

**AMNESTY  
INTERNATIONAL**



August 15, 2019

The Honorable Mitch McConnell  
Majority Leader  
United States Senate  
317 Russell Senate Office Building  
Washington DC 20510

The Honorable Chuck Schumer  
Minority Leader  
United States Senate  
322 Hart Senate Office Building  
Washington DC 20510

**RE: Amnesty International Calls on Senate to Convene Emergency Session to Pass  
Universal Background Checks Legislation**

Dear Senator McConnell and Senator Schumer:

On behalf of Amnesty International USA (“AIUSA”) and our two million members and supporters world-wide, we urge you to call an emergency session immediately so that the Senate can take swift action to reduce and prevent gun violence, and to save lives.

After the recent mass shootings in Gilroy, El Paso, and Dayton, hospital staff in those cities rushed in to perform emergency surgeries to save lives. They did not rest at home or stay on vacation after these shootings.

Likewise, the Senate must immediately return to Washington, D.C. to fulfill its principal job of creating and passing laws to protect the nation. It is unacceptable for the Senate to remain at home on a five-week recess and to sit on its hands, while Americans continue to die every day due to guns. Beyond the El Paso and Dayton mass shootings, there were reports of at least 11 other [shootings](#) in nine different states during the first half of August, according to the Gun Violence Archive.

The Senate is long overdue to take legislative action. In February 2019 the House passed the Bipartisan Background Checks Act of 2019 (H. R. 8) and the Enhanced Background Checks Act of 2019 (H. R. 1112). The Senate could have, and should have, quickly taken up those bills and passed them. Instead the Senate did nothing, for over five months.

AIUSA urges you to call an emergency session and to pass the following legislation:

- Background Checks Expansion Act (S. 42),
- Ethan’s Law (S. 193),
- Assault Weapons Ban of 2019 (S. 66),
- Disarm Hate Act (S. 1462) and
- Gun Violence Prevention Research Act (S. 184).

Ending gun violence is AIUSA’s top domestic human rights priority. In May 2019, 116 activists from 37 states came to Capitol Hill as part of AIUSA’s lobby day. They met with 76 Senate offices and urged them to pass universal background checks (S. 42). This month, in district, AIUSA activists are meeting with Republican Senators to demand immediate action on universal background checks.

AIUSA's 2018 report "[In the Line of Fire: Human Rights and the U.S. Gun Violence Crisis](#)" examined how all aspects of American life have been compromised by the unfettered access to guns, with no meaningful national regulation. In July 2019 Amnesty International [published a report concluding](#) that the U.S. has failed to meet its human rights obligation to provide effective remedies to those injured or victimized by gun violence. Those obligations will not be fulfilled unless and until Congress passes common sense gun safety laws.

Weapons of war do not belong in our communities. The Senate's refusal to act will continue to rob us of loved ones in our communities. We urge you to immediately call the Senate back to Washington, D.C. to take long-overdue action on gun safety legislation.

For additional information, please contact Adotei Akwei, at 202/509-8148 or [aakwei@aiusa.org](mailto:aakwei@aiusa.org).

Sincerely,



Joanne Lin  
National Director  
Advocacy and Government Affairs



Adotei Akwei  
Deputy Director  
Advocacy and Government Affairs