



21 August 2020

2020/21 SAPS CRIME STATISTICS ANALYSIS: FIRST QUARTER

Table of Contents

1. Introduction	1
2. Legislative framework	1
3. Overall crime situation for 2019/20	1
3.1. Domestic violence	4
3.2. Crime detected as a result of police action	4
4. Quarterly Release	5
5. Key Issues for Consideration by Parliament	6
6. References	8

1. INTRODUCTION

The Minister of Police released the 2020/21 first quarter (01 April to 30 June 2020) crime statistics on 14 August 2020. All crime categories, with the exception of business burglary, decreased sharply compared to the first quarter of the previous financial year. This was the first quarterly release since a 2016 Cabinet decision to increase the frequency of the publication of the crime statistics. As expected, most categories of crime decreased significantly during the first quarter of 2020/21 that fell within the national COVID-19 lockdown period.

The quarterly release of crime statistics has several challenges, including the absence of the dissemination policy. The Portfolio Committee on Police should schedule an engagement with the South African Police Service (SAPS) to scrutinise this policy and other challenges associated with the quarterly release of the crime statistics.

2. LEGISLATIVE FRAMEWORK

Section 218 (f) of the Interim Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1993 (Act No. 200 of 1993) provides that “*subject to the directions of the Minister of Safety and Security, the National Commissioner will be responsible for the keeping and provision of crime intelligence data, criminal records and statistics*”. This section is retained in terms of item 24 of schedule 6 of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996 (Act 108 of 1996). The National Instruction 3/2011 provides the crime definitions to be utilised by police officials for purposes of the opening of case dockets and the registration thereof on the Crime Administration System (CAS)/Investigation Case Docket Management System (ICDMS).

3. OVERALL CRIME SITUATION FOR FIRST QUARTER 2020/21

The first quarter crime statistics for 2020/21 fell in the first three months of the national COVID-19 lockdown period. As the movement of goods and people was limited, a sharp decrease in crime was expected. Unsurprisingly, overall crime decreased by 33.7 per cent in the first quarter of 2020/21 compared to the same period of the previous financial year. During the first quarter, 266 495 serious crimes were reported to the South African Police Service (SAPS), of which 34 per cent were contact crimes (crimes against the person).



The figure below illustrates decreases in most categories of crime, except burglary at non-residential premises and crimes detected by the police. Within contact crime, common robbery showed the largest decrease of 49.8 per cent, followed by assault with the intent to cause grievous bodily harm with a decrease of 41.0 per cent and sexual offences with a decrease of 39.7 per cent.

