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**MAYOR DE BLASIO AND DEPARTMENT OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS COMMISSIONER MENIN
LAUNCH GROUNDBREAKING INVESTIGATION INTO ILLEGAL SALE OF SECONDHAND
GUNS**

Subpoena Sent to One of Nation's Largest Online Firearms Marketplaces

Innovative Approach Targets Sellers, Not Website Itself

NEW YORK—Mayor Bill de Blasio and Department of Consumer Affairs Commissioner Julie Menin today announced an investigation into the possible illegal and unlicensed sale of secondhand guns in New York City. On October 19, DCA issued a subpoena to ARMSLIST, one of the country's largest online firearms marketplace for classified ads, seeking to discover whether local sellers are using the website to advertise and illegally sell secondhand arms without DCA licenses and skirting City, State and federal laws in the process. While other investigations have focused on the website, DCA is focusing on the sellers who use the website.

“The loss of even a single life at the hands of gun violence is far too many. Cities all across this country are confronting the scourge of firearms – and more dangerous ones – on our streets. In the absence of any concerted federal action to mandate background checks and tighten the marketplace of guns running amok in our country, New York City must use every tool at our disposal to save lives. Through this investigation into ARMSLIST, DCA is stepping up and doing its part to keep our city safer for every New Yorker – civilians and officers alike,” said **Mayor Bill de Blasio**.

“When dealers are not licensed and do not conduct background checks, potentially dangerous individuals can easily obtain guns, often with deadly consequences,” said **DCA Commissioner Julie Menin**. “Guns sold on ARMSLIST have been linked to various shootings and to keep these weapons out of the hands of dangerous buyers, we must hold sellers accountable and responsible for their actions.”

“Illegally possessed firearms have no place in this city. We will continue working to prevent, investigate, and hold responsible individuals or organizations who bring illegal guns into New York City. We look forward to working with the Department of Consumer Affairs in their investigation,” said **Police Commissioner William J. Bratton**.

Anonymous sellers in New York City frequently use ARMSLIST to advertise firearms purportedly for in-person sale in New York City. Those sellers may be engaging in illegal activity if they do not have a DCA secondhand gun dealers' license. They may also be violating New York State's SAFE Act, which requires that a background check be performed by a federal firearms licensee before a firearm is sold or transferred by a private seller, unless the transfer is between immediate family members.

A secondhand firearm dealer can advertise through any medium, including online classifieds, but the advertisement must comply with the City's laws and rules. Any person or business that buys or sells secondhand firearms in New York City must have a DCA secondhand firearm dealer license. A DCA secondhand firearm dealer license requires a background check and copies of the licensee's Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives' Federal Firearms License, and New York Police Department Firearms

Dealer's License. Licensees are required to keep records of sales for three years. Violators of the DCA licensing law are guilty of a class A misdemeanor and can be fined up to \$500 for the violation, and second violations will be subject to up to 15 days of imprisonment and a fine up to \$1,000.

"Gun websites like ARMSLIST are easing the flow of weapons into our city, and must be stopped," said **Public Advocate Letitia James**. "New Yorkers are dying every single day because firearms are in the wrong hands. I applaud the Department of Consumer Affairs for taking this action, and look forward to helping them move forward with this investigation."

"Stopping illegal gun sales saves lives," said **Manhattan Borough President Gale A. Brewer**. "While we need federal action to quell the national epidemic of gun violence, in the meantime, it is critical that our City and State governments use every tool they can to get guns off our streets and crack down on illegal, unlicensed sellers. I applaud the Department of Consumer Affairs' action on this issue, and hope it yields results."

"Gun violence is a scourge on our city and our nation, and anything we can do to take guns off of our streets is certainly a worthwhile initiative. Cracking down on second-hand weapons sales will help keep our city streets safer and prevent violence in our communities, and I congratulate Mayor de Blasio and the Department of Consumer Affairs for moving forward on this investigation, which will undoubtedly save lives," said **Bronx Borough President Ruben Diaz Jr.**

"The illegal trafficking and resale of guns is a very serious nationwide problem that must be addressed," said **Congressman Eliot Engel**. "New York City is awash in guns that were purchased legally in other states and then transported here and sold on the secondary market where there are no background checks or regulations of any kind. The dangers here are obvious, and more needs to be done to end this deadly trade. As a co-sponsor of the Gun Trafficking Prevention Act in Congress, I am encouraged by the steps Mayor de Blasio and Commissioner Menin are taking to investigate the sale of secondhand guns. It is my hope that we in the federal government will be able to supplement their efforts with stricter, sensible gun regulations soon."

"New York City has strong laws to stop the trafficking and sale of illegal secondhand guns that should be a model for the rest of the country," said **Congresswoman Carolyn B. Maloney**. "I am pleased to see that Mayor de Blasio is working to enforce those laws so that we can stop the influx of these deadly weapons. If these dealers are found in violation, they should be held accountable to the fullest extent of the law."

"I applaud the Mayor and Commissioner Menin for undertaking this innovative approach that seeks to curb the illegal and unlicensed sale of secondhand guns. Commissioner Bratton was absolutely right when he chided Congress for not doing enough to rein in gun violence. We need action on the federal level. But with the GOP-led Congress refusing to act, I commend the Mayor and Commissioner for using resources at their disposal to keep New York City safe," said **Congresswoman Grace Meng**.

"There is no denying the crisis we face – the epidemic of gun violence in our country," said **Congressman Jerrold Nadler**. "Americans are 20 times more likely to be killed by gun violence than people in any other developed country. This is an outrage. Mayor de Blasio is right to insist that New York City must lead the way, and I commend the work of his administration and DCA to make our city safe with the launch of this groundbreaking initiative to crackdown on illegal secondhand gun sales."

