



20 August 2020

2019/20 SAPS CRIME STATISTICS ANALYSIS

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1. INTRODUCTION

The Minister of Police released the 2019/20 crime statistics during a Portfolio Committee on Police meeting on 31 July 2020. Members raised a concern that the short notice of the release, did not afford sufficient time to go through the documents to enable fruitful engagement and scrutiny of the crime statistics. The Committee resolved to schedule another meeting on the 2019/20 crime statistics.

Crime statistics represent the number of crime charges or counts and not the number of registered case dockets, because a case docket can contain a single count of a particular offence or multiple counts of an offence or several offences. When cases are investigated and the collected evidence suggests that a crime did not actually occur, such cases are closed as unfounded. The unfounded cases are excluded from the reported crime statistics in each annual crime statistics publication.

The SAPS focusses on the raw numbers of counts per crime category during reporting and not population ratios per hundred thousand. The ratios are important to compare crimes on an equal basis between the provinces and internationally. The lack of population ratios for crimes are problematic as provincial populations vary significantly from each other. As such, when a province with a low-density population has one less incident in a crime category, the percentage decreases significantly compared to a province with a high-density population. The ratios were last reported in 2017/18. A key challenge in reporting crime ratios is the use of the appropriate population figures.

The SAPS and Statistics South Africa (StatsSA) have been working together since 2011 to improve the quality of the crime statistics. This collaboration was formalised by a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) signed in April 2015. The Statistician-General (SG) constituted a Clearance Committee to evaluate and authenticate the quality of crime statistics in line with the South African Statistical Quality



Assessment Framework (SASQAF). The 2018/19 and 2019/20 crime statistics were compliant to the SAQAF and were declared official statistics (no longer national statistics).

In compliance with a 2016 Cabinet decision to increase the frequency of publication, the Minister of Police announced the quarterly release of crime statistics and will commence from August 2020 for the first quarter of the 2020/21 financial year (April to June 2020). As part of the quarterly release, the SAPS must publish its Crime Statistics Data Dissemination Policy to inform the public about the programme for the quarterly crime statistics releases, as well as the terms and conditions applicable to the quarterly statistics.¹ The quarterly release will enable improved oversight from all spheres of society. Government will be able to monitor key targets, in particular with regard to the reduction of reported serious crimes, as determined by the Medium Term Strategic Framework (MTSF). Parliament will have a greater opportunity to increase its oversight function over the SAPS on their service delivery performance. Furthermore, communities and especially Community Policing Forums (CPFs) will be able to access specific data of use to them.

The reliability of crime statistics is often called into question and the crime statistics are vulnerable to many challenges. In the past, the SAPS used outdated population figures to illustrate crime by ratio, which affected the extent to which certain crimes increased, while exaggerating the decreases in other serious crime categories.² Crime statistics are also vulnerable to subjective decisions made by officers required to capture statistics.³ This was the testimony of Brigadier Nkoshilo Seimela at the Khayelitsha Commission of Inquiry. The Brigadier stated that officers “sometimes fight figures and not crime” as an explanation for why police officers sometimes refuse to open a criminal case. A key disadvantage of the crime statistics is that it only shows reported crime and there is strong evidence that many crimes, especially sexual offence, are significantly underreported.

The categorisation of crime used by the SAPS in the dissemination of national crime statistics has also been criticised in the past. Analysts, like De Kock, Kriegler and Shaw⁴ argue that “many changes in crime trends have little to do with the police, but rather broad socio-economic or cultural factors... [and that it] make little sense to hold the police responsible for them”.⁵ Furthermore, a senior crime analyst, Dr Andrew Faull points out several challenges in using crime statistics as a key measurement of performance. This can lead to a manipulation of statistics and thus false over/underperformance.⁶ Crime statistics should inform resource allocation at stations showing an increase in crime.

A systematic analysis should be done to measure crime across the Criminal Justice System (CJS) Value Chain in order to provide a more accurate reflection of whether South Africa is winning the fight against crime. This analysis would assess the percentage of reported crimes, especially murders and sexual offences, which make it to court, in which a guilty verdict is obtained and the perpetrator sentenced to imprisonment. Reading the SAPS crime statistics in isolation and without this additional data does not provide a true reflection.

¹ SAPS (2016).

² Patel, K (2013).

³ Armstrong, A (2014).

⁴ De Kock, Kriegler and Shaw (2015).

⁵ De Kock, Kriegler and Shaw (2015).

⁶ Faull, A (2010).



2. OVERALL CRIME SITUATION FOR 2019/20

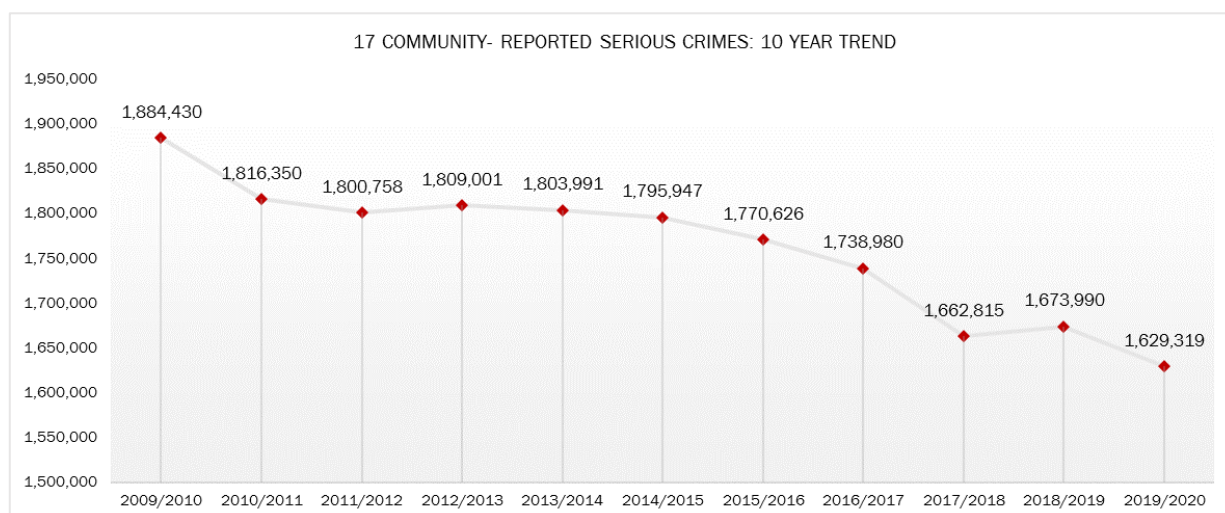
Overall crime decreased by 2.7 per cent in 2019/20 compared to the previous financial year. During this period, 1 629 319 serious crimes were reported to the South African Police Service (SAPS), of which 38 per cent (621 282 cases) were contact crimes (crimes against the person). **Contact crime** had a slight increase of 0.7 per cent in 2019/20. The largest increase was in **robbery with aggravating circumstances** (2.8 per cent increase), which includes so-called trio-crimes (carjacking, and robbery at residential and non-residential premises). Carjacking increased by 13.3 per cent in 2019/20 compared to the previous financial year. Robbery at residential premises decreased by 5.8% over this period and robbery at non-residential premises increased by 3.3 per cent.

