THE STATE OF URBAN SAFETY IN SOUTH AFRICA REPORT 2024

urban safety reference group

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Abbreviations

ABVPI	Alcohol-based violence prevention initiative
APCOF	African Policing Civilian Oversight Forum
BMCMM	Buffalo City Metropolitan Municipality
BMCMMDA	Buffalo City Metropolitan Municipality Development Agency
IBEC	Integrated By-law Enforcement Committee
CAS	Crime Administration System
CBD	Central Business District
CCTV	Closed circuit television
CMWL	Centre for Mental Wellness and Leadership
CoCT	City of Cape Town
Coe	City of Ekurhuleni
COJ	City of Johannesburg
COT	City of Tshwane
CPF	Community Policing Forum
CPTED	Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design
CSIR	Council for Scientific and Industrial Research
CSPS	Civilian Secretariat for Police Services
DDM	District Development Model
DHS	Department of Human Settlements
DOCS	Department of Community Safety
DPME	Department of Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation
DSL	Department of Safety and Liaison
DWYPD	Department of Women, Youth and Persons with Disabilities
EMM	eThekwini Metropolitan Municipality
EMS	Emergency Management Services
EPWP	Expanded Public Works Programme
FBO	Faith Based Organisation
GAC	Global Affairs Canada
GBH	Grievous Bodily Harm
GBVF	Gender Based Violence and Femicide

GDCS	Gauteng Department of Community Safety
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GDS	Growth and Development Strategy
GIZ	Deutsche Gesellschaft fur Internationale Zusammenarbeit
GLT	Gunshot Location Technology
HDI	Human Development Index
IANSA	International Action Network on Small Arms
ICDS	Investigative Case Docket Management System
ICM	Intermediate City Municipalities
ICVPS	Integrated Crime and Violence Prevention Strategy
IDP	Integrated Development Plan
IGR	Intergovernmental Relations
IUDF	Integrated Urban Development Framework
KPI	Key Performance Indicators
ISS Africa	Institute for Security Studies
JMPD	Johannesburg Metro Police Department
KfW	Kreditanstalt für Wiederaufbau
LED	Local Economic Development
LGBTQIA+	Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transexual, Queer, Intersex, Asexual and Others
NUA	New Urban Agenda
BUO	National Urban Policy
NSP GBVF	National Strategic Plan on Gender Based Violence and Femicide
NMB	Nelson Mandela Bay
NMBM	Nelson Mandela Bay Municipality
NDP	National Development Plan
NDPG	Neighbourhood Development Partnership Grant
NPC	National Planning Commission
NPO	Non-Profit Organisation
MMM	Mangaung Metropolitan Municipality
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MYPE	Mid-year Population Estimates

OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
PEP	Public Employment Programme
PSIRA	Private Security Industry Regulation Authority
SACN	South African Cities Network
SALGA	South African Local Government Association
SAPS	South African Police Service
SCODA	South African Cities Open Data Almanac
SDG	Sustainable Development Goals
SGB	School Governing Body
SPM	Sol Plaatje Municipality
SPRINT	Safer Places: Resilient Institutions and Neighbourhoods Together
SPUU	Safety Promotion through Urban Upgrading
STATS SA	Statistics South Africa
TMPD	Tshwane Metro Police Department
UN	United Nations
UNS	Urban Networks Strategy
USM	Urban Safety Monitor
USRG	Urban Safety Reference Group
VCP	Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) Inclusive Violence and Crime Prevention Programme
VPF	Violence Prevention Forum
VPUU	Violence Prevention through Urban Upgrading
WCDH	Western Cape Department of Health

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Foreword

The South African Cities Network, together with its partners, the GIZ and Global Affairs Canada (GAC) is delighted to present the fifth edition of *The State of Urban Safety in South Africa Report (SOUS)*. The 2024 Report, updating on trends and highlights the work of the Urban Safety Reference Group (USRG) in the period 2022 – 2024, also marks the 10th anniversary of our collective efforts as cities to learn, share, exchange, test practices and produce knowledge and evidence to improve city-level safety governance, under the banner of the USRG.

The 5th Report contributes to the USRG's longstanding objective to provide cities with an authoritative, incremental and longitudinal view of crime and violence to support evidence-based decision-making. In the last edition of 'state of' reporting, the USRG began to spatialize crime data; showing the true distribution of crime type per city, which is incredibly empowering for planning, collaboration, budgeting and targeting, especially in the context of limited resources.

This edition departs slightly from the regular format of previous *'State of Urban Safety'* Reports as it reflects on the last 10 years of city-led, structured engagement on the topic of urban safety. While it updates on city crime trends, relevant policy and profiles exemplary practices from South Africa's largest cities, this edition is especially exciting as it gives the reader a clearer sense of what safety is. Safety is not just a state of security: it is about our sensory experience of the public realm as well—what it smells, sounds, looks and feels like when we feel safe or unsafe.

This Report also engages with the state of safety practice in South African cities and celebrates the small but impactful contributions of the USRG in promoting partnered approaches and advocating the institutionalization of gender-responsive, area-based and long-term preventive approaches to safety.

Among its highlights, the report profiles the USRG's intervention in Hammanskraal and the importance of community engagement, design that is informed by community and user experiences, building trust in government as contributors to community safety. The case study demonstrates the necessity of deeply and meaningfully engaging communities (investing in soft infrastructure) so that public expenditure and the investment of hard infrastructure can improve lives. Furthermore, by focusing on the public realm and environmental design, collaborating with community stakeholders as local experts, the safety of all can be enhanced.

The USRG's work stream on GBV prevention at the city level demonstrates how cities can work with and harness the energy of youth in organized and semi-organized community structures. The focus on youth arises from objective evidence pointing to the need to engage this demographic, which shoulders the highest incidence of victimhood and are among the highest percentile of people that perpetrate crime and violence. Thus, a need to engage youth on GBV, particularly also given the mounting evidence that schools are increasingly sites of violence. Furthermore, that youth between the ages of 18-24 are alarmingly affected by GBV necessitates this focus.

Equally, youth are actively involved and motivated to innovate and find solutions in their localities. It is critical to harness this potential. As the work of the USRG, such as the *Innovation Competition on Youth-led GBV Prevention in Public Spaces* demonstrates, there are many inspiring initiatives by youth to create safer cities and communities.

The USRG is also excited to, for the first time, issue 4 web stories to complement the written Report. These short reels help the understanding of the key themes of 'evidence', 'working together', 'area-based interventions' and 'safer cities for women', and their centrality each, in making cities that are safe for all.

This edition is the culmination of 10 years of learning-based and action-driven partnership for which the SACN expresses immense gratitude to the Inclusive Violence and Crime Prevention (VCP) Programme of the GIZ as it draws to a close.

Utilising the momentum of 10 years of partnership and support, the SACN calls for the networks and connections generated through this investment, to grow from strength to strength and to truly embody the transversal, all-of-society and whole-of- government approaches that have been central to the USRG's advocacy.

Sincerely,

Nosipho Hlatshwayo
CEO

South African Cities Network

Thomas Hellmann
Programme Manager

GIZ Inclusive Violence and
Crime Prevention (VCP) Programme

FROM
the
Players

Introduction: Why Urban Safety?

Crime and violence are the outcomes of complex social problems, and are self-perpetuating. We talk of a cycle of crime and violence because we know that children who grow up experiencing or exposed to violence are more likely to perpetrate violence; that people who live with crime and grime are more likely to accept it as the norm, that babies born to teenage, unprepared mothers are more likely to become teenage, unprepared mothers, that those whose parents abuse substances are more like to abuse substances and that those who abuse substances are more likely to commit crimes. As we seek to assess the state of urban safety in South Africa, we must acknowledge that mandates to address some of these messy, wicked problems sit far outside of the mandates and even the sphere of influence of local government, yet it is local government that feels the impact of all of them and must ultimately find ways to respond to them, in pursuit of urban safety.

Crime, violence and vulnerability are top of mind for most South Africans, regardless of their socio-economic status or where they live. Approximately **68% of the population** now lives in metropolitan areas, where crime is intense and impacts all aspects of daily life. For the wealthy, there are private sector mechanisms to assist with their security, whereas for the poor, there is only the state, sometimes backed up with civil society interventions. Such interventions can be and sometimes are very useful, but are not always based on good practice or a sound understanding of what works to make communities safer.

People predominantly experience crime and violence where we live, access services and play. While many of the policies that impact daily life are drafted and adopted at national level, they are only made real for most people through lived experience.

Every community is different; each neighbourhood and ward, street and park serves different people in different ways, yet all are subject to certain generic conditions and laws. Municipalities are the closest tier of government to the people, and for many people it is the only personal experience of government that they have. It is through them that we either access the rights awarded us in the Constitution and the Bill of Rights, or not. Human rights are not a distant concept, they are what happens every day wherever we live. Local government is the sphere of government closest to people's experience of safety and all that safety implies: economic development, access to services, community cohesion, well-being. Local government is therefore the critical site for assessing the status of safety and practices to deliver safety.

Our cities are sprawling, messy, often organically growing settlements, where land invasion, illegal mining, aging infrastructure, undocumented migrants, informal trading, theft of public infrastructure such as lighting and traffic lights and power cables, unemployment and growing numbers of those experiencing homelessness, taxi association related violence, jostle for position as major contributors to complexity of city scapes.

Impact of Disasters

Safety and safety practice are also influenced by disasters beyond the mandates of safety practitioners. While responding to disasters is the responsibility of Disaster Management directorates, the extreme floods experienced in several cities in the last decade place a burden on municipal resources and require an intense public safety response. In KwaDukuza, this relationship between climate and public safety is recognised in an integrated strategy. Fires, often started with criminal intent or negligence, also increase vulnerability, as do unrest and protest action. The extreme violence of July 2021 in KZN encompassed a massive crime wave, in which many more people than usual committed crimes and caused widespread fear of crime, upending existing plans and processes, and requiring agility and flexible responses in a time of trauma.

> Nazira Cachalia (City of Joburg) reflects that crime is itself part of the problem: 'Crime and violence, crime and grime, they impact our ability to deliver services – the overcrowding in the city for instance means that we have to collect garbage twice a day because it accumulates in hours – and then you have women working for the city who are now having to work at night, and that's problematic. Women can't even safely walk in the city at night. How do we keep them safe while they are doing their jobs on the street at night?'

The last decade also includes the period of the global COVID-19 pandemic, in all likelihood the biggest disruptor of city safety journeys. In assessing both safety and safety practice over this period, it is impossible to ignore the economic impact, as well as lack of access to services on which many relied, and an increase in homelessness, which intertwines with crime and safety: people experiencing homelessness are vulnerable to crime, while some also commit crime, and many abuse or are addicted to substances, and all contribute to perceptions of unsafety and 'crime and grime'.

The South African Cities Network (SACN) has for the past 10 years convened the **Urban Safety Reference Group (USRG),** with support from the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH, through the Inclusive Violence and Crime Prevention Programme (VCP) which has been cofinanced by Global Affairs Canada since 2023. During this time, SACN has established, sustained, facilitated and worked with this thriving network of safety practitioners, to deepen understanding of the role of city safety units and strengthen the capability and capacity of urban safety practitioners. The Urban Safety Reference Group (USRG) is a network of city safety practitioners, researchers and others whose work contributes to advocacy and research on policy, support for implementation, capacity enhancement, data, resourcing and measurement of evidence informed urban safety practice. The USRG delivers substantive contributions to global and local data and city intelligence, and provides a template for structured, local practitioner-led learning, exchange and advocacy.

This report records the history of research, advocacy, practice and learning exchange in the USRG and by other role players in the urban safety sector in the last ten years. It is a recent history of the journey of urban safety in South Africa and a repository of tools, resources and lessons learned for practitioners seeking to strengthen their own safety practice, or to advocate for this approach in their institutions and with partners. It has relevance for Intermediate City Municipalities, Metros and Local Municipalities.

Aligned to the work of the USRG over this time, this report aims to provide context, identify barriers to success and acknowledge the wins that have been achieved, the work in progress and the current status. Whereas in previous reports, assessment of city safety status has been based on analysis of crime statistics alone, this review provides a more systemic perspective, taking into account the impact of significant learning, about urban unsafety and about practice that is a product of the USRG.

What is the state of safety in our major cities?

How have we progressed in terms of urban crime and violence prevention? Given the exponential growth of the private security sector over this period, we should not be surprised to see public surveillance systems, control rooms and 'boots on the ground' in greater and greater numbers. Has this translated into a reduction in crime and violence? If not, why not? And how can cities better measure the impact of and balance hard security measures alongside safety measures, taking into account the comparative cost of each?

> Nazira Cachalia offers a hopeful perspective:
>
> ***'I think that many officials across the city are now seeing what we mean by transversal safety work, they understand that their role and the way they do things can impact safety, help prevent crime, and make people feel safer, and I think mayors are seeing it has to be a strategic priority, if they want to achieve other objectives, economic or housing, they have to provide leadership on safety issues. Communities too, we have them approaching us and asking us to work with them, and they are interested when we talk of the City Safety Strategy, ask how they can be involved. That's got to be good for all of us'.***

In the chapters of this report, alongside the chapter that provides an analysis of crime stats, we deal with four themes central to the **State of Safety** of our cities in 2024, in an attempt to synthesise what is known, acknowledge what is not, and highlight what has had impact over the last ten years. The division of the report into thematic chapters is an attempt to acknowledge the systemic nature of urban safety practice, and to cluster aspects of it around key facet. The themes are not discrete and at times, a topic could as easily fit into any one of the four themes. This is the nature of complexity; properly understood it becomes a web of elements, each mutually dependent on every other. Any attempt to simplify it will result in leaving out important elements.

Chapter One: Crime Statistics and Trends

provides analysis and an update on crime statistics. As long as the incidence of reported crimes remains high, statistics often feel demotivating. It is however vital that cities understand victimisation patterns, hot spots and repeated problems. Cities are now more than ever able to triangulate crime statistics with lived experience, physical data and with their knowledge of the complexity of crime and violence, its causes, the issues in the urban environment that create opportunity for crime, and strategies and interventions to prevent or mitigate crime. Expert analysis of crime statistics and crime trends is provided in this chapter by Institute for Security Studies Africa (ISS Africa). Crime statistics are important tools in the crime and violence prevention toolkit – and also offer essential insights into the role of policing in cities, aligned to current programmes to encourage evidence-driven policing.

