

New RCMP Data Debunks the Smuggling Myth: Most Crime Guns in Canada are Domestically Sourced

PolySeSouvient and Danforth Families for Safe Communities welcome new RCMP data confirming the majority of seized crime guns come from within Canada - underscoring the need for stronger domestic firearms controls

MONTREAL, TORONTO, June 11, 2026: Statement from PolySeSouvient and Danforth Families for Safe Communities in response to the [RCMP data](#) recently obtained and [made public today](#) by the [Canadian Press](#) regarding crime guns traced in Canada:

“For years, Canadians, politicians and the media [have been told](#) by gun lobbyists that Canada’s only gun problem is a porous U.S. border — that most firearms used to commit crime in our communities are smuggled into Canada from the United States.

Today's data tells a different story.

According to data recorded by the RCMP’s Canadian National Firearms Tracing Centre (CNFTC), for all crime guns traced in 2023 whose source was known (2,814 firearms), 80% were domestically sourced and 20% were smuggled. (Only 4% of traced crime guns were linked to organized crime, and of those, 80% were domestically sourced.)

Crime guns traced by the CNFTC, by source, 2024

In 2024, the CNFTC completed 6,951 firearm traces overall. There were 4,197 traces that were identified as crime guns³, of these, 2,814 had a known firearm source. This represents an 9% increase in the number of crime gun traces completed by the CNFTC when compared to 2023 (3,865).

Where the crime gun’s source could be identified, 80% were deemed to be domestically sourced, and 20% smuggled. When compared to 2023, in 2024, the number of crime gun traces determined to have been domestically sourced increased by 1%, whereas the number deemed smuggled increased by 49%.

Table 1: Source of Crime guns traced by the CNFTC, by type, 2024

Origin by Firearm Type	Handgun	Long gun	Other	Total		
	n	n	n	2024	2023	% Change from 2023 to 2024
Domestically Sourced	242	2,001	14	2,257	2,225	1
Smuggled	488	60	9	557	373	49
Total	730	2,061	23	2,814	2,598	8

Note: This table only includes completed firearm traces where the source of the firearm and its type were known.

Source: Canadian National Firearms Tracing Centre, RCMP Canadian Firearms Program

The report’s data covers firearms traces from all Canadian jurisdictions except Ontario, where the Criminal Intelligence Service Ontario’s Firearms Analysis & Tracing Enforcement (FATE) program traces crime guns. Quebec also conducts its own tracing through the Centre Québécois de dépistage des armes à feu (CQDAAF). However, the RCMP notes that “these two tracing centres produce similar statistics on the source of their traced firearms.” [Previous Canadian data](#) align with these findings.

The same pattern holds for guns used in homicides in Canada, according to Statistics Canada. The latest Juristat report, “Firearms and violent crime in Canada, 2024,” published on April 21, states that among recovered firearms used in homicides for which origins could be traced, most (74%) came from Canada, while most of the remainder originated in the United States (24%).

Juristat Article — Firearms and violent crime in Canada, 2024

The majority of firearms sent for tracing come from Canada

As part of the Homicide Survey, the police collects information about the legal status of the firearm and its owner. It should be noted that this information is available for a minority of incidents and firearms, so results should be interpreted with caution.³⁴

In 2024, information on legal firearm ownership was available in 53% of all firearm-related homicides. According to that information, at the time of the homicide, the firearm involved was legally owned in nearly one-quarter of homicides (24%, or 37 out of 152 homicides), meaning that the firearm had been legally acquired and that the legal conditions for firearm possession had been met.

Information on the origins of firearms that were illegally owned at the time of the homicide is available in a minority of homicides (22%, or 25 out of 115). Of these, police indicated that 32% of cases involved a firearm that had been stolen from its legal Canadian owner, while 8% of cases involved a weapon lost by its legal Canadian owner. In the remaining cases, the firearm was illegal, meaning that it had never been legally owned in Canada (56%) or had been illegally purchased from its legal Canadian owner (4%).

The firearm used to cause death was recovered in 41% of firearm-related homicides. Of the recovered firearms, 77 (70%) were sent for tracing. It was possible to trace the origins of nearly half of these firearms (44%, or 34 out of 77). Of the 34 firearms whose origins could be determined, most (74%) came from Canada, while most of the remainder originated in the United States (24%).

The truth is simple: most crime guns in Canada start out legal.

In short, most crime guns originate on the shelves of legal vendors within Canada—from big cities to small towns and rural communities—before being straw-purchased, illegally resold, stolen, or misused by their legal owners.

Provincial and territorial governments, along with police chiefs and associations, must not be swayed by disinformation from gun lobby groups claiming that most crime guns are smuggled from the US. Authorities need to act on this data by supporting the timely, effective implementation of measures from Bill C-21 and moving forward without delay to remove ALL assault-style firearms from circulation. Prohibiting assault weapons was the right decision. Extending the amnesty for prohibited weapons was not.

This data should end the debate about which firearms drive most gun crime in Canada—and dismiss the absurd argument that governments should focus solely on smuggling. Yes, smuggled guns are a problem that must be addressed. But the days of politicians and pro-gun commentators blaming smuggling alone while dismissing controls on the legal market as unjustified are over.

The weapons most often used in mass shootings are - or were once - legally owned in Canada. The rifle used at Polytechnique was legally owned on the day of the 1989 tragedy. The handgun used in the 2018 Danforth mass shooting was initially legally sold by a Saskatchewan gun store. Legal guns are disproportionately used in intimate partner femicides, such as the murder of Brenda Tatlock-Burke by her husband, an ex-RCMP officer, who kept several legal guns in their home.

Acknowledging these facts is not an attack on lawful gun owners — it is the starting point for honest, evidence-based policy. Anything less costs lives. »