



ANNUAL REPORT

2012
2013

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ACRONYMS

CEO	Chief Executive Officer
CFR	Central Firearms Registry
FCA	Firearms Control Act (2000)
GFSA	Gun Free South Africa
DOH	Department of Health
IANSA	International Action Network on Small Arms
MP	Member of Parliament
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
PSIRA	Private Security Industry Regulatory Authority
SA	South Africa
SAPS	South African Police Service
SaVI	Safety and Violence Initiative
UNODA	United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs



IN MEMORY OF

Nelson Rolihlahla Mandela

18 July 1918 – 5 December 2013

Nelson Mandela is revered worldwide as an icon of peace and reconciliation after guiding South Africa from the oppression of apartheid to a constitutional, multi-racial democracy.

His years behind bars for refusing to bend in his determination to win freedom for his people made him the world's most celebrated political prisoner and a leader of mythic stature for oppressed people, both within South Africa and beyond.

Charged with capital offences in the 1963 Rivonia Trial, his statement from the dock was his political testimony, "During my lifetime I have dedicated myself to this struggle of the African people. I have fought against white domination, and I have fought against black domination. I have cherished the ideal of a democratic and free society in which all

persons live together in harmony and with equal opportunities. It is an ideal I hope to live for and to achieve. But if needs be, it is an ideal for which I am prepared to die."

After being imprisoned for nearly three decades for his fight against apartheid, Mandela emerged to use his status and charisma to bring down apartheid while avoiding a civil war.

"The time for the healing of the wounds has come. The moment to bridge the chasms that divide us has come," Mandela said in his inaugural speech on becoming South Africa's first black president in 1994.

A few months after being sworn into political office, Mandela threw his support behind a gun hand-in, stating, "Our hard-won political freedom will mean nothing unless we have freedom from violence, freedom from fear..."

Mandela made reconciliation the theme of his presidency. When Mrs Betsie Verwoerd, the widow of Hendrik Verwoerd, infamously known as the 'architect of apartheid', refused an invitation to tea, he decided to surprise her in her whites-only enclave; knocking on her door, and appearing later with her in a smiling photograph. When he was told by his staff that they were changing the name of the Parliamentary office building named after Dr Hendrik Verwoerd, Mandela suggested they hold off until his widow had passed on, 'There is no need to hurt her unnecessarily. It can wait...'

The hallmark of Mandela's mission was the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, which investigated apartheid crimes on both sides and tried to heal the wounds. Based on forgiving, not forgetting, the model has since been used by other countries torn by civil strife.

Includes excerpts from a reflection, 'The Nelson Mandela I knew ... and loved', by Gun Free South Africa's founder and patron, Rev. Dr. Peter Storey, 9 December 2013



Nelson Mandela supported a gun hand-in on 16 December 1994, which marked the birth of Gun Free South Africa.



LETTER FROM THE CHAIR

The world mourned when Nelson Rolihlahla Mandela, South Africa's first democratically elected president, passed away on 5 December 2013. He was admired and respected, revered and celebrated for being a freedom fighter, a Nobel peace prize laureate and the father of a nation.

He was also Gun Free South Africa's very first supporter.

Gun Free South Africa (GFSA) originates from a gun hand-in that took place on 16 December 1994. The then Minister of Safety and Security, Sydney Mufamadi declared a 24-hour, no-questions asked, gun amnesty; whereby anyone handing in a weapon would be exempt from prosecution. Tata Madiba threw his support behind the campaign, giving permission for his photo to be used on posters advertising the gun hand-in and declaring that "Our hard-won political freedom will mean nothing unless we have freedom from violence, freedom from fear..."

Almost 20 years after the gun hand-in, we still live with the fear of daily violence; violence rates in South Africa are much higher than the global average and gun deaths and injuries still present a significant burden to the health, justice and social welfare system. Over 13,000 people were shot and killed in 2012 and 2013. Over 50,000 others survived an incident of gun violence during this same period.

Though GFSA is small in number and limited in resources, we firmly believe the work we do makes a difference in a country awash with violence in general and gun violence in particular. Our voice is clear and uncompromising. We offer a vital alternative to the dominant fearful and violent narrative.

The pages of this report demonstrate how it is possible to begin to shift the dominant narrative of fear and showcase the work GFSA has undertaken to reduce gun violence in South Africa. Much of this work has been achieved by two part-time staff members. Claire Taylor began working for GFSA on 1 January 2012;

which meant that as of 2012 GFSA had a paid employee who could take on much of the work previously done by a committed and active Board working voluntarily. A year later, GFSA's founding Director and world-respected gun control activist, Adèle Kirsten, joined Claire.

While both have worked tirelessly towards achieving our vision of a Gun Free South Africa, the successes and achievements in this report would not have been possible without the involvement, support and commitment of GFSA's Board and the many, many others who contributed their time, expertise and knowledge.

In particular, we would like to acknowledge the contributions made by Adèle Els, Alan Arguile, Barbara Holtmann, Carolyn Raphaely, Daniel Linde, Janet Carlisle, Jerry Nkeli, Karen Cookson, Natalie Jaynes, Nomfundo Mogapi, PJ Hope, Shuaib Chalklen, Sue Soal, Theresa Lorenzo, the staff at 15 on Orange Boutique Hotel and the Centre for Human Rights, Faculty of Law, University of Pretoria, as well as the support we receive from the Open Society Foundation for South Africa and our anonymous benefactor.

Together, we can create the South Africa that Tata Madiba fought so hard to achieve - a country free from fear, free from violence. A Gun Free South Africa.



INTRODUCTION

This report covers a two year period, from January 2012 to December 2013. These two years signalled the return of GFSA into the public domain, as two part-time staff members took over the gun control lobbying, advocacy, public awareness and media relations implicit in the work we do. During this period we have become increasingly aware of a breakdown in the firearms control management system in South Africa (SA). Incidents of irregularities, fraud, alleged corruption and bribery involving local police stations and the national Central Firearms Registry (CFR), as well as firearms training institutions and gun dealers are the subject of regular media coverage.