Chapter Two: Evidence-Driven Safety Practice

records the work of the USRG and other groupings to facilitate learning exchange and advocate for and support evidence-driven safety practice. It also investigates the recent history of local government collecting and accessing the kinds of local lived experience evidence that are needed to inform safety strategies. City or Precinct Safety Audits have been in use for almost two decades, but they are costly and require additional resources to respond to findings in an appropriate way. Debates about the value of perception, or qualitative data versus quantitative are in themselves complex and many local government officials have no direct experience of collecting or using data. New and innovative steps taken by COGTA are helpful in this regard, with the launch of a national database for municipalities, that provides granular data for decision making and comparison and learning from place to place and city to city.

Chapter Three: Working Together

looks at the progress that has been made working in partnership for safety, both transversally in cities, and externally with communities, the private sector and institutions of higher learning/ academic institutions. The chapter documents hopeful seeds and examples of collaborations for safety. It grapples with obstacles and draws lessons from them (possibly the most important lessons being the ones learned from failure). It records interesting innovations and explores what municipalities need to do to become better partners.

Chapter Four: Area-Based Violence Prevention Intervention

deals with one of the most successful aspects of integrated and multi-sectoral safety practice over the decade, perhaps because it delivers visible results, and planners and designers of spatial solutions are more able to see the links between safety and place. There are many examples of public spaces that have benefitted from transversal design and implementation. Area based interventions also include a deep understanding of the environment, of community needs and dynamics. Properly consulted, designed and implemented, area based interventions offer safe pockets of opportunity, from which cities can learn and which can be expanded and replicated elsewhere.

Chapter Five: Gendered Safety Lens

casts a gender lens on city safety work. GBV is a national priority and an intransigent, wicked problem and there is no simple way to resolve it. Practitioners warn that unless societal norms are challenged and patriarchy is overturned, GBV will always be with us. The chapter interrogates the National Strategic Plan for GBV and Femicide from a local government perspective, and compares its expectations with municipal mandates that influence women's safety. The isolation of gender desks in municipalities is also examined, and practitioners weigh in on how the objectives of the NSP might be better supported through transversal practice and tools.

1

Chapter One:

Crime Statistics and Trends

State of Crime and Safety in South African Cities

This chapter analyses the state of crime and violence in nine of South Africa's major cities: Johannesburg, Cape Town, eThekwini, Ekurhuleni, Tshwane, Nelson Mandela Bay, Mangaung, Buffalo City and Msunduzi. The analysis is based on data derived from SAPS' annual crime statistics for the financial year 1 April 2022 to 31 March 2023. While this data is released at national, provincial and police precinct levels, for this report, police precinct data has been aggregated to the city level to provide a better understanding of the public safety challenges at a more localised level. Through this, the intention is to provide meaningful data to support decision-making regarding the interventions needed. In addition, the continuous time series of city-level crime statistics spans 18 years, from 2005/06 to 2022/23, offering a view of longitudinal trends of selected crimes in these cities.

Source: ISS and previous State of Cities Reports

1.1 Interpreting Crime Statistics

The SAPS annually collects and disseminates statistics on crimes recorded at the 1 164 police stations within the borders of South Africa. The crimes recorded by the SAPS include those reported by victims, witnesses or third parties and those detected by police officials. The data collection process begins with an incident of an alleged crime being assessed for its unlawfulness. At this point, the incident is then classified. The incident is recorded in a case docket and entered into the SAPS' Investigative Case Docket Management System (ICDMS) and the Crime Administration System (CAS). Crimes are grouped into various broad categories, as listed in Figure 1 below.

These are the categories of crimes for which official figures are currently released for public use. This is, however, not an exhaustive list of all crimes recorded by the police.

FIGURE 1: Crimes for which official figures are released for public use by SAPS

'Contact crime' or 'serious violent crime' comprises about forty percent of serious crimes reported to the police (also known as 'community-reported serious crimes'). Contact crimes include interpersonal violent crimes such as murder, attempted murder, and all forms of assault, including sexual offences.

Another type of violent crime is 'violent property-related crime', which in turn consists of two main crime categories:

- The first is 'common robbery', which is the violent removal of property from a person through force, harm, or the threat of harm.
- The second is' robbery with aggravating circumstances', also known as 'armed robbery', because a weapon is used (most often a firearm or knife). This second category – armed robbery – is broken down into further sub-categories in terms of location. These include 'robbery at non-residential premises' (mainly small businesses), 'robbery at residential premises', and 'carjacking'. These three are the so-called 'trio crimes', which are prioritised by the police and the National Prosecuting Authority (NPA).

Other subcategories include 'truck hijackings', 'bank robberies' and 'cash-in-transit robberies'. Most armed robberies are thought to happen to civilians on the street or in other public spaces ('street robberies'), but the police do not expressly release figures for this crime category.

The police category of 'property-related crime' includes 'residential and non-residential burglary' and 'theft of and out of motor vehicles'. This makes up about a quarter of serious 'community-reported crime'.

'Other serious crime', mainly types of theft (such as 'stock theft', 'shoplifting' and 'commercial crime'), makes up roughly a quarter of crime. 'Contact-related crime' ('arson' and 'malicious damage to property') is the smallest sub-category, at around seven percent.

'Crime detected as a result of police action' consists of cases stemming from roadblocks and other police operations, resulting in the detection of 'drug-related crimes', 'driving under the influence of drugs or alcohol', the discovery of 'illegal firearms and ammunition', and, since 2011/12, the detection of 'sexual offences'. These figures are thus determined by police action, as recorded by the police and not by community members. They are, therefore, not a measure of the actual incidence of the crime category.

Most crimes in the overall category of 'crime detected as a result of police action' are drug-related. This is because many police operations target those selling and buying drugs. However, the actual drug use and distribution levels are generally understood to be mostly unaffected by police action. As a result, changes in these figures should not be used to indicate the availability of drugs per se or the market size. Figures on 'driving under the influence' may also reflect levels of police action rather than the scale of the problem.

1.2 Reliability of the Crime Statistics

It is important to note that police statistics are not considered a scientific or objective measure of all the crimes that occurred in a given location and time period. Instead, they represent a data collection process designed to assist law enforcement organisations in the practical execution and evaluation of their duties. The SAPS' crime statistics should always be qualified as 'crime statistics as reported to and recorded by the police'. This is important to note, as many crimes are not reported to the police and, therefore, do appear in the crime statistics.

A range of factors influences whether a crime is reported to the police – for example:

- The understanding victims and witnesses hold of the types of incidents that are deemed to be appropriate for police attention versus those which are more appropriate for interpersonal, family, or community resolution
- Victim and witness interpretation of various parties' legal rights and responsibilities (i.e., whether or not they think that a crime or unlawful act has occurred)
- Victim and witness willingness or ability to initiate an official legal process following what may already have been a traumatic incident
- The ability of victims and witnesses to access police services and produce an accurate written record of the event.

Generally, individuals who have relatively high levels of wealth and education, an expectation of personal safety, hold insurance policies on their goods, and have a sense of trust in the police are more likely to report a criminal incident that they experienced as a victim or witness. Crimes experienced by poor, vulnerable, or marginalised individuals are far less likely to be reported to or recorded by the police.

Consequently, different crime categories have different levels of reliability or validity as an indicator of actual crime levels. For example, past surveys suggest that a vast majority of motor vehicle thefts in South Africa are reported to the police, although fewer cars are now insured. The reason why this is traditionally so high is that victims need an official case number to be able to claim insurance on a stolen vehicle. However, only about half of residential burglaries are reported to the police, as most victims do not have household insurance. Moreover, many believe that the police will not or cannot do anything to help them.[1] Such differences in reporting rates can produce crime statistics presenting a distorted impression of crime prevalence, distribution, or trends.

Crime statistics should always be interpreted in the context of independent survey data on crime experiences and reporting, such as that provided by Statistics South Africa (Stats SA) in its annual National Victims of Crime Survey (VoCS).

An additional difficulty in analysing crime statistics is that crime reporting rates are not evenly distributed across any country, city, neighbourhood, or even household. Moreover, statistics for crime categories do not provide sufficient insight into the nature of the crime risk or threat. For example, knowing the number of murders and the trends says nothing about the victims, perpetrators, specific locality, or causal factors driving murder. It is thus important to analyse crime levels and drivers at the smallest geographical scale possible. As discussed in previous reports, this is very difficult in the South African context. For one thing, despite recording a disproportionate share of many major crime types, South African cities do not have access to point-level crime data to better understand hotspots and respond to their unique crime situations.

With available SAPS crime data, the best thing to do is generate city-level crime statistics. This requires specific technical work, given that the SAPS does not release crime statistics for individual cities.

1 Statistics South Africa, Victims of Crime Survey 2019/2020, P0341, 2020, p. 15, 23. Statistics South Africa, Victims of Crime Survey 2021/2022, P0341, 2020, pp. 16.

1.3 Crime Statistics Methodology

The methodology used when compiling the crime statistics at a city level is outlined below – with the same four steps used as in previous iterations of this report.

STEP 1

Determine which police station areas fall within the relevant municipal boundaries.

This step is necessary because the geographical boundaries that pertain to SAPS police precincts do not correspond with municipal boundaries or the boundaries of any other source of governance-relevant data, making it difficult to track and compare data at a city level.

Geographic information system (GIS) technology is used to overlay the spatial boundaries of the police station areas (as provided by the SAPS) with the spatial boundaries of the municipalities (provided by Stats SA, as for Census 2011). In 2023, as in 2019, 2020, 2021 and 2022, the precinct boundaries were overlaid with the 2018 municipal boundaries (as updated by the Municipal Demarcation Board). Police stations with 50% or more of their geographical area falling within the relevant municipal boundaries are included in each city's list of stations.

One exception is the Msunduzi police station in KwaZulu-Natal, which extends over three different municipalities (with the largest being eThekwini, with a 43% share of this precinct falling within its municipal boundary). Three new police station areas were included for Mangaung and one for eThekwini, as both these cities' boundaries were expanded during the 2016 demarcation process. At the same time, the area included under Mangaung increased substantially towards the south and now includes the police station precincts of Dewetsdorp, Van Stadensrus and Wepener. eThekwini's municipal boundary was also extended towards the southwest to include the Umbumbulu police precinct. In 2021, the SAPS added crime statistics for three new police stations in Gauteng and the Eastern Cape, with these additional stations built to provide additional resources to high-crime communities. In 2022/23, two new stations were added to the metro areas. These were Chatty in Nelson Mandela Bay and Cosmo City in Johannesburg.

STEP 2

Sum the relevant stations' crime figures for each of the 20+ crime types, for the last 18 years, for each city.

The crime figures recorded at all the police stations allocated to each municipality (through Step 1 above) are added up to give the total number of each crime recorded at a municipal level for each of the last 18 years. This spans all the crime figures recorded between **1 April 2005 and 31 March 2023.** Recent quarterly releases have not been included, as these figures are not certified as the official crime statistics by the Statistician General and cannot be compared for the same quarter over previous years. These represent a snapshot of crime on a specific date and are not directly comparable with the annual statistics.

STEP 3

Determine an appropriate population estimate for each city, for each of the last 18 years.

This step is necessary because the cities vary in population size, and many have changed significantly over the last 18 years. Stats SA releases annual mid-year population estimates (MYPE) based on census and other data, using the 'cohort-component method'.[2] This method uses a model – including what has been determined from censuses about each area's demographics (such as age and sex) and levels of fertility, mortality, and international migration – to produce an estimate of the population in June of each year. These population projections are provided for the country, provinces, and each of the country's metropolitan and district council areas. Ideally, the preferred population data should be at the midpoint for the period under review (i.e., September of the financial period) to allow for more accurate per capita rates. Still, these are not published by Stats SA.

The 2022 MYPE includes updated estimates for 2022 and the previous years. A 2023 MYPE was not published in anticipation of the release of the 2022 Census data. The 2024 MYPE released on 30 July 2024 did not include any metropolitan or district-level data. Where 2022 Census data was released at a district level, the actual population figures have been questioned.[3]

These 2022 MYPE estimates are used unaltered for eight cities discussed in this report. However, Msunduzi is a local rather than a metropolitan municipality. Its population estimates for each year have been derived from the 2022 MYPE for local municipalities, which has Census 2011 as the base year, as adjusted by the annual percentage growth projected for its district (uMgungundlovu District Municipality). By far being the largest local municipality in this district with two-thirds of its population, it is reasonable to assume that projected growth in Msunduzi local municipality is in line with that of the larger district.

Table 1 below shows the population figures for 2013 to 2022 (based on the 2022 MYPE released by Stats SA).

