

### Firearms as Tools of Terror

Firearms are used to control, terrorize and intimidate victims and survivors of domestic violence:

- An estimated 13.6% of American women alive today have been threatened by intimate partners with firearms. 43% of these reported having been physically injured.<sup>1</sup>
- A survey of contacts by the National Domestic Violence Hotline found, of respondents' whose abusers had access to firearms:
  - 10% said their abusers had fired a gun during an argument;
  - 67% believed their abusers were capable of killing them.<sup>2</sup>

### Domestic Violence Homicide

Firearms are the weapon of choice for domestic violence homicides:

- **Most intimate partner homicides are committed with firearms.**<sup>3</sup>
- **Intimate partner homicides committed with firearms are on the increase.** Between 2010 and 2017, the number of intimate partner homicides committed with firearms increased 26%. Intimate partner homicides committed with other weapons decreased.<sup>4</sup>
- **An abuser's access to a firearm increases the risk of femicide by 1,000%.**<sup>5</sup>
- In 2018, 1,014 women were killed by male intimate partners, comprising 58% of women killed by men.<sup>6</sup>
- 1 in 3 female murder victims and 1 in 20 male murder victims are killed by intimate partners.<sup>7</sup>
- 35% of all women killed by men are killed by intimate partners with guns.<sup>8</sup>
- Domestic violence incidents involving firearms are twelve times more likely to result in death than incidents involving other weapons or bodily force.<sup>9</sup>
- A ten-city study found 1/5 of homicide victims with temporary protective orders were murdered within two days of obtaining the order; 1/3 were murdered within the first month.<sup>10</sup>
- Half of women killed by male intimate partners are killed by dating partners.<sup>11</sup>
- 76% of women murdered by intimate partners and 85% of women who survived murder attempts were stalked first.<sup>12</sup>
- 59.1% of mass shootings between 2014 and 2019 were related to domestic violence, and in 68% of mass shootings, the shooter had a history of domestic violence or killed a family member or intimate partner.<sup>13</sup>
- Women in the US are 11 times more likely to be murdered with a gun than in other high-income nations.<sup>14</sup>
- States that prohibit both domestic and dating abusers from possessing firearms have a 13% lower rate of intimate partner homicide than states that do not.<sup>15</sup>
- States that prohibit respondents to both temporary and final protective orders have a 13% lower rate of intimate partner homicide than states that do not.<sup>16</sup>
- State laws requiring abusers prohibited from possessing firearms to relinquish their firearms are associated with a 12% decrease in intimate partner homicide.<sup>17</sup>
- Possession of a firearm does not make women safer:
  - Research shows that possessing a firearm is not a protective factor.<sup>18</sup>
  - An abused woman's purchase of a firearm increases the risk of intimate partner homicide by 50% and doubles the risk of firearm homicide by an abusive partner.<sup>19</sup>
  - Even NYPD officers, who train constantly, hit their targets less than half of the time from seven yards away.<sup>20</sup>

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If you are in crisis, contact The National Domestic Violence Hotline at 1-800-799-SAFE (7233) or [www.TheHotline.org](http://www.TheHotline.org).

Please visit the **National Coalition Against Domestic Violence's website** at [www.ncadv.org](http://www.ncadv.org) for more fact sheets, membership information, and valuable resources.

### Current Federal Law

Certain domestic violence misdemeanants are prohibited from possessing firearms if the perpetrator was, with respect to the victim:

- A current or former spouse;
- A current or former cohabiting intimate partner;
- A parent or guardian;
- A person with whom the victim shares a child in common;
- 'Similarly situated' to a spouse;
- 'Similarly situated' to a parent or guardian; or
- In a 'current or recent former dating

relationship' and either fewer than five years have elapsed since the completion of the individual's sentence, more than five years have elapsed but the individual was convicted of a crime involving physical force or a threat with a deadly weapon during those five years, or the individual is a repeat dating misdemeanor.

Respondents to final protective orders that include certain findings and relief are also prohibited from possessing firearms for the duration of the order if the protected party is:

- A current or former spouse;
- A current or former cohabitant;
- A person with whom the respondent shares a child in common;
- The child of the intimate partner; or
- The child of the respondent.

Between November 30, 1998 and September 30, 2021, domestic violence was the second-most frequent cause for NICS denial of a firearms permit. Only felony convictions exceeded the domestic violence prohibitors.<sup>21</sup>

Information about state laws can be found at <https://www.disarmdv.org>.

<sup>1</sup> Adhia, A., Lyons, V. H., Moe, C. A., Rowhani-Rahbar, A., & Rivara, F. P. (2021). Nonfatal use of firearms in intimate partner violence: Result of a national survey. *Preventive Medicine*. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ypmed.2021.106500>

<sup>2</sup> National Domestic Violence Hotline (2014). *Firearms and domestic violence*. Retrieved from <http://www.thehotline.org/resources/firearms-dv/#tab-id-2>.

