

ACCORDING TO THE 1 APRIL 2016 TO 31 DECEMBER 2016 CRIME STATISTICS, THE BACK TO BASICS APPROACH FAILED TO SHOW CLEAR MORE POLICEABLE CRIME REDUCTIONS SO FAR.

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The analysis of the more policeable crime trends for 1 April to 31 December 2016 inter alia reveals:

- That with the exception of murder and attempted murder, which just stabilized, ten other more policeable crime trends actually increased. The stabilization in murder and attempted murder may be due to significant decreases in social murders and attempted murders.
- That if murder and attempted murder are reduced at the same rate as during the reporting period of 1 April 2016 to 31 December 2016, it will take at least 6 to 7 years to eliminate the Phiyega deficit on murders and attempted murders.
- That an increase in quarterly reductions during the reporting period in murder, attempted murder, stock-theft, theft of motor vehicle, common robbery and residential housebreaking may be a sign that the Back to Basics approach are starting to pay off. Unfortunately quarterly and in some cases trimester data on street/public robbery, house robbery, business robbery, carjacking, truck hijacking CIT and bank robbery were unintentionally or intentionally not released to the public, so no final conclusion can be reached. It does not appear in the SAPS briefing document to the Portfolio Committee.

1.) INTRODUCTION

Six months ago, on the 2nd September 2016, during the release of the 2015/2016 annual crime statistics, the Minister of Police in his PowerPoint presentation entitled “Understanding the Sociology of Crime in South Africa.” concluded:” We will continue to implement the Back to Basics approach to policing which has started to yield positive results. The majority of our successes are based on its implementation.”

Given the facts that Government had announced the quarterly release of crime statistics two months earlier (in July), and this analyst could not see any results of the Back to Basics approach in the annual figures of 2015/2016, he called for the immediate release of the quarterly statistics for 2014/2015 and 2015/2016 and the first quarter of 2016/2017 in an article in Servamus of October 2016 (pages 33-34). The article titled: “Release the Quarterly Crime Statistics now –to confirm whether the ‘Back to Basics approach is starting to work.” can also be find on the author’s website www.crimefactssouthafrica.co.za.

After many more remarks, by especially the Minister, but also the Acting National Commissioner, claiming the successes of the Back to Basics approach, the first three

quarterly reports combined in a trimester report was released during a briefing to the Portfolio Committee on Policing on Friday 3 March 2017. Unintentionally or intentionally the quarterly detail of some crime trends/sub-trends were not released. This will form the basis for a follow-up article within the next two weeks.

In this article the 2016/2017 trimester will be analysed to establish the extent of the success of the Back to Basics approach.

2.) MORE AND LESS POLICEABLE CRIME.

Not all crime categories and even subcategories of the same category are policeable to the same extent. Policing basically consists of three functions namely: prevention, detection and crime intelligence which underlie both the first mentioned two. When it comes to some crime categories and subcategories like assault (both common and GBH), rape and sexual assault, which mostly occur between people knowing each other in private spaces, it is difficult to impossible for any police service in the world to prevent and do intelligence collection. In these cases the police should do proper investigation and forensics to support successful prosecution of specific cases. This will in all probability deter potential perpetrators. It should also provide information to and participate with other stakeholders in the analysis/research of less policeable crimes like assault, sexual offences, commercial crime and theft to generate knowledge which can be used by all role-players to prevent such crimes generally.

The crimes and sub-crimes in tables 1 and 2 of this article are more policeable in the sense that the police can through daily crime pattern-, linkage-, and environmental analysis at station level prevent these crimes, develop an intelligence collection basis to focus on the more organised of these crimes and through linkage analysis cluster cases with similarities under one investigator or team of investigators to optimize investigation and prosecution. So that when an investigator or team of investigators arrest a suspect (for example a hijacker) he can be linked to numerous hijackings, bail can in all probability be opposed and when he is found guilty he will be out of circulation to generate more hijacking statistics. So detection also become prevention.

