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| **COSATU Submission:**  **Cash in Transit Heists**  **13 June 2018** |
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1. **Introduction**

COSATU welcomes the Portfolio Committee’s initiative in bringing stakeholders together to share thoughts, experiences and proposals on how to combat the scourge of cash in transit (CIT) heists.

COSATU’s input is based upon the experience of our members from the South African Transport and Allied Workers’ Union (SATAWU) who serve as security guards for cash in transit companies and banks and our members from the Police and Prisons Civil Rights Union (POPCRU) who serve as police and correctional services officers.

We hope that our proposals will assist Parliament, government and industry to find solutions to this crisis.

Crime is a crisis for all South Africans. It has been growing across all indicators. SAPS has not been able to cope with it. Cash in transit heists have seen a massive rise.   
  
Cash in Transit heist statistics vary considerably but all point to a significant rise. 2006 with 460 heists was the highest recorded year. After this with concerted efforts by SAPS it declined. 2017 saw between 147 and 152 CIT heists. An 11% increase over 2016. Half way through 2018 we have seen it virtually double to 159. We are on track towards achieving a daily CIT heist.

We have seen a 30% increase in CIT vehicle bombings with attacks on guards increasingly violent and lethal. We have seen a 3000% increase in ATM bombings. Needless to say the 15 000 ATMs present vulnerable targets.

COSATU’s submission will highlight some of the key challenges our members and society have experienced as well as specific proposals to address them.

1. **Collusion, Corruption and Vetting**

COSATU believes that key to the spike and success of these CIT heists has been that most of the heists are conducted not by lone criminals but rather highly sophisticated, well resourced and most importantly well informed criminal syndicates.

There is ample evidence that most heists are provided with up to date inside intelligence. This is provided by employees of the CIT security companies themselves, e.g. controllers, dispatchers, drivers, guards etc. They are poorly paid and vulnerable to bribery or blackmail by these syndicates with ample money and means to bribe and blackmail. Often innocent workers are the first to be blamed and subsequently unfairly dismissed by employers and law enforcement authorities.

There have been numerous instances captured in the media where syndicates have been able to bribe SAPS members. These SAPS members have then assisted to delay their response time to the heist or deliberately allowed the chase or case to collapse. Reports have also been received of magistrates also being bribed and threatened by syndicates.

Vetting procedures inside the security industry itself are poorly and infrequently done.

**COSATU Proposals:**

* Compulsory industry wide vetting procedures and standards must be instituted.
* All members of the CIT companies must be required to undergo regular vetting.
* These should be monitored by enforced by a joint structure representing the Private Security Industry Regulatory Authority (PSIRA), SAPS, the State Security Agency (SSA) and unions.

1. **Working Conditions**

Workers in the security industry work under very difficult conditions. Some of the typical conditions that security sector workers face include:

* They work extremely long shifts, often 12 hours at a time.
* Workers are paid low wages.
  + Some entry level security guards earn as little as R3500 per month. Others fare little better with R6500 per month.
  + Many undocumented migrant workers are deliberately employed as they will accept out of desperation, low paid and unsecure work.
* Workers do not have the security of permanent jobs but are frequently on short term contracts of 3 or 6 months that are subject to renewal. They have become permanent temporary workers.
* Workers are often employed without pensions, medical aid, disability and life insurance.
* The insurance provided for injury or death on duty is often insufficient emotional and financial compensation for families who have lost their bread winners during a CIT heist.

**COSATU Proposals:**

For the bargaining council to agree that all workers in the sector should:

* Workers should be guaranteed a 40 hour work with no reduction in wages and not be forced to work 12 hour shifts etc.
* Minimum wage levels for security guards need to be pushed to a living wage.
* Minimum wage level for CIT security guards need to be pushed from R11 000 to R20 000 per month to reduce the temptation to be bribed by syndicates.
* Workers, as per the Labour Relations Act, should be made permanent by their employer after 3 months.
* All workers should be provided with pension, medical aid and insurance.
* Compensation for families who have lost bread winners etc. should be sufficient to cover their full losses.

1. **Training**

The CIT heist syndicates are well known for being highly trained, skilled, equipped and resourced. They are often military veterans. CIT security guards are entrusted to hold off these syndicates against all orders whilst protecting millions of Rands.

