

From the Advocacy Team

Tragedies Familiar to Americans, Unthinkable to Austrians and Australians

Last June, a man armed with a modified pistol and shotgun entered a secondary school in Graz, Austria, killing nine students and one teacher and injuring 11 others before taking his own life. The attack was Austria's first mass shooting at a school and its deadliest shooting since World War II. A week after the Graz shooting, lawmakers began formulating a package of gun law reforms, proposing to raise the age to legally purchase pistols, rifles, and semi-automatic weapons to 25, to strengthen psychological screenings for permit acquisition, a one-month cooling-off period between when a person obtains a permit and when they can purchase a gun, and data-sharing between the military and gun licensing authorities. Some provisions of the new law went into effect in November. The remaining provisions will do so in 2026.

What can we learn from Austria's response to a single school shooting?

On December 14, a Hanukkah celebration at Bondi Beach, Australia ended in tragedy when two gunmen, a father and son, opened fire in an antisemitic attack on a mostly Jewish crowd celebrating the first night of the holiday. At least 15 people were killed (in addition to the older shooter) and over 40 were injured (in addition to the younger shooter). It was the worst mass shooting in Australia since 1996, when a mass shooting killed 35 people, after which the government passed sweeping gun law reforms. With its already strong gun laws, Prime Minister Anthony Albanese convened an emergency national cabinet the day after the Bondi Beach shooting, where leaders agreed to pursue new gun laws, including limits on the number and types of firearms a single person can own (the older shooter had a legal permit for six guns, all of which he brought to Bondi Beach), as well as creating an accelerated national firearms register.

<https://www.motherjones.com/politics/2025/12/sydney-massacre-bondi-guns-hanukkah-vigil-memorial/>