Added to this is data from the police that the CFR processed over 1 million gun-related applications in nine months. This seeming fast-tracking of applications resulted after the Minister of Police admitted to the “malfunctioning” of the CFR in November 2010, which had caused a backlog of firearm licence applications. The Minister promised to turn the CFR into a “functional unit” that would deal with the backlog by July 2011. A month after this date, in August 2011, 1,048,341 firearm applications (for firearm licences, renewals and competences) were finalised. GFSA’s concern is that the CFR, under mounting pressure to address the backlog,

rapidly processed firearm licences without necessarily following due process.

The latest mortuary data available shows that gun deaths in SA dropped steadily since the Firearms Control Act, and the new system of firearms control it brought into practice, was implemented. Between 1998 and 2009 gun deaths halved - from 34 people a day, to 18.¹

Yet the recent breakdown in SA’s firearms control management system has resulted in a spike in reported gun violence. Although up-to-date mortuary data is unavailable, trauma surgeons have noted an increase in gun-related injuries and deaths.

2014 marks South Africa’s 20th anniversary of democracy; in many ways it’s an opportunity to celebrate all that has been achieved over these years. A significant success has been the thousands of lives saved because of SA’s new gun law. However, any such celebration is marred by the recent spike in gun injuries, most likely due to the breakdown of SA’s firearms control management system. GFSA’s work is, therefore, even more relevant now, as we offer an alternative vision for South Africa beyond 20 years of democracy: a South Africa free from gun violence.

1 Information on gun deaths in SA sourced from R. Chetty, Firearm Use and Distribution in South Africa (Pretoria: The National Crime Prevention Centre, 2000), p.18 and Matzopoulos, R., Prinsloo, M., Bradshaw, D., Pillay-van Wyk, V., Gwebushe, N., Mathews, S., Martin, L., Laubscher, R., Lombard, C., Abrahams, N. The Injury Mortality Survey: A national study of injury mortality levels and causes in South Africa in 2009. Cape Town: South African Medical Research Council, which is in press and due for official release in late 2014.



GUN CONTROL LOBBYING AND ADVOCACY

A core focus during the January 2012 to December 2013 period involved monitoring the implementation of gun control laws, defending attempts to weaken these laws, and closing loopholes which threaten the safety and security of South Africa through the weak or poor management of the firearms control system.

PARLIAMENTARY SUBMISSIONS

A major activity undertaken to achieve GFSA's objective of monitoring, defending and strengthening gun control in SA was engaging with proposed changes to relevant legislation. During the two years under review, GFSA made three parliamentary submissions.

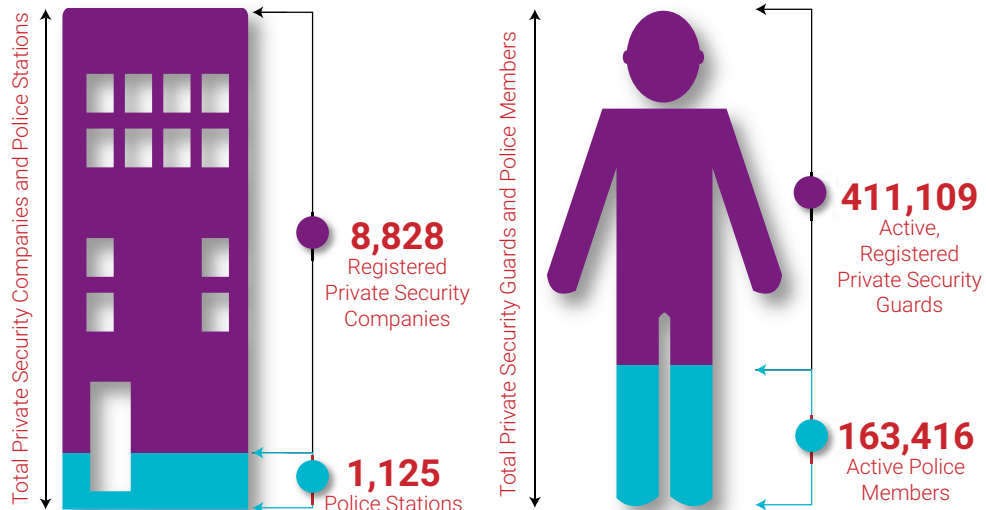
Private Security Industry

The Private Security Industry Regulation Amendment Bill [B 27–2012], which aimed at strengthening the 2001 Act regulating the Private Security Industry Regulatory Authority (PSIRA) - was tabled in parliament on 14 September 2012.

GFSA's written submission on the Bill included calls for:

- Client-level responsibility, which is emerging internationally as good practice. Two international codes of conduct, the Montreux Document and the International Code of Conduct for Private Security Providers, recommend that the contracting party takes responsibility for ensuring that

South Africa's private security industry is the biggest in the world. At last count there were **8,828 registered private security companies** with **411,109 active, registered private security guards**, compared to **1,125 police stations** and **163,416 active police members**.



the private security company contracted is of good and proper standing, and that the company and its staff do not have a prior record of criminal involvement.

- Alignment of training standards and qualifications for private security guards and ensuring discrepancies between and within the Firearms Control Act and PSIRA Act are addressed, as these are confusing and create loopholes allowing for poor training, particularly in relation to gun control.
- Increased monitoring of policing functions undertaken by private security companies, including that PSIRA develops a binding code of conduct and training for all private security companies with armed guards, based on the International Code of Conduct for Private Security Providers on the use of force.

GFSA was invited to make an oral presentation to the parliamentary Police Portfolio Committee on 1 November 2012. Our input was well received by MPs and PSIRA, with both engaging extensively with our recommendations.

In addition to making both a written and an oral submission on the PSIRA Bill, GFSA networked with ten civil society organisations, empowering and encouraging them to also make submissions, including the Ceasefire Campaign and Campaign for a Safer South Africa.

