



MEDIA STATEMENT:

STOP POLICE USING R5 MASSACRE RIFLES

30 January 2015: As the South African Police Service celebrates its 20th anniversary in Kabokweni, Mpumalanga today, social justice activist organisation Amandla.Mobi and Gun Free South Africa partner in a [campaign](#) to ban R5 rifles in public order policing.

Two years after the Marikana massacre, the South African Police Service (SAPS) is still using R5 assault rifles for crowd control. This was a shock finding at the Farlam Commission, when Police Commissioner Riah Phiyega admitted that police continue to use the R5 military grade assault rifle in public order policing; a practice described by an international policing expert as “totally unacceptable” [1].

The R5 was introduced into South African policing in the late 1980's, at the height of oppression during Apartheid. Because bullets shot from R5s disintegrate on impact, police officers who gun people down in crowd control situations can't be held to account as bullets cannot be traced back to them.

That a weapon used to murder, oppress and brutalise under Apartheid is still being used by police officers for crowd control in a democratic South Africa is unacceptable.

Says Gun Free South Africa's Ms Adele Kirsten, “What happened at Marikana should have been used by SAPS as a moment to reflect on how public order policing and crowd control situations are undertaken”.

Amandla.Mobi's founder, Ms Koketso Moeti explains that the purpose of the campaign is to “give ordinary citizens a voice and remind Police Commissioner Phiyega and Police Minister Nhleko of their duty to ensure the safety of all who live in South Africa by banning the use of the R5 massacre rifle by those tasked with protecting us.”

She urged people to “act now”. “In April 2014 South Africa's government was one of just eight to vote against a United Nations resolution calling on states to end the indiscriminate use of lethal force against a crowd [2]. Five months later Police Commissioner Phiyega asked treasury for an additional R3.3 billion over four years, some of which will be used to increase ‘physical resources’, for public order policing [3]”.

Says Kirsten, “We are calling on police leaders to show their commitment to the vision of SAPS as a professional and demilitarised police service (as articulated in the NDP) by disarming Public Order Policing units of R5 rifles and announcing this banning at the first sitting of parliament in 2015.”

[1] [Farlam: Police use of deadly R5 rifles 'unacceptable', The Mail & Guardian, 10 September 2014](#)

[2] Resolution 25/38: [The promotion and protection of human rights in the context of peaceful protests](#). The eight states that voted against Resolution 25/38 were: China, Cuba, India, Kenya, Pakistan, the Russian Federation, South Africa, Venezuela and Viet Nam.

[3] [Public Order Policing: SAPS demands more muscle, the Daily Maverick, 3 September 2014](#)

[amandla.mobi](#) is an independent social justice organisation that turns cellphones into a democracy building tool so that no matter where anyone lives, what language they speak, or what issue they care about, they can connect with others to take action against social injustice.

[Gun Free South Africa](#) is a national NGO working towards a safer, more secure South Africa, by reducing gun violence.

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