Figure 1: Crime Situation April to June 2020

CRIME CATEGORY	April to June 2016_17	April to June 2017_18	April to June 2018_19	April to June 2019_20	April to June 2020_21	Case Diff	% Change
CONTACT CRIMES (CRIMES AGAINST THE PERSON)							
Murder	4 305	4 859	4 668	5 398	3 466	-1 932	-35,8%
Sexual Offences	11 239	11 526	11 387	12 094	7 296	-4 798	-39,7%
Attempted murder	4 329	4 492	4 429	4 575	3 487	-1 088	-23,8%
Assault with the intent to inflict grievous bodily harm	38 100	37 336	37 564	37 425	22 064	-15 361	-41,0%
Common assault	36 709	35 727	36 024	36 185	25 995	-10 190	-28,2%
Common robbery	13 219	12 336	12 711	12 885	6 469	-6 416	-49,8%
Robbery with aggravating circumstances	34 498	34 545	34 332	35 705	21 599	-14 106	-39,5%
Total Contact Crimes (Crimes Against The Person)	142 399	140 821	141 115	144 267	90 376	-53 891	-37,4%
Total Sexual Offences							
Rape	8 999	9 237	9 018	9 737	5 805	-3 932	-40,4%
Sexual Assault	1 426	1 499	1 625	1 668	1 070	-598	-35,9%
Attempted Sexual Offences	491	463	451	454	271	-183	-40,3%
Contact Sexual Offences	323	327	293	235	150	-85	-36,2%
Total Sexual Offences	11 239	11 526	11 387	12 094	7 296	-4 798	-39,7%
SOME SUBCATEGORIES OF AGGRAVATED ROBBERY							
Carjacking	4 119	4 028	4 002	4 550	2 677	-1 873	-41,2%
Robbery at residential premises	5 290	5 530	5 535	5 214	4 006	-1 208	-23,2%
Robbery at non-residential premises	5 059	5 133	4 779	5 100	3 341	-1 759	-34,5%
Robbery of cash in transit	29	59	62	38	19	-19	-50,0%
Bank robbery	0	4	1	0	0	0	0 Cases
Truck hijacking	279	288	334	283	198	-85	-30,0%
CONTACT-RELATED CRIMES							
Arson	1 107	928	945	943	633	-310	-32,9%
Malicious damage to property	28 186	26 960	26 719	26 224	18 558	-7 666	-29,2%
Total Contact-Related Crimes	29 293	27 888	27 664	27 167	19 191	-7 976	-29,4%
PROPERTY-RELATED CRIMES							
Burglary at non-residential premises	19 033	18 032	17 827	17 274	18 840	1 566	9,1%
Burglary at residential premises	62 164	57 736	55 247	53 433	37 128	-16 305	-30,5%
Theft of motor vehicle and motorcycle	14 083	12 817	12 181	11 835	5 564	-6 271	-53,0%
Theft out of or from motor vehicle	35 252	33 063	31 651	31 467	17 533	-13 934	-44,3%
Stock-theft	7 401	7 217	7 969	7 813	7 345	-468	-6,0%
Total Property-Related Crimes	137 933	128 865	124 875	121 822	86 410	-35 412	-29,1%
OTHER SERIOUS CRIMES							
All theft not mentioned elsewhere	85 176	75 313	74 253	71 704	45 455	-26 249	-36,6%
Commercial crime	18 157	17 771	21 928	21 316	15 431	-5 885	-27,6%
Shoplifting	17 401	16 041	14 817	15 747	9 632	-6 115	-38,8%
Total Other Serious Crimes	120 734	109 125	110 998	108 767	70 518	-38 249	-35,2%
Total 17 Community Reported Serious Crimes	430 359	406 699	404 652	402 023	266 495	-135 528	-33,7%
CRIME DETECTED AS A RESULT OF POLICE ACTION							
Illegal possession of firearms and ammunition	3 765	4 156	3 883	3 573	2 747	-826	-23,1%
Drug-related crime	67 866	74 287	76 400	39 964	18 767	-21 197	-53,0%
Driving under the influence of alcohol or drugs	18 956	22 016	19 531	21 853	3 168	-18 685	-85,5%
Sexual Offences detected as a result of police action	1 416	1 513	1 708	2 189	411	-1 778	-81,2%
Total Crime Detected As A Result Of Police Action	92 003	101 972	101 522	67 579	25 093	-42 486	-62,9%

Source: SAPS (2020)

Murder decreased with 35.8 per cent in the first quarter of 2020/21 compared to that of the previous financial year. In the first quarter of 2020/21, murder of on-duty police members decreased by 70 per cent compared to the previous year. Murder of off-duty police members also decreased by 37.5 per



cent over the same period. In the first quarter of 2020/21, murder on farms and smallholdings decreased by 30.8 per cent compared to that of the previous financial year.

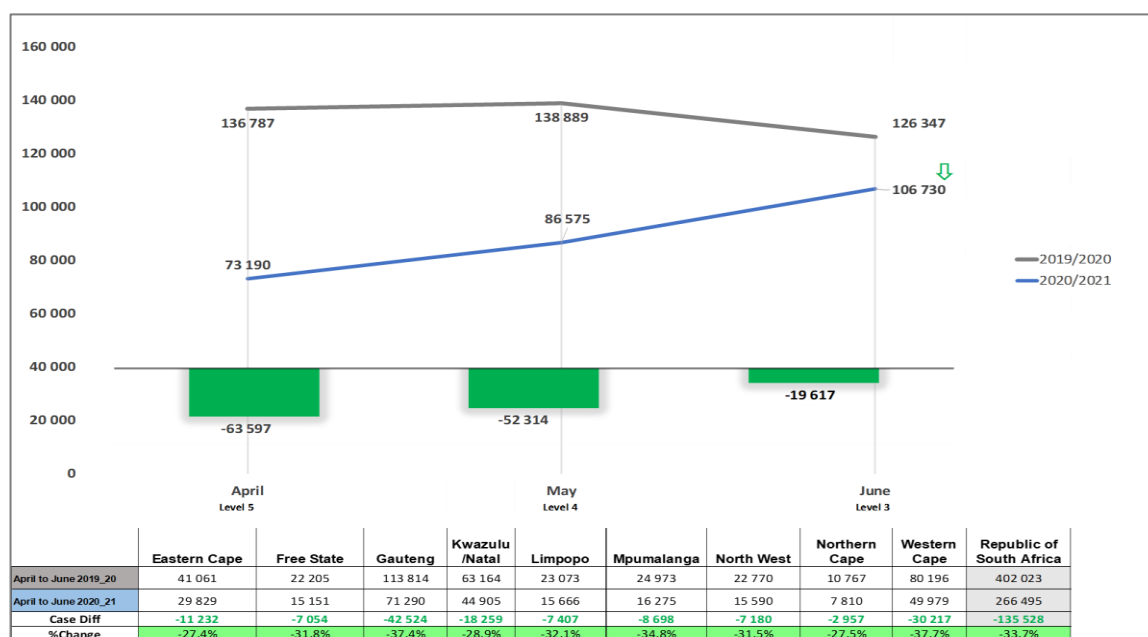
Sexual offences decreased with 39.7 per cent in the first quarter of 2020/21 compared to that of the previous financial year. With this category, rape decreased the most with 40.4 per cent, followed by a decrease of 40.3 per cent in attempted sexual offences and contact sexual offences that decreased with 36.2 per cent.

