

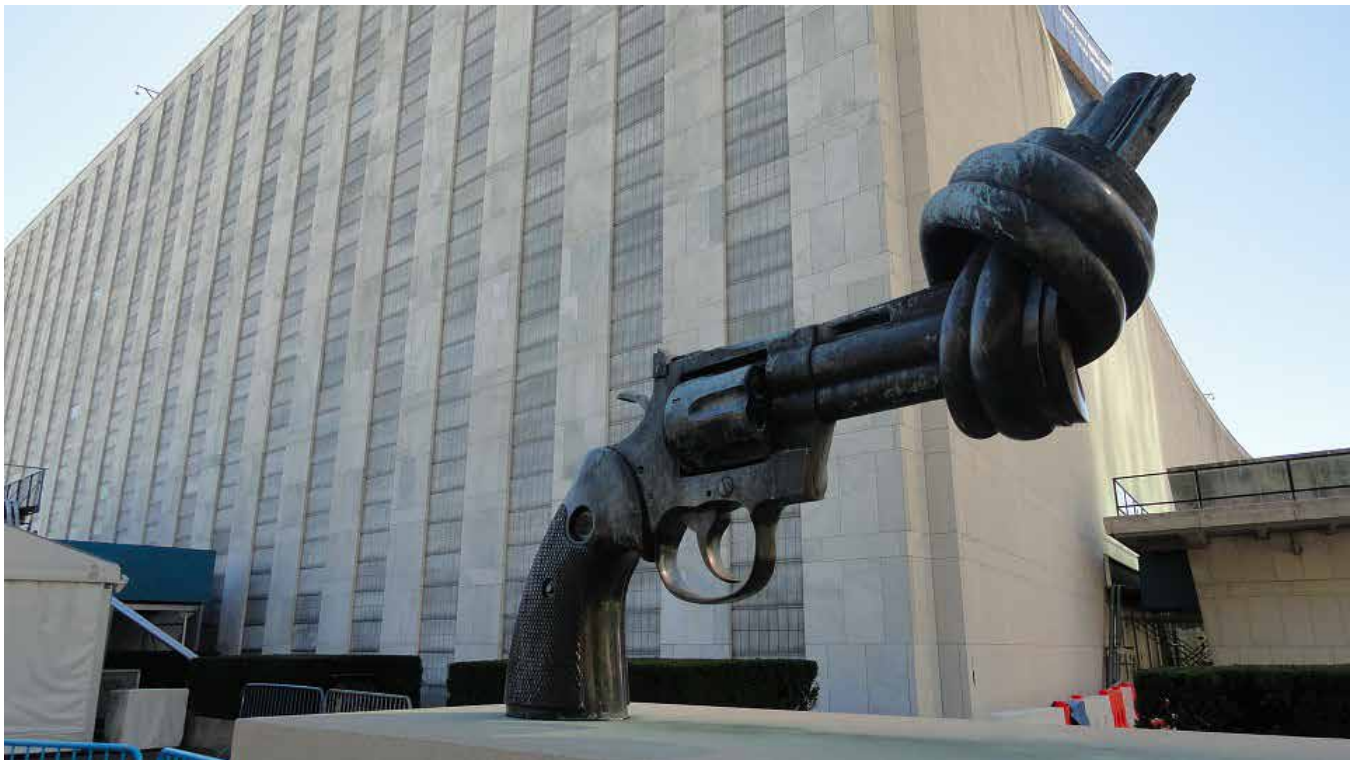
# Gun Free South Africa's story: 1995-2025

Celebrating 30 years of making South Africa  
a safer country by reducing gun violence



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## KEY ACHIEVEMENTS

### Strengthening gun control

**Ensured that South Africa's Constitution recognises civilian gun ownership as a privilege** under the law and not as a fundamental right.

**Successfully lobbied for the Firearms Control Act (2000), which has saved thousands of lives:** Research published in the American Journal of Public Health shows that over 4,500 lives were saved in five South African cities over five years (2001-2005) because of the Act.

**Provided expert advice to the courts when the Firearms Control Act was under attack:** Highlights include acting as amicus curiae (friend of the court) in a Constitutional Court case regarding the constitutionality of firearm licence renewals. The ConCourt ruled that gun ownership is a privilege, not a right under South Africa's Bill of Rights, and that firearm licence renewals are therefore constitutional. In 2020 GFSA again acted as amicus curiae when the Supreme Court of Appeal upheld this ruling—a significant victory for gun control in SA.

Through lobbying and advocacy **GFSA has consistently held the state to account for upholding gun control laws and protecting the country from gun violence. This focus was strengthened through GFSA's Prinsloo Guns class action:** Launched on 10 May 2023 on behalf of families to hold the state accountable for leaking guns in police stores to gang leaders, the Prinsloo Guns class action is a significant highlight and marks a new approach for GFSA.

While GFSA has been involved in previous court action, the Prinsloo Guns class action takes state accountability to the door of the Police Minister for failure to secure police weapons and ammunition stocks by seeking financial relief linked to deaths and injuries as well as an obligation on the police to improve its protocols for recording, storing and handling firearms.

**Published a comprehensive report 'Gun control and violence: South Africa's story' which tracks 25 years of gun control to show that strong gun laws save lives but poor enforcement kills.** This report has been instrumental in mapping what needs to be done to address SA's rising gun violence levels, which, as of 2025, are almost as high as 30 years ago.

## KEY ACHIEVEMENTS

**Made over 30 policy submissions to focus attention on the unique role of guns in driving violence in SA.** GFSA's evidence-based submissions have called for tighter controls over civilian and state-held firearms and ammunition as well as improved oversight of the police and private security industry. GFSA has also lobbied for reforms to domestic violence legislation to better protect women and children from gun-related violence, national youth policies to safeguard young people, victim support services legislation to strengthen systems for crime victims, and liquor laws to address the proven alcohol-violence nexus. GFSA's strategic policy advocacy has positioned the organisation as a trusted voice in national violence prevention and has helped influence legislative frameworks to protect vulnerable communities from gun violence.

**Published over 120 evidence-based firearms policy briefings to strengthen South Africa's violence prevention framework.** These briefings translate new data and gun violence prevention research into actionable insights for parliamentarians, government officials including police leadership, and community safety leaders.

**Championed national firearm amnesties and gun destructions to reduce the availability of guns in SA.** Over 170,000 firearms and 2.4 million rounds of ammunition have been surrendered in amnesties held in 1994, 2005, 2010 and 2020 while over 1.4 million firearms have been destroyed.

**Conducted groundbreaking research that has shaped national understanding of gun violence.** This includes proving the risk of firearms for self-defence, showing how domestic firearms are the biggest source of illegal guns in the country, with SA arming our neighbours rather than the reverse, documenting how strong gun laws save lives while poor enforcement kills and exploring the feasibility of outsourcing SA's Central Firearms Registry to address historic underperformance and corruption which helps fuel SA's gun violence epidemic.

**Is a founding member of the International Action Network on Small Arms (IANSA),** which keeps members informed about the latest developments in small arms control and coordinates global campaigns to reduce gun violence worldwide.

## KEY ACHIEVEMENTS

### Advocating for women's right to safety

**Legislative impact:** Through advocacy for the Firearms Control Act, GFSA helped save the lives of women across SA, with mortuary data showing that intimate femicide rates dropped from 4 women killed daily (1999) to 3 women daily (2009), SA's Medical Research Council has directly attributed lives saved to the Firearms Control Act.

**Awareness and education:** GFSA has created and distributed educational materials showing how the Firearms Control Act and Domestic Violence Act can protect women from gun violence. Partnering with key organisations such as Sonke Gender Justice and the Women's Legal Centre, GFSA has raised awareness on how to remove guns and other dangerous weapons from the home. Innovative campaigns that have helped GFSA amplify its reach include:

- A #GunFreeValentine campaign, which is run each February to raise awareness of the risks guns pose to women in the home, not only in SA, but globally through IANSA
- The innovative 'Bul-lets' campaign (renaming Lil-lets tampons as Bul-lets) to highlight domestic violence and inform women of their rights under the Firearms Control Act
- The #IWillNotBeNext campaign highlighting the 21 women shot and killed weekly in South Africa and urging for legislative reforms to better protect women from gun violence

**Community engagement:** In addition to organising and supporting various marches and vigils urging for meaningful action to protect women, GFSA currently hosts 'Gloves Up, Guns Down' self-defence classes for young women to raise awareness of how the Firearms Control Act can be used to protect women from gun violence.

**Research and publications:** GFSA contributed to a global report 'A practical guide to gender-responsive small arms control' published by the Small Arms Survey. In partnership with Swedish development agency IM Sweden, GFSA participated in a research project that raised the voices of women and LGBTQI+ survivors and activists, resulting in the 'Voices of Women: On guns, violence and activism report'. Currently GFSA is working with MOSAIC and the National Shelter Movement of South Africa on a research project 'Remove the Trigger from Domestic Violence'.