2 Statistics South Africa, Mid-Year Population Estimates 2021, 2022 https://www.statssa.gov.za/?page_id=1854&PPN=P0302.

3 Moultrie, T. and Dorrington, R., 2024, The 2022 South African Census: A Technical Report Prepared for the South African Medical Research Council, https://www.samrc.ac.za/sites/default/files/attachments/2024-07/CensusReport.pdf. Paton, C., 29 July 2024, News24, City of Joburg in fight to save budget after Stats SA shrinks its population, https://www.news24.com/fin24/economy/city-of-joburg-in-fight-to-save-budget-after-stats-sa-shrinks-its-population-20240729

TABLE 1: Population estimates per city according to Stats SA 2020 mid-year population estimates (2013-2022)

City	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
Buffalo City	801 542	802 602	803 215	803 476	803 293	802 966	802 506	800 874	800 981	797 680
Cape Town	3 980 132	4 069 606	4 158 178	4 246 670	4 333 921	4 423 834	4 514 918	4 604 986	4 682 755	4 756 254
Ekurhuleni	3 351 924	3 439 884	3 530 064	3 622 885	3 715 613	3 805 825	3 894 969	3 982 223	4 076 421	4 040 081
eThekwini	3 608 910	3 658 647	3 707 923	3 757 349	3 812 103	3 868 517	3 926 230	3 981 205	4 002 705	4 145 061
Johannesburg	4 723 020	4 883 370	5 049 204	5 221 035	5 384 380	5 545 624	5 706 791	5 866 550	5 967 573	6 094 057
Mangaung	807 345	816 660	826 154	835 900	844 920	853 893	862 732	870 920	835 917	838 806
Msunduzi	640 100	649 326	658 730	668 365	677 692	687 179	696 689	715 154	724 998	735 955
Nelson Mandela Bay	1 173 686	1 180 732	1 187 246	1 193 407	1 198 890	1 204 201	1 209 429	1 213 060	1 212 718	1 212 653
Tshwane	3 084 142	3 173 484	3 266 231	3 362 806	3 455 310	3 546 798	3 638 328	3 729 104	4 679 483	3 910 179
All Metro	22 170 801	22 674 311	23 186 945	23 711 893	24 226 122	24 738 837	25 252 592	25 766 095	26 983 552	26 530 726
RSA	53 636 678	54 477 990	55 327 828	56 189 972	57 056 765	57 924 791	58 793 276	59 622 350	59 964 917	60 604 992

STEP 4

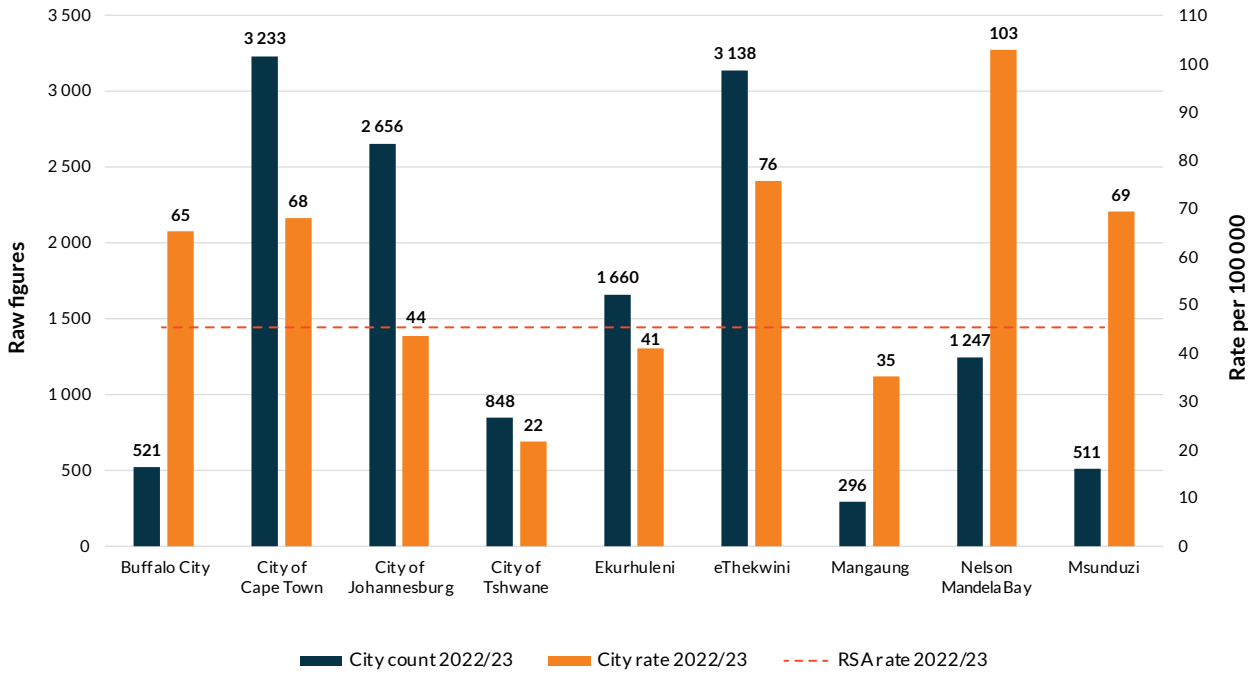
Divide the relevant crime figures by the relevant population estimate for each of the 20+ crime types, for the last 18 years, for each city.

This step is necessary because trends and differences in city populations must be considered when comparing their crime statistics. Dividing the raw number of crime figures recorded by the appropriate population estimate makes generating a crime rate per 100 000 people possible. On this basis, one can compare what official statistics say about the level of reported criminal victimisation or risk experienced by the people in those populations.

The following example illustrates the importance of accounting for each city's population: Mangaung has seen a count of 296 murders recorded in the 2022/23 year, three times less than the 848 murders recorded during the same period in Tshwane. This might lead one to conclude that Tshwane's residents face a higher risk of murder than those in Mangaung. However, once one has accounted for the fact that Tshwane has nearly five times the population, it becomes clear that the average resident of Mangaung is 1.6 times more likely to be murdered than the average resident of Tshwane, despite the latter area recording a higher number of murders. Similarly, with 3 233 murders, Cape Town has nearly three times the number of murders compared to the 1 247 of Nelson Mandela Bay. Yet Cape Town has four times the population of Nelson Mandela Bay, resulting in these two cities holding murder rates of 68 and 103 per 100 000 population, respectively.

The figure below indicates that five cities (Buffalo City (65), Cape Town (68), eThekwini (76), Nelson Mandela Bay (103) and Msunduzi (69)) have a murder rate above the national average of 45 murders per 100 000 population. Johannesburg, Mangaung, Ekurhuleni and Tshwane all record murder rates below the national average.

FIGURE 2: Absolute number of murders compared to murder rates per 100 000 (2022/23)



1.4 National Crime Trends

1.4.1 Property crimes

Non-violent property crimes (burglaries, thefts, and fraud) constitute more than half (51.5%) of all serious crimes recorded by the SAPS. These crimes have seen substantial and fairly steady declines over the long term. For example, the recorded rates of residential burglary and theft of motor vehicles and motorcycles have more than halved since 1994[4]. These long-term trends are confirmed by the results of surveys conducted with victims of crime, providing an important source of corroboration.[5]

Percentage changes over the past ten years alone (2012/13 to 2022/23), showed marked substantive decreases of between 44% and 45% in 'theft of motor vehicle and motorcycle', 'theft out of or from motor vehicle' and 'burglary at residential premises'[6]. Decreases for 'burglary at non-residential premises'(-26%) over this period were more muted.

Between 2021/22 and 2022/23, marginal decreases were again recorded in the categories of burglary at non-residential premises' (-0.4%), and 'theft of motor vehicle and motorcycle' (-1%). However, for the first time, increases were recorded in 'burglary at residential premises' (4%) and 'theft out of or from motor vehicle' (6%).

TABLE 2: Non-violent property crime rates

Property Crime	Rate 2012/2013	Rate 2013/2014	Rate 2020/2021	Rate 2021/2022	Rate 2022/2023	Percentage change over 1 year	Percentage change over 10 years
Burglary at non-residential premises	139	137	110	104	103	-0.4%	-26%
Burglary at residential premises	495	484	268	260	270	4%	-45%
Theft of motor vehicle and motorcycle	110	106	59	62	62	-1%	-44%
Theft out of or from motor vehicle	263	268	140	136	144	6%	-45%

Violent property-related crime rates have seen increases over a ten-year period. The rate of total robbery with aggravating circumstances has risen by about 21% over ten years since 2012/13. During this period, the subcategory of robbery at residential premises has risen by 12% over a decade. Robbery at non-residential premises has risen seven percent since 2012/13. Carjacking has seen a substantial 99% increase since 2012/13. These three priority crimes (known as the 'trio crimes') have shown mostly increases in the past year. The table below indicates that carjacking increased by seven percent in a year (after a 24% increase in 2021/22) and residential robbery by five percent. Non-residential robbery decreased by one percent, indicating a possible stabilisation when compared to the nine percent increase recorded over the previous annual reporting period.

TABLE 3: Violent property crime rates

Violent Property Crime	Rate 2012/2013	Rate 2021/2022	Rate 2022/2023	Percentage change over 1 year	Percentage change over 10 years
Carjacking	19	35	37	7%	99%
Robbery at residential premises	34	36	38	5%	12%
Robbery at non-residential premises	31	33	33	-1%	7%
Robbery with aggravating circumstances	200	221	241	9%	21%

4 A Kriegler & M Shaw, A Citizen's Guide to Crime Trends in South Africa, 2016, Jonathan Ball Publishers, Cape Town. The authors provide 1995 rates for residential burglary and theft of motor vehicle and motorcycle of 596 and 273 respectively in the annexure page 187.

5 Note that the Victims of Crime Survey 2017/18, 2018/19 and 2019/20 from Statistics South Africa showed increases in the victimisation rate of residential burglary. The 2020/21 survey showed a decrease in the number of housebreakings. The 2022/23 survey shows statistically insignificant increases with rates on par with 2017/18, 2018/19 and 2019/20 levels.

6 These downward trends in non-violent property crimes are consistent with those in several other countries worldwide.

Overall, aggravated robbery increased by nine percent in the past year.

The risk of falling victim to violent property crime is two to seven times lower compared to non-violent property crime.[7] Yet violent property crime has a much bigger impact on the victims, and on overall feelings of safety. This is because of the direct contact between the perpetrator and the victim during which violence or the threat of violence occurs. Victims to violent property crimes therefore tend to experience high levels of emotional trauma, irrespective of the physical harm and financial loss suffered.

Contributing factors that may influence changes in violent property crime trends include:

- **Changes in security systems and technology.**
  Improved security systems or products (e.g., burglar bars, alarm systems, cameras, and vehicle immobilisers) can make it more difficult and riskier for criminals to gain access to houses, businesses, and vehicles without a victim present. Improved barriers to entry of residences and businesses or access to vehicles may be driving increasing numbers of perpetrators to use violent measures to gain access to desired items. For example, obtaining goods secured in a safe in a building with burglar bars and electric fencing is easier and quicker with victim cooperation to facilitate access.
- **Possession of high-value items.**
  High-value items such as laptop computers, tablets, cell phones, expensive watches, and jewellery have a large second-hand market. Individuals who carry these items on their person or possess them in their homes may be specifically targeted. The possible displacement effect from non-violent to violent property crimes requires further research in the South African context.
- **Failures of policing.**
  Robbery can be substantially reduced through effective policing. Robberies are perpetrated by relatively small groups of repeat offenders who are often networked. Effective police crime intelligence and detective work can result in significant arrests and prosecutions that will substantially disrupt these networks. Consequently, fewer robberies are committed as increasing numbers of perpetrators are sent to correctional facilities and fewer perpetrators turn to this type of crime due to the increased risks of incarceration. Unfortunately, SAPS intelligence and investigative capability deteriorated notably from 2012 onwards. Consequently, perpetrators increasingly see robbery as a high-reward, low-risk crime.

During the Covid-19 lockdown restrictions since April 2020, organised and syndicated crime flourished while police resources and attention were diverted away from routine crime combating operations. These groups have proliferated and are now entrenched in many urban areas. Specific anti-robbery strategies are now required in high-robbery areas, targeting specific individuals and networks of perpetrators.

7 Seven times more residential burglaries were reported to the SAPS compared to residential robberies. Three times more non-residential burglaries were reported to the SAPS compared to non-residential robberies. Two times more theft of motor vehicles were reported to the SAPS compared to carjackings.

1.4.2 Interpersonal violent crimes

The rates for murder, as well as other recorded interpersonal violent crimes, have shown mixed results over the past ten years. Rates of murder (43%) and attempted murder (31%) have increased over the past ten years, whilst rates for sexual offences (-16%), assault with the intent to inflict Grievous Bodily Harm (GBH) (-18%) and common assault (-1%) all recorded decreases over this period. The last three crime types are notoriously under-reported, and it is unclear if decreases are associated with increasing under-reporting or decreasing crime levels, or a combination of these factors. As discussed below, murder is the most reliable crime statistic and is a proxy measure for violence levels.

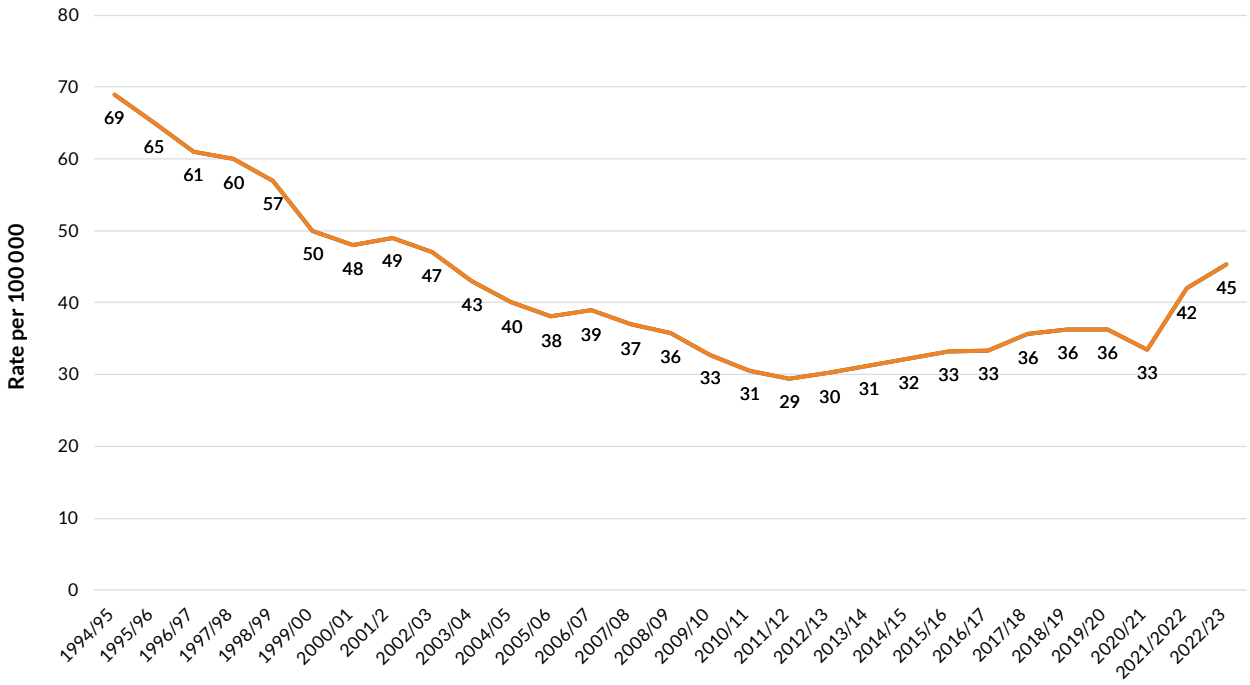
TABLE 4: Interpersonal violent crime rate

Interpersonal violent crime	Rate 2012/2013	Rate 2020/21	Rate 2022/2023	Percentage change over 1 year	Percentage change over 10 years
Murder	31	42	45	8.0%	43%
Attempted murder	31	37	41	12.5%	31%
Sexual Offences	115	88	88	0.4%	-16%
Assault with the intent to inflict grievous bodily harm	350	272	279	2.9%	-18%
Common assault	325	283	306	7.9%	-1%

All rates for interpersonal violence increased between 2022/23 and 2022/23. Rates of murder (8%) and attempted murder (12.5%), sexual offences (0.4%), assault with the intent to inflict Grievous Bodily Harm (GBH) (3%) and common assault (8%) all recorded increases over this period.