Total sexual offences increased by 1.7 per cent compared to the previous financial year. In 2019/20, 53 293 sexual offenses were reported in South Africa. Rape and sexual assault increased by 1.7 per cent and 4.2 percent, respectively. Together rape and sexual assault account for 93 per cent of all sexual offences.

All subcategories of **property related crimes** decreased in 2019/20 and recorded an overall decrease of 5.2 per cent. **Other serious crimes** also decrease by 4 per cent compared to the previous financial year.

Crime detected as a result of police action decreased by 14.5 per cent, which is a worrying trend. In 2018/19, this category also decreased by 21.8 per cent compared to 2017/18. In 2019/20, the decrease was most noticeable in the subcategory: detection of drug related crime, which decreased by a significant 26.7 per cent. In 2019, the SAPS attributed the decrease to the 2018 Constitutional Court judgement on the use, cultivation or possession of cannabis for personal consumption in private.

The figure below shows a steady downward trend of **community-reported serious crimes** over the past decade, despite an increase in 2018/19.

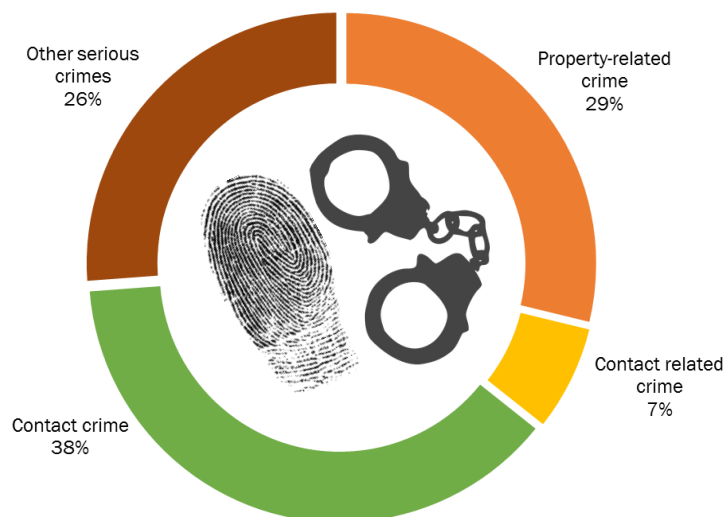


Source: SAPS (2020)



The figure below shows the proportional distribution of the four main categories of the 17 community-reported serious crimes in 2019/20. It shows that contact crimes were proportionally the largest contributor at 38 per cent, followed by property-related crimes (29 per cent) and other serious crime (26 per cent). Contact-related crimes accounted for only 7 per cent of crime during 2019/20.

Contact crime accounted for 38% of crime in 2019/20



Source: SAPS (2020)

The table below shows the top five police stations contributing to serious crimes during 2019/20. Most of these stations reported a decrease in crime figures compared to the previous financial year. Despite these decreases, the top five stations are the same as in the previous financial year.

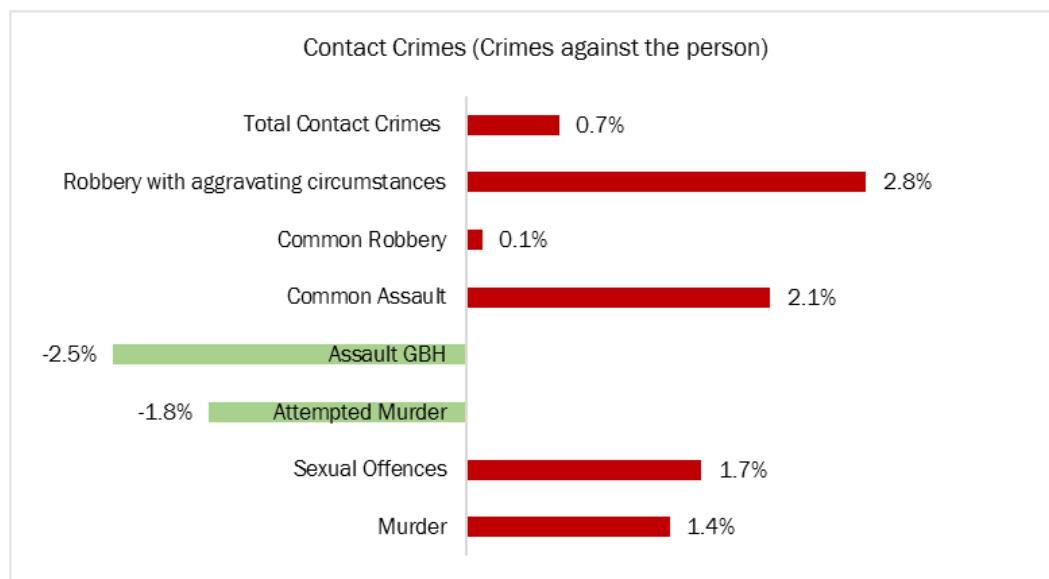
Table 1: 17 Community reported serious crimes: top five stations

Ranking	Police station	Number of crimes	Increase/decrease in 2019/20
1.	Cape Town Central (WC)	12 801	-6.9 per cent
2.	Mitchells Plain (WC)	10 811	-4.9 per cent
3.	Johannesburg Central (GP)	10 639	-12.8 per cent
4.	Honeydew (GP)	10 214	2.3 per cent
5.	Park Road (FS)	9 688	-9.2 per cent

Source: SAPS (2020)

3. CONTACT CRIMES

Contact crimes accounted for 38 per cent of serious crime in 2019/20. These are the most feared crimes as the victim and perpetrator are in close proximity to each other. The figure below shows that contact crime had a slight increase of 0.7 per cent in 2019/20 compared to the previous financial year. Most subcategories showed an increase, except assault to cause grievous bodily harm (GBH) and attempted murder, which decreased by 2.5 per cent and 1.8 per cent, respectively. Robbery with aggravating circumstances increased by 2.8 per cent, which is the largest increase in contact crimes.



