

CRIME SITUATION IN THE REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA FOR THE 2007/2008 FINANCIAL YEAR

CRIME TRENDS REPORT

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Address By

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INTRODUCTION

The Crime Trends Report we are publishing today indicates a continuation of the steady decline in crime levels in South Africa that we have seen in the past five years. I must convey, right at the outset though, Government is still concerned that, while they are going down, the levels of crime continue to be unacceptably high. Government would have wanted to see a more drastic decrease in the levels given, particularly, the interventions that have been made since we started publishing crime statistics regularly from the 2001/2002 Financial Year.

One of the important interventions that government made was the redeployment of more and better resources to the various police stations in the country where crime fighting actually happens. A total of 14 504 police members were deployed to 606 stations. Some of the deployees were experienced police managers and commanders who served, previously, at the national and area levels of the South African Police Service. Some of the stations received allocations of reservists who are a force-multiplier to the police.

There are varied and divergent generators of crime, including the socio-economic conditions under which many of our people live. The phenomenon of informal settlements has also created conditions for crimes of need where residents often submit to temptation and commit crime to satisfy that need. The conditions of life within the settlements have given rise to a sub-culture of tolerance to crime by some residents where space

is given to criminals to commit crime willy-nilly in those and other areas. The criminals also buy silence from some residents who either cooperate out of fear or because they gain from some of the criminal activities.

Some of the older democracies, in their response to circumstances like ours, have resorted to community or geographic policing as a key project to prevent and combat crime. We are also building towards rooting in our communities that concept as the best measure to deal with crime in South Africa. There is truth in the argument that the law enforcement agencies have a primary responsibility to deal with crime but, it is also true that the fight against crime benefits tremendously when the communities work in a solid partnership with the law enforcement agencies.

It is our experience that in areas where communities are working together with the police, crime levels there have been reduced, quite drastically in some respects. The call for partnerships in the fight against crime is beginning to reap handsome benefits as more people and organizations are responding positively.

SOCIAL CRIME

Our crime surveys continue to show that social crime is a big problem in our country, especially the abuse of women and children, in particular the girl child. That type of social crime is committed mostly by perpetrators who are known to the victims because of the relationship that exists between them. Some of the perpetrators are husbands, fathers, relatives, family friends or acquaintances. Both perpetrator and victim are often found in the same social environment. The difficulty with such crimes is that, more often than not, the police come into the picture after the crime has already been committed. Cases where the police enter the situation early enough to prevent the crime are few and far between. That is because, by their nature, those crimes are committed in seclusion where mostly only the perpetrator and victim are present.

The current report will show that rape has gone down by 8,8%. That, though, cannot be said emphatically to be an indicator that the scourge is lessening. The same can be said about indecent assault where there is a 2,1% decrease. Children suffer most from cases of indecent assault. The lowest figure of indecent assault was 12,6% during the 2001/02 reporting

period. The highest incidence was 16,1% during the 2004/05 Financial Year.

It should be noted though that sexual crimes, in many instances, are not reported because of the relationship between victim and perpetrator, as well as the stigma that attaches to some of those crimes in cases of rape. The trend we have been observing, though, is that the reporting of such crimes in South Africa has improved and larger volumes of reports are being filed and investigated. The several interventions by relevant non-governmental bodies and the government's own programmes like the 16 Day of Activism Against Women and Children Abuse have helped a great deal to encourage victims to report their trauma to the law enforcement agencies.

The contact crimes of murder, attempted murder, serious and violent assault, rape, indecent assault, robbery with aggravating circumstances and common robbery have shown decreases when compared to the 2006/2007 trends. While in some instances the 7-10% target, that was set by government during the 2004/05 Financial Year, was not met the performance in the period under review was better than all past Financial Years since the setting of the targets.

Quite significant in this regard are the decreases of 7,4% and 4,7% in robbery with aggravating circumstances and murder, respectively, given that those crimes went up by 4,6% and 2,4% in the past Financial Year.