Internationally, murder is considered a robust (although imperfect) comparative measure of violence. This is because murder incidents are considered one of the most reliable crime statistics, as the police record most incidents. South Africa's murder rate of 45 per 100 000 people is nearly eight times higher than the international average and more than three times higher than the average for the African continent. Since the advent of democracy, murder and attempted murder have mostly declined. However, this changed in 2011/12, after which these crime types recorded a notable upward trend.

FIGURE 3: South Africa's murder rate per 100 000 (1994/95-2022/23)



A longer-time perspective shows that South African murder levels nationally have not been below 30 per 100 000 since at least the 1970s.[8] This is considered very high by global standards. Only a handful of countries record murder rates at this level. Comparative global research shows that a very strong predictor of a country's level of crime and violence is its level of inequality as measured by its Gini coefficient. South Africa is one of the most unequal countries in the world, if not the most unequal. Addressing inequality must no longer be considered an abstract and long-term ideal.

Although the murder rate more than halved between 1994/95 and 2011/12, it increased gradually to 45 murders per 100 000 population in 2022/23. The exception is in 2020/21, when the rate temporarily dropped to 33.5 murders per 100 000. As indicated below, the slight decrease in the 2020/21 year can be attributed to the restrictions placed on the country in the face of the Covid-19 pandemic. The 2021/22 and 2022/23 increases will likely continue in the medium term because the drivers of violence (such as increasing food insecurity and growing inequality) have not been addressed – and may have been exacerbated by the pandemic. There is, however, a range of factors that could be driving the increases. These include socio-economic deterioration, increased inequality and food insecurity, increased political corruption resulting in deteriorating police and criminal justice performance, subsequent declines in public trust in the government, an influx of firearms into high-risk areas and increasing levels of inter-group conflict such as gang and taxi violence. Many of these are far more pronounced in urban settings experiencing rapid urbanisation.

Different factors are likely to drive increases in murders in different geographical localities. For example, in wealthier cities with high economic activity, murder is often driven by residential robbery or hijacking. In contrast, increased gang activity or conflict could be the leading cause in certain marginalised urban areas. It is, therefore, essential to identify precisely what specific factors are at play in particular murder hotspots. For example, multiple murders (two or more victims) also drive the murder rate again, specifically in KZN, Gauteng, Eastern Cape and the Western Cape. Some of these murders relate to retaliations or revenge attacks as part of inter-group violence. In other cases, the motives may relate to extortion, vigilantism, taxi violence or gang violence.

As recommended in previous reports, crime prevention resources can be effective when they are very narrowly targeted to specific localities, populations, and crime factors. The USRG's hotspots research of 2017 was an attempt to encourage precisely this kind of highly localised problem-solving thinking.

Comparing the cities' trends in specific crime types to each other, to the average of the nine, and to the national levels, reveals the unique challenges that each city needs to face. It is this that is addressed in the section that follows.

8 A Kriegler & M Shaw, A Citizen's Guide to Crime Trends in South Africa, 2016, Jonathan Ball Publishers, Cape Town

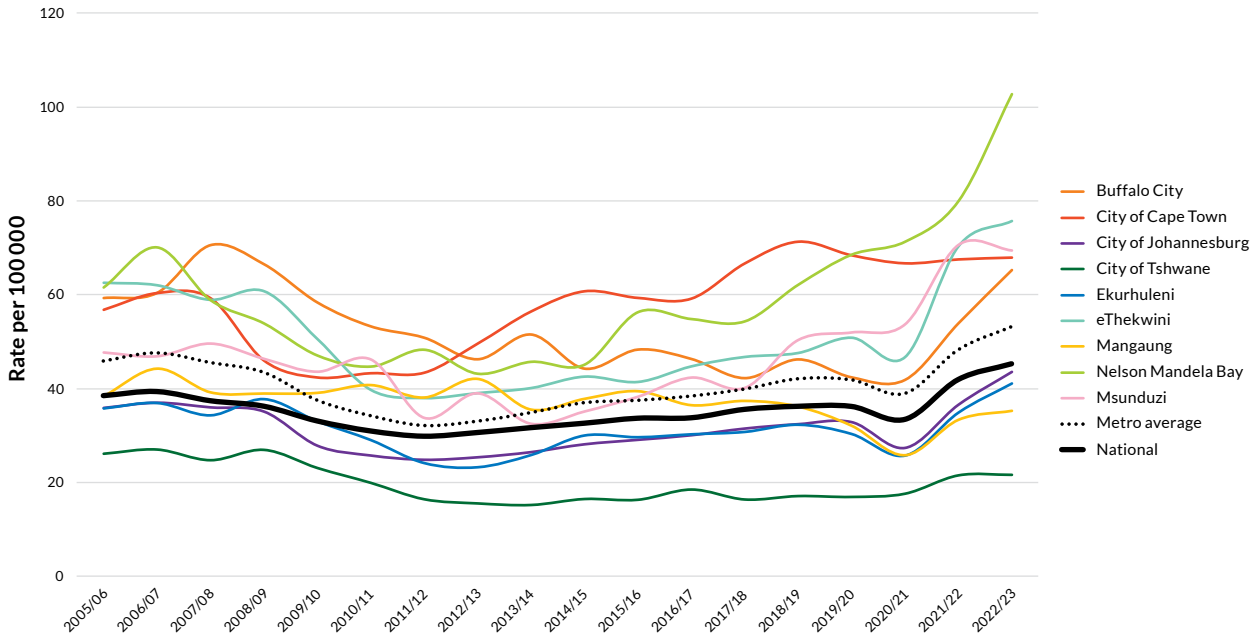
1.5 Latest City Trends in Key Crime Categories

This section examines the main crime types for 18 years since 2005/06 and compares the nine cities to national and average metro trends. It is not an exhaustive account of the crime trends in the relevant cities but points to some important features and trends observed in crime statistics.

1.5.1 Murder

While 44% of the South African population resides in these cities, half (51%) of all recorded murders happened in the nine cities in 2022/23. The average murder rate of 53 per 100 000 inhabitants (compared to 48 per 100 000 in 2021/22) for the nine cities is well above the national murder rate (45). Most cities have followed the national trend – namely, an overall decline over the long-term period, with a subsequent increase from around 2011/12.

FIGURE 4: Murder per 100 000 (2005/06-2022/23)



Two cities have seen an overall decrease in their murder rates over an 18-year period, albeit at lower rates than the previous years, namely Tshwane (-17%) and Mangaung (-8%). In the previous year, three cities indicated decreases over this 18-year period but have seen reversals due to increases in the current year. These are Buffalo City (10%), Ekurhuleni (15%), and Johannesburg (21%). The average recorded murder rate has, however, continued to increase markedly over this period for four cities, namely Cape Town (20%), eThekwini (21%), Msunduzi (46%) and Nelson Mandela Bay (67%). A 67% increase in Nelson Mandela Bay and 46% in Msunduzi are particularly alarming. Nelson Mandela Bay now has a murder rate double the metro average at 103 murders per 100 000 inhabitants.

Since 2011/12, the combined cities' average murder rate has increased substantially by 66%, above the national increase of 52%. Most of these increases have been recorded in the past two years since the relaxation of the COVID-19 restrictions. Only Mangaung (-7%) recorded decreases over the decade. Alarmingly, Nelson Mandela Bay (113%), Msunduzi (106%), eThekwini (99%), Johannesburg (76%) and Ekhuruleni (70%) saw increases well above the metro increase for this period. Cape Town (57%), Tshwane (32%) and Buffalo City Municipality (28%) also saw increases but below the metro average. Each city should investigate the drivers of these substantial increases, focussing on the hotspots.

Only Msunduzi (-2%) experienced decreased murder rates in the last year. Notable increases have been experienced in Nelson Mandela Bay (29%), Buffalo City (21%), Johannesburg (19%), Ekurhuleni (18%), and eThekwini (8%). Cape Town (1%) and Tshwane (1%) again saw a marginal increase similar to the previous year.

As indicated in Figure 4, the murder rate for Tshwane is the lowest (at 22 per 100 000), while the murder rates for Cape Town and Nelson Mandela Bay are now 68 (unchanged from the previous year and 103 (a large increase from 80 the previous year), respectively. The increase in the murder rates for these two cities began earlier and has been far more significant than the increases in any other city, suggesting that they are facing a far more complex set of challenges when compared to the other cities. The murder rate in Cape Town is starting to stabilise. The 2019 Western Cape Safety Plan aims to address some of the drivers of violence in its hotspots through data-led and evidence-based policing.[9]

The cities of eThekwini and Mzunduzi recorded murder rates of 76 and 69, respectively, for 2022/2023. This financial period follows the July 2021 unrest, which affected these two cities extensively and impacted the Gauteng metros. The unrest resulted in at least 354 deaths, 150,000 job losses and R50 billion in damage.[10] During this 2021/22 period which coincides with the violence, The cities of eThekwini and Mzunduzi recorded murder rates of 70 and 71, respectively, inclusive of those deaths recorded as murder during the unrest. Cities and hotspots differ considerably in the various drivers of murder (e.g., gang-related violence is not a driver everywhere). However, they also share some common factors, such as GBVF and other forms of interpersonal violence, such as assaults due to arguments. Understanding each city's uniqueness is essential when planning a response. The implementation of the White Paper on Safety and Security seeks to address not only some of the drivers but also aims to enhance safety planning partnerships and processes.

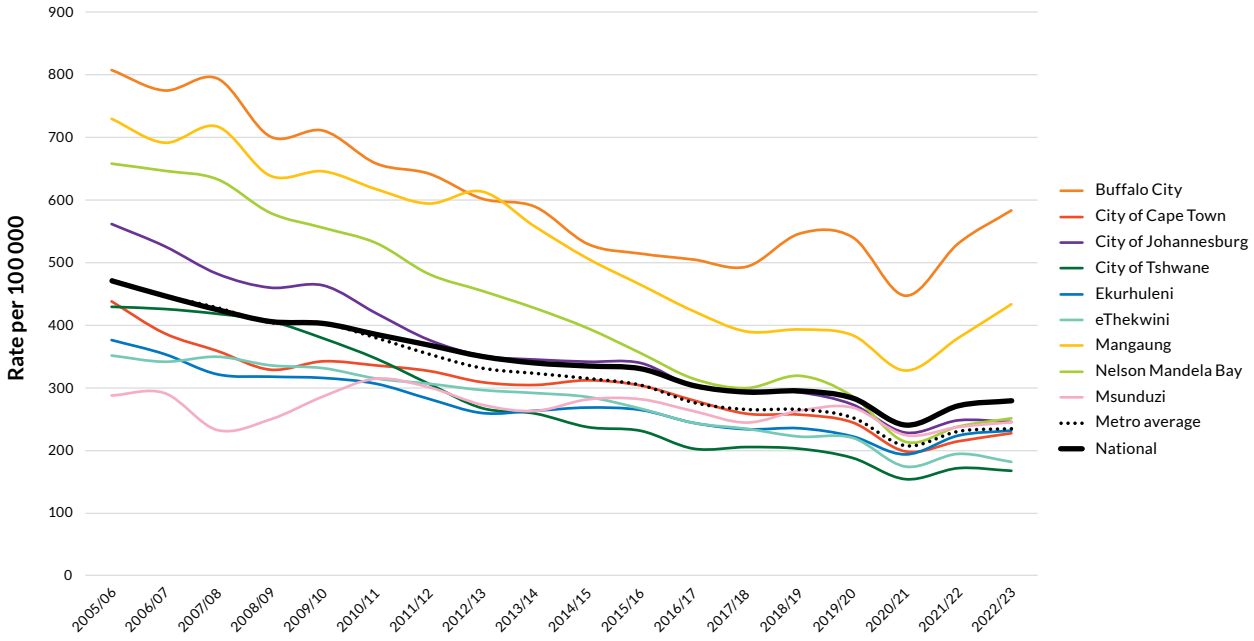
9 Western Cape Government, WC Safety Plan, 2019, https://www.westerncape.gov.za/sites/www.westerncape.gov.za/files/assets/departments/premier/western_cape_government_safety_plan.pdf

10 News 24, July Unrest, 8 July 2022, https://www.news24.com/news24/investigations/july-unrest-one-year-later-sa-still-doesnt-know-who-masterminded-the-chaos-20220707-2

1.5.2 Assault with intent to inflict grievous bodily harm

About 37% of all reported assaults with intent to inflict grievous bodily harm (GBH) take place in the nine cities. While murder rates have increased substantially since 2011/12, the trends for recorded rates of assault GBH have shown notable declines. Since 2005/6, cases of assault GBH recorded by the police have declined steadily in all cities. Nelson Mandela Bay (-48%) has seen the most significant decline in assault rates in Tshwane (-45%), followed by eThekwini (-41%), Johannesburg (-35%) and Cape Town (-30%). Mangaung (-27%), Msunduzi (-19%) and Ekurhuleni (-18%) witnessed notable drops. Buffalo City had the lowest decrease (-9%).

FIGURE 5: Assault with the intent to inflict GBH per 100 000 (2005/06-2022/23)



Despite the overall declines, in 2022/23, Buffalo City had more than double the rate of the metro average (584, in contrast with the metro average of 235) and nearly double the national rate (279.5). Mangaung had assault rates of 433 – again above the national and metro rates. The average rates for Nelson Mandela Bay (251), Johannesburg (246), Msunduzi (245), and Ekurhuleni (231) were all above the metro average rate (235). The high rates may be linked to high levels of interpersonal or inter-group violence, where weapons such as knives and firearms are not necessarily used – as opposed to murder, attempted murder and armed robberies, where these weapons are present.

Between 2017/18 and 2020/21, the assaults GBH showed an upward shift, with five cities recording increases in 2018/19. That year, Buffalo City experienced the sharpest rise, with an 11% increase in assault GBH, followed by Msunduzi (8%) and Nelson Mandela Bay (7%). Mangaung and Ekurhuleni recorded slight increases of 1% each. However, in 2019/20, only Msunduzi experienced an increase of 2%. The other cities have seen decreases of between 1% (Buffalo City) and 10% (Nelson Mandela Bay).
In 2020/21, during the COVID-19 lockdown restrictions, all nine cities saw a substantial decrease in assault GBH, in line with the overall trends. These decreases are substantiated by a -18% decrease in the metro average between 2019/20 and 2020/21.

