

## Media Statement:

### ***Gun Free South Africa's response to loss of 2000 guns by police in 4 years***

1 November 2017: The Minister of Police has admitted that 2027 guns were stolen from police armouries in the last four years. These guns are now part of the illegal pool of guns, and outside of any control.

Every illegal gun in South Africa begins life as a legal gun. Legal guns leak into the illegal market in 3 ways:

1. **Fraud and corruption** in gun licensing, which means unfit people are granted legal guns;
2. **Smuggling** of legal guns between countries;
3. **Loss and theft** of guns, which is the greatest source of illegal guns. Figures from the police show that police lose an average of 2 guns a day, while civilians lose an average of 20 guns a day.

Once a legal gun leaks into the illegal market, there are no laws regulating who can own or use it or how it can be used. Because guns are robust commodities, they can be used over and over again to commit crimes.

There are two ways to get rid of illegal guns: Mop up illegal guns and close the tap leaking guns into the illegal pool.

1. There are two ways government can **mop up** guns: they can either be recovered through intelligence driven and search and seizure operations or they can be handed in during a national firearms amnesty or gun buy-back.
2. **Closing the tap** involves more strictly regulating legal guns to reduce the risk that they will leak into the illegal pool. South Africa's gun law, the Firearms Control Act (2000), is a world class gun law that saved thousands of lives between 2000 and 2010 by ensuring that only 'fit and proper' manufacturers, traders and owners were granted gun licences.

However, a law is only as good as its enforcement; strong gun laws save lives, but poor enforcement kills.

Since 2011 the Firearms Control Act (2000) has not been properly enforced. The result is a steady rise in violent crime: The latest crime stats show that murders in South Africa have increased a staggering 22%, from a low of 15,554 murders in 2011-12 (43 a day) to 19,016 in 2016-17 (52 a day).

Between 35% and 40% of murders in 2016-17 were committed with a gun, amounting to 18 to 21 gun-related murders a day.

Police Minister, Fikile Mbalula, you have the power to stop gun violence: mop up the illegal pool of guns in our communities, and ensure that the Firearms Control Act (2000) is strengthened and enforced to strictly regulate who owns what gun for which purpose.

*Ends*