Although murder and attempted murder are not pure more policeable crimes, they are included in this analysis because of their importance to and impact on society. Murder ends the life of the victim and causes permanent psychological scars to those who were close to the victim and attempted murder may also cause permanent physical as well as psychological scars to the victim, as well as trauma to those close to the victim. In most international country stability indexes and rating tools murder/homicide ratios/rates are used

as one of the primary indicators and this can influence investments in, loans, development aid and tourism to a country.

The docket analysis included in the "Addendum to the SAPS Annual Report of 2015/2016." (p.13-16) clearly confirms that at least 40% of the murders that occurred in the April-September 2015 period were in all probability more policeable. The by far the largest portion of these more policeable murders are in all probability as a result of the public/street robberies during which people are killed for their money and belongings and the community/bystanders react with vigilantism. If this 2015 docket analysis is compared to previous ones it is clear that vigilantism is growing.

Previous analysis indicated that the majority of attempted murders occur during robberies.

3.) ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS.

In table 1 the percentage decrease/increase per more policeable crime in the 2015 trimester (1 April 2015 to 31 December 2015) and the 2016 trimester (1 April 2016 to 31 December 2016) are compared. The 2016 trimester is also compared broadly with the last three columns, labelled as the Phiyega period, Cele period, and Selebi period. The percentage increases and decreases in these columns are average annual decreases/increases for these periods and are indeed broadly comparable to the trimester periods. The three periods include the following financial years: the Selebi period (2003/2004-2008/2009), the Cele period (2009/2010-2011/2012) and the Phiyega period (2012/2013-2015/2016). Some will say that the late National Commissioner Jackie Selebi already arrived in SAPS in November-December 1999 and took over command in January 2000. But for the purposes of this analysis the Selebi era is only taken from 2003/2004 which was the start of the serious implementation of the National Crime Combatting Strategy to achieve the contact crime reduction targets of 7% to 10%. The era from 1994/1995 to 2002/2003 can be described as the period of an escalating crime crises. During the last year of the Selebi era (2008/2009) acting National Commissioner Tim Williams was actually in control while the last year of National Commissioner Cele also include a period where Acting National Commissioner Nhlanhla Mkhwanazi was in control. The current acting National Commissioner Khomotso Phahlane took control of SAPS in October 2015-17 months ago. So he was actually managing the SAPS for halve of 2015/2016 which is included in the Phiyega era. Commissioner Phahlane and the Back to Basics approach will only be evaluated against the

first nine months (April 2016 to December 2016) of the 2016/2017 financial year-the 2016 trimester.

These periods, linked to specific National Commissioners, are used in this analysis because:

a) Each of these periods represent very distinct characteristics of and differences in policing. The author /analyst who compiled this article was the head of the Crime Information Analysis Centre (CIAC), later called Crime Research and Statistics, of the police from basically the appointment of National Commissioner George Fivaz up to 9 months after the appointment of General Riah Phiyega. In this period of nearly 18 years, different leadership styles, turbulence/instability in management, focus on crime, and emphasis on crime intelligence, prevention and detection had distinct crime reduction outcomes.

b) This analysis specifically focus on the more policeable crime reduction outcome, of the Minister of Police and acting National Commissioner of the SAPS. The Back to Basics approach. **In short did the Back to Basics approach start to pay off in the last 17 months and will it eliminate the crime increases of the past five years and restore the crime reduction rates of the previous decade?**

TABLE 2: Comparisons of decreases/increases in more policeable crime in the 2016 trimester (April to December 2016), with those in the 2015 trimester (April –December 2015), and the average annual decreases/increases during the Phiyega period (2012/2013 to 2015/2016), Cele period (2009/2010 to 2011/2012) and the Selebi period (2003/2004 to 2008/2009).

