



urban safety
reference group

COMING 2016

“ In 2030, people living in South Africa feel safe at home, at school and at work, and they enjoy a community life free of fear. Women walk freely in the streets and children play safely outside ...”

National Development Plan, South Africa, Vision 2030

“ Make cities inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable. ”

Sustainable Development Goal #11

The State of
Urban Safety in
South Africa 2016

Understanding crime trends in South African cities is key for appropriate responses

Despite significant improvements over the last two decades, high levels of violence and crime continue to be one of the major development challenges in South Africa. According to the official crime statistics released in 2015, the national murder rate is 33 per 100,000, roughly five times the global average, placing the country amongst the most unsafe in the world.

With an urbanisation rate of over 60%, the majority of the South Africa's population live in cities and towns, and it is in these urban areas that vulnerability to violence is most acutely felt. As in many countries, the highest levels of violence tend to be concentrated in cities due to different interrelated risk factors that converge in urban areas. These include high levels of inequality, social exclusion, (youth) unemployment, substance and alcohol abuse, availability of guns, fragmented family structures and inadequately planned for and managed urbanisation. In South Africa these problems are compounded by the socio-spatial segregation legacy of apartheid.

Given that cities are responsible for by far the greatest share of economic activity, and hold the greatest potential for successfully addressing the core national development challenges of poverty, inequality and unemployment, a lack of safety in urban areas has a direct negative impact on the economic and social development prospects of both cities and the country as a whole.

While there are many ongoing efforts by both public and non-governmental institutions in South Africa aimed at making cities safer, what has been missing is a systematic analysis of crime data and trends for the country's main urban municipalities. Such an analysis is critical for a better understanding of the dynamics of violence and crime in the country, and for empowering city authorities and other key governmental and civil society actors to formulate appropriate prevention and response strategies, and to direct resources to where they are needed the most.

The urban nature of crime in South Africa

About 38% of South Africa's population lives in the nine major municipalities of (in decreasing order of population size) the City of Johannesburg, City of Cape Town, eThekweni, Ekurhuleni, City of Tshwane, Nelson Mandela Bay, Mangaung, Buffalo City, and Msunduzi. Most crime types, however, see considerably more than 38% of the reported national incidents occurring in these municipalities. For example, about 78% of the car hijackings, 74% of the car thefts, and 57% of the house robberies in the official statistics were recorded in one of these areas.

01

State of urban safety in south africa report 2016

To fill this gap, in 2015 the South African Cities Urban Safety Reference Group (USRG) initiated a multi-year research project to develop an appropriate set of measurable indicators on urban safety and to collect and analyse relevant data for the country's largest cities. As the flagship research output of the USRG, the first State of Urban Safety in South Africa Report will be published in the first quarter of 2016.

The report aims to:

- **raise awareness** of the topic of urban safety in South Africa, and the need for a national, concerted approach to making cities and towns safer
- **promote a common frame of reference** for understanding and responding to urban safety in the South African context through a set of urban safety indicators that provide the basis for comparison, assessment, and planning
- practically **guide and inform** the development and implementation of relevant violence prevention and reduction strategies on both national as well as local government and community level
- **share knowledge and lessons** regarding interventions to prevent and reduce violence and crime in South Africa's cities

The report is expected to become a credible resource for all decision-makers and practitioners involved in different aspects of making cities safer, including political leaders, officials across various disciplines from various levels of government, civil society, as well as the business sector.

The contents of the report will encompass:

- relevant **data** on the state of violence and crime in South Africa's major urban centres
- **policy** developments at all different levels pertaining to urban safety
- individual city reports on the strategic and programmatic **responses** to violence and crime
- key **insights** and learning emanating from the meetings of the USRG
- examples of local good **practices** for making cities safer

02

Indicators for measuring urban safety

At the heart of the report is a set of proposed indicators for measuring and tracking the state of urban safety in South Africa's cities. The indicators have been developed with the support of the University of Cape Town's Centre of Criminology, and draw on an extensive global and South African literature review on urban safety and violence and crime prevention theory and practice. Careful consideration has been given to selecting indicators that are relevant to South African cities as well as the availability of data and measurability.

A total of 21 indicators are proposed, divided into two inter-related areas:

- The first 10 indicators aim to measure the state of crime and violence within the cities, based on data from crime statistics (such as murder, robbery etc) and perception and victimisation surveys
- The next 11 indicators are designed to measure social and structural risk factors that are regarded as impacting on levels of crime and violence within the city. These indicators include urbanisation risk factors (such as rapid population growth and density), poverty, inequality and deprivation indicators (such as high income differences), and community conditions and the built environment (such as infrastructure).

