



Course Name

Handout I

Crime Statistics

Crime stats: Cops declare victory

September 21 2012 at 07:58am

By KRISTEN VAN SCHIE, SHAUN SMILLIE AND LOUISE FLANAGAN

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Minister of Police Nathi Mthethwa, national police commissioner General Riah Phiyega and SA Police Service research task team head Mzwandile Petros at Parliament. Photo: Brenton Geach

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Johannesburg - It is not just about statistics; it is about winning the hearts and minds of all South Africans – and the police believe they are nearly there.

Confidence in the police force is up, and this, believes SA Police Service research task team head General Mzwandile Petros, will be reaffirmed by the year's end with StatsSA's release of the Victim Survey.

Speaking to The Star on Thursday, Petros said visible policing and operations like Duty Calls, where crime hotspots are identified and "flooded" with officers, has had its desired effect on the crime stats.

It was also changing the way criminals operated, by making them travel to new areas to find targets of opportunity. "You are seeing this in outlying areas like Muldersdrift and Bronkhorstspuit," he said.

But while criminals might be on the run in some areas, there were still problems that needed to be addressed, Petros said. The police needed to improve how they deal with organised crime.

"We need good detectives and we are working at improving their skills," he said.

The incidence of the most feared crimes is slowly going down, according to Thursday's crime stats. While violent crime categories are down, Petros said the police were facing criminals who were willing to travel to do their work.

Police Minister Nathi Mthethwa said: “We are not there yet, but with the participation of all sectors of society, we are turning the tide against crime.”

The statistics are released annually by the police, six months after the end of the financial year they are from – a delay frequently criticised. The stats are the cases reported and do not include detection or conviction rates.

Murder, attempted murder, assault, sexual assault and robbery – it’s down across the board for contact crimes in SA.

Murder is down 3.1 percent, attempted murder 5.2 percent, assault with grievous bodily harm 5.2 percent, common assault 3.4 percent and rape 1.9 percent. The police calculated the decreases and increases on the incidence of each type of crime per 100 000 people, which Mthethwa said was the internationally accepted way of measuring.

But children were increasingly being targeted, warned Mthethwa, calling for parents and guardians to watch over their children more carefully.

Nearly 800 children were murdered in the past year and more than 25 000 were victims of sexual assault. Children are 5 percent of the total murder victims and 40 percent of the sexual assault victims.

The murder rate is regarded as a key indicator.

“Murder is one of the most reliable trends of crime statistics,” said Mthethwa.

He pointed to the drop in murders per 100 000 people.

“This translates to a 27.6 percent reduction in murder over an eight-year period.”

The actual number of murders went down too – by nearly 17 percent – from more than 18 000 to fewer than 16 000.

Of the murders, about two-thirds are assault-related, 16 percent committed during another crime, 5 percent self-defence, 5 percent vigilante justice, 1 percent gang related and 1 percent taxi related.

Petros said the police were constrained by their inability to predict most murders or assaults, and because many were committed in private places.

He said substance abuse contributed significantly to contact crimes, often escalating arguments to assaults to murders.

Mthethwa said sexual offences remained “stubbornly high”.

“To a large extent, we do admit that this is one challenging category for the police to police. It is also influenced by reporting behaviour. If victims trust the police, then you will get more reporting,” he said.

The pointers for organised crime – carjacking, truck hijacking, bank robbery and cash-in-transit heists – are all down, which Mthethwa attributed to the use of provincial operational centres, or war rooms.

Drunk-driving cases increased 3 percent, up for the second year in a row. “This is worrying, particularly as fatalities continue to be associated with drunk driving,” said Mthethwa.

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The Star

Crime stats 'cold comfort': DA

September 20 2012 at 03:29pm
By SAPA

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(File photo)

Cape Town - A "minuscule" decrease in crime is no indication that the government is doing everything it can to keep South Africans safe, the DA said on Thursday.

