



25 February 2021

**3RD QUARTER CRIME STATISTICS RECORDED FROM
01 OCTOBER TO 31 DECEMBER 2020**

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1. INTRODUCTION

The Minister of Police released the 2020/21 third quarter crime statistics on 19 February 2021 covering the period from 01 October to 31 December 2020. The period fell within lockdown level 1 through to the adjusted level 3 of the extended lockdown. The overall number of reported crimes decreased by 7.1 per cent during the third quarter of 2020/21 compared to the same period of the previous financial year.

The paper provides an overview of the 2020/21 third quarter crime statistics and highlights various areas of concern. The paper further considers the statistical value chain and the dissemination of the crime statistics. The paper is in preparation of a scheduled Portfolio Committee on Police on 03 March 2021.

2. CRIME STATISTICS: Q3 2020/21

2.1. Overall

The overall number of reported crimes decreased by 7.1% during the third quarter of 2020/21 compared to the same period of the previous financial year. The South African Police Service (SAPS) recorded the most noticeable decreases in property-related crime categories.

During the release, the Minister indicated that the statistics expose some gaps in the policing of certain crime categories and reveal policing shortcomings in Mpumalanga, KwaZulu-Natal, Free State and the Western Cape. These provinces recorded more than 10 per cent increases in the number of reported murders. The Minister announced the implementation of a



turnaround plan in these provinces and that the Ministry and SAPS management will conduct operational oversight on the implementation of this plan.

CRIME CATEGORY	October to December 2016/17	October to December 2017/18	October to December 2018/19	October to December 2019/20	October to December 2020/21	Case Diff	% Change
Total 17 Community Reported Serious Crimes	454,350	440,370	444,130	430,104	399,718	-30,386	-7.1%

Source: SAPS (2021)

The table above shows the SAPS recorded a total 399 718 serious crimes during the third quarter of 2020/21, which is 30 386 fewer crimes than the same period of the previous financial year. It is also the lowest number of crimes reported for the period October to December since 2016/17. Of the total number of crimes, 171 764 contact crimes were recorded, which is 42.9 per cent of all crimes recorded in the third quarter of 2020/21.

Comments

- 1) The SAPS should provide the statistics for the 2020/21 year to date together with the quarterly release to enable an understanding of the trajectory of crime for the financial year.
- 2) The SAPS should indicate whether the policing of lockdown regulations had an effect on their regular day-to-day policing duties/plans.
- 3) The SAPS should indicate the status of the implementation of the White Paper on Safety and Security, as it maps out the role of all role-players to fight crime as a collective.
- 4) The SAPS should indicate what the role of alcohol consumption is on contact crimes. Do they test blood-alcohol levels of suspects to establish whether the person was intoxicated?

2.2. Contact crimes

CRIME CATEGORY	October to December 2016/17	October to December 2017/18	October to December 2018/19	October to December 2019/20	October to December 2020/21	Case Diff	% Change
CONTACT CRIMES (CRIMES AGAINST THE PERSON)							
Murder	5,549	5,691	5,918	5,908	6,297	389	6.6%
Sexual Offences	14,193	14,436	15,130	15,325	15,595	270	1.8%
Attempted murder	4,927	4,826	5,060	5,014	5,452	438	8.7%
Assault with the intent to inflict grievous bodily harm	50,907	49,154	50,583	49,428	50,124	696	1.4%
Common assault	43,631	43,789	45,660	47,599	47,875	276	0.6%
Common robbery	13,859	13,504	13,722	13,531	11,822	-1,709	-12.6%
Robbery with aggravating circumstances	36,283	36,243	36,348	37,352	34,599	-2,753	-7.4%



CRIME CATEGORY	October to December 2016/17	October to December 2017/18	October to December 2018/19	October to December 2019/20	October to December 2020/21	Case Diff	% Change
Total Contact Crimes (Crimes Against The Person)	169,349	167,643	172,421	174,157	171,764	-2,393	-1.4%

Source: SAPS (2021)

Although the number of reported contact crimes decreased by 1.4 per cent, most categories recorded increases. Most concerning amongst these are the increases in murder and attempted murder, which increased with 6.6 per cent and 8.7 per cent, respectively. According to the SAPS, arguments and misunderstandings were the leading motive for murder accounting for 991 out of the total of 6 297 murders (15.7%).

