SPEAKER NOTES: NATIONAL COMMISSIONER OF THE SOUTH AFRICAN POLICE SERVICE (SAPS)

Minister and Deputy Ministers, we welcome the decrease in murder, sexual offences, contact crime and the overall reduction in 17 community-reported crime categories.

These reductions are encouraging and demonstrate that our collective efforts to prevent and combat crime are beginning to yield positive results. However, we are not complacent. We recognise that behind every crime statistic is a victim, a family and a community whose lives have been affected by crime.

With this said, our Safer Festive Season Operations are in full swing, with intelligence-driven interventions and targeted operations taking place across the country.

The latest operational results are a clear demonstration of our commitment to intensifying the fight against crime.

RECENT SUCCESSES IN LAST 72 HOURS

Ladies and gentlemen,

In the last 72 hours, police have dealt decisively with organised criminal networks, particularly in the areas where these criminal activities are most prevalent.

Allow me to highlight some of these successes.

DRUG LABORATORY DISMANTLED IN KWAZULU-NATAL

In Kranskop KwaZulu-Natal, police dismantled a drug manufacturing laboratory with an estimated value of R100 million. Large quantities of Mandrax tablets were seized and one suspect has been arrested.

This is about the 15th Major multimillion rand drug lab to be dismantled in 12 months in various provinces such as Gauteng, KZN, North West, and Limpopo with more than 60 suspects arrested thus far including South Africans, Mexican nationals and other nationalities. The total worth of these major drug labs goes up to more than R2.4 Billion.

These operation are dealing a significant blow to drug manufacturing and distribution networks.

We are intensifying our operations at small holdings and farms where these drug dealers think they can hide!

In the same reporting period, its also commendable to add that

- ✓ 3 752 suspected drug dealers were arrested as well as 31 424 suspects arrested for possession of drugs.

Our message to drug traffickers is clear: we will pursue you, dismantle your operations and bring you before the courts.

CASH-IN-TRANSIT ROBBERY ARRESTS IN THE FREE STATE

In the Free State, seven suspects were arrested shortly after allegedly committing a cash-in-transit robbery in Navalsig, Bloemfontein.

Police recovered the stolen money, five vehicles, four AK-47 rifles, one R5 rifle and 648 rounds of ammunition.

This is a significant breakthrough that has taken dangerous criminals and high-calibre firearms off our streets.

CASH-IN-TRANSIT ROBBERIES

Minister, we note the increase in cash-in-transit robberies during the reporting period. This remains a serious concern, given the levels of violence and the use of high-calibre firearms associated with these crimes.

However, SAPS continues to make progress in pursuing and dismantling the criminal networks behind these robberies.

With intensified intelligence driven interventions, from 1 July 2026 to date, 55 most wanted suspects have been arrested in connection with cash-in-transit robberies across the country and during confrontations with police, six of these wanted CIT suspects were shot and killed.

At these crime scenes, police also recovered 33 illegal firearms and nine vehicles linked to these criminal activities.

These operations demonstrate that we are actively pursuing those responsible for these robberies. We will continue to target these syndicates, recovering illegal firearms and ensuring that those involved are brought to justice.

ARREST LINKED TO THE MURDER OF AN MK PARTY REGIONAL COORDINATOR

We have also witnessed the arrest of a 44-year-old suspect who is linked to the murder of Lastborn Thobelani Shazi, an MK Party Ugu Regional Organiser and Ward 18 Umzumbe ward councillor candidate.

Shazi was fatally shot at his residence on 2 November 2026, just two days before the Local Government Elections, while participating in a virtual political party meeting.

The suspect is also facing charges relating to the murder of the alleged hitman who is believed to have carried out the killing. This murder reportedly followed a dispute over payment for the assassination.

These arrests demonstrate that the Political Killings Task Team will pursue those who orchestrate, finance and execute political killings. No individual is above the law, regardless of their position or connections.

POLITICAL KILLINGS TASK TEAMS

Minister and members of the media,

Through the Political Killings Task Teams we have been able to register commendable progress in investigating and bringing perpetrators of politically motivated killings to justice.

The KwaZulu-Natal Political Killings Task Team, since its establishment, has arrested 604 suspects, with 151 accused persons having been sentenced to a combined total of more than 2 300 years of imprisonment.

There are a number of cases in court and a number of investigations have are now trial ready.