Crime category	2015 trimester	2016 trimester	Phiyega period	Cele period	Selebi period
Public/street robbery.	0,4%	4.6%	8.0%	-6.6%	-6.3%
House robbery.	2.8%	5.3%	6.0%	-3.0%	19.4%
Business robbery.	1.3%	6.5%	5.9%	4.9%	55.7%
Carjacking.	16.0%	14.9%	13.8%	-12.2%	1.6%
Common robbery.	-2.3%	-0.7%	0.7%	-3.5%	-7.6%
Burglary: Residential.	-1.7%	-0.6%	0.6%	-0.1%	-3.5%
Burglary: Business.	0.4%	1.2%	1.8%	-0.0%	1.7%
Theft of motor vehicle.	-2.6%	-0.8%	-2.1%	-7.4%	-2.8%
Theft out of or from motor vehicle.	-4.7%	-0.6%	1.9%	6.4%	-7.3%
Stock-theft.	-3.0%	2.0%	-2.6%	1.0%	-5.4%
Murder.	4.2%	-0.1%	5.0%	-4.7%	-1.7%
Attempted murder	4.0%	-0.8%	5.8%	-6.3%	-7.8%

If the decreases and increases of more police able crime in the 2016 trimester (which was a full 9 months in which General Phahlane could apply the back to basics approach) are compared to those in the 2015 trimester (where he only had 2 months to apply the back to basics approach) one would have expected a significant improvement in the crime situation especially because they just had to improve on the dismal failure of the Phiyega period. Precisely the opposite occurred. The increases in public/street robbery, business robbery, house robbery, and burglary at business premises increased between two and 12 times that of the 2015 trimester. Stock theft, which decreased with 3.0% in the 2015 trimester, increased with 2.0% in the 2016 trimester. The 2015 trimester decreases for: common robbery (-2.3%), burglary: residential (-1.7%), theft of motor vehicle (-2.6%), and theft out of and from motor vehicle (-4.7%) shrunk to respectively -0.7%, -0.6%, -0.8% and -0.6%. So in the case of these four trends it moved from decrease in 2015 to stabilization in 2016.

The only two crime trends where there were significant improvement were murder and attempted murder. Both these very important trends moved from increase in 2015 to stabilization (marginal decreases of below one percentage point). Murder and attempted murder decreased respectively from 4.2% in 2015 to -0.1% in 2016 and 4.0% in 2015 to -0.8% in 2016. It is impossible to establish from the current data if these decreases were evenly distributed across the social and non-social subcategories of murder and attempted murder.

Although SAPS should be congratulated on the stabilization of murder and attempted murder after the catastrophic era of 2012-2015/2016 (the Phiyega era) it can't be emphasized enough that it is still very far removed from the systematic average annual decreases of -4.7% for murder and -6.3% for attempted murder during the Cele era and -1.7% for murder and -7.8% for attempted murder during the Selebi era. A stabilization is also not very reassuring if one remembers:

a) That South Africa in 2015/16 were in the 8th position from the top, out of 162 independent countries on the murder spectrum. These countries represents 99.6% of the world population. It is also one of only two other countries outside of Latin America which have four metropolitan areas on the top 50 murder cities of the World list (with Cape Town in position nine from the top) (see "[Are you hallucinating to think that murder and for that matter other crimes can be prevented by the police? A definite no, no!](#) on www.crimefactssouthafrica.co.za, for more information on the 2015 Global Peace Index- GPI- of the Institute for Economics and Peace and the 2016 Mexico Citizens Council for Public Security, top fifty murder/homicide city list.).

b) That murder decreased basically every year between 1995/1996 and 2011/2012. In 1995/1996, 26 877 murders were recorded /and in 2011/2012 there was 15 554. That is a 42.1% decrease. In the 2012/2013 to 2015/2016 (Phiyega period) it escalated with 20.1%. During the Phiyega period murder should have decreased with respectively -4.7% and -1.7% annually if the Cele or Selebi trends were sustained. So strictly speaking in the period 2012/2013 to 2015/2016 South Africa lost out on the opportunity to lower its murder figures with between 27% and 39%, which would result in a very significant downward movement in South Africa's international murder ranking. The same would have happened with attempted murder which basically fluctuated each year between the formation of the SAPS in 1995/1996 and 2002/2003. Then attempted murder decreased with 51.0% from 30 076 cases in 2003/2004 to 14 730 cases in 2011/2012. In the Phiyega era it increased with 23.1%. South Africa again lost out on the opportunity to lower its attempted murder figure with between 48% and 54% by now. Now Minister Nhleko and acting National Commissioner Phahlane will take at least 6 to 7 years to wipe out this Phiyega deficit, going at the rate of reduction of the 2016 trimester.

