

## **Safety and Security in South Africa 1999 - 2000**

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### **1 Introduction**

When studying the nature and scope of services provided by the Policing Services in South Africa in terms of the Draft White Paper on Safety and Security as well as the *Policing priorities and objectives for 1997/98*, we can conclude that there is general consensus on the primary objectives of the SAPS and other policing services, namely to maintain order and to protect lives and possessions

Authors such as Sheehan and Cordner (1988 : 16) identify six additional secondary objectives of policing services in general in order to realize the primary objectives:

- crime prevention
- arrest and prosecution of offenders
- recovery of stolen and lost property
- assisting the sick and injured
- enforcing non criminal regulations
- providing services which are not available elsewhere in the community

### **2 Constitutional Provisions Relating to Protection Services at Provincial level**

The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa 1996, schedule 5, part A list the following functional areas of concurrent national and provincial legislative authority:

- public transport
- police to the extent that the provisions of chapter 11 of the Constitution confer legislative authority or competence upon the provincial legislatures
- disaster management
- regulating road traffic

The summation of the Draft White Paper on Safety and Security (1998:6) determines that the provincial governments will be responsible for monitoring the efficiency of the provision of police services in a single line of command, control and communication. Moreover, in order to ensure effective crime prevention at provincial level, provinces should assume responsibility for

- initiating and coordinating social prevention programs
- mobilizing resources for social crime prevention programs
- coordinating a number of provincial functions and role players, such as education, health and local government in order to improve crime prevention
- evaluating and supporting crime prevention programs at local government level aimed at the rural poor and residents of peri-urban settlements
- implementing and assuming joint responsibility for social crime prevention programs in areas where the local government either lacks the resources or the capacity to undertake the task (Uys 1998 : 64-73)

### **3 Protection Services at Local Government Level**

Local governments have a unique role to play in preventing and combating crime in South Africa. The place and role of local government is to participate **actively** in the social crime prevention initiatives, to develop projects aimed at potential victims such as the elderly and at potential offenders, and to adapt the provision of services in order to facilitate crime prevention. Cities and towns are also encouraged by national government to prepare strategies for crime prevention.

There have been reports of coordinated crime prevention operations between the SAPS and local governments which resulted in great success stories. Project Kwano in Pretoria and "Vrugteslaai" in Kempton Park are good examples of this type of combined crime prevention activities which enhance the safety and security of residents.

During conversations with SAPS members and local authority security officials at grass roots level it seemed that combined crime prevention operations between the various statal and parastatal policing agencies are fortunately very healthy. General cooperation between these agencies also seems to be on the increase which result in an improvement in relationships and ultimately in the prevention of crime.

POSV Executive Members are urged to pay special attention to the continuation of these combined crime prevention programs as well as cooperation with other policing agencies in general. The escalation in the crime rate necessitates this type of continued cooperation.

The diagram below illustrates the relationship between local government, community police forums and the SAPS.

### **4 The Role of NGO's in Providing Protection Services at Local Government level**

Interactions between NGO's and government institutions means that the different parties will communicate

with one another in different ways. The aims of such communications may include the following:

- to convey points of view on specific areas of contention
- to inform the government of a particular need or fear
- to request or even demand that the government take a specific stand on controversial issues that are considered important
- to reach consensus or a compromise on certain controversial issues (Uys 1998 : 83).

Channels for interaction should be established by POSV for NGO's to communicate their views. One cannot simply assume that government will be aware of the needs and fears of people in a country. This can result in instability, which is not good for the level of crime as well as the policing of the country. I am of the opinion that POSV can play an important role and make a valuable contribution in this regard.

## **5 Utilization of Technology and Resources**

Financial shortages due to a cut in police budgets result in the inability of statal as well as parastatal policing agencies to perform their duties efficiently and effectively. Personnel and resource shortages are usually the end result of this.

Policing agencies are for this reason compelled to make use of a criss-cross utilization of technology and resources. During a conversation with senior members of their Pretoria Local Authority Safety and Security Department, it became evident that Local Governments, in conjunction with the SAPS, are looking at the possibility of installing a closed circuit TV systems in the Pretoria CBD. A task team is in the process of investigating the viability of such a system.