The new kid on the block, the Gauteng Political Killings Task Team, which was established only eight months ago, has also already recorded significant breakthroughs, with 39 arrests to date. These include the arrests in murder cases of two EFF members.

In the Western Cape, where the newly born Political Killings Task Team was established in August 2026, six suspects have been arrested so far.

Among them for the murder of former mayor of the Knysna local municipality, Aubrey Tsengwa. These results demonstrate the importance of specialised investigative capacity in addressing politically motivated killings.

Our message therefore remains very clear: political affiliation, influence or connections will not shield anyone involved in orchestrating, financing or executing political killings from accountability.

We will continue strengthening these teams to ensure that every political killing is thoroughly investigated and that those responsible face the full might of the law.

This is only a taste of what is yet to come. We are unleashing the full might of the law on criminals this festive season. There is nowhere to hide.

OPERATION SHANELA: JULY–SEPTEMBER 2026

Coming to the period under review, the South African Police Service has recorded significant operational successes through Operation Shanela and other intelligence-driven interventions.

During the period July to September 2026, Operation Shanela resulted in the arrest of 222 441 suspects for various offences across the country.

In addition, our detectives conducted intelligence-led tracing operations, resulting in the arrest of 29 343 wanted suspects linked to serious and violent crimes.

These include murder, attempted murder, rape, illegal possession of firearms, house and business robberies and drug-related offences.

These arrests are particularly significant because they demonstrate that we are not only responding to crime but actively pursuing those who have evaded the criminal justice system.

ENFORCING LIQUOR LEGISLATION AND COMBATING ALCOHOL-RELATED CRIME

We also intensified compliance inspections and targeted operations to enforce liquor legislation and address alcohol-related crime.

These operations resulted in:

- ✓ 6 495 illegal liquor outlets shutdown and more than 393 000 litres of alcohol confiscated.

We continue to target establishments that operate outside the law and contribute to crime and violence in our communities.

REMOVING ILLEGAL FIREARMS AND WEAPONS

Minister, one of our key priorities remains the removal of illegal firearms and dangerous weapons from our communities.

During the reporting period,

- ✓ 3 799 illegal firearms, including high-calibre weapons were seized including 30 154 rounds of ammunition.
- ✓ 10 801 dangerous weapons and 1 986 explosives were also seized.

SAFER FESTIVE SEASON OPERATIONS

Just in the past week alone, police seized 198 illegal firearms and since the launch of the National Safer Festive Season Operations on 12 October 2026, we have recorded the following results:

- ✓ 750 illegal firearms seized.
- ✓ 9 884 rounds of ammunition seized.
- ✓ 442 suspects arrested for possession of unlicensed firearms.

These figures demonstrate our determination to remove illegal firearms from circulation and disrupt the activities of criminals who use these weapons to terrorise our communities.

Our members remain deployed across the country, conducting high-density operations, roadblocks, searches, tracing wanted suspects and targeting identified crime hotspots.

We will sustain this momentum throughout the festive season.

Minister and Deputy Ministers these are weapons that could otherwise have been used to commit murder, robberies, intimidation and other violent crimes. Every illegal firearm removed from circulation is a potential life saved.

FIGHTING GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE AND FEMICIDE

Ladies and gentlemen,

The fight against gender-based violence and femicide remains a priority for the SAPS.

During the reporting period, police arrested more than 10 000 GBVF perpetrators and in terms of convictions, during the period under review, 668 perpetrators of gender-based violence and femicide were sentenced to imprisonment.

Of these:

- ✓ 88 were sentenced to life imprisonment.
- ✓ 78 received sentences of 20 years and more.
- ✓ 169 were sentenced to between 10 and 19 years.
- ✓ 333 were sentenced to between one and nine years imprisonment.

We welcome these convictions because they demonstrate that those who abuse women, children and other vulnerable groups will be held accountable.

We will continue working closely with the National Prosecuting Authority to strengthen investigations and ensure that perpetrators face the full might of the law.

We remain committed to ensuring that perpetrators of sexual violence and abuse are identified, arrested and brought before the courts.

OTHER MAJOR ARRESTS ACROSS PROVINCES

Our operations also resulted in significant arrests for other serious and violent crimes which include:

- ✓ 1 670 arrests for murder and 1 711 arrests for attempted murder.