Green Paper on Policing

GFSA made a written submission on the Green Paper on Policing in July 2013. The Green Paper (Notice 616 of 2013) was developed by the Civilian Secretariat of Police for three reasons: to put in place a comprehensive framework to guide policing strategies over the medium to long-term; to contribute towards building a well-resourced, professional and highly skilled police service; and to contribute towards entrenching effective and accountable policing.

In our submission GFSA noted that while firearms control related issues were mentioned throughout the Green Paper, no section focused on this issue. As such, GFSA urged for the inclusion of a consolidated section in the law dealing specifically with police and firearms. Our call was based on the following:

- The South African Police Service (SAPS) is the state body tasked with the control of firearms in South Africa. As such, SAPS (whether at the Central Firearms Registry, provincial or station level) is responsible for ensuring the integrity of the entire firearms control management chain. Thus, it is imperative that the Green Paper includes policies around the police's role in firearms control.
- Being an armed police force, firearms are a central tool in police officers' daily work. The Green Paper must, therefore, spell out in detail the principles of firearm use in policing.

As well as being armed, SA's police force is the state body responsible for firearms control. As such, it is imperative that policing policies include specific guidelines relating to police and firearms.



DANGEROUS WEAPONS BILL

One of these is a toy, can you tell the difference?



GFSA made both a written and oral submission on the Dangerous Weapons Bill [B 37–2012] in February 2013.

In our submissions GFSA called for a ban on all replica/imitation firearms. In making this call we noted that in a country like South Africa, where gun violence is rife, no one is in a position to consider whether a gun is real or an imitation.

GFSA's call to ban replica/imitation firearms

resonated with a key discussion in parliament on the Bill; the question of intention. With the Bill giving the police the power to intervene if they suspect that a replica/imitation firearm will be used to commit a crime, the challenge is deciding on a person's intention. GFSA argued that if replica/imitation firearms were banned, intention would be clear – only people with criminal intent would have a replica/imitation firearm in their possession.

COMMITTEE OF ENQUIRY

On 15 May 2013 the Minister of Police announced the establishment of a committee of enquiry to “investigate unscrupulous dealers in firearms and illegally-operating firearms training institutions”. In his media statement the Minister explained that the reason for establishing the committee was to investigate the practices of “certain” firearms dealers and training institutions that were flouting the Firearms Control Act (FCA). Headed by two advocates, Soraya Hassim and Rams Ramashia, the committee started its work in June 2013.

On 1 August 2013, GFSA staff members, Adèle Kirsten and Claire Taylor, met with the committee for a frank and engaged discussion on the state of gun control in South Africa, which revolved around three points:

1. Problems are systemic not isolated

Firstly, the committee was urged to not regard individual incidents of fraud, bribery or corruption under investigation as isolated and disconnected. Instead, GFSA encouraged it to examine the systemic nature of the problem, with a view to identifying both operational and policy gaps and weaknesses along the entire firearms control management chain.

2. Forensic audit of all gun licences

Secondly, the committee was asked to either expand its terms of reference to conduct a forensic audit of all gun certificates, licences and permits issued by the police from January 2011 or that it makes this recommendation in its findings.

In making this appeal, evidence was presented that key role-players tasked with ensuring that gun licences are granted only to ‘fit and proper persons’ are circumventing the law by undermining its purpose: to regulate who owns what gun for which purpose.

GFSA spelt out the dual impact of this breakdown in South Africa’s firearms control management system. The first is diversion, which is the process by

which legal guns are lost to the illegal pool because of weaknesses in the chain of firearms control. These weaknesses allow legal guns to be siphoned out of the legal pool and into the illegal pool where there are no controls. Due to the fact that firearms are robust commodities with no ‘sell-by’ date, once they are in the illegal pool they are repeatedly used to perpetrate crimes with few mechanisms to ‘mop’ them up.

The second impact is an increase in gun related violence. This is evident in the increase in the number of shootings reported in the media, hospital trauma unit admissions showing a spike in gun-related injuries and the increasing number of calls for assistance to GFSA from women who are threatened by their gun-owning partners.

3. Moratorium on all gun licences

Finally, the feasibility of placing a moratorium on the issuing of all gun certificates, licences and permits while the committee’s work is in progress was discussed. GFSA argued that, given the importance of having a well-functioning and effective firearms control management system, the most reasonable and practical step is to halt all business until the committee’s work is complete. However, GFSA did acknowledge the veracity of the Minister of Police’s view that if the firearms control licensing system is shut down while the committee conducts its investigation, it will not be able to examine the system as it functions daily. Consequently, the committee was urged to consider the pros and cons in this regard.

GFSA’s submission was an opportunity to insert a new voice into the committee’s deliberations. Through us, the committee began to recognise that an individual’s ownership of a gun impacts on broader community safety, in that one gun can threaten an entire community if it is lost, stolen or misused. In addition, GFSA encouraged the committee to consider seeking input from the public health community and those organisations working with women affected by violence.



PROMOTING SAFE AND GUN FREE COMMUNITIES



G FSA's years of experience in supporting Gun Free Zones makes us an invaluable and rich resource for organisations working towards community safety. G FSA is regularly approached by small community organisations for help and advice as they recognise that one way for community members to live free is to go gun free.

However, in 2012 and 2013 G FSA was approached by two large institutions - Telkom (South Africa's largest wire-line telecommunications provider) and the Gauteng Department of Health (DOH) - for advice on the process of making their respective premises gun free. Telkom approached G FSA after its (then) CEO, Ms Nombulelo Pinkie Moholi, instigated a process to make all Telkom premises and service outlets gun free, as she did not want any firearms on Telkom premises. The Gauteng DOH wanted G FSA's support in a 2013 campaign to promote a healthy and safe environment for staff and patients at all its clinics. The campaign recognised that a gun free space is healthier and safer for everyone.