"These incremental changes are cold comfort to law-abiding citizens who live in fear of criminals," said Democratic Alliance spokeswoman Dianne Kohler-Barnard.

She was responding to the 2011/12 crime statistics released by Police Minister Nathi Mthethwa at Parliament.

Kohler-Barnard said four key crime categories - murder, sexual offences, aggravated robbery, and residential robbery - showed an average decrease of only 1.43 percent, compared to 5.7 percent last year.

"Virtually no decrease (only 0.26 percent) was experienced in 'aggravated robbery', compared to a 10.8 percent decrease in this category last year," she said.

Murder dropped by just 331 - with 15 609 citizens murdered last year.

Besides the distinct lack of progress in these serious crime categories, the DA had grave concerns about "the manipulation of statistics to paint a rosy picture".

Certain categories of crime, such as domestic violence, gang-related violence, and violent public protests had been absorbed into larger categories "in an effort to hide the real situation on the ground", she said.

"For example, domestic violence is subsumed under common assault and assault with intent to cause grievous bodily harm.

"This makes it difficult to determine the precise number of domestic violence incidents which occur, and whether we are winning the fight against domestic abuse."

As ever, the DA had questions about the validity and reliability of the crime statistics.

“National police commissioner Riah Phiyega admitted (on Thursday) that there is no independent audit of the statistics.

“This means that we can’t determine whether the procedure followed in collating the statistics is valid.”

It was time for an independent body to take control of the crime statistics away from the police, Kohler-Barnard said.

The latest statistics were also up to 18-months-old. The DA wanted to see real-time crime statistics made available to the public at station level.

This would not only give the public information on the nature and extent of crime in their areas, but would also allow the SA Police Service to tailor local responses relevant to present-day realities.

Mthethwa and Phiyega should not pat themselves on the back for “meagre progress”.

“South Africans will certainly not feel any safer as a result of these crime statistics,” she said. - Sapa

Full text of crime statistics speech

September 20 2012 at 11:48am

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Picture: Itumeleng English.

Remarks by the Minister of Police, E.N. Mthethwa, MP, on the occasion of the release of the 2011/12 SAPS National Crime Statistics, Parliament, Cape Town - 20 September 2012

The release of the South African Police Service (SAPS) crime statistics for the period 1 April 2011 to 31 March 2012 is a duty that must be understood by society as a reflection on the work done in the fight against crime.

The crime statistics that we are sharing with the nation this morning indicate a mixed bag with marginal downward trends in some of the crime categories. Where government succeeds, we will continue to draw from the lessons and replicate in other areas. Where government is not pleased, we will re-commit ourselves to creating a safer South Africa. When it comes to our commitment in fighting crime – we remain unshaken.

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In dealing with these challenges, we further draw inspiration from Gallileo Galilei who said, quote: 'All truths are easy to understand once they are discovered; the point is to discover them. By denying scientific principles, one may maintain any paradox. Facts which at first seem improbable will, even on scant explanation, drop the cloak which has hidden them and stand forth in naked and simple beauty.'

As we did the previous past two years, we also engaged a number of different role-players to compare their experiences with regard to certain crime types. We have noted that there is convergence on our crime statistics with various independent stakeholders, especially in relation to sectors such as business, tracking and insurance.

All percentage increases and decreases are calculated on the basis of ratios per 100 000 of the population (per capita figures) in line with international practice. This is done to equalize our population growth and be able to scientifically compare provinces different sizes with each other.



(File photo)

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All the figures will be available on the SAPS website.

*** Decrease in Contact Crimes (Crimes against the person)**

Seven categories of serious crimes are grouped together as contact crime. In fact all seven categories of contact crime witnessed a decline (this refers to murder, attempted murder, sexual offenses, assault grievous bodily harm, assault common, aggravated robbery and common robbery).

The crimes in question accounted for 29,9% of South Africa's recorded serious crimes; such crimes involve physical contact (usually violent and coercive nature) between the perpetrators and their victims. We are encouraged that all provinces with the exception of Free State, Limpopo and Western Cape, experienced a decline in this form of crime.

