

NO ARREST MADE YET

10 KILLED IN U.S. MASS SHOOTINGS

Over two dozen wounded in four shootings over the weekend

PHILADELPHIA

At least 10 people were killed and more than two dozen wounded in four shootings across the United States this weekend, as lawmakers struggle to respond to the country's long-running epidemic of gun violence.

The shootings came after a spate of mass killings that have sparked renewed calls for reform of the nation's gun laws.

An eruption of violence in Chattanooga, Tennessee, on Sunday resulted in 14 people being shot, including two killed, while another person died and two more were injured after they were struck by vehicles fleeing the scene, police chief Celeste Murphy said, adding several victims remained in critical condition.

The pre-dawn incident occurred near a nightclub.

In Philadelphia on Saturday, two men and a woman were killed when multiple people opened fire on a crowd at a popular South Street nightlife area.

Philadelphia Police Commissioner Danielle Outlaw said one of the victims got into a fight with another man, which could have been the cause of the shooting.

The two others were "innocent bystanders", she said.

In Saginaw, Michigan, three people were killed and two others wounded in a shooting on Sunday, MLive.com and WEYI television reported, citing police.

And in Clarendon County, South Carolina, five teens and a 12-year-old were among seven people wounded in a shooting at a graduation party on Saturday that killed one adult, police said.

Such gun violence has become almost commonplace in America, with more than a half-dozen other shootings recorded over the weekend in which multiple people were killed, according to the Gun Violence Archive, which tracks shootings nationwide.



A man walking past bullet holes in the window of a store on South Street in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, on Sunday. AFP PIC

But the shock felt over recent mass shootings at a grocery store in Buffalo, New York and an elementary school in Uvalde, Texas, which saw 10 and 21 people gunned down respectively, have spurred ardent cries for action.

Democratic Senator Chris Murphy has been working with a bipartisan group of senators on reform measures — a heavy lift with Republicans routinely rejecting most forms of gun control.

Senator Murphy said on Sunday the group hoped to hammer together a legislative package that draws at least 10 Republican votes on top of expected support from nearly every Democrat.

"I think the possibility of success is better than ever before," he told CNN.

The emerging package, he said, would probably include "signif-

icant mental health investment, school safety money, and some modest but impactful changes in gun laws", including an expansion of background checks for gun buyers.

"Congress needs to pass commonsense regulation that will stop this nonsense," an angry Chattanooga mayor Tim Kelly said.

He called for "mandatory background checks and prohibiting high-capacity magazines that allow shooters to hurt dozens of people without having to reload".

Warmer weather tends to bring a spike in US violence, and in addition to the massacres in Texas and New York, recent weeks have seen mass shootings at a hospital in Oklahoma and a church in California.

Bystander Joe Smith, 23, told *The Philadelphia Inquirer* his mind had flashed to the recent

incidents when he heard shots ring out Saturday.

"There was guttural screaming," he told the newspaper.

While Republicans have successfully blocked most efforts at gun control for years, some have recently spoken out for change.

In conservative, gun-loving Texas, more than 250 self-declared firearm enthusiasts, including donors to Republican Governor Greg Abbott, signed an open letter supporting efforts at bipartisan gun reform, the *Dallas Morning News* reported.

US President Joe Biden last week called for new gun control legislation. On Sunday he renewed his call for restrictions on semi-automatic rifles.

"If we can't ban assault weapons as we should, we must at least raise the age to buy assault weapons to 21," he tweeted. **AFP**