Why the U.S. is No. 1 in mass shootings

By Melissa Healy, Los Angeles Times

The United States is, by a long shot, the global leader in mass shootings, claiming just 5 percent of the global population but an outsized share – 31 percent – of the world's mass shooters since 1966, a new study finds.

The Philippines, Russia, Yemen and France – all countries that can claim a substantial share of the 291 documented mass shootings between 1966 and 2012 – collectively didn't even come close to the United States.

And what makes the United States such a fertile incubator for mass shooters? A comprehensive analysis of the perpetrators, their motives and the national contexts for their actions suggests that several factors have conspired to create in the United States a potent medium for fostering large-scale murder.

Those factors include a chronic and widespread gap between Americans' expectations for themselves and their actual achievement, Americans' adulation of fame, and the extent of gun ownership in the United States.

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