



# U.S. GUN VIOLENCE

The U.S. has both the highest absolute and highest per capita rates of gun ownership in the world, and guns are easily accessible by those likely to misuse them. Yet the U.S. has failed to implement even a basic system for the regulation of firearms – with no requirements for universal background checks, licensing, and training for gun purchasers or for registration of guns.

Killing an average of 109 people each day, gun violence is the second leading cause of death among children and disproportionately affects communities of color. African Americans are ten times more likely to be the victims of gun homicides than white Americans, and gun violence is the leading cause of death among black men ages 15–34. Persistent firearm violence, high rates of gun ownership, and ease of access to firearms by individuals likely to misuse them demonstrate how the U.S. government is failing to meet its obligation to respect, protect and fulfill human rights pursuant to international law. Persistent gun violence in the U.S. is denying people their civil and political rights including the right to life, the right to security of person and the right to be free from discrimination.

The U.S. crisis of gun violence impacts a broad range of people domestically, including women, children, communities of color, and students. It also impacts foreign countries as the Trump administration relaxes arms export oversight to boost U.S. arms sales, making it easier for dangerous actors to access military-style weapons which are often used to commit human rights atrocities abroad.

## **THE HUMAN COST**

Hadiya Pendleton was an honors student and drum majorette who had just performed at President Obama's inauguration. In January 2013, gun violence claimed her life. Two members of a gang, driving past Hyde Park, Chicago, saw a group of teenagers gathered under a canopy, sheltering from the rain, and opened fire, mistaking the teenagers for rival gang members. Hadiya was just 15 years old when she was killed.

## TALKING POINTS

- It is time for a change: the crisis of gun violence in the U.S. and failure of the U.S. government to take effective action has resulted in the death of thousands and injuries to even more. The U.S. has an obligation under international law to ensure the rights and individual safety of people living in the country.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

- Establish a White House Task Force to End Gun Violence with a mandate to direct and coordinate a whole of government, interagency, effort to identify evidence-based gun violence prevention policies that address school safety, gun violence in communities of color, mental and health care for gun violence survivors, universal background checks, licensing, and training for purchasers and registration of firearms.
- The Task Force should, consistent within applicable law, work across executive departments and agencies, in consultation with community and directly impacted voices, to:
  - ◇ Within its first 100 days release a report identifying both existing and needed policies of all relevant executive departments and agencies that could be enforced or implemented to meaningfully reduce gun violence, and host a national convening of community organizations in Black and Brown communities to examine the specific challenges of gun violence in their communities.
  - ◇ Provide Congress a clear direction on urgently needed legislative reforms and funding priorities to end gun violence.
  - ◇ Where possible, incentivize states to create safe gun storage and extreme risk protection order policies.
  - ◇ Where possible, increase funding support for sexual and gender-based violence prevention programs and close the “boyfriend loophole” for abusers with guns.
  - ◇ Prohibit the possession, shipment, or transport of a firearm by an individual who has been convicted of a misdemeanor hate crime.
  - ◇ Issue directives to the Department of Justice, Attorney General, and the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms, and Explosives (ATF) requiring:
    - Enforcement of existing gun violence prevention measures that fall within their jurisdictions, including interstate gun trafficking, and
    - Implementation of policies banning 3-D printed guns, ghost guns, and other dangerous accessories that increase firearm lethality.
- Mandate that the State Department and Department of Commerce to reverse policies transferring oversight of exports of semi-automatic weapons and ammunition and adopt policies preventing the import of foreign assault weapons into the U.S.
- The President should call on Congress to invest in our communities by providing at least \$150 million annually, for at least 10 years, to community gun violence prevention and intervention programs that have proven effective in decreasing gun violence in communities where there are persistently high levels of firearm violence.
- The President should direct ATF to research and compile a report on guns sold in 2020 through

default sales, including all data on whether any purchasers would have failed a background check should they have been subjected to one, and whether any were retrieved by ATF.

- Direct the Federal Bureau Investigation (FBI) and the Department of Homeland Security to produce a report on hate violence with guns including detailing what policies can be implemented to ensure communities are safeguarded from incitement to violence and hate crimes. Direct Health and Human Services and Social Security Administration to release certain critical data to FBI for individuals in crisis who should be prohibited from purchasing a gun due to their incapacity or state of mind.
- Direct a ban on the import of assault weapons from other countries.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

- In the Line of Fire: Human Rights and the U.S. Gun Violence Crisis (2018) (available [here](#))
- Scars of Survival: Gun Violence and Barriers to Reparation in the U.S. (2019) (available [here](#))
- Fragmented and Unequal: A Justice System that Fails Survivors of Intimate Partner Violence in Louisiana (2019) (available [here](#))

### FOR MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE CONTACT:

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