News release

Côte-des-Neiges tragedy exposes Canada's deadly SKS loophole

Carney government must immediately halt new SKS sales

Montreal, June 25, 2026 — **PolySeSouvient**, composed of victims and survivors of the 1989 Polytechnique mass shooting, issued the following statement in response to preliminary information from **Montreal police** and media reports about the June 22, 2026 shooting in the **Montreal Côte des Neiges** neighbourhood, including the observation that the gun in videos of the tragedy is a **Soviet SKS**:

> "PolySeSouvient's first thoughts are with the family and colleagues of Const. Mohamed Lamine Benredouane, who was killed, with the injured officer, and with the loved ones of Mr. Michael (Michel) Moshe Mizrahi, who was also killed. We stand with the Côte-des-Neiges community and with all Montrealers who are grieving, shocked, and outraged by this horrific violence. We also thank the first responders whose courage and professionalism prevented even greater loss of life.
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> The Côte-des-Neiges shooting is a devastating reminder that it is indefensible for the SKS to remain a legal firearm available for purchase to anyone with a simple firearms licence. It is also a stark reminder that Canada still allows military-style assault weapons to be purchased and to circulate in our communities.
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> Whatever other factors were involved, this attack could not have happened without access to a powerful firearm. According to a La Presse report, the shooter, Albertan Seth Scott Hatfield, had a PAL (Possession and Acquisition Licence), the mandatory permit to legally own firearms and purchase magazines and ammunition. If this is true, he was likely the legal owner of the SKS and another non-restricted firearm found in the hotel room.
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> The parallels with the mass shooting at Polytechnique are impossible to ignore. Then, as now, legally available weapons were used to carry out or attempt multiple murders. Then, as now, hatred of women and violence were enabled by access to high-powered firearms designed to kill quickly and efficiently.
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> Not all gun crime involves assault-style long guns, but too often it does. These firearms are built for rapid lethal force. One mass shooting is one too many.
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> That is why survivors, witnesses, and families of the victims of the Polytechnique femicides, along with people affected by Dawson College, the Quebec Mosque, the Danforth in Toronto and may others, have long demanded a total ban on assault weapons.
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> After three Moncton RCMP officers were killed with a military-style firearm (a semi-automatic M305) in 2014, the government responded by initiating a review aimed at implementing major firepower upgrades for frontline Mounties – but not removing assault weapon from civilian circulation. It was only after the 2020 Nova Scotia mass shooting that Ottawa finally prohibited 1,500 models of military-style firearms. More were added in 2024 and 2025 to close obvious gaps. Yet the government still exempted the SKS, a Soviet-designed military weapon, despite it being the model most used in mass shootings and police murders in recent years in Canada.

In 2022, the government tried to ban the SKS through the failed G-46 amendment to former Bill C-21. Last year, its own expert panel on firearms recognized that modern SKS versions share the same characteristics as prohibited weapons. Ottawa knows the risk. It has simply refused to act.

And despite Carney's election promise 'to quickly reinvigorate' and 'complete' the buyback and removal of assault-style weapons, his government just extended the amnesty for these prohibited firearms, for a fourth time, keeping such weapons in circulation for at least another year. New Zealand completed the task within six months after Christchurch. Australia within a year after Port Arthur. Canada has had more than six years and still has yet not completed its ban on assault weapons.

As things stand, owners who registered their prohibited firearms under the buyback program can take public money and buy a new SKS rifle. That is not public safety. It is a taxpayer-funded farce that leaves the same deadly threat on the market under a different name.

PolySeSouvient reiterates its call to the Carney government to immediately end new sales of SKS models. This is the bare minimum. It would close an obvious gap, send a clear signal, and show that Ottawa is finally prepared to act before another family is shattered.

PolySeSouvient is also demanding a precise and accelerated schedule for consultations and regulatory action on existing SKS rifles. The current pace is indefensible, and there is no official timeline. These weapons remain widely available, repeatedly linked to violence, and treated with a leniency they do not merit.

The gun lobby and its political allies continue to push the same tired misinformation: that smuggled handguns are the only real issue. Smuggled handguns are not the only problem, and they are not a reason to ignore long guns. Earlier RCMP data show that most crime guns are long guns, in addition to being domestically sourced. More recent data made public by the Canadian Press confirm these statistics.

We should also remember that historically, most police officers killed in the line of duty in Canada were murdered with long guns, typically high-powered ones. Côte-des-Neiges (QC), Fredericton (NB), Mayerthorpe (AB), Fredericton (NB), South Simcoe (ON), Bourget (ON), Saanich (BC) and other tragedies where multiple police officers were shot are not abstractions. They are the cost of denial, delay and political cowardice. Legal assault weapons are literally being used to hunt our police officers.

Canada must end the charade now. The events of June 22 leave no room for excuses: weapons designed for war do not belong in civilian hands. The government must choose public safety over inaction."

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