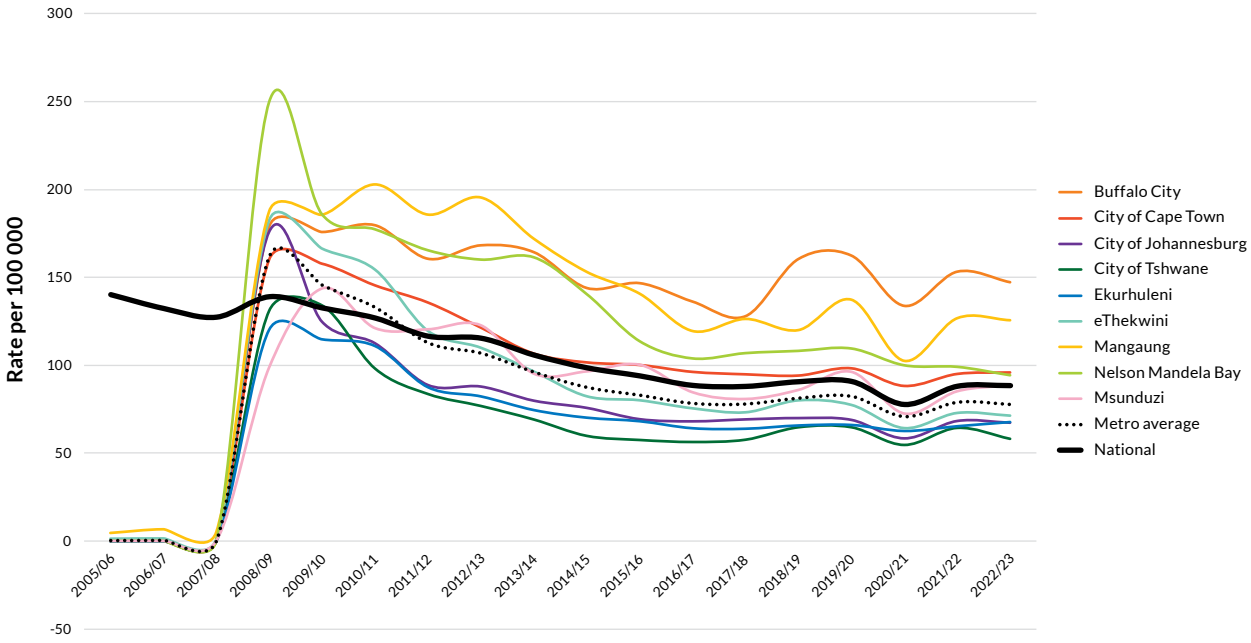
In 2021/22, all nine cities, except for Tshwane (-9%), saw increases for the first time in decades. In 2022/23, these increases continued in six cities, except for eThekwini (-7%), Tshwane (-2%) and Johannesburg (-1%). Mangaung (14%) experienced the sharpest rise, followed by Buffaolo City (10%), and Cape Town and Nelson Mandela Bay (both increasing by 6%). Ekhuruleni (4%) and Msunduzi (3%) had the lowest increases this year.

It is unusual globally to have declining assault rates alongside increasing murder rates. It is, therefore, essential to remember that about half of assaults are not reported to the police (according to the 2022/23 National VoCS) or withdrawn shortly after reporting.[11] Moreover, it is important to note that there is some evidence that reporting rates for assault have been declining – with this, in turn, potentially overstating the declines reported by the police. Changes in police statistics may, therefore, reflect crime reporting trends rather than actual crime trends.

1.5.3 Sexual offences

The sexual offences statistics released by the SAPS are problematic. Most victims and survivors of this crime do not report the offence because of a lack of trust in the police or concerns of stigmatisation of their families or themselves. In addition, the definition changed in 2008/09 with the introduction of the Sexual Offences Act 32 of 2007, which replaced common law crimes with statutory crimes for various sexual offences.[12] As a result, sexual offences statistics before this change are incompatible with current figures. Since 2011/12, the SAPS have reported sexual offences detected due to police action (e.g., offences associated with sex work or public indecency) as a separate category.

FIGURE 6: Sexual offences per 100 000 (2005/06-2022/23)



Similar to assault GBH, in 2022/23, nearly 39% of all reported sexual offences were recorded in the nine cities. Interestingly, the national rate of 88 is well above the metro rate of 78, indicating that sexual violence is not necessarily only an urban problem.

Over the past decade since 2013/13, all cities have seen a steady decline in this rate, with the most dramatic decline in Nelson Mandela Bay (-41%), Mangaung (-36%), eThekwini (-35%), Msunduzi (-28%), Tshwane (-24%), Johannesburg (-23%) and Cape Town (-21%). The decreases were smaller for Ekurhuleni (-18%) and Buffalo City (-12%).

11 Statistics SA, P0341 Victims of Crime Survey, 2023, 54, https://www.statssa.gov.za/publications/P0341/P03412023.pdf.

12 Department of Justice, Sexual Offences Act 32 of 2007, https://www.justice.gov.za/legislation/acts/2007-032.pdf

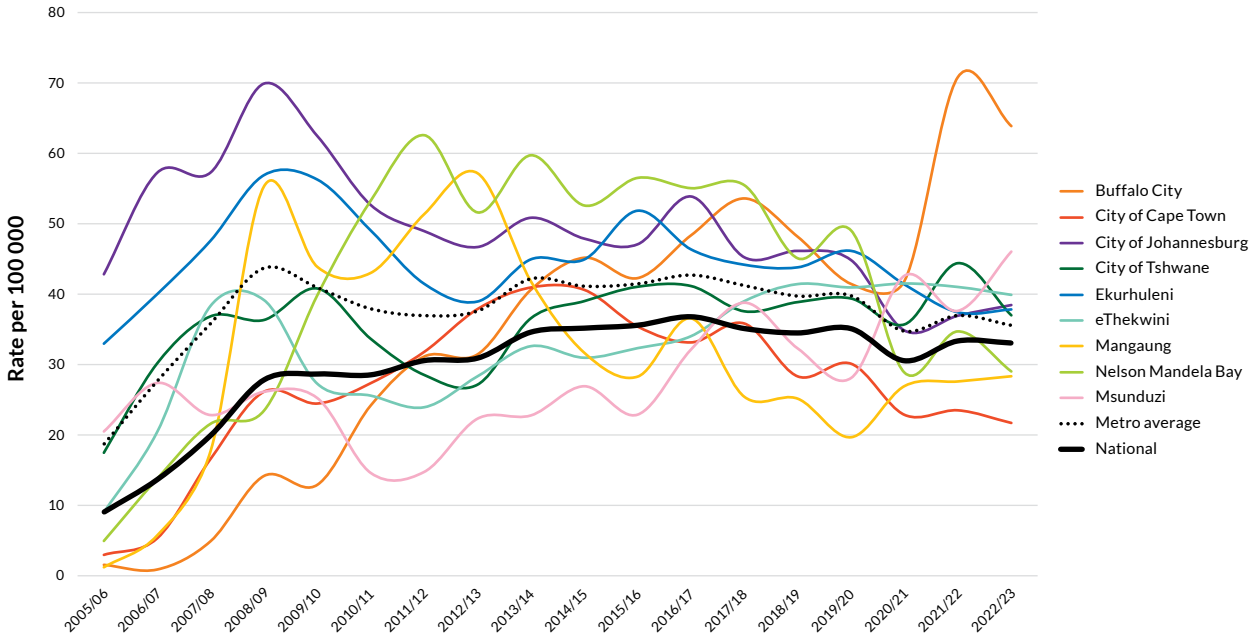
Between 2021/22 and 2022/23, six cities, except for Msunduzi (4%), Ekurhuleni (4%) and Cape Town (1%) saw decreases. Tshwane (-10%) and Nelson Mandela Bay (-5%) experienced the sharpest drops. Buffalo City (-4%), eThekwini (-2%) Mangaung and Johannesburg (both with -1%) had the lowest increases over this year's period. It is difficult to ascertain from the statistics alone whether the actual prevalence increased, reporting rates decreased, or the shift was due to a combination of both. It would be useful if Stats SA released reporting rates at a district level for the larger cities. Household surveys are also likely to have a significant underreporting rate because of the stigma and sensitivity often associated with sexual offences. The cities should fund supplementary specialised city-level victim surveys by expert organisations and academic institutions to better understand victimisation rates.

1.5.4 Robbery at non-residential premises

In 2022/23, nearly half (47%) of all cases of robbery at non-residential premises were recorded in the nine cities. These robberies occur predominantly in small businesses and have a substantial financial impact on these businesses. All cities experienced steep increases in recorded rates of non-residential robbery in the first half of the 18-year period. The second half, from about 2011/12, saw the stabilisation or decline in this rate in five cities, albeit at notably high levels.

Of concern is the substantial three-digit increase in robberies at non-residential premises recorded in Msunduzi (106%) and Buffalo City (103%) over the past ten years, followed by a 41% increase in eThekwini and a 36% increase in Tshwane. The sharp increase in Buffalo City is driven by a 69% increase in 2021/22 but was followed by a 10% decrease in 2022/23. However, Msunduzi saw a 22% increase in the past year.

FIGURE 7: Robbery at residential premises per 100 000 (2005/06-2022/23)



For 2022/23, the national average decreased by one percent and the metro average by four percent. In addition to Buffalo City (-10%), four of the nine cities experienced a decline in this rate at notably high levels. Tshwane recorded the most significant decrease (-17%), followed by Nelson Mandela Bay (-16%), Cape Town (-8%) and eThekwini (-3%). Therefore, the reductions are not as marked as in the previous year.

However, all other cities experienced increases. Buffalo City (22%) recorded a substantial increase, as indicated above. The remaining cities recorded slight increases of between 1% and 4%.

Cities should investigate the drivers of robbery in their cities, and all robbery categories should be prioritised. Despite small decreases in most cities in the last year, the high levels still indicate that the police have not been able to address this crime despite it being classified as a priority crime and as one of the subcategories of the so-called 'trio crimes'. However, decreases in these 'business' robberies need to be investigated as some experts indicate that there may be a link between the decrease in these robberies and the rise of extortion groups in hotspot areas.[13]

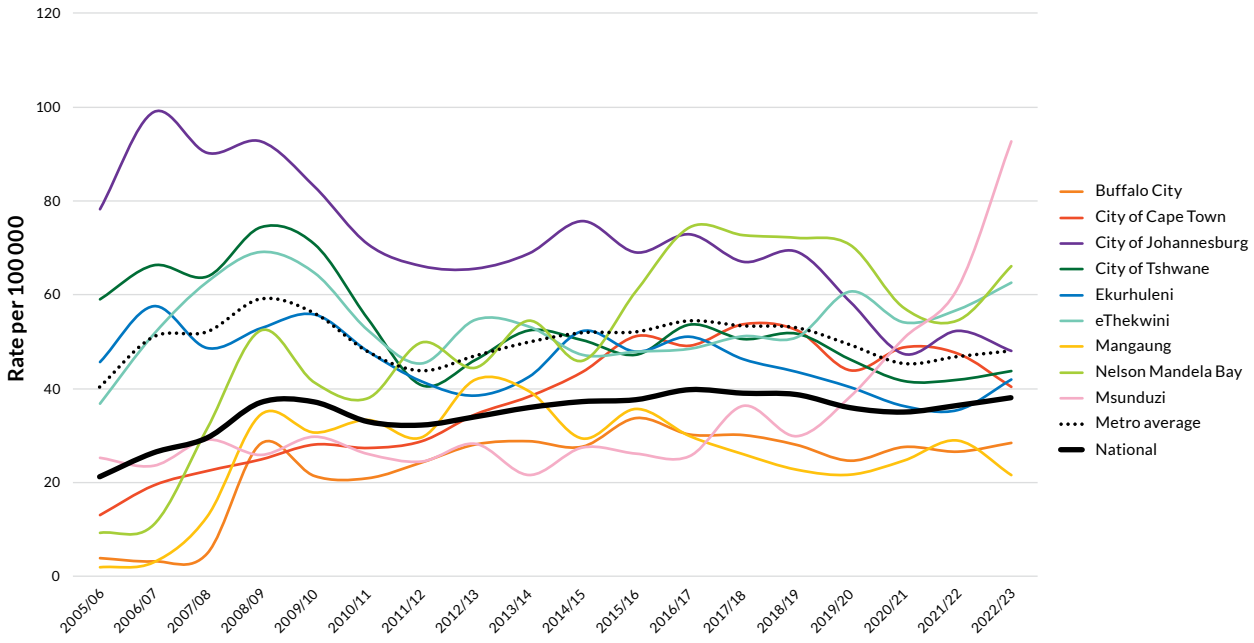
13 Gastrow, V. ISS Today, Is Cape Town's drop in business robbery a cause for concern, 9 July 2024, https://crimehub.org/iss-today/is-cape-town-s-drop-in-business-robbery-a-cause-for-concern

1.5.5 Robbery at residential premises

Robbery at residential premises is also a police priority crime and a subcategory of the so-called 'trio crimes'. It is predominantly an urban problem. When reviewing the national records of robberies at residential premises for 2022/23, 55% were recorded in the nine cities.

The residential robbery rate in Msunduzi has spiked markedly by 51% (from 61 to 93 per 100 000 population) in 2022/23. The increase was less stark in eThekwini (from 57 to 63 per 100 000 population), Nelson Mandela Bay (from 55 to 66 per 100 000 population) and Ekurhuleni (from 35 to 42 per 100 000 population) and has been well above the metro residential robbery rate (from 45 to 48 per 100 000 population) and national rate (from 36 to 38 per 100 000 population).

FIGURE 8: Burglary at residential premises per 100 000 (2005/06-2022/23)



Increases have been substantial in two cities over the past 10 years, namely Msunduzi (228%), Nelson Mandela Bay (49%), and to a lesser extent in Cape Town (17%) and eThekwini (15%), suggesting a cause for major concern in these cities. Ekurhuleni (9%) and Buffalo City (1%) had single-digit increases.

Significant reductions in residential robberies in 10 years have been recorded in Mangaung (-49%), Johannesburg (-27%) and Tshwane (-5%) following a very rapid earlier increase, especially in Mangaung, Msunduzi and the coastal cities. It may be worth investigating how reductions were achieved, especially in Johannesburg.

Over the last year, a substantial reduction was recorded in Mangaung (-25%), Cape Town (-15%) and Johannesburg (-8%). Marginal increases have been seen in four cities, namely Tshwane (4%), Buffalo City (7%) and eThekwini (10%). The other three cities experienced substantial increases, namely Msunduzi (51%), Nelson Mandela Bay (21%) and Ekurhuleni (18%). The spike in these cities requires urgent attention.

