



## FACT SHEET

GENDER, GUNS

AND VIOLENCE

## DEFINITIONS

### WHAT IS GENDER?

- Gender refers to the socially created roles, personality traits, attitudes, behaviours and values that are acceptable for men and women. Gender is learnt, and changes over time.  
(Talking Taboos: Gender Health & Justice Research Unit)
- Sex and gender are not the same thing
- Sex refers to the physical or biological characteristics used to classify men, women and intersex people.
- Gender defines what women and men, and girls and boys are expected to be and do. Learn more here:  
**What is gender?**
- Gender is not fixed. It is not absolute.
- **Gender norms** are the “rules” about how each gender should behave. Gender norms contribute to gender inequality (**NSVRC**)

### WHAT IS MASCULINE AND FEMININE?

- When we discuss gender, we use the terms “**masculine**” and “**feminine**” to identify a set of characteristics, values and meanings that we attach to being male and to being female. (**The Critical Media Project**). Words that are masculine stereotypes for men include; physical strength, power, decisiveness, action, bravery, aggression, tough, rational
- Words that are feminine stereotypes for women include: passive, submissive, fearful, weak, emotional, soft, irrational

### WHAT IS VIOLENCE?

Violence is the intentional use of physical force or power, threatened or actual, against oneself, another person, or against a group or community, which either results in or has a high likelihood of resulting in injury, death, psychological harm, maldevelopment, or deprivation.

**World Health Organisation**

### WHAT IS A FIREARM?

A firearm is a device manufactured or designed to propel a bullet or projectile through a barrel or cylinder by means of a burning propellant.

### WHAT IS A HAND-GUN?

A handgun is a pistol or revolver and can be used with just one hand. It is durable and easy to hide.

*\*note: a gun and a firearm is the same thing but in law a gun is referred to as a firearm.*

### WHAT IS A LEGAL GUN?

A legal gun in South Africa is a gun that is licensed to an individual gun owner. This person needs to be a South African citizen or permanent resident, be 21 years or older and not have a criminal record. The gun owner would have had to pass mental health checks, background checks that include inquiry into substance addiction. The gun owner must also pass basic training in how to handle a gun from an accredited facility and needs to know his responsibilities and duties under the law. An ordinary person is allowed to own a maximum of four guns.

### WHAT IS AN ILLEGAL FIREARM?

An illegal gun is any gun that is produced, transferred, held or used in violation of a national or international law. Most guns start off their life as a legal guns. Legal guns become illegal when they are stolen from the legal owner, lost by the owner, and bought illegally on the black market.

### WHAT IS GUN VIOLENCE?

**Gun violence** or gun related violence is violence committed with the use of a gun, which includes murder, attempted murder, using a gun in order to threaten or intimidate, suicide and attempted suicide.

### WHAT IS FEMICIDE?

Femicide is defined as the killing of a female person by an intimate partner (**saferspaces.org**).

### WHAT IS GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE (GBV)?

Gender-based violence involves men and women, in which women are usually the victims. GBV is often a result of unequal power relationships between men and women. It includes, but is not limited to, physical, sexual and psychological harm. The most common form of gender-based violence is abuse of women by intimate male partners.

## GUNS AND GENDER

Most acts of violence across the world, including firearm-related violence, are overwhelmingly perpetrated by men and boys and most victims of firearms-related violence are also men and boys. Globally, men account for 80 per cent of murder victims and perpetrators. (UNODC. 2011) Most firearms are owned by men - whether in the home for self-protection, as a hobby such as hunting, as part of their job such as a police officer or security guard, and in gangs.



More men than women own guns as a global trend



On average **16 PEOPLE** are killed by guns every day in South Africa.  
Gun Free South Africa

### GUN-RELATED DEATHS



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67% of women killed by guns are killed by a single shot, usually to the head or face.

Study on Guns and Gender-based Violence

A legal gun is used in 75% of cases in which a woman is shot and killed, and in 60% of cases this shooting occurs in her home.

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**88%** of **GUN-RELATED SUICIDES** are men and 12% are women.

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A woman is killed by an intimate partner every 8 hours in South Africa: **17% OF THESE DEATHS ARE FROM GUNSHOT.**

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Women are more at risk for being shot and killed at the hands of an intimate partner than men.

Men are more at risk of being shot and killed by male acquaintances than women.

Any woman who lives in fear of a gun in her home can ask the **MAGISTRATES COURT OR THE POLICE** to remove the gun immediately.



[Click here](#) for more information

## GUNS AND GENDER

### ACTIVITIES THAT PUTS A GUN IN SOMEBODY'S HAND:

- Hunting
- Military service
- Security guard
- Police officer
- Protection of family
- Toy guns and other toy weapons
- Traditional weapons
- Gangs

Which of these activities are associated with men?



## GUN VIOLENCE HAS A PATTERN, IT IS NOT RANDOM

The probability of gun violence increases with the number of risk factors present in someone's life.

### WHAT ARE RISK FACTORS?

- Risk factors increase the likelihood that a young person will use violence or experience violence.
- Risk factors are not the direct causes of youth violence but they contribute to youth violence.
- Risk factors occur at the individual, family, peer, social and community level.
- Risk factors are not the fault or doing of an individual. Risk factors are caused by how a society is structured (race, economics, gender). Risk factors can also be linked to family circumstance
- Risk factors include; exposure to violence and conflict in the family, high emotional distress, being a victim of violence, school failure, involvement in gangs and few economic opportunities.

