

## ASSAULT WEAPONS BAN

### THE PROBLEM

Shooters using semi-automatic assault rifles with large-capacity magazines can kill many people in a matter of minutes and pose a significant threat to public safety. Despite the dangers posed by these types of weapons and accessories – exponentially increasing potential violations of human rights – there is no federal law regulating them.

### THE FACTS

- Assault rifles are particularly lethal because rounds fired typically achieve a velocity of over 3,000 feet per second, compared to handguns that fire rounds closer to 1,000 feet per second.
- Assault rifles have been used in a series of high-profile public mass shootings over recent years, including 20 children and six staff killed at Sandy Hook in 2012; 49 night clubbers dead at the Pulse in Orlando in 2016; 58 concertgoers killed in Las Vegas in 2017; 26 church members killed in Sutherland Springs in 2017; and 13 students and four adults shot dead at Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School in 2018.
- In a review of 56 mass shootings between 2009 and 2015, it was found that in mass shootings where assault weapons or large-capacity ammunition magazines were used, more than 13 people were shot, compared to five for other incidents, and on average around eight people died, compared to five fatalities for other incidents.
- Medical providers explain that unlike wounds caused by bullets from a handgun, high velocity bullets cause damage that extends beyond the bullets' path, causing more harm and increasing the lethality.
- Semi-automatic assault rifles and large-capacity magazines also pose a threat to law enforcement officers seeking to protect the public in a live shooting incident. The International Association of Chiefs of Police recommends that the U.S. pass laws banning military-style assault weapons so that officers are not faced with shooters armed with military-grade weapons.

### THE HUMAN RIGHTS FRAMEWORK

1. **RIGHT TO STAY ALIVE:** The state has a duty to prevent abuses of the right to stay alive by taking measures to address actual or foreseeable threats to this right, including in the context of gun violence.
2. **RIGHT TO SECURITY OF PERSON:** The right to personal security places an obligation on states to protect individuals from foreseeable threats to life or bodily integrity from private actors. Only by ensuring safe environments through the regulation and restriction of access to lethal weapons by private individuals can states maximize the enjoyment of the rights of all.

### AIUSA'S RECOMMENDATION

- The U.S. must enact laws banning semi-automatic assault rifles, semi-automatic shotguns, semi-automatic submachine guns and large capacity magazines.
- The U.S. should ban high-capacity magazines for all firearms. Possession, sale, purchase, transfer, manufacture and/or distribution of these items should be prohibited for private individuals.

Please contact [egv@aiusa.org](mailto:egv@aiusa.org) with any questions or to request citations behind any of this information.