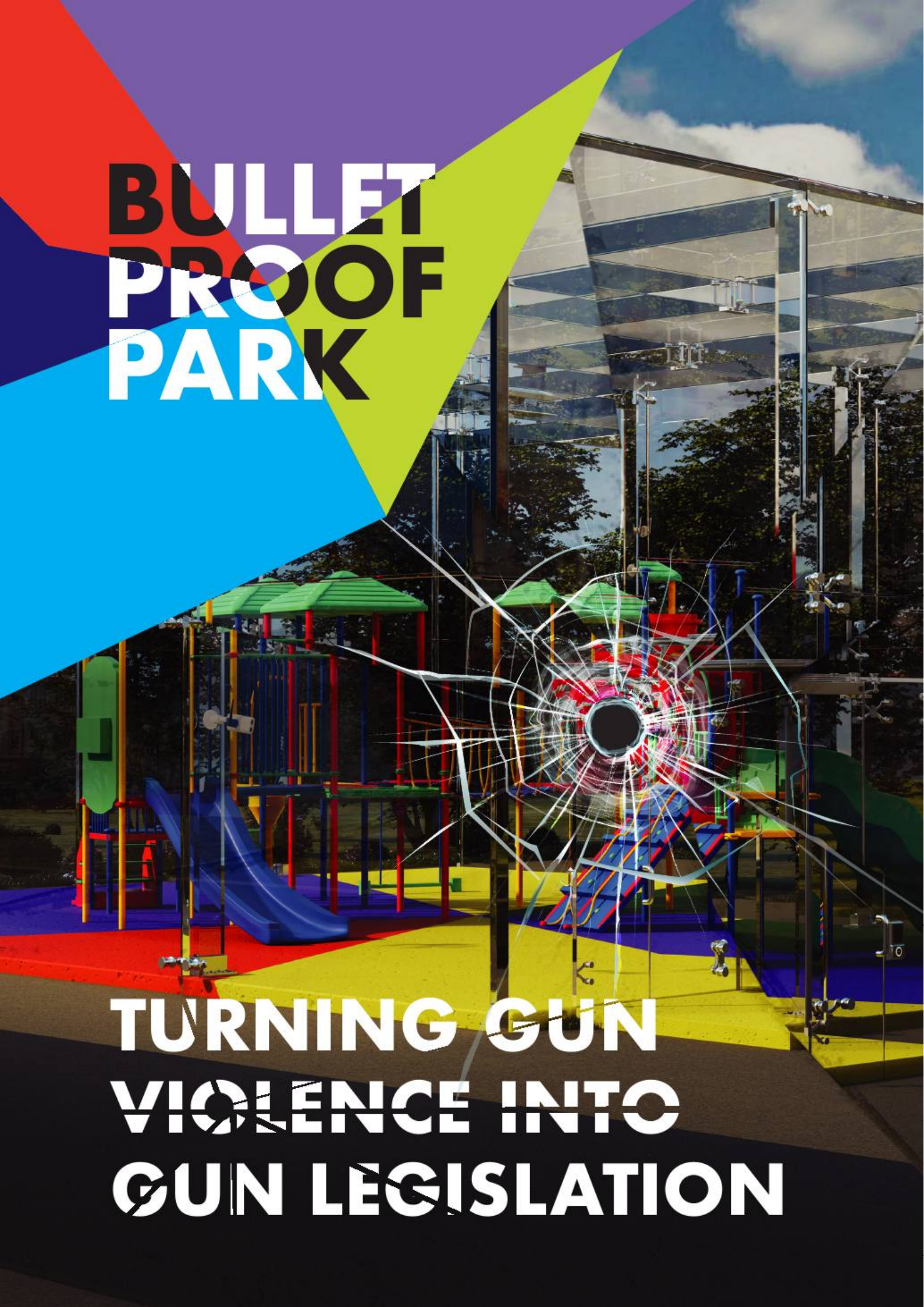


The image is a composite graphic. In the background, there is a modern building with a glass facade that reflects the sky and surrounding trees. In the foreground, a colorful playground with slides and climbing structures is visible. A large, circular, shattered glass effect is superimposed over the center of the image, with cracks radiating outwards. The top left corner features large, overlapping geometric shapes in red, purple, blue, and yellow. The text 'BULLET PROOF PARK' is written in large, bold, white capital letters across the top left, partially overlapping the colorful shapes and the playground. The text 'TURNING GUN VIOLENCE INTO GUN LEGISLATION' is written in large, bold, white capital letters across the bottom, set against a dark background.

