

2. REPORT OF THE PORTFOLIO COMMITTEE ON POLICE ON ITS OVERSIGHT VISIT TO THE SAPS TRAINING FACILITY AT 3 SOUTH AFRICAN INFANTRY (3 SAI) BATTALION OF THE SOUTH AFRICAN NATIONAL DEFENCE FORCE (SANDF) (KIMBERLEY, NORTHERN CAPE PROVINCE), THE KIMBERLEY CENTRAL POLICE STATION (NORTHERN CAPE PROVINCE), THE CENTRAL FIREARM REGISTER (CFR) (GAUTENG PROVINCE) AND THE SAPS TSHWANE TRAINING ACADEMY (GAUTENG PROVINCE) ON 21 AND 22 MAY 2023, DATED 31 MAY 2023.

1. INTRODUCTION

The Portfolio Committee on Police undertook an oversight visit from 21 to 22 May 2023 to the Northern Cape and Gauteng Provinces. On 21 May 2023, the Committee was briefed by the South African Police Service (SAPS) and the South African National Defence Force (SANDF) at the 3 South African Infantry (3 SAI) Battalion in Kimberley. On the same day, the SAPS briefed the Committee at the Kimberley Central Police Station. On 22 May 2023, the Committee visited the Central Firearm Register (CFR) and the SAPS at the Tshwane Training Academy.

2. DELEGATION

The delegation comprised of the following Members and support staff:

2.1. Members of the Committee

The following Members attended the oversight visit:

- Hon. Joemat-Pettersson (Chairperson) (ANC)
- Hon. Marekwa (ANC)
- Hon. Seabi (ANC)
- Hon. Peacock (ANC)
- Hon. Patrein (ANC)
- Hon. Khoza (EFF)
- Hon. Terblanche (DA)
- Hon. Shaik-Emam (NFP)

Apologies

Apologies were received from the following Members:

- Hon. Molekwa (ANC)
- Hon. Dr Groenewald (FF+)
- Hon. Shembeni (EFF)
- Hon. Whitfield (DA)
- Hon. Meshoe (ACDP)
- Hon. Majozi (IFP)

2.2. Support staff

The following support staff attended the oversight:

- Ms Mbengo: Committee Secretary
- Ms van Zyl-Gous: Content Advisor
- Ms Sihawu: Executive Secretary to the Chairperson

3. TRAINING FACILITY AT 3 SAI BATTALION (KIMBERLEY, NORTHERN CAPE PROVINCE)

The Portfolio Committee on Police was hosted at the 3 South African Infantry (3 SAI) Battalion of the SANDF to receive a presentation and for Committee engagements before a site inspection.

3.1. Presentation from SANDF

The presentation was led by Colonel T Sekgobela, Officer Commanding 3 SAI Bn, who highlighted the following:

- Introduction;
- Facilities provided to the SAPS in 2022 and 2023;
- Relationship with the SAPS
- Challenges; and
- Closing remarks.

3.2. Presentation from SAPS

The SAPS Acting Deputy National Commissioner: Support Services (Lt Gen Ntshiea) welcomed the delegation and provided an outline of the oversight visit. The Divisional Commissioner: Human Resource Development (Lt Gen Zulu) led the presentation, which included the following:

- Introduction;
- Number of trainees placed at 3 SAI;
- Number of SAPS trainers deployed at 3 SAI;
- Irregular appointment/ recruitment based on the forensic review;
- SANDF Resources utilised by SAPS;
- Meals/ Menu;
- Implementation Protocol between SAPS and SANDF;
- Payments for utilisation of SANDF Facilities;
- Interventions in place to deal with any challenges; and
- Summary of the Basic Police Development Learning Programmes (BPDLP) Curriculum

Note: The presentations can be obtained from the Committee Secretary on request.

3.3. Site visit

The Committee visited the food storage, kitchen and mess (dining) facilities at 3 SAI and interacted with the chefs and kitchen staff. The kitchen prepares meals for approximately 2 000 people, three times daily, and serves fresh fruit with each meal. All rations are bought from local vendors and Halaal meals are contracted out. The Committee further inspected the bungalows and ablution facilities offered to trainees. The Committee noted that the bungalows are generally very neat, but did not have curtains that could close. The Department indicated that a dorm-style bungalow accommodation set-up is standard in SAPS Training Academies and can accommodate more trainees than, for instance, the recently refurbished units at the Hammanskraal Academy that offers single accommodation to trainees. The Committee met with the 1 589 trainees at the 3 SAI parade ground where the Chairperson addressed the trainees and offered words of encouragement and support. Members of the Committee were introduced to trainees and they sang to the Committee which was much appreciated.