**Helping moms of children murdered through gun violence hold the state accountable:** Through its community work GFSA has encountered many mothers with open murder case dockets after losing their children to gun violence. Through a Moms Movement project, GFSA has been supporting these moms set up support groups and seek justice through the South African Police Service (SAPS) Inspectorate Division.

## KEY ACHIEVEMENTS

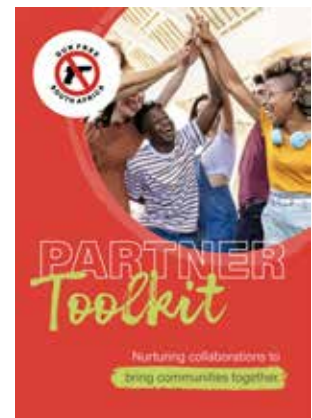
# Enhancing community mobilisation and activism

**Gun Free Zones: A global model for community safety.** For 30 years GFSA has been working in communities to help them establish Gun Free Zones (GFZs) as places of safety and community activism. GFSA has successfully implemented this innovative model in some of the most gun violence-affected communities in Gauteng and the Western Cape, transforming spaces like restaurants, taverns and early childhood development centres into safe havens that actively reject gun violence. The GFZ initiative goes beyond simply declaring spaces gun-free—it empowers communities to take ownership of their safety by creating visible symbols of resistance to gun violence, fostering dialogue about safety, and building community engagement and resilience.

In 2000, recognising that school violence was a major problem, the SAPS awarded GFSA a tender to develop a pilot project implementing schools as Firearm Free Zones under Section 140 of the Firearms Control Act. The project, called **Iguniflop**, involved 27 schools across South Africa. An independent evaluation found that 70% of participants believed they were safer after their school became a GFZ. While all schools adopted GFZ policies and applied for official designation, the Minister of Police has yet to declare any space a Firearm Free Zone under the Act.

In recognition of our expertise and the effectiveness of this model, GFSA's GFZ approach was incorporated into United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs (UNODA) 'Guidelines on establishing and maintaining Gun Free Zones', positioning South Africa as a global leader in community-based violence prevention.

**Strategic Partnerships:** GFSA has consistently mobilised communities through global and national partners. To support this vital work, we developed a 'Partner Toolkit' — a comprehensive resource helping organisations build and sustain partnerships for change through step-by-step guidance when working with new or existing partners. The Toolkit was created by two of our youth leaders after graduating from the DG Murray Trust Innovation Fellowship, which supports young people to develop as change agents and future leaders.

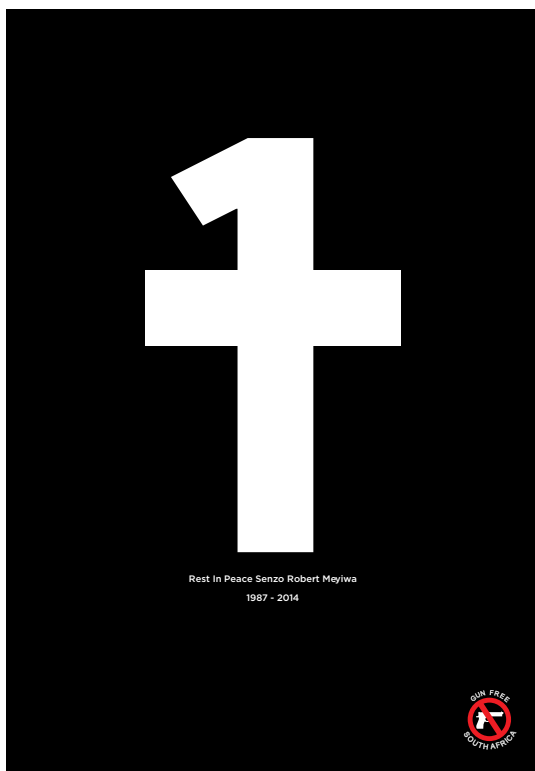


## KEY ACHIEVEMENTS

At a global level, we have worked in strategic partnerships with key international gun control leaders including Philip Alpers, David Atwood, Cate Buchanan, Wendy Cukier, and Rebecca Peters—influential advocates and experts in the global gun control movement.

Key national partnerships include:

- **South African Football Association:** Following the murder of national team captain Senzo Meyiwa, we partnered with SAFA to establish the Senzo Meyiwa Gun Control Committee, raising awareness of gun violence risks among young men



- **Amandla.mobi:** We collaborated on a social media campaign to ban R5 assault rifles in police crowd control
- **Cape Flats Safety Forum:** We partnered on a 'Dear Santa' letter campaign where children wrote letters to SA's police commissioner and president, pleading for action to keep children safe from gun and gang violence

## KEY ACHIEVEMENTS

### Empowering youth for change

A core focus of GFSA's work has been to protect and inspire young people while raising awareness of the urgent need for action to shield young people from gun violence. Beyond the GFZ project GFSA has helped keep young people safe and inspired them in various ways, such as:

- A **Shoot for the Stars** campaign where children in Atlantis were inspired to aim for their goals and dreams instead of aiming a gun when they were photographed with props to visualise a future without gun violence
- **Sports against gun violence** events in Alexandra and Tembisa helped keep youth off the streets and protect them from crime and violence
- **Marches and vigils** were held to highlight the risk of young people to gun violence, including a Youth Day walk in Alexandra in 2018 and in Atlantis in 2022 and 2023

**Capacity building and leadership development:** Through partnerships with organisations and campaigns like Activate! Leadership and the Children's Radio Foundation, GFSA has helped equip young people with tools and training to raise their voice against gun violence and broader social injustice. Significant initiatives include:

- A **'Toolkit to Building Safer Communities'**—a practical resource for youth empowerment and organising



- **'Hero's Journey' training programme**—a week-long intensive in 2021 that developed young leaders
- **'Aim for Change' zine playbook**—developed with IANSA and Algonquin College to amplify youth voices for social change

## KEY ACHIEVEMENTS

Each December GFSA encourages caregivers to not buy toy guns as gifts for children, showing them how this normalises guns and undermines the damage and trauma of gun violence through our **'Don't groom for violence' campaign**.

### Influencing public perceptions and increasing awareness

**Media advocacy:** Over the years GFSA has engaged in thousands of media interactions that have fundamentally shifted conversations around gun violence in South Africa. These interactions have raised awareness of the risks of guns, highlighted the urgency of prevention interventions and promoted proven solutions to address SA's gun violence crisis.

GFSA also partnered with advertising agencies—which took us on pro-bono—to deliver powerful, conversation-changing campaigns, which include:

- **'Even Max the gorilla isn't safe from gun violence' (1997)**—Ad agency Sonnenburg Murphy Leo Burnett developed a powerful campaign calling for urgent action to reduce SA's high levels of gun violence after Max, a mountain gorilla at the Johannesburg Zoo, was shot and wounded by an armed criminal who had jumped into the gorilla enclosure while trying to escape police
  
- **'If your stolen gun was there, so were you' (2014)**—This hard-hitting campaign, developed with Young & Rubicam Advertising, challenged gun owners' responsibility for securing their weapons. The campaign's impact extended beyond awareness-raising, resulting in a precedent-setting legal victory at the Advertising Standards Authority that affirmed NGOs' constitutional right to use advocacy advertising for social change
  
- **'Guns Out of Hand' (2022)**—This deeply personal campaign shared the true stories of survivors and families affected by gun violence, capturing the split-second moments when a gun changed lives forever and humanising the statistics behind South Africa's violence epidemic

## KEY ACHIEVEMENTS

- **'Bullet Proof Park' (2024)**—Our most recent collaboration with M&C Saatchi Abel presented the outrageous proposal of building a playground encased in bulletproof glass so children could safely play. This provocative concept sparked a national conversation about what real solutions look like, with widespread agreement that such a park should never be built—that we need real solutions to SA's gun violence crisis, not bulletproof parks for our children
- **'Dear Santa' (2024)**—As a continuation of the Bullet Proof Park campaign, in December 2024, children living on the Cape Flats wrote letters to the National Police Commissioner and President, pleading for action to keep children safe from gang and gun violence. The campaign provoked direct responses from key government figures, including the Western Cape Provincial Minister of Community Safety and the National Police Commissioner. Most significantly, President Ramaphosa addressed gun violence directly in his 2025 State of the Nation Address, adopting language from our campaign

GFSA has published a range of evidence-based **educational resources** like 'Suicide Prevention: The Means Matter' to reduce the risk of gun-related suicide, a 'Where do Illegal Guns Come From?' infographic to dispel myths that illegal guns are smuggled into SA and an 'Understanding Trauma' pamphlet describing the effects of gun violence and recovery steps.

