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# 1. Young men as risk group

Young men in South Africa (and across the globe) are primary perpetrators of physical violence, sexual violence and victims of homicide.<sup>1</sup> The highest homicide rates in South Africa (184 per 100 000; nine times the global rate) are seen in men between the ages of 15 and 29 years.<sup>2</sup> The homicide rate for South African males is six times higher than for South African females, compared to the global average of three times higher.<sup>3</sup>

Research has demonstrated linkages between masculine norms, confrontational and belligerent identities to the perpetration of interpersonal violence.<sup>4</sup> According to researchers, identities and aspirational views to be 'ready for a fight', 'show no fear or pain' and 'play it cool' <sup>5</sup> reinforce the view that violence is a legitimate mechanism to respond to conflict.<sup>6</sup> Links are also drawn between violence amongst young men and structural and physical violence of the state.<sup>7</sup>

Young men are also represented as victims of violence and crime in both South Africa and globally.<sup>8</sup> Studies between September 2004 and September 2005 indicated that 42 per cent of South African children and youth (between the ages of 12 and 22) were victims of crime and violence.<sup>9</sup>

## 2. Gender-based-violence

There has been progress, and there is recognition of the needs to address violence against women and children (VAWC) in South Africa, with key policies within the main human rights treaties such as the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW).<sup>10</sup>

Violence against women includes, but is not limited to domestic violence, sexual violence by non-partners, marital rape, date rape, stalking, sexual harassment, sexual exploitation, domestic homicides and harmful traditional practices.<sup>11</sup> Disaggregated data on family violence, rape and sexual assault, or intimate partner violence is not readily available in official crime statistics.

In 2010 global estimates showed that 30 per cent of women aged 15 years and over had experienced physical and/or sexual intimate partner violence (IPV)<sup>12</sup> (IPV defined as 'violence between individuals'). While it is difficult to provide accurate data of violence

against women in South Africa, a study conducted in 2012 found that 77 per cent of women in Limpopo, 51 per cent in Gauteng, 45 per cent in the Western Cape and 36 per cent of women in KwaZulu-Natal, had experienced some form of Gender Based Violence (GBV) (intimate and non-intimate) in their lifetimes.<sup>14</sup> Despite legislative enactments aimed at eradicating GBV and enhancing the protections afforded to women, violence against women has been described as 'socially normalised, legitimised, and accompanied by a culture of silence and impunity'.<sup>15</sup> Moreover, more women are killed by their current or ex-intimate male partner in South Africa than in any other country with a rate of 8.8 per 100 000 women.<sup>16</sup> Therefore, South African women globally experience some of the highest rate of GBV.<sup>17</sup>

Women in particularly contexts face heightened risks. The most vulnerable groups of women includes women with disabilities; destitute women, women in institutions or in detention, older women, lesbians, bisexual and transgender women, women living with HIV and AIDS and migrant and refugee women.<sup>18</sup>

Qualitative research has identified the following risk factors with respect to the perpetration of physical and sexual violence: the lack of nurturing parenting, including parental absence;<sup>19</sup> childhood abuse; witnessing domestic violence and alcohol abuse.<sup>20</sup>

#### 2.1 Domestic violence

The term 'domestic violence' is defined to include: physical abuse; sexual abuse; emotional, verbal and psychological abuse; economic abuse; intimidation; harassment; stalking; damage to property; entry into the complainant's residence without consent and any other controlling or abusive behaviour.<sup>21</sup> However, domestic violence is not recorded as a separate offence in available crime statistics and therefore obtaining accurate rates of domestic violence is challenging. Under reporting and inconsistent recording of domestic violence also exacerbate the ability to draw on reliable data.<sup>22</sup>

Researchers cite South Africa as having 'one of the highest incidences of domestic violence in the world'.<sup>23</sup> However, IPV is largely under-reported; for instance, between April 2008 and March 2009, 0.3 per cent of the adult female population in Gauteng reported an intimate partner assault to the police, and yet, during the same period of time 18.1 per cent reported violence by an intimate partner to researchers.<sup>24</sup> National research conducted by the Medical Research Council has found that 40 per cent of men report being physically violent to a

partner, and 40 per cent to 50 per cent of women report having been victims.<sup>25</sup> Compared to 1 in 4 (25 per cent) women in the United States (US) and 1 in 7 men.<sup>26</sup>