"Good laws can help keep guns out of the hands of people who shouldn't have them," said **State Senator Daniel Squadron**. "But, they can't work without city, state, and federal enforcement. I thank Commissioner Menin and the Department of Consumer Affairs for taking this step to ensure compliance with local laws, and will continue to work with the City and colleagues on common sense policies to prevent gun violence."

"I find it appalling that some sellers may be using ARMSLIST to sell firearms illegally in New York City. DCA's investigation is an important step forward to ensuring that sellers who advertise firearms on this site are not violating our City's laws. We must do more to ensure illegal firearms do not make their way into the

hands of criminals and I commend Commissioner Menin for launching this investigation,” said **Council Member Rafael L. Espinal, Jr., Chair of the Council Consumer Affairs Committee.**

“The loopholes that allow for the unlicensed, unchecked sale of secondhand guns have made it far too easy for these firearms to flood our city. Cutting of the supply and holding online sellers accountable will reduce gun violence and bolster important anti-gun violence measures the administration and Council continue to prioritize. I commend Mayor de Blasio and Commissioner Menin for spearheading this innovative step to reduce gun violence and thank them for continuing to prioritize the public safety needs of the city,” said **Council Member Vanessa Gibson, Chair of the Council Committee on Public Safety.**

“On average, 36 Americans die from gun violence each day, a growing statistic that has had a very real impact on our city, as well. We must do more. I applaud Mayor de Blasio and DCA Commissioner Menin for launching an investigation into the illegal sale of secondhand guns, which is an important step toward combating this pandemic that has plagued our city for far too long,” said **Council Member Jumaane D. Williams, Deputy Leader and Co-Chair of the Council’s Task Force to Combat Gun Violence.**

“‘Craigslist for guns’ – if that concept doesn’t send shivers down your spine I don’t know what will, and I commend Mayor de Blasio for using every tool at the City’s disposal to plug gaping regulatory holes in the virtually unsupervised online secondhand gun market,” said **Council Member Rory Lancman.**

“Gun sellers, dealers, and owners have a shared responsibility to ensure that firearms are kept out of the possession of individuals whose actions endanger innocent lives and the safety of our community. We must hold all individuals who knowingly circumvent city, state, and federal laws meant to protect the public from illegally possessed firearms accountable. The investigation of ARMSLIST will send a clear message that we are committed to utilizing every available resource to enforce background checks, accountability, transparency, and end the illegal sale of firearms. This is a critical step forward to curb the gun violence that has taken far too many lives in our city. I applaud Mayor de Blasio and Consumer Affairs Commissioner Menin for their leadership on such a prevalent issue that predominantly affects communities of color,” said **Council Member Laurie A. Cumbo.**

“Gun violence has claimed too many lives in the City of New York and in my borough of The Bronx. DCA’s proactive step to subpoena ARMSLIST and investigate the unlicensed sale of secondhand guns will protect New Yorkers and keep our city safe. I applaud DCA Commissioner Menin for her leadership on preventing gun violence before illegal guns can claim another life,” said **Council Member Ritchie Torres.**

“We know that 90 percent of the crime guns recovered on the streets of NYC flow in from states with weak gun laws. These guns end up killing and maiming not only our citizens, but also those charged with protecting us. Last December, Officers Liu and Rivera were killed by a gun that was traced back to a pawnshop in Georgia. Our city and state are flooded with guns from southern states, trafficked in by criminals who can easily procure them from shady gun dealers, gun shows or the internet. Until we have tougher federal laws, New York City and State must do everything possible to identify the sources of these guns,” said **Leah Gunn Barrett, Executive Director of New Yorkers Against Gun Violence.**

“Previous investigations by Mayors Against Illegal Guns, now a part of Everytown for Gun Safety, have found that one in 30 would-be gun buyers shopping on ARMSLIST had a felony conviction or history of domestic violence that prohibited them from legally buying guns, and that high-volume gun sellers operating without proper licenses offer hundreds of thousands of guns for sale on Armslist every year,” said **Senior Counsel, Everytown for Gun Safety Adam Skaggs.** “Because these sellers are not required under federal law to conduct the same background checks required at brick-and-mortar gun stores, their sales contribute to illegal gun trafficking. Ensuring that those selling guns on the Internet comply with licensing and other applicable laws is vital to public safety, and DCA’s efforts to enforce the law should be commended.”

“We highly commend Mayor De Blasio for taking aggressive action to make New York City safer by keeping guns out of the hands of criminals and other prohibited purchasers. His leadership should serve as an example to

all politicians who have an obligation to keep their communities safe from gun violence. Brady background checks have blocked more than 2.4 million sales to prohibited purchases; but since this Law was passed in 1993, the internet has ushered in a new era of commerce which has created a haven where anyone — including violent felons and domestic abusers — can buy a gun without a background check in most states. Like all Americans, we New Yorkers have had enough of this unchecked madness and we applaud the City’s innovative legal approach as an important step toward stopping it,” said **Dan Gross, President of the Brady Campaign to Prevent Gun Violence.**

The Department of Consumer Affairs

The Department of Consumer Affairs (DCA) licenses, inspects, and educates businesses, assists and informs consumers, mediates complaints, and offers free financial counseling and safe banking products. DCA enforces the Consumer Protection Law, the Paid Sick Leave Law and other related business laws throughout New York City and licenses nearly 80,000 businesses in 55 different industries. For more information, call 311 or visit DCA online at nyc.gov/consumers or on its social media sites, [Twitter](#), [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#) and [YouTube](#).

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