BULLET PROOF PARK

**TURNING GUN
VIOLENCE INTO
GUN LEGISLATION**

OPENING STATEMENT

Every day, an average of 34 people are shot and killed in South Africa. Three of those 34 people are children

The Cape Flats area of South Africa's Western Cape province — like Hanover Park, Manenberg, Eerste Rivier, Mitchells Plain, Khayelitsha and Nyanga — are among the most violent places in the country. These areas contributed almost a quarter of the gun-related deaths in the first quarter of 2024 alone.

Added to this, gang-related gun violence remains the major cause of death in the region, with the violence largely perpetrated in public places from gangs operating primarily in the Cape Flats. The very same places our children play.

As Caryn Dolley reported in South Africa's Daily Maverick, over roughly 72 hours between 29 March and 1 April 2024, 94 people were killed in the Western Cape in gang-related violence. The common denominator was the use of guns, though stabbings were also a common method. Again, often in the very same spots where our children play daily.

**WE NEEDED TO STOP THIS.
URGENTLY.**



On average, one person was murdered every hour in the province over two days, with two people being killed nearly every hour on the third day.

THE CHALLENGE

Many of the victims of gun-related gang violence in affected areas of the Western Cape are not the intended targets. Instead innocent bystanders are caught in the crossfire – many of them children. Devastatingly, nearly half of children under 12 who were admitted to a Cape Town children's hospital over the last 20 years have been victims of crossfire and more than 300 children were treated for gunshot wounds in the Western Cape in the first quarter of 2024 alone. 58 of those died as a result.

Pervasive gang violence exposes children to brutality from a very young age and normalises violence in their everyday lives.

This issue demands significantly greater attention, care and productive dialogue. With gang-related murders on the rise year-on-year, protecting children who live in areas which often resemble war zones is a collective responsibility. Equally, given the volume of news coverage around these violent incidents we needed to overcome active news avoidance among South African communities so that we could mobilise them behind these efforts and turn intention into change. South Africa has the highest news avoidance numbers (85%) in the world, according to the Reuters Institute.

Suspect arrested for murder of Cape Town school girl caught in gang crossfire



The suspect is expected to appear in the Mitchell's Plain Magistrate's Court on Friday. File Picture: Tracey Adams/PAOL
Published 11h ago

Hanover Park community demands safety for schoolchildren



The peaceful protest idea came after a learner was shot on Tuesday.
Hough/Independent Newspapers

CAPEARGUS NEWS

Teenage girls shot in separate incidents



15-year-old girl shot in the thigh in a crossfire in Wesbank. Picture: Mandlakhe Tshwete

CAPEARGUS NEWS

Delft boy, 5, survives a hail of bullets



Bullet casings. File picture: Brandon Magasa/African News Agency
Published Jan 23, 2024

THE IDEA: TURN THE AVOIDANCE INTO ACTIVE CONVERSATION

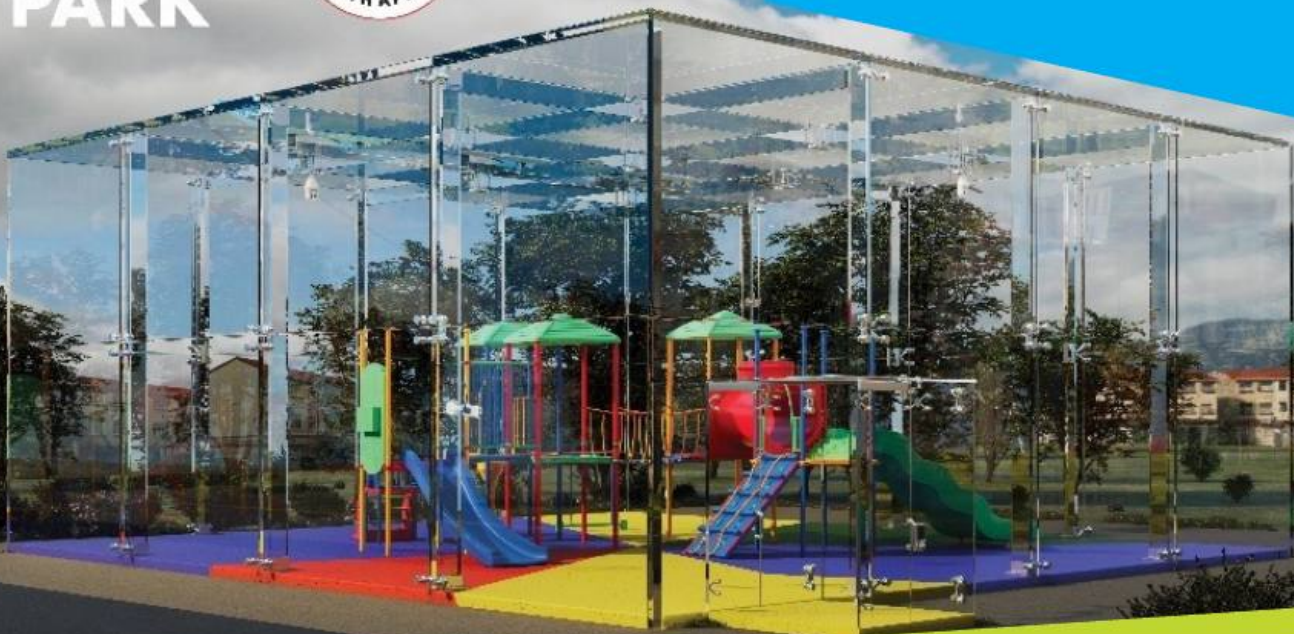
Working with Gun Free SA, the leading NGO dedicated to reducing gun violence in South Africa, we proposed the development of the world's first 'Bulletproof Park' in Mitchells Plain, one of the areas most severely affected by gang and gun violence.

