

SAPS overhaul necessary to fight crime in South Africa

By Okkie Terblanche MP - Shadow Deputy Minister of Police

Honorable Speaker;
Honorable Minister;
Honorable Members;
Fellow South Africans;

In Terms of section 12(1) of the constitution, everyone has the right to freedom and security of the person, which includes the right to be free from all forms of violence, from either public or private sources.

The South African taxpayer pays an ever-increasing amount of money annually, currently R97.59 billion, to ensure our safety. It is therefore fair to expect that this huge annual investment will yield the desired results.

Sadly, this is unfortunately not the case. Violent crimes are on the rise every single day. Certain areas in our country are run by drug lords and gangsters. Innocent people are dying in the crossfire. A quote from the Sunday times on 30th June 2019 reads as follows - "Cape Town will most likely become the crime capital of the world if the police fail to turn the crime tide around".

Speaker, crime levels in South Africa are unacceptable and the obvious question is, can it be turned around? The answer is a resounding yes, the Democratic Alliance (DA) has developed a turnaround strategy to make South Africa safe again. By:

- Restructuring the South African Police Service (SAPS). The whole structure must be overhauled, changing the department from this clumsy, out-of-touch organization, to a streamlined responsive organization. Basic policing must be managed nearer to the ground. Crime prevention and other related services must be devolved to a Provincial level;
- The top-heavy structure at SAPS must be trimmed, and these savings can then be re-allocated for basic policing;
- *Implementering van 'n behoorlike Landelike Beveiligings Plan. Plaas- en ander moorde in landelike gebiede moet gestop word. Die SAPD se plan in nog steeds nie gereed of geïmplementeer nie! Die DA het 'n plan wat dadelik geïmplementeer kan word. Dit sal stabiliteit verseker wat ons mense op plase en landelike gebiede sal toelaat om rustig met hul lewe voort te gaan en op normale daaglikse aktiwiteite te fokus;*
- By professionalizing SAPS through training and retraining, and by providing modern equipment to give police the means to tackle criminals head-on. The Police will never win the fight against crime with outdated equipment;
- By changing the strategy and style of policing - it is not clear what the department's policing style is at the moment. After almost two decades the police have not managed to successfully roll out the former strategy, namely sector policing. In many areas where it was rolled out, it collapsed due to staff and other shortages; and,

- The only lasting solution is to adopt a participative policing style where the police and the community form strong partnerships to police different areas. Reservists and other volunteers must play a more prominent role in SAPS.

Speaker, the DA salutes all our hard working and dedicated policemen and women, but the time has come to take the bull by the horns and transform the police into an effective crime fighting machine. Change is necessary! Let's do it now!

The many vacancies in the Independent Police Investigative Directorate (IPID) and the Civilian Secretariat for Police must be filled as a matter of urgency to enable these organizations to fulfil their watchdog roles.

I thank you.