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Here's where home invasions are happening in Toronto and what's being done to prevent them

Before 2023, majority of home invasions were in apartments, condos, rooming houses

Nicole Brockbank, Angelina King · CBC News · Posted: May 14, 2026 4:00 AM EDT | Last Updated: 4 hours ago



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Toronto police data shows home invasions back on the rise, especially in wealthiest areas

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Residents of Toronto's wealthiest neighbourhoods are beefing up security and calling for criminal reform to address home invasions, which police say organized crime rings often orchestrate by recruiting youth to carry out the attacks.

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Lea Ledohowski woke up to the sound of what she thought were gunshots.

But the loud banging turned out to be three masked men on the doorstep of her Toronto home trying to smash through her front window with a hammer.

"A piece of glass separated three masked perpetrators from my family," Ledohowski said about the February incident.

"I was face to face and eye to eye with these gentlemen. And the most upsetting thing I think, in the moment, is they did not seem deterred at all."

Instead, Ledohowski says she believes it was only time that stopped the men. It took too long to break through the window and so she says they ran off. Her experience is one of 45 home invasions, including attempts, across the city this year. The numbers are up 22 per cent this year compared to the same time last May.



A still from security video shows a masked man on the doorstep of Lea Ledohowski's Toronto home trying to smash through her front window with a hammer earlier this year. CBC News has blurred the exterior of Ledohowski's home because she's concerned about potential future home invasions. (Submitted by Lea Ledohowski)

The rise in these crimes in Toronto over the last few years is largely due to a significant increase in home invasions involving houses in some of the city's wealthiest neighbourhoods, according to a CBC News analysis of Toronto police data.

Before 2023, the majority of home invasions reported since 2014 occurred in apartments, condos and rooming houses each year. But as the number of overall reports grew in 2023 and then doubled in 2024, most of that jump came from invasions of houses. For the last two years, home invasions targeting houses made up over 70 per cent of all of these reported crimes.

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In the wake of that shift, residents of many of the city's higher-end neighbourhoods have been taking matters into their own hands, beefing up home security, and calling for criminal reform to address a problem that police attribute, at least partially, to a shift from carjackings to brazen home invasions to access keys to steal vehicles.

"When we go through these shifts, where home invasions are high, carjackings seem low," said Toronto police Insp. Kristy Smith, who runs the service's holdup squad.

Smith says many security gaps that once enabled car theft have been closed. "So often the original key is the answer."

Home invasions drop after police patrols

Toronto police's holdup squad took on most home invasion investigations in the wake of a provincial car jacking task force put together in 2024 to address an increase in violent vehicle-related offences.

Home invasions hit a 10-year high in 2024, before dropping in 2025 and then rising again at the beginning of this year in Toronto. Affluent areas with large detached houses and driveways were among the hardest hit.

In response to the latest uptick, the holdup squad launched Project AEGIS at the end of February in 53 and 32 divisions, which include many higher-end neighbourhoods in midtown Toronto and North York. Both had six home invasions through the first two months of this year.

Marked and covert police cars have been patrolling those areas overnight since then to deter and disrupt the crimes. The divisions include the two neighbourhoods with the most reported home invasions since 2022 — Bedford Park-Nortown and Willowdale East — along with others like the Bridle Path, Lawrence Park, Rosedale and Leaside.

"We've seen a marked decline in incidences in those neighbourhoods," said Smith.

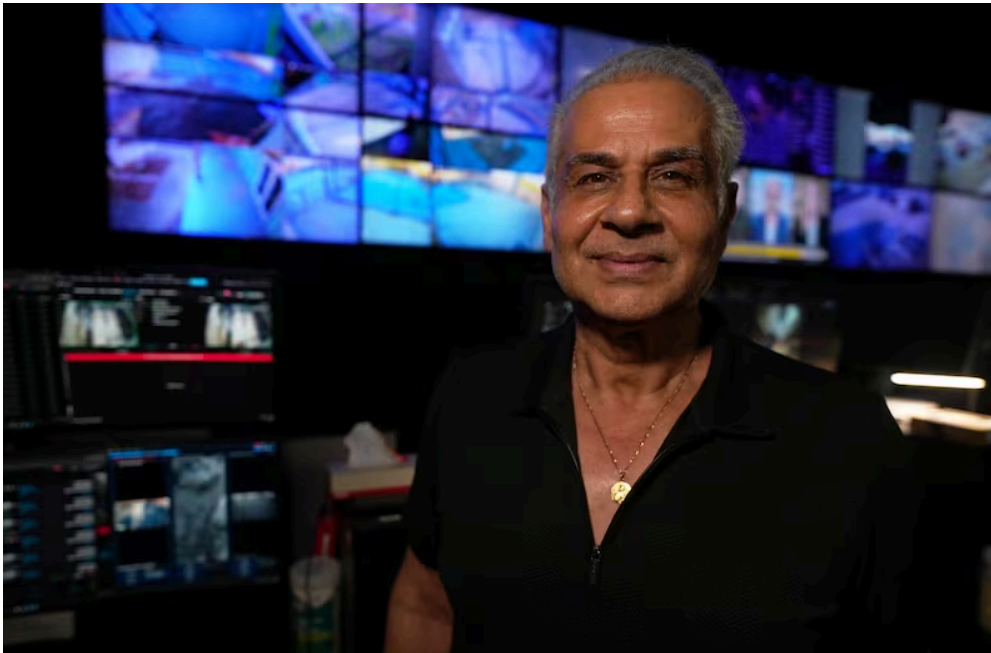
"Did it stop the problem? Did it scare them off? Did it push them somewhere else? Those are all things that we need to stay alive to — so the problem doesn't go away. Sometimes it just moves to another location."

