

## Daily Maverick

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<https://www.msn.com/en-za/news/national/ban-guns-for-private-citizens-says-bheki-cele-as-30000-weapons-are-destroyed/ar-BBW2xn5>

### Ban guns for private citizens, says Bheki Cele as 30,000 weapons are destroyed

Yanga Sibembe  
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**Bheki Cele (File) Minister of Police Bheki Cele says in the future he hopes to see a South Africa where only law enforcement officers would carry firearms.**

**There should be no guns for private citizens, Minister of Police Bheki Cele said at Arcelor Mittal Steel in Vereeniging on Wednesday, where 30,000 firearms were destroyed.**

The weapons were placed in a giant “pot” and smelted, resulting in a hot mess reminiscent of lava. For safety reasons, observers were made to stand well clear of the action.

Cele said most illegal firearms made their way to criminals when they were stolen from homes during robberies.

The firearms destined for the furnace on Wednesday ended up in the hands of the state either through being seized by or voluntarily handed over to the SAPS across the country's provinces.

Gauteng contributed the most firearms to the 30,039 destroyed weapons, “followed by Eastern Cape, Mpumalanga, and then the other provinces”.

However, Cele could not provide a breakdown of how many firearms were seized in each province.

He said about 20,000 were voluntarily handed in, while about 10,000 were seized by law enforcement.

The SAPS said that since October 2016 when 23,000 firearms were destroyed, it had seized a large number of illegal firearms through planned operations.

According to Cele the number of firearms in the police safe storage facilities sits at 60,000, which he said they planned to destroy soon.

“There has to be a shorter time period for the next destruction. This is to cut off anyone getting any funny ideas (within the SAPS), and these firearms finding their way back on to the street.”

Cele is right to be concerned.

Former police colonel [Chris Prinsloo](#) is serving an 18-year jail sentence for crimes including theft and racketeering. Prinsloo [said he had sold at least 2,000 firearms meant to be destroyed](#) by police to a Cape-based businessman, who then allegedly sold them to gangsters.

It is believed 1,066 murders were carried out with 888 of the weapons between 2010 and 2014. At least 261 children were murdered or wounded between 2010 and 2016 with the guns, according to a *News24* report.

The SAPS says it will continue to fight the proliferation of illegal firearms and ammunition as they pose a threat to the safety and security of the inhabitants of the country.

“In order to prevent the commission of serious and violent crimes as well as to stamp the authority of the state, police have to continue to actively detect and remove these illegal firearms from circulation,” the SAPS said in a statement.

On Wednesday Gun Free South Africa’s Sara Chitambo said that the organisation welcomed the destruction of the firearms and “sees it as a positive”, but said much more should be done by the leadership of the country, especially when “23 people die every day in South Africa” due to firearms.

Chitambo said Gun Free South Africa was pushing for the complete ban of handguns in the country. **DM**