

INCIDENTS INVOLVING 3D-PRINTED FIREARMS

A Trump Administration proposal to transfer control of firearm exports from the State Department to the Commerce Department would ease restrictions on the online distribution of plans for 3D-printed guns. There have already been several incidents that illustrate the potential dangers of making 3D-printed guns widely available.

3D-PRINTED MACHINE GUN SEIZED AT ARIZONA BORDER CROSSING

U.S. Customs and Border Protection seized an AR-type rifle with a lower receiver that was produced on a 3D printer and modified to fire in fully automatic mode in 2016 at the Lukeville, Arizona border crossing. Other firearms, ammunition, and ammunition magazines were also recovered.¹



3D-PRINTED REVOLVER FOUND BY TSA IN CARRY-ON BAGGAGE

The Transportation Security Administration (TSA) discovered a replica revolver assembled with parts made from a 3D printer and loaded with live ammunition at the Reno airport in 2016 during routine X-ray screening of carry-on baggage. TSA's "Week in Review July 29th – August 4th," noted, "This was a good catch from the TSA team at Reno."²



¹ "3-D-printed full-auto rifle seized at Lukeville crossing," *tucsonsentinel.com*, February 8, 2016.

² TSA has found 3D-printed firearm components twice at checkpoints at McCarran International Airport in Las Vegas – in January 2018 and December 2016. A 3D-printed replica firearm was found in a carry-on bag at the Manchester-Boston Regional airport in May 2017, "The TSA Has Found 3D-Printed Guns at Airport Checkpoints 4 Times Since 2016," *Time*, August 2, 2018.

MAN PROHIBITED FROM POSSESSING FIREARMS BUILDS GUN USING 3D-PRINTED LOWER RECEIVER

In 2016, Eric McGinnis's attempt to purchase a semiautomatic rifle was rejected when the background check identified a protective order filed by his girlfriend. McGinnis then obtained gun parts including a barrel and upper receiver and used a 3D printer to make a lower receiver. From the parts he built a short-barreled AR-15 type rifle. He was arrested when police heard him firing the gun in a public wooded area. Police found a "hit list" in his backpack that included home and office addresses of Democratic and Republican lawmakers.³



AR-15 ASSAULT RIFLE MADE WITH 3D-PRINTED RECEIVER FOUND WITH CACHE OF ILLEGAL FIREARMS

In 2015, two Oregon residents with felony records were charged with illegally possessing firearms, including an AR-15 assault rifle that incorporated a 3D-printed lower receiver. The rifle also lacked a serial number.⁴



³ "Man Carrying Prohibited 3D-Printed Gun Found With List of Lawmakers' Addresses," Press Release, United States Attorney's Office, Northern District of Texas, February 13, 2019.

⁴ "Seized assault rifle presumed to be made with 3D printer," *Herald and News*, June 28, 2015.

GUN DEALER MAKES SILENCER WITH 3D PRINTER

In 2015, a Texas gun dealer made a silencer with a 3D printer. He did register the silencer as required by law. He claims an advantage of a 3D-printed silencer is that it is disposable.⁵



THREE “FULLY FUNCTIONAL” 3D-PRINTED GUNS SEIZED BY AUSTRALIAN POLICE

Australian police seized three fully functional 3D-printed handguns in a raid in July 2018 where weapon parts, a “knuckle duster,” fake licenses, and drugs were also found.⁶



⁵ “Texas Gun Dealer 3D Prints a Plastic Silencer,” *3DPrint.com*, March 19, 2015.

⁶ “3D-printed guns in Qld house looked real,” *Australian Associated Press*, July 18, 2018.

FIREARMS MADE WITH 3D-PRINTED COMPONENTS SEIZED IN SWEDEN

In 2017, Swedish authorities seized two guns partially constructed with parts made on a 3D printer. The upper and lower receivers and the outer barrel assembly were made with a 3D printer. Other components were conventionally manufactured. The guns were examined by the Swedish National Forensic Center (NFC) and determined to be functional.⁷



AUSTRALIAN AUTHORITIES SEIZE MACHINE GUNS MADE WITH 3D-PRINTED PARTS

In November 2016, Australian police found a sophisticated firearms production facility using 3D printers and computers to manufacture machine guns. Four machine guns and other weapons and drugs were seized. Police said the raid on the facility closed down a drug and weapons trafficking network working across the Gold Coast of Australia.⁸



⁷ "Firearms using 3D-printed components seized in Sweden," *Armament Research Services*, May 19, 2017.

⁸ "Gold Coast drug raids uncover 3D-printed submachine guns," *The Guardian*, November 23, 2016.

3D-PRINTED GUN PARTS FOUND BY AUSTRALIAN LAW ENFORCEMENT AUTHORITIES

Australian authorities found 3D-printed gun parts in a 2015 Queensland, Australia raid related to drug and weapons offenses. Police also recovered 3D-printed “knuckle dusters,” a sawed-off rifle, ammunition, and marijuana.⁹



PHOTO: Queensland Police Service

3D-PRINTED GUNS SMUGGLED INTO ISRAELI PARLIAMENT BY JOURNALISTS

In 2013, investigative journalists were able to smuggle a 3D-printed gun into the Israeli Knesset during a speech by Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu. The gun was based on designs by Defense Distributed. Knesset Guard Sergeant-at Arms Brigadier General Yossi Grif said the technology “presents an entirely novel challenge to all the security systems in Israel and in the world.”¹⁰

For more information, contact Violence Policy Center Legislative Director Kristen Rand at 202-822-8200 x102 or krand@vpc.org.

⁹ “3D printing: Suspected plastic gun parts found in raid on Gold Coast property,” *ABC*, February, 10, 2015.

¹⁰ “Journalists print gun, point it at Netanyahu,” *timesofisrael.com*, July 4, 2013.