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Free State Agriculture Point of View Firearms Control Bill

Self-defence is a basic human right and cannot be restricted by the state. The newly proposed amendments to the Firearms Control Act entail, amongst other things, that the possession of a firearm under the self-defence category is no longer permitted.

The practical implications of the amendments are:

- No weapons are allowed for self-defence; you are totally at the mercy of circumstance.
- Hunting and sporting weapons are further restricted, even if you have dedicated status.
- Possession of reloading equipment becomes a crime, so no reloading of ammunition is allowed.
- Priming development is taboo.
- No weapons may be transported without a special permit. Hunting or going to the shooting range will require a permit.
- No one under the age of 16 years is allowed to handle a weapon, not even under supervision.
- No more than 100 rounds of ammunition per weapon may be in your possession without a special permit. This applies whether you have dedicated status or not.
- Acquisition and maintenance of dedicated status are made more difficult.
- Private arms collections are scrapped in totality, only public collectors are recognised.
- The Minister acquires wide powers to restrict the import of weapons and ammunition.

The mere thought that the government will propose such a bill, especially in a country with some of the highest murder rates in the world, is not only outrageous, but extremely disturbing and will lead to an increase in criminal anarchy. This is

absolutely contrary to the provisions of common law regarding the right to self-defence (self-protection), while the Bill of Rights enshrined in the Constitution absolutely guarantees the right to life.

Rural communities are already vulnerable and, as recently pointed out in the increase in farm attacks and homicide statistics, it is inconceivable to be deprived of legal firearms. The state's inability to protect its citizens from increasing crime, and the perception that criminals have more rights and may possess firearms (which are usually illegal), coupled with the perception that citizens no longer have the right to defend themselves, are absurd and unconstitutional.

Recent crime statistics show that 21.1% of all murders can be attributed to armed robbery, rape, vigilantism, gang incidents and/or retaliation between criminals and victims. The law-abiding citizens' right to protect and defend themselves is undermined by the provisions of the bill.

Among the other provisions in the draft bill that materially prejudice legal firearm owners is the fact that possession of reloading equipment will no longer be allowed and will therefore be criminalised. This has significant negative consequences for the owners of such equipment who have already spent money to purchase and maintain them. These consequences also apply to traders, and thus a restriction on their freedom of trade.

The bill further places a limit on the number of weapons that may be owned. The draconian provisions have resulted in several legal firearm owners having to reduce their weapons.

These are just some of the negative aspects that are highlighted. A more complete document will be compiled in which the draft legislation will be commented on in greater detail.

The proposed legislation is not only absurd and irrational, but it also restricts your fundamental rights as a law-abiding citizen within a Constitution that is considered by many to be one of the best in the world. If this draft legislation is not stopped, the best Constitution in the world is of no force and effect. Help us stop this process in its tracks!