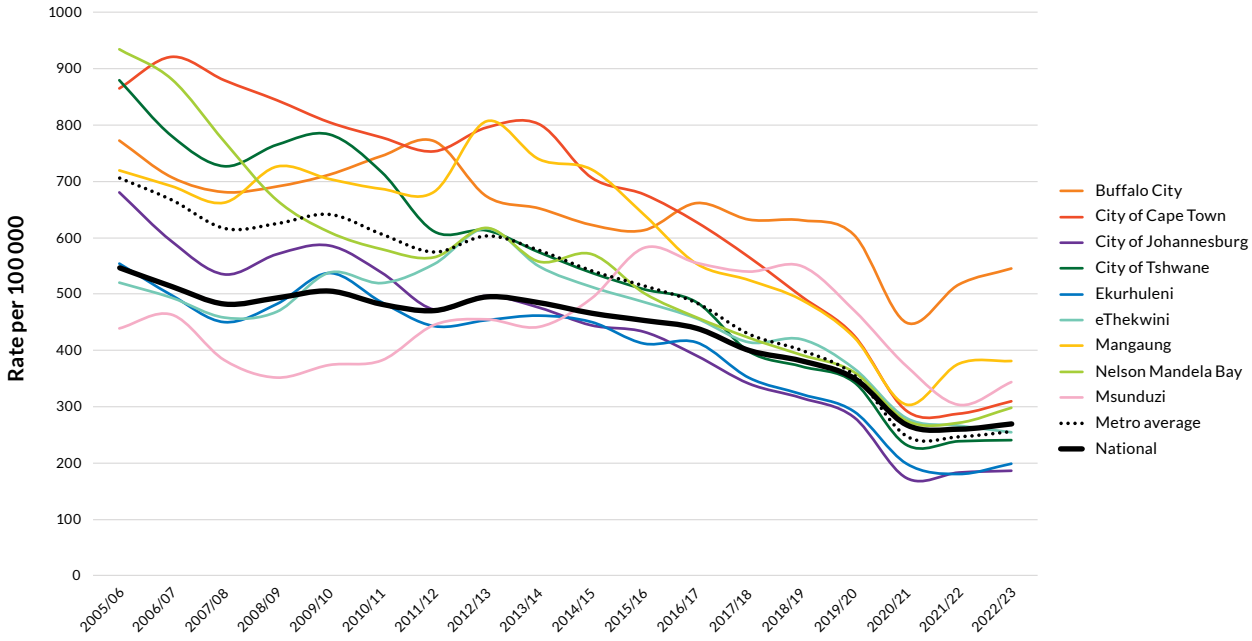
1.5.6 Burglary at residential premises

The picture of burglary at residential premises (non-violent, property crime) differs greatly from that of robbery at residential premises (violent, contact crime). It suggests a displacement effect from non-violent to violent property crimes.

In 2022/23, nearly 41% of all reported burglaries at residential premises were recorded in the nine cities. Interestingly, the national rate of 270 is well above the metro rate of 255, indicating that this crime is not necessarily only an urban problem.

Overall, residential burglaries have steadily decreased in all cities since 2005/06. Significant reductions (between 22% and 73%) have been noted over a decade in all cities. For all cities other than eThekwini (-51%), Mangaung (-47%), Buffalo City (-29%) and Msunduzi (-22%), these reductions were between 64% and 73% well above the national average of 51%.

FIGURE 9: Robbery at non-residential premises per 100 000 (2005/06-2022/23)



As suggested, this might result from the displacement effect from non-violent to violent property crimes. It is also important to keep in mind that, according to the National VoCS, only half of all residential burglaries are reported to the police.[14]

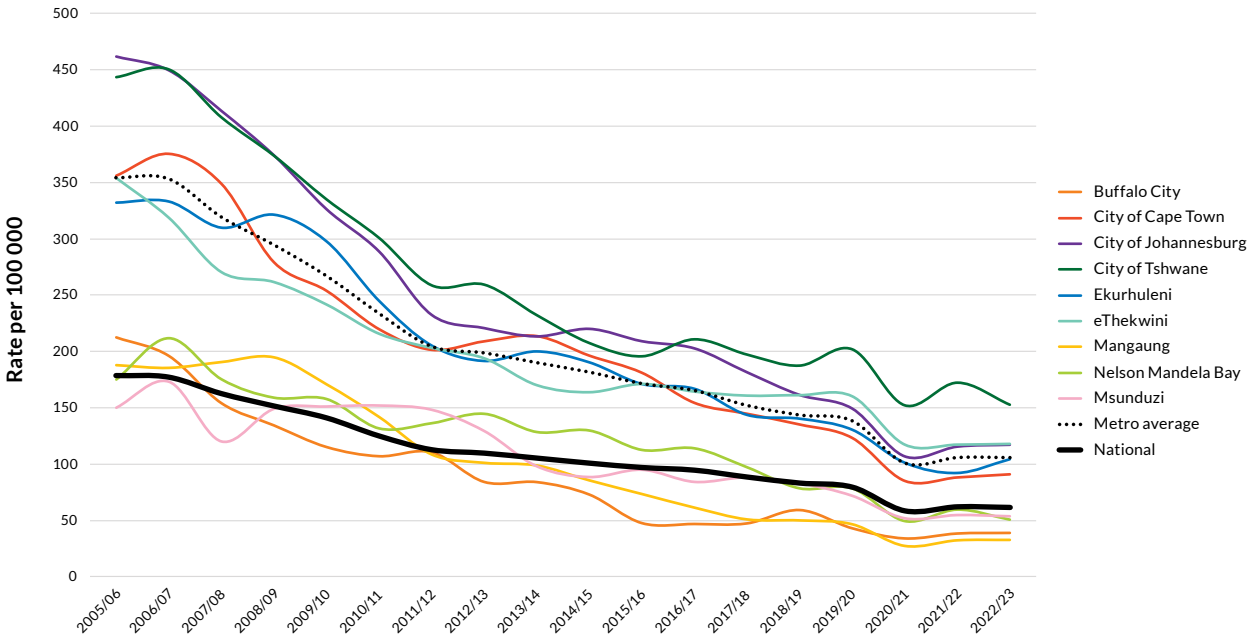
Alarmingly, this trend started reversing over the last year for eight of the nine cities, with all cities experiencing an increase of between 1% and 13%. Notable increases were recorded in Msunduzi (13%), Nelson Mandela Bay and Ekurhuleni (both at 10%), followed by Cape Town (8%) and Buffalo City (6%). eThekwini was the only city recording a marginal reduction of four percent.

14 Statistics SA, P0341 Victims of Crime Survey, 2020, 9, http://www.statssa.gov.za/publications/P0341/P03412019.pdf. The 2021/22 Victims of Crime Survey puts this figure at 59% for the first time. This seems very high when compared to historical trends.

1.5.7 Theft of vehicles and motorcycles

The theft of vehicles and motorcycles is particularly an urban problem, with 75% of these thefts recorded in the nine cities. This is illustrated by how much higher the metro average rate is, compared to the national rate (106 thefts per 100 000 within metros, in contrast with 62 thefts per 100 000 nationally). In addition, the rates for Tshwane (153 thefts per 100 000 population), eThekwini (118 thefts per 100 000 population), and Johannesburg (117 thefts per 100 000 population) have stayed well above the metro average for the past 18 years.

FIGURE 10: Recorded vehicle and motorcycle theft rates per 100 000 (2005/06-2022/23)

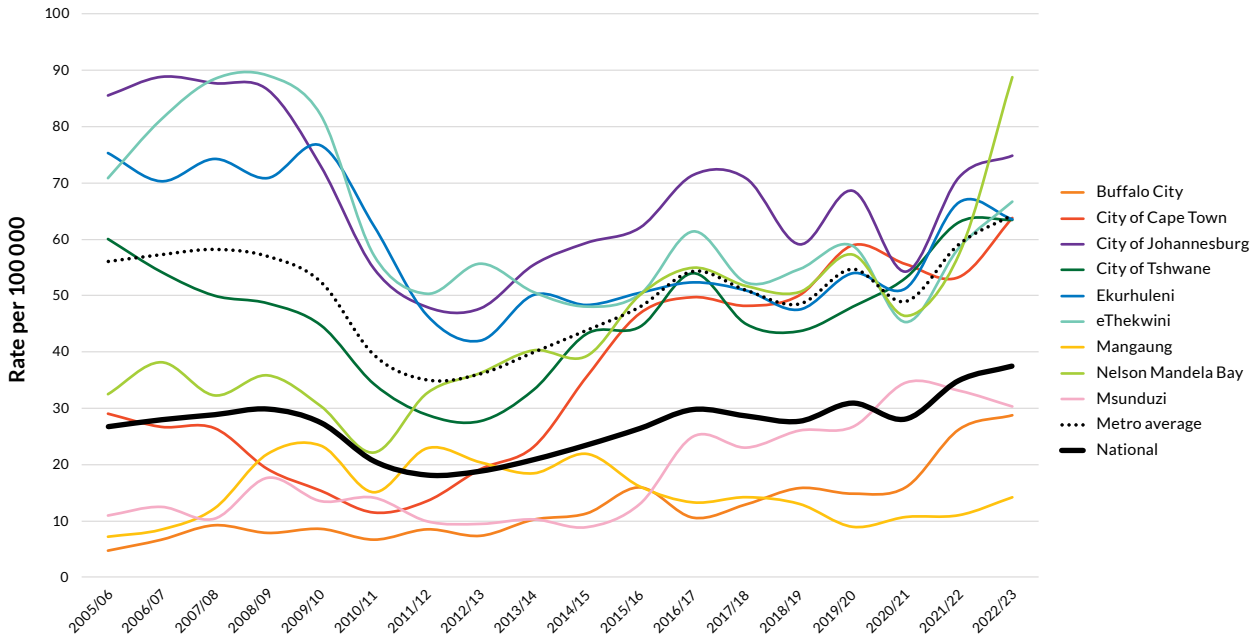


Vehicle theft rates show a general downward trend of between 64% and 83% in all cities from 2005/06 to 2022/23. In the past two years, these decreases slowed or reversed with double-digit increases in three cities of between 13% and 20% between 2020/21 and 2021/22. These increases were recorded for Nelson Mandela Bay (20%), Mangaung (18%) and Buffalo City (13%). In 2022/23, only Ekhuruleni (13%) experienced a double-digit increase. Smaller increases of between one and three percent were recorded for four cities. Tshwane (-11%) and Nelson Mandela Bay (-15%) recorded double-digit reductions.

1.5.8 Carjacking

Carjacking is also a priority crime for the SAPS, a subcategory of the so-called 'trio crimes'. Similarly to the theft of motor vehicles, three-quarters of all car hijackings (75%) occur in metro areas. The metro average of 64 carjackings per 100 000 population is nearly twice the national average of 37 per 100 000. Johannesburg's rate in 2021/22 was the highest of all cities at 71 carjackings per 100 000 population, followed by Ekurhuleni (67 carjackings per 100 000 population) and eThekwini (59 carjackings per 100 000 population). However, in 2022/23, Nelson Mandela Bay surpassed these cities as the carjacking rate spiked by 55% from 57 to 89 carjackings per 100 000 population.

FIGURE 11: Carjacking per 100 000 (2005/06-2022/23)



For the 18 years under review, Johannesburg's, Ekurhuleni's and eThekwini's carjacking rates have been consistently well above the national average. Buffalo City (505%), Msunduzi (176%), and now Nelson Mandela Bay (173%), as well as Cape Town (120%), have experienced exponential triple-digit growth in this crime since 2005/06. Over the same period, Mangaung (98%) have experienced substantial double-digit increases. However, for this period, commendable decreases have been noted for the Gauteng metros of Johannesburg (-12%) and Ekurhuleni (-16%), and for eThekwini (-6%).

The picture has grown especially concerning over the past decade. Since 2012/13, sharp increases have been experienced in carjacking rates for Buffalo City (289%), Cape Town (232%), Msunduzi (219%), Tshwane (129%) and Nelson Mandela Bay (145%), suggesting a cause for concern in these cities. Johannesburg (57%), Ekurhuleni (51%) and eThekwini (21%) also experienced significant increases in a decade. Over the past ten years, Mangaung bucked the trend with a 31% decrease – despite a 29% increase in the past year. Nationally, a fifth of all car hijackings occur in Johannesburg.

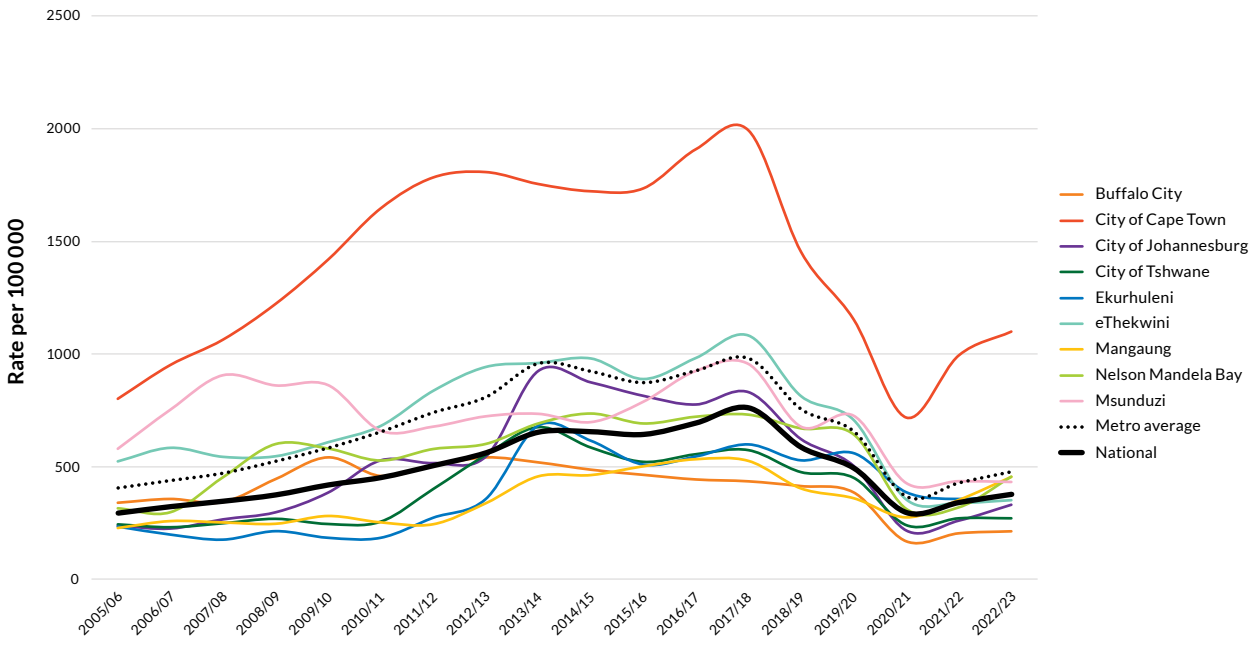
Furthermore, between 2021/22 and 2022/23, increases in carjacking occurred in seven of the nine cities, with Nelson Mandela Bay (55%) recording the largest increase, followed by Mangaung (29%), Cape Town (20%) and eThekwini (14%). The other three cities recorded increases of between one and nine percent. This situation needs to be closely monitored. Decreases were recorded for Ekurhuleni (-5%) and Msunduzi (-8%).

