



## **Media Statement: Guns Fuel Violent Crime: *Gun Free South Africa's* response to 2014-15 crime stats**

**29 September 2015: Corruption in the firearms control management system is driving South Africa's year-on-year increase in violent crime.**

Says Adèle Kirsten, Gun Free South Africa's spokesperson, firearm-related fraud and corruption has channelled guns into the wrong hands, which is fuelling violent crime in South Africa, as the latest crime statistics released today show.

Annual police statistics reveal that violent crime has steadily increased since 2012, with the 2014/15 police stats show that murder has increased by 4.6% from 2013/14; robbery with aggravating circumstances by 8.5% and car-jacking by 14.2%.

This steady increase in violent crime coincides with a breakdown in the firearms control management system. This breakdown includes:

- **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; for instance, the dismissal of the Head of the Central Firearms Registry in 2014 for alleged involvement in firearm licence fraud.
- **Fraud and corruption in the management of guns in government's care**; demonstrated by the ongoing trial of Chris Prinsloo, a senior police officer, for allegedly selling confiscated and surrendered guns 'destroyed' by police to Western Cape gangsters.
- **Risk that due process in implementing the Firearms Control Act was not followed**; in November 2010, the Minister of Police admitted that the Central Firearms Registry was "dysfunctional" and promised to turn it into a functional unit; with the emphasis being on dealing with a backlog of applications for gun licences, permits and certificates, which resulted in over 1 million being processed in 9 months.

The evidence shows, both in South Africa and globally, that strengthening national firearms control regimes reduces the incidence and rates of firearm homicides.

In the 2011/12 annual South African Police Service (SAPS) report, the year with the lowest ever reported murder figures (15,554 total murders, compared to 17,805 in 2014/15), the SAPS acknowledged that the steady decrease in murders over a ten year period was primarily due to the significant decrease in gun-related deaths. When presenting this year's crime statistics, the Minister of Police acknowledged the role played by the prevalence of firearms in fuelling crime.

Gun Free South Africa welcomes parliament's engagement with the latest crime statistics as this indicates that parliament is taking its oversight role seriously, which is especially important as the Firearms Control Act is due for amendment.

However, a law is only as good as its implementation, and in the context of tomorrow's Unite Against Corruption march, Gun Free South Africa calls on both parliament and government to take urgent action to root out corruption in the firearms control management system; thereby contributing to safety and security in South Africa.

**18 people are shot and killed every day in South Africa.**

**Gun Free South Africa is working towards a safer, more secure South Africa, by reducing gun violence.**