



## **MEDIA STATEMENT:**

### **WELCOME ANC CALL FOR STRICTER GUN LAWS TO REDUCE GUN VIOLENCE**

**30 October 2014: Gun Free South Africa congratulates the ANC's call to strengthen the Firearms Control Act to reduce gun violence in South Africa.**

Since the Firearms Control Act (2000) was promulgated, the number of people shot and killed in South Africa has halved - from 34 people a day to 18. But 18 people a day is 18 too many. As such, Gun Free South Africa welcomes the ANC's call to this morning to "review existing gun control measures with a view to limiting access to guns that end [up] in the wrong hands," and reducing the number of illegal guns on South African streets.

Strengthening the Firearms Control Act must be informed by data, so that it is evidence based. Crime and mortuary data shows that handguns are used in the majority of gun crimes in this country, indicating that the emphasis needs to be on significantly limiting or restricting access to handguns by raising the barrier for handgun ownership.

Strictly limiting who owns what gun for which purpose would help reduce the leakage of licensed guns into the illegal pool. Licensed guns are diverted into the illegal pool of weapons in three ways; first, smuggling from neighbouring countries, though police data indicates this is low. Secondly, loss and theft from licensed gun owners; police stats indicates that this is a significant source of illegal guns - since 1994 an average of almost 50 guns were reported lost and stolen every day from licensed guns owners, with civilians losing 12 times more guns than police officers. The final way involves fraud, corruption and poor implementation of the firearms licensing system, which means that people who shouldn't be granted the privilege and responsibility of gun ownership are issued licences.

This final contributor highlights that a law is only as good as its implementation. Gun Free South Africa urges that the impending review of the Firearms Control Act include a commitment to cleaning up the problems at the Central Firearms Registry to ensure that no short-cuts are taken; as well as a commitment to training police officers responsible for implementing the law so that it is properly applied.

Finally, Gun Free South Africa notes that any strengthening of gun control legislation in South Africa must include a coordinated campaign to mop up the pool of illegal guns in the country. This would include declaring a national amnesty, encouraging the public to report illegal guns, search and seizure operations and public destructions of all weapons sized or handed in.

**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.**

**Ends**