Carjackings, as with other robberies, often accompany other crimes. Although the likelihood of being murdered is relatively small during a hijacking or robbery, it does occur. In some cases, such a murder may mask an assassination or an attempted assassination, a dominant feature in the South African Landscape, especially in KwaZulu-Natal and Gauteng. However, the actual figure is unknown. Another driver is kidnappings. In the past ten years, kidnappings rocketed by 300% from 3 832 in 2012/13 to 15 342 in 2022/23. This upsurge is related to the substantial growth of violent and organised crime.[15]

1.5.9 Crimes detected as a result of police action

For the past 18 years, Cape Town has had the highest crime rate detected due to police action. This measure is determined by police action and is not in any way a measure of the actual incidence of the crime category. The most significant contribution of crimes detected as a result of police action is made up of drug-related crimes. This is because many police operations target those selling and purchasing drugs. However, the actual levels of use and distribution of drugs are generally understood not to be affected by police action. Changes in these figures should, therefore, not be used as an indicator of this crime type or other crime statistics generated as a result of police action.

FIGURE 12: Total crime detected through police action per 100 000 (2005/06-2022/23)



Despite a steep drop in the rate of drug-related crimes in Cape Town in the three years between 2017/18 and 2020/21, the city has shown a substantial 38% increase in 2021/22 and a further 27% in 2022/23. Cape Town still contributes nearly one-quarter of the total national figures. Mangaung (99%), Ekurhuleni (60%), Nelson Mandela Bay (44%), Johannesburg (39%) and Cape Town (37%) have seen a significant rise in police action between 2005/06 to 2022/23, primarily due to increased policing of drug-related crimes.

Except for Ekurhuleni (5%), all cities experienced a drop of between 24% and 63% over the past ten years, probably due to a shift in policing operational strategies away from drug-related crime. This is likely to result from the High Court judgement decriminalising the possession of marijuana for personal use. In the last year, police resources were diverted to enforcing the 'lockdown restrictions' under the regulations of the Disaster Management Act.

15 SAPS, 2023, Police Recorded Crime Statistics 2022/23, https://www.saps.gov.za/services/downloads/Annual-Crime-2021_2022-web.pdf, p17.

As policing operations refocused on crime prevention after the COVID-19 period, between 2021/22 and 2022/23, seven cities had an activity-related crime rate increase. In addition to Nelson Mandela Bay (43%), Mangaung (29%), Johannesburg (27%), Cape Town (11%), Ekhuruleni (5%) as well as eThekwini and Buffalo City (both by 4%). A slight decrease was recorded for Msunduzi (-1%) and Tshwane remained unchanged.

The data analysis set out above can be used for different data stories and can be summarised in the following question-and-answer suggestions:

- **Why should we measure murder?**
  Rates of murder are considered a generally robust comparative measure of violence internationally. As the police record most murder incidents, it is considered one of the most reliable crime statistics.

- **What is our murder rate?**
  South Africa's murder rate remains amongst the highest in the world. Yet, the national murder rate more than halved between 1994/95 and 2011/12, from a rate of 69 to 29.5 murders per 100 000 population. Since then, the rate increased by 52% to 45 murders per 100 000 population. This is cause for concern, as the rate is nearly eight times the international average.

- **Why is our murder rate on the increase?**
  There is arguably a range of factors that could be driving the increases. These include socio-economic deterioration, increased inequality, increased political corruption resulting in deteriorating police and criminal justice performance, subsequent declines in public trust in the government, an influx of firearms into high-risk areas and increasing levels of organised crime and inter-group conflicts such as gang and taxi violence. Many of these are far more pronounced in urban settings characterised by rapid urbanisation.

- **Why should we focus on crime in our cities?**
  A sizable proportion of the South African population (44%) resides in the nine cities. However, for many serious – and often violent crimes, the nine cities account for much larger proportions of what is recorded nationally – with the proportion of the following crimes that are recorded within these cities as follows:
  - 75% of reported vehicle thefts
  - 75% of reported carjackings
  - 62.5% of reported aggravated robberies overall
  - 55% of reported residential robberies
  - 51% of murders
  - 47% of reported business robberies
  - 41% of reported residential burglaries
  - 39% of reported sexual offences
  - 37% of reported serious assaults

- **Why do we need to focus on crime research in the cities?**
  Because of the urban character of many serious and violent crimes, more detailed research should be undertaken to determine when, where, how and why these crimes occur. Even within cities, crime is not evenly distributed. Different structural and socio-economic factors drive increases in murders and other crimes in different geographical localities such as neighbourhoods and even street blocks. City-level data could enable authorities to establish 'why' and develop responses according to place and time-specific drivers to address challenges sustainably, in partnership with other roleplayers and communities.

City trends in key crime categories: Concluding comments

Most types of serious crime and violence occur in South Africa's nine cities. These cities will continue to experience exponential growth. For this reason, sound city-level data and evidence are required to enhance planning and implementation, to respond more effectively to the structural and socio-economic drivers of violence and crime. These cities can only achieve their potential as safe, inclusive, and prosperous places.

1.6 Rapid diagnostic

Category		Indicator	BCM	CPT	JHB	TSH	EKU	ETH	MAN	NMB	MSU
Objective indicators		1 Murder rate	65	68	44	22	41	76	35	103	69
		2 Assault rate	584	227	246	168	231	182	433	251	245
		3 Robbery rate	281	392	355	338	287	363	196	399	333
		4 Property-related crime rate	1 120	838	541	680	490	620	838	702	653
		5 Sexual offences rate	147	96	67	58	68	71	126	94	89
		6 Public/collective violence rate	No data released for 2022/23								
		7 Police activity (higher is positive)	214	1100	331	270	375	352	456	457	432
Subjective indicators		8 Experience of crime/violence	1.7%	2.8%	3.2%	4.2%	1.7%	1.1%	0.5%	2.2%	2.3%
		9 Feelings of safety/fear of crime	75%	80%	80%	65%	59%	62%	72%	63%	65%
		10 Perception of/satisfaction with/ Trust in law enforcement	58%	53%	53%	54%	80%	47%	72%	79%	64%
Social / structural indicators	Urbanisation	11 Rapid population growth	-0.1%	1.9%	2.6%	2.6%	1.7%	1.7%	-0.1%	0.2%	1.7%
		12 Population density	290	1 949	3 710	621	2 045	1 622	85	620	980
		13 Social incoherence / family disruption	16%	14%	14%	14%	12%	14%	15%	14%	18%
	Marginalisation	14 Poverty	0.68	0.75	0.73	0.73	0.71	0.67	0.68	0.70	0.66
		15 Income inequality	0.63	0.62	0.62	0.62	0.63	0.62	0.62	0.63	0.63
		16 Unemployment	11.3	10.3	19.0	12.5	17.5	13.0	17.5	10.4	18.0
		17 Deprivation of services	19%	6%	9%	12%	10%	13%	17%	8%	39%
	Social/ physical environment	18 Informal housing	14%	18%	20%	18%	20%	9%	13%	6%	2%
		19 Infrastructure	6.60	3.10	1.00	4.50	2.60	6.40	5.50	3.90	4.90
		20 School conditions and violence	No national District level data currently available								
		21 Access to alcohol, drugs, firearms	71	366	109	89	124	107	131	152	139
		- Access to alcohol	54	103	125	59	121	16	85	80	19
		- Access to drugs	137	947	174	190	224	275	280	331	364
		- Access to firearms	23	50	28	17	27	31	28	45	33

Legend

City is doing relatively well compared to the other cities

City is doing average compared to the other cities

City is doing relatively poorly compared to the other cities

Data unavailable

TABLE 5: Comparison of cities across the 21 indicators (2022/23)

The table below reflects the 21 indicators for the nine cities, grouped into objective, subjective and social/ structural indicators. It should be noted that indicators 1 to 7 (except for 6) and 21 have been updated with new data from SAPS (2022/23). Indicators 8 and 10 have been updated with Stats SA's 2022/23 VoCS data. Indicator 9 was unavailable, therefore, the 2021/22 VOCS data was used. As set out above, new data was formulated for all indicators and, where possible, for indicators 11 to 19. These include indicators 11, 12, 16, 17 and 18, while the others remain unchanged because updates were unavailable. Only indicator 20 still does not have data available, but the Department of Basic Education plan to develop such an indicator.

A relative comparison of city performance is illustrated below through vertical intensity graphs (in the form of a horizontal orange bar graph) indicated together with the indicator value in the table below. The comparisons are not an assessment of the significance of the indicator in driving crime in each city. Just because a city has a good

showing compared to the other cities, this does not mean the indicator is acceptable. For instance, all cities have high Gini coefficients (Indicator 15: income inequality), so the fact that a city is doing relatively well compared to the other cities for Indicator 15 does not mean that the measure is at an acceptable level. This diagnostic is instead aimed at providing some guidance on the specific challenges that each city should focus on.The objective indicators show selected violent and other crime rates per city. Compared to the previous year, most cities experienced increased rates for these seven indicators. The exception is property-related crime, where five cities experienced decreases. The murder rate is a good proxy for violence and is the most reliable crime statistic. The murder rate is exceptionally high for the coastal cities and Msunduzi, with rates higher than the national rate of 45 murders per 100 000 population. The inland cities have lower rates, below the national and metro average of 51 murders per 100 000 population. The murder rate in Nelson Mandela Bay is especially concerning at 103 murders per 100 000 followed by Msunduzi (69) and eThekwini (76). Msunduzi and eThekwini had a significant spike in murders since the 2021 July unrest and persistent natural disasters affecting these cities. These cities also suffer the highest residential robbery rates.

Rising murder rates should receive significant attention in the cities. These are increasing dramatically in most cities. Murder, attempted murder and violent property crimes are fueled by the availability of firearms in the hands of a proliferation of organised crime groups and syndicates – whether these are implicated in illicit mining, drugs, goods, extortion, armed robberies or a combination of these.

However, Nelson Mandela Bay had the highest aggravated robbery rate at 399 robberies per 100 000 inhabitants, well above the metro or national average of 344 or 241, respectively. Cape Town followed closely with 392, eThekwini (363) and Johannesburg (355).

The largest cities of Johannesburg and Cape Town have the highest percentage of people feeling unsafe after dark, at 80% each. The largest cities also suffer from high levels of population growth. Due to rapid urbanisation, 20% of residents in Johannesburg resided in informal housing in 2022—on par with Ekurhuleni—followed closely by Cape Town and Tshwane. This gives rise to higher rates of deprivation of services and unemployment.

Johannesburg has seen increases in crime rates in the past year. The murder rate increased by 23%. Traditionally, the city had relatively low murder rates but the city's murder rate is 39% higher in 2022/23 than in 2017/23. The main drivers are the increase in robbery and other organised crime-related violence, such as illicit mining. Robbery with aggravating circumstances increased by nine percent in the past year. The city also saw an increase in property-related crime for the second consecutive year after 16 years of sustained decreases. The city shares the top spot with Cape Town as having the highest percentage of persons feeling unsafe after dark. The city has the highest population density and the highest unemployment rate according to the latest household survey.

Cape Town continues to see high rates in almost all crime types, although most recent increases have been lower than in other cities. Despite this, the city has held the third lowest assault rate. The city has the highest rate of crime detected as a result of police action indicating the prioritisation of police action during the reference period. The city shares the top spot with Johannesburg as having the highest percentage of persons feeling unsafe after dark. The city has the highest poverty index (the closer to 1 shows more development), while its income inequality gap is on par with the other cities. This should be closely monitored. The city's rapid population growth (third only to Johannesburg and Tshwane) and percentage of residents living in informal housing in 2021 is the third highest on par with Tshwane, third only to Johannesburg and Ekurhuleni.

eThekwini increased its position for murder from fourth in 2020/21, third place in 2021/22, to second only to Nelson Mandela Bay in 2022/23. and robbery remained in third place overall after Nelson Mandela Bay and Cape Town. The city has continued to hold the second-lowest assault rate. In previous years, the city's social and structural indicators appear to be improving, with a reduction in marginalisation factors through an improvement where deprivation of services is concerned and an improvement in social/ physical environment factors.

However, it scores quite highly (second only to Buffalo City) on the physical vulnerability index (6.4). Once an updated score is available, the 2021 July violence and 2022 floods may exasperate this score. The more remote and/ or structurally vulnerable, the higher the physical vulnerability score (1=low and 10=high vulnerability).

Ekurhuleni has the third-lowest murder rate, just above Tshwane and Mangaung, and continues to have the fourth-lowest robbery rate. Ekurhuleni continues to face challenges relating to the social/ structural indicators, ranking fourth for rapid population growth and second highest population density. However, in recent years, it has managed to perform better than in previous years where income inequality is concerned. As with Johannesburg, 20% of residents are now living in informal housing in 2022/23.

Tshwane continues to record relatively low rates of interpersonal violent crimes, with the lowest rates of murder, assault and sexual offences. The city enjoys the lowest murder rate out of all nine cities by a large margin. Despite recent steep increases in its robbery rate, it has the fourth lowest ranking, ranking higher with Msunduzi, Mangaung, Ekurhuleni and Buffalo City. Urbanisation continues to be challenging – with rapid population growth ranking now on par with Johannesburg up from third highest after Johannesburg and Cape Town. As with Cape Town, 18% of Tshwane residents living in informal housing in 2021 – just behind Johannesburg and Ekurhuleni.

Nelson Mandela Bay has ranked first in the indicators for murder and robbery. Still, the city has improved its police activity to be ranked second highest from the lowest for police activities two years ago (indicating the lowest police rate of police operations). The city has the second highest levels of trust in the police, after Ekurhuleni. The city's social and structural rankings perform significantly better than other cities, despite marginalisation factors reflecting a fourth ranking for unemployment with Ekurhuleni. Population growth has stagnated. This may be the result of the city's continued water and socio-economic woes.