### WHAT ARE RISK FACTORS

### FOR VIOLENCE

The more risk factors present in someone's life, the more likely they are to engage in acts of violence, either as a perpetrator or victim of gun violence. Being male is a risk factor that increases the chances of being involved in gun violence.

The graphic below illustrates how risk factors work together to form the usual patterns of gun violence. People who have many of these risk factors present in their lives are more vulnerable to gun violence.

#### INDIVIDUAL

Being black  
Young  
Male  
Abused as a child

#### COMMUNITY

Exposed to violence  
Lack of support systems  
Lack of role models  
Lack of resources

#### SOCIETAL

Under-resourced educational systems  
Unemployment  
Weak criminal justice system  
Racial injustice

## WHAT ARE PROTECTIVE FACTORS?

Protective factors are the opposite of risk factors. Protective factors buffer young people from the risks of becoming violent. These factors exist at various levels and include: a positive social orientation, frequent shared activities with parents and involvement in prosocial activities.

**What are protective factors**

## THE REALITIES OF GUN VIOLENCE DID YOU KNOW

**Guns kill more people more effectively than any other weapon**

**Gun violence is one of the leading causes of death in South Africa**

**Young men are more at risk of gun violence**

**The primary perpetrators and victims are young black men**

**Guns play a big role in violence against women in South Africa**

**A gun in the home increases the risk for women being shot and killed**

**Most gun violence against women is committed by their intimate partners**

**Guns are used to kill, rape threaten and intimidate women**

**More civilians (ordinary people) in South Africa own guns than the entire police force and army**

**An estimated 3.4 million legal guns are in the hands of ordinary people, this includes private security.**

**An estimated 700 000 guns are in the hands of state security**

**Losing or being robbed of your gun, feeds the illegal market and increases gun violence.**

**Up to 20 guns are lost or stolen everyday In 2014, civilians lost 18 guns a day and the police lost 2 guns a day.**

## GUN VIOLENCE AND MEN



The murder rate  
in South Africa

**34 / 100 000  
POPULATION**

The highest murder rates are found  
in young men between the ages of  
15 and 29 years with a rate of

**184 / 100 000  
POPULATION**

FIND OUT  
MORE  
**HERE**



## GUN VIOLENCE IS VIOLENCE COMMITTED WITH A FIREARM AND INCLUDES:

Murder, attempted murder, suicide, attempted suicide, threats using a firearm, armed robbery, drive-by shootings.

## Gun violence is preventable in your community. To stop it you need to know:

- **Where it happens**  
(In the home? On the street? At schools?)
- **Who has the guns**  
(Men? Boys? Security? Police?)
- **Who is doing the shooting**  
(A stranger? Gangs? Partners? Police?)
- **Who are victims?**
- **Who has power in your community**  
(Gangs? Priests? Traditional leaders?)
- **Safe and dangerous spaces in your community**
- **The law - Schools Act, Domestic Violence Act**

## MYTH BUSTERS

**MYTH** Women and children are more likely to be shot and killed by guns than men.

**FACT** The majority of victims shot and killed are men.

**MYTH** Keeping a gun in the home for self-defense protects me, my family and possessions.

**FACT** The presence of a gun in the home puts everyone at risk of injury and death. The presence of guns actually increases the risk of individuals and families being targeted for theft, assault and murder, as well as suicide, femicide (when women are murdered by their intimate partners) and accidental injury or death.

**MYTH** Women are at risk of being shot by strangers or home invaders.

**FACT** Women are more likely to be shot and

killed in the home by an intimate partner including husbands, boyfriends and romantic partners, than by a stranger.

**MYTH** We need to control crime, not guns.

**FACT** Guns are a primary tool of violent crime in South Africa. Strong gun laws reduce gun violence.

**MYTH** Owning a gun is a right

**FACT** Gun ownership is a privilege under the law. That means if you want to own a gun you have to show that you are responsible and understand when and how you can use your gun. It also means that the government has the final say about whether or not you are fit to own a gun.

**Gun Free South Africa**



**YOU ARE 4X MORE LIKELY**  
to have your gun used against  
you than to be able to use it  
successfully in self-defence.



**More lives are lost worldwide  
from non-conflict firearm events,  
(shootings) than during ongoing wars.**

United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime

## RESOURCES IN SOUTH AFRICA



Resources that protect against gun violence: community policing forums, gun free zones, street lights, secured surroundings (e.g. locking doors, window's closed), create a neighbourhood watch, know your neighbours, have a good relationship with the police, community self defence classes.

## IF YOU HAVE BEEN A VICTIM OF GUN VIOLENCE AND NEED EMOTIONAL SUPPORT

SADAG

Lifeline

The centre for the study of violence and reconciliation (CSVSR)

WITS trauma unit

SAPS Victim Empowerment Programme

Youth Crime Prevention Desk

## INTERNET RESOURCES

Sonke Gender Justice

Safer Spaces

Gun Free South Africa

Gun Free advert

Put the Gun Down Music Video

I Wanna Grow Up - Don't Shoot Music Video

Helps to shift people's attitudes

**Between one and four  
people survive a gun  
violence incident for each  
of the 18 fatalities a day.**

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