3.4. Committee deliberations

The Committee highlighted the following concerns during deliberations:

- 1) The Committee requested an explanation for the SAPS having to pay the SANDF R117 million for the use of 3 SAI Bn facilities as both are government Departments.
- 2) The Committee raised concern about the gender-parity of recruits at 3 SAI Bn as the majority are male and requested the Department to provide a gender breakdown across all trainees countrywide.
- 3) The Committee questioned the proportion of recruits that start training against those who complete training. The Committee further questioned whether funds are recouped when trainees drop out. The Committee also asked what are the predominant reasons for trainees failing to complete the training programme.
- 4) The Committee wanted a clearer understanding of the challenges experienced at the training facilities.
- 5) The Committee questioned whether there have been any casualties related to training at the base.
- 6) The Committee requested the Department to indicate whether trainees' state of mind is evaluated at the start of training to measure whether they are in good mental health to become a police member.
- 7) The Committee asked whether the recruits are trained on ethics and corruption.
- 8) The Committee noted that the recruits are tested for competency in English at the start of training and questioned whether major challenges are identified. This is in light of the recently released Progress in International Reading Literacy study that revealed that 78% of South African pupils at their fourth year of primary school could not read for meaning.
- 9) The Committee asked whether ablution facilities are sufficient to accommodate the additional trainees at the 3 SAI Bn base.
- 10) The Committee questioned whether religious meals, such as Halaal meals are catered for.
- 11) The Committee raised concern on the seeming lack of patriotic symbols displayed in training material and at the base.

- 12) The Committee requested clarity on the different amounts paid to the SANDF for the use of facilities at 3 SAI Bn in 2022 and 2023.
- 13) The Committee requested the Department to indicate what payments, salaries or stipends are made to trainees.

3.5. Responses from the Department

The Department responded on the following matters:

- 1) The Department indicated that payments between government departments are a requirement of National Treasury under the PFMA and other Treasury Regulations.
- 2) The Department stated that the gender-parity of the trainees at 3 SAI Bn is slanted towards male trainees as the accommodation facilities are better suited of males, but indicated that other training facilities are better balanced in terms of its gender intake.
- 3) The Department indicated that the payments made to the SANDF were higher in 2022 due to a larger contingent of trainees taken in at 3 SAI Bn compared to the current year (3000 vs 1500). This also meant that there were more trainers deployed to Kimberley who were housed in accommodation outside the 3 SAI bn base.
- 4) The Department indicated that while English competency of trainees are at an acceptable level, the main challenge is with sentence construction, resulting in poor written construction of witness statements.
- 5) The Department indicated that trainees are paid R4 500.00 per month and covered under the police medical scheme POLMED.
- 6) The Department indicated that ablution facilities across 3 SAI Bn are sufficient to accommodate the increased number of people at the base.
- 7) The Department indicated that provisions are made in the contract with trainees to recoup funds in the case that they do not complete the training, however this is often not followed-up and required more attention.

3.6. Recommendations by the Committee

The Committee recommends the following:

- 1) The Committee recommends that a fully-fledged SAPS Training Academy should be established in the Northern Cape.
- 2) The Committee recommends that more efforts should be made to ensure gender parity in recruits and trainees in future years.
- 3) The Committee recommends that more attention should be paid to recoup funds from trainees that do not complete their training.

4.7 Closing remarks

The Chairperson stated that while the situation at 3 SAI is not ideal, recruits should remain mindful of the opportunity that is provided to them in terms of employment. It would have been better to accommodate all trainees at SAPS Training Academies, but that the facilities provided by the SANDF are welcomed and well kept. The Chairperson stated that the arrangement with 3 SAI bn should continue until a fully-fledged SAPS Training Academy is established in the Northern Cape.

The MEC for Transport, Safety and Liaison (Northern Cape Province), Hon Bloem, indicated that she is appearing on behalf of the Northern Cape Premier and the entire Northern Cape Cabinet. She expressed her gratitude for the good relationship that has been built between the SAPS and the SANDF. The MEC further stated that the intake at 3 SAI Bn boosts the local economy and thanked the Portfolio Committee on Police for visiting the Northern Cape Province.

In closing, the Chairperson expressed her appreciation to the Minister of Defence and Military Veterans for accommodating the SAPS trainees at a SANDF facility. The Chairperson further thanked the Honourable President for the intake of additional police recruits.

