**1. Portfolio Committee on Police Report on the Oversight visit to Manenberg Police Station on 22 April 2016, dated 23 August 2016.**

**1. Introduction**

The Portfolio Committee on Police undertook an oversight visit to the Manenberg Police station on 22 April 2016 with a view of ascertaining what was happening in the community as press reports indicated that over 14 people had died within two weeks as a result of gang violence.

The Committee was concerned whether the police are able to bring the gang violence under control to protect people’s lives in the Manenberg community.

**1.1 Delegation**

The delegation comprised of the following people:

**Members of the Committee:**

Hon. F Beukman (Chairperson)

Hon. M Mmola

Hon. L Mabija

Hon. Z Mbhele

**Apology:** Hon. A. Molebatsi.

**Ministry of Police**

Hon. M. Sotyu: Deputy Minister of Police

**Support Staff of the Committee:**

Mr. P Gwebu - Committee Secretary

Mr I Kinnes - Committee Content Adviser

Ms N Van Zyl-Gous - Committee Researcher

Mr K Dodo - Committee Assistant

Mr T Gabula - Principal Communication Officer

**2. Station profile**

The station is a Brigadier-level station and is responsible for policing the areas of Manenberg, Heideveld, Athlone industrial area, Welcome Estate and Surrey Estate. The station commander is Colonel Henry Hugo. It is part of the Nyanga station cluster.

Manenberg police station covers an area surface of 10 km2 and has a population of 91 491. There are 29 pre-primary schools, 20 primary schools and six high schools in the policing precinct. There are two shopping centres in the precinct. There are 6 bottle stores and 11 liquor outlets in the precinct. The station has a cell capacity of 40. The station has 170 staff members while the staff establishment caters for 211 giving it a staff shortage of 41. The station has been allocated 17 student constables which will give it a strength of 187.

The station has 46 vehicles of which 6 vehicles has kilometres less than 50 000 and 40 vehicles with over 50 000 kilometres.

It has a fully functional and active community police forum that has sub-forums and participates in its own anti-crime campaigns. The station has 3 active sectors. The sectors have reported the main crime threats as follows:

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Sector 1** | **Sector 2** | **Sector 3** |
| Murder | Murder | Murder |
| Attempted Murder | Attempted Murder | Attempted Murder |
| Armed Robbery | Armed Robbery | Armed Robbery |
| Housebreaking | Theft out of M/V | Drugs |

The Chairperson welcomed everyone present and noted that the purpose of the visit was to look at the events in Manenberg and see what more was required for the police to do their jobs effectively. He indicated that the community needed to trust the police and that the Committee was aware of the narrative that they required more resources. He wanted to know however what the successes of the Manenberg Police were. He stated that the police should highlight its successes and deal with the challenges that have arisen.

The Deputy Minister of Police, Hon. M. Sotyu stated that there are many challenges in the Western Cape and that specifically the Nyanga Police station is also facing some huge challenges. She noted that a police officer from the station was killed in Nyanga recently and that one of the areas where the police were not doing well was in the area of wellness of police officers. In this respect, the Minister of Police established a Transformation Task team which is headed by the Deputy Minister which will boost the morale of the police. She emphasised that it was imperative that the issues of the resources and boosting the numbers of police officers were addressed urgently in view of the tasks required of them. In this regard, the Ministry was discussing the need to enrol the private security companies to assist the police when it comes to addressing the killing of police officers. They could also be used to guard installations

Of concern was the fact that the living conditions of police officers needs to be improved as it was not conducive to their productivity. Lastly, the Deputy Minister noted that the Province requires attention as far as gangsterism is concerned and the Province could not afford to do away with Operation Combat which was designed to deal with violent gangs.

**3. Station Briefing**

The Provincial Commissioner reported that the gang conflict was principally between the Americans and Hard Livings gangs. According to the Commander of Operation Combat, the cause of the violence was the fact that a member of the Hard Livings was shot at by his own members after he took money, drugs and weapons that belonged to the Hard Livings. He subsequently defected to the Americans and this triggered the war between the two gangs. A member of the Dixi Boys was injured in an attack on 30 April 2016. As a result there have been retaliatory and counter attacks by all gangs involved in the conflict. Juveniles were used in the shootings and as a result of the shootings, 17 people were killed since the start of April 2016. All of the deceased were gang members. Twenty case dockets have been opened and the SAPS affected 21 arrests. There are 15 attempted murder cases and the Committee was informed that secondary parties subsequently joined the gang war. The Clever Kids and the Dixi Boys have become fully involved in the fighting.

The station has also a shortage of staff members, they have 18 post promotions in the near future and Operation Combat has focussed on the area and they are supported by provincial detectives.

**4. Committee Concerns**

Committee members raised a number of concerns about the ongoing violence and the ability of the SAPS to meet the challenge of gang violence in the community. Members questioned why the station had an acting station commander and whether there was a need to bring resources from elsewhere. Members also wanted answers on whether the Metro Police was working closely with the SAPS and how many gang leaders were arrested. Of serious concern was the efforts to reduce the number of illegal firearms in Manenberg. Members also wanted to know for how long the understaffing of the station was allowed to drag on.

**4.1 SAPS Responses**

The SAPS responded that they are working well with the Metro Police and that they have already arrested a number of gang leaders in the area. Operation Combat in the main focussed on drugs and drug leaders and drug runners. There have been a long lists of successes of the confiscation of illegal firearms and drugs. As far as vacant posts at the station was concerned, there were 24 vacant posts which would be filled soon. There have been some challenges with the rigidity of posts, but the SAPS indicated that it would ensure flexibility.