A study by the South African Medical Research Council in 2009 revealed that 56 per cent of all murders of women were perpetrated by intimate partners - six times higher than the global average.<sup>27</sup> Further research studies estimate that in 2011, 417 out of every 100 000 people (both women and men) applied for protection orders.<sup>28</sup>

## 2.2 Sexual violence

While acknowledging that all forms of violence (with exception of murder) are generally underreported in crime statistics, researchers in South Africa note that rape is 'probably more underreported' than other categories of violent crime.<sup>29</sup> This is widely acknowledged in international and national literature.<sup>30</sup> The reasons for underreporting are largely related to the deeply sensitive and personal character of sexual violence and include a lack of recognition by victims of the criminal nature of sexual violence, as well as, barriers to reporting sexual violence, such as shame, self-blame, community taboos, discriminatory police practices, and secondary victimisation. <sup>31</sup> The Medical Research Council estimated that only one in nine rapes are reported.<sup>32</sup>

In 2013/2014 the number of sexual offenses decreased by 5.6 per cent. Although disaggregated data on the rates of rape and sexual assault, or intimate partner violence is not available in the 2013/2014 official crime statistics, the exact number of reported cases for rape and sexual assault are available.<sup>33</sup>

The total sexual offences in the country were reported at a rate of 118.2 per 100 000 people for 2013/2014,<sup>34</sup> with 46 253 cases of rape in 2013/2014 and 6 795 cases of sexual assault.<sup>35</sup> This rate has decreased since 2004/2005 when it was recorded as being 148.4 per 100 000 people. <sup>36</sup> However, despite this overall trend in declining rates of sexual offenses, the rates have fluctuated over that time.<sup>37</sup> These fluctuations, particularly the change in rates from 2007/2008 to 2008/2009, where rates increased from 133.4 per 100 000 people to 144.8 per 100 000 people respectively, may have been partly attributable to the introduction of the Criminal Law (Sexual Offences and Related Matters) Act 32 of 2007 which broadened the definition of rape.<sup>38</sup> The amount of rapes and sexual assaults reported in 2013/2014 were less than in previous years, and while this may represent a decrease in

confidence around reporting to the police, it may also represent a genuine decline in these crimes.<sup>39</sup>

The 2013/2014 victims of crime survey reported that sexual offence victims (16 years and older) were most likely to be victimised by their relatives (25.1 per cent), followed by a known community members from their area (24.0 per cent). In only 6.1 per cent of cases was the perpetrator a spouse or lover. Half (50.0 per cent) of all sexual offences occurred at home, while only 15.4 per cent occurred in someone else's home and even less (9.6 per cent) in the street in a residential area. A positive finding of the study was that most victims (81.6 per cent) indicated that they knew where to access medical assistance, while 76.8 per cent knew of a place they could go to for counselling and 54.0 per cent knew where to obtain a protection order.

The following provincial trends were noted in 2013/2014: Free State had a rate of 174.9 per 100 000 people, Northern Cape of 150.8 per 100 000 people, Eastern Cape of 149.5 per 100 00 people, North-West Province of 134.8 per 100 000 people, Western Cape of 134.0 per 100 000 people, Limpopo of 116.4 per 100 000 people, KwaZulu-Natal of 113.6 per 100 000 people, Mpumalanga of 95.8 per 100 000 people, and Gauteng Province of 86.6 per 100 000 people.44

## 2.3 Consequences of violence

Research indicates the effects of violence against women and children are lasting, harming communities and families, and have been linked to key drivers of the HIV epidemic.<sup>45</sup> A survey among 1 366 South African women showed that women who were beaten by their partners were 48 per cent more likely to be infected with HIV than those who were not.<sup>46</sup> Such victims may also suffer isolation, inability to work, loss of wages, lack of participation in social and civic activities and limited ability to care for themselves and their children.<sup>47</sup>

While the state has the primary responsibility for addressing violence against women, a study notes that few countries have the policy, legal and service infrastructure to respond to, or influence social, justice and health services to address GBV effectively.<sup>48</sup> GBV is also said to be one of the most expensive public health problems globally, estimated to cost South Africa between R 28.4 billion and R 42.4 billion per year (1.3 per cent of GDP annually).<sup>49</sup>

# 3. Children's exposure to crime and violence

The main convention in South Africa that aims at protecting the rights of children is the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC).<sup>50</sup>

