

# **SAPS as broken as the communities it has to protect**

by **Okkie Terblanche MP** – DA Shadow Deputy Minister of Police

Honourable Chairperson, honourable members and fellow South Africans. Here we are again, to consider another huge amount of money to promote the safety of South Africa.

We have been here before and know the script and the annual drill.

- New promises made by the President in his State of the Nation Address;
- The Ministerial Priorities;
- SAPS' Priorities;
- Performance Plan and targets by both IPID and the Civilian Secretariat;
- Impressive and very convincing paperwork;
- Performance measurements;
- The whole lot.

We have it all over again.

The result is known. Renewed hope by our citizens that the safer country of our dreams, will emerge this time.

However, this optimism is short lived. The latest crime stats beam out the reality.

Nothing has changed.

Voorsitter,

Suid-Afrika verdien beter.

Die situasie is besig om te vererger. Op Vrydag 14 Mei 2021 het Minister Cele die nuutste misdaad statistieke bekend gemaak. Moord het vanaf 1 Januarie tot 30 Maart met 8.4% 2021 gestyg. Bykans 5 000 mense is vermoor. Wat 'n slagting.

Hierdie syfers sou mense oor die wêreld heen laat regop sit, self in oorlogs- en onrus geteisterde gebiede, maar hier word dit maar gelate aanvaar. Dit is mos Suid-Afrika en dit is maar wat hier gebeur.

Dit is nie meer aanvaarbaar nie.

Suid-Afrika verdien beter.

Misdaad is steeds hoog en daar is ander realiteite wat die Suid-Afrikaanse Polisie Diens verder strem om misdadigers suksesvol te vervolg en agter trailies te kry.

This past weekend, the Portfolio Committee on Police paid oversight visits to both the Central Firearm Register and the Forensic Science Laboratory in Tshwane.

Conditions at The Central Firearm Register are really concerning. The unit is accommodated in a dilapidated building, declared unfit for human occupation. The floors are not designed to carry the current load. The stacks of paperwork are far too heavy. The building must be vacated as a matter of urgency.

The backlog is dating back as far as February 2010, when former minister Nathi Mthethwa's appointed task team made the same findings.

It has worsened since then and cannot be resolved in the short term. An interim solution is required to manage this mess and must urgently be pursued. It must be migrated to a computerized system.

The Forensic Laboratory has a backlog of:

- 103 644 DNA crime samples; and
- 107 220 RI Buccal samples.

That is a total of 210 864 samples; 68 235 of them related to GBV.

The first phase of the new FEM system was implemented on 6 April 2021. Full implementation is scheduled for October 2022. An eighteen-month period is estimated as a best-case scenario to finalize the backlog. The countdown starts from 1 July 2021. Justice for many victims of these crimes is still further delayed.

My colleague, Bobby Stevenson, the MPL for safety and security in the Eastern Cape issued a media statement on Friday 14 May 2021. He highlighted an alarming upwards trend in farm attacks and violent crime in that province. These attacks have almost doubled from last year over the same period to this year and may cripple the agricultural sector.

SAPS' rural safety plan does not effectively prevent these crimes and attention is required to stabilize this important sector across the country. The re-introduction of properly trained and equipped specialist units to protect rural communities is urgently required. This problem manifests itself across the country.

The SAPS budget was also cut to fund the R10 billion SAA bailout. This grounded airline will most probably never fly again. What happened to our priorities?

SAPS' total budget allocation is R96.35 billion. Only the administrative budget grows by 1.6%, while visible policing's decreased by 7.2%. Crime prevention is key and should get the lion share of the budget.

The Ministry got an allocation of R62.6 million, a sizeable amount if compared with Home Affairs' R30.5 million and Treasury's R4.4 million. Why is this budget necessary? More personnel could have been appointed.

SAPS' personnel are expected to decrease from 181 344 in 2020/21 to 162 944 in 2023/24 due to natural attrition. This will accelerate the department's overall declining performance trend over the past three financial years.

IPID is severely underfunded. The Marikana Commission, The Khosa judgement and the Marikana panel underlined this concern. Its watchdog role is undermined and therefore cannot fulfil its mandate.

The Civilian Secretariat is underperforming at the moment. Its role and functions must be revisited to determine the way forward.

The President is urged to deal with the conflict between the Minister and the National Commissioner. They must focus on their own roles and responsibilities. The Department's credibility and performance are at stake.

It's time to up your game Mr. Minister.

South Africa deserves better.

The DA does not support these budget votes.