G FSA liaised with both Telkom and the provincial DOH, including a presentation to Telkom's National Strategy Team. This was an opportunity for Telkom to engage with the practicalities of the initiative, while tapping into G FSA's knowledge and resources. In addition to providing guidance, G FSA made the template of our standardised 'This is a Gun Free Zone' sign available so that both Telkom and the DOH could adapt it with their logos and start creating Gun Free Zones as islands of safety.

G FSA's innovative Gun Free Zones have gone global: They've been incorporated into UNODA Guidelines on GFZs.



In recognition of G FSA's wealth of experience in establishing and supporting Gun Free Zones, in 2013 we were approached by the United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs (UNODA) for help in developing a Gun Free Zone guide, aimed at governments and communities wishing to establish and maintain Gun Free Zones. After a series of interviews, in which G FSA shared our experience and materials, the draft UNODA Gun-Free Zone Guidelines, strongly based on G FSA's work, were developed. The guidelines are focused, clear, succinct, easy to use and an acknowledgement of the value of Gun Free Zones as a community safety building tool.

Telkom approached G FSA for advice on making its 6,000 premises gun free, recognising that gun free spaces are safer.



Gun Free Zones: Islands of safety in a sea of guns



MEDIA AND PUBLIC RELATIONS

MEDIA RELATIONS

Media Enquiries

In the early hours of Valentine's Day 2013, one of the world's most famous athletes, South African double-amputee paralympian Oscar Pistorius, killed his girlfriend, Reeva Steenkamp - shooting her through a closed bathroom door at his home. Oscar has defended his actions, claiming Reeva's death was an accident; in his affidavit he testified that he believed that an intruder or intruders had got into his two-storey house, in a guarded and gated community with walls topped by electrified fencing, and were inside the toilet cubicle in his bathroom. Thinking he and Steenkamp "would be in grave danger" if they came out, he "fired shots at the toilet door" with the firearm that he slept with under his bed. Pistorius claims he wasn't wearing his prosthetic limbs "and felt extremely vulnerable". However, neighbours reported hearing arguing before the shooting, resulting in the state pursuing a case of premeditated murder against Pistorius. The court case started on 3 March 2014.



The media interest following Oscar Pistorius' shooting and killing of Reeva Steenkamp was unprecedented, as newsrooms around the world scrambled for the latest news and analysis. GFSA was well-placed to respond; having the latest statistics available on gun ownership, gun use and distribution in South Africa, as well as gun use in domestic violence. In total, GFSA responded to over 50 requests for interviews, including with Al Jazeera, AFP, Associated Press, the BBC, CNN and South Africa's popular television breakfast show, SABC Morning Live.

The deluge of media requests following the Oscar-Reeva shooting was extreme, but it was not the only focus of our media presence. Throughout 2012 and 2013, GFSA responded to a steady stream of media enquiries - over 150 in the two years under review. These included GFSA's call for a moratorium on all gun licences issued, our response to allegations of fraud and corruption in the firearms industry including the CFR, as well as our proposed solutions to gang-related violence in the Western Cape and gun-related violence in schools.

GFSA responded to over 150 enquiries from the media in 2012-2013.



Media Statements

In addition to responding to media enquiries, GFSA proactively shaped the news agenda by issuing media statements and comments. Almost 20 media releases were issued over the two year period, alerting the media to GFSA activities and responses to events. These included:

GFSA Activities

- GFSA's oral submission to Parliament on the Private Security Industry Regulatory Authority Bill, was complemented with a statement alerting the media to loopholes in the legislation relating to the private security industry, which means that there are no controls over firearms owned by private security companies.
- We issued a statement to announce the publication of *Gun Violence, Recovery and Disability*, which GFSA launched in South Africa in partnership with the Surviving Gun Violence Project (see Events and Functions below for details).

Response to events

Many of GFSA's media statements were congratulatory, including:

- Praising the police for holding a gun destruction event in Vereeniging on 29 March 2012 at which GFSA Board member, Pamela Crowsley spoke (see Events and Functions below for more details).
- Congratulating the Minister of Police on acting swiftly in response to allegations of irregularities in the firearms licensing process and establishing a committee of enquiry to 'investigate unscrupulous dealers in firearms and illegally-operating firearms training institutions' - as described in Lobbying and Advocacy above.
- Applauding the police for taking decisive action after the two most senior police officers at the CFR were suspended with immediate effect for their involvement in bribery and corruption relating to firearm licensing. In our statement we raised our concern that the two were implicated and called for a forensic audit of all licences issued since one of the suspended officers, Brigadier Mangwane, took over the helm of the CFR.

Following the Sunday Times' extensive coverage of gang violence on the Cape Flats, including Western Cape Premier Helen Zille's call to deploy the army, GFSA approached the paper to publish an opinion piece looking at preventing gang related violence from a public health perspective. The piece, *Fewer guns is the answer to Cape Flats violence: Firearms ban would make policing easier and safer*, written by Naeemah Abrahams, Richard Matzopoulos and Sebastian van As was published on 5 August 2012.

Other media statements were in response to tragic shootings:

- Urging the Minister of Police to stipulate that police officers leave their firearms at work when off-duty; this after an 18-year-old pupil allegedly took his mother's gun to school and shot dead a fellow pupil whom he accused of bullying; the pupil's mother was a police officer and the firearm used was her official firearm.
- Warning that children cannot be 'gun-proofed', which is the term used when children are told to leave a gun alone and not touch it, if they find it. GFSA's response followed the tragic death of three children in two incidents: in the first, a 13-year-old accidentally shot his friend with his father's gun, which was left under a mattress, before shooting himself dead; in the second, a 6-year-old shot and killed her best friend with her grandfather's gun, which was also not safely locked away. In our statement we pointed out that "Gun proofing children is ineffective and dangerous; it makes children responsible for an adult gun owner who has violated the law by failing to store his gun unloaded and locked in a safe."
- On the one month anniversary of Reeva Steenkamp's death, we issued a media statement pointing out that just 40 of the 540 gun-related deaths in SA during the month period had been reported in the media. Our message was that gun violence is preventable: the strengthening of South Africa's gun laws has helped save lives, but more needs to be done, specifically closing loopholes and tightening controls to save more lives.