Violence against children is defined by the United Nations Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCRC) as: 'all forms of physical or mental violence, injury or abuse, neglect or negligent treatment, maltreatment or exploitation, including sexual abuse, while in the care of parent(s), legal guardian(s) or any other person who has the care of the child'.<sup>51</sup>

South African Police Service (SAPS) reported 2 630 cases of neglect and ill-treatment of children in 2013/2014; the most cases reported to be in more urban provinces of Gauteng (704) and Western Cape (452), while only 86 cases were reported in the Northern Cape. 52 However, from 2004 to 2014 the overall number of reported cases decreased by 52.8 per cent. 53 In 2012 SAPS reported 51.9 per cent of social contact crimes committed against children were sexual offenses, with 60.5 per cent committed against children below the age of 15, and 29.4 per cent of such offences involving children between the ages of 0 and 10 years. 54

In 2014, it was reported that there were 3.7 million orphans and approximately 90,000 children living in child-headed homes.<sup>55</sup>

Table 1: Child murder rate per 100 000 children

	Female rate	Male rate	Overall rate
0-4 years	8.3	7.6	7.9
5-9 years	1.7	1.6	1.7
10-14 years	1.5	2.7	2.1
15-17 years	4.6	21.7	13.2
Overall	3.9	6.9	5.5

Source: Medical Research Council 'Child homicide patterns in South Africa: Is there a link to child abuse?' (2012).

A study conducted in 2015 found that of 4 095 young people, one in five (19.8 per cent) have experienced sexual abuse in their lifetime and 7.9 per cent reported some form of neglect at some point in their lives. <sup>56</sup> The study also found that over one-third of young people faced physical abuse and 16.1 per cent of respondents reported emotional abuse. <sup>57</sup> 23.1 per cent of young people reporting exposure to family violence, 44.5 per cent having experienced theft, 19.7 per cent of young people reported persistent bullying, 21.4 per cent

reported having been threatened with violence, 19.2 per cent of young people had been attacked without a weapon, and 15.9 per cent had been attacked with a weapon.<sup>58</sup>

In 2009, South Africa had an overall child homicide rate of 5.5 per 100 000 children younger than 18 years.<sup>59</sup> Nearly half (44.6 per cent) of these homicides were due to child abuse and neglect.<sup>60</sup>

There are links between youth who have witnessed excessive violence in their neighbourhoods and aggression among the youth.<sup>61</sup> This is due to cognitive impairment from youths who have experienced overt violence, resulting in problem-solving difficulties.<sup>62</sup> Exposure to violence can also lead to the development and internalisation of norms encouraging the use of aggression as a means to manage conflict and assert power in interpersonal relations, as well as a means to increase self-esteem.<sup>63</sup> There also tend to be a higher proportion of deviant peers in socially dysfunctional communities, which are directly linked to problematic parenting.<sup>64</sup>

A 2013 study on youth exposure to violence in the Western Cape highlights the extent of violence in the community among children and adolescents, with 40 per cent reporting direct victimisation and the prevalence of poly-victimisation.<sup>65</sup> The study further draws links between structural issues of historical oppression and socioeconomic marginalisation and high levels of violence within the community.<sup>66</sup>

According to the National Schools Violence Study (2012), 48.7 per cent of school-going learners had been exposed to violence in their home or community, while 12 per cent had seen one family member intentionally attack another family member. <sup>67</sup> High levels of crime and violence are an additional risk factor at a relationship and community level. <sup>68</sup> Amongst school children, 49 per cent reported that their neighbourhood was characterised by high levels of crime. <sup>69</sup>

Despite the ban against corporal punishment within the South African Schools Act 84 of 1996, the practise continues in South African schools. While the 2014 General Household Survey (GHS) indicates that corporal punishment has decreased nationally since 2011, 12.4 per cent of school learners still reportedly experienced corporal punishment in 2014. However, there are clear signs of underreporting in that the number of learners that experience some form of corporal punishment in schools exceeds the number of educators who are being sanctioned for practising corporal punishment.

