



SAGA Press Release

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Rebuttal - SAPS Commissioner Lt. Gen Mkhwanazi, eNCA Interview

In this week's eNCA Power to Truth, Media Against Crime televised broadcast, SAPS KwaZulu-Natal Provincial Commissioner, Lieutenant General Nhlanhla Mkhwanazi made a series of completely inaccurate, false and misleading statements devoid of truth or reality. It's astounding that such statements can be made in a public forum and by such a high-ranking SAPS officer.

Mkhwanazi states that under the previous Arms and Ammunition Act of 1969, 91,000 firearms were licenced compared to more than double that at 192,000, under the new Firearms Control Act. That statement is ludicrous and patently untrue, and if it does not border on the sublime it's painfully devoid from reality. Even the Central Firearms Registry's (CFR) erratic statistics put firearm owners at anywhere between 1.5 and 2 million holding between 3 and 4 million licenced firearms.

By international standards this is NOT high. On an international ranking (Wikipedia 2017) of registered firearms by the statistical benchmark of firearms per 100 people - South Africa sits at 89th position on the list with only 9.7 guns per 100 people. South Africa ranks behind countries such as Venezuela 35th, Australia 51st, Afghanistan 63rd, Russia 67th, Ukraine 86th, and Denmark 87th. Let those statistics sink in!

Mkhwanazi argues that all firearms, including illegal firearms, were once **ALL** licenced and stolen from law-abiding citizens. He goes on to state that **ALL** firearms recovered by SAPS are the consequence of stolen legal firearms and suggests that policy and legislation needs to be changed to effectively preclude citizens' rights to legally own and licence firearms!

Mkhwanazi goes on to state that KwaZulu-Natal has an estimated population of 12.5 million, and makes the point that our prisons have 18,000 beds but have an inmate population of 24,000 which he suggests represents about 20% of the population. We completely fail to understand his logic or its mathematical veracity as, following this logic, 20% of 12.5 million translates to 2.5 million criminals, in KZN alone. Then, as stated in his opening statement, if South Africa only has 192,000 licenced firearms and 20% of these fall into criminal hands, the country by his logic should only have an illegal firearms problem of 38,200.

If however Mkhwanazi is referring rather to the estimated population of South Africa at say 67 million, that means SAPS then consider an estimated 13,800,000 citizens/residents to be criminals or potential criminals. The stated 18,000 prison beds will then just not cut it, no matter how quickly Public Works builds new prisons. Mkhwanazi may have unwittingly redefined the terms **misinformation, disinformation and malinformation!**

Data shows that the State is by far the biggest conduit of firearms into criminal hands. The evidence and cases continue to mount up, from the Cape to Northwest province and back again. For example, in the 2004 case involving burglary at the Police Public Order Unit's Faure armoury near Cape Town, gang insiders asserted that they had long identified the State as the easiest way of sourcing guns in bulk rather than individually through suburban burglaries. So, on this fact alone, until this significant SAPS-related problem is addressed, we will continue to lose the battle against violent crime.

Mkhwanazi's assertion that **all** "illegal guns were once licensed" is also patently false. The extensive degree of cross-border smuggling of firearms is well-documented. As are the losses from SAPS stores and stocks via corruption and criminal capture of the organisation. Fully automatic weapons are frequently used in major crime, notably cash in transit robberies. These automatic weapons are not permitted to be owned, licenced or held by citizens, they arguably, illegally stream across our porous borders or are obtained from the SANDF or SAPS themselves.

As concerning is the fact that we have absolutely no data regarding losses from the SAPS13 evidence stores, and their own reported losses are equally questionable. On average, the reported recovery rate of stolen state and police firearms is only 7% which is **one-tenth** the recovery rate of civilian guns. Evidence shows that between 2007 and 2017, 37,000 once licenced firearms were recovered versus 30,000 recoveries of never before registered firearms. In other words, of the 67,000 recovered firearms over that 10-year period, 55% were previously licenced and 45% were never licenced/illegal firearms – this fact makes a complete mockery of the 'ALL' as stated by Mkhwanazi.

In Mark Shaw's book 'Give us more Guns' evidence is presented suggesting that police guns are sold rather than lost, as they are seldom ever recovered. In 2010 the police reported that 66% of firearms stolen from civilians were recovered verses the astonishingly low 7% for police-issued firearms, as mentioned above. In the worst-case scenario; an estimated 10,000 firearms are stolen annually, including from parastatals, security companies, police and civilians. The stated recovery rate of 66% means that 3,400 (34% of 10,000) of stolen firearms are potentially retained in criminal hands. Proportionally this represents a mere 0.11% of firearms ALREADY in criminal hands as sourced through other means.

The claim that privately held firearms stolen from homes is a major source of guns for criminals (as opposed to a coincidental one) has also been debunked - yet Mkhwanazi appears to hold onto this fallacy for reasons of convenience.

If Mkhwanazi's strategy is to solve crime by pushing for the disarmament of millions of legal and law-abiding South African citizens because the SAPS is failing so abysmally in the fight against crime, then he is as out of touch with reality as is each of his predecessors. We must then question his fitness to hold office. It is no wonder SAPS as an organisation instils absolutely no confidence in the population. A corruption report referred to on eNCA today (15 May 2024) alone, reflects half of those polled (1,500 people across all 9 provinces) having limited confidence in the police and a third having **NO** confidence at all.

We ask the Commissioner; where would the law-abiding residents of KZN be today if legally armed citizens had not stood up and filled the complete void left by the absent police force during a whole week of civil unrest and looting in 2021? A very sobering thought.

Let US stand together and defend OUR rights to self-determination, self-defence and legal firearm ownership by rallying against misinformation, disinformation, falsehoods and political agendas.

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