This innovative concept aimed to create a safe and secure play area for children who are often killed in gang war-related crossfire while simply playing innocently in the street. It highlighted the jarring reality that play was the most dangerous thing that children could do.

Designed by planning and technology specialists, the park would be entirely enclosed in bulletproof glass, offering the amenities of a typical playground – such as slides and monkey bars – while actively ensuring children's safety from stray bullets.

Additionally, the park would feature advanced security measures, including secure entrances and panic buttons, providing parents and guardians with peace of mind.

BULLET PROOF PARK



It would be a world first. By presenting an outrageous solution to an even more outrageous problem, Gun Free South Africa wanted to bring attention to the issue, showing South Africans what the future may hold if gun violence isn't stopped. But it was more than that, attention was simply not enough – we had to drive an active conversation that would be distinctive in a news cycle that was increasingly focused on upcoming national government elections. We knew that this needed to be on the election agenda for residents in these areas.

THE EXECUTION

We focused on a three-phase approach: context setting, conversation initiation, and the release of a feasibility report, coupled with a deeply compelling call to action. This allowed us to not only ensure the sustainability of our story in a news cycle with short attention spans, but also meant we could strategically focus on a diversity of topics and media types to ensure the appropriate levels of reach and scale for our conversation.

Context Setting:

For starters, the issue of gun violence in South Africa needed to be contextualised and highlighted – with a particular focus on the perilous daily situation on the Cape Flats. This was achieved through securing interviews with Adele Kirsten, Executive Director of Gun Free South Africa, leading the charge to once again explain the severe reality of the gun violence crisis. We added to this by profiling mothers who had lost their children to guns as a result of this crisis. We also handled a poignant interview with a mother whose son was killed by a stray bullet in the area, by actively focusing on translating numbers that our audience might struggle to grasp into a personal story with a human face.

Create Conversation:

The suggestion of an idea this audacious not only raised immediate awareness about the dire issue of gun violence affecting children, but also sparked a global conversation across traditional and social media platforms. We reached media nationally in South Africa and made headlines across multiple countries as the very global question of “Is this really the future we want for our country’s children?” took hold of local and international dialogues and commentary.

A proposal for a park we shouldn’t need sparked the conversations we needed.

The campaign drove dialogue around why something like a Bulletproof Park would be required in the first place, and raised awareness of the gun violence problem in a meaningful and felt way. We took wallpaper headlines and translated them into active conversation and engagement in the communities directly impacted by our proposal.

Media coverage was far more than column centimetres or broadcast engagements. We actively drove coverage in a way that ensured we were able to use this as a launch pad for meaningful community engagements. So, while our main focus was local media within the Western Cape, we also targeted top-tier national media to achieve this. We intensely lobbied media to keep this story on the agenda over the duration of the campaign, notwithstanding the headwinds of other stories on the national agenda. Many journalists had follow-up questions, leading to further media interactions and we triggered the cycle we were aiming for.

As a result, the Gun Free South Africa team met with community members to discuss the park’s feasibility and address their concerns. The conversation had started.

BULLET PROOF PARK

SAFE TO SLIDE

Introducing the only playpark designed to safely shield your children from stray bullets, making the scariest thing the height of the slide.



FOR REAL
SOLUTIONS
SCAN HERE



PROTECT KIDS
NOT GUNS

BULLET PROOF PARK

PROTECT & PLAY

The only playpark equipped with panic buttons making it easier for kids to alert the police in the event of an active shooting.

