



SAPS Crime Statistics 2019 – 2020: Contact and Sexual Crimes against women and children

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1. INTRODUCTION

At the end of July 2020, the South African Police Services (SAPS) released the crime statistics for the 2019/20 year covering the period 01 April 2019 to 31 March 2020. The information contained in this brief has been sourced from the SAPS Presentation as released on 31 July 2020.¹

This brief provides an overview of contact and sexual crimes against women and children.

- For the 2019-20 year, contact crime or crime against the person, has increased by 0.7% from 617 210 in 2018-19 to 621 282 (4 072 new cases)
- For the same period, sexual offences have increased by 1.7% from 52 420 in 2018-19 to 53 293 in 2019-20
- 92 191 of contact crimes occurred in private residences – either the victim or perpetrator’s residence or those of family, friends or neighbours. This includes 18 231 rapes that occurred in private residences.
- 38 356 contact crimes, (excluding rape and other sexual assault), were perpetrated by a current or former partner or spouse of the victim.

The SAPS provided a breakdown of causative factors for some of the categories of contract crime, namely common assault, assault with the intent to cause grievous bodily harm, attempted murder and murder. While this is not disaggregated by sex or age, some of the causative factors below are where women and children may likely be victims – this is not withstanding the fact that women and children may be victims in all categories of crime.

Table 1: Causative factors of contact crime

Causative factor	Categories of crime				Total
	Common assault	Assault GBH	Attempted murders	Murders	
Domestic related	21 344	14 907	923	1 482 38	38 656
Rape-related	380	401	50	82	913
Bullying at school	546	345	19	9	919

¹ South African Police Services, 2020, Crime Situation in Republic of South Africa Twelve (12) months (April to March 2019_20)

2. CRIMES AGAINST WOMEN AND CHILDREN

The SAPS notes that figures of crimes against women and children are inclusive of unfounded counts. Figures should thus be regarded as preliminary as the verification through physical dockets were not finalised due to Covid 19. To this end, there are some discrepancies between the figures in some areas.

Crimes against women and children continue to be a huge challenge within the South African society and have implications beyond just the actual crime. There is an urgent need to address the legacy of inequality, particularly as it relates to race, gender and class. There is also a need to improve access to services for victims, whether it be shelter, psychosocial or access to the justice system. Behavioural change and creating awareness in communities are also a means of intervention. The collection of adequate data will also contribute to identifying the true scope of the problem and resourcing interventions adequately

Contact crimes against women and children (excluding sexual offences)

Contact crime refers to those crimes in which the victims themselves are the targets of violence or property is targeted and the victims in the vicinity during the commission of the crime are subjected to threats of violence or the use of such violence.²



