

## **Banning the importation of handguns will help slow the expansion of the Canadian handgun market until new gun control bill is passed**

**Montreal, August 5, 2022 – PolySeSouvient**, which represents survivors and families of victims of gun violence, applauds Ministers Marco Mendicino and Mélanie Joly's decision to make use of the country's import/export laws to end the importation of handguns into Canada.

**Nathalie Provost, Polytechnique graduate and survivor** says: "We applaud the determination and ingenuity of both Ministers Mendicino and Joly with respect to the government's efforts to rein in the exponential growth of the number of handguns in private hands in Canada until Bill C-21 and its regulations are passed.

"Because commercial inventories still remain, including some that may have been replenished after having been sold out, and because domestic production can still continue, a ban on imports will not end the purchase of handguns in Canada. However, this is a significant and creative measure that will unquestionably slow the expansion of the Canadian handgun market until Bill C-21 is adopted, hopefully this fall.

"Ideally, the purchase of new handguns would have ended in the days following the tabling of regulations to that effect, which was done at the end of May on the same day that the government introduced Bill C-21. But passing these regulations required unanimous consent from all parties and, unfortunately and unsurprisingly, the Conservative Party refused to cooperate, thereby allowing the massive run on handguns that has since been [observed](#) across the country. True to its past actions and positions on guns, the Conservative Party continues to side with pro-gun groups, some of which have publicly [encouraged](#), [applauded](#) and even [given instructions](#) on how to maximize the recent massive purchase of handguns and, this, despite the fact that banning the importation, purchase and sale of handguns [is supported by](#) 8 out of 10 (78%) of Canadians."

Combatting the criminal use of handguns is a complex endeavor. Many wrongly claim that the problem of gun crime lies mainly with illegal handguns, particularly those in the hands of street gangs. In fact, [Statistics Canada's most recent report on gun violence](#) shows that **only 6% of firearm-related violent crimes involve a criminal organization or a street gang**. And [recent statistics from the RCMP tabled in the House of Commons](#) reveal that the problem is far from being limited to illegally imported handguns: **overall, 68% of guns seized by law enforcement throughout the country, including 40% of all handguns, are domestically sources**. (Here is a [compilation](#) of various reports regarding the source of crime guns, which vary from city to city and province to province.) While combatting illegal trafficking remains a priority, it is not the main goal of Bill C-21. Banning assault weapons and reducing the number of handguns is primarily aimed at preventing mass shootings (mainly committed with legally acquired weapons) as well as the purchase of handguns for illegitimate purposes like self-protection and their theft (which is one of the main sources of illegal market, with an average of [700 handguns stolen annually between 2000 and 2012](#)). Gun control and crime control are not mutually exclusive: we can - and should - do both.

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(\* Please note that because of summer schedule, Ms. Provost will only be available until 1 pm).