More buttons, less panic!



FOR REAL
SOLUTIONS
SCAN HERE



PROTECT KIDS
NOT GUNS

BULLET PROOF PARK

GUARDED GAMES

Let your children play safely, giving you piece of mind that the only grazes they'll get will be from grass, not bullets.



FOR REAL
SOLUTIONS
SCAN HERE



PROTECT KIDS
NOT GUNS

Call to Action:

Based on these community meetings, we developed a feasibility report, the outcome of which was communicated to media to once again drive prominence of our story. Additionally, ahead of the 2024 national government elections, Gun Free South Africa urged South Africans to consider their political parties' stance on gun violence, taking a local issue and placing it firmly on the national stage.

BULLET PROOF PARK

GUARDED GAMES

Let your children play safely, giving you piece of mind that the only grazes they'll get will be from grass, not bullets.



FOR REAL
SOLUTIONS
SCAN HERE



PROTECT KIDS
NOT GUNS

THE IMPACT

The campaign ignited conversations worldwide, across both traditional and social media platforms. The suggestion of an idea this audacious, expensive — and shockingly necessary — stoked several conversations, giving room for Gun Free South Africa to re-emphasise its key messaging on policy reform, community action and practical behavioural change to end the scourge of gun violence in South Africa. The answer is not to build more Bulletproof Parks for children, but to remove the necessity for them. We created a moment of reflection for the national consciousness, not only competing with a flood of other stories, but ensuring that the most powerful one emerged at the top.

Through this effort, we produced 105 individual pieces of media coverage, reaching almost 100 million people nationally (or every South African at least twice). We earned almost ZAR13 million in earned media, but more importantly we had earned the attention we needed to create influence. Media interest shot up by a staggering 142% and engagement with news articles averaged around 4600 for each story.

100 MILLION

people engaged nationally

R13 MILLION

earned media

142%

increase in media interest

Average

4 600

engagements for each of the 105 stories created

Bulletproof playground to safeguard Mitchells Plain children

Crime-fighting groups have welcomed Gun Free SA's proposal to construct the world's first bulletproof park in Mitchells Plain.



Bulletproof Park for Mitchells Plain Could Change Children's Lives

BY ASHLEIGH REEDT @B000THINGS4U APRIL 12, 2024



The International Response:

It wasn't enough to be influential at the community or national level alone. We deeply understood that international interest would lift the overall pressure point on engaging this critical issue. The campaign achieved significant global reach, with prominent media in both the UK and the US covering the story. Throughout the campaign we reached a combined 167 million people. Significant coverage was carried globally, especially in titles like: The US Daily Express, The Sun US, The Mirror US, The Sun UK, and The Metro UK.



Social Media:

We took the conversation to social media to drive scale and engagement. We knew we needed to be “viral” by design. And this is exactly what we achieved.

We saw a

227%

increase in total mentions of Gun Free South Africa, to the previous period.

306%

increase in unique authors.

732%

increase in public interest overall.

The conversation about the need for a Bullet Proof Park was now agenda setting.

 Mitchell's Plain set for world's first bulletproof park Apr 10 sapeople.com Interactions: 3.3k	 'Bulletproof Park' project proposal: Adèle Kirsten Apr 17 banoyl.com Interactions: 0
 Gun Free SA is not working with DA Apr 10 dailyvoice.co.za Interactions: 61	
 'Dié park sal glad nie werk' Die Son Apr 19 son.co.za Interactions: 42	
 Bulletproof park 'politics' mar vision to keep children on the capetats safe when playing Apr 10 iol.co.za Interactions: 23	
 Would you visit a Bulletproof Park by Gun Free South Africa? Drum Apr 30 snl24.com Interactions: 9	