² SAPS Definition

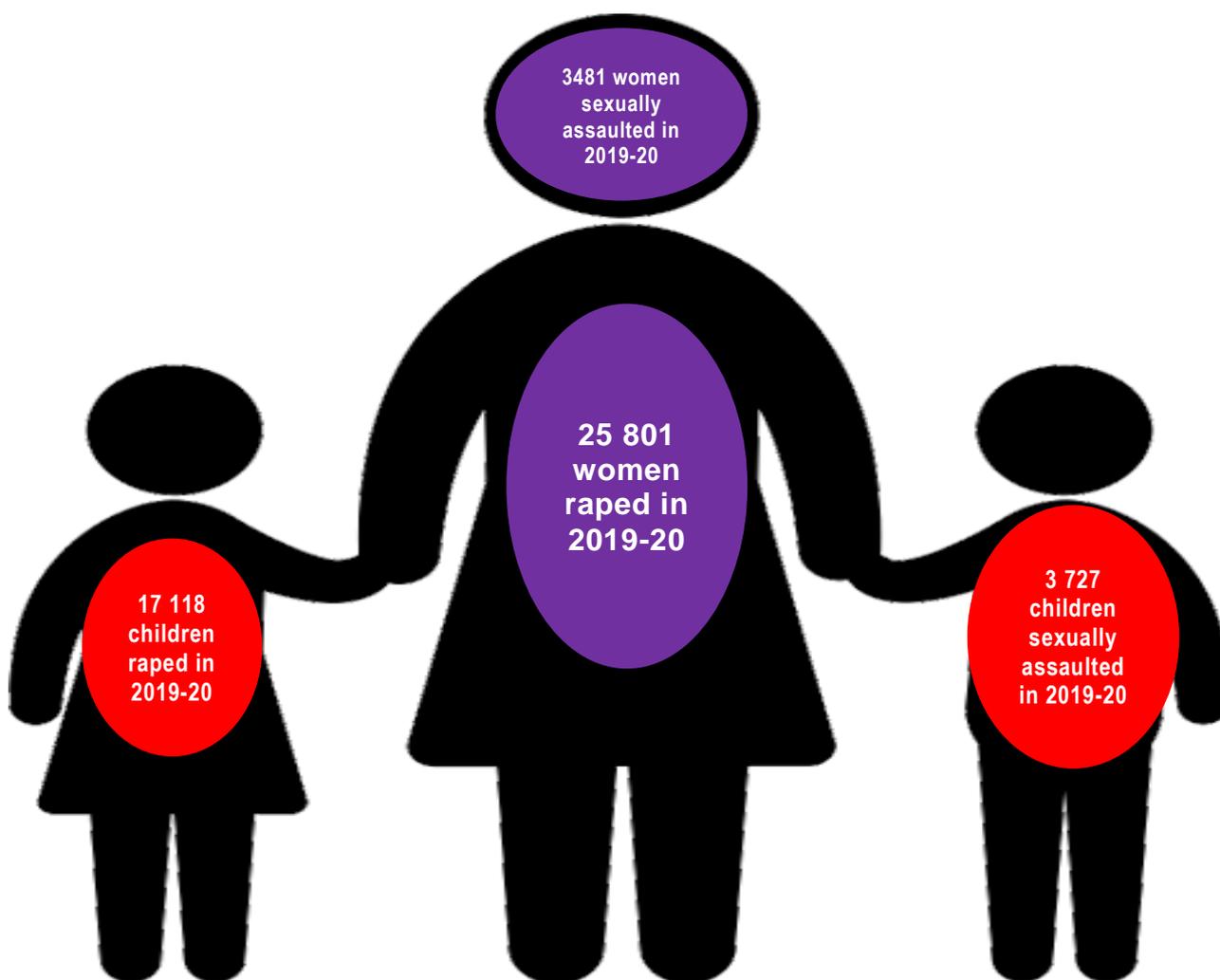
Table 2: Contact Crimes against women and children (excluding sexual offences)

Category of contact crime	Total	Women	Children
Murder	21 325	2 695 (12.6%)	943 (4.4%)
Attempted murder	18 635	3 214 (17.2%)	1 137 (6.1%)
Assault GBH	166 720	50 859 (30.5%)	7 506 (4.5%)
Common assault	165 494	83 202 (50.2%)	10 692 (6.4%)

While it is evident that men remain the primary victims of murder, common assault against women and children accounts for more than 56% of the overall reported cases. In addition, women and children constitute 35% of assault with the intent to do grievous bodily harm cases.

Sexual Offences against women and children

Sexual offences are sexual activities that a person has not consented to, and it can refer to a broad range of sexual behaviours that make a victim feel uncomfortable, frightened or threatened. Sexual offences include the following crimes: Rape, Sexual Assault, Attempted Sexual Offence, and Contact Sexual Offence.³



