



## MINISTRY OF POLICE

### **SPEECH BY THE MINISTER OF POLICE, MR FIROZ CACHALIA, AT THE RELEASE OF THE FOURTH QUARTER CRIME STATISTICS, 22 MAY 2026, PRETORIA**

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Deputy Minister of Police, Mr Cassel Mathale,  
Deputy Minister of Justice and Constitutional Development, Mr Andries Nel,  
Deputy Minister of Social Development, Mr Ganief Hendricks,  
Acting National Commissioner of the South African Police Service, Lt. General Puleng Dimpane,  
Acting Head of the DPCI, Lt General Nkosi,  
Deputy National Commissioners present,  
Provincial Commissioner of KZN, Lt General Mkhwanazi,  
Representatives from the Civilian Secretariat for Police Service, IPID, Statistics SA and PSiRA,  
Major General Thulare Sekhukhune, the SAPS Crime Registrar,  
Members of the media,  
Ladies and gentlemen,  
Good day to you all.

We meet today to release the official crime statistics for the fourth quarter of the 2025/2026 financial year, covering the period 1 January to 31 March 2026.

The figures that will be presented today are not just numbers. They are a stark mirror held up to our society. Behind every statistic is a traumatised victim, a distraught family, a community living in fear.

I want to take this opportunity to extend our deepest sympathies to the Molosankwe family, following the murder of North West Province anti-crime activist and traditional healer, Thato Molosankwe. We are saddened to have lost an individual who was committed to fighting crime and corruption, while also working to strengthen relations between local communities and the police. Maximum resources have been deployed to solve this heinous crime. Regrettably, too many people who stand up to crime and corruption, including councillors, professionals like auditors and lawyers are targeted for doing the right thing. Strengthening the regime of whistleblower protection must therefore be a priority. The Cabinet has approved the Protected Disclosure Bill for public comment. This is an extremely important initiative which Deputy Minister Andries Nel will speak to.

Since my appointment as Minister of Police, I have visited various communities affected by crime in different parts of the country. I have met and spoken with many people from communities bearing the brunt of crime. I am deeply aware of how terribly crime impacts on people's lives, families and communities.

These statistics give us a clearer sense of the scale of the challenge, where it is happening, the factors driving crime and violence and the trends at national, provincial and local level.

The crime statistics are compiled by the SAPS Crime Registrar in line with international standards for official statistics. They draw on the crime reported at each of the 1 175 police stations across the country and have been independently assessed and accredited as official statistics.

They are also population-adjusted, using Statistics South Africa's mid-year estimates, so that we can better assess the risk of certain crimes in each province.

These figures tell a complex story: one of progress that is real and measurable, but also that we continue to be challenged by deep-rooted violence and organised criminality that threaten our people and our democracy.

While we must not sugar-coat the reality, neither must we ignore the gains that hard-working police officers and communities have made together. I'll now highlight the key trends.

### **1. Nationally, serious crime is down, but still at an unacceptably high level**

Violent crimes, referred to by the police as "contact crimes" as there is direct contact between the perpetrator and victim – has declined by 4,6%. That means 7 405 fewer cases of violent crimes were reported compared to the same quarter last year. This trend started in 2024, with violent crime having dropped by 10,2% since then resulting in 17 440 fewer cases reported compared to this latest quarter.

Most strikingly, murder has decreased nationally by 9.5%. In the same quarter of last year, 5 727 people were murdered. That number has come

down to 5 181. That means 546 fewer lives lost, and fewer grieving families and friends. Compared to the same quarter in 2024, there were 1 355 fewer murders or a 20,7% decrease. As this is our most reliable crime statistic, we pay particularly close attention to the data and information on murders.

It is also heartening to see double digit decreases in the serious armed robberies that make up the trio crimes. There has been a 20,4% reduction in house robberies, 18,3% in business robberies and 22% reduction in the robberies of non-residential premises compared to the same period last year.

