Police treating as terrorist attack the alleged stabbing of Sydney bishop during livestreamed mass

NSW premier Chris Minns said a 'major and serious criminal investigation' was under way

New South Wales police are treating the alleged stabbing of a bishop during the live stream of a mass in western Sydney as a terrorist attack.

The premier, Chris Minns, said the decision was taken early on Tuesday morning and validated by the police minister.

The NSW police commissioner, Karen Webb, said a strike force had been established to investigate last night's incident

"This is a major and serious criminal investigation," Minns said on Tuesday.

"It is crucial that New South Wales police are able to devote their resources and intelligence as well as officers to the investigation of this crime."

Hundreds of people clashed with police in western Sydney on Monday night after a prominent Orthodox Christian leader was allegedly stabbed at the altar of his church.

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