As a whole, robbery with aggravating circumstances decreased with 39.5 per cent. Within this category, the subcategories that make up trio-crimes (carjacking, robbery at residential and non-residential premises) decreased with 32.6 per cent in the first quarter of 2020/21 compared to the previous quarter. Carjacking decreased the most with 41.2 per cent, followed by robbery at non-residential premises that decreased with 34.5 per cent and robbery at residential premises that decreased with 23.2 per cent.

Property-related crime decreased with 29.1 per cent in the first quarter of the 2020/21 financial year compared to the previous quarter. Burglary at non-residential premises increased by 9.1 per cent in the first quarter of 2020/21 compared to the previous year, which is the only crime category that increased during this period. Between April and June 2020, 18 840 cases were reported, of which 2 692 burglaries were at educational premises and 1 246 at liquor outlets/premises. The highest number of school burglaries occurred in KwaZulu-Natal (651) followed by Gauteng (607) and the Eastern Cape (326). The highest number of liquor outlets/premises were burgled in the Western Cape (270), followed by Gauteng (228) and KwaZulu-Natal (224).

Contact-related crime decreased with 29.4 per cent in the first quarter of 2020/21 compared to the first quarter of the previous financial year. Within this category, arson decreased with 32.9 per cent and malicious damage to property decreased with 29.2 per cent in the first quarter of 2020/21 compared to the previous year.

Figure 2: 17 Community Reported Serious Crime (April to June 2020)



Source: SAPS (2020)



The figure above shows a significant difference in the month of April between the first quarter of the 2019/20 and 2020/21 financial years. However, as the national lockdown restrictions were eased in May, from level 5 to level 4, the gap between the two quarters started to narrow. This gap narrowed further in June when level 3 restrictions were introduced. This gap will continue to narrow with the further easing of restrictions going forward.

3.1. Domestic violence

During the first quarter of 2020/21, the SAPS reported selected domestic violence related crimes by provincial breakdown and sex. The breakdown by sex provides an interesting and holistic view of the victims of domestic violence. The most prevalent cases affecting both females and males relate to common assault and malicious damage to property.

Table 1: Selected domestic violence related crimes by provincial breakdown and sex

OFFENSE	EC	F S	GP	KZN	LP	MP	NW	NC	WC	FEMALE	MALE	RSA
Murder	18	12	13	23	5	3	14	8	16	65	47	112
Rape	53	32	70	45	14	12	21	12	63	312	10	322
Attempted murder	21	22	44	36	9	10	16	11	20	122	67	189
Assault GBH	377	257	1 001	515	257	175	196	104	482	2 413	951	3 364
Common assault	530	745	2 835	893	333	290	311	122	1 459	6 214	1 304	7 518
Common robbery	9	7	15	12	3	1	5	4	12	53	15	68
Robbery aggravating	0	0	6	4	1	3	0	0	6	15	5	20
Malicious damage to property	249	225	764	259	128	102	135	43	581	1 607	879	2 486
Burglary residential	11	12	26	17	3	6	3	2	41	73	48	121
All theft not mentioned elsewhere	61	49	198	87	22	23	34	10	252	488	248	736

Source: SAPS (2020)

The SAPS did not provide statistics for crimes against women and children. The 2019/20 crime statistics were criticised because the figures for crimes against women and children included unfounded cases, and are thus unverified statistics.