GFSA's online gun violence map gives a name and story to some of the every-day gun violence across the country. It has also been used to monitor the changing pattern of gun violence, showing that since 2020 SA is seeing a rise in the number of mass shootings in which people are shot multiple times, as well as an increase in the number of women shot in public spaces.

## KEY ACHIEVEMENTS

### Building a resilient organisation

**Board:** GFSA's diverse Board, consisting of experts in public health, trauma medicine, psychology, gender research, anti-corruption, community mobilisation, and youth engagement, as well as survivors of gun violence who bring vital lived experience to our governance helped steer the organisation over thirty years.

**Chairpersons:** Peter Storey, Sheena Duncan, Paul Graham, Pamela Crowsley, Alan Storey, Ronald Menoe, Yolande Baker and Palesa Madi have each provided critical leadership and strategic direction, bringing distinguished expertise and credibility that has enhanced GFSA's influence and ensured that the organisation is a respected voice.

**Patrons:** Our founding patrons Archbishop Emeritus Desmond Tutu, Sheena Duncan, Chief Rabbi Cyril Harris, Bishop Stanley Mogoba, Sheik Nazeem Mohamed, Sheila Sisulu, and Pastor Ray McCauley, along with current patrons Professor Emeritus Bishop Peter Storey and Pregs Govender, have provided moral authority and public credibility that has strengthened GFSA's voice in advocating for a safer South Africa free from gun violence.

**Staff and Volunteers:** GFSA's Directors—Adèle Kirsten (founding director who led the organisation for 20 years), Judy Bassingthwaighe, Natalie Jaynes and Stanley Maphosa (who was appointed in 2025), dedicated staff members and volunteers who contributed their time, expertise and passion to GFSA over thirty years all played an important role in GFSA's story.

# KEY ACHIEVEMENTS

**Donors:** Thank you to our funders for your belief, your commitment and your support over 30 years:

## South African

Anglo American Chairman's Fund  
 Claude Leone Foundation  
 Constitutionalism Fund  
 DG Murray Trust  
 Gauteng Department of Community Safety  
 Liberty Life Foundation  
 Millennium Trust  
 Norton Rose Fulbright  
 Open Society Foundation for South Africa  
 RAITH Foundation  
 Social Justice Initiative

## Global

Broederlijk Delen  
 Commonwealth Foundation  
 Dreikönigsaktion der Katholischen Jungschar  
 Embassy of Finland  
 Entraide et Fraternité  
 European Union  
 Heinrich Böll Stiftung  
 Horizont 3000  
 International Development Research Centre  
 Joseph Rowntree Charitable Trust  
 Netherlands Organisation for International Development Cooperation  
 Norwegian Church Aid  
 Oxfam GB  
 Samuel Rubin Foundation  
 UNSCAR: United Nations Trust Facility  
 Supporting Cooperation on Arms Regulation (UNSCAR)  
 World Council of Churches

## KEY ACHIEVEMENTS

**Partners:** GFSA has worked with a range of organisations who have amplified and expanded our voice. Special thanks to the following:

African Policing Civilian Oversight Forum (APCOF)  
 Amandla.mobi  
 C19 Anti-Repression Working Group  
 Cape Flats Safety Forum  
 Clacherty and Associates  
 Council for Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR) Crime Prevention Centre  
 Desmond and Leah Tutu Foundation  
 Eltroon Charitable Trust  
 IM Sweden  
 Institute for Security Studies (ISS)  
 International Action Network on Small Arms (IANSA)  
 Lawyers for Human Rights (LHR)  
 M&C Saatchi Abel  
 Medical Research Council of South Africa (MRC)  
 Mosaic  
 National Shelter Movement  
 Razer PR  
 Reeva Steenkamp Foundation  
 South African Football Association (SAFA)  
 Small Arms Survey  
 Social Justice Coalition  
 Socio-Economic Rights Institute of South Africa (SERI)  
 Sonke Gender Justice  
 Sonnenburg Murphy Leo Burnett  
 Trauma Action Group  
 Women's International League for Peace and Freedom Mobilising Men for Feminist Peace Initiative  
 Women's Legal Centre  
 Young & Rubicam  
 Youth Employment Service

# SOME OF THE KEY MOMENTS FROM OUR HISTORY...

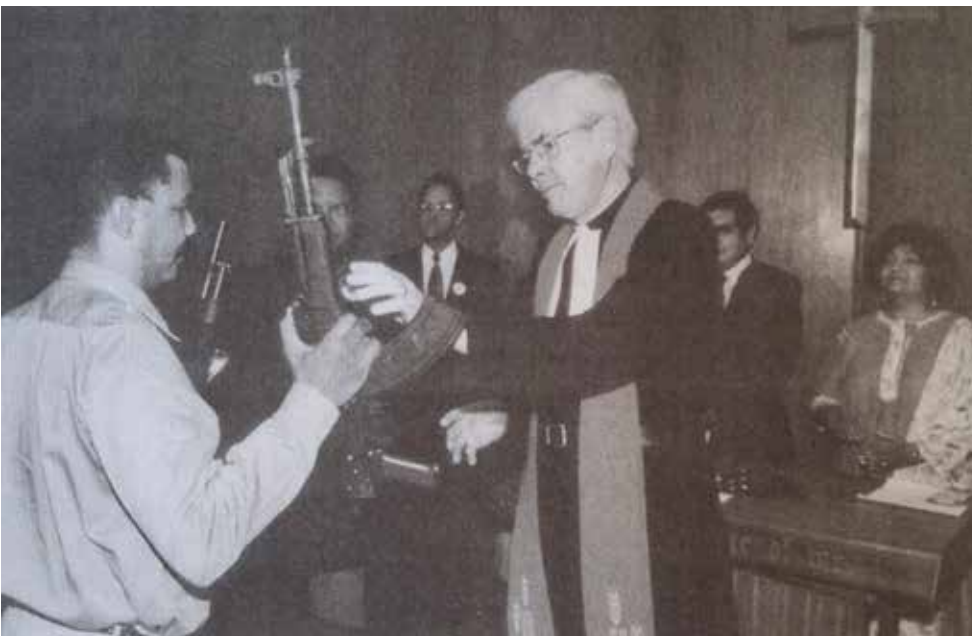
## 1994 Gun Hand-In

GFSA traces its roots back to the months before SA's first democratic elections on 27 April 1994. Guns had proliferated in the hands of different political groups claiming they were needed for 'self-defence'. The unarmed majority lived in fear on trains and taxis, in the streets and in their homes. There was real concern that there might be a military coup and many feared civil war.

It was in this charged environment that the seed for GFSA was planted in September 1994 with a campaign for a national firearms amnesty where civilians could hand their guns in for destruction. The campaign movers were members of the religious sub-committee of the National Peace Accord that played a significant role in the birth of democracy in South Africa. Prominent individuals like President Nelson Mandela, Archbishop Desmond Tutu, Bishop Peter Storey and Sheena Duncan—saw the campaign as central to this process.

With endorsement from the leadership of the Christian, Jewish, Moslem, Hindu and Buddhist communities as well as businesses, a national firearms amnesty was declared by the government on 16 December 1994, where no one would be prosecuted for handing in illegal firearms. This date held deep significance for South Africa as the newly renamed Day of Reconciliation, symbolising the country's commitment to fostering reconciliation and national unity.

Although the firearms amnesty on 16 December 1994 did not result in getting enough guns out of circulation, it succeeded in putting the issue of gun control on the national agenda and was the impetus for GFSA's formation.



**1995**

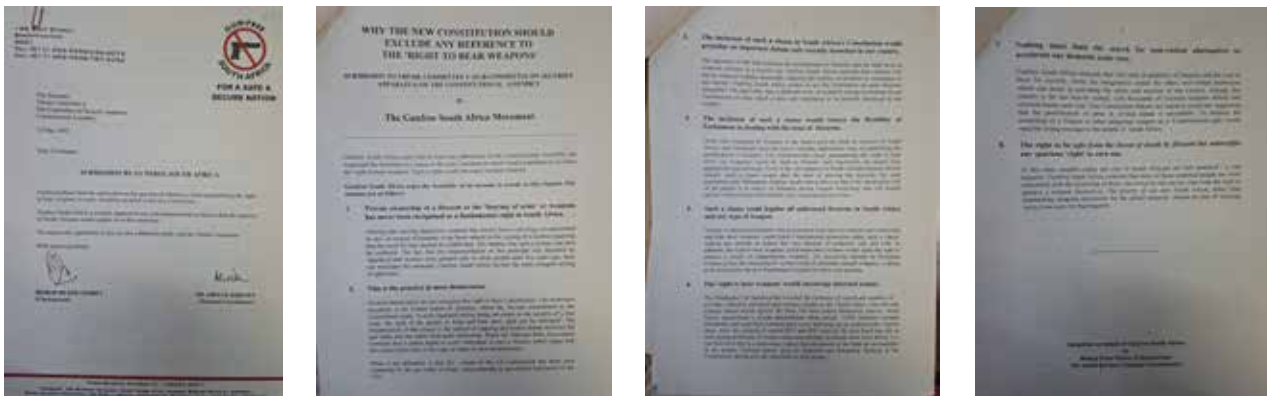
**GFSA established**

Following on from the 16 December 1994 hand-in GFSA was established in 1995 with Bishop Peter Storey as Chairperson and Adèle Kirsten as National Coordinator. Our founding patrons were Sheena Duncan, Chief Rabbi Cyril Harris, Bishop Stanley Mogoba, Sheik Nazeem Mohamed, Sheila Sisulu, Archbishop Desmond Tutu and Pastor Ray McCauley.



