

THE FACTS:

ABOUT GUN VIOLENCE AND THE EFFECTIVENESS OF FIREARM BANS



- GUN VIOLENCE TRENDS:** Firearm-related violent crime is a small percentage of all violent crime in Canada (3% in 2017), which is less than one half of one percent of overall police-reported crime in Canada; however, the four years (2014-2017) did see a significant increase in violent crime involving firearms. **Source:** [Statistics Canada](#)
- MISLEADING STATS:** Firearms policy changes, including bans, are justified using cherrypicked, incomplete, and misleading statistics to build a narrative. The year 2013 is repeatedly used as a statistical benchmark to 'demonstrate' a firearms crisis in Canada. The 42% increase in firearm-related violent crime rate from 2013 to 2017 is a very short period and uses a baseline (2013) that was the lowest for many relevant categories during the past 50 years (e.g., criminal homicides). In fact, the 2017 rate was lower than 2009, and Minister of Public Safety Ralph Goodale acknowledged that long-term trends for firearms-related crime in Canada had actually declined during his [May 8, 2018 testimony](#) to the Standing Committee on Public Safety and National Security.
- GANGS DRIVING GUN VIOLENCE STATS:** Since 2013, gang-related firearm homicides have almost doubled. After declining 37 percent from 2009-2014, the gang-related homicide rate rose for a third consecutive year in 2017. There were 0.44 gang-related homicides per 100,000 population, the highest rate since comparable data became available in 2005. In 2016 and 2017, about one-quarter of all homicides were gang related, up from 16%-17% each year 2010-2015, with nine in ten committed with a firearm. Nearly 52% of homicides with a gun are now gang-related. **Source:** [Statistics Canada](#)
- UNKNOWNNS ABOUT FIREARM-RELATED VIOLENT CRIME:** Statistics related to the origins of crime guns, whether gun crime is linked to organized crime, the ethnicity and socioeconomic characteristics of victims and offenders are still largely unknown. **Source:** [Statistics Canada](#)
- MOST ILLEGAL FIREARMS AREN'T DOMESTICALLY SOURCED:** Despite uncertainty, ~85% of all handguns seized in Toronto in 2020 were traced back to the United States. **Source:** [CityNews](#)
- BANS DON'T TARGET CRIMINALS:** The federal government acknowledged that "any ban on handguns or assault weapons would primarily affect legal firearms owners, while the illicit market would be indirectly affected as there would be fewer available to potentially divert". **Source:** [Reducing Violent Crime: A dialogue on Handguns and Assault Weapons](#).
- POLICE DON'T SUPPORT BANS:** The Canadian Association of Chiefs of Police (CACP) don't support handgun bans. In 2019, Vancouver Police Chief and then President of the CACP said in the majority of cases involving gun violence, the handguns being used are already illegal and it makes no sense to ban something that is already prohibited. **Source:** [CBC](#)

THE TAKE-HOME

Licensed firearm-owning Canadians agree that gun crime should be reduced, but want measures implemented that directly target criminals and illegal activity. Front-line professionals and community leaders facing gun crime in Canada agree that the money spent on bans, buybacks, and redundant policy siphons critical funding away from where it is needed most - reducing smuggling, ensuring the justice system fully prosecutes offenders, and offering community and social programming to help prevent circumstances that contribute to high rates of gun violence and gangs.