Studies on gender violence in South African schools highlight how GBV is not limited to adults. A report by the UN Children's' Fund (UNICEF) and the Department of Women, Children and People with Disabilities (2012) finds that one in five incidents of sexual abuse happened in schools and one third of people who raped children were teachers. <sup>73</sup>

Perpetrators of violence against children are overwhelmingly relatives, friends, acquaintances or neighbours, with most abuse taking place in or nearby the home.<sup>74</sup> For example, around one-third of parents report using severe forms of corporal punishment against their children.<sup>75</sup> Single-parent households are widely recognised as a risk factor for violence against children.<sup>76</sup> Other risk factors include family conflict, living with a stepparent, exposure to numerous caregivers and alcohol abuse in the home.<sup>77</sup>

These studies further highlight how the nature of GBV relates to wider social structures, inequalities and resources.<sup>78</sup> A Cape Town based study conducted in 2013 noted the complexity of violence in teenage sexuality relations, indicating how violent gender relations can be considered to be part of romantic cultures and therefore violence within sexual relations are accepted.<sup>79</sup>

Due to their age and having less capacity than adults to protect themselves, children are especially vulnerable to violence. Groups cited as most vulnerable include migrant children, those living in HIV-affected households, children with disabilities and children living without biological parents or outside a family environment.<sup>80</sup> The prevalence of child sexual abuse, mistreatment and family violence is largely unknown, as there are limited nationally representative studies on the extent and impact of child mistreatment, and violence against children is under reported. However, published research findings on child abuse and child maltreatment in South Africa implies that children's exposure to all forms of violence is extremely high, resulting in substantial psychological distress.<sup>81</sup> There is an increased risk of children, particularly boys who have experienced or witnessed violence becoming perpetrators of violence in the future.<sup>82</sup> Similarly, girls exposed to sexual abuse in childhood are at increased risk of becoming victims of sexual and physical abuse, including IPV at a later point in their lives.<sup>83</sup>

Caregivers and siblings in trouble with the law also constitute a risk factor for crime and violence. Amongst school children, 23 per cent reported that they have a sibling who had or is currently in jail for criminal activity, while 9 per cent report that their caregiver or parent ever been in jail for criminal behaviour. 84

# 3.1 Trafficking and child-employment

South Africa is cited by the International Labour Organisation (ILO) as 'playing a leading role in eliminating child labour', however there still remain incidents of child labour and trafficking.85

Human trafficking is defined by the UN as: 'the recruitment, transportation, transfer, harbouring or receipt of persons, by means of the threat or use of force or other forms of coercion, of abduction, of fraud, of deception, of the abuse of power or of a position of vulnerability or of the giving or receiving of payments or benefits to achieve the consent of a person having control over another person, for the purpose of exploitation.'86 Globally the percentage of child victims is on the rise: it increased from 20 per cent in 2003 to 2006 to 27 per cent from 2007 to 2010, with over 68 per cent of cases in Africa and the Middle East, and 27 per cent of cases in the Americas.87

South Africa is considered a source, transit and destination country of child trafficking, and the distribution and creation of child pornography is increasing.<sup>88</sup> Reports indicate that children are trafficked within the country to urban centres with boys being forced to work in street vending, food service, begging, criminal activities and agriculture; girls are subjected to sexual exploitation and domestic servitude.<sup>89</sup> Girls between the ages of 12-15 are also forced into marriage.<sup>90</sup>

The Basic Condition of the Employment Act states that: 'No person may employ a child – who is under 15 years of age; or who is under the minimum school-leaving age in terms of any law'.91. However, a Government official report found in 2010 indicated that 36 000 children were absent from school because they were working, and 290 000 children were injured at work or were exposed to dangerous conditions.92 Children living and working on the street are also more vulnerable to violence and abuse as they are not protected by family or society.93

# 3.2 Consequences of violence

There are multiple data sources indicating the extent to which contemporary young South Africans grow up in an especially violent context.<sup>94</sup> This includes exposure to domestic and family violence, direct victimisation of children and the lack of 'safe spaces' in many urban environments.<sup>95</sup> In a study undertaken using a sample of 617 Grade 7 learners from nine primary schools in two low-socioeconomic municipal districts of Cape Town almost all (98.9)

per cent) had witnessed some form of community violence.<sup>96</sup> Domestic violence was also reported by the majority of respondents (76.9 per cent) and more than half (58.6 per cent) reported some form of direct victimisation at home.<sup>97</sup> While only a small proportion reported sexual abuse (8 per cent), exposure to school violence was reported by 75.8 per cent.<sup>98</sup>

