



Statement: Response to video of armed man shot in head by cop at hotel Easy access to guns puts everyone at risk for injury or death

16 November 2021: During the recent public debate on proposed amendments to the Firearms Control Act, a common theme was how effective guns are for self-defence. Despite the evidence that guns are not the solution, and rather pose a risk for injury and death, the myth persisted through anecdotal evidence. This terrible incident, leaving all the people involved traumatised, and one man fighting for his life, shows how the presence of guns alters the outcome of an altercation, and changes lives forever.

Says Adèle Kirsten, GFSA's Director, "the presence of a gun put everyone in that situation – the man who was shot, his wife, the police as well as hotel staff and guests – at risk of being injured or killed."

The incident takes place as gun violence in South Africa has reached epidemic proportions: Nationally, guns have overtaken knives as the weapon most used in murders¹, while in Gauteng more people are shot and killed than die in traffic accidents².

With 23 people shot and killed every day in South Africa, GFSA urges government to move speedily to bring the Amendment Bill to Parliament in 2022. The Bill, aligned to government's policy for the control of firearms in South Africa, will ensure that measures are strengthened to reduce the availability of guns and increase state accountability for the control of its own weapons. The policy notes that "the high level of violence, and especially of lethal violence, is driven by the easy availability of firearms. The programme to reduce the proliferation and availability of firearms is central to our efforts to reduce violent crime and break the cycles of violence that characterise our society."³

Ends

¹ South African Police Service national annual crime statistics:

- South African Police Service. 2019. Crime Statistics: Crime situation in Republic of South Africa (12) months (April to March 2018-19). Presentation to Portfolio Committee on Police, 12 September. (Online). Available at <https://pmg.org.za/committee-meeting/28873/> (accessed 28 March 2020).
- South African Police Services. 2020. Crime situation in Republic of South Africa: Twelve (12) months (April to March 2019-20). Presentation to the Portfolio Committee of Police, 31 July. (Online). Available at www.saps.gov.za/services/april_to_march_2019_20_presentation.pdf (accessed 3 August 2020).

² Gauteng Department of Health. 2019. Gunshot wounds and stabbings top the list of causes of death in Gauteng. Media statement, 5 November: Reports that for 2018/2019 financial year, "state mortuaries recorded 2416 gunshot deaths followed by motor vehicle accidents and stabbings at 1695 and 1295 respectively."

³ Department of Safety and Security. 2000. Policy for the Control of Firearms in South Africa, January.