

## United? The US and the UK on Gun Control

Gun crimes affect societies worldwide. Nevertheless, what can be done if a country has strict gun control laws, but, regardless of that, gun crime remains a notable issue?

Perhaps, the primary argument supporting the right to gun ownership is that of protection and safety. This is, at the very least, the case in the US. Gun supporters outline that gun ownership is a civil right, securing individual safety. What could be said about the UK, though – what are the main similarities and distinctions worth noting between the two countries in terms of gun control?

In the US, licensed guns are legal. In truth, there are several options to choose from. For example, if someone is [feeling a little frugal](#), he/she can even save some money when buying a gun. In this context, the heated debate in America is ongoing and has been for decades now, as there are several arguments brought up in the discussion.

What could be said about the UK, though?

### Noteworthy Incidents that Triggered Political Action

Basically, the matter of gun-control has been heavily precipitated in the United Kingdom resulting in notable acts of violence that triggered public outrage. Eventually, this set the grounds for political action against gun violence.

However, what was the incident that determined the political parties to take action? Expressly, in August 1987, a gunman with two legally owned rifles and a handgun proceeded on a six-hour shooting 70 miles west of London. He killed no less than 16 people, and, afterward, he killed himself. This incident is referred to as the *Hungerford massacre*. Consequently, in the UK, there was introduced the Firearms (Amendment) Act was introduced. Essentially, this enlarged the list of banned weapons, as well as semiautomatic rifles, while improving the legislation required for acquiring weapons.

That is not all, though; there was another incident worth mentioning in this respect. A similar gun-related tragedy occurred in the Scottish town of Dunblane, in 1996. As a result, UK gun control laws were made even stricter. A man carrying four legally-purchased guns shot and killed 16 school children, as well as an adult. After doing that, he committed suicide. At that time, this incident was acknowledged as one of the worst mass-shootings that ever occurred in the country.

A public campaign was established – namely the [Snowdrop Petition](#) – which mainly contributed to making the legislation even more restrictive in the sense of banning handguns, with a few exceptions only. In addition to that, the government considered introducing a temporary-gun-buyback program.

## Was UK's Gun Control Policy Efficient?

The question that naturally follows is: was UK's gun control policy efficient or not? Did it reach its purpose – that of maximizing the safety of the individuals and of the society? Essentially, the purpose of these restrictions was diminishing gun-crime incidents.

Nevertheless, as pointed out by analysts, the numbers of gun-related crimes increased greatly in the late 1990s. What is more, in 2004, the amount of gun-related crimes peaked, after falling with each subsequent year. Criminologists outlined that, even if the stricter gun control regulations aim at addressing the matter of gun ownership, significant numbers of weapons still remain in the UK.

In the last couple of years, the number of crimes has been quite worrying. It appears that firearms have found a way of entering people's homes, and Britain's streets. There are several reasons why guns have ended up being distributed illegally.

To that end, it would seem that the laws didn't reach the effect they intended, as the UK is still dealing with crimes. Even if the laws are stricter than in the US, the authorities don't have total control of the issue. Many of these horrific crimes still take place, outlining that gun crime is quite prominent in the UK, and there's nothing the laws can do about it.

For instance, since 2004, the figures regarding gun ownership have notably dropped. However, there are still numerous crimes that involve guns, which are being reported on a yearly basis.

15 years after the widely known Dunblane massacre, [Derick Bird](#) went on a shooting rampage in Greater England, the year of 2010. Consequently, no less than twelve people were killed, whereas others were severely injured. This vicious attack shocked the entire population and the police, as well. What triggered such a scenario? Why do things like this still happen nowadays?

At that time, the prime minister was David Cameron. He publicly promised that the problem will be dealt with right away, in order to address the needs of the local community involved in the incident. Concurrently, Cameron also added that the UK laws concerning gun ownership were among the strictest and toughest in the world. To that end, it appeared that the laws alone weren't sufficient to prevent and stop such crimes from taking place.

The psychology behind the action should be considered and investigated. The authorities' efforts should be directed towards understanding the primary reasons why these crimes occur, as the strict laws don't seem to work. They only make it a bit more *challenging* and *difficult* for criminals to reach their purposes, but they don't seem to

stop them altogether. Many of these crimes are connected with gang culture and growing up in a community where there is violence.

On a different note, excluding such scenarios, the fundamental reason why most people purchase guns is that of protection. Many people are worried about their safety in the cities. The unfortunate reality, though, is that laws aren't efficient in stopping bad things from happening – not entirely, at least.

### **Final Thoughts**

To conclude, gun-control regulations differ in every culture and society. What we can clearly notice from the facts outlined above is that laws might contribute to diminishing the incidence of tragic crimes, but they don't eliminate them altogether. This makes us question the matter of safety in a society, which is fundamentally the main reason why *most* people consider investing in a gun in the first place.

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