Violence against children has significant long-term effects.<sup>99</sup> Evidence suggests child maltreatment leads to a cycle of violence with children exposed to violence at a young age more likely to perpetrator or be victim to violence in later life.<sup>100</sup>

For instance, studies have drawn links between corporal punishment and an increase in behavioural problems<sup>101</sup> as well as IPV and parents' alcohol misuse causing emotional and behavioural disorders.<sup>102</sup> Exposure to direct and indirect violence in the home is also proven to negatively affect children's cognitive development at the ECD level, as violence becomes normalised as a means of problem solving.<sup>103</sup> Additional issues with children affected by violence include long-lasting effects on their health and developmental outcomes. <sup>104</sup> Violence is also shown to be intergenerational,<sup>105</sup> and affected children are more prone to depression, attempted suicide and are more likely to engage in harmful use of substances and risky sexual behaviour, and therefore more likely to become HIV-infected.<sup>106</sup>

South Africa also has a high proportion of children indirectly exposed to violence, specifically the prevalence of fetal alcohol spectrum disorders (FASD), which are the highest in the world, with 22.5 per cent of children aged 1 - 9 years stunted or wasted.<sup>107</sup>

Exposure to violence at a young age also leads to revictimisation, which is especially prevalent among girls exposed to sexual abuse at an increased risk of being raped again in childhood and experiencing IPV as adults. Studies also show that the experience of trauma and violence in childhood also affects brain development in reducing the ability of children to subsequently form strong emotional relationships and empathise. 109

#### 4. Disabilities and exclusion

The Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) was ratified by South Africa 2007. It states eight guiding principles to protect persons with disabilities (PWD) included (i) respect for dignity, (ii) non-discrimination, (iii) full and effective participation in society, (iv) respect for difference, (v) equality of opportunity, (vi) accessibility, (vii) gender equality and (viii) respect for the evolving capacities of children with disabilities, and respect

to allow them to preserve their identities.<sup>110</sup> The United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities reinforces the need to protect the rights of children and adults living with disabilities and to ensure their full and equal participation in society. This includes protecting them from violence and other environmental factors that adversely affect their health and safety.

Children and adults with disabilities are at much higher risk of violence than their non-disabled peers.<sup>111</sup> Abuse varies according to certain disabilities, while mentally and physically displaced children are at an increased risk of sexual abuse, those with learning disabilities are particularly vulnerable to neglect.<sup>112</sup>

The under reporting of abuse of children with disabilities in South Africa is an additional issue. <sup>113</sup> A study on rights for disabled children in South Africa highlights widespread family violence, abuse and rape of children with disabilities, specifically reports of sexual abuse and rape of disabled children in special schools never reaching the courts. <sup>114</sup>

# 5. Older persons vulnerability to violence

The Older Persons Act (13 of 2006) calls upon 'Measures to prevent and combat abuse of older persons', highlighting the need for cooperation of service holders, such as between hospitals and SAPS and register those convicted of abuse towards an older person.<sup>115</sup>

Older persons are particularly vulnerable to a number of crimes, due to age, infirmity, personal, and socio economic circumstances, including the intentional or reckless infliction of pain or injury; the use of violence or force for participation in sexual conduct or conduct contrary to their wishes; the intentional imposition of unreasonable confinement; or the intentional or deliberate deprivation of food, shelter, or health care; and theft and extortion. Comprehensive interventions that provide increased support and oversight, public education, and that address the systemic issues that make older persons vulnerable, are central to structural, individual, relationship and community to reduce the risk of abuse. 116

Comprehensive interventions that provide increased support and oversight, public education and that address the systemic issues that make older persons vulnerable, are central to structural, individual, relationship and community to reduce the risk of abuse.

# 6. Lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans-gender and intersex (LGBTI)

South Africa was the first country in the world to constitutionally prohibit discrimination on the basis of sex, gender or sexual orientation, as outlined in section 9 of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa. Whilst state responses in form of law reform that addresses access to justice barriers and institutional reforms that tackles police conduct which dehumanises, reinforces stigma, are central to government responses these are primarily reactive. These strategies must be informed by a better understanding of safety and security concerns of LGBTI persons, as opposed to, generic programme responses.