During the third quarter of 2020/21, the SAPS recorded 19 farm murders, which is a significant increase of 216.6 per cent compared to the same period in the previous financial year, during which the SAPS recorded 6 farm murders. During the third quarter, there were 88 farm attacks in which the SAPS recorded the following crimes: 52 cases of robbery at residential premise; 19 murders; 16 attempted murders; 10 assault GBH; 9 thefts of motor vehicles or cycles; 2 rapes; and 1 malicious damage to property. The SAPS further reported that farmers/farm management attacked 26 farm workers, including 3 murders.

The number of reported cases of common robbery and robbery with aggravating circumstances decreased with 12.6 per cent and 7.4 per cent respectively.

Comments/questions

- 1) Can the SAPS explain why the number of murders and attempted murders are the highest in the third quarter of 2020/21 compared to the five-year period from 2016/17 to 2020/21, especially since there were still some restriction in movements of people and goods under the national lockdown.

2.3. Sexual offences

CRIME CATEGORY	October to December 2016/17	October to December 2017/18	October to December 2018/19	October to December 2019/20	October to December 2020/21	Case Diff	% Change
Total Sexual Offences							
Rape	11,357	11,545	12,068	12,037	12,218	181	1.5%
Sexual Assault	1,805	1,978	2,117	2,288	2,390	102	4.5%
Attempted Sexual Offences	623	588	604	639	625	-14	-2.2%
Contact Sexual Offences	408	325	341	361	362	1	0.3%
Total Sexual Offences	14,193	14,436	15,130	15,325	15,595	270	1.8%

Source: SAPS (2021)



Sexual offences increased with 1.8 per cent in the third quarter of 2020/21 compared to that of the previous financial year. Within this category, sexual assault increased with 4.5 per cent, rape increased with 1.5 per cent and contact sexual offences with 0.3%. Attempted sexual offences decreased with 2.2 per cent.

During the third quarter, the SAPS recorded 12 218 rapes, of which the majority (4 904 of the total / 40 per cent) occurred at the residence of either the perpetrator or victim, followed by a public place (1 780 of the total / 14.5 per cent).

These figures differ dramatically from that of the first quarter of 2020/21, during which sexual offences decreased with 39.7 per cent. The decrease continued over the second quarter (July-September 2020) with a decrease of 16.8 per cent and thereafter started to increase.

Comment/questions

- 2) The SAPS should explain the different categories of sexual offences and how the SAPS interprets the legal definitions of these crimes. Are these categories clearly defined and understood?
- 3) The SAPS should present their Gender-Based Violence Plan and how this will be implemented across the medium-term. The SAPS should also provide the estimated expenditure on this plan.
- 4) As part of the 2021/22 SAPS Budget Vote, the SAPS indicated that they will increase detection rates against women and children, which will be achieved by the increase of its detection capacity, improve forensic support and implementation of the integrated criminal justice strategy. The SAPS should unpack these initiatives. Specifically, the SAPS should indicate whether the increased detection capacity will be allocated to the Family Violence, Child Protection and Sexual Offences (FCS) Units.
- 5) The current three-year supply contract for DNA test kits (rape kits) expires next year. Have SAPS started considering renewal or a new service provider as to prevent the significant challenges experience with the previous contract which led to a shortage of rape kits?

2.4. Domestic violence

According to the SAPS, 24 565 domestic violence-related crimes were recorded during the third quarter of 2020/21 (Note: These are selected cases by the SAPS and could possibly not be the total recorded during the third quarter. However, it provides an insight into these crimes).

The leading domestic violence- related crime during the third quarter of 2020/21 was common assault (51.1 per cent), followed by assault with the intention to cause grievous bodily harm (GBH) (23.4 per cent). According to the SAPS, they recorded 193 murders related to domestic violence, of which the victims had a 50/50 split in terms of sex, thus 97 females were murdered and 96 males were murdered.



Comments/questions

- 6) The SAPS should explain the split in males/females in murder related to domestic violence. Do the figures include those who murdered their partner in self-defence?