**Ensured that SA's Constitution does not recognise gun ownership as a fundamental right**

GFSA's first success was to lobby the Constitutional Assembly to not recognise the right to bear arms in SA's Constitution.



GFSA's focus in its early years was to understand the nature and extent of gun violence in SA and establish links with other organisations. It was during this time that the true crisis of gun violence in SA became apparent: South Africa had the death profile of a country at war with more people being shot and killed than dying on the country's roads.

Yet legislation to control gun ownership, the Arms and Ammunition Act of 1969, was completely inadequate: There were no competency requirements or licence renewal systems, the age limit for gun ownership was 16 years and the limit on the number of guns an individual could own was twelve.

## 1997 Silent March

On 20 June 1997 GFSA with the Johannesburg Community Chest coordinated a Silent March to highlight SA's gun violence crisis. Over 2,000 pairs of shoes were lined up at Zoo Lake in Johannesburg in memory of the thousands of people killed by guns.



## GFSA's office vandalised

On 30 October vandals ransacked GFSA's office, scattering documents and overturning pot plants onto computer equipment. Potting soil was spread across floors and human excrement was left in the stairwell. While some office equipment was stolen during the break-in, the intruders poured a mixture of ammonia-based cleaning fluid and water over keyboards and computer monitors.

## 1999 Raising the voice of the unarmed majority: Gun Control Alliance

GFSA began building a broad-based civil society alliance in South Africa to strengthen gun control. The Gun Control Alliance (GCA), launched in 1999, grew to represent over 450 organisations, institutions and individuals representing business, health, human rights, religious, women and youth interests.

The GCA had its origins in the Gun Control Charter, developed by GFSA as a tool to bridge the gap between policy makers and civil society. The Charter consisted of a list of minimum demands to be included in a new gun law. When the public was invited to comment on the Firearms Control Bill, the GCA mobilised its members and networks to make written submissions and to encourage public debate on the issue.



## Founding member of global gun control network

In May 1999 a broad-based international civil society network, the International Action Network on Small Arms, was launched. GFSA was a founder of IANSA and remains an active member. Being part of IANSA provides us with the opportunity to highlight successes and impact and learn from other countries and actions around the world aimed at reducing gun violence. The IANSA secretariat plays an important role in keeping members informed about latest developments on small arms control matters at the UN. In addition, IANSA coordinates action on global campaigns such as the annual Global Week of Action Against Gun Violence.

## **2000** Firearms Control Act 60 of 2000

Two rounds of public hearings on the Firearms Control Bill were held in Cape Town—the first in June 2000 and the second in August of the same year. GFSA was instrumental in challenging the widespread view that gun control only affects gun owners. Through strategic organising GFSA helped ensure that representatives from interest groups including women, children, public health and affected communities were heard.

## Samuel Kobela's Parliamentary Testimony: A Voice from the Community

Samuel Kobela from Mapela—a poor rural community in Limpopo Province made an oral submission to Parliament on the Firearms Control Bill. He reflects on the experience below:

"First, I would say, when I heard the news that I would be going to Cape Town to make an oral submission on the Firearms Control Bill, I got excited, nervous and proud. I got excited in the sense that it would be my first time to fly and also my first visit to Cape Town and to Parliament as well as to the sea. I got nervous when I thought of presenting before the MPs, and I felt proud at being invited by the Safety and Security Portfolio Committee. Adèle [GFSA's Director] and myself left at 16h15 to Joburg International Airport. On board the flight I was relaxed because I was sitting next to Adèle. We arrived in Cape Town at 20h00. We drove to Sea Point where we spent the night. Sea Point is next to the sea and really I had a clear view of the sea. In the evening, Adèle acted as the Portfolio Committee Chairperson and asked me to present. After my presentation, she asked me questions. She encouraged me—and this kind of practice really helped me. I went to bed at 23h00 and woke up at 5am. Before we drove to Parliament Claire (a GFSA staff member) and myself walked on foot to the sea where she took pictures of me. We arrived at Parliament at 8h30. During the Public Hearings I listened carefully to presenters. Some of the presenters were furious, criticising the Bill as a whole. Nevertheless I realised how friendly the MPs were. When the Chairperson called my name, I felt nervous, but when I started talking I regained confidence. My presentation focussed on two issues: Gun Free Zones (GFZs) and the Age Limit. I supported chapter 20 (of the Bill) on GFZs. GFZs are about community safety and the initiative has been going on for three years in Mapela and is getting support from more residents. I also objected to the age limit of 18 (in the Bill) and proposed the age should go to 25. This will exclude school going kids and will also make the implementation of GFZs in schools easier. After my presentation, the MPs applauded me for the work I've been doing."

GFSA's work during this period is regarded as an example of effective public policy advocacy as was confirmed in an independent evaluation by a funder: According to stakeholders, including alliance members, state department officials and MPs, the GCA significantly contributed to the campaign for stricter gun control.



## Saving thousands of lives

In 2000, despite vocal opposition from South Africa's gun lobby, the Firearms Control Act was passed into law. Published research attributes the steady decline in violence in SA between 2000 and 2010 to a decline in gun violence resulting from stricter gun controls associated with the Firearms Control Act:

- The "strength, timing, and consistency of the decline in suggest that stricter gun control through the FCA accounted for a significant decrease in homicide overall, and firearm homicide in particular." American Journal of Public Health
- "There was a very substantial difference in the rate of (women that were shot and killed between 1999 and 2009). The decrease is most likely explained by gun control legislation ...with provisions for safer firearm use and ownership amongst its key features." PLOS Medicine
- "Our study shows a decline in total firearm injuries in children from 2001 ...demonstrating that strengthening firearm legislation can reduce firearm-related injury." South African Journal of Surgery

## Establishing islands of safety: Gun Free Zones

The GFZ project is an important tool used by GFSA to empower communities to create safe spaces. As a result of our work with communities, the Firearms Control Act makes provision for the establishment of Firearm Free Zones. Our work has also been included in a United Nations guideline on how to establish and maintain Gun Free Zones.

As of 2025 GFSA continues to work in communities, supporting the establishment of GFZs in spaces as diverse as taverns and groove spots to early childhood development centres.



# Iguniflop: Firearm Free Zone Schools

Recognising that violence at schools is a major problem, the SAPS put out a tender in February 2000 for a pilot project to develop, implement and maintain schools as Firearm Free Zones under Section 140 of the Firearms Control Act. GFSA applied for and was awarded the SAPS tender because of our experience in establishing GFZs.

In total, 27 schools across SA participated in the pilot project, which was called Iguniflop. An independent evaluation of the pilot found that participants overwhelmingly (70%) believed that they were safer after their school became a GFZ. While all 27 schools in the pilot adopted GFZ policies and applied to the Minister of Police to be declared as Firearm Free Zones under Section 140 of the Firearms Control Act, to date the Minister has yet to declare any space a Firearm Free Zone.

As of 2025, GFSA is supporting taverns in Gauteng to apply to become Firearm Free Zones under the Firearms Control Act.

**IGUN IFLOP** newsletter  
vol 1 no1 Mar/May 2002

**WHAT IS THE FIREARM FREE SCHOOLS PILOT PROJECT?**

Recognising that schools are often the site of violence, we put out to tender a pilot project to develop, implement and maintain firearm free schools in South Africa.

We were able to do this because we have a law that makes firearm free zones (FFZ) Section 140 of the Firearms Control Act says that an FFZ is a place where guns are not allowed and no one can carry or use any firearms or ammunition. Anyone who violates can be given a heavy prison sentence.

Congratulations! You are part of this pilot. Your experience will help other schools to learn how to become safer places for learning and teaching by becoming firearm free.

**content**

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**WHO'S WHO?**

There are lots of different people in the tender team apart from the South African Police Service SAPS.

**Gun Free South Africa (GFSA)**

GFSA was awarded this SAPS tender, which means that it is responsible overall for developing and piloting a model to make schools firearm free. We awarded GFSA this tender because of its experience in helping communities and organisations across South Africa become Gun Free Zones. Before the Firearms Control Act was signed into law, people could still declare their premises as Gun Free Zones. However, under the protection given to Firearm Free Zones by the Firearms Control Act, which protects them by criminal law, Gun Free Zones are protected by civil laws that prohibit trespassing.