³ SAPS Definition

Table 3: Sexual Offences against women and children

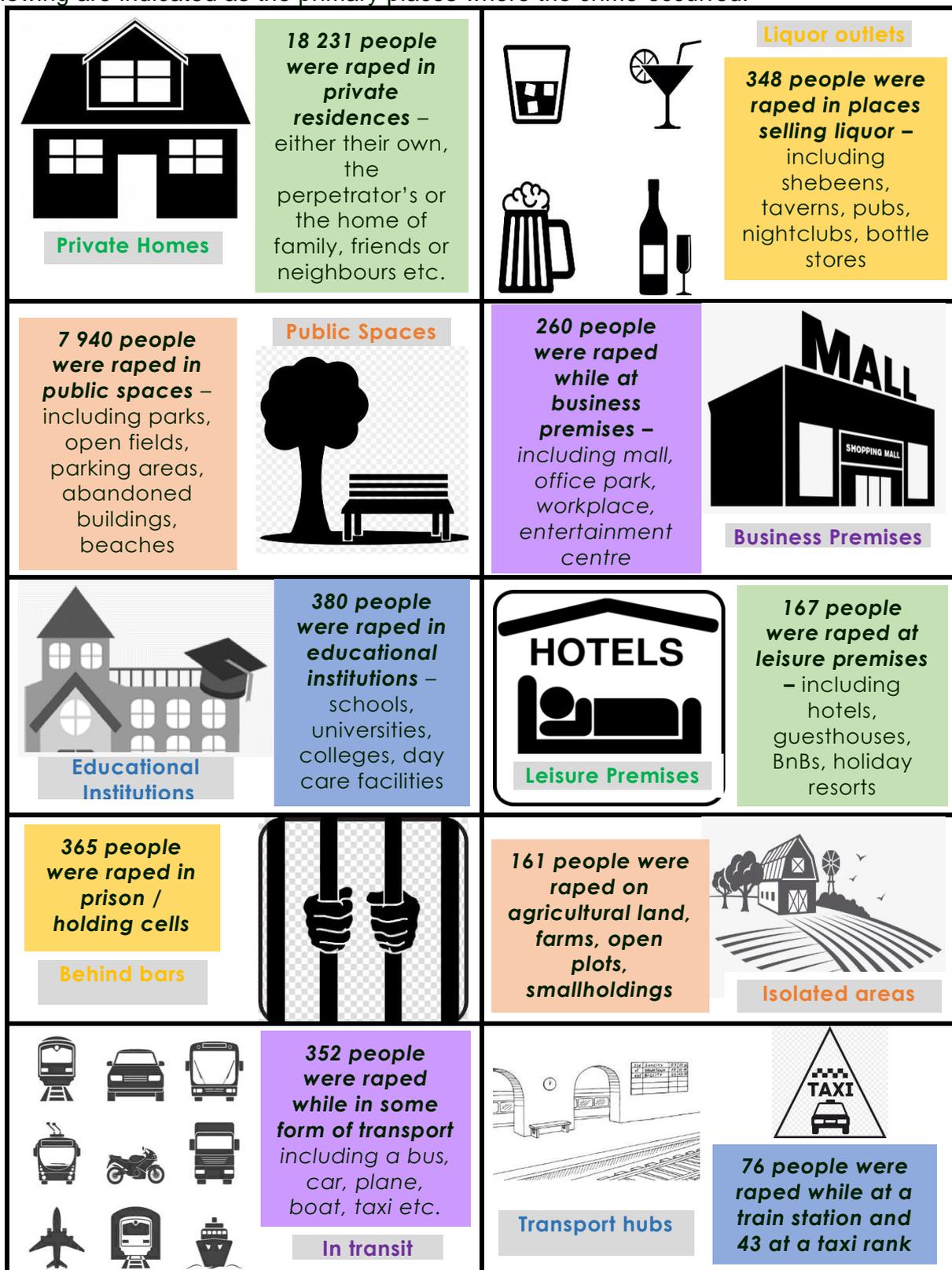
Category of Sexual Offence	Total Sexual Offences	% Women	% Children
Rape	42 289	25 801 (61%)	17 118 (40.4%)
Sexual Assault	7 749	3 481 (44.9%)	3 727 (48%)
Attempted sexual offences	2 076	1 382 (66.5%)	586 (28.2%)
Contact sexual offences	1 179	436 (36.9%)	639 (54.1%)
Total Sexual offences	53 293	31 100 (58.3%)	22 070 (41.4)

As noted previously, SAPS indicates that the figures for crimes against women and children have not been verified. Discrepancies therefore exist as follows:

Total Rape	Total Rape Women+Children	Difference
42 289	42 919	+ 630

- **Sexual Offences against women and children account for 99.7% of all sexual offences**, indicating that the scale of the problem is huge and requires urgent intervention. In the case of rape SAPS reports a total of 42 289 cases. However, when adding the amounts for the reported rapes of women and children, this results in 42 919 cases – an increase of 630 cases. The above figures also show that 100% of rape cases were committed against women and children. Cases of sexual assault against women and children constitute 93% of the overall cases. While SAPS indicates that the figures on **crimes against women and children are inclusive of unfounded counts**, it must also be remembered that crimes in these categories are often under-reported and the scale of the problem may be even greater.
- Crimes against women and children are often perpetrated by someone known to them, such as a family member or intimate partner. **Earlier it was noted that 38 356 contact crimes, (excluding rape and other sexual assault), were perpetrated by a current or former partner or spouse of the victim. Crimes by family members, parents or guardians are indicated for 11 097 cases of contact crime.** In addition, crime is also often perpetrated in an environment where one would expect to feel or be safe such as a home or school.
- The diagram on the next page presents some of the areas where a specific contact crime, namely rape, has occurred. SAPS has recorded this information for 28 432 out of 42 289 reported cases or 67% of the total cases. The information shows that **18 231 people were raped in private residences** – either their own, the perpetrator’s or the home of family, friends or neighbours etc.

In rape cases where the scene was mentioned (28 432 out of 42 289 reported cases⁴), the following are indicated as the primary places where the crime occurred.



⁴ According to SAPS, the unknowns or unmentioned due to circumstance of the crime are not included in these figures - 28 432 out of 42 289 reported cases accounts for 67.2% of cases