

Multiple people killed at University of Nevada, Las Vegas and in Austin, Texas as 2023 breaks record for mass shootings

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6 December 2023

A shooting at the University of Nevada, Las Vegas left three people dead and one critically injured after a gunman opened fire on campus on Wednesday. The university stated that the gunman was spotted at the business school and that there were reports of shots being fired near the student union. Authorities reported that the gunman was found dead on campus but have not reported, as of this writing, whether he took his own life or was killed by police.

Just the day before, six people were killed and three injured during a shooting spree by a Texas man in San Antonio and Austin on Tuesday. The shooter, 34-year-old Shane James, was taken into custody after crashing a vehicle while attempting to flee from a shootout with police that injured an officer.

The first reported shooting was at 10:43 a.m. local time outside of Austin's Northeast Early College High School where a sergeant with the school's police force was shot in the leg by the shooter. The school and a nearby facility went into an hours-long lockdown following the incident.

An hour later James reportedly killed two people in south Austin. One person died at the scene while the other died after being transported to a hospital. One of the victims was reportedly a mother pushing her one-year-old baby in a stroller.

Later that day, around 5:00 p.m., James shot and injured a cyclist in southwest Austin. Authorities stated that the victim suffered non-life-threatening injuries. Two hours later police responded to calls about a burglary less than a mile from where the cyclist was shot. A shootout between James and police began where an officer suffered multiple gunshot wounds. He reportedly attempted to flee in a car before crashing and was taken into custody.

Police entered the home where the burglary was reported and found two people with severe injuries inside. They were later pronounced dead at the scene.

Following James' arrest the police investigated a residence in San Antonio linked to his name. According to

Bexar County Sheriff Javier Salazar, two people were found dead, both believed to be in their 50's. Their deaths are being investigated in connection to the shootings in Austin. He added that "the bodies were relocated" to the home where they were "wedged inside a very small room and . . . up against the door."

The shooting at UNLV and killing spree in Austin add to a long string of mass shootings in the United States.

Just a few hundred miles north of Austin in Dallas, Texas a man killed four people, including a one-year old, before taking his own life on Sunday. A teenager was also injured during the killings.

According to authorities, Byron Carrillo, 21, cut off his ankle bracelet before shooting and killing Jose Lopez, 50, Karina Lopez, 33, Vanessa De La Cruz, 20, and the one-year old child. A 15-year-old girl was taken to a hospital while a 13-year-old girl present was uninjured. Carrillo fled Dallas to Austin where he was pursued by officers. He shot and killed himself four hours after the shootings.

On the same day in Vancouver, Washington, Stuart Rouse, 64, shot and killed his wife, Christina, 63, their two adult daughters, Kristina and Mellissa, and his brother before taking his own life. Authorities had received a call around 1 p.m. local time asking for a welfare check on the family's home. A family relative told police that they had received a text from Stuart saying he had "harmed others" according to a statement from the sheriff's office. Shots were recorded by a neighbor's security camera coming from inside the home around 10 a.m.

And this past Friday an unknown and at-large assailant opened fire on a homeless encampment in Las Vegas, injuring four and killing one. Recently released security camera footage shows the suspected shooter sprinting to enter the passenger side of a waiting black SUV.

The shooting in Las Vegas followed a string of attacks on homeless individuals in Los Angeles. Jerrid Powell was arrested last week as the suspect in the targeted killing of

three men sleeping on the street in three separate attacks. The three were killed in their sleep in separate locations that spanned the city between November 26 and 29. The response of Los Angeles Mayor Karen Bass was to encourage unhoused people to “not sleep alone.” Police Chief Michel Moore stated during a press conference “We are asking everyone to encourage people experiencing homelessness, especially those who are alone, to seek shelter and to seek opportunities to come in from the streets.”

Los Angeles has an estimated homeless population of 66,000 and only 16,000 emergency shelter beds available according to the Los Angeles Homeless Services Authority.

These latest killings have placed the number of mass shootings as tracked by the *Washington Post* in the United States at a record high of 40 in 2023, up from 36 last year. The shooting spree in Texas placed the total number of people killed in mass shootings, defined by the *Post* as when four or more people are killed with a firearm, at more than 200 in 2023 alone.

Several other mass killings, involving any weapon, put the total at 217 people across 43 incidents. The year 2019 holds the record for mass killings with 46 incidents involving 234 people killed, according to a database maintained by the Associated Press and Northeastern University.

Since the low of 22 in 2012, the number of mass killings each year has increased to more than 40 in three of the past five years, with a decline due to the initial public health response to the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020. The number of victims has increased as well, with five of the past ten years seeing 200 or more fatalities. Only three of those years saw less than 150, while only three years between 2006 and 2013 breached 150 fatalities.

Since 2006, 2,989 people have been killed across at least 574 mass shootings. Thousands more have been involved in mass shootings that include four or more people killed or injured. Including those injured during a shooting, there have been more than 630 mass shootings in the United States this year according to the Gun Violence Archive.

Gun violence in general has risen rapidly in recent years. In 2016, 15,000 people were killed and 30,000 injured with firearms. In 2022, there were 20,000 killings and 38,000 injuries. Suicides using firearms are also up, with 23,000 in 2016 and 26,000 in 2021.

This epidemic of gun violence is a uniquely American illness. No other country sees such levels of gun violence outside of wars and civil unrest.

While easy access to firearms is no insignificant factor, it is hardly a complete explanation for why the US is a global leader in gun violence. The answer lies, more fully, in the degradation of American society in tandem with the expansion of imperialist violence around the world.

The United States has been at war almost continuously for the past three decades, seeking to offset its economic decline in relation to global competitors through military might. In that time it has led bloody bombing campaigns in Yugoslavia and Libya, brutally occupied Iraq and Afghanistan, instigated the war against Russia in Ukraine and is flagrantly supporting the genocide of 2.3 million Palestinians in Gaza.

External brutality is mirrored internally. As the decline in America’s global position promotes war abroad it is accompanied by class war at home. The past three decades have seen an egregious expansion in inequality and an endless infusion of resources for Wall Street profits and war.

Meanwhile, both capitalist political parties have embarked on a contest of who can enact the greatest austerity measures. Essential government services have been slashed and millions of people have been forced to work without effective mitigation through an ongoing pandemic. More than 30 million people are food insecure and nearly 20 million households spend more than 30 percent of their income on rent.

American society is becoming increasingly militarized and undemocratic. The police kill more than 1,000 people every year, making use of surplus equipment from the military intended to suppress protests and strikes.

A sick society produces sick people. Regardless of the individual motives and mental distresses of those involved in these recent shootings, the rise in mass killings in the United States is fundamentally connected to the ceaseless promotion of violence, the decline in living standards for the working class, the degeneration in quality of art and culture, and the collapse of American civil and democratic institutions.

More succinctly, it is the protracted crisis of American and global capitalism that bears responsibility for these crimes. The same processes that lead to imperialist war abroad are leading to outbursts of violence at home.



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