



**END OF THE ROAD:** Police yesterday melted down thousands of firearms in Vereeniging. PICTURE: HERBERT MATIMBA

# Police melt down more than 4 000 firearms and knives

SPHIWE MASILELA AND SAPA

GAUTENG police yesterday destroyed thousands of weapons at ArcelorMittal's steel processing plant in Vereeniging.

Deputy provincial police commissioner Maj-Gen Phumzo Gela said 3 364 firearms and around 1 000 knives were melted down.

"The destruction of (the) firearms means that many lives will be saved."

He said some of the weapons came from police searches. Others had been used to commit crimes.

Once weapons were recovered they were sent for ballistic analysis and other processes before they were destroyed.

The weapons included rifles, pistols, knives, swords, and axes.

Gela said improved visible policing was having a significant impact in areas like Muldersdrift and Benoni.

He thanked communities for tipping police off about crimes and encouraged them to continue this co-operation.

"For the past two financial years, we have seen a decrease of crime activities in the province," Gela said.

He said although Operation Duty Calls campaign ended last month, the fight against crime in the province was not over.

"We will also be destroying 31 000 knives.

"And we will take each and eve-

ryday like it is Operational Duty Calls," Gela said.

Community members who have been helping the police for any suspicious acts were encouraged to continue.

The chairperson of the Gauteng Community Police Board, Andy Mashaile, said it was possible for Gauteng to be a safer province if every citizen took part in reporting crime.

"With only 41 000 police officers in Gauteng, crime activities more especially in the 2012 festive seasons were down.

"A response time in Gauteng is at least a minimum of 15 minutes," Mashaile said.

He said they have been working tirelessly to fight crime.