4. KIMBERLEY CENTRAL POLICE STATION (KIMBERLEY, NORTHERN CAPE PROVINCE)

The Portfolio Committee on Police was hosted by the Provincial Commissioner: Northern Cape and Management of the Kimberley Central Police Stations to receive a presentation and committee engagements, followed by a site inspection.

As an opening remark, the Chairperson gave an opportunity to the Members, guests and stakeholders as well as representatives from the Community Police Forum (CPF), Provincial Government and Provincial Legislature to introduce themselves.

4.1. Presentations from SAPS

The Station Commander presented the following information on the Kimberley Central Police Station:

- Background;
- Demographics;
- Resources: Personnel and vehicles;
- Infrastructure;
- Crime Statistics;
- Crime Investigation;
- Court successes; and
- Policing challenges.

The CPF addressed the Committee and indicated that they have a good working relationship with the Station Commander and indicated that programmes are in place to address crime in the area. These programmes include the painting of houses and cleaning of yards. The CPF representative further stated that all community complaints are received and addressed by the Station Management. The CPF representative highlighted the impact of load-shedding on crime in that streets are not lit during these periods, which increases crime. The CPF expressed their appreciation towards the Station Commander.

Note: The presentations can be obtained from the Committee Secretary on request.

4.2. Site visit

The Committee conducted a walk-about on the station precinct, including the Community Service Centre (CSC), Detention Cells and the Victim Friendly Room (VFR).

4.3. Committee deliberations

The Committee noted the following during deliberations:

- 1) The Committee raised concern regarding the significant number of taverns in the policing precinct (123 taverns). The Committee highlighted that all spheres of Government must work together to address escalating crime levels. Local Governments must consider the impact of alcohol on crime when considering tavern applications and not only aspects of economic development. The Committee indicated that the silo-approach must be addressed through the implantation of the District Development Model (DDM) as announced by the President of the Republic.
- 2) The Committee raised concern about increases in the majority of crime categories in the police precinct, and indicated that serious intervention is needed to stem the escalation in crime across Kimberley.
- 3) The Committee expressed concern about the high number of Second Hand Goods stores (169) across the precinct and indicated that these stores often offers a marketplace for stolen goods. The Committee questioned the regularity on which Second Hand Goods shops are inspected by the SAPS.
- 4) The Committee expressed concern about the average caseload of Detectives and indicated that high caseloads can lead to ineffective investigations.
- 5) The Committee noted that more than half of the Visible Policing vehicles are not operational and noted that this has a significant impact on crime prevention.
- 6) The Committee raised concern about the lack of informants used by the station/Detectives and questioned the reasons for the lack of trust between communities (informants) and the SAPS.
- 7) The Committee noted its surprise that the CPF is not experiencing any challenges, as this is generally not the case at other stations visited.
- 8) The MEC for Transport, Safety and Liaison (Northern Cape Province), Hon Bloem, indicated that alcohol and drug abuse is the most significant problem in the area and contributor to crime.

5.4 Responses by the Department

The following responses were received from the Department:

- 1) The Department indicated that a recently held Community Policing Indaba yielded positive results and that funds will be allocated to support community policing projects.
- 2) The Provincial Commissioner indicated that illegal mining impacts on crime in the area and that so-called 'zama-zama's' are predominantly undocumented foreign nationals.
- 3) In terms of vehicle availability, the Departments stated that an emerging challenge is that suppliers often dispatch incorrect vehicle parts to meet a specific deadline and

this creates an administrative backlog for sending the incorrect parts back and sourcing correct vehicle parts.

- 4) The Department stated that many Government Departments are absent from collaborating in crime prevention initiatives and specifically highlighted the absence of the Department of Social Development in this regard.
- 5) The Department agreed that the number of taverns in the area are unacceptably high and indicated that despite the Department being consulted on the issuing of permits, their opinion is disregarded.
- 6) The Department stated that significant resources are taken up by responding to public protests in the Northern Cape province.

5.5 Recommendations by the Committee

The Committee recommends the following:

- 1) The Committee recommends that the Minister of Police must engage with his counterpart in the Department of Trade, Industry and Competition to address the proliferation of taverns, and the impact thereof on crime.
- 2) The Committee recommends that the Sol Plaatje Municipality should enforce its bylaws and ensure that taverns comply with operating hours. The Municipality should further consider the impact of alcohol on crime when considering the approval of tavern licences.

