



Factum

Four in Five (81%) Think There is a Serious Gun Problem in Toronto, Relatively Few (28%) Feel the Issue is Being Blown Out of Proportion

Most Think Social Programs, Not Increased Policing, Should Be Prioritized to Combat the Issue

Toronto, Ontario, August 8, 2018 — In the aftermath of a rash of gun violence in Toronto this summer, culminating in the Danforth shooting last week, a new Ipsos survey conducted on behalf of Global News reveals that most believe there is a serious gun problem in the city, and that the issue is not being blown out of proportion. More specifically, four in five (81%) Torontonians agree (40% strongly/41% somewhat) that there is a serious gun problem in their city, while two in ten (19%) disagree (5% strongly/14% somewhat) that a problem exists. Baby Boomers (55+) are most likely to believe there is a gun problem in Toronto, followed by Gen Xers (35-54 year olds) and Millennials (18-34 year olds) at 87%, 80%, and 75% respectively.

Moreover, the vast majority (88%) agree (42% strongly/45% somewhat) that Toronto is becoming more violent compared to 5 years ago, while just 12% disagree (2% strongly/11% somewhat). Interestingly, in 2005, 87% felt that the city had become more violent over the 5 years prior, but 61% *strongly* agreed at the time, suggesting that concerns about violence were more intense in 2005 than they are today.

The issue of gun violence has been receiving a lot of attention in the news media, and most Torontonians believe this attention is warranted: just three in ten (28%) agree (10% strongly/18% somewhat) that gun violence in Toronto is being blown out of proportion and is not a major problem. Conversely, most (72%) disagree (27% strongly/44% somewhat) that the issue is being blown out of control.

Many Feel Unsafe, Avoiding Certain Areas of City

A majority (55%) of Torontonians agree (20% strongly/35% somewhat) that they are afraid of falling victim to gun violence, led by Millennials (68%), followed by Gen Xers (59%) and Boomers (43%). Residents of North York (61%) are also slightly more likely than those in Etobicoke/York (55%), Scarborough (55%) and downtown/East York (51%) to indicate that they are afraid of falling victim to gun violence.

Many Torontonians are adjusting their behaviour in terms of where they go and what they do in response to the recent spate of gun violence:

- Two in three (64%) agree (23% strongly / 41% somewhat) that they avoid certain neighbourhoods because they are scared for their safety, led by those living in Etobicoke/York (71%), followed by North York (68%), Scarborough (64%), and Toronto/East York (57%). However, a majority (56%) **disagrees** (15% strongly/41% somewhat) that guns in Toronto are mostly contained to a few neighbourhoods, suggesting that the gun violence in the city is viewed as a more widespread problem.
- Half (50%) agree (16% strongly / 35% somewhat) that they are making conscious decisions to avoid large crowds and public areas to try and keep themselves safe, a feeling expressed the most (at 59%) by those living in North York, a community

Address: 160 Bloor Street East, Suite 300
Toronto, ON M4W 1B9
Tel: +1 416 324-2900

Contact: **Darrell Bricker, PhD**
CEO, Ipsos Public Affairs
Email: Darrell.Bricker@ipsos.com
Tel: +1 416 324-2001



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shaken by last April's van attack along Yonge Street, and those under the age of 55 (at 57% compared to just 40% of those 55+).

- Three in ten (29%) agree (11% strongly/18% somewhat) that they are considering moving out of the city, specifically because of the crime, including more men (36%) than women (23%), and more Millennials (42%) and Gen Xers (36%) than Boomers (14%).

Toronto Still Perceived as Being Relatively Safe Compared to Most Other Cities

Despite the concern over recent gun violence, Toronto is still seen as a safe city. Eight in ten (78%) agree (33% strongly/ 45% somewhat) that their city is relatively safe, compared to other cities of similar size. In fact, to show their support for the communities rocked by gun violence, nearly two in five (38%) will go out of their way to visit and shop in these neighbourhoods, with men (43%) being more likely than women (33%) to say that they will do this.

A majority (58%) agrees that the city is taking the right steps to curb gun violence, though only 13% *strongly agree* that this is the case, suggesting that more can be done. Four in ten (42%) disagree (10% strongly/33% somewhat) that the city is taking the right steps.