\* 11/4 = 1/5/5 = Cape Times 05/04/2002 N

**First gun-free school is in heart of gangland**

**Yellowwood Primary School in Mitchell's Plain is set to become the first school in the province to be a Firearm Free Zone. A pilot project born out of the new Firearms Control Act.**

Headmaster of Yellowwood Primary school, situated in the Mitchell's Plain police station territory in present at the gang violence that has been raging around the school.

The school was on the border between rival gang territories and were last seen on its fields for more than 10 years, teachers said yesterday.

Headmaster Dennis, a parent, said there were thousands of guns, most had with a yellow tag, to which people could when the school was open.

"I know what to do. When the shooting stops, the police must take the guns. I will try to take it and not another man bring me to school. That's how bad it is. Maybe this project will work - it's the best plan we've got."

The SA Police Service, Intergovernmental and Gun Free Zones, Africa have identified 20 schools across the country that are to be declared Firearm Free Zones because they are in high-risk areas.

Five Cape Town schools have been named. The others are Chapman Primary, Islangeni, Taberna and Chris Hani High schools.

Yellowwood Primary is one of a pilot project developed and handed it to the Mitchell's Plain police station commander.

The policy has been approved and is expected to be signed by Deputy and recently Minister of Police, Nkomo before the Department is signed.

It would then be a criminal offence to enter a Firearm Free school with a gun, said Thomas Dyer, Gun Free South Africa project co-ordinator.

Dennis, Co-ordinator of the MIP

These police, said school managers caught in the school grounds because they had found the weapons and bullets on the school premises and could be charged with trespassing.

Staff were also afraid to take the case further in paragraphs and away with it.

"The law gives us more power. There will be no way they will get off," Dennis said.

**EYES ON PEACE:** Byron Mathew and Giovanni Roberts marched with 300 other Yellowwood Primary School pupils to the Mitchell's Plain police station yesterday. Picture: GA/SA/RE/277

## 2001 Global lobbying

In July 2001, GFSA attended a United Nations meeting in New York, playing a key role in lobbying the South African government to adopt the politically-binding Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects. GFSA continues to participate in global initiatives, such as the UN Convention against Transnational Organised Crime (UNTOC) and other international forums, bringing South African realities to global discussions while incorporating international commitments and best practice into our domestic advocacy work. This focus on global engagement reflects our understanding that gun violence is a transnational challenge requiring coordinated international responses



## 2006 Million Faces Petition

In partnership with Amnesty International, Oxfam International and IANSA, GFSA helped present the Ministry of Foreign Affairs with the world's largest visual petition. Twenty-eight thousand South Africans joined over 1 million citizens from 160 countries to send photos of their faces in support of a global campaign calling for tougher controls on the arms trade to prevent weapons from getting into the wrong hands. The legally binding global Arms Trade Treaty entered into force in 2014.



# 2010 Firearms Amnesty

As South Africa geared itself to host the FIFA World Cup, GFSA kicked off 2010 by partnering with the Civilian Secretariat for Police on the 2010 national firearms amnesty.

During the amnesty, held from 11 January to 11 April 2010, the public was given immunity from prosecution for being in illegal possession of firearms or ammunition. GFSA played a leading role in the amnesty; monitoring the process, thereby ensuring civil society oversight and transparency and assisting the police with communicating the amnesty message.

At the close of the 2010 firearms amnesty over 42,000 firearms and 450,000 rounds of ammunition had been handed in.



# 2014 If your stolen gun was there, so were you

GFSA has consistently raised awareness of the risks of guns and how the Firearms Control Act can be used to save a life.

One of GFSA's most powerful advertising campaigns developed with Young & Rubicam Advertising entitled 'if your stolen gun was there, so were you' highlights that one of the risks of having a gun is the risk for loss and theft, thereby inadvertently arming criminals.

Following a complaint to the Advertising Standards Authority and a lengthy hearings process, the Authority ruled in favour of GFSA, and other NGOs, deeming the advert to be non-commercial advertising constituting an expression of opinion.



**2015****Ban R5 assault weapons in police crowd control**

GFSA partnered with social justice activist organisation amandla.mobi on a social media campaign to ban the use of R5 rifles in public order policing. The campaign drew on the National Police Commissioner's admission to the Farlam Commission of Inquiry (which was established to investigate the circumstances resulting in 34 miners being shot by police officers at Marikana), that two years after the massacre the SAPS still uses R5 assault rifles for crowd control.

**2017****Gun Free Valentine campaign launched**

GFSA's annual Gun Free Valentine campaign, which raises awareness of how the law can be used to remove a gun from domestic and intimate partner violence is now celebrated globally through IANSA.



**2018**

## Constitutional Court ruling: Gun ownership is a privilege, not a right

GFSA acted as amicus curiae in a 2018 case in which the Minister of Police appealed a High Court judgment which challenged the constitutionality of regular gun licence renewals. Using evidence provided by GFSA, the ConCourt unanimously ruled that gun ownership is not a fundamental right under SA's Bill of Rights, rather it is a privilege regulated by the Firearms Control Act. Under the Act:

- No person may possess a gun without a valid licence;
- A firearm licence is valid for a limited period of time; and
- Unless a gun owner has renewed his gun licence before expiry, he has committed a criminal offence and is subject to penalties, including a fine or imprisonment.

### Keep youth safe

GFSA organised a march in Alex to highlight the specific risk of young people to being both the victims and perpetrators of gun violence. Thousands of community members joined the march, which ended with handing over a petition to the Alexandra SAPS station commander.



## 2019 Shoot for the Stars

To inspire young people to aim for their goals and dreams instead of aiming a gun, children in Atlantis were photographed with props to shoot for the stars and visualise a future without gun violence

"Instead of just talking and giving information on guns and gun violence that these youngsters would probably forget, the children did something that they will forever keep in their minds, and share wherever they are." Monique Hansen, GFSA Programme Manager and activist, Atlantis



## The story of gun control in SA

GFSA published a comprehensive report 'Gun control and violence: South Africa's story'. This tracks 25 years of gun control, showing that when firearms were strictly controlled (2000-2010), gun-related deaths nearly halved from 34 to 18 people shot and killed daily, but that poor enforcement kills. As of 2025, 33 people are shot dead daily.



**Gun control & violence:**  
South Africa's story

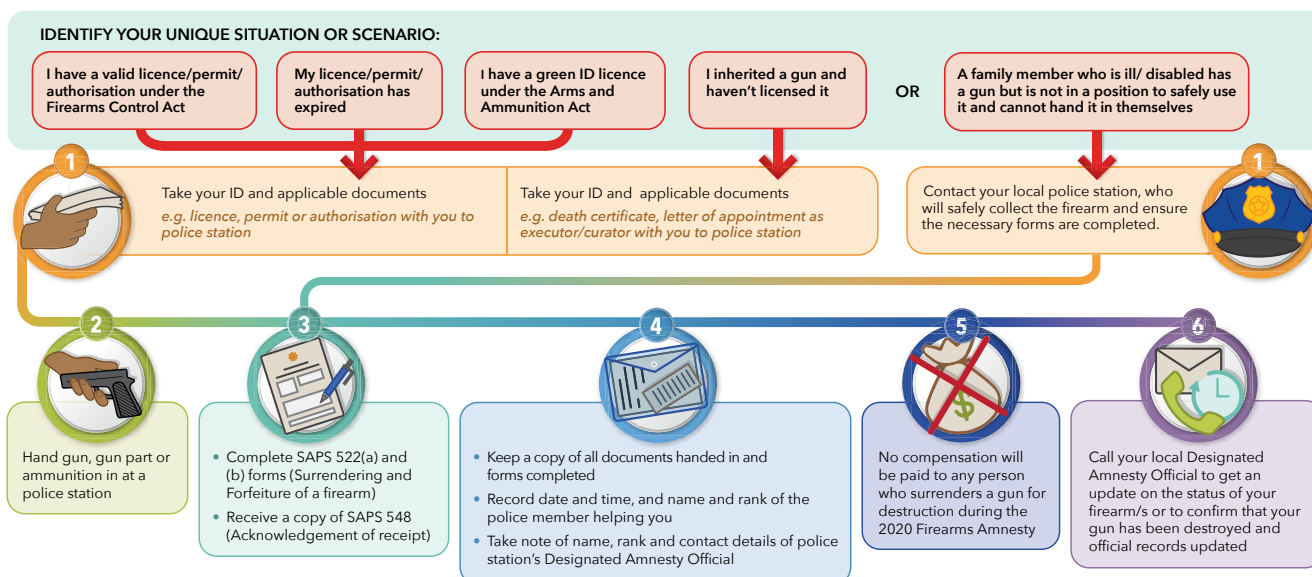


## 2020 National firearms amnesty

Contributed to the Minister of Police declaring two six-month national firearms amnesties starting in December 2019 and ending in January 2021, and lobbied for and helped shape the conditions for successful amnesty implementation. Over 120,000 firearms were handed in during these amnesties.



