

Police: 4 Dead, 2 Injured In California shooting

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ALTURAS, Calif. (AP) -- An eviction hearing at an American Indian headquarters in Northern California turned deadly as a woman who once served as a tribal leader allegedly opened fire, killing four people and critically wounding two others in a gun and knife attack, authorities said.



Cherie Lash Rhoades, a former chairwoman of Cedarville Rancheria, was taken into custody after the bloody attack at the tribal office Thursday afternoon, Alturas police chief Ken Barnes said in area media reports.

Barnes said in a story carried by KRCR-TV that the four dead include a 19-year-old woman, a 30-year-old man, a 45-year-old woman and a 50-year-old man. The police chief said one victim is the tribe's leader.

Police said tribal members were meeting about evicting Rhoades and her son from her home at the Rancheria which, according to its website, is a federally recognized tribe with 35 members.

The station's report said that Rhoades allegedly pulled out a gun and shot four people in the Cedarville Rancheria Tribal Office and a fifth person who tried to flee. After running out of bullets, authorities said, Rhoades grabbed a butcher knife and stabbed a person.

One person escaped the building, covered in victims' blood, and ran to the Alturas police station to alert the authorities, the station reported.

When officers arrived, Barnes said, the suspect was outside the building, running and clutching a knife in her hands, but a Rancheria employee helped tackle her and she was quickly subdued and brought into custody.

Authorities said she faces murder and attempted murder charges.

Police declined further comment in several calls from The Associated Press, saying they will issue a press release later.

The stabbing victim and one of the shooting victims - both women - were taken to a Redding hospital where they were in critical condition, the Redding Record-Searchlight reported.

Investigators said they found two guns but Barnes said he didn't know whether both had been used in the shooting, the Record-Searchlight said.

The Redding paper reported that the shooting was on everyone's mind Thursday night at the Niles Hotel, which is a few blocks from the rancheria's headquarters, said Cheyenne Menkee who works at the hotel's saloon.

"It's not something you hear about happening here in Alturas," she said. "My heart dropped a little bit... some people in here a kind of shaky. People were concerned if someone they knew was shot."

Barnes said the community has been shocked by the rampage.

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"We're a close-knit community," he told the Record-Searchlight. "It's a pretty traumatic event for a lot of people."

A person who answered the phone at a residence listed for Rhoades declined to comment Thursday evening.

Alturas, the seat of Modoc County, is a town with a population of about 2,800 and is known for its remote wilderness and natural beauty. It is about 55 miles south of the Oregon border and 35 miles west of the Nevada line.

Officials said Rhoades is a former leader at the Cedarville Rancheria. The Rancheria owns 26 acres in Cedarville, Calif., and many of its families reside there, according to the tribe's website.

The tribal office in Alturas hosts tribal events and activities like council meetings, youth tutoring and holiday celebrations.