3.2. Crime detected as a result of police action

Crime detected as a result of police action' is the only crime category in which an increase is viewed as positive and a decrease as negative. An increase indicates that police action led to arrests during police operations. According to the SAPS, these crimes are indicators of the effectiveness of police activities and an increase indicates intensified police activity, rather than increased crime activity.¹

¹ SAPS (2019)



In the first quarter of 2020/21, crimes detected as a result of police action decreased with 62.9 per cent. Although this can be attributed to the lockdown restrictions related to the sale of alcohol and limited movement of people, this downward trend was already seen in the 2018/19 financial year in which it decreased with 21.8 per cent and again decreased with 14.5 per cent in 2019/20.

4. CHALLENGES WITH THE QUARTERLY RELEASE

The current crime statistics dissemination process includes presentation of the crime statistics at various structures prior to public release. These include:

- National Crime Combating Forum (NCCF)
- National Management Forum (NMF)
- Minister of Police
- Justice, Crime Prevention and Security (JCPS) Director Generals' committee
- JCPS Cabinet committee
- Cabinet
- Portfolio Committee on Police
- Media briefing

There are various challenges associated to current dissemination process, including:

- Cumbersome process
- Alignment of all committees' diaries
- Statistics Act policy (same time access to the statistics)
- Uncertainty regarding responsibility for crime statistics dissemination policy (SAPS or Ministry)

There are also various specific risks associated to the quarterly release of crime statistics, including:

- Inability to meet deadlines due to protracted dissemination processes, such as -
 - Non-adherence to National Instructions and Standing Orders by station personnel in terms of accurate registration of crime and timelines for transfer of dockets
 - Dependency of extraction of statistics on synchronisation process
 - Obtaining, processing and assessment of crime data
- Insufficient Crime Information Management and Analysis Centre (CIMAC) officials at stations to conduct crime data quality assurance and analysis
- Limited to statistical numbers with no thorough explanation of the crime dynamics
- High likelihood of misinterpretation of the quarterly statistics
- Arrangement processes with various committees

According to the SAPS, the following mitigation actions can address these risks:

- Data integrity responsibility to be built into Annual Performance Agreement of commanders at all levels of policing
- Additional capacity for CIMAC at station level and Crime Registrar at both provincial and national levels
- Simplification of release processes



5. KEY ISSUES FOR CONSIDERATION BY PARLIAMENT

The Portfolio Committee on Police could consider the following issues during deliberations on the first quarter of 2020/21 crime statistics:

Lessons learnt during lockdown

- 1) The lockdown restrictions have a significant impact on the crime statistics, making analysis and comparison to the same period of the previous year difficult or impossible. How will the SAPS approach this in their analyses at the end of the 2020/21 financial year?
- 2) What lessons has SAPS learnt about the impact of the lockdown restrictions on the patterns and causative factors in crime?
- 3) Will the SAPS adapt their strategies to combat crime based on the lessons learnt?
- 4) Crime patterns are expected to normalise with the easing of lockdown restrictions. Will the SAPS be able to contain the gains made during the lockdown?

Status of Integrated Case Docket Management System (ICDMS)

Capturing crimes on the CAS/ICDMS is the first crucial step in ensuring reliable crime statistics. The ICDMS has been plagued by various challenges and delays. As such, the Committee should request the Department to report on the status of the implementation of the ICDMS countrywide. Specifically -

- 1) What is the number of police stations that have implemented (and are using) the system?
- 2) What are the current challenges with the further rollout and implementation of the ICDMS?
- 3) When will the Case Administration System (CAS) be phased out?

Unfounded cases/unverified statistics

- 1) Do the crime statistics contain unfounded cases?
- 2) Did the SAPS verify all quarterly statistics prior to release?
- 3) Were the first quarter statistics for 2020/21 verified and certified by the Statistician-General?
- 4) If so, why did the SAPS include unfounded cases as counts for crimes against women and children?

Use of population ratios

- 1) Although the SAPS indicated that StatsSA calculated the ratio (per 100 000 people), the SAPS must still indicate which population data set was used for the first quarter ratios of contact crime.
- 2) The Committee should request the SAPS to use both raw figures and ratios per 100 000 people for all crime categories.

Crime Statistics Data Dissemination Policy

- 1) The Committee should request the Department to indicate whether the Crime Statistics Data Dissemination Policy has been developed. If so, the Committee should request the Department to indicate who drafted the policy and request a copy of the policy paper.

Resourcing and personnel

- 1) The Committee should seek assurance that the necessary attention has been given to ensure stability and sustainability within the Crime Research and Statistics Unit of the SAPS.
- 2) Does the Department have sufficient capacity in the Crime Information and Analysis Centre (CIMAC) to conduct regular and sufficient crime analysis? If not, what approach is applied to increase the capacity of the CIMAC?