In the 2010/11 financial year, contact crime decreased by 6,9% and for the financial year under review, we recorded a decrease of 3,5%. Contact crime has been significantly reduced by 35,5% from 2004/05 to 2011/12.

Decrease in Murder

Murder is one of the most reliable trends of crime statistics. During 2011/12 we recorded a decrease by 3,1%. We are encouraged to see the murder ratio a further decrease in a long line of decreases which still contributes to the systematic and almost constant decrease in murders since the dawn of democracy; despite South Africa's 30% population growth.

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In 2004/05 there were over 18 000 murder cases recorded and this figure only began to go below 16 000 in 2009/10; when this current administration took over. This translates to a 27,6% reduction in murder over an 8 year period (2004/05 – 2011/12).

Research conducted by Crime Research and Statistics of the SAPS indicated that approximately 65% of murders started off as assaults resulting from interpersonal arguments, which were often further stimulated by alcohol and drug abuse.

To this end, we are also encouraged by the continued decrease we experienced in the following crime categories during the 2011/12 financial year:

- * Attempted Murder decreased by 5,2%
- * Assault Grievous Bodily Harm (GBH) decreased by 4,2%
- * Common Assault decreased by 3,4%

One of the shifts that we have witnessed is that although crimes against women and children are decreasing, we are now seeing a trend where young children are now being targeted and abused. We shall be intensifying the war against young children to ensure that this trend is reversed. A greater and growing awareness among parents/guardians that children should be looked after and protected, must be considered.

Decrease in Sexual Offences

One area that still remains stubbornly high is around sexual offences. The decrease should be understood in perspective, that as government we still remain concerned about the conviction rate of criminals who commit such crimes.

For the 2011/12 financial year, the sexual offences ratio decreased by 3,7%. We need to emphasize that as government we are however, still concerned about the scourge of rape in our country. Rape decreased by 1,9% but it is unacceptably high. More resources and better training of police mechanisms are now being put in place.

To a large extent we do admit that this is one challenging category for police to police. It is also influenced by a reporting behaviour, if victims trust the police, then you will get more reporting. So the issue of under-reporting remains a challenge and not just in South Africa but internationally.

We took a decision in 2009 to re-establish the Family Violence, Child Protection and Sexual Offences (FCS) units. This decision was informed by the challenges that women, children and the elderly in our country continue to face in this democratic dispensation.

Over the last two years since its re-launching this unit has trained specialized officers to deal with these heinous crimes. In the new police stations that we build and those that are refurbished, we must ensure that there are special dedicated areas for the victims of such crimes.

A working relationship with the Judiciary has been established to have such cases prioritized. The correctness of the decision we took in the past few years is indicated in the major victories that this unit has managed to score over the last two years.

Amongst the victories, the FCS units can claim the following:

- * In the cases where it involves the children under the age of eighteen, the unit has secured convictions that resulted in total of 10 345 years for those criminals. In the same age group, it has managed to secure 175 life sentences for these crimes.

* In cases where it involves victims that are eighteen years and older, the units have secured convictions that resulted in total of 10 854 years of imprisonment. In the same age category it has managed to secure 131 life sentences.

This excludes the cases that are in the court roll still awaiting finalization. The important struggle we must continue to wage, is to end violence against women, a critical part of the historic effort to change the power relations in our society.

Decrease in Organized Crime (carjacking, cash-in-transit, and bank robbery)

The most highly organized forms of aggravated robbery; namely carjacking, cash-in-transit, bank robbery have experienced decreases. Some of the factors that have contributed to these decreases include the implementation of the provincial operational centres (War Rooms) in some provinces.

Decrease in Car Hijackings

For the 2010/11 financial year, car hijacking decreased by 23,6%. We are pleased that strategies that have been put in place over the past three years continue to yield results. To this end, for the period 2011/12, car hijacking further decreased by 11,9%.