 Gun Free SA has put forward a proposal to develop the world's first 'Bulletproof Park' ... Apr 11 Total Interactions 21	 @WeekendArgus A proposal by Gun Free SA to build the world's first bulletproof park in Mitchells ... Apr 6 Total Interactions 3
Charles Omvanzo Obbo @cobbo3 Shockert! Bulletproof park for children to be built in South Africa. Proposal is that children play within th... https://t.co/htmdumPn2c Apr 18 Total Interactions 16	kmza @KFMza Gun Free SA to build world's first bullet-proof park in Mitchells Plain https://t.co/whRowZo8ph Apr 4 Total Interactions 3
702 @Radio702 Bullet-proof park proposed in Mitchells Plain to protect children. https://t.co/gprJ2qF9ce Apr 4 Total Interactions 8	Daily Voice @DailyVoiceSA Mixed views on social media after plan for bulletproof park in Mitchells Plain is unveiled Is a bulletproof... https://t.co/whRowZo8ph Apr 15 Total Interactions 2
Newzroom Afrika @Newzroom405 Gun Free SA is proposing that gang-infested Mitchells Plain receive the world's first bulletproof... Apr 11 Total Interactions 6	The Citizen News @TheCitizen_News 'Insane to think': Benni McCarthy on world's first 'bulletproof park' in Mitchells Plain. #BenniMcCarthy... https://t.co/whRowZo8ph Apr 13 Total Interactions 2
SAfmRadio @SAfmRadio Does the new proposal for a Bulletproof Park in Mitchells Plain have merit against... Apr 23 Total Interactions 3	Cape Argus @TheCapeArgus Gun Free SA has denied claims that their proposal to build a bulletproof park in Mitchells Plain was in... https://t.co/H3Dv984ee7 Apr 10 Total Interactions 2

Daily Voice @DailyVoiceSA A proposal by Gun Free SA to build the world's first... World's first bulletproof park in Mitchells Plain www.dailyvoice.co.za Apr 8 Interactions 300	HeiderbergFM 93.6 @HeiderbergFM93.6 What is a bulletproof park? Claire Taylor, a researcher from Gun Free South Africa ... Apr 10 Interactions 18
Daily Voice @DailyVoiceSA Is a bulletproof park the way to go to protect young ... Mixed views on social media after plan for bulletproof park in ... www.dailyvoice.co.za Apr 15 Interactions 132	DRUM Magazine @drummagazine Gun violence shouldn't get in the way of a child's... Would you visit a Bulletproof Park by Gun Free South Africa?... www.sn24.com May 1 Interactions 8
RT @RTnews Gun Free SA, South Africa's leading non-profit... This content isn't available right now www.facebook.com Apr 17 Interactions 122	Cape Argus @CapeArgus Gun Free SA has denied claims that their proposal ... Bulletproof park 'politics' mar vision to keep children on the ... www.iol.co.za Apr 10 Interactions 7
Voice of the Cape Radio - VOC @VOC91.3fm Recent weeks have seen a surge in gang violence in areas such as Lavender Hill and Manenberg, raisin... Apr 16 Interactions 92	Newzroom Afrika @newzroom405 Gun Free SA has put forward a proposal to develop the world's first 'Bulletproof Park' ... Apr 11 Interactions 6
Daily Voice @DailyVoiceSA Gun Free SA has denied that their proposal to build ... Gun Free SA is not working with DA www.dailyvoice.co.za Apr 10 Interactions 54	

The Community Response:

The campaign drove active engagement among all stakeholders and contributed significantly to the hosting of community meetings which were facilitated by Gun Free South Africa in Cape Town. These meetings discussed the Bulletproof Park and other solutions to the gun violence issues in these communities. The Bulletproof Park had created convening power for a community in need, making gun violence a national issue while turning earned media into a “real life” conversation point that could work to create real, meaningful and felt change.

The stakeholders brought to the table included:

- Norman Jantjies, Community Policing Forum (PCF) Chair of Mitchells Plain.
- Irvin Kinnes, Criminologist at UCT Centre for Criminology, also an expert on gangs.
- Cape Flats Safety Forum.
- Amanda Dissel, Policy Head, for the Western Cape provincial government’s Community Safety department.
- The Trauma Advocacy Group (TAG), a group of public health professionals including forensic pathologist, epidemiologist, researchers, trauma doctors.

Additionally, Gayton McKenzie (a former gangster himself) and the leader of the highly influential political party, the Patriotic Alliance (PA), adopted this as a platform issue for his national election campaign. Coming from these communities directly, the PA was able to turn conversation into advocacy for this issue. These conversations alone generated an additional 41 million interactions on platforms like TikTok without us having to initiate the debate.

Critically, McKenzie is now an MP and a cabinet minister in the newly formed coalition government of national unity, creating space for this to move from an election issue to an actual shift in legislation. Our influence is taking root.



THE RESULT

The Bulletproof Park continues to drive awareness about the dire issue of gun violence affecting children in South Africa. More than this, we made this a global conversation around gun control – an internationally critical conversation that needs influence from everyday citizens.

We had placed gun control back onto the national agenda. We rose above active news avoidance and sustained this over a number of months.

We mobilised communities, regional governments, politicians and social activists to come together to begin the dialogue around what the future of gun control could be to prevent the need for a Bulletproof Park.

The park we shouldn't need, forced us to have the conversations we should.

Most importantly, our story has only just begun.