LGBTI people are particularly prone to discrimination, persecution and violence and safety strategies need to acknowledge and address societal attitudes and recognise that different factors impact on LGBTI persons vulnerability based on individual context and circumstance. For many, violence begins at home, in schools, the workplace and in the streets. Whilst state responses in form of law reform that addresses access to justice barriers and institutional reforms that tackles police conduct which dehumanises, reinforces stigma, are central to state responses these are primarily reactive. These strategies must be informed by a better understanding of safety and security concerns of LGBTI persons, as opposed to, generic programme responses.

Lesbian woman are particularly affected by the general populations' overall conservative values and views towards homosexuality.<sup>117</sup> While lesbian women are protected as a vulnerable group in South Africa researchers argue there is insufficient government response to address the victimisation they face.<sup>118</sup> 'Corrective' rape is defined as rape to 'cure lesbians of their sexual orientation'.<sup>119</sup> While it is unclear how pervasive 'corrective' rape is in South Africa as SAPS do not keep statistics on this; it is reported that between 1998 and 2012, 31 lesbians were murdered in South Africa due to their sexual orientation.<sup>120</sup> Research conducted in 2008 found that black lesbian women from townships are particularly at risk to sexual violence. <sup>121</sup> The study estimated that black women living in a township are 4.7 per cent more likely to be raped than a white woman, and 44 per cent of white lesbians from the Western Cape feared sexual violence, compared to 86 per cent of black lesbians.<sup>122</sup>

# 7. Relationship between guns and violence

There exist conclusive links between ownership levels of handguns and rates of victimisation by gun-related crime, as indicated in a 2014 study of 50 countries by the Centre for Crime and Justice Studies.<sup>123</sup>

The Medical Research Council reports that South Africa's rate of firearm deaths is one of the highest in the world and a third of all homicides are a result of the use of firearms.<sup>124</sup>

Table two (below) highlights the number of non-natural deaths caused by firearms as the third most commonly reported death (16.2 per cent).<sup>125</sup> This reinforces proposals of to the need to address the availability of firearms in South Africa.

Table 2: Number and percentage distribution of deaths due to other external causes of accidental injury, 2013

Cause of death (based on ICD-10)	Number	Percentage
Accidental exposure to other and unspecified factors (X58-X59)	12 123	45,6
Other accidental threats to breathing (W75-W84)	4 768	17,9
Exposure to inanimate mechanical forces (W20-W49)	4 303	16,2
Exposure to smoke, fire and flames (X00-X09)	2 227	8,4
Accidental drowning and submersion (W65-W74)	1 518	5,7
Accidental poisoning by and exposure to noxious substances (X40-X49)	799	3,0
Exposure to forces of nature (X30-X39)	282	1,1
Exposure to electric current, radiation and extreme ambient air temperature and pressure (W85-W99)	303	1,1
Falls (W00-W19)	181	0,7
Contact with venomous animals and plants (X20-X29)	49	0,2
Exposure to animate mechanical forces (W50-W64)	36	0,1
Overexertion, travel and privation (X50-X57)	11	0,0
Contact with heat and hot substances (X10-X19)	8	0,0
Total	26 608	100,0

Source: Statistics South Africa 'Mortality and causes of death in South Africa' (2013) Table 4.12 p 40.

# 7.1 Gun ownership

While accurate data on unlicensed or stolen firearms is not consistently available. According to figures supplied by the Central Firearms Registry (CFR), as of August 2011, 2 907 135 firearms were held by civilians under the 1969 Arms and Ammunition Act. A further 138 624 new licenses were issued under the Firearms Control Act (FCA) between 1 July 2004 and 22 August 2011. An estimated 12 000 firearm applications are handled each month by the police nation firearm office. Researchers report in a national study conducted that 18.2 per

cent of school children report that it is easy to get a gun in their community, while 50 per cent report it is easy to get a knife. 128

SAPS has reported that in the past three years 227 929 (73 577 in 2013/2014) individual firearm licenses were approved but, over the same period, 29 067 firearms (7 589 in 2013/2014) were lost by legal owners.<sup>129</sup> The legal possession of firearms has been largely stable over the last ten years, never recorded as being above 33.3 per 100 000 people (2004/2005) or below 28.2 per 100 000 people (2008/2009).<sup>130</sup> SAPS reported 15 420 cases of illegal possession of firearms and ammunition in 2013/2014.<sup>131</sup>