<sup>3</sup> Violence Policy Center (2018). *When men murder women: An analysis of 2016 homicide data*. <http://www.vpc.org/studies/wmmw2018.pdf>

<sup>4</sup> Fridel, E. E. & Fox, J. A. (2019). Gender differences in patterns and trends in U.S. homicide, 1976-2017. *Violence and Gender*, 6(1), 27-36. doi: 10.1089/vio.2019.0005

<sup>5</sup> Spencer, C. M. & Stith, S. M. (2020). Risk factors for male perpetration and female victimization of intimate partner homicide: A meta-analysis. *Trauma, Violence, & Abuse*, 21(3), 527-540. doi: 10.1177/1524838018781101

<sup>6</sup> Ibid.

<sup>7</sup> Bridges, F. S., Tatum, K. M., & Kunselman, J. C. (2008). Domestic violence statutes and rates of intimate partner and family homicide: A research note. *Criminal Justice Policy Review*, 19(1), 117-130.

<sup>8</sup> Violence Policy Center (2017). *When men murder women: An analysis of 2015 homicide data*. Retrieved from <http://www.vpc.org/studies/wmmw2017.pdf>.

<sup>9</sup> Saltzman, L. E., Mercy, J. A., O'Carroll, P. W., Rosenberg, M. L., & Rhodes, P. H. (1992). Weapon involvement and injury outcomes in family and intimate assaults. *JAMA*, 267(22), 3043-3047.

<sup>10</sup> Vitti, K. A. & Sorenson, S. B. (2008). Restraining orders among victims of intimate partner homicide. *Injury Prevention*, 14(1), 191-195.

<sup>11</sup> Cooper, A. & Smith, E. L. (2011). *Homicide trends in the United States, 1980-2008*. <http://www.bjs.gov/content/pub/pdf/htus8008.pdf>.

<sup>12</sup> McFarlane, J. M., Campbell, J. C., Wilt, S., Sachs, C. J., Ulrich, Y. & Xu, X. (1999). Stalking and intimate partner femicide. *Homicide Studies*, 3(4), 300-316.

<sup>13</sup> Geller, L. B., Booty, M., & Crifasi, C. K. (2021). The role of domestic violence in fatal mass shootings in the United States, 2014-2019. *Injury Epidemiology*, 8(38). <https://doi.org/10.1186/s40621-021-00330-0>

<sup>14</sup> Mayors Against Illegal Guns. *Guns laws and violence against women*. <http://3gbwir1ummda16xrhf4do9d21bsx.wpengine.netdna-cdn.com/wp-content/uploads/2014/10/Guns-and-Violence-Against-Women-Everytown-for-Gun-Safety.pdf>.

<sup>15</sup> Zeoli, A. M., McCourt, A., Buggs, S., Frattaroli, S., Lilley, D., & Webster, D. W. (2017).

Analysis of the strength of legal firearms restrictions for perpetrators of domestic violence and their association with intimate partner homicide. *American Journal of Epidemiology*. doi: 10.1093/aje/kwx362

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## Domestic Violence & Firearms

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<sup>16</sup> Ibid.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid.

<sup>18</sup> Campbell, J. C., Webster, D., Koziol-McLain, J., Block, C., Campbell, D., Curry, M. A., Gary, F., Glass, N., McFarlane, J., Sachs, C., Sharps, P., Ulrich, Y., Wilt, S., Manganello, J., Xu, X., Schollenberger, J., Frye, V., & Lauphon, K. (2003). Risk factors for femicide in abusive relationships: Results from a multisite case control study. *American Journal of Public Health*, 93(7), 1089-1097.

<sup>19</sup> Wintemute, G. J., Wright, M. A., & Drake, C. M. (2003). Increased risk of intimate partner homicide among California women who purchased handguns. *Annals of Emergency Medicine*, 41(2), 281-283. <https://doi.org/10.1067/mem.2003.66>

<sup>20</sup> Rostker, B. D., Hanser, L. M., Hix, W. M., Jensen, C., Morral, A. R., Ridgeway, G., & Schell, T. L. (2008). *Evaluation of the New York City Police Department firearm training and firearm-discharge review process*.

[http://www.nyc.gov/html/nypd/downloads/pdf/public\\_information/RAND\\_FirearmEvaluation.pdf](http://www.nyc.gov/html/nypd/downloads/pdf/public_information/RAND_FirearmEvaluation.pdf).

<sup>21</sup> Federal Bureau of Investigation. (2021). *Federal denials: Reason why the NICS Section denies, November 30, 1998 – September 30, 2021*. [https://www.fbi.gov/file-repository/federal\\_denials.pdf/view](https://www.fbi.gov/file-repository/federal_denials.pdf/view)

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