**MEDIA STATEMENT**

**POLICE COMMITTEE RECOMMENDS SUPPORT FOR FIREARMS AMNESTY TO THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY**

**Parliament, Friday, 12 June 2020 –**The Portfolio Committee on Police has resolved to accede to a request by the South African Police Services for a new firearms amnesty. The committee will recommend to the National Assembly that the proposed 2020 firearm amnesty, in terms of section 139 of the Firearm Control Act, 2000 (Act No. 60 of 2000), be approved.

The initial firearms amnesty was approved by Parliament on 21 November 2019 for the period 1 December 2019 to 31 May 2020. The committee noted that during this period 27 336 firearms and 212 476 ammunition were surrendered. Furthermore, the committee noted that 798 firearm components (i.e. barrels, frames and receivers) were surrendered. “We would like to appreciate the people that have taken the opportunity to turn in their firearms and ammunition. Their actions give the fight against the proliferation of firearms on our streets a new impetus.” said Ms Tina Joemat-Pettersson, the Chairperson of the committee.

Despite this, the committee is cognisant of the fact that people were unable to hand in their firearms at police stations during the last month of the amnesty as a result of the national lockdown in the fight against the spread of Covid-19. It is in this context that the committee felt it was necessary to approve the new application by the Minister for a period of six months from 1 August 2020 until 31 January 2021 under section 139(2)(c) of the Firearms Control Act, 2000.

The committee notes and welcomes the exemption of 28 police stations from receiving firearms. The committee accept the reasoning that the stations are exempted as mitigation against identified risk.

Meanwhile, the committee notes that 10 704 applications for firearm licences have been received by the South African Police Service (Saps), with 147 applications finalised. The committee has urged the Forensic Science Laboratory to expedite the ballistic testing process to enable the Central Firearms Registrar to finalise the backlog.

The committee will recommend to the National Assembly to approve the firearm amnesty 2020.

**ISSUED BY THE PARLIAMENTARY COMMUNICATION SERVICES ON BEHALF OF THE CHAIRPERSONS OF THE PORTFOLIO COMMITTEE ON POLICE, MS TINA JOEMAT-PETTERSSON**