Many Guns, Many Deaths

The recent news of three gunman shooting innocent civilians in San Bernardino, CA has prompted a number of news outlets to point out that this is nothing new. Mass shootings—defined at shootings at a public place in which the shooter murdered four or more people, excluding domestic, gang and drug violence—are happening more than once a day in 2015. Indeed, an interactive map that identifies each location since the December 2012 Sandy Hook shooting gives an alarmingly dense coverage of the U.S. The map included in this article only shows the locations (deep red circles indicate places where more than one shooting took place), but the actual map (located here: http://www.vox.com/a/mass-shootings-sandy-hook) tells the actual date and location of each incident.

The total: 1,042 mass shootings, 1,312 people killed, 3,764 wounded. These numbers are compiled by Mass Shooting Tracker, which, the website notes, is crowdsourced and requires that all circles on the map be verified with news reports. It may be missing some incidents.

Despite these alarming numbers, mass shootings still make up a small minority of all firearm deaths in America—which total more than 32,000 each year. However, contrary to what you may hear, two-thirds of those deaths are suicides, not homicides. Nevertheless, when you add in all the statistics, in 2012, the most recent year that we have accurate numbers, there were 29.7 firearm related deaths per 1 million Americans. The comparable statistic in Canada: 5.1. In Germany, the rate is even lower: 1.9 per 1 million citizens. One possible explanation for a violent death rate that is orders of magnitude higher than other countries: more guns. The U.S. makes up about 4.4% of the total global population, but owns 42% of the world’s civilian-owned guns.

source: http://www.vox.com/a/mass-shootings-sandy-hook