Correlating the two sets of indicators, in particular the effects of social / structural risk factors as independent variables on the dependent variables of crime and violence, is important in order to deepen the understanding of urban safety in South Africa's cities. Looking at the correlations reveals that while some types of crime are more policeable than others, in the majority of cases addressing the causes of crime and violence requires developmental approaches, rather than relying on policing alone.



Crime and violence indicators

Social/structural risk factor indicators

Objective factors:

- Indicator 1: Murder rates
- Indicator 2: Assault rates
- Indicator 3: Robbery rates
- Indicator 4: Property-related crime rates
- Indicator 5: Sexual offences rates
- Indicator 6: Public/collective violence rates
- Indicator 7: Police activity

Subjective factors:

- Indicator 8: Experience of crime/violence
- Indicator 9: Feelings of safety/fear of crime
- Indicator 10: Perception/satisfaction with law enforcement/police

Urbanisation factors:

- Indicator 11: Rapid population growth
- Indicator 12: Population density
- Indicator 13: Social coherence/family disruption

Marginalisation factors:

- Indicator 14: Poverty
- Indicator 15: Income inequality
- Indicator 16: (Youth) unemployment
- Indicator 17: Deprivation of services

Social and physical environment factors:

- Indicator 18: Informal housing
- Indicator 19: Infrastructure
- Indicator 20: School conditions and violence
- Indicator 21: Access to alcohol, drugs, firearms

Policing and situational strategies

- Innovative police activity
- Collaboration between state and non-state policing (like CPF's)
- Prevention through environmental design (CPTED) - situational crime prevention and target hardening

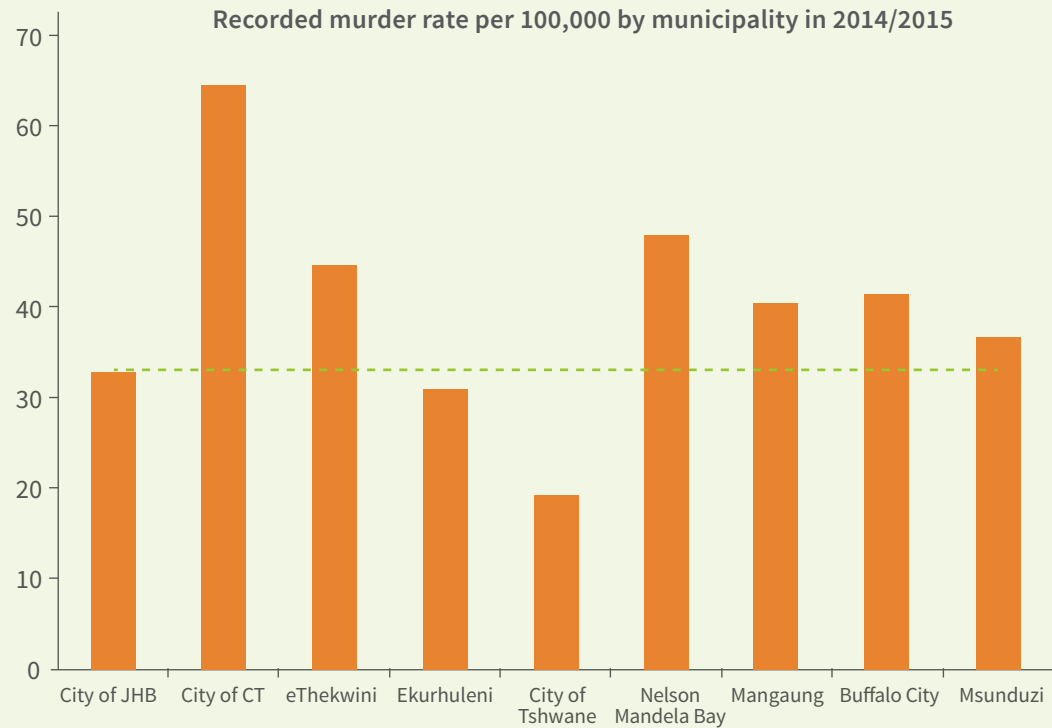
Social and situational strategies

- Social strategies like victim support and counselling, programmes aimed at children / youth / schools, reducing alcohol / drugs access etc.
- Prevention through environmental design (CPTED): upgrading, transport