Source: SAPS (2020)

Murder and sexual offences, which are arguably the most feared crimes, increased by 1.4 per cent and 1.7 per cent, respectively.

3.1. Murder

Data on crime rates are difficult to compare internationally because the definition of crime categories differ significantly. However, comparisons for murder is possible and it is believed that murder rates are rising worldwide, despite a decline in Europe and Asia.⁷ On a list of 216 countries comparing murder rates to 100 000 people -

- South Africa has the 11th highest murder rate worldwide, with 35.0 murders to 100 000 people.
- Honduras has the world's highest murder rate, with 90.4 homicides per 100 000 people. Honduras also has the highest incidence of firearm-related deaths in the world.
- Venezuela has the second highest murder rate with 53.7 murders per 100 000 people.

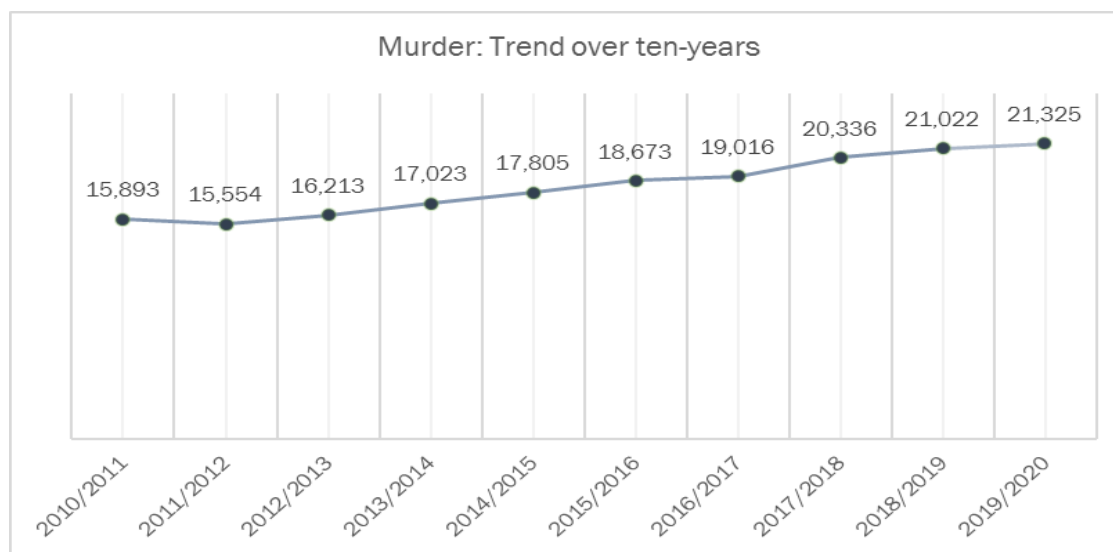
The United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) published its **2019 Global Study on Homicide**.⁸ The study found that organised crime accounted for more deaths than all armed conflicts combined. Criminal activity causes many more deaths than conflicts and terrorism combined.

- The 464,000 victims of homicide worldwide surpasses the 89,000 killed in armed conflicts and the 26,000 fatal victims of terrorist violence in 2017.
- Since the start of the twenty-first century, organised crime has resulted in roughly the same number of killings as all armed conflicts across the world combined.

Murder is the most reliable indicator of violent crime. In 2019/20, South Africa recorded 21 325 murders, which represents a 1.4 percent increase compared to the previous financial year. The figure below indicates the trend for murder over a ten-year period and shows a steady upward trend. On average, 58 people are murdered daily in South Africa.

⁷ <https://www.worldatlas.com/articles/murder-rates-by-country.html>

⁸ <https://www.unodc.org/documents/data-and-analysis/gsh/Booklet1.pdf>



The table below gives the top five police stations contributing to murder in 21019/20. Nyanga police station reported a 36 per cent decrease in its murder rate in 2019/20 than in 2018/19, which is 104 less murders in 2019/20 than in 2018/19.

Table 2: Difference in top five stations contributing to murder in 2019/20

Ranking	Police station	Number of murders	Increase/Decrease in 2019/20	Increase/Decrease in 2019/20 (per cent)
1.	Delft (WC)	265	18	7.3 per cent
2.	Khayelitsha (WC)	251	30	13.6 per cent
3.	Inanda (KZN)	231	22	10.5 per cent
4.	Umlazi (KZN)	212	32	17.8 per cent
5.	Nyanga (WC)	185	-104	-36.0 percent

Source: SAPS (2019 and 2020)

The Delft police station recorded the highest number of murders in 2019/20 (265 murders), which is an increase of 7.3 per cent compared to the previous financial year. The Khayelitsha police station recorded an increase of 13.6 per cent and is the police station with the second highest number of murders in South Africa in 2019/20. The Umlazi police station moved up from number seven in 2018/19 to number four in 2019/20, with an increase of 32 murders (17.8 per cent increase).

Causative factors

According to the SAPS, in 2019/20, arguments were the leading causative factor in murder, attempted murder (2 974 cases), assault GBH (31 699) and common assault (37 876) cases. Domestic violence as a causative factor accounted for 21 344 common assaults, 14 907 assault GBH, 2 974 attempted murders and 3 447 murders.



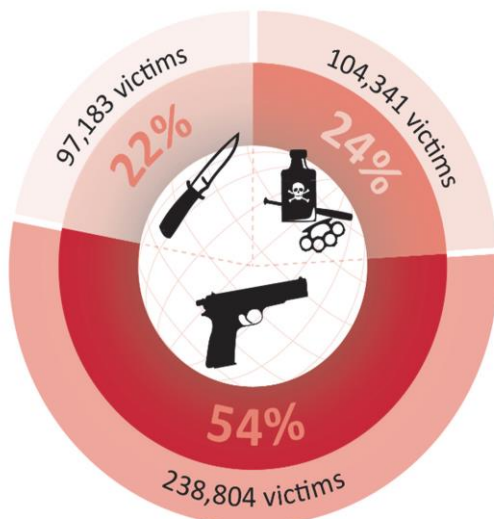
Place of occurrence

According to the SAPS, the most murders (9 714 cases), attempted murders (7 735 cases) and assault GBH (30 272) cases were committed in a public place.⁹ Most cases of common assault (33 933) and rape (18 231) occurred in a residence.

