

Amnesty Extension for Thousands of Prohibited Assault-Style Firearms Undermines Public Safety and the Rule of Law

Legal Challenge of Two Lower Court Rulings by Pro-Gun Groups
Should Not Keep Prohibited Firearms in Circulation

Montreal, June 9, 2026: The following is **PolySeSouvient**'s statement in response to [today's announcement](#) regarding the fourth extension of the initial 2020 amnesty period for owners of prohibited weapons:

"PolySeSouvient is deeply disappointed by the federal government's decision to extend the amnesty period for prohibited assault-style firearms until three months after the Supreme Court rules on a challenge brought by pro-gun lobby groups.

This extension means that highly lethal, prohibited weapons will remain in private hands for many more months. No rational was given to justify the decision other than "providing certainty to individual owners and businesses that they will continue to be protected from criminal liability while the Supreme Court hears the appeal and renders its decision."

The government did not seem to apply the standard test that the court normally applies in determining whether or not to issue an injunction – including the 'balance of inconvenience' and the relative weight of potential 'irreparable harm' faced by gun owners (who may be prosecuted for the illegal possession of prohibited gun should the Supreme Court overturn the [2023](#) and [2025](#) lower court rulings upholding the government's authority to ban certain weapons) *versus* the 'irreparable harm' to possible victims of future mass shootings - women, children, police officers, and other members of the public who could be shot and killed with one of these weapons.

Protecting public safety should never be subordinated to the interests of individuals, including those who refuse to comply with the law. Legislation should not be suspended simply because it is challenged. That is why injunctions are rarely granted in criminal law contexts.

With this decision, the government is protecting gun owners unwilling to surrender their prohibited weapons against criminal charges — at the expense of potential future victims of mass shootings in Canada. Continuing to allow access to these weapons increases the risk of this type of extreme violence.

Why not let the Supreme Court weigh the merits of an injunction?

It is particularly troubling that Public Safety Minister Gary Anandasangaree chose to act pre-emptively — before any injunction request was even filed by the gun lobby, and well before any ruling from the Supreme Court. The Minister is either assuming that the Supreme Court would have granted the gun lobby an extraordinary remedy that courts grant only in the most narrow circumstances - where the harm from enforcement outweighs the public interest - or he is making a political decision unrelated to legal case law, likely to appease gun owners.

The decision not only undermines public safety but also the rule of law.

Delaying the enforcement of laws that have already been twice upheld by the courts risks eroding public confidence in the rule of law.

While legal challenges are a normal part of the judicial process, treating them as justification to pause duly enacted public safety measures allows opponent's litigation strategies to override legitimate government authority. Governments routinely implement laws while constitutional challenges proceed.

Pre-emptively suspending a public safety measure — where the measure is clearly in the public interest and the challengers are self-interested opponents — is contrary to the Supreme Court's established [RJR-MacDonald norm](#), which requires courts to give significant weight to the public interest on the balance of convenience (and that public interest must be assumed). This extension breaks from that norm and suggests that litigation tactics by well-financed lobby groups can be used to delay democratically enacted protections for the greater public good. That is not prudent governance. It's a political decision dressed up as procedural caution.

The prohibition on assault-style firearms was introduced to reduce the risk and scale of mass shootings. Extending the amnesty prolongs the presence of these high-risk weapons in circulation, prioritizing individual compliance timelines over collective safety and undermining the law's protective purpose.

The rule of law requires that legislation be enforced consistently, promptly, and equally. This fourth amnesty extension does the opposite: it delays enforcement, creates inconsistency, and weakens public confidence that critical safety measures will be carried out as intended.”

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