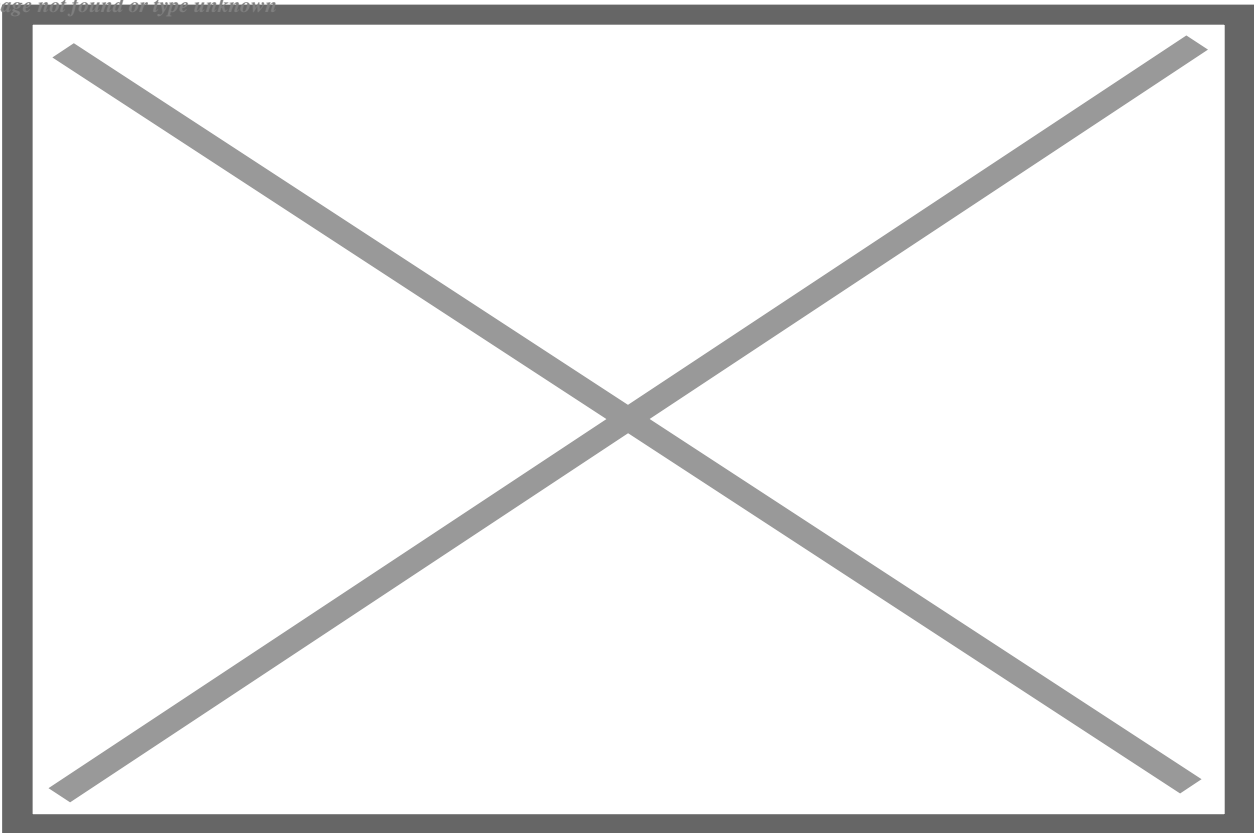


Shooting forces thousands of students to go into lockdown in Canada

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Ottawa, November 12 (RHC)-- A shooting that left four people wounded and another similar incident forced thousands of students at two Montreal area colleges to go into lockdown on Friday. At 5:30 pm local time, gunshots were heard at a park across the street from Montmorency College in the Montreal suburb of Laval. Four people were shot and later taken to hospital with non-life-threatening injuries.

The college, with around 10,000 students and faculty, remained locked down into the evening while the police continued the search to find the shooter. Mayor Stephane Boyer tweeted that a police operation was ongoing, as television footage showed parents of students crowding the streets surrounding the

campus.

Earlier, a man, 19, wearing a bulletproof vest was arrested at a college 40 kilometers (25 miles) south of Montreal and charged with allegedly uttering threats. Students and staff at Cegep Saint-Jean-sur-Richelieu told local media that they had been ordered to barricade themselves in classrooms and turn off the lights during the day, while regional police began an operation outside.

Alejandra Montequin, one of the students of the college, told Canadian broadcaster Global News that everyone was frightened and the atmosphere was very tense. "At the beginning we were very scared," Montequin said. "It was very tense, people were talking to their parents."

Quebec Public Security Minister Francois Bonnardel said in a Twitter post that students at Cegep Saint-Jean-sur-Richelieu experienced very difficult conditions. He emphasized that he was waiting for the results of the police investigation to know the details of the incident.

One of Canada's worst mass shootings took place in 2020, when a gunman driving a fake police car shot 13 people and killed another nine in a fire he set in Portapique, Nova Scotia. While Canada's gun homicide rate is less than one-fifth the US rate, it is higher than that of other rich countries and has been rising, according to Statistics Canada.

In May, Ottawa introduced legislation to implement a "national freeze" on the sale and purchase of handguns a week after a gunman killed 19 children and two teachers in their classroom in Uvalde, Texas.

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