Instruments used in murder

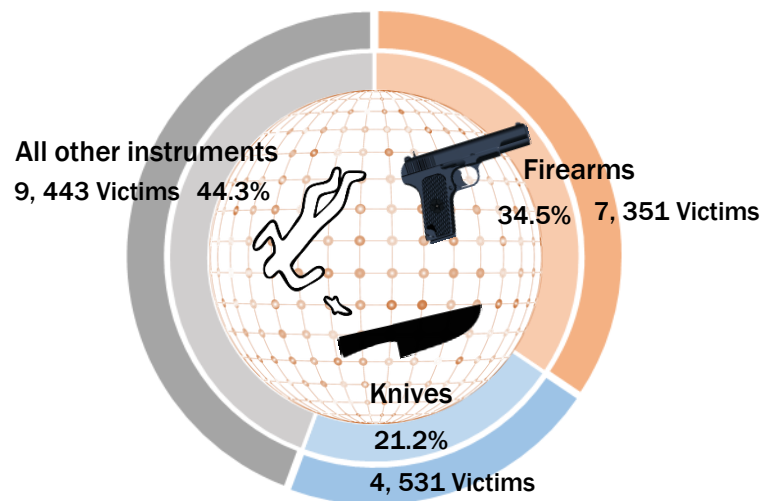
According to the UNODC, “shooting has long been the most common cause of death in homicide cases worldwide. In 2017, slightly more than half of all homicides were carried out with firearms, whereas only one fifth involved sharp objects”.¹⁰ Further, the UNODC found that “some countries with high proportions of firearm-related deaths tend to have high rates of homicide, which may indicate that firearms and high homicide levels are linked”.¹¹ In South Africa, firearms were used in 34.5 per cent of murders and knives accounted for 21.2 per cent of murders. The figure below shows that other instruments accounted for 44.3 per cent of murders, which include instruments such as body parts, blunt instruments and drugs.

Firearms were involved in more than half of all homicides worldwide in 2017



Source: UNODC (2019)

Firearms were the single most used weapon to commit murder in SA for 2019/20



Source: SAPS (2020)

3.1.1. Murder of members of the police

Between 2014/15 and 2017/18, murder of police members increased from 81 to 85 murders. This trend started to decrease in 2018/19, when 77 police members were killed and continued downwards in 2019/20 with a decrease of 5.2 per cent (73 members were killed).

However, in 2019/20 the number of off-duty police killings decreased by 20 per cent (38 members killed; 11 counts less), while murders of on-duty members increased by 23.3 per cent (35 members killed; 7 counts increase). Most on-duty police members were killed while attending to a complaint. For half of

⁹ Public place include streets, open fields, recreational centres, parks, beaches, parking areas and abandoned buildings.

¹⁰ <https://www.unodc.org/documents/data-and-analysis/gsh/Booklet1.pdf>

¹¹ <https://www.unodc.org/documents/data-and-analysis/gsh/Booklet1.pdf>



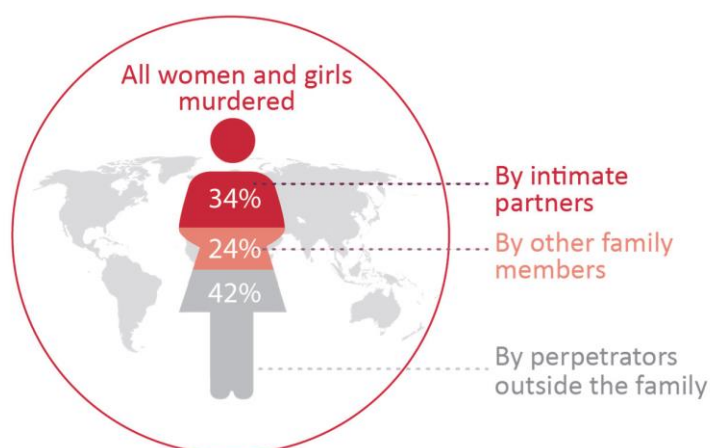
all off-duty police members killed in 2019/20 (19 from 38) there were no causative factors identified. The SAPS stated that these members were found dead with no witnesses.

3.1.2. Violence on farms and small holdings

In 2019/20, murder on farms and smallholdings increased by 4.3% (49 murders), which is two counts more than the previous financial year. In 2017/18, 62 murders were recorded on farms and smallholdings which decreased by 24.2 per cent in 2018/19 (15 counts less with a total of 47 murders). During the commission of farm murders, other crimes occurred, listed as robbery at residential premises (12 counts), attempted murder (4 counts), malicious damage to property, kidnapping, attempted robbery, carjacking and general theft with 1 count for each.

3.2. Gender based violence and femicide

According to the UNOCD, “women were the victims in 82 per cent of homicides carried out by intimate partners during 2017, which confirms how women continue to bear the greatest burden of victimization in the context of intimate partner violence”. The figure below shows that worldwide, intimate partners and other family members together account for 58% of perpetrators of murder of women and girls.



Source: UNOCD (2019)

Interestingly, the UNOCD found that in Europe, men who kill their intimate partners have a markedly different profile to men who kill outside relationships. “They tend to have better jobs and enjoy a higher standard of living than other perpetrators, and often have no criminal background. One study found that men who killed their partners were better educated than other homicide perpetrators and had fewer gaps in their employment history”.¹²

The SAPS provided statistics for crimes against women and children for 2019/20, but the figures included unfounded cases. When cases are investigated and the collected evidence suggests that a crime did not actually occur, such cases are closed as unfounded.

According to the SAPS, the international best practices and norms when it comes to disposal of cases as unfounded are technically excluded from the crime figures. The charges are verified

¹² <https://www.unodc.org/documents/data-and-analysis/gsh/Booklet1.pdf>



in terms of National Instruction 13/2017 to establish the authenticity and accuracy of the manner of disposal. The verification is necessary in order to ensure the integrity of statistics and to deter the improper disposal of reported cases in the organisation.

It is unclear why the SAPS presented unverified statistics for crimes against women and children.

