

Mass shooting in Sacramento, California, leaves 6 dead and 12 injured

Sebastian Greene, Gabriel Black
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Six people are reported dead and 12 injured after a mass shooting in downtown Sacramento, California, early Sunday morning.

Police responded to the sound of automatic gunfire at 2:00 a.m. at a popular cluster of nightclubs near 10th and K streets, not far from the State Capitol building. Six victims—three male and three female—were pronounced dead at the scene.

Multiple videos have been posted to social media showing the incident. In one video, a crowd of partygoers was fist-fighting on the street outside a club, when in the distance gunshots began to be fired and the crowd began running. One eyewitness told the *Sacramento Bee* that he heard one gunman fire and then another gunman return fire.

In another video, at least 76 gunshots are heard in just 54 seconds as a crowd of people ran from the scene. Over 100 bullet casings were found on the scene, and several buildings and cars were hit.

On Monday, police arrested a 26-year-old man in connection with the incident.

Sacramento Police Chief Kathy Lester told local news KCRA 3 after the arrest, “[T]his is a complex investigation, and we’re looking for multiple suspects.”

Sacramento County District Attorney Ann Schubert also stated Monday, “The investigation is highly complex involving many witnesses, videos of numerous types and significant physical evidence.”

According to a report in *Forbes*, the victims’ bodies were still lying on the ground Sunday well into the afternoon, almost 12 hours later. Police claimed this was necessary to understand what had happened.

This latest horrific mass shooting comes amidst a wave of violent incidents in the United States. Just this past weekend between April 1 to April 3, the following took place:

- Three people were killed and two injured in multiple

shootings on Sunday in Baltimore, Maryland.

- Two people are dead and one injured in two separate shootings in Arkansas Sunday night.

- Two people are dead and three people injured in four separate shootings in Harrisburg, Pennsylvania.

- Eighteen people were shot in Chicago over the weekend in multiple incidents. One of those people shot was killed by police officers during an alleged hostage situation near a mall on the city’s Southside.

- One person was killed and five injured in four different shootings in Minneapolis, Minnesota.

- Four people were shot in two separate but related shootings in Colorado Springs, Colorado.

Just this year alone, according to the Gun Violence Archive, there have been 117 mass shooting incidents in the United States. Mass shooting incidents are defined as incidents with at least four gun injuries or deaths.

The Gun Violence Archive reported that through April 4, this year has seen nearly 11,000 gun deaths, 6,204 which were suicides, 4,745 homicides, murders or other shootings, including accidents. Among children under 11, 79 have been killed by gunfire, while for those between 12-17 the figure stands at 323. Year after year, the United States resembles a killing field with an average of 47,858 annual deaths by gun violence since 2014, including approximately 1,000 people shot and killed by the police.

The shooting in Sacramento was the second instance of mass gun violence to occur in the area this year after a father fatally shot his three daughters, their chaperone, and himself during a supervised visit at a church in February. In May of last year, the nearby San Francisco Bay Area saw its bloodiest mass shooting in history when a Transportation Authority employee opened fire on co-workers at a light rail maintenance yard, killing nine, before committing suicide.

The wave of gun violence in the US is, fundamentally, an expression of a deep social crisis. Across the United

States, and most of the world, social tensions are at a breaking point.

Decades of declining income share to working people, the evisceration of stable well-paying jobs and ongoing cuts to social infrastructure have all contributed to a climate of desperation. On top of this the COVID-19 pandemic has killed over 1 million people and sickened millions more. The American ruling elite, in allowing so many to die, has made clear that it places no value on the lives of workers, the elderly and the immunocompromised.

Meanwhile the cost of living is surging at rates not seen in four decades, with the US Commerce department estimating costs will be \$5,200 more for the average family this year compared to last. This has placed immense pressure on the millions who live paycheck to paycheck and cannot afford even a \$400 emergency. The US-NATO drive to war against Russia threatens to drive prices even higher.

Violent acts, whether a wanton killing or a crime over money or revenge, are some of the sharpest and most disoriented expressions of this general social tension. They are similar, in ways, to so-called “deaths of despair,” drug overdoses and suicides, in that they reflect the immense instability and difficulty faced by broad masses of the population. In 2020, 93,000 people died of drug overdoses in the United States and about 46,000 by suicide. About 5 to 7 percent of overdose deaths are believed to be intentional.

The incident Sunday comes as the Biden administration announced a policy of “fiscal responsibility” last Monday for the 2023 budget proposal, which features the largest ever US military spending at more than \$813 billion and a substantial increase for domestic police repression while slashing social spending critical for the mental and physical health of the American working class. The Biden administration is using the war in Ukraine as an excuse to continue the decades-long assault on social programs and is cutting off funding to cover COVID-19 testing and vaccination for the uninsured.

House Speaker Nancy Pelosi (Democrat, California) released a statement Sunday responding to the Sacramento shooting declaring, “Too many families and communities across the nation have been shattered by the epidemic of gun violence plaguing our nation, which steals more than 100 beautiful souls each day.” She added that the “House Democrats have passed the Bipartisan Background Checks Act and the Enhanced Background Checks Act: common sense and urgent action that will

help end the bloodshed.”

The Democrats often campaign on gun control but never stop for a second to present a deeper analysis of what are the root causes of these persistent and seemingly chronic occurrences of mass shootings in America precisely because doing so would require adopting a critical attitude towards capitalism, which Biden, Pelosi and all the corporate politicians defend. Empty verbiage following each new shooting and increases in police budgets are the only significant actions taken by these figures.

The Democrats and Republicans have overseen 30 years’ worth of mass shootings while seeking to offset the decline of America’s economic dominance by deploying the military to kill millions and destroy entire societies in the Middle East, North Africa and Central Asia. This naked resort to violence and its presentation as an effective solution to the problems one faces has had its own nefarious effect at home.

Meanwhile, an understanding of gun violence must take into account the mental health crisis in the United States, of which mass shootings are often a symptom. The pandemic and the dislocation the homicidal response of capitalist governments has caused for billions of people around the globe has significantly intensified this health crisis.

In Sacramento, before being called off in a last-minute deal late Sunday night, nearly 5,000 teachers and school workers were on strike in the Sacramento City Unified School District over COVID-19 safety concerns, severe understaffing issues, low pay, and cuts to health care benefits. The teachers joined a growing strike wave which included Chevron refinery workers in Richmond, California, and other struggles across the country and world by workers who are demanding an increase in their living standards which have been eroded by inflation.

The only way out of the mass misery and death created by capitalism is for workers to link their struggles across industries and nations in a conscious struggle to take political power away from the corporate oligarchs who perpetuate this system and reorganize society to meet human need and not private profit.



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