

## **Gun Violence and Terrorism in Canada**

Canada has been seized by a terrorism panic in recent days, as authorities have worried that radicalized jihadists pose a mounting threat. Canada raised its terrorist threat level to "medium" on Tuesday following a fatal hit-and-run attack on two Canadian military members by a Quebec man believed to be a terrorist sympathizer.

Canada has strict national [gun-control laws](#) in comparison to the U.S. Canadians must have a valid license to own a firearm, which requires recipients to pass a safety course, criminal history and background check. Canada also has requirements regarding personal references and a mandatory waiting period. In 2012, Canada reported only 172 firearm-related homicides out of a total of 543 homicides, the lowest tally in more than half a decade, in comparison with the United States' 8,813 homicides, according to statistics released by the Canadian government.

The most recent major shooting incident in Canada took place in June, when 24-year-old Jeffrey Bourque shot and killed three Royal Canadian Mounted Police officers in a spree in the Eastern Canadian town of Moncton.

### **October 24, 2014 [Statement](#) by the President of the Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops after recent acts of violence in Ottawa and Saint-Jean-sur-Richelieu, Quebec**

This is a time of profound national sadness for all Canadians. The recent acts of violence in Ottawa and Saint-Jean-sur-Richelieu, Quebec, have touched the hearts of many people. We worry that the horror of terrorism is taking root in our soil, so long a land of peace, cooperation, and inter-cultural collaboration.

God created us to experience the fullness of life and love. This outbreak of violence contradicts God's intention for each one of us. However, the many spontaneous acts of mutual care and watchfulness that characterized the past few days are signs that most of us, believers and non-believers, are trying to live out God's will for a fraternal, just and peaceful society.

While the roots of violence are perhaps mysterious, we believe that God's gift of the Incarnation, Passion and Resurrection of his Son Jesus continues to bear fruit in the ongoing history of humanity. We believe it will one day bring about the end to all terrorism, killing and death. Such a hope impels our commitment to working for peace and justice for human beings everywhere. On behalf of the Bishops, priests, religious and lay Catholics of Canada, I unequivocally state that we are also committed to dialogue with the Muslim communities spread throughout our land. We recognize that violent distortions of Islam are causing misunderstanding and suffering in the world and in Canada for peace-loving Muslims as well as non-Muslim communities. Openness, trust, and sharing are ever more essential between our faith communities to help build understanding in this challenging environment.

Christians and Muslims share a belief in God's mercy, and it is in that belief that we all raise our voices in prayer: May God welcome into Paradise the innocent victims of all terrorist acts; may their families know consolation and hope; and may we all learn to live in peace and solidarity one with another.

**+ Paul-André Durocher**  
**Archbishop of Gatineau**  
**President of the Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops**