



# Protecting Canadians & Keeping Assault Weapons Illegal

In 2019, we ran on a commitment to keep Canadians safe and keep assault-style weapons off our streets by moving forward with a ban on all military-style assault weapons.

In a May 2020 Order-in-Council, we delivered on this commitment and banned over 1,500 models and variants of military assault-style firearms and components. These newly prohibited firearms and components could no longer be legally used, sold, or imported in Canada. A Criminal Code amnesty was put in place until April 30, 2022, to protect lawful owners from criminal liability and to enable them to comply with the law. We further committed to moving forward with a buyback program so owners of now banned assault-style firearms would have the ability to sell the firearm back to the government for destruction.

Military assault-style weapons banned under the May 2020 Order-in-Council include well-known models like the AR-15, as well as weapons used during some of Canada's worst tragedies including:

- **Ruger Mini-14:** a variant of the firearm used in the Ecole Polytechnique shooting in 1989
- **Vz. 58 semi-automatic:** involved in the Quebec City mosque shooting in 2017
- **Springfield M14:** used in the Moncton shooting in 2014
- **Beretta CX4 Storm:** used in the Dawson College shooting in 2006

The background to the May 2020 Order-in-Council states:

*Assault-style firearms are not suitable for hunting or sport shooting purposes given the inherent danger that they pose to public safety. **The newly prescribed firearms are primarily designed for military or paramilitary purposes with the capability of injuring, immobilizing or killing humans in large numbers within a short period of time given the basic characteristics they possess, such as a tactical or military design and capability of holding a quickly reloadable large-capacity magazine.** While some of these newly prohibited firearms were previously used by individuals for hunting or sporting purposes, it is the view of the Government that those firearms are unreasonable and disproportionate for such purposes. The significant risk that these firearms pose to the public's safety outweighs any justification for their continued use and availability within Canada given that numerous types of firearms remain available for lawful ownership for hunting or sport shooting purposes.<sup>1</sup>*

While Erin O'Toole's platform explicitly commits to repealing this Order-in-Council, a re-elected Liberal government will further strengthen our laws on military assault-style weapons by making it mandatory for owners to either sell the firearm back to the government for destruction and fair compensation or have it rendered fully and permanently inoperable at government expense.

These actions will remove these assault weapons from our streets and prevent them from being used to cut short innocent lives.

## Our Record

In 2019 we passed Bill C-71, An Act to Amend certain Acts and Regulations in relation to firearms. This legislation implemented concrete steps to:

- Keep firearms out of the wrong hands by requiring sellers to verify the validity of a firearms licence before selling a non-restricted firearm;
- Strengthen retail record keeping provisions to assist police tracing guns used in crimes by requiring businesses to keep point-of-sale records for non-restricted firearms;
- Institute lifetime background checks to prevent those with a history of abuse against their spouse or partner from obtaining a firearms license; and
- Strengthen firearm transportation requirements by requiring authorization to transport restricted and prohibited firearms to locations other than the range.

In the Fall Economic Statement 2020, we committed \$250 million over five years directly to municipalities and Indigenous communities to support anti-gang programming and prevention programs for youth-at-risk. This included funding to reduce border-related gang activity and prevent smuggled firearms from entering the country, enhance capacity for Royal Canadian Mounted Police investigations and firearms-related enforcement activities, and provided support to the Youth Gang Prevention Fund.

In Budget 2021, we further provided \$312 million over five years, starting in 2021-22, and \$41.4 million ongoing, to implement legislation to help protect Canadians from gun violence and to fight gun smuggling and trafficking. Funding will support the Royal Canadian Mounted Police, the Canada Border Services Agency, and Public Safety Canada, and builds on investments made in the 2020 Fall Economic Statement. These measures will fight gun crime in our communities and keep Canadians safe.

<sup>1</sup> Emphasis added. <https://gazette.gc.ca/rp-pr/p2/2020/2020-05-01-x3/html/sor-dors96-eng.html>