I also welcome the slight 2% decrease in kidnappings given the substantial increases in this crime category since 2021/22.

Property-related crimes such as burglary, theft of and from motor vehicles and stock theft dropped by 8,5%. Other serious crimes – including general theft and shoplifting – declined by 4,2%.

While we need detailed studies to help us better understand the factors behind these declines, in my view, the work of our police officers and communities have played a significant role.

But I must also be clear: the levels of violence and criminality in South Africa remain far too high. A decrease in crime is not the same as achieving safety. The levels of crime are still unacceptably high with 58 murders per day on average during this quarter.

Our goal is not just fewer crimes, but that communities are and feel safe everywhere.

## **2. Crime Patterns show substantial variations across the country**

The crime data also reveals notable provincial disparities and stubborn hotspots.

While Gauteng, the Western Cape, Eastern Cape and KwaZulu-Natal all recorded notable decreases in murders, these four provinces recorded over 80% of all murders in South Africa.

But the risk of being murdered differs vastly across the country. To establish the relative risk, we look at the murder ratio, that is the number of murders per 100 000 people nationally and in each province.

During this period, there were 8,2 murders per 100 000 people nationally. The Eastern Cape presents the highest risk with 14,3 murders per 100 000 people, followed by the Western Cape with 12.8 murders per 100 000 people and then KZN at 8,8.

While Gauteng records the highest numbers of murders, the risk of being murdered in that province is half that of the Eastern Cape, with 7,1 murders per 100 000 people. The remaining five provinces all have lower murder rates than Gauteng, with Limpopo holding the lowest rate of 2,9.

Specific police precincts continue to appear at the top of the rankings for the most serious crimes. Major-General Sekhukhune will present the 30

specific police precincts that record the highest numbers of various serious crime types. While violent crime showed a decrease in most of these police precincts, a third of them still recorded increases.

These high crime precincts are not just places on a map. They are communities where fear has become a daily companion, where women and children plan their lives around danger, and where honest residents often feel abandoned to gangs and guns.

### **3. Social Factors are behind much of our violence**

The statistics also reveal that the home, where we should be safest, is for too many of our people, a dangerous place. 1 523 murders occurred in the residences of the perpetrator or victim.

Nearly half of all rapes in this quarter, 47.2% took place at the home of the victim or the perpetrator. That is 4 620 out of 9 782 rapes, committed not in dark alleys by strangers, but in homes, by people known to the victim. Violence in South Africa is not only about strangers attacking strangers. It is about partners, relatives, neighbours, and acquaintances. It is driven by arguments, jealousy, road rage and other interpersonal conflict. In this quarter alone, 898 murders were triggered by arguments and misunderstandings, a further 251 motivated by retaliation, revenge or punishment and 299 murders resulted from vigilantism.

This is a sobering truth: if we want to reduce violent crime, we must confront the culture of violence inside the home, the mistaken idea that men must be violent to be respected or that women must put up with violence to be loved.

In fact, history has clearly taught us that violence is destructive, a weakness that must be overcome.

Alcohol remains a powerful accelerant of this violence. In this quarter, 7 267 incidents of assault with intent to cause grievous bodily harm, rape, attempted murder and murder were linked to alcohol use.

We must address the toxic role of alcohol abuse and violence. The more alcohol we consume, the more violence we will suffer. We need to understand this fact and start taking action to reduce alcohol consumption. I have asked Civilian Secretariat for Police to take a closer look at the regulations that provide licences to liquor outlets and their trading hours. We must also reflect on the dangerous belief that “mob justice”, will make us safe. Thousands of lives have been lost due to vigilantism in South Africa over the years, and we are still not safe.

Violence does not solve anything. It only leads to more violence.

#### **4. Organised Crime remains a key threat**

Crime generally, and organised crime in particular, is not evenly spread across the country. It is heavily concentrated in our economic hubs and in certain high-risk spaces.