Media Events Calendar

Rather than merely reacting to events 'out there' GFSA developed a media events calendar for 2012-2013, so as to further shape the news agenda. The following activities were undertaken in these two years:



In SA 3 women are killed every day by their intimate partner, down from 4; because of the Firearms Control Act, which has significantly reduced the number of women shot and killed.

2012

11–17 June: IANSA Global Week of Action Against Gun Violence

GFSA partnered with CrimeLine in a campaign encouraging the public to report illegal guns and gun use.



For the 2012 International Action Network on Small Arms (IANSA) Week of Action Against Gun Violence, GFSA linked up with CrimeLine, which, through a series of adverts on Primedia radio stations as well as social media platforms, encouraged people to report illegal guns and gun use to 32211, CrimeLine's anonymous SMS crime tip-off number.

9 August: Women's Day

GFSA partnered with the Medical Research Council on a seminar that the Gender and Health Unit hosted in Pretoria on 21 August to launch the latest research into female homicides. The findings included that the number of women killed by their intimate partner has dropped from four women a day in 1999 to three women a day in 2009. This translates into a drop from one woman being killed every six hours in 1999 to one woman being killed every 8 hours in 2009.

The reason for this drop in intimate femicide is due to a decline in the number of women that were shot and killed compared to deaths by other means, including stab and blunt injuries. The researchers attributed this decrease in gun-related deaths to the implementation of the Firearms Control Act (2000).²

² Abrahams N, Mathews S, Martin LJ, Lombard C, Jewkes R (2013) Intimate Partner Femicide in South Africa in 1999 and 2009. *PLoS Med* 10(4): e1001412. doi:10.1371/journal.pmed.1001412.





10 September: World Suicide Prevention Day

For World Suicide Prevention Day, GFSA developed a pamphlet called Suicide Prevention: The Means Matter

Firearms are used in 14% of suicides in South Africa. Gun-related suicide attempts are almost always fatal, while those with other methods are less likely to kill. Putting time and distance between a suicidal person and a gun may save a life. Nine out of ten people who survive an attempt do not go on to die by suicide later.



published on two popular online health and wellness sites managed by two of South Africa's biggest media groups, Lifestyle on Independent Online and Health 24.

While people often ask 'why?' after a suicide or suicide attempt, an important question to ask is 'how?' This is because the means by which someone tries to or does kill themselves is very important, often meaning the difference between attempting suicide and committing suicide.

Guns differ from other means. They are quick and irreversible. Once the trigger is pulled, death usually follows within minutes. People attempting suicide by other means, such as pills, car exhaust fumes or razors have some time to reconsider mid-attempt and summon help or be rescued. With a firearm, once the trigger is pulled, there's no turning back.

Putting time and distance between a suicidal person and a gun may save a life. The pamphlet includes information on how to safely hand in a gun, or, where this is not possible, what the law requires regarding safe storage of a gun.

GFSA sent copies of the pamphlet to LifeLine SA and the South African Depression and Anxiety Group as a resource for both counsellors and clients. The text was also

SUICIDE PREVENTION: THE MEANS MATTER

Efforts to prevent suicide generally focus on the **why**. We provide support and care to those who are suicidal – trying to help resolve the problems that led to their hopelessness. This is a valuable and humane response. But as we understand more about who attempts suicide and when and where and why, it becomes increasingly clear that **how** people attempt – the means they use – plays a crucial role in whether they live or die.

Firearms are used in 14% of suicides in South Africa!

Handguns account for 46% of suicides in South Africa, followed by poisoning (17%) and firearms (14%). Nearly 70% of all suicide victims are aged between 15–44 years. Deaths due to suicide are highest among youth aged 15–29 years (26%) followed by adults aged 30–44 (23%). There are four male suicides for every female suicide. The major external causes of suicide among males are hanging (50%) and firearms (19%); while among females it is poisoning (38%) and hanging (30%).

When do people take their lives?

Many suicide attempts occur impulsively during a crisis.

A study of people in the United States (25) who nearly died in a suicide attempt, were asked, "How much time passed between the time you decided to complete suicide and when you actually attempted suicide?"

- 24% said less than five minutes.
- Another 47% said an hour or less.

Although some people who die by suicide plan their act carefully, many don't. In fact, many take their lives within 24 hours of a crisis – like an argument with a family member or a relationship break-up. One third of youths who died by suicide in the US had faced a crisis within 24 hours!

Why do people take their lives?

Many factors lead individuals to try to end their lives. Drug and alcohol dependence and abuse, depression and certain other mental illnesses, impulsiveness and aggressiveness, family history of suicide, parental psychopathology, previous attempts, and recent losses or setbacks (like a relationship break-up, arrest, or job problems) are risk factors for suicide deaths and attempts.

The **why** of suicide is important, but a growing body of research indicates that **how** people attempt suicide is also important. Reducing access to lethal means is an effective way to increase the odds that a suicide attempt will end in care, not in death.

The means matter when it comes to suicide prevention.

Guns are more lethal than other suicide means.

They're quick. And they're irreversible.

Doesn't all that diminishes whether an attempter lives or dies, means also matter.

About 80% of attempts with a firearm are fatal (that's a much higher case fatality rate than for nearly every other method). Many of the most widely used suicide attempt methods have case fatality rates below 5%.

Reducing access to lethal means saves lives.

How do guns differ from other means?

Guns are more lethal. They're quick. And they're irreversible. Once the trigger is pulled, death usually follows within minutes. Attempters who take pills or inhale car exhaust fumes or use razors have some time to reconsider mid-attempt and summon help or be rescued. The method itself often fails, even in the absence of a rescue. Even suicide attempters who use hanging can stop mid-way as about half of hanging suicides are partial suspension (meaning the person can release the pressure if they change their mind). With a firearm, once the trigger is pulled, there's no turning back.

