

Terror Charge Filed Over Explosive Attack at Protest

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Perth: Australian authorities have charged a 31-year-old man with terrorism after he allegedly threw a homemade explosive device into a large crowd during an Australia Day protest in Perth last month.

Police said about 2,500 people had gathered in support of the Aboriginal community when the suspect hurled the device, which contained ball bearings and screws. Although the bomb failed to detonate, officials warned it could have caused a "mass casualty event" had it exploded.

The suspect, whose identity has been suppressed by court order for safety reasons, was previously charged with committing an unlawful act with intent to harm and possessing explosives under suspicious circumstances. The new terrorism charge carries a maximum penalty of life imprisonment and marks the first time such a charge has been

laid in Western Australia.

Premier Roger Cook alleged the attack was motivated by hateful and racist ideology targeting Aboriginal people and peaceful demonstrators. Police Commissioner Col Blanch said the device's fuse had been lit and described the suspect as self-radicalized, claiming investigators found evidence he had accessed extremist online material.

Australian Federal Police and the domestic intelligence agency ASIO joined the investigation shortly after the incident to assess any ongoing threat. The accused remains in custody and is scheduled to appear in Perth Magistrates Court on 17 February.

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