As murder is the most reliable indicator of violent crime, only this category will be used for crimes against women and children. In 2019/20, 2 695 women were murdered, which is a decrease of 2.7 per cent compared to the previous financial year. A total of 943 children were murdered, which is a decrease of 7 per cent. However, not all murders of women can be counted as femicide, as the SAPS does not provide the breakdown of perpetrators. However, in a breakdown of causative factors for murder, the SAPS stated that 1 482 murders were domestic related.

Similarly, domestic violence as a causative factor in contact crime reveals that it accounts for-

- 21 344 Common assault cases
- 14 907 Assault GBH cases
- 923 Attempted murder cases
- 1 482 Murder cases

A ten-year trend analysis of sexual offences reflects a steady decrease from 2010/11 to 2016/17, where after it increased over the past three financial years (2017/18 to 2019/20). In 2019/20, 53 293 sexual offences were recorded in South Africa, of which 80 per cent were rapes (42 289 rapes). Together rape and sexual assault account for 93.9 per cent of total sexual offences.

Rape and sexual assault account for 93.9 per cent of total sexual offences.

In 2019/20 the Inanda police station recorded the highest number of sexual offences (351 cases), followed by Umlazi (335) and Delft (291 cases).

Table 3: Top five police stations contributing to sexual offences in 2019/20

Ranking	Police station	Number of Sexual offences	Increase/Decrease in 2019/20
1.	Inanda (KZN)	351	-8.8 per cent
2.	Umlazi (KZN)	335	11.3 per cent
3.	Delft (WC)	291	4.7 per cent
4.	Mthatha (EC)	281	18.6 per cent
5.	Plessislaer(KZN)	273	33.2 per cent

Source: SAPS (2020)

Sexual assault increased from 7 437 counts in 2018/19 to 7 749 counts in 2019/20, which is an increase of 4.2 per cent. Between 2010/11 and 2014/15, sexual offences showed a general downward trend, which increased sharply in 2015/16 and continued to rise. Attempted sexual offences and contact sexual offences decreased by 3.3 per cent and 6 per cent, respectively.



3.3. Attempted murder, assault GBH, common assault and common robbery

Attempted murder and assault with the intent to cause grievous bodily harm (assault GBH) decreased by 1.8 per cent and 2.5 per cent, respectively. As in the case of murder, arguments and misunderstandings was the most common motive for attempted murders (2 974 out of 18 635), as well as assault GBH (31 699 out of 166 720).

Common assault and common robbery increased by 2.1 per cent and 0.1 per cent, respectively. Since 2010/11, common assault has showed a downward trend, but had a sharp increase in 2018/19. Similarly, common robbery decreased from 2014/15, but spiked in 2018/19.

3.4. Robbery with aggravating circumstances

Robbery with aggravating circumstances reflects a steady upward trend over the past decade. In 2019/20, 143 990 cases of robbery with aggravating circumstances were reported, which is an increase of 2.8 per cent compared to the previous financial year.

Trio crimes increased by 2.6 per cent in 2019/20 compared to the previous financial year. In 2019/20, there were 59 943 reported cases of carjacking, robbery at residential and non-residential premises, which is 1 495 cases more than the previous year. Although most of the top 30 police stations contributing to trio crimes are in Gauteng, three out of the five top police stations contributing to trio crimes are in KwaZulu-Natal. The top five stations are:

1. Honeydew (GP): 636 Trio crimes; increased by 15.4 per cent.
2. Nyanga (WC): 542 Trio crimes; decreased by 7.5 per cent.
3. Pinetown (KZN): 447 Trio crimes; increased by 33.8 per cent.
4. Inanda (KZN): 422 Trio crimes; increased by 48.1 per cent.
5. Umlazi (KZN): 420 Trio crimes; increased by 18.3 per cent.

Carjacking increased by 13.3 per cent in 2019/20 compared to the previous financial year. The most common type of vehicle hijacked is sedans/hatchbacks, followed by bakkies. The majority of the top 30 police stations contributing to carjacking recorded significant increases compared to the previous financial year.

1. Nyanga (WC): 383 carjackings; increase of 40.3 per cent.
2. Mamelodi East (GP): 230 carjackings; increase of 67.9 per cent.
3. Philippi East (WC): 214 carjackings; increase of 116.2 per cent.
4. Booyens (GP): 206 carjackings; increase of 19.8 per cent.
5. Harare (WC): 186 carjackings; increase of 42.0 per cent.

The number of robberies at residential premises decreased by 5.8 per cent in 2019/20 compared to the previous financial year. The top five police stations contributing to robberies at residential premises are:

1. Honeydew (GP): 341 cases; increase of 3.6 per cent.
2. Sandton (GP): 205 cases; decrease of 7.2 per cent.
3. Douglasdale (GP): 191 cases; increase of 41.5 per cent.
4. Inanda (KZN): 184 cases; increase of 46.0 per cent.
5. Diepsloot (GP): 183 cases; decrease of 9.4 per cent.



The number of robberies at non-residential premises increased by 3.3 per cent in 2019/20 compared to the previous financial year. Many police stations in the top 30 contributing stations to robbery at non-residential premises recorded significant increases, like Thohoyandou that recorded an increase of 84.4 per cent, followed by Mankweng (61.0 per cent increase) and Kagiso (56.1 per cent increase). The most common businesses robbed are general dealers, spaza/tuck shops and liquor outlets.

Firearms were the most common instrument used in all trio crimes. The second most used instrument was a knife in robbery at residential and non-residential premises and a body part in carjacking. Most robberies at residential premises occurred between 00:00 and 02:59, with most cases reported on a Saturday.

In 2017/18, there were 238 cash-in-transit robberies, which was a significant spike of 56.6 per cent compared to the 152 such robberies in 2016/17. Since then, the number of cash-in-transit robberies has decreased. In 2019/20, there were 164 cash-in-transit robberies, which is a decrease of 10.4 per cent in comparison to 2018/19. Almost half of the top 30 police stations contributing to cash-in-transit robberies (14 police stations) did not have any such robberies in 2018/19.

The number of truck hijackings increased from 1 182 in 2018/19 to 1 202 in 2019/20, which is an increase of 1.7 per cent. Many police stations recorded significant increases in truck hijacking cases. For example, the Jeppe police station (GP) recorded 10 truck hijackings, which is a 400 per cent increase compared to the two trucks hijacked in the previous financial year.