- 3) What role does the Research Division of the SAPS play in docket analysis?
- 4) Do station managers understand the functions of CIMAC and are CIMAC products utilised?
- 5) Do station managers understand the importance of fieldwork for CIMAC officers?
- 6) What is the link between CIMAC and Crime Intelligence?
- 7) Are issues of data integrity discussed at Provincial Crime Combatting Forum (PCCF) and Station Crime Combatting Forum (SCCF) meetings?
- 1) Are CIMAC officials used more effectively in urban and metropolitan areas, as opposed to rural areas? If so, the Department should explain the reasons for the under-utilisation of CIMAC officials at rural stations.
- 2) The Department should indicate the most prominent challenges that influence the service delivery of CIMAC, like vehicle shortages (to conduct fieldwork), a lack of computer equipment, cellular phones, cameras, office space and the non-availability of mainframe connections.

Underreporting of crime and subjective capturing

- 1) The Committee should request the SAPS to indicate the steps taken to encourage communities to report all crimes, especially those prone to underreporting such as sexual offences and housebreakings and home robberies.
- 2) How does the SAPS ensure that crime is captured objectively?

Police performance using statistics alone

There are several challenges in using crime statistics as a measurement of performance. This measurement can lead to a manipulation of statistics and thus false over/underperformance.

In 2018, the Civilian Secretariat for Police Service² stated that the number of violent crimes reported at police stations was used as a measure of that station's performance and that this had the impact of:

- Holding SAPS accountable for things they do not have control over, including unemployment rates, inequality, children growing up without father figures, public areas not designed to be safe, and other socio-economic factors.
- Giving SAPS an incentive not to report or to under-report certain categories of crime.
- Allowing SAPS to ignore petty offences as these have not entered the reporting domain or the performance indices.

The Committee may want to request the following from SAPS:

- 1) Has the SAPS adapted its approach to measuring the performance of police stations on crime statistics?
- 2) The SAPS should indicate what steps are taken to prevent the manipulation of crime statistics at station level and what other factors are used to determine the performance of police stations.³
- 3) Are there systems in place to ensure that police stations take petty crimes seriously and to de-escalate offences committed by youth in particular, as this is often the early stages of anti-social behaviour?
- 4) What is the status of implementation of the 2016 White Paper on Safety and Security to ensure a holistic approach to crime prevention and crime fighting?

² CSPS(2018)

³ Faull, A (2010).



6. REFERENCES

Armstrong, A (2014). *Our police fights stats, not crime, the Commission of Inquiry into policing in Khayelitsha heard this week*. Published on the GroundUp website on 20 March 2014. [Internet] Available from: <http://www.groundup.org.za/article/saps-fight-stats-not-crime_1631/> [Accessed on 25 May 2017].

Civilian Secretariat for Police Service (CSPS). *Analysis of the SAPS 2017/18 crime stats: A Civilian Secretariat Perspective* dated 24 October 2018.

De Kock, C, Kriegler, A and Shaw, M (2015). *A citizen's guide to SAPS crime statistics: 1994 to 2015*. [Internet] Available from: <http://www.criminology.uct.ac.za/sites/default/files/image_tool/images/225/CRI_pdf_Optimised-Citizen%27s%20guide%20to%20the%20SAPS%20stats.pdf> [Accessed on 26 May 2017].

De Kock, C (2017). *Presentation to Portfolio Committee on Police on 31st May 2017. The Compilation of Crime Statistics*. Information provided.

Faull, A (2010). Missing the target: When measuring performance undermines police effectiveness. Published in SA Crime Quarterly. [Internet] Available from: <https://journals.co.za/docserver/fulltext/iscrime/2010/31/iscrime_n31_a4.pdf?expires=1597238289&id=id&accname=quest&checksum=71D5273B8528E4F6D523239E8BCC96DB> [Accessed on 12 August 2020].

Patel, K (2013). ISS: Were SA crime stats cooked deliberately? Published on the Daily Maverick website on 07 November 2013. [Internet] Available from: <<https://www.dailymaverick.co.za/article/2013-11-07-iss-were-sa-crime-stats-cooked-deliberately/#.WSawB2y1skE>> [Accessed on 25 May 2017].

SAPS (2019). South African Police Service Annual Crime Report 2018/19.

SAPS (2020). Police Recorded Crime Statistics 1st quarter of the 2020/21 financial year (April to June 2020).