WHY?

WHY?

WHY?

WHY?

WHY?

HOW?

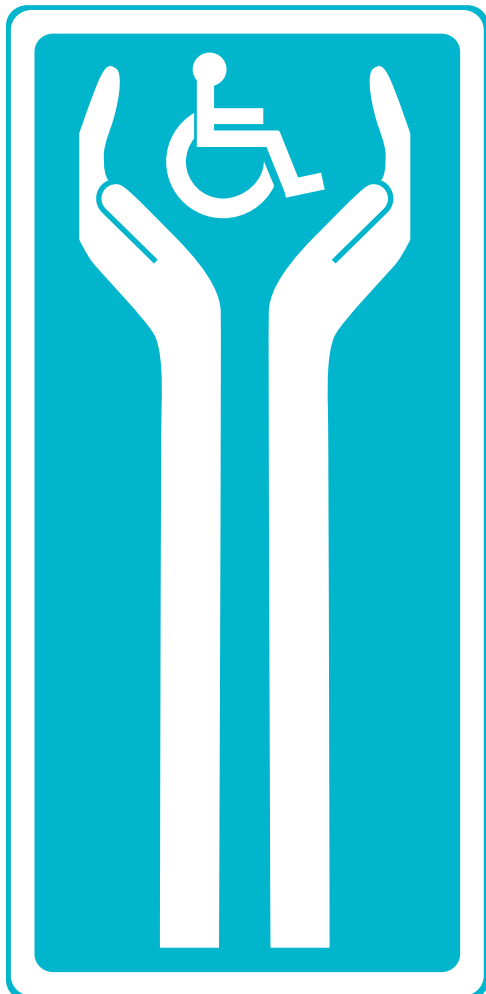


2013

16–21 September: IANSA Global Week of Action Against Gun Violence



For the 2013 IANSA Global Week of Action Against Gun Violence, which was chosen to coincide with the commemoration of the International Day of Peace on 21 September, GFSA launched our new website, see Public Relations below for more information.



10 October: World Mental Health Day

The theme of World Mental Health Day in 2013 was helping the elderly with their problems of depression and loneliness, both of which are major contributors to suicide. GFSA ran a social media campaign to raise awareness about the importance of putting time and distance between a suicidal person and a gun, using the pamphlet on preventing gun-related suicide developed for the 2012 World Suicide Prevention Day.

3 November–3 December: National Disability Month

GFSA partnered with the global NGO Surviving Gun Violence Project to launch a new publication, *Gun Violence, Disability and Recovery*, see Events and Functions for more information.



PUBLIC RELATIONS

Events and Functions

Gun destruction

GFSA Board member, Pamela Crowsley, spoke at a gun destruction event that took place in Vereeniging on 29 March 2012. In her address she applauded the destruction of firearms by the SAPS, pointing out that all too often we hear about the destruction caused by firearms.

2010–2011 Annual Report celebration

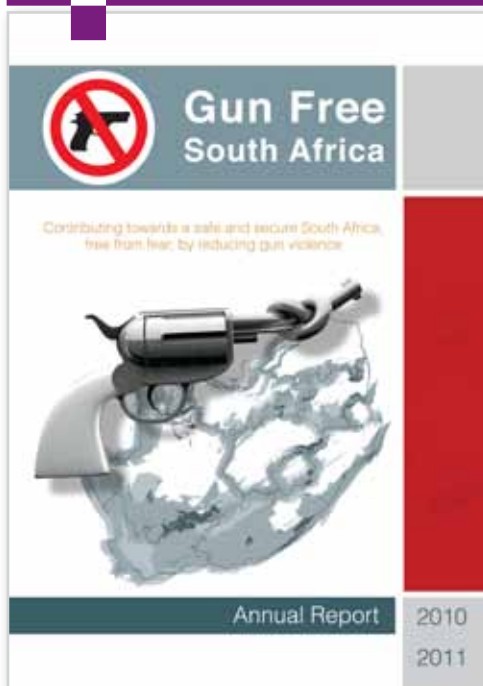
GFSA launched our 2010-2011 annual report at a small celebratory event. The function was held at the boutique hotel, 15 On Orange in Cape Town, which provided the venue free of charge, and discounted catering by 25%, in support of GFSA's work. 15 on Orange's support was given after a service provider of theirs was shot and injured in a hi-jacking a few months earlier.



Destroying stockpiles of weapons is a visible sign that SA's government is committed to creating a safe and secure country.

Twenty guests attended the launch, including representatives from the Safety and Violence Initiative (SaVI) and NICRO, as well as one of GFSA's patrons, Rev. Dr. Peter Storey.

GFSA launched our 2010-2011 annual report at a celebratory lunch at the boutique hotel, 15 On Orange.



Peter Storey, GFSA's Founder and Patron spoke at the celebratory launch



Publication launch

For every person shot and killed, between three and 14 people survive. GFSA partnered with the global NGO, Surviving Gun Violence Project, to launch a new publication on gun violence and associated disability. GFSA's Adèle Kirsten and Malose Langa both contributed to the publication.



What are the experiences of survivors of gun violence, what can we learn from them so as to better assist others' recovery and how can we prevent gun-related injury and impairments in the future? These questions are answered in a landmark book GFSA co-launched in South Africa in November 2013.

To coincide with Disability Month (3 November to 3 December 2013) under the United Nations' theme "Break Barriers, open doors: for an inclusive society for all"; GFSA partnered with the global NGO Surviving Gun Violence Project to launch a new publication, *Gun Violence, Disability and Recovery*. Two contributions from GFSA affiliates were included in the publication; GFSA Board member, Malose Langa, contributed a piece on guns and notions of violent masculinities and Adèle Kirsten, GFSA staff member, wrote the country chapter on South Africa.

