

SAGA Release on Unlawful Shootings

6 January 2020

The recent spate of unlawful shootings, especially in the Johannesburg area, over the festive season, once again indicates the lawlessness and the immaturity of some of the inhabitants of our country. These unlawful shootings, some of which killed or injured innocent people, and numerous other criminal acts, are typical examples of why the government should take the blame for its incompetence and inability to make South Africa a place where its inhabitants are, and feel, safe. In addition, there are people who do their best to destabilize our country, people who do not care about the national and international consequences of their criminal activities. And, as usual, government and the anti-gun lobby, will not focus on these atrocious deeds but on the instruments that were used. Rather than focussing on generally law-abiding citizens who had forgotten, for whatever reason, to renew their licenses to possess firearms, the full force of law enforcement should be focussed on ridding society of criminals and the tools they use to commit their evil deeds.

Responsible, law-abiding, free citizens did not commit these crimes but it is convenient to blame inanimate objects, such as firearms. Since these illegally possessed firearms have probably not been recovered, there can be no indication of their source. For Gun Free SA, the most obvious source is the licensed firearms' owner, conveniently neglecting the large number of firearms that have been stolen from, or lost by, governmental agencies (mostly the military and police); those illegally smuggled into the country; and the stockpiles of former organisations' firearms that have not been uncovered.

Recently Gun Free SA once again stated that “the shootings in Johannesburg during the New Year’s celebrations show that firearms are readily available on South African streets”. It appears that the anti-gun lobby thrive on these unlawful criminal incidents. It is not a matter of guns – it is a matter of criminality. Since time immemorial, and long before the advent of firearms, violent crimes have been committed. Had there been no firearms, these criminals would find other means to commit their evil deeds. Let us be reminded that most of the horrific genocides of the previous century were committed with means other than firearms and most of the recent serious mass murders were not committed with firearms. Often the armed citizen (not the police), is the thin line between safety, law and order and anarchy. The killing of a potential mass murderer in a church in America is a typical example, which, incidentally, is not unlike what Charl van Wyk did in a church in Cape Town a few decades ago.

Together with their family and friends, SAGA mourns the death of all innocent people who died as a result of these unlawful shootings and we wish those who were injured a speedy recovery. We also wish the police well in their endeavours to investigate these atrocious deeds and bring to justice these irresponsible criminals.

However, until the President, the Minister of Police, and the government, seriously and objectively consider crime and the impact thereof on all the peoples of our country, and our international relations and economy, they would but addressing a symptom of the illness. Now is the time for government to show real commitment – focus on the real criminals, the murderers, robbers, thieves, gangs, etc, not on those

who have gone through the trouble to obtain licenses for their firearms, and because of a complicated system which the police fail to effectively administer, the few people who had failed to renew their licenses.