



MEDIA STATEMENT

NO ONE IS IMMUNE TO GUN VIOLENCE IN SOUTH AFRICA

Thursday 5 May 2016: A media survey reveals that in just 31 days, 86 people were killed with a gun, and 68 people were injured. Of the total number of deaths and injury reported, 128 were men and 31 were women, including 7 girl children. The cases reported in the media over this period show that firearms are used to kill men, women, and children, young and old, police officers, taxi drivers, security guards, business owners, and alleged gangsters. In short, no one is immune.

Of the 128 male victims, 72 were killed and 53 were injured, whereas of the 31 women victims, 13 were killed and 14 injured. Of these gun deaths, 6 were police officers (of whom 3 had their service pistols stolen and one attempted theft), and 13 were alleged perpetrators killed as a result of police action. A further 20 of the gun deaths were gangsters killed in inter-gang rivalry in Manenberg, Cape Town.

Despite the significant reduction in gun deaths since the introduction of stricter gun laws in South Africa in 2000 (from 34 gun deaths a day in 1998 to 18 a day in 2009), in GFSA's view this snapshot media survey shows that there are still far too many guns in circulation, with too many gun deaths. Alan Storey, Chairperson of GFSA, says 'the case for stronger gun legislation is clear given these media reports'.

As part of the *Global Week of Action Against Gun Violence*, GFSA partnered with Sonke Gender Justice in tracking reported gun related incidents across print, TV and on-line media, using a key word search for the period 4 April to 4 May 2016. The analysis of the information from the media reports covered location, context, type of violence, gender of victims and perpetrators including age, number of deaths, number of injuries, number of perpetrators and finally recording the type of firearm used and its legal/illegal status. While these media reports reflect media choices on what to report, they therefore do not reflect the proportions of different kinds of gun violence found in our

society or what is happening at the population level. However, they do reflect the wide range of social contexts and interactions in which people are subject to gun violence.

Although the age the victim was not always reported, a summary analysis of the age data shows that male victims of gun violence are concentrated in the age band from late 20s to mid-40s, with the youngest victim being 11 years old (gang related) and the oldest 73 years. The age pattern for women victims looks quite different, with a concentration in the early 20s to mid-thirties, with the youngest victim being a one year old and the oldest victim being 83 years. What is striking about the female demographic is that at least seven of the victims are girl children ranging in age from one to 17 years.

Of course we do not know what happened to those 68 people who were injured. Do they all survive, or do some of them die as a result of their injuries? And if they survive, how many are permanently disabled, how many lose their jobs, and what costs are incurred for medical and rehabilitation services?

According to the media reports gun violence is perpetrated predominantly by men working in groups of 2 to 5. In incidents in which there was only one perpetrator reported, this was either a crime of domestic violence or a taxi drive-by shooting or political assassination.

In more than two thirds of the incidents reported, the type and make of firearm, or the status of the firearm, that is whether it is legal or illegal, was not reported. This is perhaps one of the biggest challenges in reporting on gun violence. Information on the type of gun used in crime is important in helping us understand the kind of interventions needed.



**18 people are shot and killed every day in South Africa.
Gun Free South Africa is working towards a safer,
more secure South Africa, by reducing gun violence.**

Ends