Gun Violence, Disability and Recovery provides the first ever global overview of the rights and needs of survivors of gun violence. The collection contains contributions from over 35 gun violence survivors, trauma surgeons, disability rights activists, rehabilitation specialists, violence prevention and reduction experts, development practitioners, and gender justice advocates. From countries with low resource levels to those already equipped with state-of-the-art rehabilitation centres, this innovative publication provides policymakers, practitioners, government officials, and donors with timely analysis on what could be done differently to meet the needs and rights of survivors of gun violence.

Two events were held to launch the publication in SA, one in Cape Town on 1 November and another in Pretoria on 6 November.

Gun Violence, Disability and Recovery



Cate Buchanan, Editor



Almost 20,000 of the 2 million people shot worldwide each year were shot in South Africa in 2009, but survived to tell their story.



Cape Town

The Cape Town launch of *Gun Violence, Disability and Recovery* was held as part of the SaVI Colloquium on *Understanding and Preventing Violence in Africa* on the evening of 1 November 2013 at a SaVI cocktail function. The Colloquium itself was attended by a range of people working in the field of violence prevention such as emergency medical and trauma staff (including professors and students from the Groote Schuur Hospital trauma unit), psycho-social trauma specialists, criminologists, social workers, community workers, urban safety upgrade specialists, psychologists and gun control advocates and researchers.

Dr Sebastian van As, GFSA Board member and head of the trauma unit at the Red Cross Children's Hospital, was the MC. He included stories from the hospital and highlighted the importance of preventing gun violence in children.

Three speakers made inputs at the launch:

- Shuaib Chalklen, UN Special Rapporteur on Disability and a gun violence survivor.
- Theresa Lorenzo, Associate Professor in Disability Studies at the University of Cape Town.
- Adèle Kirsten, Gun Free South Africa - see Box for more information on Adèle's contribution.

Adèle Kirsten inserts SA's voice in global publication on gun violence and disability

GFSA's Adèle Kirsten contributed the country chapter on South Africa to *Gun Violence, Disability and Recovery*, for which she interviewed a number of gun violence survivors and caregivers to record their experiences of gun violence, impairment and recovery. Through her research Adèle shows that South Africa, unlike many other countries, has some good policy in place but this isn't effectively implemented to address the rights of survivors of violence and crime - rights that are eroded by the lack of firm legal obligation to implement policies, an ineffective and inefficient public sector, poverty and geography.

According to Adèle, "While *Gun Violence, Disability and Recovery* is about moving beyond the body count and engaging with those who survive gun violence; it's ultimately about preventing gun violence and associated impairments. To this end Gun Free South Africa will continue working towards our vision of a South Africa free from gun violence."

Pretoria

Gun Violence, Disability and Recovery was launched in collaboration with the Centre for Human Rights, Faculty of Law, University of Pretoria, which provided the venue and audio-

visual equipment free of charge as part of the Conference on Disability Rights in Africa on 6 November 2013. Participants included gun violence survivors and/or people closely connected and involved in disability rights, as



well as a range of government representatives from the Department of Women, Children and People with Disabilities.

Nomfundo Mogapi, Head of the Trauma Unit at the Centre for the Study of Violence and Reconciliation acted as MC, highlighting the long term impacts of trauma and the importance of gun violence survivors being heard - both in identifying their needs and realising their rights.

Three speakers made inputs at the launch:

- Jerry Nkeli, Human Rights lawyer and violence survivor.
- Carolyn Raphaely, Wits Justice Project, who contributed to *Gun Violence, Disability and Recovery*. See Box for more information on Carolyn's contribution.
- Adèle Kirsten, Gun Free South Africa - see Box for more information on Adèle's contribution.

The impact of launching *Gun Violence, Disability and Recovery* has been far-reaching.

One exciting development is that the issue of gun violence has been located within South Africa's disability and rehabilitation sector, which means people are starting to engage with gun violence as an issue distinct from other causes of disability. This, in turn, has implications for survivors of gun violence to begin discussing whether the experience of surviving gun violence is unique, what survivors' needs and rights are and what can be done to prevent others from having to survive gun violence.

A second outcome is that a number of survivors of gun violence have approached GFSA for assistance - medical, psycho-social and involving criminal justice. As GFSA is not a service provider, we have started linking up with organisations that provide these services so we can refer survivors on; knowing that they will get the service they need, while reducing the risk of secondary victimisation and trauma. In addition, GFSA has updated our website to include these contacts, including a link to the Surviving Gun Violence Project.

Carolyn Raphaely compares Oscar with Ronnie

In her input at the Pretoria launch of *Gun Violence, Disability and Recovery*, Carolyn Raphaely from the Wits Justice Project compared the experiences of two awaiting trial prisoners by SA's Department of Correctional Services. As paralympian murder-accused Oscar Pistorius succeeded in having his bail conditions relaxed, allowing him to travel and drink alcohol; Ronnie Fakude, a 50-year-old paraplegic (after being shot in a hi-jacking) in prison for alleged fraud, was again denied bail. While allegations are levelled at prison authorities for giving Oscar 'special treatment', the same authorities claimed that Ronnie pretended to be disabled, which is why they refused to give him a wheelchair and denied him medical treatment.

Through this stark comparison, Carolyn graphically illustrated the human rights abuses perpetrated against people with disabilities in SA's prisons - that is, unless they have money. The Wits Justice Project has set up a fund to help Ronnie, and all proceeds from the sale of *Gun Violence, Disability and Recovery's* eBooks have been donated to this fund.

Public Enquiries

During 2012 and 2013 GFSA responded to various public queries regarding gun control and safety. While most people requested information on how to get rid of an inherited firearm, increasingly GFSA is being asked to help women who are threatened by a partner who owns a gun. In such cases, GFSA works with the police and civil society organisations, such as the Tshwaranang Legal Advocacy Centre and ProBono.Org.

GFSA Website

GFSA 'soft' launched our new website - www.gfsa.org.za - in 2013, to coincide with the IANSA week of action against gun violence. The more formal launch of the website will take place to celebrate GFSA's 20th anniversary.

