

# Gun Free South Africa

*Reducing gun violence  
Making South Africa safer*

June 2022 Newsletter



## Guns and human rights

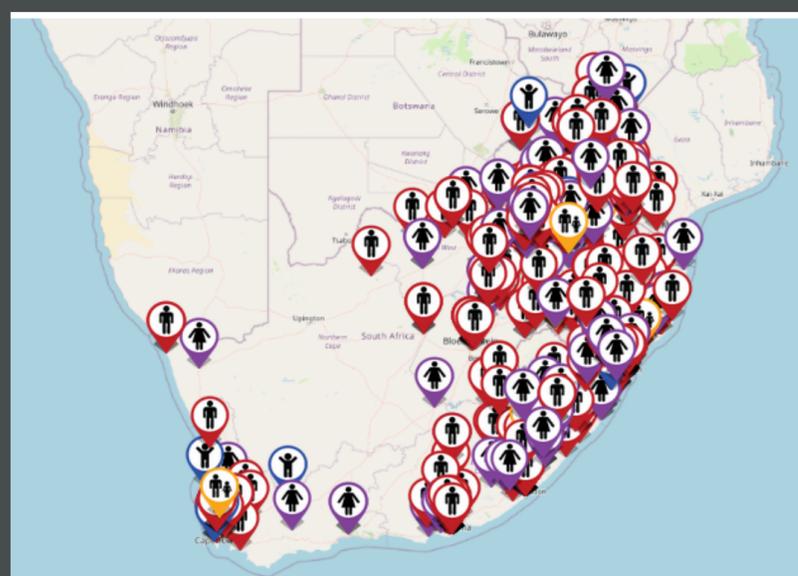


GFSA partnered with former top cop Jeremy Vearey on Human Rights Day

Click on the links to watch Jeremy unpack how guns impact our human rights:

- Our right to life, dignity, freedom and safety is enshrined in South Africa's Constitution. A gun curbs all of these rights
- Safety is a human right. Does this include self-defence? Absolutely! But owning a gun for self-defence is not as safe as you may think
- Help reclaim our communities and our right to safety by creating Gun Free Zones

## Changing pattern of gun violence



Interactive map

GFSA's gun violence map tracks the devastating impact of guns on human rights. It also shows a changing pattern in gun violence: more multiple shootings, more people being shot multiple times and more women being killed in public spaces. [See our map here](#)

## Women and gun violence



Femicide – the murder of women and girls – is the most extreme form of violence. Using new research from the South African Medical Research Council, GFSA's policy briefing [Femicide in South Africa over 18 years](#) tracks how gun-related femicide has changed between 1999 and 2017.



# Burden of gun violence on SA's health system

While more research is needed to understand how and why gun violence in South Africa is changing, public health professionals have raised the alarm about the increasing burden of gun violence on the country's health system.

They note that the number of gunshot injuries and deaths are rising and that single gunshots are rare. This means health professionals at all levels – EMS staff called out to a shooting, hospital staff tasked with treating patients, and forensic pathology service staff responsible for post-mortems – are increasingly overwhelmed by gun violence.



THE PAPER FOR THE PEOPLE

## Sunday Times

Our focus on the downstream treatment, care and processing of gunshots has meant normalising an abnormal situation in our hospitals and mortuaries.

But the numbers have become too big. The time has come to change our approach and treat gun violence for what it now is – a public health epidemic.

The solution to gun violence is to go upstream and limit the number of guns in our communities.

We appeal to the government to prioritise public safety as it amends the Firearms Control Act. The data is clear – fewer guns means less gun violence.

Excerpts from an opinion piece written by public health professionals published in the Sunday Times, 5 June 2022.  
Read the full piece [here](#)



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# Protecting our YOUTH

## Getting rid of toy guns to tackle gun violence

In Atlantis in the Western Cape, which has been experiencing high levels of gun violence, GFSA partnered with early childhood development centres to take toy guns out of the hands of young children and replace these with educational toys.

*"It's not that children who play with toy guns would go on to use real firearms. The problem is that we are living in a context of high levels of gun violence which kids see every day. So, the divide between fantasy and reality becomes much more insecure."*

Monique Hansen, GFSA Western Cape Regional Co-ordinator



ECD centres in Atlantis support toy gun destructions to address high levels of gun violence in the community

## Partnering to stop gun violence

GFSA has also been working with partner organisations in Gauteng to help protect our youth from gun violence.

A dialogue at the Girls and Boys Club in Alexandra and a fun walk with the Bophelong-Empilweni New Life Community Project in Thembisa helped raise children's awareness of their rights and responsibilities during Child Protection Week.

For Youth Day GFSA partnered with the Sello Sa Tlou theatre group in Thembisa to host a sports against gender-based violence soccer and netball event.



A dialogue at the Boys and Girls Club in Alex was held during Child Protection Week



Fun walk in Thembisa to raise children's awareness of their rights



Supporting a sports against GBV event in Thembisa for Youth Day

23 people are shot and killed every day in SA

# Gun control and public safety

## New SA research highlights risk of guns for self-defence



GFSA's most recent policy briefing looks at gun control, self-defence and public safety. It summarises national and global research showing the risks that a gun for self-defence poses to the gun owner, their family and the country at large.

New research by the University of the Witwatersrand, University of Cape Town and Medical Research Council confirms this risk.

The study analysed robberies in which force was used to identify the risk factors that escalate robbery into murder. It found that while robbery-homicide is relatively rare, the increased risk of being killed in a robbery can be linked to victims who are older white men and to the likelihood that victims are armed and resist attack.

Click here for a copy of [Gun control, self-defence and public safety](#)

## *"Gun violence is preventable"*

The key message GFSA made in our bilateral with the Civilian Secretariat for Police Service. Following an instruction from parliament, the Secretariat consulted stakeholders over a six month period on proposed amendments to the Firearms Control Act.



*"Evidence should inform policy, not anecdotes or people's fears. And the evidence is overwhelming that easy availability of guns results in an increase in deaths."*

GFSA's Adèle Kirsten is on a mission to save lives by preventing gun violence. [Click here to read more](#)