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Brazilians vote resounding 'no' to proposed ban on gun sales

Brazilians vote on gun ban

Brazilians soundly rejected a proposal to ban the sale of guns in a national referendum Sunday. With more than 92 percent of the votes counted, 64 percent of Brazilians were opposed to the ban, while 36 percent backed it, said election officials, giving the "no" position an insurmountable lead.

The issues

- Brazil has one of the world's highest firearm murder rates. Brazil has 100 million fewer citizens than the United States, but a staggering 25 percent more gun deaths at nearly 40,000.
- Supporters argued that gun control was the best way to staunch the violence. Opponents played on Brazilians' fears that the police can't protect them.
- The proposal would have prohibited the sale of firearms and ammunition except for police, the military, some security guards, gun collectors and sports shooters. It would complement a 2003 disarmament law that sharply restricts who can legally purchase firearms and carry guns in the street. That law, coupled with a government-sponsored gun buyback program, has reduced deaths from firearms by about 8 percent this year, the Health Ministry said.
- Earlier this year, support for the ban was running as high as 80 percent. But in the weeks before the referendum, both sides were granted free time to present their cases on prime-time TV, and the pro-gun lobby began to grow. Analysts said the pro-gun lobby benefited from equal time on television in the final weeks of the campaign and that they cannily cashed in on Brazilian skepticism of the police.

Quote

"It's a stunning defeat for the global gun control movement. They poured millions of dollars and millions more man hours trying to enact this gun ban and they failed. The aim of this gun ban movement was to use Brazil as the rallying point to enact gun bans in the United States. We're happy they were defeated."

NRA public affairs director Andrew Arulanandam

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