

Over 8000 SAPS Firearms Missing

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The SA Police Service has lost, had stolen or otherwise misplaced 8286 firearms, including pistols, shotguns, rifles and revolvers, over the past three years.

Of these, it has recovered less than 900, according to a written reply by the Safety and Security ministry to a parliamentary question posed by the Democratic Alliance.

Up to the end of January in the current (2008/09) financial year -- from April 1, 2008, to March 31 -- the police force had 329 of its firearms stolen, and lost another 183.

SAPS can also not account for the whereabouts during this period of a further 1995 weapons, which are listed under the heading "not yet classified". This is understood to mean it cannot determine whether the firearms have been lost or stolen, only that they are missing.

The reply also notes a total of 156 firearms were recovered during the current financial year, up to February 9.

In the previous (2007/08) financial year, 191 firearms were lost, a further 250 stolen and 1484 are still "not yet classified". A total of 294 firearms were recovered during this period.

In 2006/07, a total of 1635 firearms were lost, 593 stolen and 1628 remain in the "not yet classified" category. A total of 442 firearms were recovered during this period.

According to the same written reply, South Africa's municipalities have lost or had stolen over eight percent of the firearms issued them.

Of the total 15,311 firearms they own, the municipalities have reported 1260 lost or stolen. It is not clear whether this is over the same three-year period as the SAPS figures.

"The municipalities continually report lost and stolen firearms to the respective police stations," the reply states.

Source : Sapa /rod/jog

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