2.5. Some subcategories of aggravated robbery

CRIME CATEGORY	October to December 2016/17	October to December 2017/18	October to December 2018/19	October to December 2019/20	October to December 2020/21	Case Diff	% Change
SOME SUBCATEGORIES OF AGGRAVATED ROBBERY							
Carjacking	4,314	4,153	3,929	4,462	4,794	332	7.4%
Robbery at residential premises	5,935	5,956	5,970	5,704	5,781	77	1.3%
Robbery at non-residential premises	5,219	5,368	5,314	5,426	5,052	-374	-6.9%
Robbery of cash in transit	45	62	35	39	65	26	66.7%
Bank robbery	0	6	1	0	0	0	0 Cases
Truck hijacking	324	339	312	325	436	111	34.2%

Source: SAPS (2021)

The categories known as **trio-crimes** (carjacking, robbery at residential and non-residential premises) increased with 0.2 per cent in the third quarter of 2020/21 compared to the previous year. Carjacking increased the most with 7.4 per cent, followed by robbery at residential premises that increased with 1.3 per cent. Robbery at non-residential premises decreased with 6.9 per cent.

The significant increase in reported cases of robbery of cash in transit (CIT) and truck hijacking is of serious concern. Robbery of CIT increased with 66.7 per cent in the third quarter of 2020/21 compared to the previous year and truck hijackings increased with 34.2 per cent over the same period. According to the SAPS, most CIT robberies: (1) took place in the Gauteng province, (2) happened when the armoured vehicle was on the road, and (3) used explosives (when traveling) and firearms (in cases of cross-pavement robberies).

Comments/questions

- 7) The SAPS should explain what initiatives will be implemented to address CIT robberies. The SAPS should indicate why these crimes increased so sharply after they were successfully reduced previously.
- 8) Similarly, how will SAPS address the increase in truck hijackings?



2.6. Contact-related crimes

CRIME CATEGORY	October to December 2016/17	October to December 2017/18	October to December 2018/19	October to December 2019/20	October to December 2020/21	Case Diff	% Change
CONTACT-RELATED CRIMES							
Arson	1,205	1,047	1,142	999	957	-42	-4.2%
Malicious damage to property	31,731	30,391	31,132	29,598	30,032	434	1.5%
Total Contact-Related Crimes	32,936	31,438	32,274	30,597	30,989	392	1.3%

Source: SAPS (2021)

The number of reported cases of contact-related crime increased with 1.3 per cent in the third quarter of 2020/21 compared to that of the previous financial year. Within this category, arson decreased with 4.2 per cent, while malicious damage to property increased with 1.5 per cent in the third quarter of 2020/21 compared to the previous year.

2.7. Property-related crime

CRIME CATEGORY	October to December 2016/17	October to December 2017/18	October to December 2018/19	October to December 2019/20	October to December 2020/21	Case Diff	% Change
PROPERTY-RELATED CRIMES							
Burglary at non-residential premises	18,735	18,100	18,124	17,179	15,550	-1,629	-9.5%
Burglary at residential premises	61,878	57,797	56,088	51,737	42,834	-8,903	-17.2%
Theft of motor vehicle and motorcycle	13,150	12,577	12,115	11,772	10,099	-1,673	-14.2%
Theft out of or from motor vehicle	33,636	32,282	30,735	28,458	22,697	-5,761	-20.2%
Stock-theft	7,704	8,739	8,948	8,437	7,854	-583	-6.9%
Total Property-Related Crimes	135,103	129,495	126,010	117,583	99,034	-18,549	-15.8%

Source: SAPS (2021)

Property-related crime decreased with 15.8 per cent in the third quarter of the 2020/21 financial year compared to the previous year. Theft out of motor vehicle and burglary at residential premises decreased the most, with 20.2 per cent and 17.2 per cent, respectively.

Burglary at non-residential premises decreased by 9.5 per cent in the third quarter of 2020/21 compared to the previous year. Between October and December 2020, 15 550 cases were reported, of which 1 794 burglaries were at educational premises and 839 at liquor



outlets/premises. The highest number of school burglaries occurred in Gauteng (376), followed by KwaZulu-Natal (330) and the Limpopo (237).

Reported cases of stock-theft decreased with 6.9 per cent in the third quarter of 2020/21 compared to the previous year. Approximately 75 000 heads of stock were stolen, of which the most were sheep (33 697), followed by cattle (17 456).