TABLE 2: The quarterly decreases/increases in more policeable crime for April-December 2016.

Crime category	Quarter: April-June	Quarter: July-September	Quarter: October-December	TRIMESTER 2016/2017 APRIL - DECEMBER 2016
Public/street robbery.	-	-	-	4.6%
House robbery.	-	-	-	5.3%
Business robbery.	-	-	-	6.5%
Carjacking.	-	-	-	14.9%
Common robbery.	1.8%	-1.1%	-2.5%	-0.7%
Burglary: Residential.	1.3%	-0.4%	-2.6%	-0.6%
Burglary: Business.	1.4%	2.5%	-0.3%	1.2%
Theft of motor vehicle.	4.1%	-3.4%	-3.0%	-0.8%
Theft out of or from motor vehicle.	0.6%	-0.2%	-2.1%	-0.6%
Stock-theft.	9.6%	0.9%	-3.2%	2.0%
Murder.	0.6%	1.9%	-2.3%	-0.1%
Attempted Murder.	3.1%	-1.7%	-3.1%	-0.8%

In table 2 the quarterly increases and decreases for more policeable crime in the 2016/2017 trimester are provided. The trends/categories for which quarterly data were provided in the 3 March release, show a promising improvement in reductions as the 2016/2017 year proceed. It clearly indicates that all eight crime trends in table 2 increased in the first quarter (they were all red). There were three trends increasing, three trends decreasing and two which stabilized in the second quarter. In the third quarter, which was dominated by operation festive season, seven of the trends show decreases and one stabilised. For example stock-theft experienced a 9.6% increase in the first quarter, then a 0.9% increase in the second quarter and a -3.2% decrease in the third quarter. This is actually a 13 percentage point improvement over the three quarters. In all probability it is an indication that those responsible for the policing of stock theft realized in April to June 2016 that stock-theft is increasing very significantly and that they immediately adapt their strategy to prevent stock-theft which first led to a marginal increase in the July-September 2016 quarter and a 3.2% decrease in the festive season quarter (October to December 2016). It can at the same time also reflect an increase in underreporting of stock-theft.

The analysis in table 2 leaves one with hope that the more policeable crime crisis which South Africa faces is not unbeatable. It can be beaten by proper policing as especially illustrated by the Cele and Selebi columns in table 1 and the trends in table 2.

But table 2 also raises a very serious question: Why was the quarterly and sometimes even trimester crime statistics for, street/public robbery, house robbery, business robbery, carjacking, truck hijacking CIT and bank robbery not released. Do these categories/ trends tell a different story which the Minister or the acting National Commissioner or another police official felt should be "filtered out" to the Portfolio Committee, public, and those analysts which are not in the inner circle. Or did those who compile the crime presentation just forgot to include these and fortunately up to now three weeks after the release nobody, including the Portfolio Committee, raised any serious questions about that.

4.) CONCLUSION.

There can be no other conclusion after this analysis, that 17 months of the application of the Back to Basics approach did not deliver clear more policeable crime reductions. The most devastating crime trends, in terms of life, limb and trauma, namely: public/street robbery, house robbery, business robbery and carjacking are marching on. The Back to Basics approach of the Minister and the acting National Commissioner did not start to pay off during the last 17 months. The approach itself or the way in which it is implemented should be

reviewed urgently. The crime crisis is growing daily in South Africa, which already has a very unacceptable international violent crime ranking.