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More than 4 000 police service guns lost in past six years - FFPlus

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Picture: Brett Hondow/Pixabay

Johannesburg - The South African Police Service (SAPS) has lost more than 9,5 million rounds of ammunition and 4 357 firearms over the last six years, said Freedom Front Plus leader Pieter Groenewald.

The figures were revealed by Police Minister Bheki Cele in response to a parliamentary question posed by Groenewald.

"The question to the minister was what number of firearms and how much ammunition in possession of the police were reported lost or stolen in each province respectively. These figures are shocking and totally unacceptable, particularly the loss of ammunition. It is incomprehensible

that more than 3 million rounds of ammunition can go missing in a province during a single year and nobody knows how it happened. No wonder violent crime is out of control. The police service seems to be the biggest provider of illegal ammunition," Groenewald said in a statement.

The biggest quantity of ammunition that went missing in a single year was in the Eastern Cape where 3,2 million rounds of ammunition went missing in 2016/2017. In the North West, 2,2 million rounds of ammunition went missing during the 2014/2015 financial year, according to the minister's reply.

Last year, the North West province lost nearly half a million rounds of ammunition.

Groenewald said measures provided by Cele as remedial steps in his response "were no more than the standard rules and procedures" and were not being properly enforced.

"President Cyril Ramaphosa and the minister both regularly make statements about the need for stricter control of firearms. Minister Cele himself said that government wants to impose stricter conditions for the possession of firearms for self-defence in an attempt to reduce violent crime, especially murders. It however does not help to blame the legal owners of private firearms for crimes that are committed with firearms. The minister's department should get the blame. A firearm without ammunition is useless. The FF Plus insists that heads must roll seeing as this amounts to gross misconduct against the people of South Africa."

Groenewald said his party will request that the chairperson of the portfolio committee for police Tina Joemat-Pettersson urgently schedule the matter for discussions.

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