U.S. firearms sales February 2022: Russia’s invasion of Ukraine appears to have increased U.S. firearms unit sales

(GRENVILLE, SC, USA & HALIFAX, NS, CANADA) – Small Arms Analytics & Forecasting (SAAF) estimates February 2022 U.S. firearms unit sales at about 1.4 million units, a year-over-year decrease amounting to −3.9% relative to February 2021. The decline affected the handgun segment by −3.1% and the long-gun segment by −4.7%.

Detailed data by firearms type and state are available for purchase at https://SmallArmsAnalytics.com/shop/.

SAAF’s firearms unit sales estimates are based on raw data taken from the FBI’s National Instant Criminal Background Check System (NICS), adjusted for checks unlikely to be related to end-user firearms sales. For example, in February the state of Illinois conducted over 270,000 firearms permit checks alone whereas end-user unit sales likely amounted to just under 40,000. SAAF thus makes certain adjustments to the FBI’s raw data based on retailer reports and other information. Even so, SAAF-adjusted NICS numbers may still underestimate the actual unit sales level by some amount.

SAAF Chief Economist Jurgen Brauer comments that “the estimated U.S. firearms unit sales for February 2022, although in line with the general seasonal pattern seen in the industry, were higher than might have been anticipated given the recent post-covid-19 pandemic sales slowdown. However, it is noticeable that the number of daily NICS background checks conducted on February 24th, 25th, 26th, and 28th (Thursday, Friday, Saturday, and Monday) were unusually high, coinciding with the beginning of Russia’s invasion of Ukraine.”

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Small Arms Analytics & Forecasting (SAAF) is a research consultancy focusing on the business & economics of the global small arms and ammunition markets. Politically unaffiliated, SAAF is an independent, evidenced-based resource for industry, advocacy, research, and policymaking alike, as well as for financial analysts and members of the media. Among other services, SAAF produces forecasts of U.S. civilian firearms unit sales, nationwide and for most states. Small Arms Analytics™ and Small Arms Analytics & Forecasting™ are legally protected Service Marks of Small Arms Analytics & Forecasting. (Contact sales@SmallArmsAnalytics.com for sales and other information.)