Close cooperation with the SAPS in this regard can for instance be beneficial to both the Local Government Security Officers, Traffic Officers, the SAPS and other institutions involved in crime prevention. The shearing of training facilities is another venue to be pursued.

## **6 Report: Truth and Reconciliation Committee**

The various reports of the Truth and Reconciliation Committee was studied and nothing specific was found to be of specific interest to POSV. Because of the fact that the issue was raised during a Executive meeting the question could be asked whether POSV as an organization or the members in their private or official capacity were involved in situations which could be of interest to the Truth and Reconciliation Committee. If that is the case, POSV must communicate the facts to the Executive Committee in order to enable them to decide on a plan of action.

Because the activities of the said Committee were not terminated yet, POSV must propagate and communicate a healthy, humane and fair operational ethics to its members to safeguard the organization and its members in future from any investigation by the Truth and Reconciliation Committee.

## **7 Strategy on Crime Fighting for 2000**

If the Finance Minister Trevor Manuel's budget speech is analyzed carefully, it becomes clear and surprising that the Police Service's budget for the forthcoming year had decreased in real terms. According Security Focus (March 2000 : 6) the ISS mentioned the fact that "The budget does, however, allocate R150 million to the Scorpions unit based in the Department of Justice". This will enhance the State's ability to investigate and prosecute priority crimes. The unit is, however, unlikely to take a lot of pressure off the SAPS, which will continue to be responsible for investigating and preventing the vast majority of crimes.

Over the last nine budget years, spending on the criminal justice system has outpaced the inflation rate. According to the ISS (in Security Focus, March 2000) spending on the Police, Justice and Prison Departments increased from R4,3 billion in 1999/1991 to R23,5 billion in the 1999/2000 budget year, an increase of 450 percent. Over the same period the inflation rate increased by 159 percent.

As crime is too complicated a phenomena to be directly influenced by the State's expenditure on the war against crime. In his opening of parliament speech the president Thabo Mbeki, called for the creation of a humane society where peace, security and dignity will replace crime, fraud, corruption, flagrant abuse of human rights and lawlessness. Shortly thereafter safety and security minister Steve Tshwete announced the Justice, Crime Prevention and Security Cluster of ministries' priorities for the year. The priorities will ensure the cluster's contribution towards the president's vision (Schönteich in Nedbank ISS Crime Index No.1 : 7).

The question arises: "What is the role of Local Governments and private security in this war against crime?" In an attempt to answer this pertinent question, lets have a brief look at the incidence of crime in our country.

## **8 Criminal Justice Monitor**

The Criminal Justice Monitor of the ISS tracks selected indicators of crime and the performance of the criminal justice system on a bi-annual basis. The Monitor relies on the latest available statistics as supplied by official sources (Nedbank ISS Crime Index No.1 : 1 - 5)

### **8.1 Changing crime levels**

- Between 1994 and 1999 crime generally increased by 15%. During this same period, the country's population increased by 11%. Several serious crimes increased at a faster rate than the average between 1994 and 1999

such as rape, car hijacking, serious assault, housebreaking and common robbery.

- Statistics for 1999 indicate that crime levels, measured from one year to the next, are increasing at a faster rate than any other time since 1994. Between 1995 and 1996 crime increased by 0.3%. Since then, the year-on-year increase has been 1.1% (1997-1998), reaching a high of 7% (1998-1999).
- One third of all recorded crimes are violent (including murder, attempted murder, robbery, assault and rape). At 32.5%, the number of violent crimes, as a proportion of all reported crimes in 1999, remained constant compared to previous years.
- Murder is the only serious crime that has shown a clear decrease since 1994. The number of murders decreased by 11% between 1994 and 1999. As a ratio of the population, the number of murders decreased from 69.3 per 100 000 people in 1994 to 55.3 per 100 000 in 1999.
- The only serious property crime to show a steady increase since 1994 is burglary of residential premises.
- Robbery with aggravating circumstances (which includes car hijacking) has increased since 1996. Car hijacking constitute about 16% of this category of robbery, and the increase in hijacking from 12 860 incidents in 1996 to 15 457 in 1999 no doubt contributes to the increase in robbery with aggravating circumstances generally.

