

# Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions



The National Prosecuting Authority of South Africa  
Igunya Jikelele Labetshutshisi boMzantsi Afrika  
Die Nasionale Vervolgingsgesag van Suid-Afrika

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## **PROJECT IMPI: THE STATE VERSUS A.R. RAVES AND I. LAHER**

The abovementioned matter refers.

1. Lieutenant Colonel C J Ontong has advised Advocate Shareen Riley of my office that as from 22.08.2016 he will no longer be the lead investigator and or form part of Project Impi.
2. The progress and results achieved in this investigation since December 2013 when it was initiated by Major Generals Jacobs and Veary, has led to high level arrests of a senior police official (Prinsloo), an arms dealer (Raves) and a prominent businessman, Irshad Laher.
3. These arrests as evident from the recent media reports ignited strong public debate and strengthened public confidence in the ability of SAPS to effectively and successfully investigate organised criminal enterprises that engage in the smuggling of firearms, corrupt activities and money laundering.
4. The next and crucial phase of this project is the prosecution of the aforementioned accused in the High Court next year.
5. The removal of Lt Colonel Ontong from the project at this stage could prove to be detrimental in the successful conclusion of this project for the following reasons:
  - 5.1 As the lead investigator under the command of Major General Veary, he has conducted all the searches, sought intelligence advice, pursued all the significant leads and information, located and secured evidence, arrested all the accused, identified, located and interviewed witnesses including expert witnesses and obtained the majority of the statements in the docket.



As the lead investigator he was also instrumental in either himself or guided his team of investigators to locate and secure evidence and identify and preserve the crime scenes. At all stages of the project he was responsible for the operational requirements of the project and organization of further investigative support such as arranging uniform ops and crime operational support.

5.2 Lt Col Ontong has effectively managed not only the investigators on his team but also the witnesses that are integral to the investigation. He has secured the cooperation of several accomplice witnesses that will testify in terms of Section 204 of the Criminal Procedure Act and has built and maintain these relationships during the duration of this project. It is therefore required that he continues to identify the needs of the witnesses, offer support and assistance in meeting those needs. He is currently protecting and managing the witnesses. He is busy organising witness protection for the family members of an accomplice witness. He is also managing the possible risk of harm by actively engaging with the legal representative of another accomplice witness who has become uncooperative.

5.3 Since Lt Col Ontong was responsible for the integrity of the investigative process, in particular the collation, request for examination of the exhibits and storage of it, Advocate Riley will require his immediate assistance with the pre-trial discovery process and exhibit preparation for trial. To demonstrate the importance of this, Advocate Riley has received on 11.08.2016 a further request for exhibit material from the legal representative of Alan Robert Raves and has requested Lt Col Ontong's assistance in this regard.

6. Although the project was initially projected to last until the arrest of all the perpetrators who sold and purchased the firearms that were intended for destruction, the developments in the investigation prompted the reassessment of the scope of the project's activities by broadening its parameters to include the following investigations:

6.1 Finding the outstanding balance of firearms that were sold to street gangs that are still in circulation and continue to contribute towards gang related crime in the Western Cape.

6.2 The witnesses have highlighted how loopholes in the firearm legislation and regulations are used to facilitate trans- border smuggling of firearms to other countries from South Africa. Further investigation is therefore required into the import and export of firearms by individuals and or arms dealers for illicit means and the possible violation of South Africa's arms embargoes and international protocols of which South Africa is a signatory.

- 6.3 The investigation of the arms dealer, Alan Raves, has demonstrated that firearms could possibly be stockpiled for crimes against the state by right wing groups.
- 6.4 The investigation of the arms dealer, Alan Raves, has demonstrated that there is a market for the illicit or unauthorized manufacture of by the use of firearm components that were imported or stolen.
- 6.5 Corruption at the Central Firearm Registry and by DFOs at the stations.
- 6.6 The theft of firearms from military bases stockpiled possibly for crimes against the state by right wing groups.
- 6.7 The unlawful reactivation of dismantled or deactivated firearms.
- 6.8 The discovery of irregularities at licensed arms dealerships by the DFOs on this project.

Due to the nature and complexity of this criminal matter, it is imperative that Lt Col Ontong remains as the lead investigator of this project with his dedicated team consisting of investigators and DFOs.

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**DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC PROSECUTIONS: WESTERN CAPE**