As can be appreciated, the decrease in murder is connected to the decrease in aggravated robbery, which is often accompanied by bloodshed as firearms are used in the commission of such crimes. The larger portion of the murders is committed, as already indicated, within the context of social crime.

OTHER CRIMES

The crimes we identified in the 2006/07 Financial Year as a serious concern continued to be a problem in the period under review. Robbery at residential premises rose by 1 720 cases, or by 13,5%, from 12 761 in the previous Financial Year, to 14 481 cases in the current reporting cycle.

Robbery at business premises increased by an even bigger number, from 6 689 cases in the previous period to 9 862 during the current reporting cycle. That is an increase of 3 173 or 47,4%.

There were increases also in car and truck hijackings. Carjacking jumped from 13 599 to 14 201 cases, an increase of 602 cases on the previous period. The biggest jump involved the hijacking of trucks where, in the previous period 892 cases were reported to 1 245 in the current reporting cycle, accounting therefore, for an increase of 39,6% or 353 cases.

We have learnt, from dockets that we have analysed on the three crime types, that the majority of carjackings, house and business robberies occur respectively in 3,6%, 3,2% and 2,2% of South Africa's police precincts. At least 70% of all carjackings happened at owners' premises, either at their gates or driveways.

Some of the car and truck hijackings are part of organized crime. The cars are needed for quick getaway from crime scenes and as battering rams against cash vans in cash-in-transit heists. The trucks carry valuables that the organized criminal gangs want.

Organized crime continues to be a big problem because of the damage it inflicts on society. Firearms are used in many organized crime cases and people are killed, including innocent bystanders. Organized criminal gangs are also involved in the illicit drug trade which is affecting many of our people, especially the youth. The organized gangs also use their ill-begotten financial resources to corrupt people.

Those crimes are a small percentage comparatively speaking but, because of the havoc they wreak against society, they are the crimes we are mostly paying particular attention to.

The police identified and investigated during the period under review 145 organized crime groups. Most of them were involved in drug-related crime, motor vehicle theft, the hijacking of motor vehicles and trucks, fraud, corruption, trafficking in non-ferrous metals, precious metals and stones. 131 syndicate leaders and 375 syndicate members (runners) were arrested. This means that 27.41 % of the organized crime projects that were under investigation for the period under review were taken to court.

Of the total arrest of 1 274 062 made by the police during the period under review 170 097 were for social related contact crimes and 24 592 for violent organized crime.

CRIME PREVENTION OPERATIONS

Actions carried out	Number/QUANTITY
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SUCCESSSES	
ARRESTS	
<i>Contact crimes related to the social fabric – related contact crimes</i>	
Murder and attempted murder	13 620
Rape and attempted rape	17 554
Assault GBH	91 509
Common assault	45 487
Indecent assault	1 927
<i>Violent organised contact crimes</i>	
Car- jacking	1 677
Truck- jacking	152
House robbery	3 174
Business robbery	1 089
Cash-in-transit robbery	51
Bank robbery	12
Other aggravated robberies	18 797
<i>Property-related and commercial crime</i>	
Housebreaking (All)	39 966
Theft of motor vehicles and motor cycles	4 872
Theft out of / from motor vehicles	5 045
Shoplifting	37 759
Other theft	57 067
Stock theft	2 978

<i>Crimes dependent on police action for detection</i>	
Illegal possession of firearms and ammunition	7 424
Drug- related crime	58 562
Driving under the influence of alcohol and / or drugs	24 905
<i>Arrests – priority crimes</i>	508 387
<i>Arrests – other crimes – including undocumented persons</i>	766 215
TOTAL	1 274 602

DCS Data on convicted violent crime offenders

Statistics from the Department of Correctional Services (DCS) dating as far back as 2000/2001 reveal that the number of offenders convicted for violent crime (aggravated measures) and serving sentences ranging from a minimum of five years to life sentences has grown significantly year on year. The annual total of offenders serving such sentences rose from 35 415 during 2000/2001 to a total of 51 149 for the period under review.

