MEDIA RELEASE

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Armscor researcher receives prestigious international recognition for ballistics research

Armscor is proud to announce that Ms Gail Ndlovu, a researcher at Flamengro, a division of Armscor, has been awarded the prestigious Jack Riegel Student Award at the 35th International Symposium on Ballistics, held in Cape Town, South Africa, on 28 October 2026.

Ndlovu received the award in recognition of her outstanding research paper titled *"Thermogravimetric Screening of Nanometal-Doped ABS/Graphene Composites Toward Optimised Hybrid Rocket Fuel Grains"*, which was selected in the international ballistics category. The recognition underscores the quality of her research and its contribution to advancing scientific knowledge in ballistics and innovative materials development.

Reflecting on the role Armscor has played in her academic and professional journey, Ndlovu acknowledged the organisation's investment in her development and the opportunities it has provided to translate academic knowledge into practical research.

"Armscor has been instrumental in my journey, having supported my studies from undergraduate level through to my master's and PhD, while also providing me with invaluable industry experience at Flamengro. My research was inspired by the work we do, where I identified an opportunity to build on an existing project and explore further possibilities. My aspiration is to apply the knowledge and expertise I have gained to strengthen Armscor's research capabilities and contribute to advancing South Africa's defence technologies," said Ndlovu.

Her achievement represents a significant milestone for South African scientific research, as she becomes the second South African to receive this prestigious accolade, following a female researcher from the Council for Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR), who received the award in 2019. A Tunisian researcher received the award in 2022, making Ndlovu the third African recipient.

Presented by the International Ballistics Society, the Jack Riegel Student Award recognises promising student researchers and supports their participation in the International Symposium on Ballistics. The award seeks to promote scientific excellence, encourage knowledge-sharing and facilitate engagement between emerging researchers and established experts within the international ballistics community.

Ndlovu's recognition is a testament to the importance of sustained investment in research, skills development and the cultivation of scientific talent. It also demonstrates the value of creating an environment in which young researchers can translate their academic pursuits into practical solutions that respond to national and defence technology requirements.

Looking ahead, Ndlovu hopes to see greater participation by young South Africans in scientific research, increased collaboration among researchers and sustained investment in locally developed technologies.

“I would like to inspire more young South Africans to pursue research that advances our local defence technologies. I hope to see stronger collaboration among researchers, increased investment in local innovation and more rocket launches taking place in South Africa. My research is a small contribution towards achieving this vision, and I welcome opportunities to mentor and collaborate with others in advancing this field,” she added.

Ndlovu's achievement reinforces the value of investing in people, research and innovation as critical drivers of South Africa's defence technology advancement. It further highlights Armscor's role in nurturing scientific talent and supporting research that contributes to the country's long-term defence and technological capabilities.

Reflecting on this milestone, Adv. Solomzi Mbada – CEO of Armscor emphasised the importance of research in sustaining the defence industry. “At Armscor, we recognise that our greatest strategic asset is the knowledge, expertise and innovative potential of our people. Ndlovu's achievement demonstrates what can be accomplished when academic excellence is supported by meaningful industry exposure and sustained investment in research and development. Her international recognition is a source of pride for Armscor and South Africa, and reinforces our commitment to nurturing the next generation of scientists and researchers who will contribute to advancing our national defence capabilities.”

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Caption – ISB 1: Ms Gail Ndlovu receives the prestigious Jack Riegel Student Award in recognition of her contribution and knowledge in ballistics research.

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