



**Press Statement**

**09 December 2025**

**Defend Our Democracy joins the country in mourning the lives lost at the Saulsville mass shooting.**

On 6 December 2025, the community of Saulsville in Pretoria endured an unspeakable tragedy when a mass shooting left 14 people injured and claimed the lives of 12 others, including three innocent children. The South African Police Service has since opened 12 cases of murder and 14 cases of attempted murder. Early indications suggest that at least three suspects were involved, and they tragically remain at large.

As law enforcement efforts intensify to address the proliferation of illicit shebeens, we are profoundly alarmed by the growing frequency of mass shootings across South Africa. These acts of violence pose an immense threat to public safety, inflict deep psychological wounds on survivors, and tear apart families and communities. The Saulsville attack marks the sixth mass shooting of its kind in 2025 alone, a devastating reminder of the urgent need for stronger, coordinated action to prevent further loss of life.

At a time when many families are preparing to come together for Christmas, others now face the heartbreaking task of planning funerals for loved ones whose lives were stolen through acts of senseless and unconscionable violence. The killing of children is especially abhorrent and must be condemned with absolute firmness and moral clarity. We trust that those responsible for this horrific crime will be brought to justice and will face the full weight of the law. While no legal outcome can ever restore the lives lost, accountability is essential to affirming that such brutality can never be allowed to take root as a norm in our society.

While the public waits to learn the full extent of criminal infiltration within our policing and broader criminal justice system, as exposed at the Madlanga Commission, we are left utterly vulnerable to predatory violence. When a democratic state not only relinquishes its monopoly on legitimate force but effectively sells it to criminal elements, the very foundations of our democracy are shaken.

This cannot continue. There must be swift and decisive apprehension of those responsible. And as we enter the festive season, we need far stricter, visible, and uncompromising enforcement of gun-control measures to protect the public and restore faith in the institutions meant to keep us safe.

We extend our deepest and most heartfelt condolences to the families and friends of every victim affected by this tragedy. May they find strength, comfort, and support as they navigate this unimaginably painful time. Our thoughts remain with the entire Saulsville community as it mourns, heals, and seeks answers.

-Defend Our Democracy