Yet often security guards are deployed after only a week’s training. Frequently security guards are told to pay a bribe in exchange for passing their exams and to receive their certification. Their training is far below the length and quality of that provided to members of SAPS or SANDF.

To continue on this road is to ask for CIT heists to simply become a growth industry!

**COSATU Proposals:**

* Standardise quality and compulsory training across the industry.
* External oversight of the training to be provided e.g. with a joint structure including PSIRA, unions, SAPS and the Department for Higher Education and Training.

1. **Equipment**

CIT workers are frequently provided old and faulty equipment. Examples of the equipment challenges include:

* Guards are often given old and faulty weapons which often misfire or jam. Whilst the syndicates use automatic rifles especially AK 47s, guards are usually issued with pistols.
* The armoured vehicles frequently do not having working air conditioning. These are armoured vehicles and this is not a luxury as they cannot drive with the windows open for security reasons.
* Armoured vehicles often do not in fact have armoured plates, bullet proof windows or protected or suitable tyres.
* There are often only two security guards in one armoured vehicle.
* Whilst some companies use automatic dye to prevent the cash being used syndicates when stolen, some companies do not. This then makes them a direct target for syndicates.

**COSATU Proposals:**

There should be industry required standards binding upon all CIT companies to ensure that all CIT guards are provided with:

* New, accurate and working weaponry.
* Automatic rifles suitable for CIT protection.
* Armour plated bullet proof covering vehicles, their windows and tyres.
* Working air conditioning.
* 4 guards per vehicle.
* Back up vehicles for CIT transporters.
* Money dye in all money bags.
  + Including new technology such as Polyrethane Dispensing Units to protect cash from being stolen or usable by syndicates.

1. **Broader Sectoral Support**

The security industry has largely been left on its own to deal with this violent explosion of crime. It is simply overwhelmed and not equipped to handle it.

The challenges at SAPS and across the law enforcement sector are well known. The recent changes have given some hope to our members. Police officers are heartened to have a new minister for police who shows support for them and a determination to deal with crime.

Our members are also pleased with the appointments of new permanent heads of crime intelligence and the Hawks. More especially that these are police veterans well known for their integrity and commitment to fight corruption. They have also welcomed efforts by IPID to root out corruption within SAPS. COSATU is also pleased by the initial steps to clean up SSA.

There are still huge problems of corruption, wastage, maladministration across the law enforcement agencies. Some can be dealt with in the short term and others will need longer term interventions.

**COSATU Proposals:**

* A joint task team consisting of PSIRA, banking sector, unions, SAPS, SSA, National Prosecuting Authority, Departments of Justice and Correctional Services to deal with this crisis.
* SAPS support and escorts for CIT transits.
* Recruitment of SANDF veterans by the CIT companies.
* Revival/ establishment of joint specialised SAPS and SSA units to develop real intelligence on syndicates.
* Continued overhaul of SAPS leadership.
* Shifting of SAPS personnel from head office and administrative deployments to stations and specialised units.
* Overhaul of the NPA leadership and the replacement of its Director.
* Overhaul leadership of Correctional Services, tackling of corruption and overcrowding in prisons and turning them from centres of crime to centres of correction.
  + The isolation of prisoners implicated in CIT heists from within prisons.
* Amendment of the Criminal Procedures Act to deny bail to any persons accused of attacking SAPS members and security officials and guards.
* Amendment of the Criminal Procedures Act to require life sentences for any persons convicted of killing SAPS members and security officials and guards and harsher sentences for those convicted of attacking them.
* Amend the Fire Arms Act to ban all private ownership of fire arms and to only authorise their possession by SAPS members, security officials and registered security guards.
  + Provide a suitable amnesty with financial incentives for the handing in of all fire arms, legal and illegal. Failure to hand them in must be a punishable offence.

1. **Conclusion**

COSATU hopes that our highlighting of the conditions faced by our members and our proposals for interventions by Parliament, government and the security and banking industry will be taken into account during the Portfolio Committee’s deliberations and will be of use to finding a solution to the CIT heist crisis.

COSATU will remain available as always to assist the committee in any way possible.

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