5.6 Closing remarks

In closing, the Chairperson noted that the Northern Cape Province has the capacity to reduce its crime rate. She indicated that the proliferation of illegal mining in the province has a significant impact on crime. The Chairperson also stated that the Mayor has a responsibility to close taverns operating outside approved trading hours. The Chairperson called for a national team to assist the province with the mushrooming of undocumented foreign nationals and stated that communities must feel, but not fear the police. The Chairperson thanked all stakeholders and support staff.

5. CENTRAL FIREARMS REGISTRY (CFR), PRETORIA, GAUTENG PROVINCE

5.1. Opening and site visit

The Chairperson welcomed everyone present at the CFR, Veritas Building, and explained that the Committee will only conduct a site visit and will receive the presentation at the SAPS Training Academy, as the CFR does not have adequate boardroom facilities.

The Committee was led by the Acting Deputy National Commissioner: Support Services and Deputy National Commissioner: Policing. During the inspection, Members noted that progress had been made in the archiving and storage of applications when compared to a previous visit by the Committee. The Department indicated that the remaining files are awaiting auditing before being archived (and stored) offsite.

5.2. Presentation

The Department made a detailed presentation and covered the following areas:

- Background;
- Feedback on recommendations from the previous visit;
- Performance status (2019 –2023);
- Applications exceeding 120 working days (2019 –2023);
- Current status of new firearm licence applications;
- Amnesty Firearms and Destructions;
- Enquiries and Complaints;
- Other critical issues: Support related;
- Other related issues
 - Litigations and Open Motions
 - Record keeping of firearms
 - Tracking and Tracing of Ammunition
- CFR Accommodation; and
- System related matters
 - Enhanced Firearms Register System;
 - Transition to new Firearm Control System;
 - Digitisation of files at the CFR.

Note: The presentations can be obtained from the Committee Secretary on request.

5.3. Deliberations

The Committee raised the following concerns during deliberations:

- 1) The Committee requested the Department to summarise the challenges experienced with SITA on the digitation of the CFR, and highlighted the high risk of documents/applications being lost while stored at the CFR.
- 2) The Committee asked why no ammunition was destroyed in the 2021/22 financial year.
- 3) The Committee raised concern about the high number of firearm applications received from the private security industry.
- 4) The Committee noted that challenges experienced with applications are with provinces and not at national level and asked the manner in which these challenges are addressed.
- 5) The Committee raised concern with the continued occupation of the Veritas building and indicated that this should be viewed against a previous finding that the building is not fit for human occupation.
- 6) The Committee questioned the delays in the relocation to the Telkom Towers building and asked why the relocation was attempted while the Department knew that the building was not ready. The Committee further asked what funds were spent on this relocation and indicated that this constitutes fruitless and wasteful expenditure.
- 7) The Committee requested the rental cost of the Telkom Towers building and asked whether it is a state-owned building.
- 8) A Committee member of the Gauteng Legislature indicated that a major challenge remains the loss and theft of state-owned firearms and indicated that the Premier of

Gauteng had previously indicated that all such firearms must be chipped to make identification easier. The Member further raised concern that firearms in police evidence stores are “rented out” to criminals for committing various crimes.

- 9) The Committee raised concern about the continued fire hazard posed by the storage of documents at the Veritas building and questioned what would happen if a fire is to break out.
- 10) The Committee questioned the reason why additional services provided by the DPWI and SITA cannot be shifted to the SAPS as this will alleviate various dependencies.
- 11) The MEC for Community Safety in Gauteng highlighted the proliferation of illegal firearms, especially high calibre firearms, as a major concern. She further highlighted the cross-border smuggling of vehicles, which can be addressed with effective stop-and-search operations at border posts. She further indicated that border patrols by the SANDF should be increased to address the crossing of undocumented foreigners along the borderline. The MEC indicated that partnerships with private security companies should be increased as a vital force multiplier of the SAPS. In this regard, the MEC also highlighted the importance of CPFs and Reservists as force multipliers.

5.4. Responses

The following responses were received from the Department:

- 1) The representative from SITA indicated that a new Head was appointed at SITA and that processes related to Supply Chain Management will be changed from a manual system to an electronic system and this will mitigate delays in the system. The representative further indicated that the digitation-contract for the CFR is comprehensive and expensive and, as such, all processes must be followed meticulously. The contract was awarded to the company *Providence Software Solutions*.
- 2) The Department indicated that the rental for the Telkom Towers building is R14 million per month. The COEGA corporation was appointed as implementation agent to renovate the Telkom Towers Annex Building. The renovation will start in September 2023.
- 3) The Department indicated that the Minister of Communications and Digital Technologies is allowed to transfer serviced from SITA to SAPS.
- 4) The timeframe for the destruction of ammunition is not legislated unlike the destruction of firearms.
- 5) The private security industry is not limited in terms of firearm applications.