4. PROPERTY-RELATED CRIMES

The total property-related crimes decreased with 25 937 counts, or by 5.2 per cent in 2019/20 compared to the previous financial year. The reported decrease is for all subcategories of property-related crime in 2019/20. **Burglary at residential premises** shows the largest decrease of 6.7 per cent in property-related crimes when compared to the previous financial year. In 2019/20, the SAPS reported 14 906 less burglaries at residential premises. Notably, robbery at residential premises also decreased by 5.8 per cent over the same period.

Stock theft has shown a steady increase since 2015/16, but has decreased in 2019/20 with 1 254 counts less, which is a decrease of 4.2 per cent. In 2019/20, 29 672 cases of stock theft were reported, during which mostly sheep were stolen (62 923 sheep), followed by cattle (39 115 cattle) and goats (31 344 goats). The majority of stock theft occurred in a kraal (at farm) (28.9 per cent), followed by a veld (grazing camp on farm) (27.9 per cent) and abattoir (19.5 per cent). Stock theft has a significant impact on rural communities and economies.

Many subsistence farmers depend on livestock for food and trade. In addition, commercial farmers experience significant financial losses on the loss of the animal and future earnings in meat and wool production. In 2019, the SAPS identified stock theft as part of the Crime Intelligence Corporate Renewal (turnaround) Strategy and that it forms part of threat-based impact driven operations. The nature of stock theft needs rapid deployment and a threat management system.



5. OTHER SERIOUS CRIMES

In 2019/20, the SAPS reported 426 569 *other serious crimes*, which is a decrease of 4 per cent compared to 2018/19. The decrease is largely attributed to a 5.9 per cent decrease in *all theft not mentioned elsewhere* (also known as ordinary or other theft).

Commercial crime had a slight increase of 0.1 per cent. However, specific police stations in the top 30 police stations contributing to commercial crime recorded significant increases. Johannesburg Central police station had the highest number of commercial crime in 2019/20 (1 281 cases), which is an increase of 11.6 per cent compared to the previous year. Similarly, the second highest contributing police station was Sandton, which recorded an 18.9 per cent increase in 2019/20 compared to the previous financial year.

6. CRIME DETECTED AS A RESULT OF POLICE ACTION

Note: 'Crime detected as a result of police action' is the only crime category in which an increase is a positive and a decrease a negative. An increase indicates that the police make progress in their combatting of crimes within this crime category. It refers to police action that led to arrests made during police operations.

In 2019/20, the worrisome declining trend in *crime detected as a result of police action* continued. In 2018/19, the SAPS reported a decrease of 21.8 per cent and in the 2019/20 financial year, the decrease was 14.5 per cent. Since 2010/11, *crime detected as a result of police action* increased significantly up until 2017/18, and thereafter it started to decrease. In terms of subcategories, **unlawful use or possession of drugs and unlawful dealing in drugs** decreased by 26.7 per cent. In terms of counts, the SAPS reported 49 105 less than in the previous financial year. The figures indicate the number of cases and not the quantities or types of drugs confiscated. In 2019, the SAPS attributed the decrease to the 2018 Constitutional Court judgement on the use, cultivation or possession of cannabis for personal consumption in private.

Sexual offences detected as a result of police action increased from 7 976 cases in 2018/19 to 9 614 cases in 2019/20, which is an increase of 20.5 per cent. In the current climate of gender-based violence and femicide in South Africa, this is a positive trend and should continue in future.

7. CRIME STATISTICS METHODOLOGY

Compilation of crime statistics

Crimes are recorded when they are reported to the SAPS or detected by the police. The process starts by opening a docket and registering the information on the crime administration system (CAS) or Integrated Case Docket Management System (ICDMS) (the latter will replace the CAS). A code is then allocated to the crime category and the crime statistics are derived from this administrative data collection process. The crime codes are aggregated into daily summary of serious crime codes used for crime statistics reporting purposes. The crime statistics focuses on 21 serious crimes. The crimes are grouped into two sets based on the collection approach, namely community-reported serious crimes and crimes detected as a result of police action.



Crime counting rules

The national crime statistics represent the number of crime charges or counts and not the number of registered case dockets. The docket is the source document for recording an offence.¹³ A case docket can contain a single count of a particular offence or multiple counts of an offence or several offences. The offences can involve one victim or complainant or multiple victims. In case multiple offences are committed during a single crime incident, each offence will be recorded in addition to the primary offence. These additional counts also form part of the crime statistics (e.g. gang rape and common robbery).¹⁴

This often results in incorrect data capturing, as all offences that occurred within a single crime incident are not always captured on the CAS/ICDMS. This means that underreporting can occur if regular data integrity checks are not performed by the Crime Information Management and Analysis Centre (CIMAC) managers at station level.

Crime data quality management

As stated above, the CIMAC managers at station level are tasked to continually conduct quality checks on daily reported crimes. This process will be monitored and evaluated from provincial and national levels through monthly and quarterly quality checks to improve the collection of reliable and comprehensive crime statistics.

In addition to this process, the clearance committee will, in accordance with the Memorandum of Understanding between Statistics South Africa (Stats SA) and the SAPS, assess the quality of crime statistics utilising the South African Statistics Quality Assessment Framework (SASQAF) before each annual release of such statistics.

Dissemination

In compliance with a 2016 Cabinet decision to increase the frequency of publication, the Minister of Police announced the quarterly release of crime statistics and will commence from August 2020 for the first quarter of the 2020/21 financial year. The quarterly release will enable Government to monitor key targets, in particular with regard to the reduction of reported serious crimes, as determined by the Medium Term Strategic Framework (MTSF). This will also afford Parliament an opportunity to increase its oversight function over the SAPS on their service delivery performance.

In 2016, the SAPS stated that a Crime Statistics Data Dissemination Policy will be developed to inform the public about a programme for the quarterly crime statistics releases, as well as the terms and conditions applicable to the quarterly statistics.¹⁵ The quarterly release of crime statistics further promotes the timeliness dimension of the SASQAF, which is derived from the United Nations General Data Dissemination Standard (GDDS).

Memorandum of understanding with Statistics South Africa

The SAPS and StatsSA have been working together since 2011 to improve the quality of the crime statistics. This collaboration was formalised when the SAPS and StatsSA signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) in April 2015 to further improve the quality and integrity of crime statistics. The MoU focusses on the following services provided by StatsSA:¹⁶

¹³ SAPS (2016).

¹⁴ SAPS (2016).