A number of studies link gun ownership to GBV in South Africa<sup>132</sup>. It found that while men are the main victims of gun violence, women are most vulnerable, and legally owned firearms are the main risk factor for murder of intimate partners,<sup>133</sup> with at least half of female homicide victims being killed by their male intimate partners.<sup>134</sup> At a global level the World Health Organisation (WHO) estimated that in 2013 male partners committed 38 per cent of female homicides.<sup>135</sup>

The majority of small arms and light weapons are in the hands of private individuals, and it is estimated that civilians hold nearly 75 per cent of the global stockpile of guns. In 2009 (the most recent year for which data is available), an average of 18 people were shot and killed a day (6 428 people shot and killed in total); half the number of people shot 10 years previously (1998: 12 298 people shot and killed; average 34 people a day). In 2011 licensed civilian gun owners represented 3.6 per cent of the total population and there were 5.9 licenced firearms per 100 people.

#### 7.2 Firearm violence

A WHO report on violence prevention states that around one in every two homicides is committed with a firearm with firearm homicides accounting for 33 per cent of all homicides in South Africa. This report draws strong links between the ease of access to firearms as well as excessive alcohol use and multiple types of violence. United Such links are especially apparent in South Africa; according to United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) 2013 Report, 35 per cent of murders in South Africa were committed with a firearm. South Africa's rate of firearm deaths is one of the highest in the world and a third of all homicides are a result of the use of firearms.

A study on firearm-related homicides in Gauteng concluded that violence was the leading manner of death and firearm-related deaths accounted for almost one-third of homicides in 2013.<sup>143</sup> The Western Cape community safety department also reported that over half for the 1 256 murders recorded at the Salt River Mortuary in 2014 were carried out with guns.<sup>144</sup> Studies in both Cape Town and KwaZulu-Natal also suggest that it is older children who are more likely to be injured with a firearm, with the majority of gunshot wounds occurring in the age group 13 to 19 years.<sup>145</sup>

It is important to consider the instrument of homicide as certain types instruments, particularly firearms, significantly increase the risk of a victim of a physical assault being a homicide victim. 146 Research indicates that firearms are the most lethal compared to sharpforce and blunt-force instruments as they allow a person with violent intensions to kill multiple individuals with minimal degree of effort, and while maintaining a non-intimate distance. 147 The presence of firearms also increases the possibility of aggressive behaviour 148 and escalates the level of violence. 149

Economic costs of armed violence must also be considered. A WHO report states that four per cent of the national health budget goes to hospital treatment for serious abdominal firearm injuries.<sup>150</sup> In South Africa in 2014, each gun-injured patient cost the state health service an estimated R 22 000.<sup>151</sup>

## 8. Relationship between crime and substance abuse

The Department of Social Development and Central Drug Authority (2014) notes that 14 per cent of the population have a lifetime diagnosis of alcohol abuse and/or dependence, with 28-39 per cent of the adult population current drinkers and 23-25 per cent of current drinkers engaging in hazardous of harmful alcohol use over weekends.

This is significant because many fatal and non-fatal forms of violence are initiated while the perpetrator is under the influence of alcohol and drugs, including assault, homicide and rape.<sup>154</sup> SAPS reported a national rate of 131.7 per 100 000 people driving under the influence of alcohol or drugs in 2013/2014 and the rate of drug related crime (the unlawful possession of drugs and dealing drugs) at 492.1 per 100 000 people.<sup>155</sup>

The abuse of alcohol and other drugs are a significant variable in assault cases. The Medical Research Council reports that nationally, South Africa has one of the highest per

capita alcohol consumptions levels in the world,<sup>156</sup> with a total adult per capita consumption of 9.5 litres of pure alcohol per year.<sup>157</sup> There has also been a rapid increase in the use and abuse of substances over the past decade.<sup>158</sup> This is significant because many fatal and nonfatal forms of violence are initiated while the perpetrator is under the influence of alcohol and drugs, including assault, homicide and rape.<sup>159</sup> Research by the Department of Social Development and Central Drug Authority (2014) indicates that, 'tik' (crystal meth, or methamphetamine), alcohol, 'dagga' and 'whoonga' and 'nyaope' exacerbate poverty and crime and also contribute to child abuse and gender violence.<sup>160</sup>

The abuse of alcohol, combined with the easy availability of alcohol has been shown to significantly contribute to violence, with studies showing a positive correlation between alcohol outlet density and high levels of physical violence. <sup>161</sup> This is particularly the case with IPV in South Africa. A 2013 study in the Vhembe district found that women reported greater instances of physical violence when their partner grappled with alcohol or other substance abuse problems. <sup>162</sup> Research conducted indicate that 64.7 per cent of school children reported it is easy to access alcohol. <sup>163</sup>