### 2020 FIREARMS AMNESTY: (1 August 2020 to 31 January 2021) 6 STEPS TO HANDING IN YOUR GUN



#### NEED MORE INFO?

- Contact your nearest police station
- Visit the SAPS website: [https://www.saps.gov.za/services/flash/main\\_firearms.php](https://www.saps.gov.za/services/flash/main_firearms.php)
- Phone the Central Firearms Registry Enquiry Desk on 012-353-6111 (24-hour hotline)

#### REPORT CORRUPTION OR PROBLEMS:

Government's Anti-Corruption HOTLINE on 0800 701 701

#### CONTACT GUN FREE SOUTH AFRICA:

✉ [info@gfsa.org.za](mailto:info@gfsa.org.za) ☎ 071 876 1135 🌐 [www.gfsa.org.za](http://www.gfsa.org.za)



## AIM FOR SAFETY

## 2021 Youth leadership

We conducted an intensive week-long leadership development 'Hero's Journey', equipping young people with tools to become effective advocates against gun violence and broader social injustice.

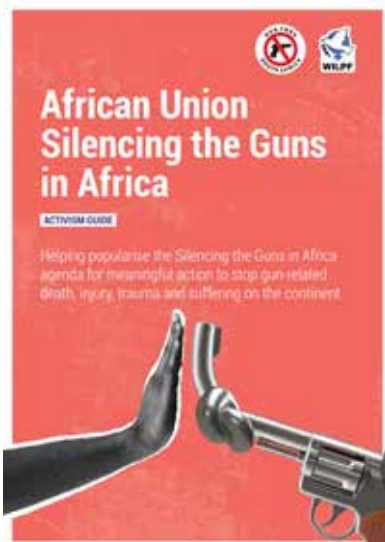
## 2023 Prinsloo Guns Class Action

On 10 May, GFSA launched a class action on behalf of families to hold the state accountable for leaking guns from police stores to gang leaders. While the organisation has previously been involved in court action—including Constitutional Court and Supreme Court cases that ruled gun ownership is a privilege, not a right—the Prinsloo Guns class action marks a new approach for GFSA. This case takes state accountability directly to the Police Minister's door, seeking both financial relief for deaths and injuries caused by leaked police weapons and an obligation on the police to improve protocols for recording, storing and handling firearms.



## 2024 Silencing the guns in Africa

In partnership with the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom (WILPF), under the Mobilising Men for Feminist Peace project GFSA developed The African Union Silencing the Guns in Africa Activism Guide. The guide, which includes over 40 ideas for action, is aimed at activists working to end gun-related death, injury, trauma and suffering on the continent.



## Bullet Proof Park and Dear Santa

Our collaboration with M&C Saatchi Abel presented the outrageous proposal of bulletproof playgrounds, sparking a national conversation about real solutions to gun violence. As a continuation of this campaign, children from the Cape Flats wrote 'Dear Santa' letters to the National Police Commissioner and President, pleading for action against gang and gun violence. The campaign provoked direct responses from key government figures and, most significantly, President Ramaphosa addressed gun violence directly in his 2025 State of the Nation Address, adopting language from our campaign.



## 2025 New leadership

GFSA's founding director Adèle Kirsten retired, and Dr Stanley Maphosa was appointed as new executive director.



# Honouring our Heroes

For 30 years brave individuals **have dared to stand, to speak, to act.**

For our anniversary we're celebrating our Gun Free Guardians,

**Who called the shots for a safer South Africa.**

These **30 stories represent hundreds of our heroes:**

Survivors, community leaders, policemen, families of victims, pastors

Who've kept an **unwavering hope for a Gun Free South Africa.**

## President Nelson Mandela

"Gun Free South Africa is doing courageous pioneering work for a peaceful future"  
18 July 1918—5 December 2013

South Africa's first democratically elected president Nelson Mandela supported the GFSA firearms amnesty gun hand-in on 16 December 1994, saying "it is a praiseworthy initiative and deserves support from all leaders and people. I welcome it and will do everything you require to ensure its success."

**Our Mission**  
Gun Free South Africa is committed to making a material contribution to building a safe and secure nation, free from fear, by reducing the number of firearms in society.

**"Gun Free South Africa is doing courageous pioneering work for a peaceful future."**  
— Nelson Mandela, President of the Republic of South Africa

Help GFSA reduce the number of guns in South Africa.  
GFSA relies on donations and sponsorship from the public and business sectors.  
You too can become involved by joining GFSA and participating in one of its branches, or by volunteering to assist a branch in your community. If you wish to make a donation to GFSA, or to become a sponsor, or both, please fill in the attached coupon before and send it to us.  
Patrons: Hon. Dr. Peter Dinko, Chief Warrant Officer, Police; Archbishop Desmond Tutu, Mt. Shasta, Ontario; Sheriff Graham Mchomozi, Peka, Ken. Mt. Shasta; Archbishop Denis Hurley and Mt. Shasta, South Africa; Chairperson: Mt. Shasta, Ontario.

**I/We support the aims of Gun Free South Africa.**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
City: \_\_\_\_\_  
My Cheque/Amount of \_\_\_\_\_ is enclosed.

National Office: 195 Sand Street, Berea, Johannesburg, 2001, 2013  
Tel: 011-401-4996, Fax: 011-401-4996  
E-Mail: gfsa@waw.co.za

**Get rid of it before it gets rid of you**



# Abie Isaacs

**Abie Isaacs** has long been a voice for the voiceless. From the struggle against apartheid to protecting Cape Flats communities, his fight has never wavered. As chair of the Cape Flats Safety Forum, he works to protect young people from guns, gangs, and drugs—often using his own salary to fund the cause. “I have to serve my community.” In one of the country’s most violent places, Abie’s leadership offers something rare: a path to safety.



# Adele Kirsten

**Founding director**

**Adèle** has been a committed nonviolence and social justice activist for over three decades. She began her life of activism as a founding member of the End Conscription Campaign; an anti-apartheid organisation supporting young men who refused to serve in the apartheid army. After helping organise the historic 16 December 1994 GFSA gun hand-in campaign, Adèle was appointed as GFSA’s founding director in 1995. Under her guidance, GFSA became a leading voice in violence prevention advocacy. In 2000, she was named Media Woman of the Year for her advocacy work with GFSA, and in 2008 she published ‘A Nation without Guns? The Story of Gun Free South Africa’, documenting the organisation’s early history and South Africa’s journey toward comprehensive gun control. Adèle retired from GFSA in 2025 and currently works as a consultant affiliated with the South African Medical Research Council and the Lancet Commission on Global Gun Violence and Health, continuing her commitment to evidence-based approaches to reducing gun violence in South Africa.



# Alan Storey

**Alan Storey** was the inspiration for GFSA's Gun Free Zone campaign. As a founding member and early chairperson of GFSA, he brought the conviction that faith and nonviolence are inseparable. From the pulpit to parliament, he preached justice—not only as belief, but as daily practice. “The story of the Bible,” he said, “is about a people struggling to be free.” His voice still echoes in our work: a call to disarm fear, and choose freedom for all.



# Avril Andrews

When **Avril Andrews** lost her son Alcardo to gang violence, she faced a choice: leave her community or fight for it. She chose to stay. In his memory, she built the Alcardo Andrews Foundation, feeding over 600 people daily and giving grieving families a reason to hope. Through Moms Move for Justice, she turned pain into power, uniting mothers to march for peace. Today, as a key partner in building Gun Free Zones in Hanover Park, Avril carries GFSA's vision of healing and hope into the heart of her community.



# Barbara Holtmann

**Barbara Holtmann** has spent her life asking one powerful question: what does it look like when it's fixed? From government to business to grassroots, her work has helped communities imagine safer futures and build them. For Barbara, the answer is clear: a South Africa without guns. A long-time ally of GFSA, her vision continues to shape ours. In her words, and her work, she reminds us that hope is not vague. It's practical, possible, and urgent.



# Benita Pavlicevic

**Benita Pavlicevic** has spent decades empowering communities to create change. Through the Human Awareness Programme in the 1980s, she trained hundreds of community leaders on social justice rights and campaign strategies. In GFSA's early years she facilitated our strategic planning processes, helping establish management and administration systems—all pro bono. Her skilled facilitation and keen understanding of social and political dynamics has helped countless activists navigate complex terrains. Benita represents the backbone of South Africa's movement building: those who quietly strengthen organisations so they can change the world.



