

THE NEW ZEALAND BRAVERY DECORATION (N.Z.B.D.)

Ziyaad SHAH

Date of action: 15 March 2019

Date of award: 16 December 2021

Citation

On 15 March 2019 Mr Ziyaad Shah was attending Friday prayers at Al Noor Mosque on Deans Avenue in Christchurch. On hearing the call to prayer he sat down in the middle of the main prayer room, and greeted another worshipper next to him.

Shortly before 1.40pm, a lone gunman armed with semi-automatic shotguns and assault rifles, with several hundred rounds of ammunition, commenced an attack on the Al Noor Mosque. The gunman entered the Mosque, and made his way to the main prayer room, shooting people in the main entranceway and along the corridor.

Mr Shah heard a series of continuous gunshots and became aware of people moving towards him, away from the entrance of the prayer room. Mr Shah deliberately grabbed the man next to him and rolled to his left, shielding the other man with his body. As the gunman continued shooting, Mr Shah was shot twice.

Mr Shah decided to pretend to be dead, and told the shielded man to remain calm and do the same. He continued to lie on top of him, as the gunman walked around shooting at people continuously. Bleeding from his wounds, Mr Shah remained lying down, protecting the other man, until the gunman finally left the Mosque.

Mr Shah's selfless actions in protecting his fellow worshipper demonstrated exceptional bravery.