



**MINISTRY OF POLICE
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA**

**MEDIA BRIEFING: MINISTER OF POLICE, GENERAL BHEKI CELE GIVES AN
UPDATE ON THE LEVELS OF COMPLIANCE AND ADHERENCE TO THE
COVID-19 LOCKDOWN REGULATIONS IN THE COUNTRY**

**GCIS, TSHEDIMOSETSO HOUSE
FRIDAY, 22 MAY 2020**

**Deputy Minister Cassel Mathale
National Commissioner, General Kehla Sitole
Senior Officers of the SAPS
Members of the media who are tuned in this afternoon
Our viewers and listeners at home**

**Sanibonani
Good afternoon**

When President Cyril Ramaphosa declared a state of disaster in March, the objective was to flatten the curve in relation to the spread of the corona virus. Subsequently, measures have been put in place to practicalise this objective. A number of Regulations were promulgated including the current Risk Adjusted Strategy, all in the best interests of the citizens of this country.

We were urged to all work together and fight this pandemic, and we have to a greater extent been successful in achieving this.

Now, 57 days later and exactly three weeks into Lockdown Level 4, the country is anxiously awaiting the dawn of Alert Level 3 as government continues to respond to both the pandemic and the needs of the public.

MINISTERIAL VISITS TO PROVINCES

I have together with the Deputy Minister of Police, Cassel Mathale and the National Commissioner, General Kehla Sitole been visiting provinces to assess enforcement by the security forces as well as adherence to the lockdown regulations. I have visited some provinces more than once after receiving complaints and observing high levels of non-compliance. Coincidentally, these provinces where I visited more than once, are currently those with the highest COVID-19 infection rates.

ARRESTS FOR CONTRAVENTION OF REGULATIONS

At one point towards the end of April when we were still on Level 5, we had about **107 000 cases opened with 118 000 people charged** for contravention of the lockdown regulations. In just over a month, this number has **more than doubled and is almost at 230 000** for contraventions that include:

- Liquor related offences
- Cigarette related offences
- Illegal gatherings which have gone down when compared to Level 5
- Failure to confine to place of residence which remains a serious challenge
- Cross border and inter-provincial movement
- Business related
- Transport related offences which have actually gone down as the taxi industry has improved in terms of compliance
- Fraudulent or no permits

Provinces with the highest number of arrests for contravention of the lockdown regulations almost mirror the provincial infection rates with the Western Cape in the lead, followed by Eastern Cape, Kwa-Zulu Natal and Gauteng.

Accordingly, the arrested persons were either issued with fines or released with warning, while some are out on bail and those cases relating to more serious offences are before the respective courts in the country.

We know that criminals are opportunistic. So organised crime syndicates have taken advantage of the lockdown especially on the ban of alcohol and cigarettes, and have expanded their illegal trade into the illegal market of illicit and counterfeit alcohol and cigarette sales.

We have also observed an **increase in smuggling of contraband** (liquor and tobacco) between South Africa's land borders with Botswana, eSwatini, Lesotho, Mozambique and Zimbabwe, as well as the sale of these products in the black market.

Our lockdown partners the SANDF, have disrupted some of these illegal operations mainly along South Africa's borders with Mozambique and Zimbabwe; and confiscated contraband including alcohol and cigarettes worth about R1,07 million in March and R1,6 million in April.

SERIOUS AND VIOLENT CRIME

In relation to serious and violent crime, we announced in April that there was a dramatic decline in especially the contact crime category which includes domestic violence, as well as in trio crimes which include house and business robberies as well as hijackings.

Again this time around, we have compared crime since the lockdown to crime over the same period in 2019. While the figures remain low comparatively speaking, we have noted slight increases in some crime categories.

The reasons behind the increase or decrease in crime is yet to be determined and confirmed by our Crime Analysts. However, we do believe that the slight increase is due to the relaxation of the lockdown restrictions which has seen increased movement of people and traffic on the road, as more companies have gone back to business again.

CONTACT CRIME

27 March to 19 May 2020 compared to the same period last year

	29 March to 21 May 2019	27 March to 19 May 2020 (Lockdown)	Case Difference	Percentage Change
Murder	2 970	1 072	-1 898	-63,9%
Rape	5 350	919	-4 431	-82,8%
Attempted murder	2 571	1 132	-1 439	-56,0%
Assault GBH	22 144	4 348	-17 796	-80,4%
Robbery with aggravating circumstances	14 822	5 397	-9 425	-63,6%

TRIO CRIMES

27 March to 19 May 2020 compared to the same period last year

	29 March to 21 May 2019	27 March to 19 May 2020 (Lockdown)	Case Difference	Percentage Change
Carjacking	2 641	773	-1 868	-70,7%
Robbery at non- residential premises	2 987	1 189	-1 798	-60,2%
Robbery at residential premises	3 021	1 539	-1 482	-49,1%

Cash-in-Transit Robberies

When we compare incidents of cash-in-transit robberies during the lockdown to the same period on 2019, the number has **dropped remarkably from 26 to only four (4)** incidents.