city responses

Analysing patterns in crime and safety

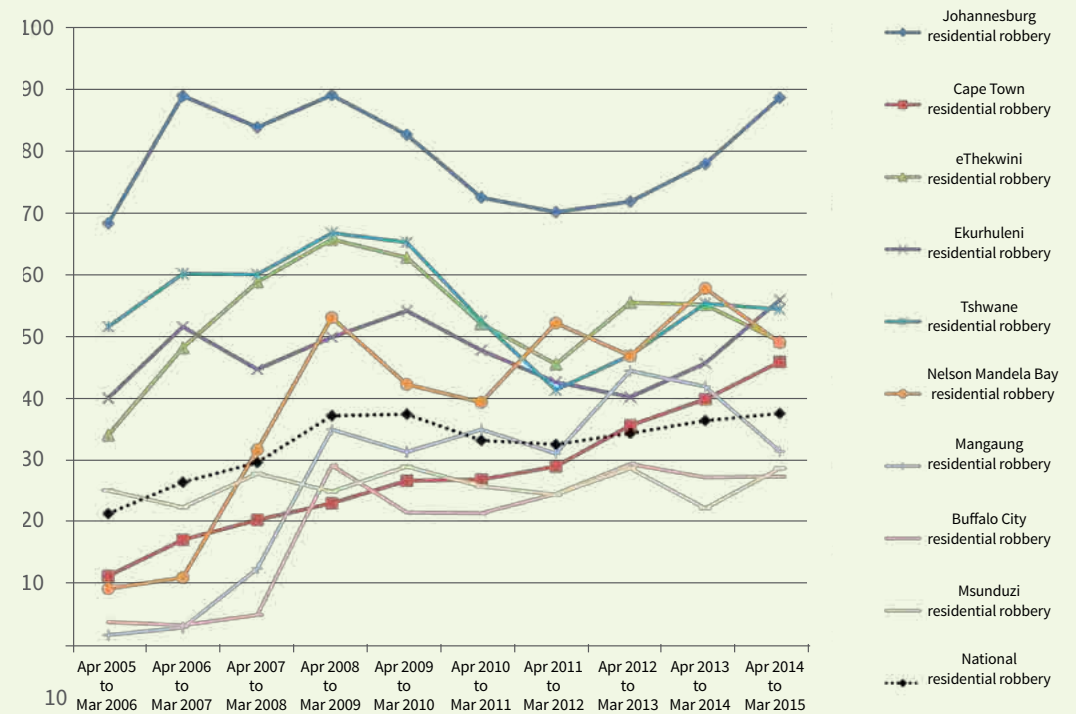
While trends may be broadly similar across different cities, important differences exist in terms of each city's crime and safety profiles and patterns. Understanding the reasons for these differences, as well as the best possible levers to target in order to address each city's most pressing crime concerns, requires the development of an extensive database of knowledge on city level.



The report provides an overview of trends for the crime and violence indicators for the last ten years. Analysing patterns in crime and safety over time is useful for a better understanding of city safety profiles, and for planning and evaluating prevention interventions. For example, two cities may currently have similar rates of a certain crime type, but one may be seeing its lowest rate of that crime on record, while the other may be reaching a peak after a decade of increase – with the two situations likely recommending very different courses of action.



Recorded rates of robbery at residential premises per 100,000 by municipality from 2005/2006 to 2014/2015

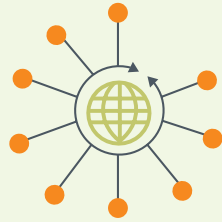


Although robbery in public spaces is far more common in South Africa, robbery in the home is one of the biggest drivers of South Africans' fear and insecurity. On a national level, this crime also exhibits among the most worrying trends over the last ten years, in that it is one of the very few that has seen a major increase from a national rate of about 21 per 100,000 in 2005/2006 to about 38 per 100,000 in 2014/2015.

It is also crucial to compare the indicators and their correlations across different settlements or neighbourhoods within the cities. A clear picture of the the 'hot spots' within the city that contribute disproportionately to each city's crime figures enables more targeted crime and violence prevention interventions.

Informing city responses

One of the core objectives of the report is to document and track the responses to violence and crime in South Africa's cities, with the goal of city inhabitants becoming, and feeling, safer. Based on the data generated through the report, as well as additional evaluation research, in time the report is intended to support local governments and other relevant actors to better measure and understand the impacts of policies and initiatives aimed at making communities and cities safer. This will guide improvements to strategies, the development of required capacities, and direct investments in violence and crime prevention in a more targeted manner.



urban safety reference group

The State of Urban Safety in South Africa Report is a flagship publication of the South African Cities Urban Safety Reference Group (USRG). The USRG constitutes the first institutionalised forum in South Africa that enables practice-based learning on the theme of urban safety and violence prevention to inform urban policy, planning and management. It has proven to be a valuable platform for peer-to-peer learning and knowledge sharing amongst practitioners from the SACN member cities as well as other key government role-players on urban safety and violence prevention.

The USRG was established in early 2014. It is convened by the South African Cities Network (SACN) with the support of the Inclusive Violence and Crime Prevention (VCP) Programme. The VCP Programme is a joint South African-German intervention coordinated by the South African Department of Cooperative Governance and implemented by the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) on behalf of the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ).



For further information on the USRG or the State of Urban Safety in South Africa Report, please contact:

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