Overall, eight in ten (80%) Toronto residents feel safe in their city. Virtually all (96%) Torontonians feel safe when at home, the vast majority feel safe in restaurants or coffee shops (86%) or when taking public transit (80%), three in four (74%) feel safe at public venues, and most (69%) feel safe walking alone in their own neighbourhood, after dark, up 5 points since 2005 (64%).

At six in ten (60%), however, a majority do not feel safe (40% feel safe) walking alone in an unfamiliar neighbourhood after dark, including as many as two in five (18%) who claim to feel *very unsafe* when doing this. Men are more likely than women to feel safe overall (84% vs. 76%), when walking alone in their neighbourhood after dark (74% vs. 65%), or when walking in an unfamiliar neighbourhood after dark (52% vs. 30%).

Most Think Social Programs, Not Increased Policing, is the Best Way Forward

Opinions about how to most effectively combat gun violence have shifted remarkably over the last decade plus. In 2005, two thirds (64%) of Toronto residents felt that increasing police presence should receive priority over social programs, as a countermeasure to gun violence. By comparison, in 2018, nearly six in ten (56%) Torontonians would rather see priority assigned to social programs, instead of increasing the police presence (44%) in the city. Put another way, there has been a reversal of opinion, with a majority now of the view that increasing police presence might not be the right answer to this problem and that increased social programs are the best way forward.

Most Toronto residents think that various laws, regulations, and social programs would be effective at reducing gun violence in their city. In fact, the vast majority are of the belief that having more mental health resources (86%), more social programs for youth (86%), more police patrolling the streets in the late evening/ early morning (85%), more anti-gang programs (84%), stricter gun control laws (84%), tougher sentences for gun crimes (83%), and more anti-drug programs (81%) will prove at least somewhat effective at curbing gun violence. Further, a majority think that having more police patrolling the streets in the daytime (76%), more affordable housing (69%), or "carding"/arbitrary street checks of people who look suspicious, even if some communities believe they are unfairly being targeted (64%) would be at least somewhat effective at helping to reduce gun violence in the city.

Residents of Toronto's boroughs are more likely to think that "carding" (71% of Etobicoke/York, 72% of North York, and 69% of Scarborough residents vs. 52% of Toronto/East York residents) and having more daytime police patrols (83% of Etobicoke/York, 80%

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Toronto, ON M4W 1B9
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Tel: +1 416 324-2001



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of North York, and 80% of Scarborough residents vs. 67% of Toronto/ East York residents) would be effective solutions to the gun violence problem. Men are also more likely to support “carding” than women (72% vs. 56%). On the other hand, women are more likely to support having more social programs for youth (89% vs. 82% of men), more mental health resources (92% vs. 79%) and having stricter gun control laws that would further limit the sale of guns (89% vs. 78%). At around nine in ten, Boomers are statistically more likely to prefer both tougher sentences for those convicted of gun crimes (91%) and a greater police presence on the streets in the late evening/early morning (94%), compared to Gen Xers (at 83% & 80% respectively) and Millennials (at 73% and 77%).

Majority of Torontonians Approve of Mayor Tory and Police Chief Saunders, Support Mayor’s Proposal to Ban Handguns

The recent violence in the city does not appear to have shaken the confidence that Torontonians have in their leaders. Approval ratings for the Police Chief, rank-and-file police offers, and the Mayor of Toronto remain strong. The chart below depicts the proportion of Torontonians who approve of each of the following people or groups tested:

	% approve (strongly/somewhat)	% disapprove (Strongly/somewhat)	% Don’t know
Rank-and-file police officers	73% (21% / 52%)	16% (5% / 12%)	10%
Police Chief Mark Saunders	65% (17% / 48%)	22% (6% / 17%)	13%
Mayor John Tory	65% (25% / 40%)	30% (11% / 19%)	5%
Your City Councilor	61% (18% / 44%)	22% (8% / 14%)	16%
Prime Minister Justin Trudeau	57% (22% / 35%)	41% (20% / 21%)	2%
Premier Doug Ford	51% (21% / 29%)	42% (27% / 15%)	8%
Bill Blair, Federal Minister of Border Security & Organized Crime Reduction	47% (13% / 33%)	30% (10% / 20%)	23%