## **8.2 How safe the public feel**

Compared to 1998 slightly more (1%) South Africans "felt safe or very safe on most days" in 1999. The number of South Africans feeling "unsafe or very unsafe" decreased slightly from 49% in 1998 to 47% in 1999.

## **8.3 The South African Police Service**

- Some 1325 police officers were murdered between January 1994 and June 1999. Of these 468 were murdered while on duty, and the remainder (857) while off duty.
- Most police officers were murdered in Gauteng (514), followed by KwaZulu-Natal (369).

## **8.4 The private security industry**

- The number of active security officers registered with the Security Officer's Interim Board increased from just over 115 000 in September 1997 to 163 545 in January 2000. An increase of almost 42% in just over two years.

- Over a similar period the number of uniformed members of the SAPS decreased from 98 300 to about 89 500 - a decrease of 9%.

- The number of active security service providers registered with the Security Officer's Interim Board increased from 4 437 in September 1997 to 4 856 in January 2000 - an increase of 9.5 %.

### **8.5 Prisons**

- Between January 1995 and December 1999 some 4 367 prisoners escaped from South Africa's prisons.

- The number of yearly escapees has been decreasing since 1996. In 1995 some 1 177 prisoners escaped, 1996 (1 244), 1997 (989), 1998 (498), and 1999 (459).

- South Africa's 236 prisons (of which four are under renovation and therefore only partly occupied) have been built to accommodate 99 300 inmates, but in December 1999 were holding 165 970.

- Between June 1994 and December 1999 the number of sentenced prisoners increased by 31%. The number of awaiting trial prisoners increased by 215%.

- Between June and December 1999 the number of awaiting trial prisoners as a proportion of total prisoner numbers increased from 35% to 37%.

## **9 Government's Strategy on Crime Fighting for 2000**

The main objective of the cluster, referred to in the Introduction, which comprise of the ministries of safety and security, justice and constitutional development, correctional services, home affairs, and defense, is to focus its endeavors and resources jointly in addressing the incidence of crime, public disorder, inefficiencies in the justice system and all those aspects of our society that have the most negative effects on development. To achieve this objective the cluster identified the following strategic interventions:

### **9.1 Social crime prevention**

Policy makers within the cluster have come to the conclusion that the fight against crime can be won only if the issue of endemic poverty is tackled. In line with this the government has adopted an Urban Renewal Program, which is a multi-faceted approach to dealing with problems in high density poverty ridden urban areas.

The cluster has launched a number of pilot projects in high density crime areas around the country. These

projects include such disparate activities as: crime awareness poster campaigns; safer school campaigns where reservists, neighborhood watch members and teachers form school patrol units; and missing persons projects which concentrate on finding abducted and missing children through coordinated campaigns between the police service, its reservists, community organizations and the media. All the pilot projects are supported by a high visibility police presence, frequent police patrols, and intelligence driven cordon and search operations.

It is interesting, but also strange to notice that this strategy exclude or negate the role and contribution of local governments security and also private security. It refers *obiter dictum* or casually to campaigns between the police service and community organizations. Whether private security is by implication included in the concept "community organizations" is a debatable question.

It could be accepted and anticipated that local governments, as a third level of government, will form part of this strategy of social upliftment of poor communities in order to combat crime. The question can however be asked: Are they really part of this strategy, and if so, how effective are they?

## **9.2 Prosecution led and intelligence driven investigations**

The Scorpions will further the cluster's objective to increase national conviction rates through prosecution led investigations. The Scorpions will focus its activities on crimes such as vehicle hijacking, syndicate drug and arms dealing, transnational crimes, money laundering, and corruption within the criminal justice system. The unit is, however, unlikely to take a lot of pressure off the SAPS, which will continue to be responsible for investigating and preventing the vast majority of crimes, as mentioned in the introduction.

Again, this strategy ignores the valuable contribution of the corporate crime investigator in the parastatal, local governmental and private institutions. These crime investigative contributions do alleviate the work load of the SAPS and contribute greatly to the total criminal justice process. Contributions in this regard should be brought to the attention of the cluster and be recognized by government.

