

## **MEC Pat Ngomane's remarks during the media briefing on the Provincial Crime Statistics on 30 October 2017.**

**30 October 2017**

**Head of the Department of Community Safety, Security and Liaison Mr William Mthombothi, Provincial Commissioner, Lieutenant General Mondli Zuma, Community Police Forum Board Chairperson, Mr Kevin Pillay, Department of Community Safety, Security and Liaison and SAPS Management, Leadership of the SANDF led by Lt Colonel KH Masina, Officials from other State Departments such as Home Affairs, SSA and SARS, Members of the media.**

**Greetings to you all.**

Virtually, this gathering is not about crime statistics, but accountability in relation to the people who were murdered, robbed and raped among others. This is what matters the most as ordinary people are directly affected during the planning and committing of criminal activities in the province.

In his own words, Police Minister Fikile Mbalula said: "We must not see these statistics just as pure numbers, behind the numbers are real feelings, real lives, real hurt, real harm, real losses, deaths, feelings of unsafety. These statistics represent the memory of that gruesome rape or murder, the fearful home invasion and loss of property."

We fully concur with the Minister's sentiments as these are not just numbers but the reality of much untold suffering that many families and individuals have gone through. This, ladies and gentlemen, we must all work together and stop pointing fingers as we interrogate these figures.

Although the crime statistics for the period 2007/2008 to 2016/2017 indicate a downward trend, it still remain a concern that during the financial year 2016/2017, the statistics indicated an increase of about 1,4 % of crimes reported.

Crime can only be won when we all work together, side by side with our communities and our security agencies.

Although some categories have shown a decline in terms of numbers and percentages, the numbers remain fairly high. It means we still have a long way to go.

Ladies and gentlemen, these numbers, while they are somewhat scary, they all mean that police are doing their work and also community members are reporting crime. Communities can only report crime if they believe that the police have a capacity to solve these crime cases.

Therefore in our own analysis, we should not always be tempted to say police are not doing their work. Most of the crimes occur behind closed doors when police are not there particularly sexual offences cases. It is usually between two people who know each other. Therefore, let us appreciate the work that SAPS and other law enforcement agencies are doing.

## **Contact Crimes**

Seven categories of serious crimes are grouped together as contact crimes, which include murder, attempted murder, sexual offences, assault with an intention to cause grievous bodily harm (GBH), assault common, aggravated robbery and common robbery.

Contact crime in general has gone up by 2% for the period under review as the province has recorded 33 381 incidences of contact crimes. Of a huge concern ladies and gentlemen, is that the province has recorded an increase in murder cases by 11.1% as 954 cases of murder were reported across the province for the period under review.

On the other hand attempted murder and robbery aggravated went up by 19.3% and 11.8% respectively. Sexual offences and Assault GBH went down by 3.5 and 4, 1 % in that order.

Most of these crimes happen during weekends around midnight. Illegal mining has also played a significant role towards the escalating rates of contact crimes.

It is in this context that we are urging SAPS Management in the province to enhance police visibility in affected areas.

Another issue that seem to play a hand in cases of murder and attempted murder is instances of rhino poachers who become killed in and around of Skukuza when in confrontation with law enforcement official.

### **Crimes dependent on police action**

Crime detected as a result of police action is usually not reported to the police and it is usually as a result of deployment of law enforcement and employment of intelligence officer.

Such crime is usually recorded after the apprehension of suspects in connection with the illegal possession of firearms and ammunition, drug-related crimes, driving under the influence of alcohol and/or drugs and sexual offences detected as a result of police operations.

Illegal possession of firearms and drug related crimes have increased. Driving under the influence of alcohol or drugs cases have also increased by 15, 2 % and sexual offences detected as a result of police action have also increased. On the other hand, sexual offences detected as a result of police action incidences have decreased by 55.9% compared to the same period last year.

### **Trio Crime**

We have also noted that trio crimes such as car and truck jacking, house robberies and business robberies have contributed immensely to increased incidences of contact crimes. People get killed and others assaulted when these crimes are taking place.

With regards to business robberies, through awareness campaigns led by the department, we always encourage business people not to keep their money in the business premises as it attracts criminals.

Most of these shops are owned by people coming from other countries, and it is about time we do something as government as these crimes contribute negatively on the provincial statistics.

Recently, there has been a surge in cash-in-transit robberies in the province and we believe that the security companies will work together with the SAPS to prevent these robberies and arrest the perpetrators.

As part of supporting SAPS' crime prevention initiatives, the department continues to implement awareness campaigns aimed at enhancing Rural Safety, Border Security and eradicating Gender Based Violence among others.

We continue to prioritize crimes relating to gender abuse and we would like to welcome the establishment of the Sexual Offences Courts by the Department of Justice. We believe and hope that more perpetrators will be brought to book and eventually these offences will be eradicated.

As we are about to launch the 16 Days of Activism Against Women and Children Abuse campaign, we continue to encourage all victims to report any form of abuse to the police. We strongly condemn the abuse and killing of women and children in the province.

With regards to Border Security, the department together with SAPS, SANDF, Nkomazi Municipality and the CPF have recently launched a project on the borderline that will assist in curbing the stealing of vehicles which are moved illegally through the borderline to Mozambique.

The project includes putting up barriers that will make it difficult for vehicles to be moved to the other side of the border. Since the implementation of the project, there is a number of vehicles that were recovered at the borderline by the SANDF.

During the financial year under review, the SANDF in Mpumalanga under the leadership of Lt Colonel Van Staden recovered stolen vehicles to the value of over R14,6 million.

You will remember that vehicles are being stolen or hi-jacked from other parts of the country including our province, Nkomazi in particular and taken through the borderline to Mozambique.

Illegal goods, including cigarettes, cosmetics, alcohol and clothing to the value of over R27,4 million were confiscated along the borderline.

While conducting patrols, SANDF members arrested 4394 undocumented people and 113 other crime suspects. The undocumented people include Mozambicans, Swazis and Pakistanis among others.

Substantial amount of dagga and rhino horns were also recovered along the border line.

These successes among others are an indication that there are still good and brave men and women within the law enforcement fraternity who are committed to stop trans-national crime.

Ladies and gentlemen, it must be emphasized that the fight against crime remains not only the responsibility of government but community members as well; hence we will continue with various programmes that encourages community participation in the fight against crime.

The public is also encouraged to work together with their Community Policing Forums (CPF's) so that they together develop strategies to prevent crime that occurs in their area. If we commit ourselves to report criminal activities, we will be able to effectively reduce crime in all the categories.

Our gratitude goes to the CPF leadership under Mr. Kevin Pillay and members across the province, the business sector and other civic associations who are partnering with the department in the fight against crime.

Ladies and gentlemen, for in depth crime trends and information in the province, I will allow the Provincial Commissioner, Lieutenant General Mondli Zuma to give us his presentation.

I thank you.