Statement on SABC exposé regarding fraudulent issuing of firearm competencies

By: Hubert Wentzel
Tuesday, 23rd February 2016

Dear Network Member,

It was reported on SABC television yesterday that the owner of Skopos, a security training facility, has been exposed as allegedly selling official certificates of proficiency in respect of firearm licence applications. The television footage appeared to show a person (allegedly a Mr. Andre van Tonder) conducting a cash transaction in connection with the sale of a fraudulent or false certificate of proficiency.

Speaking from Pretoria on Monday night, Advocate John Welch, Chairman of the Board of Trustees of SAGA said “SAGA is deeply concerned about this situation and as an organisation of more than 30 years standing strongly believes that these serious allegations must be investigated and addressed without delay.”

“Our Firearms Control Act provides for a very strict licensing regime in terms of which any person must first be declared competent before s/he could apply for a license for a firearm. Competency clearly implies amongst others knowledge of the relevant laws and firearms. Since its inception it has been SAGA’s view that people should be licensed and that firearms should merely be registered. Competency declaration was a clear step in the right direction. However, if the system is abused or shortcuts are taken in that some unscrupulous trainers issue proficiency (training) certificates without the applicant having done the required training and tests, SAGA calls for any such allegations to be thoroughly investigated.”

“Notwithstanding the fact that the police must fully investigate the allegations and due process must take its course, SAGA is of the opinion that the Professional Firearms Trainers Council (PFTC), as a solid and accredited training service provider ought to immediately take appropriate internal steps.”

In conclusion, Advocate Welch pointed out that despite media speculation which would seek to portray all firearms instructors and gun owners in a poor light, the actions of one instructor and one training provider should not be used as a yardstick to discredit legitimate gun owners and ethical instructors. “The sale of fraudulent driver’s licences is a well known phenomenon in South Africa, yet it would be nonsensical to assume that every holder of a driver’s licence has obtained such document fraudulently from a dishonest authority. There is no logical cause to paint all training providers and gun owners with a brush of suspicion because of the alleged fraudulent activity of one company”, he argued.

Issued by: The SAGA Office tel +27 31 5629951 fax: +27 86 5539615