



Awulethe Umshini Wakho – Surrender Your Firearm and Do Your Part

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Today, the Minister of Police, Mr Nathi Mthethwa, the National Police Commissioner, Mr Bheki Cele, and a number of partners including Business Against Crime South Africa (BACSA), the SA Hunters and Game Conservation Association and Gun Free South Africa, celebrated the first five days of the Firearm Amnesty by destroying over 80,611 firearms at Arcelor Mittal Steel in Vereeniging, Gauteng.

These weapons were primarily the result of search and seizure operations conducted nationally by the police with the overwhelming majority confiscated within Gauteng. Since the first firearms amnesty in 2005, over 517,000 firearms have been destroyed in a similar manner through the concerted efforts of the police to crack down on the proliferation of firearms within the country, particularly those that are illegally held.

Minister Mthethwa at the event stressed that the firearm amnesty, launched on 11 January and running through to 11 April 2010, was from the perspective of responsible gun ownership. The amnesty period is not to “disarm the law-abiding citizen of their legal firearms”, he said. Instead, it was to wage war against criminals who abused and held firearms illegally to commit crimes against innocent victims throughout the country. Minister Mthethwa emphasised that ‘(t)he increased availability and abuse of firearms and ammunition [...] contributed significantly to the high and unacceptable levels of violent crime in South African society’.

Dr Graham Wright, CEO of BACSA, within his message of support for the destruction process and the Firearms Amnesty, urged gun-owners and citizens to be responsible and comply with the full requirements of the Firearms Control Act (2000), making use of the opportunity of the Amnesty period where it applied. The surrender of any obsolete, redundant and/or surplus firearms would valuably contribute to the efforts of the police. Dr Wright stressed that “BACSA views the





Amnesty process as an important aspect within a broader, more holistic approach to crime” and encouraged all to do their part to stem the proliferation of illegal and stolen firearms particularly. On today’s national destruction of firearms, Dr Wright said that “today’s event, is a marker of the success of the previous Amnesty campaign which resulted in the seizure, confiscation and voluntary surrender of illegal and legal firearms in their thousands.” On behalf of the business community, Dr Wright pledged the full support of business to the process.

BACSA takes this opportunity to commend the SAPS for their work on the front line which is daily helping to create a safer and more secure South Africa. Citizens with information on the whereabouts of illegal firearms are urged to do their part by contacting the National Firearms Call Centre on 012 353 6111. Those with lapsed licences are urged to take this opportunity to comply with the requirements of responsible ownership as the amnesty period launched this week would not be repeated.

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