Gauteng, the Western Cape, the Eastern Cape and KwaZulu-Natal continue to contribute the largest share of serious and organised crimes. Gauteng remains the epicentre of several forms of violent organised crime:

- It accounts for 57.1% of all carjackings in the country.
- 54.8% of all kidnappings.

- And 48.4% of all cash-in-transit robberies.

These are not opportunistic crimes. They are the work of organised criminal syndicates that are highly mobile, heavily armed, and deeply embedded in our economic centres. They hijack vehicles, extort businesses, and terrorise workers transporting the salaries and social grants that keep families alive.

Extortion is a particularly dangerous trend. Our data sample of 469 extortion cases paints a worrying picture. Protection rackets – including the so-called “construction mafia” – are spreading, especially in the Western Cape, which accounts for 57 out of 131 sampled protection racket cases.

These networks do not only steal money. They sabotage service delivery, collapse small businesses, and rob our people of jobs and opportunities. They bleed the state and drive away investment.

Of particular concern is the ongoing increase in commercial crimes. This crime category started increasing slowly a decade ago, but steep annual increases have been recorded since the advent of Covid19.

Much of this is organised crime who exploit vulnerable people and is increasingly happening online and in cyberspace. The increases are particularly concerning as a vast majority of this type of crime is not reported to the police.

As I have said before, much organised crime is not present in these crime statistics but emerges in the data contained in reports from the Auditor

General, Special Investigation Unit, the Financial Intelligence Centre and the South African Revenue Service.

While high-flying and well-dressed criminals amass wealth and are revered by those who benefit from their illegal activities – too many of our communities will continue to suffer from drugs, shootouts, infrastructure damage and corrupt government officials.

## **5. The Way Forward**

Our response to the criminality reflected in these statistics is as follows:

**First, we will rigorously implement our bold, police reset agenda.**

The national decreases in serious violent crimes such as murder, rape and aggravated robbery are not insignificant. But, the levels are still too high and we need to redouble our efforts, particularly in those precincts that continue to show increases. In too many communities and homes across the country, violence remains stubbornly high.

We know that policing can have a substantially positive impact on community safety. We also know that there are many tens of thousands of dedicated police officials working under difficult circumstances, often at personal sacrifice. But there is much more that the SAPS could do if we sort out its various challenges.

That is why I focused my Budget speech earlier this week, on the bold, police reset agenda that the Acting National Commissioner and I have fully committed to.

This multi-year strategy will aim to strengthen the fight against organised and violent crime by building a modern, professional and trusted police service that places the safety of our people first.

It foregrounds enhancing the professional and ethical conduct of our police members, overhauling our procurement and supply chain systems, while strengthening our intelligence and investigative capabilities. We will also be modernising our police stations and reinvigorating community policing across the country.

In her speech, Lt-General Dimpane will be providing more details of the police reset agenda.

Special attention will be given to bolstering the top 50 high crime stations while identifying and sharing good practices from any of our police stations that demonstrate promising results. We will also focus on reinvigorating community policing, as the police need to work with people at a local level to be effective.

As I mentioned earlier this week, we will be exploring the viability of implementing and funding a national and provincial community patroller programme. These will be trained and vetted community members deployed by the local SAPS to act as a visible deterrent in crime hotspots, particularly around and on routes to schools, clinics, shops and other areas that require additional safety measures. I can confirm that I have received a proposal on this programme from the Civilian Secretariat of Police.

I can announce today that I will be establishing a Police Advisory Panel with former SARS Commissioner Edward Kieswetter as the Chair and Dr

Zukiswa Mqolombo who is the Deputy Chair of the Public Service Commission will be the Deputy Chair of the panel. I will be announcing the other members in two weeks time. The role of this panel will be to advise myself and the Acting National Commissioner on the progress of the reset agenda, and on the recommendations of the Madlanga Commission.

I have decided not to wait until August for the final report from the Commission, because the areas that require systemic reform are already clear.

