



Gun Free SA welcomes respected policy think-tank's call for government to prioritise gun control to reduce violent crime in SA

26 June 2024: An Institute for Security Studies (ISS) report [Strengthening the SAPS for a safer South Africa: Recommendations for police reform](#) launched this morning calls on SA's new government to prioritise gun control to reduce violent crime nationally.

According to Gareth Newham, Head of the ISS' Justice and Violence Prevention Programme, "we have to get on top of our murder rate" which is "driven by firearms."

With [guns the leading weapon used in murder](#) in South Africa, the ISS urged that firearm crime and violence be "the initial focus of SAPS." Key priorities to recover illegal firearms and better regulate legal firearm stocks identified in the ISS report include:

- Mapping all gun-related crimes to ensure that police responses are better targeted, perpetrators are identified, and sources of illegal firearms are disrupted more effectively. In this regard the report calls for the establishment of dedicated firearm units with adequate intelligence support in all provinces.
- Implementing measures to address problems facing the [Central Firearms Registry](#), which include rigorously addressing corruption in SAPS firearm management, fully digitising the system, and substantially enhancing oversight and accountability for lost firearms.

The report also calls on other stakeholders, such as the National Prosecuting Authority to prioritise the prosecution of firearm violence and other related firearm offences, and for parliament to oversee crime and violence prevention interventions.

GFSA welcomes the ISS' recommendations. Says Adèle Kirsten, Director of GFSA, "gun violence in SA is at crisis levels: 34 people are shot and killed every day with mass killings becoming increasingly common. Addressing gun violence must be a priority for the whole of government."

She notes that a key intervention to addressing gun violence in SA that was not included in the ISS report is the strengthening of South Africa's gun law. Since the Firearms Control Act was passed into law in 2000 a range of developments mean it is no longer fit for purpose e.g. loopholes are exploited by gun owners to accumulate guns and ammunition, while gun ownership for self-defence is allowed despite overwhelming evidence globally and in South Africa that [guns are not effective for self-protection](#).

The power of the law to reduce gun violence is evident from South Africa's own experience. In the first years of democracy SA's gun violence levels were as high as today, with 34 people shot dead daily. As a result of effective gun control that focused on both recovering and destroying illegal guns and restricting licensed guns to stop their leakage and illegal use, the number of people shot dead almost halved in 10 years.

"SA's own experience shows that [gun control is crime control](#)," says Kirsten, a fact that was recognised by Newham, who said that controlling guns is an "immediate and short-term focus that will have the biggest impact."

We all want a safer country. We urge government to seriously engage with the ISS' report and prioritise gun violence reduction.

**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.**