

Four-year-old victim of Christchurch mosque shooting suffering brain damage

Matthew Rosenberg

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Note that this report is dated April 12 – just 13 days before Alen chats with Prince William.

A young girl who was shot in the Christchurch terror attacks has sustained brain damage and doesn't recognise her parents, her father says.

Four-year-old Alen Daraghmih is in Auckland's Starship children's hospital, conscious, but not responding.

Across the road, her father Wasseim Alsati remains in Auckland City Hospital where he's spent the past three and half weeks.

Both father and daughter sustained serious injuries in the massacre at Al Noor mosque on March 15.



Wasseim Alsati fought through his emotions to talk about his daughter, Alen Daraghmih's, horrific first visit to the mosque. Photo: Supplied / Not-For-Syndication

"To be honest, it's in the last couple of days I've come to understand the situation. We're very hurt," an emotional Alsati said from his hospital bed on Thursday night.

"She's awake, but she's not responding. She can't see. Her hands and her legs are slightly moving, but not the way she wants them to."

Daraghmih has undergone eight surgeries, but it will be six months before doctors know how bad the damage is, Alsati said.

Meanwhile, Alsati is battling his own medical issues, having undergone several surgeries at Christchurch Hospital before being transferred to Auckland on March 17.



Four-year-old Alen Daraghmih is currently in Auckland's Starship Children's Hospital with brain damage following the Christchurch terror attacks. Photo: Supplied / Not-For-Syndication

He was shot three times in the attack, and says he has "heaps of fragments of bullets" left in his body, some of which won't be removable until a later date.

Being able to walk again is a minimum of 18 months away, he's been told.

"On Monday they took half a bullet from my tummy, it was about a big nail size. They did that surgery while I was awake," Alsati said.

"I am really tired [and] I'm crying all the time. My wife, she's really been strong. She's got her power from our family here."

Alsati's mother, mother-in-law and two brothers are currently in New Zealand on visitors visas and have been supporting the 36-year-old barber from Christchurch and his wife, who is kept busy attending to Daraghmih.

In the past two and a half weeks, Alsati says he's only seen his wife for half an hour because of [the demands of looking after their daughter](#).

Messages of support from his customers in Christchurch was something helping him stay focused on recovery, but there were many unknowns going into the future, he said.



Wasseim Alsati, 36, is a barber in Christchurch. He moved to New Zealand from Jordan in 2014. Photo: Supplied / The-Press

"For me as a barber, I would love to get home to start working to get some income for the family. I don't know what sort of income I will get from ACC or Victim Support. It's been four weeks now."

Alsati wanted to reiterate his thanks to Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern and Police Superintendent Naila Hassan for the support he and his family had received following the attack, particularly around the immigration needs of his visiting family.

"They helped us to keep the family here, immigration-wise. We would love to keep the family here for much longer."

A [Givealittle page has been set up](#) to help the family's financial needs at this time.

-Stuff