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Obama Says Mass Shootings Have Become 'Routine' in America

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President Barack Obama addressed the nation for the 15th time in response to a mass shooting that's occurred during his presidency on Thursday, saying the country has become numb to them and calling on the American people to officially declare that enough is enough.

The President spoke from the James Brady Press Briefing Room in the aftermath of a [shooting on an Oregon community college campus that has left at least 10 dead and 7 wounded](#), markedly tense and angered by the fact that he was once again addressing the nation on the issue of gun violence.

"Somehow this has become routine. The reporting is routine. My response here at this podium ends up being routine," Obama said. "We've become numb to this."

Obama began by expressing condolences for the families, like he's had to do in the wake of tragedies in Tucson, Ariz.; Aurora, Colo.; and Fort Hood, Texas. He thanked the first responders, like he did in response to the shooting at the Navy Yard in Washington, D.C., and in Newton, Conn. And as President Obama said most recently in the wake of the mass shooting at a Bible Study at the Emanuel A.M.E. Church in Charleston, S.C., "our thoughts and prayers are not enough."

"This is a political choice that we make to allow this to happen every few months in America," Obama said. "We collectively are answerable to those families who lose their loved ones because of our inaction."

It was a speech, about 15 minutes in length, that Obama could only deliver comfortably in the fourth quarter of his presidency, free from the constraints of a re-election campaign. He admitted to politicizing the issue, something critics of his responses to mass shootings have been apt to call him out on. On Thursday, however, he said the issue should be politicized because only politicians have the power to prevent such tragedies from occurring again.

Obama called out politicians and organizations like the National Rifle Association, who he said he already could imagine cranking out press releases claiming that “more guns” and “fewer safety laws” would prevent mass shootings.

“Does anybody really believe that?” the Commander in Chief pondered aloud. “There is a gun for roughly every man woman and child in America ... How can you with a straight face make an argument that more guns make us safer?”

Obama went on to challenge the American public, the news media and lawmakers to get serious about gun reform. In a professorial tone that bordered on condescension, Obama called on the news media to “tally up the number of Americans killed through terrorist attacks and the number of Americans that have been killed by gun violence” and publish the numbers side by side.

“Tonight as those of us who are lucky enough to hug our kids a little closer are thinking about the families who aren’t so fortunate, I’d ask the American people to think about how they can get our government to change these laws to save lives and let our young people grow up,” he said.

He ended by saying that he prays this is the last time he’ll need to address the nation in this way, as the families of multiple innocent Americans grieve a sudden and tragic loss of life at the hand of a gunman. But based on his experience as President, he said, he knows he cannot make that guarantee.

It was, after all, his 15th time.

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