

**Media Statement:**  
**Guns fuel crime: 18 to 21 murders committed with guns every day**  
***Gun Free South Africa's response to 2016-17 crime stats***

**24 October 2017: Poor enforcement of gun control laws is leaking guns from the legal to the illegal pool and driving South Africa's year-on-year increase in violent crime.**

Latest crime statistics show murder, attempted murder and robbery with aggravating circumstances – crimes most likely committed with a gun – have increased for the fifth year running.

In 2016-17, 51 people were murdered every day, 343 more people than in the previous year (an 1.8% increase), attempted murders were up by 78 (0.4%), while 8,429 more robberies with aggravating circumstances were committed (a 6.4% increase to 140,956).

Although the police must be commended for recovering an additional 1,362 illegal firearms and rounds of ammunition in 2016-17, Gun Free South Africa is concerned that this 9% improvement is due to the greater availability of guns, instead of improvements in policing.

Since 2012, South Africa has seen a steady rise in violent crime, with murder increasing a staggering 22%, from a low of 15,554 murders in 2011-12 to 19,016 in 2016-17. Gun Free South Africa estimates that between 35% and 40% of murders in 2016-17 were committed with a gun, amounting to 18 to 21 gun-related murders a day.

Research undertaken by the Medical Research Council has proven that the decline in South Africa's overall murder rate between 2000 and 2010 was a direct result of introducing stronger gun laws, which saved thousands of lives from gun violence. In 2012, this trend began reversing.

The steady increase in violent crime dating from 2012 coincides with a breakdown in South Africa's firearms control management system. This breakdown includes:

- ***Fraud and corruption in the gun licensing process***, which means that people who are not fit for gun ownership are fraudulently granted gun licences by police officials;
- ***Loss and theft of legal guns which leak into the illegal pool***, this is best demonstrated by the sentencing to 18 years of Christiaan Prinsloo, a senior police officer, for selling 2,400 confiscated and surrendered guns 'destroyed' by police to Western Cape gangsters; thus far 1,066 murders in that province have been forensically linked to these guns.

The evidence in South Africa and globally is that strengthening national firearms control systems reduces gun violence.

However, laws are only as good as their enforcement and while strong gun laws save lives, poor enforcement kills.

As such, Gun Free South Africa is deeply concerned that in his presentation to parliament this morning the Minister of Police failed to present a coherent plan to recover illegal guns and strictly regulate legally held guns as a strategy to close the tap leaking legal guns into the illegal pool. Instead he reiterated his populist and dangerous call for the SANDF to be deployed to deal with violent crime.

Gun violence can be stopped. Police Minister, Fikile Mbalula, you can and you must take decisive action: mop up the illegal pool of guns in our communities, and ensure that the Firearms Control Act (2000) is strengthened and enforced to significantly reduce access to guns. Or, if you're really serious about taking action, be bold and declare South Africa gun free.

Ends