

10 November 2017

FIREARM AMNESTY 2018

On 8 November 2017, SAGA trustee Damian Enslin, attended the Portfolio Committee for Police meeting at Parliament with respect to the proposed Firearm Amnesty 2018.

The police were represented by a number of Generals, including Major General Bothma, who presented the conditions of the Amnesty as well as the structure and process of the Amnesty. A copy of this presentation is available on our website.

The Portfolio Committee were deeply concerned about the rationale behind the Amnesty as a number of committee members felt there was no point in the amnesty, if the main criteria was the removal of illegal firearms from criminal hands.

A number of questions were posed to Major General Bothma and the police concerning the previous Amnesty – whether any crimes had been solved or, if firearms that were previously handed in, had been linked to any crimes at all. Major General Bothma was unable to give any data concerning this and advised Parliament that he would revert with data in due course.

Further concerns raised by the Committee was with respect to the safekeeping and transportation of firearms. The Committee was deeply troubled by the fact that some police stations had recently lost a number of firearms and that possibly thousands of firearms have been lost by the police in recent times.

The Committee was also concerned about the vetting of the officers that would be involved in this process, from the police station all the way to destruction of the firearms. They wanted to know how these persons were to be vetted and when this would take place.

The notice that the police brought to Parliament was defective as it had the incorrect dates and as a result the police will have to return to Parliament on Wednesday, 15th November 2017 to submit the proper notice which we expect will then be endorsed by the Committee.

SAGA was permitted to address the Committee concerning the Amnesty and raised the fact that SAPS have not conferred with stakeholders concerning the Amnesty process and conditions. We further noted that SAGA members, as well as general society, were deeply concerned about surrendering their firearms to the police considering the recent loss and theft of firearms, and gross negligence with respect to firearms held in police custody.

The Firearm Amnesty is planned to be in effect from 1st February 2018 for a period of six months. SAGA will study the Amnesty conditions and terms in detail and advise further in due course.

With respect to the court case regarding late renewal of firearm licences, we wish to remind our members that the Minister of Police appealed Judge Tolmay's Judgement of 4th July 2017 and this Appeal has been set down for hearing in the Constitutional Court on the 8th February 2018. SAGA will keep you updated regarding these important issues.