Although the lockdown figures for serious and violent crime are still lower in comparison to 2019, we have noted an increase in hijackings especially if we compare the first two weeks of Level 5 to the first two weeks of Level 4. Most hijacking incidents were recorded in Gauteng followed by Western Cape, KwaZulu Natal and Eastern Cape.

Let me take this opportunity to commend police in Gauteng for the arrest on the 19 May 2020, of four suspects who have since been linked to 18 other hijackings, some of which were committed during the lockdown period mostly in Boksburg and other parts of Gauteng. The intelligence-led operation between the SAPS and the Specialised Law Enforcement Unit from Gauteng Provincial Traffic, led police to Soweto where police arrested the suspects and recovered suspected stolen goods. Two vehicles and a gun with ammunition were seized for further investigation.

Drug Busts

A lot of other crime fighting successes have been achieved during the lockdown. For instance, we have had two major drug busts just in this past week alone. Police in Eastern Cape on Wednesday confiscated drugs (mandrax and dagga) worth an estimated value of about R4 million during a routine inspection at a Health Checkpoint outside Middelburg in the Eastern Cape. Two suspects, both foreign nationals, were arrested.

On Monday the 18th May, members of the Hawks intercepted a truck which was en route to Cape Town, and found in a container cocaine worth over R30,4 million. A 37-year old suspect was arrested.

Multiple murders in KwaZulu Natal – 7 killed

Let me also take this opportunity to condemn the violence in relation to the multiple murders yesterday afternoon in the Kwa-Makutha policing precinct in KwaZulu Natal. Seven young men aged between 21 and 36 were killed by unknown suspects and the circumstances are now under investigation. Police must leave no stone unturned in ensuring that the suspects are found and brought to book.

GENDER BASED VIOLENCE AND DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

Allow me to begin by welcoming the long term sentences handed down on two convicted rapists yesterday.

A 66-year old Cape Town man, Herman Harker, was handed 15 life sentences plus 30 years for rape and abduction.

We also welcome the life sentences on former police captain after being found guilty of raping his then 10-year old grand-daughter 18 years ago. He was found guilty in 2000 in the Sterkspruit Regional Court

Coming to GBV, I have noted recent media reports claiming that gender based violence is on the increase. During the week one report even claimed that GBV cases had gone up by 500% during the lockdown.

While not undermining the gravity of the scourge of GBV in the country, it is important to clarify that this increase is actually in relation to the number of distressed calls made to the GBV Command Centre, and not necessarily reported cases.

Actually, when we refer to gender based violence, these would cover ALL crimes against women and children as well as the LGBTQI community. For instance, if a woman walking to the shops is mugged and robbed at gunpoint of her personal belongings by a random suspect, that incident is recorded as a crime against a woman and therefore falls under GBV.

Therefore, for purposes of measuring the impact of the lockdown on homes and families, we use cases of domestic violence.

With domestic violence, we refer to incidents such as sexual assault, rape, pointing of firearm, murder, attempted murder, assault and assault GBH, kidnapping and in such instances, the victim and suspect usually have or had a relationship. As I have

mentioned before, some of the suspects in such cases are uncles, exes, wives and girlfriends, husbands, fathers, partners, siblings, etc.

If we compare the period 27 March to 21 May 2019 with the lockdown period from 27 March to 19 May 2020, there is a sharp **decrease from 21 033 in 2019, to 6 651 cases of domestic violence during the lockdown**, giving us a percentage decrease of 68,4%.

The numbers are in reference to reported cases. Therefore, there is a possibility that there could be victims at home who have not or cannot report to the police for different reason. To assist in this regard so that victims do not feel vulnerable, neglected and unprotected, we urge victims to report to the police because police can really only come in after the crime has already taken place in the private space of homes.

We urge neighbours who are often aware of, or have reason to suspect violent domestic disruptions, to alert the police. Friends, relatives or someone within the shared residence may also alert the police about the abuse on behalf of the victim.

As far as possible, victims of domestic violence are reminded that they may approach the Courts for a protection order.

The current situation with the COVID-19 lockdown makes it particularly necessary for people to contact the police telephonically, as movement is limited. As an alternative, the SAPS Emergency Number, 10111 can be called in an emergency including when a crime is in progress. This is for urgent intervention by the police to disrupt further commission of the crime. In areas where there are no 10111 call centres, calls are diverted to the police station closest to the caller.

Callers that want to remain anonymous may contact SAPS Crime Stop Number 08600 10111 or send a tip-off via MySAPS App which can be downloaded on android and iPhone.