This panel is a precursor to the National Policing Board recommended by the National Development Plan and legislation to this effect is contained in the SAPS Amendment Bill which is yet to come before parliament. However, as this legislation will take time to be passed, I have decided to establish a similar structure now. This panel will provide us with valuable lessons about how the National Police Board could effectively function.

**Second, we will continue to strengthen our capability to tackle organised crime.**

That is why we are pursuing a new Organised Crime Strategy that has been thoroughly researched and reviewed by representatives from the public, private and civil society sectors.

As has been demonstrated internationally, and accepted here, we need as much collaboration across different sectors and agencies as possible to effectively tackle complex criminal networks.

We may all have different capabilities, mandates and resources. But together we can shift the risk from all of us, to those that seek personal wealth regardless of the cost to the society they live in.

Lt-General Nhlanhla Mkhwanazi, has been appointed to Chair the Priority Committee on Organised Crime at national level. This committee coordinate joint efforts across government departments and various sectors and as additional support to the police, the South African National Defence Force (SANDF) have also been deployed in key areas.

**Third, we will double our efforts at promoting the implementation of the Integrated Crime and Violence Prevention Strategy.**

As highlighted earlier, much of our violent crime is the result of interpersonal conflict, gender inequality, alcohol abuse, and a culture of resolving disputes through violence.

It is for this reason that we need to improve our focus on prevention through addressing the root causes and various social factors driving our crime levels. The police can do little to address these factors as are primarily responsible for enforcing the law and holding those who commit crime accountable.

The less crime there is, the better the police can focus on those who commit it. Effective crime prevention therefore requires enhanced support from all government departments and from community based, civil society and private sectors.

Already, there is a well-established network of violence prevention practitioners across all sectors that meet annually as part of the National

Violence Prevention Forum. They review and support the implementation of evidence-based interventions that measurably reduce violence.

Examples include targeted support to children, young people and families at risk, alcohol and drug use reduction programmes, violence prevention programmes for schools, workplaces and communities, to better urban design. If these initiatives are supported, strengthened and rolled out at scale, we will see even bigger reductions in crime and violence across our country.

## **6. Conclusion**

The release of the crime statistics is not just a quarterly ritual to enhance transparency. They are a resource to be used to enable collective action to promote safety and not for politicking.

I urge all government departments at national, provincial and local levels to interrogate these crime statistics. They are an important indicator of the crime risks that have to be addressed. By better understanding the trends, patterns and factors driving crime and violence in your provinces and communities, better crime prevention plans can be developed and implemented. This is not just an undertaking by government, people and organisations from the civil society and private sectors can play a significant and meaningful role.

To our police officers, these figures are proof that your work can make a difference. We must now build on this progress with better intelligence, stronger investigations, and uncompromising integrity.

In closing I want to address an issue that is unambiguous. SA is a country of laws and the police are expected to enforce these laws without fear of favour. Our laws allow legal and not illegal immigration, and our police must enforce these laws across the country and at our borders.

Our laws also include the right to protest, but do not permit vigilantism, criminality and chaos in public. The police have the responsibility to maintain public peace and will enforce the law to ensure that public order is maintained.

I can confirm that the Human Rights Commission has written to me about these protests, and I will be responding to them due course. I can also confirm that the government will be engaging with groups that are organising protest action on illegal immigration to explain our view on this matter.

To the people of South Africa, I see the fear you live with. I see the courage you show in reporting crime, testifying in court, and standing up to gangs. I hugely appreciate those people who participate in Community Policing Forums, join patroller groups and undertake local level crime and violence prevention initiatives. This includes those of you who provide skills training to young people in sport, music and culture to after school and on weekends. All these initiatives make a substantial difference.

These statistics provide us with guidance. Our task is to transform this decline in violent crime into a sustained, long-term reduction in violence and organised criminality across the country.

We will not rest until the right to safety, enshrined in our Constitution, is a lived reality in every home, every street, every school, every taxi rank, and every village in this country.

I thank you.