The cluster will also seek to improve methods of intelligence gathering and closer cooperation between the National Intelligence Agency (NIA), the police service, the Scorpions, and the customs and immigration service. This is expected to contribute towards improved criminal investigations which should impact positively on the quality of prosecutions. Again the contribution of local governments, corporate crime investigations, forensic auditors, Correctional Services, the department of social welfare and private security is ignored (The pillars of the National Crime Prevention Strategy should form the basis of an integrated crime intelligence strategy).

To ensure a more effective intelligence capacity, one of the cluster's priorities for this year is to consolidate

the state's signal intelligence capacity. To accomplish this the intelligence ministry will spearhead the setting up of a national communication center during the year.

Local government, parastatal and private security industry should ensure that they form part of this national intelligence strategy and have access to the envisaged communication center.

### ***9.3 More effective border control***

Porous borders hamper internal crime prevention. The cluster announced the creation of a national coordinated strategy to bolster its efforts to combat cross border crimes. These include the smuggling of drugs, illegal firearms and other contraband goods, the exporting of hijacked vehicles, and the smuggling of illegal immigrants.

Illegal immigrants constitute greatly to the squatter and over population of poor people problem encountered and policed by local government security units on a daily basis. Close cooperation and liaison between local governments and the cluster is for this reason of utmost importance.

### ***9.4 Alternative containment and diversion***

It is evident from the statistic provided by the Criminal Justice Monitor, discussed on p.4 of this report that the South African prisons are over-populated. To alleviate this problem, the cluster is looking at ways of creating diversion programs to avoid sending persons convicted to prison.

To address the problem of over-crowding the department of correctional services intends introducing an electronic monitoring system whereby convicted prisoners can be released and placed under community corrections. This project will reduce delays in the finalisation of cases, reduce the number of awaiting trial prisoners (see statistics on p.4), and increase the number of court hours.

### ***9.5 Human resource development***

The government has earmarked the year 2000 as the year of accelerated human resource development within the public service. The most intensive training program within the cluster is that of the department of justice which has made it compulsory for all prosecutors to undergo training. A diploma course for court interpreters has been designed, and a Judicial Education program caters for the re-training of judges and magistrates.

### ***9.6 Quality service delivery***

To improve the coordination between all **security departments**, the cluster has set up a steering committee

of directors general to ensure coordinated planning and service delivery.

Improved service delivery is to be attained in the following manner:

- Upgrading of courts, including infrastructure in previously disadvantaged areas.
- The improvement of victim support services through the provision of witness waiting rooms, and rooms for child witnesses to give evidence by means of closed circuit television.
- Extensive computerization programs in the police service and the department of correctional services. R54 million has been allocated to upgrade information technology within the criminal justice system, and to link the systems of the police service and those of the justice department.

These questions could be asked: (1) What about a system linkage with correctional services as they also form part of the criminal justice system?

(2) Will this criminal justice information system be linked to the national communication center referred to in par.3.2?

### **9.7 *Private security partnership***

The departments of the cluster intend establishing and expanding partnerships with the private sector. For example, partnerships with private sector institutions such as banks are assisting the state with its border control functions, and the combating of commercial crime. The department of correctional services has awarded 25 year concession contracts to private sector consortia to design, construct and operate private prisons.

Again, no mention is made of establishing any partnership with private sector security organizations in order to combat and control crime in South Africa and alleviate the burden and enhance the efficiency of the SAPS.

## **10 Summary**

The "strategic interventions" identified by the departments comprising the criminal justice system - to contribute towards the president's vision of creating a safer society - have merit. They will, however, succeed only if they are implemented without delay. Many good policies plans adopted by the criminal justice system departments in the past have floundered because of a lack of commitment to implement them (Schönteich in Nedbank ISS Crime Index No.1 : 19).

No more true a word was ever spoken. The implementation of the National Crime Prevention Strategy (NCPS) is a good example of a well planned strategy which lacked a commitment to implementation

It is clear from the government's strategy on crime fighting for 2000 that local governments and especially local government security (although not mentioned explicitly) has got an important role to play in the upliftment of communities in general and the combating of crime in particular. Their contribution can only flourish if there is the commitment to get involved.

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