

A Look Back at 2015

AP-Times Square Poll: Shootings Weighed on Americans in 2015

By Verena Dobnik
Associated Press

NEW YORK (AP) — Mass shootings and attacks weighed heavily on the minds of Americans in 2015, according to a new poll that found most believe this year was worse for the world than last year.

A look at the key findings of The Associated Press-Times Square Alliance poll:

PREOCCUPIED BY MASS SHOOTINGS

Americans say the most important events of 2015 were a string of mass shootings, including the attacks in San Bernardino, California, and Paris, plus Islamic State group atrocities.

Fifty-seven percent of those polled say this year was worse than the last year for the world as a whole, up from the 38 percent asked that question a year ago. Only 10 percent believe 2015 was a better year than 2014,

deciding whether to take his wife and daughter along on a Christmas trip to New York.

“We were thinking about not coming this year, because of everything that’s going on,” Pruitt said. But they went ahead “because when you change your life, the terrorists win.”

THREE EVENTS SHARE THE TOP SPOT

Of those polled, 68 percent listed mass shootings in the U.S. as very or extremely important news events this year, including the one in San Bernardino that heightened fears of domestic terrorism, plus shootings in Charleston, South Carolina; Roseburg, Oregon; and Chattanooga, Tennessee.

Close behind, at 64 percent, were the Paris attacks that ushered in 2015, targeting Charlie Hebdo and the Jewish market, then the Bataclan concert hall and other city sites in November.

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—J.P. Fury, *Time Square food truck worker*

while 32 percent think there wasn’t much difference.

Americans also are much less likely than they were a year ago to believe that the current year was better for the United States — only 17 percent compared with 30 percent a year ago. Thirty-seven percent think this year was worse for the country than last year, while 44 percent don’t think there was much difference.

On a personal level, fewer than a third (29 percent) believe 2015 was better for them than 2014, while 21 percent feel it was worse, compared with 15 percent in 2014.

Interviewed separately from the poll, Jason Pruitt, a 43-year-old corporate pilot from the Detroit area, said security concerns were a factor in

And third, at 63 percent, came the Islamic State group’s various far-flung atrocities.

Commenting on the completed poll was 32-year-old J.P. Fury, working in a food truck in Times Square.

“At this point, I’m numb to all of it,” he said. “This is nothing new. Every week there’s a new shooting somewhere in America, and there’s a new terrorist attack somewhere around the world.”

OTHER ISSUES

Domestically, 44 percent of those polled rate as extremely or very important the deaths of blacks in encounters with police that sparked “Black Lives Matter” protests in Baltimore and Chicago.

Another 44 percent

rate the deal reached to curtail Iran’s nuclear program as important, and nearly as many (42 percent) Europe’s migrant crisis.

Only 40 percent said the presidential race was important to them, with the Paris climate change conference right behind (at 38 percent), followed by the Supreme Court’s legalization of gay marriage (36 percent) and the Cuban-U.S. thaw (30 percent).



PHOTO BY LISA LOVING

Portland History

The Oregon Historical Society opened ‘A Community on the Move,’ the third exhibition in a series produced by the Oregon Black Pioneers. This groundbreaking exhibition explains how the WWII shipyards, migration from the South, the Vanport flood and urban renewal projects impacted Portland’s Black families and businesses. Organizer Gwen Carr, above, shows a special book created just for the exhibit. Public talks took place through March.



AP PHOTO/DON RYAN

Kate Brown Sworn In

Oregon Secretary of State Kate Brown was sworn in as Oregon Governor by Oregon Chief Justice Thomas A. Balmer in Salem, Ore., Feb. 18. John Kitzhaber, elected to an unprecedented fourth term in 2014, announced the previous week that he would step down amid allegations his fiancée used her relationship with him to enrich herself.



PHOTO BY LISA LOVING

New Police Chief

Portland Police Chief Larry O’Dea, at left, helped rebuild the dining room table for a family at Villa de Mariposas, at a special party thrown by the community for police officers December 2014. O’Dea also volunteers with Habitat for Humanity. O’Dea was sworn in as the Portland Police Bureau’s new chief Jan. 2.

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