Other contact details:

GBV Command Centre – 0800 428 428

Child-line Toll Free – 0800 055 555

Life Line 0800 150 150

Human Trafficking Hotline - 0800 222 777

Members of the public must also report poor services by the police or lack thereof, first to the station management whose contact numbers must to be visibly placed in the CSC. Complaints can also be lodged with the National Service Complaints Call Centre on 080 033 3177. The auto attendant voice prompts will assist and direct the complainant on how to lodge such a service complaint. An email can also be sent to Complaintsnodalpoint@saps.gov.za.

MEMBERS INFECTED BY THE CORONA VIRUS

Moving away from crime, I want to take this opportunity to pay respect to members of the SAPS, the SANDF, and all other security forces who are at the frontline supporting government efforts to deal with the COVID-19 pandemic.

So far, we have 611 members that have tested positive for the COVID-19 and 101 recoveries, with the Western Cape leading with 441. Eastern Cape follows with 47 positive cases.

Let me commend the SAPS COVID-19 National and Provincial Steering Committees for ensuring that protocols are in place and that they are being followed. We have been proactive by sending The intensive screening and testing has seen hundreds of members go in isolation, and over 3000 quarantined.

Our condolences go out to the families and colleagues of six (6) of our members who have succumbed to the virus. Two of these members passed away yesterday in the Western Cape, bringing to total four COVID-19 related deaths in the Province.

I know that our communities have been nervous about police members testing positive and Stations being shut down. The truth is, as soon as a SAPS member or PSA employee from any police station or any SAPS building tests positive, the Department of Health is brought on board. Occupants of the specific building are screened and

/or tested. The building or facility must be vacated immediately for decontamination and can only be reoccupied after a period of 12 to 48 hours. Isolation and quarantining of the members and those who have been in immediate contact with them, is based on the outcome of the screening and testing.

There are about 121 stations countrywide and 40 units where members have tested positive and the premises contaminated. With the Western Cape being the hardest hit province so far, it is reported that at least 19 stations have had to be decontaminated again:

1. Athlone
2. Mfuleni
3. Lentegeur
4. Milnerton
5. Mitchel's plain
6. Kraaifontein
7. Bellville
8. Khayelitsha
9. Delfie
10. Pinelands
11. Claremont
12. Ceres
13. Phillipi East
14. Phillipi
15. Durbanville
16. Lingelethu west
17. Hout bay
18. Cape Town Central
19. Hermanus

The occupants of the building are screened prior to reoccupation of the premises to prevent re-contamination of the premises.

While the members and employees' health is a key priority, police as essential service providers, are under strict instructions to ensure that service delivery is not disrupted

at any point. Once a building is temporarily shut for decontamination, alternative accommodation is arranged for the CSC so that our communities still have access to service points. SAPS has sent out alerts and notices to immediately inform the public of alternative accommodation at stations where members have tested positive.

The Ministry of Police and the Management of the SAPS reiterate their support of all members of law enforcement agencies in the SAPS, the National and Provincial Traffic Police, and Metro Police Departments.

In relation to complaints against the police for heavy handedness, we have noted complaints relating to an incident where a journalist was allegedly assaulted by the police in Ficksburg and has since fled to Lesotho. We confirm that this matter is now with the IPID and under investigation on instruction of my instruction.

FIREARM AMNESTY ENDING 31 MAY

With the Firearm Amnesty period about to expire at the end of this month, we have been receiving a number of enquiries on whether or not this will be extended. We have written to Parliament to request for an extension after noticing the sharp decline in voluntary handovers during the lockdown.

Since December, firearms and ammunition were handed in their thousands, and then in April, only 385 were handed in.

We believe this sharp decline since April may be because of the lockdown which has limited the movement of people, as the handing over of firearms is not necessarily categorised as an essential service.

We appreciate the over 16 000 surrendered firearms thus far, including 795 estate firearms, as well as over 140 000 ammunition handed in.

It is important to always remember that the firearm amnesty is one of our many interventions to curb the proliferation of illegal firearms off our streets, as well as those

unwanted firearms. This will help us bring down serious and violent crimes that continue to terrorise our communities.

CONCLUSION

As I round up this overview on crime during the lockdown, let me take this opportunity to extend a word of appreciation to our members from all security forces who are hard at work during this COVID-19 lockdown. Let me also wish those who have tested positive for the corona virus and subsequently fallen ill, a speedy recovery.

Continue to observe hygiene protocols put in place, wearing your PPE at all times.

To the country at large, remember, the lockdown is government's effort to protect you against the corona virus. These are trying times and we therefore need to exercise patience and look at the prize – which is a healthy nation that managed to effectively respond to the pandemic as a united force against the virus.

Let us work hard in support of government interventions so that we all live to see life beyond the corona virus pandemic.

Remember the virus has no feet. We as human beings, are its mode of transport. So to make sure the virus stays put, let us stay home, exercise maximum precaution, and save South Africa.

I thank you!