Both motor vehicle theft and carjacking are more organized in nature and frequently linked to the export of stolen or hijacked vehicles across the borders of the Republic of South Africa. But we are encouraged by the work done by the crime intelligence, working with various SAPS units, and this collaboration resulted in a number of arrests thus disrupting and halting some of these syndicates.

Decrease in Cash-In-Transit

For the 2011/12 financial year we are pleased to announce a 37,5% decrease in cash-in-transit.

This is indeed encouraging. As we highlighted such progress can to a large extent be attributed to better coordination and information-sharing between the SAPS and the various role-players.

Decrease in Bank Robberies

In the 2011/12 financial year, bank robberies decreased by 10,3%.

We reiterate that such declines were not achieved through sheer luck but through well-coordinated planning, partnerships with the Business and Banking sectors and we shall continue to sustain these partnerships.

Aggravated Robberies

Aggravated robbery is the second-largest generator of other contact crimes, particularly attempted murder and murder because victims are sometimes killed or seriously injured during such robberies.

We are encouraged by the constant decline in aggravated robberies over the last three years. During the 2010/11 the robbery with aggravating circumstances ratio decreased by 12,0% and for 2011/12 we have witnessed a 1,4% decrease. We have to say upfront we are unhappy with this reversal and shall be paying attention to this category.

Part of the strategies we have now put in place include a stabilization and reduction of business robberies, sustained reduction of house and public robberies as well as gains made in combating the more organized forms of aggravated robberies.

Work is also underway to strengthen and where appropriate, formalize relationships with various stakeholders, with a view to tapping into the diverse skills to enhance capacity and ensure coordinated effort in tackling challenges and blockages.

Decrease in Common Robberies

We are further encouraged of a 4,6% decrease which was recorded in 2011/12.

The significant downward trend which has been witnessed over an 8 year period, shows a reduction of 40,9% over a period of 5 years, with an average reduction of 8,2%.

To sustain this reduction, we continue to upskill and capacitate our detective services. This includes not only increasing the number of detectives but also the quality of those we recruit.

Decrease in Two of the Trio Crimes

We have recorded decreases in two of the trio crimes for the financial year 2011/12.

* Carjacking decreased by 11,9%

* House robberies decreased by 1,9%

* However, business robberies increased by 7,5%

Our operational analysis at police station level confirmed that police visibility at the right times, right places and employing right tactics, could decrease trio crimes significantly, especially business robberies. High police visibility increases the risks run by robbers, for example, decreasing the reaction time of the police or shifting the robbers' operations to areas they are not familiar with.

The seriousness with which government views crimes against small business, requires a comprehensive and holistic strategy to ensure that the phenomenon is addressed in all its dimensions. We need to implement a shared vision, a collective and integrated approach, business involvement and participation and improved crime-prevention.

We have now finalized a strategy to combat and reduce robberies at small business and through the Civilian Secretariat of Police; we will be engaging relevant parties to ensure the implementation of the strategy within the next few weeks.

In dealing with house robberies, we must put in place various systems, particularly as this is in line with the first victims of crime survey done by Statistics South Africa; which revealed that the two crimes most feared by South Africans are house robbery and housebreaking.

Decrease in Burglary at Residential Premises

The impact of urbanization, unemployment, poverty, growing material needs, alcohol and substance abuse are among the conditions that contribute to socially determined contact crimes.

Although marginal, we have seen a decrease in the 2011/12 financial year, with a 2,0% decrease. It is further encouraging that burglary residential was reduced by 24,8% from 2004/05 to 2011/12, which is an 8-year period.

The burglars either take items for their own consumption or use, or to sell these for the cash necessary to address their own needs. As we stated during the announcement last year, to address this challenge, we undertook to regulate the Private Security Industry Regulatory Authority, to further complement this industry's cooperation with police.