# Bernie Fanaroff

**Bernie Fanaroff** spent his life looking beyond the visible, whether mapping galaxies or helping shape a safer South Africa. A world-famous astronomer, trade unionist, and government official in the Ministry of Safety and Security, he played a pivotal role in guiding the Firearms Control Act into law. When receiving a lifetime achievement award from the NRF, he said: “We must look beyond the horizon, and see what has to be done even though at the time it seems impossible.” It’s how he approached science. And how he approached gun control—with quiet conviction and the belief that even the impossible is worth striving for.



# Biddy-Rose Tiernan

**Sister Biddy-Rose Tiernan** has spent a lifetime turning faith into action for justice. From teaching young women under apartheid to defending informal settlements from teargas and bulldozers, she has never backed down from injustice. In 1999, she brought that same courage to GFSA, mobilising religious sisters to shape the Firearms Control Act. Her belief was simple: peace is sacred, and silence is not an option. Decades on, she still stands with us. Because some callings never retire.



# Brenda Tayler

When **Brenda Tayler** lost her daughter to gun violence, she turned pain into protest. In 1997, she led a Silent March at Zoo Lake, placing her child's shoes among thousands, each pair a life stolen by a bullet. The silence was deafening. Brenda's act of courage gave voice to a nation in mourning and helped shift hearts, headlines, and laws. In honouring her daughter, she awakened South Africa to the true cost of gun violence and the urgency to end it.



# Delano Chengan

**Delano Chengan** comes from the Cape Flats, so brings with him a truth no headline can hold. As the creative force behind GFSA's Bullet Proof Park in 2024, he turned a children's playground into a national wake-up call. His work reached 99 million people, echoed in parliament, and moved a country to pay attention. But it's his deep, personal connection to communities most affected by gun violence that gives his work its fire. Delano reminds us: when creativity meets purpose, change follows.



# Archbishop Emeritus

## Desmond Tutu:

**Founding director**

"Real peace never comes from the barrel of a gun"

7 October 1931—26 December 2021

Archbishop Emeritus Desmond Tutu, who himself admitted that he couldn't, and wouldn't shut up in the face of injustice, was a moral compass for the world, who lived his values with courage and conviction. He was a committed supporter of a gun free South Africa, calling for SA's first democratic election to be gun free, supporting SA's first national firearms amnesty on 16 December 1994 and soon thereafter becoming a patron of GFSA after the organisation was established in 1995. The Arch, who died in 2021, continues to inspire GFSA. His legacy of bold, joyful resistance to violence, and belief in silencing the guns for peace live on as GFSA works to create a safer, more secure country, free from the fear of gun violence.



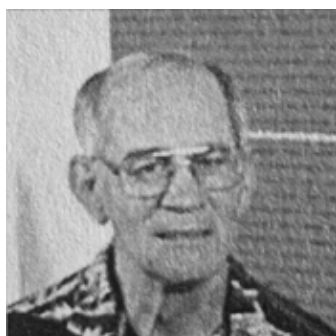
# Howard Varney

**Howard Varney** uses his legal expertise to defend those fighting for justice. This distinguished advocate has provided unwavering pro bono support to GFSA across multiple, crucial legal cases. When our provocative 'If your stolen gun was there, so were you' campaign faced legal challenge from the gun lobby, Howard secured a landmark victory at the Advertising Standards Authority. He's also advised GFSA on court cases to defend the law and our Prinsloo Guns class action, as well as policy submissions. In Howard, GFSA not only has a friend but a legal champion.



## Irvin Kinnes

**Irvin Kinnes** has spent his career examining the deep roots of violence in South Africa—policing, gangs, and the systems that hold them in place. GFSA first crossed paths with him during his time at the Civilian Secretariat for Police, and later engaged closely when he served as Content Advisor to the Portfolio Committee on Police. Irvin's commitment to open, informed debate has helped shape policy with nuance and truth. In every space, he brings insight and integrity.



## Jannie Janse van Rensburg

**Jannie Janse van Rensburg** joined GFSA in 1994 and never stopped showing up. He was the quiet force behind the scenes, running errands, scanning the headlines, answering angry calls with calm conviction. A tireless volunteer, he wrote letter after letter in defence of life, speaking out against every senseless death. His commitment was steady, selfless, and deeply felt. Jannie didn't seek recognition. He simply believed in a safer South Africa free from gun violence and gave his days, his voice and his heart to our shared cause.



# Jenni

## Irish-Qhobosheane

**Jenni Irish-Qhobosheane** spent her life exposing the violence we often can't see. From illegal guns to organised crime, from state corruption to assassinations, she tackled South Africa's darkest truths with fearless clarity and deep compassion. Led by evidence, her meticulous research shaped national conversations and was instrumental in strengthening GFSA's work to end gun violence. A quiet warrior, Jenni spoke truth in rooms few dared to enter. Her legacy lives on in policy, in rigorous advocacy, and in every effort to dismantle the networks of organised crime that threaten us all.



# Jeremy

## Vearey

Having grown up in Elsies River, **Jeremy Vearey** has spent his life on the frontlines—from guarding Nelson Mandela to dismantling gang networks on the Cape Flats. As a strategic advisor to GFSA, his voice is clear: guns violate our most basic freedoms. A key figure in the Prinsloo Guns case and class action, he brings truth from the ground to those fighting for change. Jeremy uses his reputation as a respected crime fighter and accomplished author to champion justice, safety, and the right for communities to live without fear.



## Jessica Shah

In 2022, **Jessica Shah**'s daughter, Sasha-Lee Monique was shot and killed, despite a protection order meant to keep her safe. Since then, Jessica has become an unrelenting voice for justice. She fights not only for her daughter, but for every woman let down by the system. "This won't bring my daughter back," she says, "but I'm trying to make a difference." Her grief is profound, but her resolve is greater. In refusing to be silenced, she is a tireless campaigner helping build a South Africa where women live, and live free.



## Koketso Moeti

**Koketso Moeti** has always known where real power lives—in the hands of ordinary people, taking extraordinary action. Through amandla.mobi, she's helped thousands—mostly Black women—speak in one voice, across languages and postcodes, to demand change. From banning R5 assault rifles in public policing to demanding safety with dignity, Koketso has stood beside GFSA in moments that matter. Her work connects communities across divides—reminding us that when voices unite, they can't be ignored.



## Mansoer Eksteen

**Mansoer Eksteen** is a survivor of gun violence who has transformed tragedy into purpose. On 13 October 2014, gunmen stormed his Manenberg home, shooting him multiple times with a Prinsloo Gun and killing his mother, Shamiela. But Mansoer refused to let grief and pain define him. A man of deep faith, he brings steadiness to Prinsloo Guns class action families, sharing in their pain and loss as well as their joy. His quiet strength proves that survivors are teachers, builders, and is living proof that the human spirit endures.



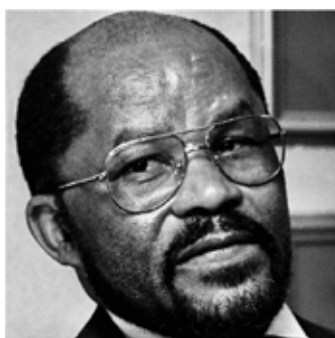
## Margy Keegan

**Margy Keegan** was a historian, a networker, and a warrior for peace. As a minute taker during South Africa's constitutional negotiations, she understood how transformation happens. At GFSA, she became our guide to how parliament works—not just the rules and practice—but the people at its heart. She showed us how to navigate portfolio committees, track law-making processes, and pay attention to every clause and debate. As GFSA's Western Cape Regional Organiser, Margy built vital alliances across the social justice sector, especially with communities ravaged by gun violence. Though she died in 2009, her legacy lives on in GFSA's lobbying and advocacy.



# Matthew Chaskalson

**Matthew Chaskalson** is best known for his work in constitutional law. But in 2016, when GFSA needed to defend the constitutionality of firearm licence renewals, he stepped forward—without hesitation, and without charge. Appearing pro bono in the case, he used the law not just to argue, but to protect. His quiet contribution helped uphold a system that saves lives. And reminded us that justice is not just what you fight for but who you fight beside.



# Mluleki George

**Mluleki George** was an anti-apartheid activist, Robben Island political prisoner and parliamentarian. Following SA's first democratic elections, he was elected to the National Assembly for the ANC and was the first Chairperson of the Portfolio Committee on Police. Mluleki understood that real transformation required more than new laws—it needed diverse people working together. He fostered trust and co-operation within the Committee, particularly during negotiations on the Firearms Control Bill and championed civil society's right to have a voice in parliament. Through his leadership, ordinary citizens could speak directly to those making decisions about their safety.



# Naeemah Abrahams

Before the papers and the titles, Naeemah Abrahams was a nurse—bearing witness to women’s pain that too many called normal. She chose not to look away. For over 30 years, her research has uncovered what others overlooked: the silent toll of guns in women’s lives, and the truth that femicide is preventable. A founding voice on GFSA’s board, she turned numbers into justice, and data into policy. Naeemah never sought to be a trailblazer. She simply did the work. And never stopped caring.