Mayor Tory has already introduced the idea of a complete ban on handguns in the City of Toronto, and the federal government has agreed to consider the mayor’s request. It appears that Torontonians are strongly with the Mayor on this issue:

- Well over eight in ten (86%) support (61% strongly/25% somewhat) a ban on the possession of handguns in the City of Toronto, while 14% oppose (5% strongly/9% somewhat) it.
- Eight in ten (83%) support (60% strongly/23% somewhat) a ban on selling firearms ammunition in the City of Toronto, while just one in six (17%) oppose (5% strongly/12% somewhat) such a ban. Nine in ten (92%) North York residents support banning the sale of firearms ammunition, more than their counterparts living in Etobicoke/York (81%), Scarborough (80%), and Downtown Toronto/East York (80%).

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The Drivers of Gun Violence

When asked about the various factors that contribute to gun violence, opinions are markedly different than they were thirteen years ago. Across the board, the intensity of strong opinions has faded, with Toronto residents being less likely to rate most factors as having a *major* contribution, suggesting an acknowledgement that it is not one issue, but rather a variety of things that contribute to gun violence, making potential solutions complex and multi-faceted.

Seven in ten (71%) view gangs as a *major factor* (compared to 89% in 2005), two in three (67%) think drugs are a *major factor* (86% in 2005), four in ten cite poverty (39% vs. 50% in 2005) or the glamorization of gang culture (44% vs. 63% in 2005) as *major factors*, and one in three the lack of police presence (32% vs. 42% in 2005), affordable housing (34% vs. 38% in 2005), or adequate recreational facilities and youth programs (30% vs. 46% in 2005) as *major factors*. Additionally, three quarters (73%) think the ability of criminals to acquire guns plays a major role, and most (54%) view a lack of adequate resources to address mental illness as a *major factor* when it comes to gun violence.

Boomers (55+) are more likely to think that gangs (87%), drugs (79%), and the ability of criminals to acquire guns (92%) are *major factors* when it comes to gun violence than Gen Xers (67%, 66%, and 71% respectively) and Millennials (55%, 51%, and 50% respectively). Women are more likely to view poverty (45% vs. 34% of men), a lack of youth programs (34% vs. 25%), insufficient mental health resources (61% vs. 46%), and the ability of criminals to acquire guns (81% vs. 65%) as *major factors*, compared to men.

Assessing the confidence that Torontonians have in their leaders to address this issue, a teight in ten, the highest proportion of Toronto residents trust Police Chief Mark Saunders (79%) or his team of rank-and-file police officers (79%) to take the appropriate actions to reduce gun violence. Around seven in ten trust community leaders (73%), Mayor John Tory (73%), their City Councilor (69%), or former Police Chief and current Federal Minister of Border Security and Organized Crime Reduction Bill Blair (67%). Six in ten (61%) trust Prime Minister Justin Trudeau while slightly fewer, and the lowest proportion overall (57%), trust Ontario Premier Doug Ford to take appropriate action. Seven in ten (70%) of those with children trust Premier Doug Ford to take the appropriate action, which only 53% of those without kids say the same.

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About the Study

These are some of the findings of an Ipsos survey conducted between July 25th and 30th 2018, on behalf of Global News. For this survey, a random sample of 800 Toronto residents aged 18+ were interviewed online via the Ipsos I-Say panel and non-panel sources. Weighting was then employed to balance demographics to ensure that the sample's composition reflects that of the adult population according to Census data and to provide results intended to approximate the sample universe. The precision of Ipsos online surveys is measured using a credibility interval. In this case, the survey is accurate to within ± 4.0 percentage points, 19 times out of 20, had all Toronto residents over the age of 18 been surveyed. The credibility interval will be wider among subsets of the population. All sample surveys and polls may be subject to other sources of error, including, but not limited to coverage error, and measurement error.

For more information on this news release, please contact:

Darrell Bricker, PhD
CEO, Ipsos Public Affairs
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www.ipsos.com

Address: 160 Bloor Street East, Suite 300
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