Crime takes place within communities and many members of the public are aware. As such the public is encouraged to be whistle-blowers against crime and report crime at all times.

Communities must desist from creating a market for stolen goods including, CDs and DVDs, by not buying stolen items and participate in neighbourhood safety forums.

Decrease in illegal possession of Firearms and Ammunition

Illegal possession of firearms ratio decreased by a marginal 1,0% during the financial year 2011/12.

For at least the past four financial years the illegal possession of firearms and ammunition cases remained absolutely constant however we still remain concerned and we shall be rolling out various campaigns to address this challenge.

Decrease in ATM Bombings

Last year at the time of reporting to the nation, we mentioned that our partnerships with stakeholders such as the South African Banking Risk Information Centre (SABRIC), Business Against Crime South Africa were being cemented. We intend to work with these partners as government to realize a further decline.

One area of concern to the police during the 2010/11 financial year was the significant increase in ATM bombings which increased by 61,5%, from 247 recorded cases in 2009/10 to 399 in the 2010/11 financial year.

We are however, proud to report to positive reversal from the increase. In the 2011/12 financial year, we have witnessed a 34,6% decrease in ATM bombings. From 399 cases to a reduction of 261 cases.

Decrease in Commercial Crime

A 1,5% decrease for 2011/12 was experienced and the significance this year is that this is a first decrease since 2004/05.

In any policing system, our intelligence is a nerve centre and plays a crucial role. It is for this reason we have prioritised the need to revitalise the intelligence component of SAPS and ensure the integration of intelligence into all aspects of policing.

The introduction and an enhancement of technology to combat and fight crime (fingerprint identification, forensic technology, CCTVs) and other strategic initiatives all contribute to the overall reduction of crime in the country, particularly commercial crimes.

By so doing, we should be able to stabilize and maintain this decrease. The increasing role of computerization and electronic communication in commercial activity including the globalization of commercial crime, require us to be ahead from a policing and planning perspectives.

Increase in Stock Theft

During the reporting period last year, we reported to the nation a decline of 8,2% in the number of reported cases of stock theft but admittedly expressed our dissatisfaction.

For the 2011/12 financial year, the decline has been reversed and we experienced a 1,5% increase. The increase means we need to review our approach because we cannot allow this slight increase to be a trend setting ratio. If we look at an 8 year period from 2004/05 to date, we see that we had reduced stock theft by 31,2%.

Dedicated focus is now being given to the practical implementation of the rural safety strategy. In this regard, particular focus is being given to cross border crimes and stock theft in particular.

The ministry of police, community organizations, agricultural organizations and trade unions continue to work together in addressing rural safety.

Increase in Drug-related Crimes

The drug-related crime ratio increased by 15,6% in the 2011/12 financial year.

Drug trafficking must become everybody's concern. We must organize and mobilize communities to build broader partnerships in pursuit of the ideals of the reconstruction and development, nation-building and reconciliation.

Through this effort we must also, in theory and practice, reflect the participatory democracy we are building. All of society must take part in this national effort and, effective systems of interaction with all social partners must be established.

Intergovernmental co-operation on safety is being enhanced through, among others, a collective effort in the development as well as stronger cooperation with provinces in tackling this challenge. We are also now strengthening cooperation with our international and regional counterparts to address this global challenge, wherein drug trafficking routes are becoming more and more sophisticated.

Increase in cases of drunken driving

In 2010/11 driving under the influence of alcohol or drugs ratio increased by 4,5%. For the financial year 2011/12, the figure has increased by 2,9% and this is worrying, particularly as fatalities continue to be associated with drunken-driving.

It is against this disturbing background that we welcomed the National Prosecuting Authority's decision to charge people with murder instead of culpable homicide when death has resulted from car accidents. We hope that this decision will ensure social responsibility among motorists.

Increase in theft out of/from motor vehicle

During the 2011/12 financial year, we witnessed an increase of 4,8% increase in theft out of or from motor vehicles.