There's been only a single home invasion in 32 division and three in 53 division between the start of the project in late February and the end of last week, according to police.

Some residents hiring private security

Ledohowski's house is in 53 division. It was also broken into last fall and several of her family's heirlooms were stolen. Ledohowski added more security cameras and security film to her windows after the break-in. Then after the attempted home invasion this year her family also signed up for Avante Security.

Emmanuel Mounouchos founded that high-end security company 30 years ago. Avante operates a 24/7 control centre in Toronto where staff review security footage flagged by AI filters for trespassers, guns and other weapons. If a trespasser is identified, Avante staff contact the clients and dispatch a security vehicle to the home in six minutes or less.



Emmanuel Mounouchos says his company Avante Security receives about eight to 10 calls a day from potential clients looking for security services. (Paul Borkwood/CBC)

"Just showing up with the lights and the cars so quickly, 99 per cent of them run away," Mounouchos told CBC News.

He says his company is getting eight to 10 calls a day for security services and when it comes to home invasions intruders are breaking in for car keys, but Mounouchos says they're now also looking for jewellery and expensive watches while they're there.

On a grassroots-level, more residents have signed up for online neighbourhood watch groups, or want to start their own, since the end of last year, according to Didi Cameron.

Interest spikes for neighbourhood watch

Cameron founded her group in Lawrence Park nine years ago. Through a Google email group she disseminates information about neighbourhood crime, tips to protect yourself and home, and she also acts as a go-between for information with police.

"I just want to deliver the neutral information about what's going on in our neighbourhood and help people protect themselves with the help of the police as much as they can help us and give us tips," she said.



Didi Cameron has helped start 20 other online neighbourhood watch groups since she started her own in Lawrence Park in 2017. (Tina MacKenzie/CBC)

Cameron's group now has more than 300 members and she's helped start 20 other groups like hers across Toronto.

Janice Lo, president of South Rosedale's Residents' Association, started a group in her neighbourhood with Cameron's help. She says her neighbours feel like anyone in the area could be a home invasion target.

"We've reached a critical point given the violence, the level of organization, the recruitment of youth that we all need to become aware and we all need to take action."

Police, residents call for criminal reform

Toronto police acknowledge that these home invasions often involve young people who are recruited by organized crime.

"I don't know if it's that lack of consequence, or just like living in a giant video game of GTA ... or they just want something that someone else has because they don't have it," said Smith.

"It's hard to say what their motives are, but it's definitely a lot of young people recruited into doing this."



Toronto police Insp. Kristy Smith runs the service's holdup squad. She says the number of home invasions in 53 and 32 divisions has dropped since her team started Project AEGIS in those areas at the end of February. (Grant Linton/CBC)

Some of that recruitment happens through encrypted apps so the youth don't know each other beforehand and can't identify each other if one of them is arrested, Smith said.

One of the legislative reforms she believes could help with this is Bill C-16, which proposes adding new offences to the criminal code related to criminal organizations exploiting young people.

The other is bail reform.

"I don't think there's something more frustrating than officers spending a lot of time into these investigations to make an arrest only in a week's time to catch the same people again doing the same thing," said Smith.

The inspector says that happens regularly with people her team arrests related to home invasions. When it comes to reform, Smith would like to see there be a reverse onus on accused for these types of crimes, where they would have to prove why they should get bail.

Toronto residents like Lo and Ledohowski also want to see changes.

"It just doesn't seem to be that the punishment for these crimes is significant [enough] to be a deterrent," said Ledohowski.