

Municipalities also losing guns: Ministry

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Tuesday, 20 April 2010 19:02 - Last Updated Wednesday, 21 April 2010 05:28



An astonishing number of guns have gone missing from municipalities, the police ministry said on Tuesday.

A preliminary audit had shown that the number of guns lost ranged from one at one municipality, to some 500 at another which the ministry did not name. The announcement follows revelations earlier this year about the number of guns lost by or stolen from police -- 2575 in the 2008/09 financial year alone. The ministry said municipalities owned 17,482 firearms. Just under half of them were owned by Gauteng municipalities. Northern Cape municipalities had the least with 64 firearms.

It was apparent that some municipalities had effective, up-to-date control measures while others were "completely below depth". Minister Nathi Mthethwa had ordered the police's central firearms registry to investigate and to make recommendations on how the police could help municipalities tighten their firearms controls. The ministry also said that steps would be taken to recover 42 guns not returned by members who left the police.