A 2010 study on the spending and revenue of South Africa's national and provincial government in relation to alcohol abuse indicates the seriousness of the alcohol problem in South Africa, and how it extends beyond individual concerns. 164 For the 2009/2010 financial year the Provincial government allocated around R7 billion on account of alcohol abuse, and the National government allocated more than R10 billion. 165 Breaking down the numbers, 35 per cent of total expenditure was spent on health, 34 per cent on safety and security and 20 per cent on correctional services. 166

## 9. Exposure to anti-social peer groups

Violence perpetrated by anti-social peer groups is not limited to named gangs.

Gangsterism is a significant problem in many of South African's cities and prisons, and gang activity spread to some smaller towns.<sup>167</sup> Prisons and communities in the Western Cape in particular have been the site of decades of gangsterism, with the notorious 'Numbers' prison gang having its origins in the 1800s.<sup>168</sup> As a result of the clandestine nature of gang activity, very little precise information is known about the workings of gangs.<sup>169</sup> Other dated publications have estimated that there are 130 gangs in the Western Cape, consisting of 100

000 gang members. Even less is known about the characteristics and operations of gangs in other parts the country.<sup>170</sup>

However, the activities of gangs are often made visible in shootings, prison riots, intimidation, killings and organised crime (in particular, the drug economy).<sup>171</sup> For example, the high levels of homicide, possession of illegal firearms and drugs and assault in the Western Cape speak to the presence of gangs in this area.<sup>172</sup> In 2013, 12 per cent of the 2,580 murders in the province were gang-related according to SAPS, an 86 per cent increase from the previous year.<sup>173</sup> However, it is difficult to determine the degree to which gangsterism affects the rates of crime and violence, as crimes are not always categorised in terms of being gang related.<sup>174</sup> SAPS further outline key challenges in dealing with the issue of gangs to include the limited implementation of the Western Cape Gang Strategy, the uncertain structure of gangs and the criminal economy and attempts at Corporatisation.<sup>175</sup>

Gang activity is particularly destructive because often involves the recruitment of underage members and frequently results in the reckless use of violence, where for example, innocent bystanders are killed in the cross fire of gang confrontations.<sup>176</sup> It threatens the wellbeing of whole communities by decreasing freedom of movement and association and usually is the most destructive for the poor and vulnerable.<sup>177</sup> Indeed, the safety of the whole community is compromised and this is often made worse when areas are densely populated and poorly planned.<sup>178</sup>

Anecdotal evidence suggests that the youth in particular are highly involved in gangsterism and there is frequently an overlap between gang activity and delinquency in general.<sup>179</sup> Children are typically recruited from schools because they are eager to prove themselves in the gang and do not face as harsh consequences as adults if caught.<sup>180</sup> For many, involvement in gangs in a family norm and children join to become career criminals as a way of meeting their economic needs.<sup>181</sup>

# 10. Lack of community social cohesion

The National Development Plan (NDP) highlights the importance of promoting social cohesion in not only dealing with the challenges of unemployment, poverty and inequality, but also addressing issues of safety and security. The transformation of sports, culture and the creative arts sector is highlighted to be a key driver in building social cohesion and common understanding. The safety are sector is highlighted to be a key driver in building social cohesion and common understanding.

The Medium Term Strategic Framework (MTSF) highlights issues of the lack of social cohesion in South Africa, and the fact that despite progress since 1994, South African society remains divided, with such divides fuelling racism, xenophobia and GBV.<sup>184</sup>

Social cohesion is described as 'the bonds that bring people together in society, particularly in the context of cultural diversity'. <sup>185</sup> There are strong links between the absence of social cohesion and heightened levels of interpersonal violence within communities. <sup>186</sup> Research in this area indicates that community dynamics may foster or impede a series of protective factors, especially in relation to interpersonal violence, such as: parents' healthy attitude towards child bearing and child rearing; <sup>187</sup> stimulating learning and social environments; as well as the availability of adult role models, adult monitoring and supervision of children. <sup>188</sup> Social fragmentation is also a contributing factor to high levels of domestic violence, criminality, teenage pregnancy and overall exposure of violence within the community. <sup>189</sup>

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