The aim of the website is to be a one stop shop for action to reduce gun violence. It includes a range of resources aimed at **preventing gun violence**, such as:

- Use your voice to stop a bullet
- Procedure for handing in a legal firearm to be destroyed
- Do you know someone who should not have a gun?
- Stop guns in domestic violence
- Stop gun-related suicide

- Make your space a gun free zone
- Children and guns, including toy guns

One of the pages focuses on surviving gun violence, including a summary of post-traumatic stress symptoms and a list of organisations that provide a range of services gun violence survivors may need to help them in their journey of healing.

The new website also includes a map listing incidents of gun violence reported in the media. While this relies on media reports (rather than actual incidents involving the 18 people that are shot and killed each day in South Africa), the purpose is to give a face and name to some of the people affected by gun violence, to make them 'real' rather than a number, and to make people realise that gun violence affects everyone, anywhere.

Twitter

GFSA tweets daily, alerting followers to the latest news, analysis, events and developments.

During 2012-2013, the number of people following GFSA increased from 150 to 450.



OPERATIONS AND ORGANISATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

GFSA BOARD

In late 2012, GFSA Board member, Adèle Kirsten stepped down and in 2013 GFSA welcomed Malose Langa as a new Board member, keeping the number of GFSA Board members to eight expert and committed individuals:

Name	Position on Board	Organisation, skills and experience
Alan Storey	Chair	Methodist Minister, Central Methodist Mission, Cape Town
Felicity Harrison	Vice-Chair	Director, Goedgedacht Forum
Pamela Crowsley	Secretary	Gun Violence Survivor
Nareshnie Maharaj	Treasurer	Finance Manager, PACSA (Pietermaritzburg Agency for Community Social Action)
Malose Langa	Board Member	Registered psychologist and lecturer at the School of Community and Human Development, University of Witwatersrand and researcher at the Centre for the Study of Violence and Reconciliation
Naeemah Abrahams	Board Member	Deputy Director, Gender and Health Research Unit, Medical Research Council
Richard Matzopoulos	Board Member	Specialist Scientist, Burden of Disease Research Unit, Medical Research Council
Sebastian van As	Board Member	Professor and Head: Trauma Unit of Red Cross Children's Hospital and Department of Paediatric Surgery, University of Cape Town; President: Childsafe South Africa

STAFFING

In the two years under review, two highly-skilled and experienced staff members joined GFSA on a part-time basis. Claire Taylor re-joined the organisation as a national coordinator in January 2011. Claire started her working life at GFSA whilst still a student at Wits University, working her way up to the position of Information Manager, before leaving to travel and gain experience in other fields. Her continued interest in GFSA and skills meant she could easily take on this role. A year later, Adèle Kirsten - founding Director of GFSA and internationally recognised expert on gun control and armed violence prevention - joined Claire, after resigning from GFSA's Board.



MEETINGS

In addition to its Annual General Meeting, GFSA's Board met four times in both 2012 and 2013. Due to the fact that Board and staff members are scattered across four provinces, most meetings were conference calls, but each year the Board met face-to-face to plan GFSA's work for the year ahead.



GFSA's Board and staff meet annually to plan for the year ahead.



FINANCES

GFSA appointed CMDS, which has served the non profit sector for over 20 years, as our new book-keeper in 2013. So far, CMDS has implemented a range of simple and effective systems for GFSA's monthly book-keeping. In addition, GFSA's Finance Committee meets bi-monthly to look at GFSA's books, budgets and to address any concerns relating to finances.

At GFSA's 2013 AGM, the Board agreed to appoint Horwath Zeller Karro as GFSA's auditor, noting that it was good governance practice to change auditors periodically.



ABBREVIATED FINANCIAL REPORT

for the period 1 January to 31 December 2012 and
1 January to 31 December 2013

INCOME STATEMENT	2012 (RANDES)	2013 (RANDES)
Total Income	346,829	838,862
Grants and donations received	342,548	826,603
Sundry income	853	7,430
Interest received	3,428	4,829
Total Expenditure	-361,296	-756,179
Salaries and consultants	-174,361	-469,589
Project fees	-158,827	-218,046
Office administration	-28,108	-68,544
Total comprehensive surplus (deficit) for the year	-14,467	82,683

Accounts for the financial year ended 31 December 2012 audited by Swart and Associates Registered Auditors.

Accounts for the financial year ended 31 December 2013 audited by Horwath Zeller Karo Registered Auditors.

Audited accounts for the financial year ended 31 December 2012 and 31 December 2013 are available from Gun Free South Africa.



CONCLUSION

In addition to reporting on GFSA's activities during 2012 and 2013, this report tracks the alarming increase in the breakdown of SA's firearms control management system. While the Minister of Police has taken action, including suspending senior police officials and establishing a committee of enquiry to investigate irregularities in the system; GFSA will continue to call for a forensic audit to be undertaken of all gun licences, permits and authorisations issued since 2011, which is when problems in the firearms control management system began. The impact of this breakdown is already being seen by trauma surgeons across SA in the form of a spike in gun-related injuries.

Nelson Mandela, South Africa's first democratically elected president was a visionary, including his observation that South Africa will never truly be free when people continue to live in fear and violence. While gun violence has declined since new gun legislation was implemented in SA, the breakdown in the firearms control management system dating from 2011, means we are still not free from the fear of gun violence.

2014 is South Africa's 20th anniversary of democracy, which is both an opportunity to celebrate all that has been accomplished and to reflect on what we want to achieve in the next 20 years. The thousands of people who are alive today because of SA's new gun law is cause for celebration. However, the fact that 18 people are shot and killed every day means South Africa is still not truly free; and for those 18 to 72 who survive being shot each day, the journey of healing and recovery is long and tough. GFSA will continue working towards Madiba's vision of a country free of the fear of gun violence, a vision of a Gun Free South Africa.





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