



## **Media Statement:**

### **Applaud SA destruction of firearms on International Gun Destruction Day**

9 July 2015: Gun Free South Africa applauds the state's destruction of firearms today, International Gun Destruction Day, at Arcelor Mittal Steel Factory, Vereeniging. Speaking at the event, Adèle Kirsten, Gun Free South Africa's Lobbying and Advocacy Director, described today's destruction as significant for 3 reasons:

Firstly, it represents an act of solidarity with all those whose lives have been devastated by gun violence as many of the firearms destroyed today were used to murder, injure, threaten and intimidate innocent people. While the implementation of SA's gun law, the Firearms Control Act (2000), has halved South Africa's gun death rate, gun violence remains unacceptably high. Every day in South Africa 18 people are shot and killed and between 18 and 72 survive an incident of gun violence, often with severe disabilities.

Secondly, today's event demonstrates South Africa's compliance with international practice regarding the destruction of firearms. The numerous destructions undertaken by SAPS over the past 15 years in which over 1 million firearms have been destroyed are in line with the UN Programme of Action (2001) and the International Tracing Instrument (2005),<sup>1</sup> both of which make provision for the destruction of confiscated, seized or collected weapons, recognising the contribution destructions make to public awareness and confidence building.

Finally, today's destruction illustrate the seriousness with which both government and the South African Police Service regard the problem of firearms, and their intention to gain control over both illegal and legal firearms in South Africa. It shows all South Africans, our neighbours and the world at large that we are committed to creating a safe and secure country, which is more important than ever before as senior police officials are implicated in firearm-related fraud and corruption, including selling guns handed in for destruction in the 2010 national firearms amnesty to criminals.<sup>2</sup>

By destroying these guns, SAPS is ensuring that they can never find their way back into circulation - to kill, injure or threaten anyone. Destroying these guns has a direct bearing on reducing crime. Less guns means less gun violence...and a safer South Africa for all.

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<sup>1</sup> The full name of the two international instruments: the UN Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All its Aspects; the ITI is the International Instruments to Enable States to identify and Trace, in a Timely and Reliable Manner, Illicit Small Arms and Light Weapons.

<sup>2</sup> See [Cops leaking guns](#), The Times, 4 June 2014 and [More arrests to follow top GP cop's](#), Eye Witness News, 21 January 2015.