CONFISCATIONS AND RECOVERIES

In addition to arrests, police confiscated contraband goods valued at more than R140 million and recovered 761 hijacked or stolen vehicles.

Our approach is to disrupt criminal networks not only by arresting suspects but also by dismantling their financial and operational infrastructure.

CONVICTIONS

Minister, arrests alone are not enough. We measure the impact of policing not only by the number of suspects we arrest but also by ensuring that those arrested are successfully prosecuted and convicted.

Between 1 July and 30 September 2026, a total of 3 292 accused persons were sentenced to imprisonment in other crimes.

These include:

- ✓ 186 accused persons sentenced to life imprisonment, including 63 murderers and 120 rapists.
- ✓ 28 sentenced to 40 years and more imprisonment.
- ✓ 38 sentenced to 30 years and more imprisonment.
- ✓ 274 sentenced to 20 years and more imprisonment.
- ✓ 1 111 sentenced to 10 years and more imprisonment.
- ✓ 1 655 sentenced to between five and nine years imprisonment.

These sentences send a strong message that serious and violent crime carries consequences.

PROTECTING POLICE OFFICERS AND BRINGING POLICE KILLERS TO JUSTICE

Minister and members of the media,

While we continue to intensify our efforts to protect communities, the killing of police officers remains a serious challenge for the South African Police Service.

Just this weekend, we will be laying Colonel Thokozani Sithole to rest in Ladysmith. She died in the line of duty while confronting armed criminals. She fought bravely until the very end, sadly losing her life in the process.

In the process, police fought back and two suspects were shot and killed and thus far three suspects have been arrested.

Her death is a painful reminder of the dangers our men and women in blue face daily as they serve and protect the people of South Africa.

As management, we remain committed to strengthening the safety and protection of our members.

Through the SAPS Police Safety Strategy, we continue to invest in specialised training, refresher courses and the provision of the necessary resources and equipment to ensure that our members are adequately prepared and equipped to respond to dangerous situations while executing their duties.

At the same time, we are making significant progress in ensuring that those who murder police officers are identified, arrested and brought before the courts to face the full might of the law.

The Directorate for Priority Crime Investigation, commonly known as the Hawks, continues to register notable progress in investigating these cases.

During the period under review, 21 suspects linked to the murder of police officers were arrested. Of these, 13 were arrested in connection with new cases reported during this period, while eight were arrested in connection with older cases.

Furthermore, 12 suspects were convicted and sentenced to imprisonment, with some receiving life sentences.

We will not allow those who target and kill police officers to act with impunity. Our commitment remains to protect those who protect the people of South Africa.

MADLANGA COMMISSION RECOMMENDATIONS

Minister, we are also giving attention to the recommendations emanating from the Madlanga Commission.

To date, 14 name referrals have been received, and the Commission's Recommendations Task Team is working diligently to ensure that these matters receive the necessary investigative attention.

The Task Team has recorded 26 arrests so far, comprising nine SAPS members, nine Ekurhuleni Metropolitan Police Department (EMPD) members and eight civilians.

Furthermore, eight SAPS members have since left the Service following various disciplinary outcomes, including dismissals and dishonourable discharges.

These developments demonstrate that we are acting on the matters brought to our attention and will not allow allegations of criminality, corruption or misconduct to go unattended.

We remain committed to ensuring that every allegation is properly investigated and that anyone found to have acted unlawfully is held accountable, regardless of their rank, position or institution.

The message is clear: nobody is above the law, including those entrusted with enforcing it.

CLOSING REMARKS

Minister and members of the media,

The statistics we have presented today reflect the commitment and dedication of police officers who continue to work under difficult circumstances to protect the people of South Africa.

While we welcome the reductions in several crime categories, we remain acutely aware that there is still much work to be done.

Our focus is clear: we will intensify intelligence-led policing, disrupt organised criminal networks, remove illegal firearms from circulation, trace wanted suspects and strengthen investigations to secure convictions.

This means, more stop and searches, more roadblocks, more compliance inspections at liquor outlets and more takedown operations! As we move deeper into the festive season, we are not lowering our guard.

Our members are on the ground, our operations are intensified, and we will continue to pursue criminals wherever they operate.

To criminals, our message is simple: South Africa is not your playground. The police are coming for you, and you will face the consequences of your actions.

We remain committed to ensuring that all people in South Africa are and feel safe.

I THANK YOU.