Our research confirms that the use of remote control devices to prevent the automatic locking of doors, which has now become the second most frequently used modus operandi employed to commit theft out of/from motor vehicles, may have led to this increase.

Conclusion:

The progress we have made, as reflected in the 2011/12 crime statistics, the victories we continue to score are reflective of the vision of the South African citizens' commitment and determination to the cause of peace and social progress.

We are not there yet, but with the participation of all sectors of society, we are turning the tide against crime. We must win the battle against crime, in whatever form it manifests itself. Crime affects all the people of our country across class, gender, religion and colour. It is our common enemy and collectively, we shall defeat this scourge. What this analogy translates to, is that all our policing actions and policies must be aligned to this fundamental goal.

In fighting crime, we must do more and talk less. Let us be inspired by one Jose' Marti, a Cuban revolutionary, poet and lawyer, who said, quote: 'Other famous men, those of much talk and few deeds, soon evaporate. Action is the dignity of greatness. Like stones rolling down hills, fair ideas reach their objectives despite all obstacles and barriers. It may be possible to speed or to hinder them, but impossible to stop them.'

Accordingly, the struggle for a reduction in crime in our country has also become a struggle for the restoration of the dignity of all citizenry, in their homes, in the workplaces and in their recreational areas.

The struggle to reclaim our streets from criminals, who seek to instill fear and compromise the safety of citizens, must be intensified. This struggle must become the epitome of the pragmatic programme to ensure that all South Africans are and feel safe.

‘Stats don’t help fight corruption’

September 20 2012 at 05:14pm
By SAPA

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Cape Town - The 2011/12 crime statistics released on Thursday do not assist in the fight against corruption, Corruption Watch said.

They did not provide the information necessary to beef up the battle against corruption, Corruption Watch executive director David Lewis said.

It appeared that the crime statistics categorised much of the reporting of corruption as common fraud.

“However, it is essential to isolate those reports of white collar crime which are, in fact, corruption.”

Whenever a case of fraud involved the abuse of public resources it should be logged as a case of corruption.

“Hopefully, this will ultimately lead to an increase in prosecutions under the Prevention and Combating of Corruption Activities Act (PRECCA) which generally carries significantly more severe penalties than do most common law white collar crimes.

“Clearly, correctly identifying corruption in the statistics will better enable the public, the policy makers and the law enforcement authorities to combat it,” he said.

It would reveal patterns and hotspots of corruption, the extent to which corruption was reported, and enable the public to assess the relative success or failure of the law enforcement authorities in dealing with corruption.

Despite clear evidence of significant and growing levels of corruption, the volume of reports and prosecutions for contraventions of the Act remained low.

“What is particularly disturbing is the failure to enforce Section 34 of the PRECCA. This is the provision in the Act that obliges those in positions of authority to report knowledge or suspicion of corrupt activities to the police.”

Given what was known about the scale of corruption, it was clear there were many people in positions of power, whether in the business or public sector, who were not doing their legal duty by reporting corruption.

“This may be because they are complicit in corruption or because they are willing to sweep dirt under the carpet. Those in positions of authority who ignore their legally binding duty to report corruption should face the full wrath of the law,” Lewis said. - Sapa

SAPS commended for crime drop

September 20 2012 at 06:24pm
By SAPA

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Independent Newspapers

Cape Town - Parliament's police portfolio committee has lauded the SA Police Service (SAPS) for “bringing down the crime rate in South Africa”.

This followed the release of the 2011/12 crime statistics by Police Minister Nathi Mthethwa on Thursday.

According to the latest statistics, the murder rate had dropped by 3.1 percent.

The committee said in a statement the figures demonstrated that the hard work in the fight against crime by police was paying off.

It was commendable that the SAPS was improving every year, as this showed that government was getting value for its money.

However, the committee was concerned that sexual crimes had not significantly dropped, with only a 1.9 percent drop in the rape rate. - Sapa