

## **SAGA MEDIA STATEMENT on the Minister of Police's Remarks regarding the amendment bill further restricting the possession of firearms by civilians**

**16 January 2020**

SAGA condemns the irresponsible remarks made by the Minister of Police on 14 January 2020 at an occasion where a licensed firearms dealer elected to make use of the amnesty and surrendered almost 300 firearms and a few thousand rounds of ammunition.

The Minister showed his ignorance when he accused guns of causing violence while at the same time referring to proposed amendments to the Firearms Control Act, which, *inter alia* would restrict a person to owning not more than one firearm.

In fact, and not for the first time, the Minister disclosed his personal agenda (or is that the ANC's agenda?) by stating that he would prefer that private citizens should not own firearms at all. This is an unambiguous indication of the government's intention to disarm civilians. Further, this is a clear signal that the government pays mere lip-service to the constitutional rights of free and responsible citizens. Perhaps his advisors should tell the Minister that if guns cause crime, then pencils cause spelling mistakes and cameras cause pornography.

The Minister should further be informed that no politician who supports gun control should get armed protection paid for by those he tries to disarm. When the Minister referred to one firearm, did he have in mind one firearm for self-defence or one firearm for self-defence, sport shooting and hunting? It was not reported what he had in mind. Probably best so, because if he had self-defence firearms in mind, he should know that the current Act already restricts a person to a single self-defence firearm.

Towards the end of 2014 a draft amendment bill was published, which was then debated by pro- and anti-gun groups during a firearms summit in the Parliamentary Portfolio Committee on Police (PPCoP), March 2015. Following this debate the chairman of the PPCoP was critical towards the police and

instructed them to present a revised version before the end of that year. This never happened, neither did it happen any of the following years, until an apparent draft bill was leaked during 2018. As this draft bill contained numerous objectionable provisions, a meeting was convened with the Civilian Secretariat of Police, who “ducked and dived” all questions. They did not have the decency to admit or deny whether the leaked bill was the one that was drafted by the Secretariat and presented to the Minister. If ever you thought the dark days of secrecy and dishonesty were something of the past – think again!

SAGA has stated *ad nauseum* that crime is committed by people who have no respect for the law. Currently they are lawless ... and they will continue to be lawless. Should firearms be removed from the hands of responsible citizens, they will all just be easier victims – victims who would be unable to defend themselves against violent criminals.

And then the Minister still has the audacity to state that only the military and the police should be armed. With a reaction time of more than 20 minutes on average throughout South Africa, this is no consolation. The lack of discipline; low productivity; and the high rate of criminality, including corruption, theft and loss of firearms, at all levels in the police service is a major contributing factor for the distrust that citizens have of the police.

SAGA believes that the Minister must focus his undivided attention on these matters rather than the law-abiding responsible citizen. The psychologically and physically prepared armed citizen remains the first responder to violent crime.