2.8. Other serious crimes

CRIME CATEGORY	October to December 2016/17	October to December 2017/18	October to December 2018/19	October to December 2019/20	October to December 2020/21	Case Diff	% Change
OTHER SERIOUS CRIMES							
All theft not mentioned elsewhere	81,642	77,754	77,833	71,509	62,195	-9,314	-13.0%
Commercial crime	18,929	18,665	20,659	21,725	23,428	1,703	7.8%
Shoplifting	16,391	15,375	14,933	14,533	12,308	-2,225	-15.3%
Total Other Serious Crimes	116,962	111,794	113,425	107,767	97,931	-9,836	-9.1%

Source: SAPS (2021)

Other serious crimes decreased with 9.1 per cent in the third quarter of 2020/21 compared to that of the previous financial year. All theft not mentioned elsewhere and shoplifting decreased with 13 per cent and 15.3 per cent, respectively. Conversely, commercial crime increased with 7.8 per cent over this period.

2.9. 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.

CRIME CATEGORY	October to December 2016/17	October to December 2017/18	October to December 2018/19	October to December 2019/20	October to December 2020/21	Case Diff	% Change
CRIME DETECTED AS A RESULT OF POLICE ACTION							
Illegal possession of firearms and ammunition	4,139	4,621	3,691	4,114	3,353	-761	-18.5%
Drug-related crime	72,697	82,680	34,939	41,520	37,546	-3,974	-9.6%
Driving under the influence of alcohol or drugs	21,114	23,326	21,907	27,011	16,259	-10,752	-39.8%
Sexual Offences detected as a result of police action	1,416	1,631	1,996	2,515	2,642	127	5.0%



CRIME CATEGORY	October to December 2016/17	October to December 2017/18	October to December 2018/19	October to December 2019/20	October to December 2020/21	Case Diff	% Change
Total Crime Detected As A Result Of Police Action	99,366	112,258	62,533	75,160	59,800	-15,360	-20.4%

Source: SAPS (2021)

In the third quarter of 2020/21, crimes detected as a result of police action decreased with 20.4 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.

3. STATISTICAL VALUE CHAIN AND DISSEMINATION

The South African Statistical Quality Assessment Framework (SASQAF) provides clear criteria and transparent procedures for evaluation of official statistics and other data, but producers can also use it for self-assessment of their own products. It further covers the various aspects of the statistical value chain (SVC), including need, design, build, collection, processing, analysis and dissemination. Although all the aspects of the SVC are important, the dissemination and accessibility of statistics are of particular importance to Parliamentary oversight, in order to ensure transparency and accountability of the security sector.

The key quality indicators in the dissemination phase and accessibility dimension are that:

- Statistics are released on a pre-announcement schedule, which is made available to users annually and is adhered to.
- Statistical products are made available to all users at the same time.
- A data dissemination policy exists, is freely accessible and is adhered to.

Pre-announced schedule and dissemination policy

The SAPS data dissemination policy is not freely accessible and as such, the crime statistics are not released on a pre-announced schedule. The SAPS must publicise the policy and adhere to the release dates contained therein.

Availability: Releasing to the Committee

During a previous meeting on the 2020/21 first quarter crime statistics (26 August 2020), Members raised concerns that the statistics were not released in Parliament as was done previously. As a response, the SAPS indicated that one of the quality indicators is that the data must be made available to all users at the same time (as mentioned above) and further that StatsSA took issue with the previous releases in Parliament.

Comments/questions

- 9) The SAPS should provide a copy of the StatsSA evaluation and certification on the quarterly statistics to the Committee.
- 10) The Committee should consider inviting the Statistician General to the next meeting on crime statistics.
- 11) The SAPS should consider that Parliament, by its nature, represents the citizenry and all documents presented in Parliament, or one of its committees, immediately becomes the



property of the people. Committee meetings are open to the media and the public, and are further livestreamed on various electronic platforms, such as YouTube and the Parliamentary television channel. Once SAPS present the crime statistics to the Committee, it is immediately available to all users at the same time, thus satisfying the relevant SASQAF criteria.

4. REFERENCES

South African Police Service (SAPS) (2021). Crime Statistics. Crime situation in the Republic of South Africa quarter three (October to December 2020). [Internet] Available from: <https://www.saps.gov.za/services/october_to_december_2020_21_crimestats.pdf> [Accessed on 24 February 2021].

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