



WEAPONS DESTROYED. Gauteng Provincial Commissioner, Lieutenant- General Mzwandile Petros, holds a weapon at Arcelor Mittal Vereeniging yesterday. Over 4 000 firearms and 54 000 knives seized during crime prevention operations were destroyed on site. *Picture: Tracy Lee Stark.*

Thousands of weapons destroyed

JEVANNE GIBBS

THE destruction of thousands of confiscated and surrendered firearms and knives is aimed at making society safer, Gauteng police said yesterday.

Speaking at a briefing at ArcelorMittal in Vereeniging, Gauteng Provincial Commissioner Lieutenant-General Mzwandile Petros said he was happy that the weapons had been permanently removed from the public.

“The confiscations were largely due to the community who provided tip-offs to police,” he said. More than 4 000 firearms and 54 000 knives were destroyed in a smelter yesterday.

While inspecting the weapons, Petros noted a Samurai sword, an axe-like creation and various firearms; including AK-47s, shotguns and pistols.

While inspecting the weapons, Petros noted a Samurai sword, an axe-like creation and various firearms; including AK-47s, and pistols decorated with paint and stickers.

“Some were surrendered voluntarily by owners, others were confiscated during police operations,” said Petros, adding that police had noticed an increase in crimes where

knives had been used.

About 180 000 firearms were voluntarily surrendered to police between January 2005 and March 2009, of which most were destroyed.

Anti-gun organisation Gun Free SA (GFSA) spokesman Claire Taylor said: “Guns don’t have a sell-by date. Destroying them reduces the risk of the (weapons) being used again.”

GFSA studies found that 18 people are shot and killed each day in South Africa, compared to the 34 shot and killed per day in 1998.

It also found that 89% of people killed by means of a gun had been men, and 11% had been women. – jevanne@citizen.co.za