

Student kills 2, injures 5 in Florida State mass shooting

Chase Lawrence
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As of this writing two are dead and five are wounded following a mass shooting by a student at Florida State University (FSU) in Tallahassee on Thursday. The shooting took place near the student union building before noon. According to law enforcement, the two people killed were not students.

Sheriff Walter McNeil of Leon County identified the gunman as 20-year-old Phoenix Ikner and said he was the son of a deputy in his department. McNeil admitted that “Unfortunately, he had access to one of her weapons,” referring to his mother, Jessica Ikner, the deputy in question.

The weapon was a former service pistol, purchased from the department. Another weapon was found, a shotgun, but it is not known if that was used.

Phoenix Ikner, a member of the Sheriff’s Office Youth Advisory Council, was wounded by responding officers after failing to obey officer’s commands and is now in police custody. Currently, he and the five wounded are receiving treatment in the hospital.

A student eyewitness said the gunman approached campus in an orange Hummer and began firing with a rifle in her direction, before going back to grab a pistol. The eyewitness, McKenzie Heeter, told NBC News that he shot a woman afterwards, and after that she “started running.” Heeter described the shooter as a “normal college dude.”

In response, university officials canceled all classes, events and business operations for the rest of the week. The FBI in Jacksonville, Florida, said its agents were “on the scene” and “assisting our local law enforcement partners.”

Republican Governor Ron DeSantis issued a boilerplate response to the shooting, “praying for the entire Florida state community,” “mourning the two individuals who lost their lives,” wishing well to those

in the hospital and calling for the prosecution of the shooter. DeSantis also praised law enforcement’s response.

President Donald Trump issued an anodyne response, saying that it was “horrible that things like this take place.” That is, that this is a run of the mill thing and that nothing can be done.

The worn-out and predictable response of the Democrats and their media mouthpieces was to meekly call for gun reform, something which has not worked in over 30 years and which they have no intention of actually following through on anyways. Since the Columbine High School shooting over 25 years ago, America has seen 428 school shootings, with 394,000 American students directly experiencing gun violence, according to a tally by the *Washington Post*.

This is not the first shooting at FSU. In November 20, 2014 three people were wounded in a campus library by 31-year-old graduate Myron May. May had worked as a prosecutor for the Dona Ana district attorney’s office less than two months before committing the shooting. He was killed by police after refusing to drop his weapon.

And the state is no stranger to violence. Florida carried out its sixth execution just four months prior. From 2019 to 2024, an estimated 827 people were shot by the police in Florida, according to the *Tampa Bay Times*.

What is lacking in the news accounts is the context in which mass shootings take place. There is no attempt to account for why these shootings occur so frequently in the United States or examine the root causes, only palliatives like gun control measure and “thoughts and prayers.”

So here is the context.

The latest shooting took place amid escalating state

violence at home and imperialist aggression abroad. Just in the last year police killed 1,365 people in the US, with at least 82 of those taking place in Florida. The US is currently facilitating a genocide in Gaza by the Israeli government. Trump explicitly stated the policy Biden followed, saying he intends to “clean” up Gaza of the Palestinians and annex the strip. Officially over 51,000 have been killed in the genocide.

In Ukraine, over 500,000 Ukrainians have died in the US-NATO proxy war, along with hundreds of thousands of Russians. Trump has launched a massive illegal bombing campaign on Yemen and has threatened Iran with annihilation.

Washington is in a trade war with the world and especially China, preparing as world imperialism did before the first and second world wars for war by seeking to onshore critical war production and to bully other countries into an anti-China coalition all so Wall Street can redivide the world in its favor.

The fact that the United States has now been at war continuously for nearly a quarter century finds expression at home in part through the escalating school shootings. Vulnerable youth seek solutions through the same methods Washington uses abroad, which are glorified at home in movies, on the major news networks, and by both the Democratic and Republican Parties.

That is to say, the phenomenon of mass shootings finds its origin in the capitalist system, which is hurtling towards world war, fascism and dictatorship. All of this would involve a massive increase in violence worldwide, especially in the US.

The problem is not going to be resolved without a mass movement of the working class that successfully replaces capitalism with socialism, expropriating the Wall Street parasites and eliminating the root cause of imperialist war and state violence.



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