# Pam Crowsley

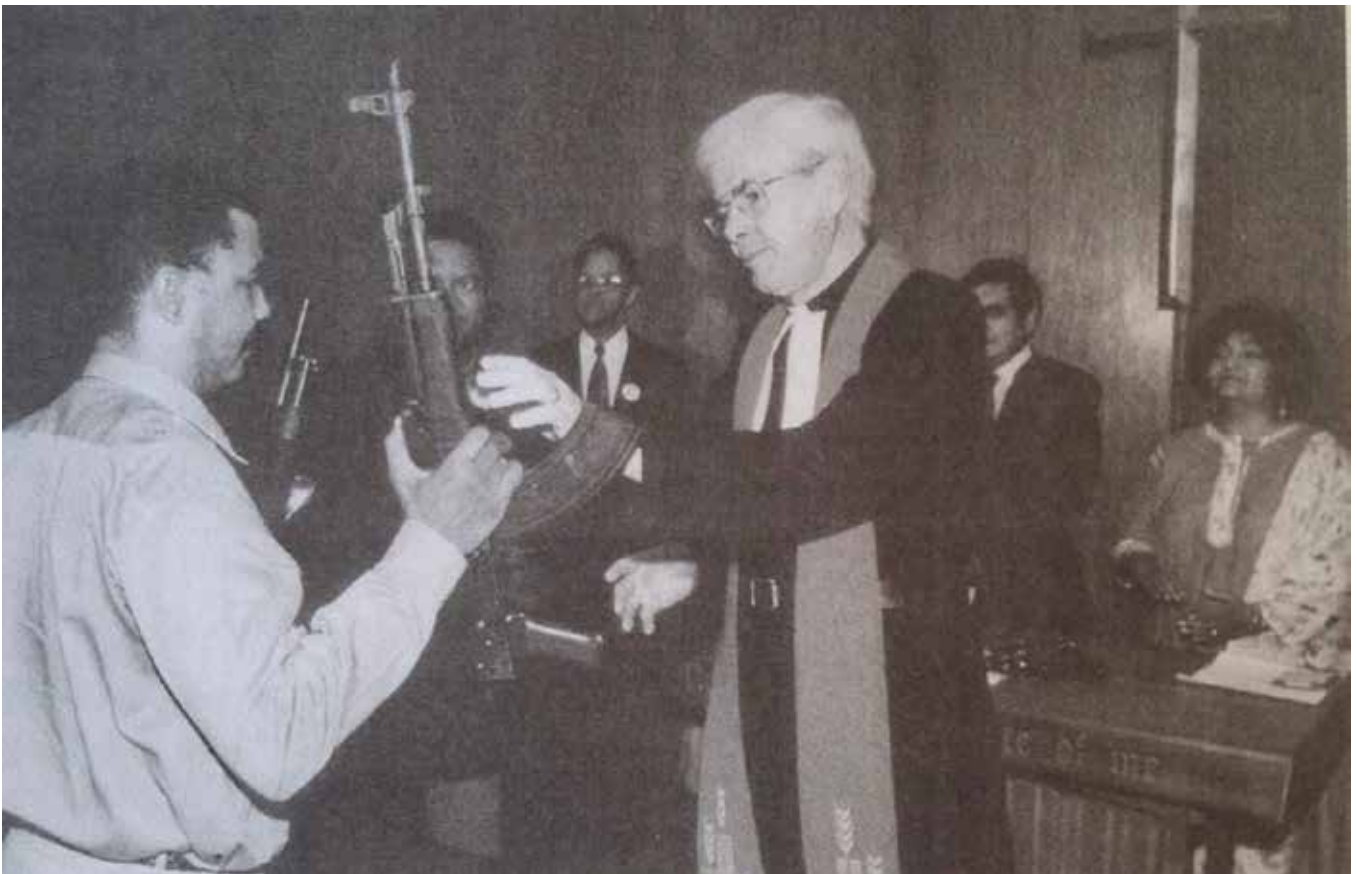
When **Pam Crowsley**’s son Dan left home one afternoon, she didn’t know it would be the last time. A single bullet from a .22 revolver ended his life in what was deemed an accident. What followed was unimaginable loss and extraordinary courage. Pam joined GFSA’s board, later becoming chair, sharing her story so others wouldn’t have to. “Keep your children safe,” she says. “Keep them away from guns.” Eighteen years on, the deep ache of loss remains. But so does her fight. Through her voice, Dan’s memory continues to save lives.



# Professor Emeritus Bishop Peter Storey:

**first chairperson (1995-1997) and patron**

**Peter Storey** is the leading founder, first chairperson, and dedicated patron of GFSA. A former president of the Methodist Church of Southern Africa and the South African Council of Churches, he helped lead the church's struggle against apartheid and co-chaired the regional Peace Accord structures intervening in political violence before South Africa's first democratic elections. Through this work, Peter became aware of the gun violence crisis in SA, which motivated him to work with a range of religious leaders to hold a national gun hand-in on 16 December 1994 in support of a safer, democratic South Africa free from the fear of gun violence. Standing in a church as a young man handed him an assault rifle was a moment of deep symbolism, and the beginning of GFSA's formation. Peter chaired the gun hand-in campaign committee and was elected as GFSA's first chairperson when it was established in 1995, acting in this role until he retired as bishop of the greater Johannesburg area in June 1997. "This campaign put the issue of guns squarely on the map. And it has never stopped." Nor has he. Peter continues as a GFSA patron.





# Richard Matzopoulos

**Richard Matzopoulos** is one of SA's most respected researchers, who has spent decades tracing the true cost of violence—not just in lives lost, but in futures stolen. A leading voice in public health and a dedicated GFSA board member, he's helped shift gun violence from a crime issue to a public health emergency. Through data, policy, and tireless advocacy, Richard has shown that violence is not inevitable—it's preventable. He doesn't just count the dead; he fights for the living. In Richard's hands, statistics become strategies for survival.



# Samuel Kobela

When **Samuel Kobela** reached out from Mapela, he wasn't asking for help—he was offering hope. He had witnessed the harm violence could cause, but he also believed in what unity could build. Together we launched one of South Africa's first successful Gun Free Zone campaigns, 21 Limpopo villages standing together as a model of grassroots peacebuilding. The message was clear: violence has no place in our future. What began with a phone call became a movement. In parliament, his story earned a standing ovation. In Mapela, it changed how thousands live and stand against gun violence.



# Shanaaz Mathews

**Shanaaz Mathews** transforms research into protection for the most vulnerable. An 'accidental academic' who started as a social worker treating child sexual abuse survivors, she discovered that rigorous research has the power to change lives. As Director of the Children's Institute for over a decade, Shanaaz championed the crucial intersection between violence against women and violence against children, including the devastating impact of gun availability in homes. Now at UCT's Department of Paediatrics and Child Health, she co-leads the global 'What Works' programme, scaling violence prevention worldwide.



# Sharon Manfred Trail

**Sharon Manfred Trail** is a UCT Business School graduate with a passion for social housing and justice. Sharon was both the brains and the organising energy behind the first firearms amnesty in South Africa on 16th December 1994. From behind the scenes, she and her husband George rallied unlikely allies, convincing OK Bazaars to clear their shelves of toy guns and crush them with a bulldozer in front of the Gauteng Legislature. Her unrelenting spirit proved that disarming a nation starts with daring to imagine it.



# Sheena Duncan

**founder, chairperson (1997-2004) and patron**

"Whenever there is opposition to what you do, then you know you are on the side of justice and truth"

7 December 1932—4 May 2010

Without Sheena Duncan, there would be no GFSA. A founding member, chair and patron, she brought a lifetime of activism into the heart of this cause. As president of the Black Sash at the time, Sheena was one of the key organisers of the 1994 gun hand-in. She was clear that while the one-day amnesty did not yield the number of guns hoped for, it was critical because it generated enormous media attention and put the issue of gun violence and gun control on the national agenda. With fierce intellect and quiet conviction, Sheena guided GFSA from the margins to the centre of national change. A fearless human rights activist, she replaced Peter Storey as chairperson in 1997, and held this position throughout GFSA's lobbying for and public engagement on SA's new gun law, the Firearms Control Act of 2000. Her deep knowledge of law shaped new legislation. Her compassion shaped us. Sheena saw gun violence not just as a safety issue but as a justice issue. And she never stopped fighting for both.

# BECOME A GUN FREE GUARDIAN

You've heard some of the **stories of courage and commitment**

That has shaped Gun Free South Africa for 30 years.

You've seen **what remarkable people can achieve** when they refuse to accept the inevitable.

**Now it's your turn to call the shots.**

## DONATE TODAY

Help build a safer South Africa by reducing gun violence.

**Visit our website**

website: [www.gfsa.org.za/donate/](http://www.gfsa.org.za/donate/)