



GUN FREE SOUTH AFRICA STATEMENT

Response to Q2 crime statistics

The weapon matters: Guns leading cause of murder in SA 34 people shot dead every day, up from 31 a day in previous quarters, yet no outrage or urgency from police or MPs at crime stats briefing

17 November 2023: GFSA is deeply concerned that gun-related violence has again increased: 34 people were shot dead every day between 1 July and 30 September, up from an average of 31 people shot and killed a day in previous quarters.

The latest crime statistics show that SA's violence bloodbath is fed largely by men arguing with and then killing other men, most often with guns; a fact that was not acknowledged or addressed in this morning's briefing by SAPS to parliament.

Says Claire Taylor, researcher at GFSA, "While gender and motive matter, so does the weapon. Guns are designed to kill, and the more guns there are, the more people are shot and killed, injured or threatened."

Limiting gun availability saves lives, as South Africa has already shown: SA's gun death rate halved from 34 people shot dead a day in 1998 to 18 a day in 2009 when gun availability shrank due to various controls associated with the Firearms Control Act (2000).

However, as gun numbers steadily increased from 2010/11 due to breakdowns in controls associated with under-resourcing, poor planning and criminality involving fraud, corruption and theft, gun violence has steadily risen.

GFSA calls on government to use its crime data to save lives and urgently:

- Establish specialised firearms units to recover and destroy illegal firearms. Being outside of any controls, illegal guns are most often used in crime, being used over and over again to kill, injure and threaten. In this regard we note with worry the decrease in the number of firearms and ammunition recovered as a result of police action in the last quarter.
- Tighten controls over legal firearms – which are the biggest source of illegal guns in SA. This includes:
 - Bringing amendments to the Firearms Control Act (2000) to parliament to close loopholes and align our gun law with global obligations and norms;
 - Ensuring that the Central Firearms Registry is fully functional and can track every single gun owned by civilians and the state from cradle to grave. In particular we call for civilian oversight over a recently awarded contract to establish an electronic firearms system for the Central Firearms Registry to ensure that R343m already paid for this exact purpose, which was written off in 2014 as "wasteful and fruitless expenditure", is not repeated.

34 people are shot and killed every day in South Africa
Gun Free South Africa is helping build a safer country by reducing gun violence