

MEDIA RELEASE	Crime crisis: PSA calls for end of deployment of civilians and politicians into Police
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The Public Servants Association (PSA) is alarmed about exploding crime statistics as recently announced by the Minister of Police. This includes reports that the double-figure increase in most crime categories was informed by the adjusted lockdown levels and distorted crime trends.

The PSA, representing thousands of SA Police Service (SAPS) employees, pointed out that comparing previous data with current environmental circumstances will not assist in combating rising criminal activities. Statistics show an increase of 60.6% in crimes such as murder, attempted murder, sexual offences, and all other categories of assault. Aggravated robberies increased by 92.2% when considering April to June 2020 statistics. Overall statistics indicate that crime has increased by 72.4%. Within three months, 5 760 citizens were murdered. justice and gang activities. Rape increased to 10 006 incidents, 181 farm attacks were reported, common assault and grievous bodily harm amounted to 76 936 reported cases, whilst domestic violence related cases totalled 15 000.

Crime is clearly out of control and the PSA is disturbed that the SAPS seems to lack capacity to deal with crime owing to limited resources available to officers, including insufficient vehicles, and the fact that there were some 60 000 police reservists in 2010, whilst in 2019 there were only 8 000. During the 2021/22-financial year, it is envisaged to fill some 3 000 SAPS vacancies with new police officers. Some 2 000 *Public Service Act* personnel and 1 000 reservists will be considered for recruitment as fully fledged police officials. This envisaged capacitating will, however, not be sufficient when considering the service-delivery needs. SAPS should recognise the challenges, including the country's socio-economics, when assessing the crime crisis. In the first quarter of 2021/22, 32 SAPS members were killed in the line of duty. COVID-19 has to date claimed the lives of 821 police officers and infected 38 000.

Policing and the combat of crime in South Africa is one of the most difficult tasks. The country struggles with the highest rates of violent crime, robbery, carjacking, and rape. These crimes are rooted in social norms, inequality and the uncontrolled movement of people and goods across borders. Ineffective border control has made South Africa a haven for the criminal market of stolen goods and property as manifested by the trafficking of stolen goods leaving the country.

The political deployment of civilians and politicians in SAPS has paralysed the force over years and is preventing it from carrying out its basic mandate of policing. SAPS has after 15 years of appointing national commissioners from the ranks of civilians and politicians, only in November 2017 appointed a career police officer, Khehla Sithole. The PSA advises that career police officers be considered for appointment into positions of authority based on hands-on experience of police work as other appointments have derailed crime fighting strategies and efforts by experienced career police officers at great expense of the country and its citizens.

The PSA calls for a united approach from all stakeholders, including education, the safety and security sector, SARS, social development, National Intelligence, the Department of Home Affairs, and the private sector for a strong, determined and consolidated approach against crime at all levels of society to bring about a state of law and order that will restore the confidence of citizens and investors alike.

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