



Chicago Sets Grisly Record with Memorial Day Weekend Violence

There were so many shootings in Chicago over Memorial Day Weekend that the media tracking the violence had a hard time keeping up. When [the final tally was published](#) by the *Chicago Tribune*, the grisly totals were 69 people shot, with six of them dying from their wounds.



This reflects a 50-percent increase in shootings this year compared to last year and is being blamed, predictably, on “proliferation of guns” and “gang conflicts” by the Chicago Police Department. Nothing was said by the CPD, however, about the “McDonald Effect” — the aftermath of the shooting by a CPD officer of Laquan McDonald, which resulted in officers being far less aggressive in reining in the violence. Some say the officers are hiding behind the new paperwork such as “contact cards” they must complete every time they speak to a citizen, and “investigative stops” where they must justify in writing the reasons for questioning a citizen.

In January of this year, for example, CPD officers made two-thirds fewer arrests than they did a year earlier, while the number of “investigative stops” dropped an astonishing 85 percent. As the *Tribune* noted at the time, officers are “much less aggressive on the street out of fear that doing even basic police work would get them into trouble. [As a result] criminals [are] taking advantage of their passive approach.”

So far this year, Chicagoans have suffered at least 250 homicides (compared to 167 a year ago at this time) and 1,500 shootings. At that rate, those numbers will easily eclipse the numbers from last year, estimated to reach 3,000 shootings and 500 deaths.

In addition to the “McDonald Effect,” the numbers of officers facing gangs in Chicago put them at a distinct disadvantage. There are slightly more than 13,000 police officers trying to combat gangs whose numbers, according to estimates, exceed 150,000 — worse than a 10-1 ratio. When Chicago’s new police superintendent, Eddie Johnson, addressed the City Club on Tuesday, he spoke of “cultural differences” with gang members who “don’t understand each other [and] fear one another.” Therefore, said Johnson, “Going forward we will work to foster cultural diversity for the CPD.” He also said he was going to increase the number of officers patrolling the Harrison District in Chicago’s west side, where most of the violence is occurring.



Written by [Bob Adelman](#) on June 2, 2016

Chicago isn't the only city facing enormous increases in violent crime. Such crime in Las Vegas is up 81 percent compared to last year, while in Dallas it's up by 73 percent and in Newark, up 60 percent.

Solutions are scant. Criminals will get guns regardless of gun-control laws. When police presence is "relaxed," they will take advantage. When law enforcement appears weak, the violent will press their advantage. Increasing police presence runs the risk of turning a city into a virtual police state.

Unrestrained violence in Venezuela serves as a good example of what happens when society's basic morality breaks down: Empty grocery shelves led mobs to attack food delivery trucks and delicatessens while police, even if present, were powerless to stop them. Brazil's second largest city, Rio de Janeiro, the site of the upcoming Olympic Games in August, has earned the unhappy title of being one of the 10 most violent cities in the world, right behind Baghdad and just ahead of Caracas, Venezuela. Chicago is vying for the same title, as are St. Louis, Newark, Oakland, and Detroit.

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