¹⁵ SAPS (2016).

¹⁶ Nhleko, N (2015).



- Provision of technical support to SAPS in its production of policing data;
- Supporting SAPS in consolidating crime statistical definitions and counting rules to produce data for quality statistics;
- Forming a Joint Working Party to implement projects for collaboration in the production of identified data; and
- Supporting SAPS to monitor and forecast trends in the country's crime statistics.

The Statistician-General (SG) constituted a Clearance Committee to evaluate and authenticate the quality of crime statistics in line with the South African Statistical Quality Assessment Framework (SASQAF). The main focus of the assessment was on the processes of compiling the crime statistics using selected indicators within the following SASQAF dimensions, namely: Methodological soundness; Accuracy; Comparability and Coherence; and Integrity and Timeliness. During 2015/16, an assessment of the SASQAF measures not previously done were performed, including Relevance, Accessibility and Interpretability. The 2018/19 crime statistics were compliant to the South African Statistics Quality Assessment Framework (SAQAF) and were declared official statistics (no longer national statistics). The 2019/20 crime statistics was also certified by the SG as official statistics.

Challenges

The accuracy of the national crime statistics came under close scrutiny in 2013 when independent analysts, most notable the Institute for Security Studies (ISS), criticised the SAPS for using **outdated population figures**, which affected the extent to which certain crimes increased, while exaggerating the decreases in other serious crime categories.¹⁷ The ISS argued that the SAPS made a serious statistical and factual error in the changes in the ratios that were presented.¹⁸ The SAPS indicated that the methodology used allows for accurate comparisons of reported crimes even when using different population estimates.

Crime statistics are also vulnerable to **subjective decisions** made by officers required to capture statistics.¹⁹ This was the testimony of Brigadier Nkoshilo Seimela at the Khayelitsha Commission of Inquiry. The Brigadier stated that officers “sometimes fight figures and not crime” as an explanation for why police officers sometimes refuse to open a criminal case. An example cited was an incident when a Khayelitsha resident was robbed of his wallet and cell phone by young men carrying a firearm. The local police officers refused to open a case because “the victim was unable to identify the perpetrators and did not know the serial number of his cell phone.”²⁰

The **categorisation** of crime used by the SAPS in the dissemination of national crime statistics has also been criticised in the past. Analysts, like De Kock, Kriegler and Shaw²¹ argue that a useful approach would be to contextualise the data as one of four broad crime types: less policeable crimes, somewhat policeable crimes, more policeable crimes and police-detected crimes. The authors of the research paper *A citizen's guide to SAPS crime statistics: 1994 to 2015* state that these are broad categories and not necessarily mutually exclusive, but that “many changes in crime trends have little to do with the police, but rather broad socio-economic or cultural factors... [and that it] make little sense to hold the police responsible for them”.²²

¹⁷ Patel, K (2013).

¹⁸ Patel, K (2013).

¹⁹ Armstrong, A (2014).

²⁰ Armstrong, A (2014).

²¹ De Kock, Kriegler and Shaw (2015).

²² De Kock, Kriegler and Shaw (2015).



8. CONCERNS RAISED IN COMMITTEE MEETING OF 31 JULY 2020

During the committee meeting held on 31 July 2020 on the crime statistics, Members raised the following key concerns -

- Halving violent crime necessitates a different approach.
- Lack of effective implementation of the Rural Safety Strategy and impact on rural safety, including attacks on farms and smallholdings.
- Breakdown of the social contract regarding GBVF.
- Discrepancies in the figures for sexual offences, especially rape.
- Conviction of suspects that killed police members.
- Lack of retrieval of firearms and subsequent use in violent crime.
- Definitions of the breakdown of causative reasons for contact crime, including muthi and witchcraft, arguments, acts of retaliation and revenge.
- Need for specialist social workers to assist with rape cases when reported to police stations.
- Need to capacitate Family Violence, Child Protection and Sexual Offences (FCS) Units.
- Differentiation between truck hijacking and malicious damage to property when the truck is set alight.
- Lack of compliance in keeping of domestic violence registers at police stations.
- Unacceptably high rate of murder (58 murders per day in SA).
- Increase in trio crimes, especially carjacking.
- Detective services must be prioritised.

9. KEY ISSUES FOR CONSIDERATION BY PARLIAMENT

The Portfolio Committee on Police could consider the following issues during further deliberations on the 2019/20 crime statistics:

Discrepancy in sexual offences and crimes against women and children: As in the previous financial year, there is a discrepancy in the data on sexual offences and crimes against women and children. The figures include unfounded cases as counts of crime. When cases are investigated and the collected evidence suggests that a crime did not actually occur, such cases are closed as unfounded. This is against international trends and best practice as unfounded cases are technically excluded from the crime figures. The charges are verified in terms of National Instruction 13/2017 to establish the authenticity and accuracy of the manner of disposal. **The verification is necessary in order to ensure the integrity of statistics and to deter the improper disposal of reported cases in the organisation.** The SAPS should explain why they presented unverified statistics for crimes against women and children.

Status of crime statistics: The Statistician-General (SG) constituted a Clearance Committee to evaluate and authenticate the quality of crime statistics in line with the South African Statistical Quality Assessment Framework (SASQAF). The focus of the assessment was on the processes of compiling the crime statistics using selected indicators within the following SASQAF dimensions, namely: Methodological soundness; Accuracy; Comparability and Coherence; and Integrity and Timeliness. The 2018/19 crime statistics were compliant to the SASQAF and were declared official statistics (no longer national statistics). Were the 2019/20 statistics verified and certified by the SG? If so, why did the SAPS include unfounded cases as counts for crimes against women and children?



Methodology- Use of ratios: The SAPS focusses on the raw numbers of counts per serious crime category during reporting. To enhance equitable comparisons of reported crimes across provinces, the 2016/17 and 2017/18 crime report included population ratios per hundred thousand, but only for contact crimes where the target is a person i.e. murder, attempted murder, sexual offences, assault with the intent to cause grievous bodily harm (GBH), common assault and common robbery. This was not repeated in 2018/19 or 2019/20. The ratios are utilised to compare crimes on an equal basis between the provinces and internationally. The aim is to determine the rate of occurrence of crime committed in a given area over a certain period based on a common unit that is measured.