5.5. Recommendations

The Committee recommends the following:

- 1) The Committee recommends that the digitation of firearm application must be fast-tracked while complying meticulously with all legislative prescripts.

6. SAPS TSHWANE TRAINING ACADEMY, PRETORIA, GAUTENG PROVINCE

6.1. Opening and site visit

The Committee conducted a walk-about at the campus grounds of the Tshwane Training Academy, including bungalows, classrooms, kitchen and dining facilities. A Member noted that the level of hygiene seemed higher in the 3 SAI Bn kitchen compared to that of the SAPS Training Academy.

The Committee had a very positive engagement with the trainees at the Tshwane Training Academy Parade Grounds. The Chairperson addressed trainees with words of encouragement to complete their training and uphold discipline when deployed at police stations countrywide. The Committee Members engaged with trainees on the parade ground.

6.2. Presentation

The presentation of the Department detailed the following aspects:

- Introduction;
- Number of trainees placed;
- Number of trainers and number of vacancies;
- Irregular appointment/ recruitment based on forensic review;
- Update on the incident regarding the injury of Constable Ntinga;
- Challenges experienced; and
- Overview: Basic Police Development Learning Programme (BPDLP) Curriculum.

Note: The presentations can be obtained from the Committee Secretary on request.

6.3. Deliberations

The Committee raised the following concerns during deliberations:

- 1) The Committee questioned whether there is an equitable share of trainees from all provinces, and an equitable share of gender representation at the Academy. The Committee further indicated that perceptions that policing is a man's job is patriarchal, outdated and must be addressed.
- 2) The Committee requested the Department to indicate what the cost implications are of the trainees that drop out from training, and indicated that there must be penalties associated for funds spent on trainees that do not complete the Basic Training course.
- 3) The Committee requested the Department to provide an age breakdown of trainees, and that an intergenerational mix of police personnel is essential to the advancement of the Department.

6.4. Responses

The following responses were received from the Department:

- 1) The Department does not recruit from individual provinces. Recruitment drives are done at a national level. After training, a gap analysis is conducted to identify

personnel needs at provincial levels and deployments are done on this basis. Trainees must acknowledge (during application) that they are willing to be deployed to any police station countrywide.

- 2) The Department stated that 52 per cent of all applications were from females, which is an increase compared to the previous year. Unfortunately, many female applicants are not taken into training based on various reasons including falling pregnant during the recruitment process. The Department indicated that they are experiencing significant challenges with applicants from minority race groups, including White, Coloured and Indian groups. To mitigate this, the SAPS are doing targeted recruitment drives to attract minority race groups to join the SAPS.
- 3) The Department detailed the rigorous recruitment standards for trainees and indicated that this entails two rounds of fingerprint testing, DNA testing, and vetting investigations (amongst others).
- 4) The Department is moving towards an e-Recruitment system to mitigate the bulk of applications received annually. In 2022/23, more than 500 000 applications were received.
- 5) The Department indicated that the recoup of funds is included in the MOU with trainees, but is not monitored effectively. The Department indicated that the funds cannot be deducted from Members' pension funds as the trainees are only approved on the pension scheme once employed at police stations.

6.5. Recommendations

The Committee recommends the following:

- 1) The Committee recommends that gender and race parity should be ensured in future recruitment drives to ensure that the SAPS has an equitable gender and racial representation.

7. CONCLUSION

The Committee noted, and expressed its appreciation for the progress made at the CFR. The Committee encouraged the Department to continue making progress and to ensure that the timeframes and expenditure associated with the digitisation of the CFR are closely monitored and adhered to. The Committee expressed its gratitude for the recruitment of additional recruits in 2022 and 2023, and indicated that these young men and women represent to future of the SAPS. The Committee wishes the trainees well in their training and future careers in the SAPS. The Committee expressed its appreciation to the SAPS Senior Management, Departmental officials and stakeholders for availing themselves over a weekend.

The Democratic Alliance (DA), African Christian Democratic Party (ACDP), and Freedom Front Plus (FF+) reserved their rights.

Report to be considered.