



## BACSA Message of Support on the National Destruction of Firearms

- Friday 15 January 2010  
Riviera on the Vaal Hotel  
Vereeniging

9:45 am  
Dr Graham Wright

Honourable Minister, Mr Mthethwa

National Commissioner, Mr Cele, and Provincial and Divisional Commissioners, Mr Naidoo and Mr Lamoer, Commissioner Dramat of the Hawks, Secretariat of the Police,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Since 2005, at the time of the last amnesty, there have been calls made from the Ministry of Police and the SAPS, for gun-owners and citizens to renew their licences and comply with the requirements of responsible gun ownership.

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.

Today, many of these surrendered and confiscated weapons are being permanently destroyed as a final amnesty period begins to gain momentum from its launch earlier this week.

The period of 11 January to 11 April 2010 marks the last amnesty period whereby citizens and gun-owners are being offered a last opportunity to either voluntarily surrender their weapons or use the opportunity of this final amnesty to comply with the full requirements of the Firearms Control Act 2000. We urge gun-owners at this time to consider whether they truly have a need for owning a firearm, either for sport, recreation, protection, collection, and/or other purposes.

The successes that we have seen over the last festive season with an apparent reduction in cash heists and shopping mall robberies, for example, will we hope continue to be sustained. Confidence in the capacity of the police to protect citizens and businesses has no doubt been





boosted by this experience and gun-owners who legally hold a firearm or firearms for protection purposes are encouraged to consider whether continued firearm ownership is necessary. The theft of weapons from legal gun-owners in robberies remains a concern as these same firearms are used for criminal activities.

We strongly urge gun-owners to ensure that if they wish to retain their firearms that all legal requirements for their safe storage and use are complied with as an important aspect of responsible ownership. It is also understood that within this amnesty period, those who missed the cut-off date for renewal last year, will, under certain circumstances, be allowed to renew their licence(s). We urge citizens with lapsed licences to take advantage of this opportunity as beyond 11 April 2010, there will be no further amnesty period.

Companies and, in particular, private security companies with obsolete, redundant or surplus firearms are encouraged to surrender their firearms within this amnesty period, as are manufacturers, gunsmiths and firearm dealers who have surplus, obsolete and redundant firearms, ammunition and firearm parts. The removal of these redundant firearms will assist to promote a safer and more secure South African environment.

We are pleased to support these efforts from the perspective of responsible, legal ownership.

Individuals with information in relation to any illegally held weapons are urged to provide information to the police through the National Firearms Call Centre (no. 012 353 6111).

We would like to commend the Ministry of Police and the SAPS for their pragmatism in relation to the amnesty and their efforts in making the amnesty period as friendly as possible by ensuring that firearms, firearm parts, and ammunition can be surrendered at any police station. The surrender process will adhere to the requirements of the Firearms Control Regulations 2004 to ensure that control and audit measures are formally carried out and existing licences against surrendered firearms and parts are cancelled and applications for a licence to possess a firearm are considered, where applicable.





The Secretariat of Police is in the process of establishing a National Task team of which BACSA will play a part to ensure that an effective monitoring and evaluation process on the flow of firearms surrendered within the amnesty period is managed effectively. Civilian oversight in this regard will assist to identify any challenges experienced within the process in a balanced way.

As owners will not be compensated for surrendering their firearms, we recommend that they consider the act of surrendering of their firearm as a civic contribution to concerted efforts to reduce crime and the proliferation of both legal and illegal firearms in the country, but particularly illegal or stolen firearms which are used to commit crimes. As the amnesty period is a relatively short one, we urge owners to not delay in taking advantage of the amnesty period.

BACSA views this process as an important aspect within a broader more holistic approach to crime and we encourage all to do their part. The Business community pledges its full support to this process.

Thank you

Dr Graham Wright  
BACSA CEO  
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