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Deadly Distinction: Chicago Has the Highest Murder Rate in the U.S.

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By Kellee Terrell
 Posted: 02/01/2012 11:33 AM EST
 Filed Under [Gun Violence](#), [PSTD](#), [Anxiety](#), [Murder](#), [Health News](#), [Post-traumatic Stress Disorder](#), [Eric Holder](#), [Academic Performance](#), [Chicago Public Schools](#), [Education](#), [Homicide](#), [Derrion Albert](#), [South Side](#), [Gun Control](#), [Arne Duncan](#), [Chicago](#)



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It's well-known that [gun violence](#) is an issue for many inner cities across the U.S. But Chicago, in particular, has the most alarming rates, almost double that of New York City.

Since 2008, 80 percent of the 530 young people under the age of 21 felled by gun violence lived in the city's South, Southwest and West sides, which are heavily populated with African-Americans and Latinos. Ironically, only one-third of the city's population lives in these areas. Englewood, an area in the city's South Side, stood out the most. Their murder rate is five times that of the rest of the city.

The Chicago Reporter, which is publishing a three-part series about how this crisis is contributing to the [loss of a generation](#), writes:

Much attention has been paid to the crisis. Community groups have held countless marches, candlelight vigils and events featuring empty desks signifying slain students.

After Christian Fenger Academy High School student Derrion Albert was beaten to death in September 2009, U.S. Attorney General [Eric Holder](#) and U.S. Education Secretary Arne Duncan visited Chicago and pledged to address youth violence, with Duncan calling Albert's death "a line in the sand." They announced a \$500,000 grant to restore a peaceful environment at Fenger. Yet the drumbeat of violence continued, with 218 student shootings and 27 student deaths reported during the ensuing school year, according to media reports quoting then-[Chicago Public Schools] CEO Ron Huberman.

And while the framing of violence suffered by Chicago public school students has focused much of the attention — and resources — on that population. The most dangerous time for young people in Chicago may be the first few years after high school. Since 2008, a total of 247 young people between the ages of 18 and 20 have been murdered in Chicago, nearly as many as the 286 under the age of 18 who've been killed during that span

[Gun violence](#) and homicides not only impact the health and lives of the victims, but also the physiological health of these victims' loved ones and other community members.

Each death or serious injury also causes wide-ranging ripple effects on friends and family members who are left with the psychological burden of witnessing violence. Studies strongly suggest that when young people live in neighborhoods plagued by violence, even when they don't directly suffer violence, they are considerably more likely to suffer from post-traumatic stress, depression and anxiety, and are more prone to behavioral problems and academic underachievement.

In other homicide-related news, an annual report found that the state of Missouri [leads the nation](#) with the highest [Black homicide rates](#) for the second year in a row. The [study](#), which omitted data from the state of Florida and only included data from a few cities in Illinois, found that Missouri's rate of 34.72 homicides per 100,000 Black residents nearly doubles the overall national rate of 17.90. For whites, a paltry 2.92 homicide rate exists nationwide.

Other cities topping the list were Michigan, Pennsylvania, Oklahoma, Louisiana, Indiana, Tennessee, Wisconsin, California and Nevada.

To read personal stories of how gun violence impacts Black youth in Chicago, [read](#) NPR's special series, "Youths And Gun Violence: Chicago's Challenge."

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(Photo: Scott Olson/Getty Images)

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Willie Courthers · ★ Top Commenter

Chicago has the highest murder rate in the US but also has the strictest gun control law. I don't think we need Sherlock to solve this mystery. It's obvious that the people doing the killing are getting their weapons illegally through the black market while law abiding citizens who are upholding the law are sitting ducks. I believe every Americans should have the right to protect their homes from intruders. That protection should include a firearm.

Reply · 10 · Like · July 25, 2012 at 2:45pm



Richard Stricklan · Roane State Community College

Willie you are right if we cant defend our homes with out going to jail were in trouble

Reply · Like · July 26, 2012 at 9:54am



Miguel W. Castro

Willie between politicians and cops, common-sense is at an all time low in the US of A.

Reply · 1 · Like · August 26, 2012 at 11:55am



Trap Jesus · Chicago, Illinois

Man its krazy out here u can if you do not have a felony have the right 2 bare arms in your home you wont go to jail but think ur walking around with guns it will be all out chaos people get shot circling a street block 2 many time what do you thing your 9mm going to do with a 40 cal with 30 shots, legal n illegal firearms who's who and the CPD the biggest gang out here in Chiraq you think they wont unload on any and everybody because everyone will have a gun so even babies younger people become more of a target then they are? I know how the goons thinking because im in it I live it everyday! Im not saying people shudnt be armed but that wont solve the problem get envoled what do these kids have so they can do sumthing besides what they doing show them sumthing hell even role models we dont have that we have a lot of pain hate and project buildings have been torn down where you think their goin? This is Gentrification boyz in the hood but not a movie we can all do better you cant change the world if theres evil then there good and vise versa cant live with out both but we can make good greater by becoming envoled! Me im in Chiraq born and raised so im ready either way #wedodrillz

Reply · 4 · Like · August 26, 2012 at 9:35am



Suzy Blair Colonna · Works at Lazy Bum

In the coming days we will hear howls from the left for gun control, this article is a grim reminder of what happens in a city & state where it is illegal for law abiding citizens to own a firearm, this murder rate on young people is horrifying, we need to stand with the Second Amendment.

Reply · 5 · Like · July 20, 2012 at 4:54pm



Charlie Choo Choo Hayes · Works at Amtrak

Chi-Iraq is a better name for it !!! I only go to the Chi just to go to work & I go straight back home, I'm serious !!!

Reply · 3 · Like · August 26, 2012 at 6:18am



Tony Mangrum

I know, it's bad. I live in an area that doesn't have any of that going on, but I woke up Saturday to read that four males - 17, 30, 34 and 23 years old - were killed and at least 5 others wounded in a IN JUST A 3 HR STRETCH Friday night in shootings and that was just on the city's South Side ALONE! At least 13 people survived shootings between 4:15 p.m. Friday and early Saturday morning....yeah, Chicago has the highest murder rate in the U.S., nearly double that of New York City. It's a very sad but true statistic.

Reply · Like · August 26, 2012 at 8:50am



Brenda Harshe · ★ Top Commenter · Allen East High School, Allen County, Ohio

I agree with Suzy.

Reply · 1 · Like · July 21, 2012 at 11:00am

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