Quantities of ammunition was also seized in the area and the operation to confiscate firearms has already made a substantive impact on the violence. The SAPS noted that it would in the very near future assess the efficacy of the operation. Since the arrest of the SAPS members dealing with firearms, it has had a substantial impact on the violence. Manenberg and Hanover Park were two communities that were the worst affected over the last five years.

The SAPS also noted that it needs a long term sustainable operation in the community of Manenberg. In the last ten years, all the leaders of all the gangs have been arrested by the SAPS. The structure of the gangs have been reproducing leadership after the arrest of their leaders and the conviction of gang leaders did not have an effect the structure of the gangs as it has become a recurring issue.

The Deputy Minister indicated that the SAPS National Intervention Unit is also working closely with Operation Combat in Manenberg. In view of the shortage of members, the station could not afford to be short of 17 Visible Policing members.

**5. Further Committee Concerns**

Members raised concerns on how the schools were affected and wanted to know how the SAPS was working with other government departments. Members noted their unhappiness with the response of the station management and appealed for an urgent focus as they wanted the Crime Intelligence Division to play a bigger role. There were also spatial and environmental issues which underpinned the situation in Manenberg. The Crime Intelligence unit was not up to scratch with respect to intelligence led operations. Members wanted to know what the overlay between Operation Combat and the detectives at cluster level was and whether there was sufficient capacity.

Another concern raised by the chairperson was what co-operation the SAPS received from the Community Police Forum (CPF). The detective turnaround strategy seemed to focus on levels 3-5 for organised crime. The Committee wanted to know whether there was a sense of co-operation from all parties. Lastly, members questioned why the station commissioner was moved to Bellville.

**5.1 SAPS Responses**

The SAPS responded that there was a plan to manage sick leave and absenteeism at the station and the patterns were currently being analysed at the station. There was no abnormal rate of absenteeism at the station. Vacancies were being dealt with the station was working very well with other government departments as the provincial joints were meeting monthly. As far as school safety was concerned, there were intelligence led operations conducted.

The decision to transfer the station commander was taken for operational reasons. Operation Combat was measuring the full activities of members of the gangs. Most of the indicators were prepared for a defined period in Manenberg. There have been successes most notably the arrest and conviction of George “Geweld” Thomas, but it was pointed out that it took up to five years for such cases to move through the courts.

The Organised Crime Threat Assessment is a process where certain levels on all crime categories are targeted. The SAPS stated that they are making use of the legislation provided to them with respect to the involvement of the Directorate for Priority Crimes Investigation (DPCI). Crime Intelligence is central to providing a picture of what is really happening in the gangs. There has to be a capacity that is flexible to respond to threats as they arise and support the station commander with respect to gang violence.

As far as the schools were concerned, each school had a safety co-ordinator and the SAPS has intensified the visitor’s scheme. There must be social crime prevention at all the schools.

**6. Community Police Forum (CPF)**

The Community Police Forum (CPF) welcomed the visit of the Portfolio Committee on Police and welcomed the Committee.

The Chairperson of the CPF reported that while there is an excellent relationship at management level, they are faced with challenges. There were instances where the CPF was undermined by various members at the station a bit further down the management levels. The relationship with the community was complex as the community members regularly attack the police and the manner in which the police relate to the community also helps the gangs.

The CPF appealed to the Committee to help find ways in drawing in other departments such as the Department of Social Development. Manenberg was part of the City’s spatial planning scheme and the City should also be involved in seeking solutions to the gang violence in Manenberg. The CPF stated that gangs claim the entire Manenberg and government officials have to get permission from gangsters to deliver services.

In particular the CPF wanted to see a closer working relationship between the Departments of Human Settlements and that of Social Development. In view of the fact that unemployment is at 40% in the community, there was much to do as policing was only one aspect of the environment.

In her closing remarks, the Deputy Minister noted that there are systems in the SAPS and that the Transformation Task Team would assist to deal with some of the issues raised. There were more than 600 schools linked to police stations as it is one of the emerging priorities of the SAPS. The Ministry have to pay attention to areas like Manenberg because people and the police cannot communicate their successes. The undermining of the CPF was not correct and the fact that it was happening everywhere should be addressed. The current operation will not end in Manenberg until all the goals of the National Development Plan that all people are and feel safe, was realised.

**7. Recommendations**

1. The Committee recommends that more human resources are to be deployed at the station.
2. The Committee recommends that all vacancies be finalised and filled.
3. The Committee recommends that the Station Commissioner’s post be advertised and filled.
4. The Committee recommends that the concerns raised by the Community Police Forum be addressed by the station management.
5. The Committee recommends that the Departments of Social Development, Human Settlements and the City of Cape Town be asked to work with the SAPS to intervene in the community.
6. The Committee recommends that a copy of the report be forwarded to the Social Services Cluster in Parliament for actioning.

**8. Conclusion**

The Chairperson thanked the Deputy Minister for her inputs and noted that there are numerous social issues that should be addressed. He stated that the Committee Report would be sent to Social Services in Parliament as there is a lot to do for social development Departments. The prevalence of firearms and drugs underscored the creation of the new units that will be dealing with illegal firearms and narcotics.

The Committee will have to look at all angles from a legislative point of view and make hard choices as it could not allow people’s lives are affected so directly.

The Chairperson expressed a word of thanks to the Deputy Minister for committing resources to the Visible Policing component of the station.

Report to be considered.