We are planning to establish a strong and viable entity to fight organized crime, on the basis of the revamped Criminal Justice System.

PARTNERSHIPS

Given that we need much more than just conventional policing to deal with social crime, the Justice Crime Prevention and Security cluster of government has established partnerships with various stakeholders, including Community-Based Organisations, the labour movement, business and religious sectors. There have emerged within the various communities organizations that are working with the police as part of community policing. In areas where such projects have been launched, the crime levels have decreased measurably.

Communities have established anti-crime groups of various kinds that do patrols together with the police and generally protect their neighbourhoods, including doing patrols on trains and beaches during the festive season.

There are several initiatives underway to intensify the fight against crime on the basis of partnerships. Business Against Crime counts among the earliest partners that joined the fight against crime during the presidency of Mr Nelson Mandela. They continue to contribute human and material resources, in a resolute fashion, to crime prevention and combating.

Big business, the supporters of Business Against Crime, got involved directly in the fight against crime in a partnership that has evolved into what is called the Anti-Crime Leadership Forum that has four Working Groups. The Leadership Forum did a review of the Criminal Justice System as one of the joint projects on which they collaborated.

Government, working with communities designed campaigns like Against Crime Together (ACT); Take Charge, which is a Gauteng initiative; Bamabani in the Western Cape;

There are also media houses that have become partners with the law enforcement agencies. Primedia designed an effective campaign, Crime Stop, which is extending its reach through a partnership with SABC to go national.

The Community Policing Forums have become an important element in community policing. Plans are in place to revamp them so that they can fulfill their mandate to coordinate the relationship between the police and the communities they serve. Such a relationship is necessary for community policing where residents in a locality would be the eyes and ears of the police in a system of networks that the CPFs will coordinate.

Other initiatives are:

The 16 Days of Activism Campaign for No Violence Against Women and Children which was started by government some years ago, as part of the United Nations campaign, is attracting more participants every year. It made strides in the effort to get women and children who are abused to break their silence and report those crimes.

On the basis of that campaign, the Ministry for Safety and Security launched Operation Basadi, which followed up cases of abuse of women, which, in some cases, had been filed away by the police and closed as

undetected. Some arrests were effected when those cases were revived and reinvestigated.

Operation Isondlo was launched by the Department of Justice and Constitutional Development to identify and punish defaulting fathers on the payment of maintenance for their children.

The fight against gender violence has benefited from the strong partnerships that government has forged with some NGOs, FBOs, gender-based organisations, business, state-owned enterprises, the media, traditional leaders and all sectors of our society.

During the 2007 16 Days Campaign, men and boys were encouraged to play a leading role in the fight against gender-based violence, so as to recognise the role that they can play in turning the tide against gender abuse. The building blocks are in place to extend the 16 Days campaign into a year-long campaign.

The Victim's Charter, launched last December 6 in Motherwell, Port Elizabeth, is being rolled out in a number of areas. The Charter and the Minimum Standards on Services for victims of crime are part of government's legal and policy framework to ensure that crimes against the vulnerable, especially women, the elderly and children, continue to receive priority.

POLICE SUCCESSES

Police arrests & wanted list

Commissioner Pruis will cover this in his presentation

REVIEW OF CRIMINAL JUSTICE SYSTEM

Minister for Safety and Security to provide

BORDER CONTROL

Responsibilities for borderline security: common international practices compared

International comparative research shows that there is no internationally accepted and uniform practice on the appropriate security force that should be utilized to enforce borderline security. This is largely dependent on the external threats to national security that have been identified by each country. Dr Erik Slavenas (Canada) comparatively asserts that countries have opted for:

- **Military forces**- Most Spanish-speaking Latin American countries, the Dominican Republic, Vietnam, Russia, former USSR, China, Belarus, Moldova
- **Civilian/military (Gendarmerie-type) forces** – Finland, France and Israel
- **Civilian forces** - Germany, Estonia, Austria, Lithuania, Latvia, Portugal, Romania, Serbia, Slovenia, Spain, India, Belgium, Turkey, Ukraine and Italy

It can be deduced from the above that most countries like, South Africa, have demonstrated an inclination towards utilizing civilian forces that are comparable to the police, who have the powers to arrest and the capability to utilize minimum force in the execution of their duties as they mostly deal with civilians along their borders.

Port of entry security Successes

The 74 Ports of Entry (54 land ports, 11 air ports, 8 sea ports and 1 dry port) in South Africa were previously manned by approximately 700 police officials nationally doing multi agency functions in most cases. Since the implementation of the Border Control Security Strategy the deployment of police officials to Ports of Entry has increased to 3500 officials who are focussing primarily on crime prevention and detection whilst their partners in other departments focus on their responsibilities albeit in an integrated manner. This number will increase to more than 11000 over the next few years.

The success of this strategy is seen the massive successes reported widely in the media, and in the crime statistics with ports such as Beit Bridge in Limpopo and Lebombo in Mpumalanga striking significant blows against smuggling and car theft syndicates.

The message that the ports are closed to criminals is getting out there as can be seen by the displacement of crime, where criminals are seeking other areas to focus on.

For a number of years the South African authorities have been tightening up border controls and improving other security measures at most of the major ports of entry and exit (sea, air and land). For example, in the context of preventing the smuggling of firearms, the Firearms Control Act 200 and the associated National Firearms Programme of the SAPS (launched in 2002), additional measures for the inspection of goods, whether imported or exported, have been introduced and implemented. This was done by the establishment of profiling units at designated ports.

The number of illegal firearms recovered at ports of entry and exit increased from 121 in 2006/2007 to 952 firearms recovered in 2007/2008.

The number of stolen vehicles recovered at ports of entry and exit decreased from 1 045 in 2006/2007 to 919 vehicles recovered in 2007/2008.

The value and quantity of drugs seized at ports of entry and exit increased in value from R 329 790 967 in 2006/2007 to R 1 441 694 523.90 in 2007/2008.

The value of illegal goods recovered at ports of entry and exit decreased from R 192 391 930 in 2006/2007 to R 135 777 142 in value of goods seized in 2007/2008.

The number of arrests at ports of entry and exit for illegal firearms; stolen vehicles; drugs; illegal goods; human smuggling and trafficking, marine life resources, precious metals and stones and non-ferrous metals increased from 30 410 in 2006/2007 to 51 856 arrests in 2007/2008.

OR Tambo International Airport

This is one of the busiest airports in Africa and has a total of 963 police act personnel. Comparing from the previous 1121 personnel in the previous financial year statistics, the discrepancies of 158 resulted in 100 members from Pan African Parliament (PAP) were transferred within the Components of PSS. The remaining 58 personnel were as a result of promotions, transfers, resignations and deaths. During this financial year, they have made major successes with regards to the recovery and seizure of narcotics. The value of the drugs seized was R 783 247 092. This includes drugs intercepted at the International Mail Centre by SAPS members.

Durban Harbour

Durban Harbour, which is also the busiest seaport, has a total of 1 038 police act personnel. With the establishment of the profiling unit during this year, more containers

are being screened and therefore gave rise to more seizures of counterfeit goods and undeclared goods. The value of these recoveries is estimated at R 110 976 365. Total value of drugs seized R 120 828.

Beit Bridge

Beit Bridge is a designated land port and has a total of 297 police act personnel. They had major successes with regards to vehicle and counterfeit goods / undeclared goods recoveries. 86 vehicles were recovered, a total amount of R 4 778 775 goods seized. Total value of drugs seized R 163 360.