However, the accuracy of the national crime statistics came under close scrutiny in 2013 when independent analysts, most notable the Institute for Security Studies (ISS), criticised the SAPS for using outdated population figures, which affected the extent to which certain crimes increased and thus exaggerated the decreases in other serious crime categories.²³ This was again questioned in 2018 when it became known that the SAPS used the incorrect census data to calculate the population ratios of crime.

The lack of population ratios for crimes are problematic as provincial populations vary significantly from each other. As such, when a province with a low-density population has one less incident in a crime category, the percentage decreases significantly compared to a province with a high-density population.

The Committee should request the SAPS to use both raw figures and ratios per 100 000 people for all crime categories.

International crime recording standards: SAPS aims to move to the adoption of the International Classification of Crime for Statistical Purposes (ICCS). The adoption of the ICCS at the national level will require the attentive translation of offences as defined by national legislation into ICCS categories, with careful consideration of the full act/event descriptions and explanatory notes. The adoption of this international classification will facilitate data integration throughout the CJS value chain (i.e. from SAPS to Correctional Services). This will contribute greatly to the promotion of data sharing as well as enable statistical data to be comparable. The SAPS should indicate the status of this process.

Crime Statistics Data Dissemination Policy: 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.

Quarterly release: In 2016, the Statistician-General recommended that the introduction of quarterly crime statistics should be preceded by an exercise that focusses on a risk analysis and human resource requirements. This would ensure that the production system is both stable and sustainable before actual quarterly publications can occur. Since the SAPS has embarked on the quarterly crime statistics series, these recommendations have presumably been implemented. However, 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. The Committee should ask the Department to indicate whether the release of quarterly crime statistics had any impact on their planning and management of crime trends across the country and in specific areas.

²³ Patel, K (2013).



Community Police Forums: The Committee should request the Department to indicate whether greater focus has been placed on the role of Community Police Forums (CPF) in the fight against crime and whether CPFs are briefed regularly on changing crime patterns in their respective areas.

Application of crime statistics: During a previous engagement on crime statistics by the Portfolio Committee, Dr Chris de Kock stated that crime statistics should be the backbone of crime intelligence.

- The Committee should request the SAPS to indicate the manner in which crime statistics are applied as a tool to fight crime.
- Is the Annual Crime Report Analysis of crime trends countrywide used to develop targeted and intelligence-led police operations?

Crime Information and Analysis Centre (CIMAC): The comprehensive analysis of crime statistics is a standard practice worldwide. There are several questions in the CIMAC -

- 1) 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?
- 2) What role does the Research Division of the SAPS play in docket analysis?
- 3) Do station managers understand the functions of CIMAC and are CIMAC products utilised?
- 4) Do station managers understand the importance of fieldwork for CIMAC officers?
- 5) What is the link between CIMAC and Crime Intelligence?
- 6) Are issues of data integrity discussed at Provincial Crime Combatting Forum (PCCF) and Station Crime Combatting Forum (SCCF) meetings?
- 7) 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.
- 8) The Department should indicate the most prominent challenges that impact negatively on 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: The Victims of Crime Survey (VOCS) found that victims underreport various crimes, like housebreaking and home robbery. The Survey further found that this is not correlated to the lack of insurance. The SAPS crime statistics have shown a steady increase in these crimes, which means that the actual state of home robberies and housebreaking could be much worse than reported. The Committee should request the SAPS to indicate what steps have been taken to address housebreakings and home robberies. This category is also the most feared crime (according to the VOCS).

Status of Integrated Case Docket Management System (ICDMS): The Committee should request the Department to state the status of the implementation of the ICDMS countrywide.

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



Police performance using statistics alone: Dr Andrew Faull (ISS) points out several challenges in almost exclusively using crime statistics as a measurement of performance. This measurement can lead to a manipulation of statistics and thus false over/underperformance. 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.²⁴

An example in this case is the sexual offences recorded at the Lusikisiki police station. The fact that the station recorded a significant increase in the number of sexual offence cases, does not necessarily indicate that the station is somehow underperforming. It could indicate that cases of sexual offences are recorded responsibly and victims are being assisted and not shown away.

Subjective capturing of crime

Crime statistics are also vulnerable to subjective decisions made by officers required to capture statistics.²⁵ This was the testimony of Brigadier Nkoshilo Seimela at the Khayelitsha Commission of Inquiry. The Brigadier stated that officers “*sometimes fight figures and not crime*” as an explanation for why police officers sometimes refuse to open a criminal case based on various reasons. An example cited was an incident when a Khayelitsha resident was robbed of his wallet and cell phone by young men carrying a firearm. The local police officers refused to open a case because “the victim was unable to identify the perpetrators and did not know the serial number of his cell phone.”²⁶

The Committee should engage the Department on the use of its crime categories and whether any thought has been given to the disaggregation of these categories into more meaningful categorisations. This is especially relevant to sexual offences into rape and domestic violence; and drug-related crime into a distinction between the possession by users and smuggling by criminal groups.²⁷

Criminal Justice System (CJS) Value Chain: The Committee should focus on the CJS Value Chain to assess the percentage of reported murders and sexual offences that make it to court, in which a guilty verdict is obtained and the perpetrator sentenced to imprisonment.

Nyanga police station: The Nyanga police station had a marked Improvement in its crime situation during the 2019/20 financial year. These include -

- Contact crimes decreased by 17.3 per cent.
 - Murder decreased by 36 per cent.
 - Attempted murder decreased by 29.9 per cent.
- Robbery with aggravating circumstances decreased by 11.6 per cent.
 - Trio crimes decreased by 7.5 per cent.
 - Robbery at residential premise decreased by 47.7 per cent.
- Sexual offences decreased by 17.7 per cent.
 - Rape decreased by 8.8 per cent.
 - Sexual assault decreased by 40.4 per cent.
- Contact related crime decreased by 32.6 per cent.
 - Arson decreased by 26.9 per cent.
 - Malicious damage to property decreased by 32.8 per cent.

²⁴ Faull, A (2010).

²⁵ Armstrong, A (2014).

²⁶ Armstrong, A (2014).

²⁷ De Kock, C, Kriegler, A and Shaw, M (2015).



In contrast, crime detected as result of police action decreased by 16.1 per cent in 2019/20. The decrease was noticeable in crimes of illegal possession of firearms and ammunition detected (decrease of 28.5 per cent) and drug related crimes detected (decrease of 18.6 per cent). The SAPS should share the operational approach in the Nyanga policing area as a best practice, but also explain the decreases in crimes detected as a result of police action.

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