**Media Statement**

The Portfolio Committee Police was briefed on the latest crime statistics for the second quarter of the 2020/2021 financial year, which covers the period from July to September this year.

Police Minister Bheki Cele, accompanied by the South African Police Service (Saps) senior management including Commissioner Khehla Sitole, the Head of the Directorate for Priority Crime Investigation General Godfrey Lebeya and provincial commissioners, told the committee that the statistics reflected a better picture than the previous performances.

Though the police reported a general decline in the number of crimes committed across the country, there murders and sexual offences continue to increase. “The increases in the murder of women and children is still a concern and there is also a new trend of kidnappings, which has various categories that include ransom or extortion, kidnapping for rape and as part of hijacking. Unfortunately, the one that makes news headlines is when there are demands for ransom,” said Minister Cele.

The committee heard that kidnapping is also experienced in South Africa’s neighbouring countries. In response, the capacity of organised crime units has been strengthened and transnational response mechanisms have been developed to tackle kidnappings.

Saps also reported that the police’s modus operandi analysis centre has discovered the involvement of ex-military combatants from neighbouring countries in criminal activities such as ATM bombings, cash-in-transit (CIT) robberies and illegal mining in South Africa.

According to the police, some of the explosives used in ATM bombings, CIT robberies and illegal mining are smuggled in from neighbouring countries.

The committee was pleased to receive the positive news that the crisis at Saps’ forensic laboratories has been resolved. This development is expected to address the backlog in the investigation of various violent crimes such as rape, murder and assault. “We can report that we have reached a turnaround on the DNA crisis and this will help a lot with rape, assaults and GBV cases,” the Minister of Police said.

The Chairperson of the committee, Ms Tina Joemat-Pettersson, said: “We appreciate the presentation. As a committee, we take the issue of crime statistics very serious. We also acknowledge the good work that you are doing and also understand that you do this work under very difficult circumstances.”

Sakhile Mokoena
22 November 2021