Mangaung ranks second lowest in terms of the murder rate while ranking lowest in terms of rates of robbery. However, the city ranks second in terms of sexual offences and assault and joint second for property-related crime. Mangaung's social and structural indicators suggest that urbanisation factors are less likely to be key drivers of crime than in most other cities, as growth, population density and social incoherence remain relatively low. However, most other indicators, such as poverty, income inequality, unemployment and deprivation of services, are relatively high.

Buffalo City experiences a serious assault rate double the national rate and 2.5 times the metro average. Their sexual offence rate is also the highest. Buffalo City has the highest property-related crime rate, more than 1,7 times the national and metro rates. Many of the objective and subjective indicators for Buffalo City compare unfavourably to most other cities, especially concerning unemployment, deprivation of services, infrastructure vulnerability, and the percentage living in informal housing in 2021.

Msunduzi has had fairly middling to low crime rates compared to the larger cities. However, its murder rate is now the third highest after Nelson Mandela Bay and eThekwini. There is a need for the city to focus on addressing its pattern of interpersonal violence crimes. Msunduzi's social and structural indicators clearly point to challenges with marginalisation, particularly in poverty, unemployment, and specifically deprivation of services, which is double that of the second-highest city, namely Buffalo City.

A more detailed analysis of each city's position in terms of the 21 indicators is provided in Annexure A of this report.

City-specific Crime Profiles ⟶

2

Chapter Two:

Evidence-Driven Safety Practice

Urban Safety Reference Group: Shared Learning at the Centre of Innovative Practice

The USRG has published reports that profile a significant recent history of municipal safety initiatives, and of crime trends and statistics in our cities. The USRG has provided a platform for practitioners, sharing innovations and good practices, successes and failures along the way. Any fear that the USRG would be a 'talk shop' was quickly dispelled as SACN produced and disseminated publications and reports, both capturing and influencing the recent history of municipal safety strategies, policies and initiatives and offering practitioners the opportunity to engage with one another as partners in innovation and evidence led practice.

Key partners of the USRG:

- The **Department of Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs (COGTA),** whose national mandate is for an efficient and effective cooperative governance system that enables resilient, safe, sustainable, prosperous, cohesive, connected and climate-smart communities. As such, COGTA is closely involved with matters of local government, and supports improved performance, transversal action, the collection and verification of data and the submission of Integrated Development Plans, as well as access to grants for specific programmes, through the Integrated Urban Development Framework (IUDF).

- The **Civilian Secretariat for Police Service (CSPS)** whose mandate is for a transformed and accountable Police Service that reflects the democratic values and principles of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa includes advisory functions on various matters, including, but not limited to, departmental policy and strategy, legislation, communication, community mobilisation on crime prevention, the Integrated Justice System. As the institution responsible for crime and violence prevention policy, the CSPS maintains a close relationship with local government.

- The **South African Local Government Association (SALGA)** represents, promotes and protects the interests of local governments, in representing the interests of local government within the system of government as a whole and supporting its members to fulfil their developmental obligations.

The participation of these national partners offers benefits to them as well as to the safety practitioners and the municipalities involved. Lillian Mashele of the CSPS comments that everyone in government knows in theory that partnership is essential to implementation of policy, but it seems to struggle to bring people together, and to sustain collaborative work, yet the USRG has achieved that, and there are important lessons to be learned from this. ***'Safety can only be achieved at the most localised of spaces in communities – we at national can only articulate policy, we are totally reliant on local government to implement. That's where the policy must have an impact'.*** Lillian acknowledges that the USRG has improved the CSPS's ability to make policy, because of exposure to the realities of contexts, constraints and resources at local level. ***'It's no good making policy that can't be implemented'*** she says, ***'and then everyone blames everyone else, and nothing changes'.*** She continues, saying that when consultation and sharing of local knowledge is inadequate, policy sets people up to fail.

Lillian believes that the value of the USRG is partially in its 'no blame' culture, where there is a greater investment in doing things better and smarter, than in finding a culprit to blame for what has not happened or worked. She values the USRG and the relationships she has forged there. ***'Sometimes being in national government is very isolating'*** she says, echoing the loneliness expressed by other participants, although many of them speaking about the loneliness of being in any tier of government.

Ugeshni Naidoo, representing SALGA, also acknowledges the value of the USRG. Ugeshni worked in local government in safety, before joining SALGA, and has direct experience of being a 'lonely safety practitioner'. She loves her role at SALGA and her participation in the USRG. ***'I love learning new things; when I can't make something work, I'll always look for alternatives. The learning approach of the USRG is so refreshing, there's no judgement, everyone is there to share and to learn together. It's what we need in government'.***

Since 2014, the USRG has been a substantial voice for local safety. Siphelele Ngobese, the coordinator of the USRG, has played a key role in guiding this, the only platform in the region dealing with issues of urban safety, by prioritising evidence, translating evidence to action, and embedding insights into practice.

The primary vehicle for exchange has been regular quarterly meetings of members and periodic topical publications as well as smaller, thematic products designed to support application. The USRG conducts regular updates on crime stats, profiling exemplary practices in cities for learning and adaptation, influencing other cities, normalising city-driven evidence collection. This resulted in the publication of biennial **State of Urban Safety in South Africa Reports (supplemented with State of Crime and Safety Reports which feature just the crime stats update, and are issued every alternate year).** In these reports national crime statistics are disaggregated to city and area level and analysed to feed into practise-based learning and recommendations. Working with the Institute for Security Studies (ISS) Africa, the USRG came to overlay population data, municipal boundaries and a range of urbanization, socio-economic and service-delivery related factors over the crime statistics, which dramatically changes not just the analytical perspective on urban safety but what the conversation about what the safety response should be. It has also helped city practitioners dig deeper into causal factors of crime and violence.

Another important feature of the USRG is that learning amongst practitioners is documented along the way, ensuring that experience captured through contributions of members provides input to a permanent record of practitioner-driven thinking and development. USRG publications reflect the collective voice rather than an individualised voice, representing the learnings from sharing practices, while in a separate stream, individual case studies capture exceptional work of specific cities.

City safety practitioners say that they use the reports to back up their strategies, their focal points and in their advocacy messages to their political principals and other colleagues. This speaks to tensions that may arise between politicians and practitioners and between security interventions and safety approaches in motivating evidence led strategies or change in institutions and systems. This has been highly visible since 2016, with instability and a breakdown of capacity and service delivery in local government. The SACN **Practice Guide on Political-Administrative Collaboration, published in 2024**, offers practical mechanisms for productive administrative / political relations, to begin to untangle this traditionally stilted interaction. In changing the perceptions and knowledge of individual practitioners, by providing them with evidence, advocates for an evidence-driven safety approach can support them to influence a different way of doing things; using knowledge for advocacy within their cities.

Important among publications of the USRG are **Urban Safety Policy Briefs** on topical issues relevant to cities. These are intended to research and synthesise the state of current knowledge and evidence on specific methods or potential tools, for reference by a policy and planning audience. Examples include the relationship between urban safety and public space, local government and substance abuse, the role of closed circuit television (CCTV) in violence and crime prevention practice, the case for safety audits for community safety at city level, and the potential of the Extended Public Works Programme (EPWP) to promote community safety.

The USRG has provided fertile ground for individual practitioners, perhaps isolated in their own environments, to find and forge partnerships with others in the same position in other cities. The network has encouraged independent thinking, while simultaneously promoting collaboration and partnership. Practitioners have learned from one another, have found confidence in the affirmation of other practitioners, and in their adaptation and replication of what has worked in one site, in another.

During the last 10 years the USRG has worked closely with a strong cohort of practitioners equipped with knowledge and tools that represent revolutionary changes in thinking. The state of safety practice is significantly more informed and insightful, and better placed to deal with the complex challenges of urban safety. This does not always result in the implementation of evidence-driven, transversal safety practice, but it is a critical step on the journey to achieving this.

Obviously, not all interventions are successful. In some cases, says Thomas Hellmann, GIZ-VCP, this is about local political instability, and local capacity and willingness to adopt new ways of doing things. In the case of Nelson Mandela Bay Metro, for instance, despite many attempts and interventions, the metro is now seen as the most dangerous place in South Africa, with crime and violence at unprecedented highs. A secondment from the GIZ-VCP office for two years delivered close relationships with urban planners and others, all the way to the Chief Operating Officer (COO). The metro is a member of the USRG, and the safety representative is committed and has participated in a number of interventions, including a safety audit, capacity enhancement for community safety and GBV prevention, and there has been significant investment in Safety through Urban Upgrading from KfW Development Bank, the German investment partner, although eventually some of these funds were withheld. Thomas says that as a development agency there has to be a balance between continuing to try and make a difference, and giving up because the environment is too tough.

During a recent safety intervention undertaken for Njoli Square, there was an intention to do a night time safety audit for women, with women, yet police advised strongly against it, saying they could not protect those who would capture data there at night, because it is too dangerous. While in this instance it was possible to engage participants and ask for their perceptions about using the space at night, this alternative does not necessarily deliver the same granular data that was sought. The value of capturing data onsite, in the moment, is significant, and the fact that it is not possible, is a finding in itself.

The GIZ-VCP was pleased to support the introduction of the **Masifunde Learner Development on the Changemaker peer-to-peer programme** in NMBM, where it is now thriving in 50 schools, offering hope for the leaders of the future.

Shared Learning from COVID 19 in the USRG; a meeting hosted by Nomusa Shembe in eThekwini offered exposure to member practitioners, all of whom could learn from it and explore ways to include the principles in their own work with homelessness.

The COVID-19 pandemic worsened trust between the police and communities, as there were reported incidents of police brutality and unfairness, which also led to under-reporting.

The eThekwini Municipality is to be praised for having one of the most comprehensive and compassionate responses to the homeless during the hard COVID-19 lockdown, which included having the foresight to implement a successful withdrawal programme. eThekwini Safer Cities demonstrated extraordinary flexibility, establishing 12 emergency shelters to accommodate 2000 homeless people, and managed these shelters in compliance with COVID-19 regulations. Through this programme, 340 people were vaccinated for COVID-19, more than 450 reunited with their families, 6 admitted into Retirement Homes, psychological services became available at 3 shelters and a social worker and Safer Cities field administration outreach programme engaged homeless people on the streets. The programme continues; the municipality recognised that what had started as a response to COVID-19 offered important evidence of the value of harm reduction services and had the potential to decrease homelessness drastically on a sustainable basis.

This response is an example of the value of peer exchange practitioners express gratitude for such engagements. Being a safety practitioner in a city where there is high crime and low resources can be a lonely and often thankless task.

Evidence and Budgeting

Safety practitioners have understood the links between transversal municipal mandates and safety outcomes; and although its often a slow and difficult task, have managed to bring a range of stakeholders into the development and implementation of transversal projects. Budgets remain severe constraints – no matter the shared belief in the need for partnerships and systemic interventions, budgets remain in silos.

> As seasoned practitioner Nomusa Shembe says, ***'there's no actual budget for safety programmes that involve an inclusive range of municipal departments. Officials might understand why it makes sense for us to all work together at a particular site, to improve lighting, waste management, access pathways and the management of bushes – or toilets. But If any one of those departments says they do not have funds, there's nothing we can do about it – we can't insist, and we do not have to money ourselves to cover their contribution'.***

This is a frustrating barrier for practitioners who have achieved the advocacy and got the right people into the room, and the issue of resourcing collaboration within the municipality is important if transversal practice is to be embedded in the cities. Economist **Carmen Abdoll** has conducted **research in partnership with the Violence Prevention Forum (VPF)** into the resourcing models for prevention work and says practitioners 'should learn the language of Treasury' to secure funds that are not available through the normal budgeting channels. The Integrated Urban Development Framework (IUDF) aims to enable an integrated budget management process aligned to planning and reporting, to improve decision-making, increase efficiency, enable better collaboration, increase visibility and accountability, ensure better forecasting, and comply with regulatory requirements. COGTA's vision through such policy is a functional and developmental local government system that delivers on its Constitutional and legislative mandates within a system of cooperative governance.

Members of the USRG recognise that it takes a long time to change entrenched beliefs and behaviours, and they demonstrate extraordinary resilience in building an evidence base and advocating for transversal, systemic safety practice. There are signs that cities take this work more and more seriously; and hope that evidence will become a key factor in decision making in the future.

Safety or Security?

Indicators and Data Sets

The USRG has not yet cast its lens with weight on law enforcement, largely because, while it is an essential element of a safer city, law enforcement officers rarely participate in safety interventions. Matt Skade, who has been active in the USRG in various capacities and from different vantages over the years, comments that other than participating in the local Community Police Forum, there are considerably less opportunities for collaboration with law enforcement than with municipal safety practitioners. The impact that trust in the police, and the consistency and quality of policing at local level has on local safety, is however undeniable.

Public safety offices in our cities have generally evolved from policing backgrounds, with many officials with many officials formerly being traffic officers, national police officers or private security. For many of them, law enforcement is the 'real work' of crime regulation and reduction, while city safety is about the 'soft' or social issues.

There have long been debates on the stand-alone nature of policing in South Africa, and pushback from the SAPS about how they alone cannot 'solve' or 'reduce' or 'manage' crime. When crime statistics are published, they are often used as a weapon against the police, as though they are a direct reflection of police performance. When the numbers go up, it is claimed that it is because police performance has deteriorated, although when they go down, there is a clamour of stakeholders to claim success. When there is a downward trend in sexual and violent crimes SAPS says it shows they are doing a better job, while an upward trend means they are more accessible, thus more women are reporting. Metro police services cooperate with SAPS to varying extents; in some metros the relationship is close and cooperative, in others it is less so.

Distinguishing **Safety** *from* **Security**

ROLE

'Prevent, combat and investigate crime, maintain public order, protect and secure the inhabitants of the Republic and their property, uphold and enforce the law'.

First responder, victim support, investigation, arrest, prepare for prosecution, implement national policies, justice, public order, crime prevention, communication.

ROLE

The objects of local government are:

a. Provide democratic and accountable government for local communities;

b. Ensure the provision of services to communities in a sustainable manner;

c. Promote social and economic development;

d. Promote a safe and healthy environment; and

e. Encourage the involvement of communities and community organisations in the matters of local government.'

Create conducive environment, maintenance, transport and mobility, services, access to opportunities, design and planning, by-laws, crime prevention, communication.

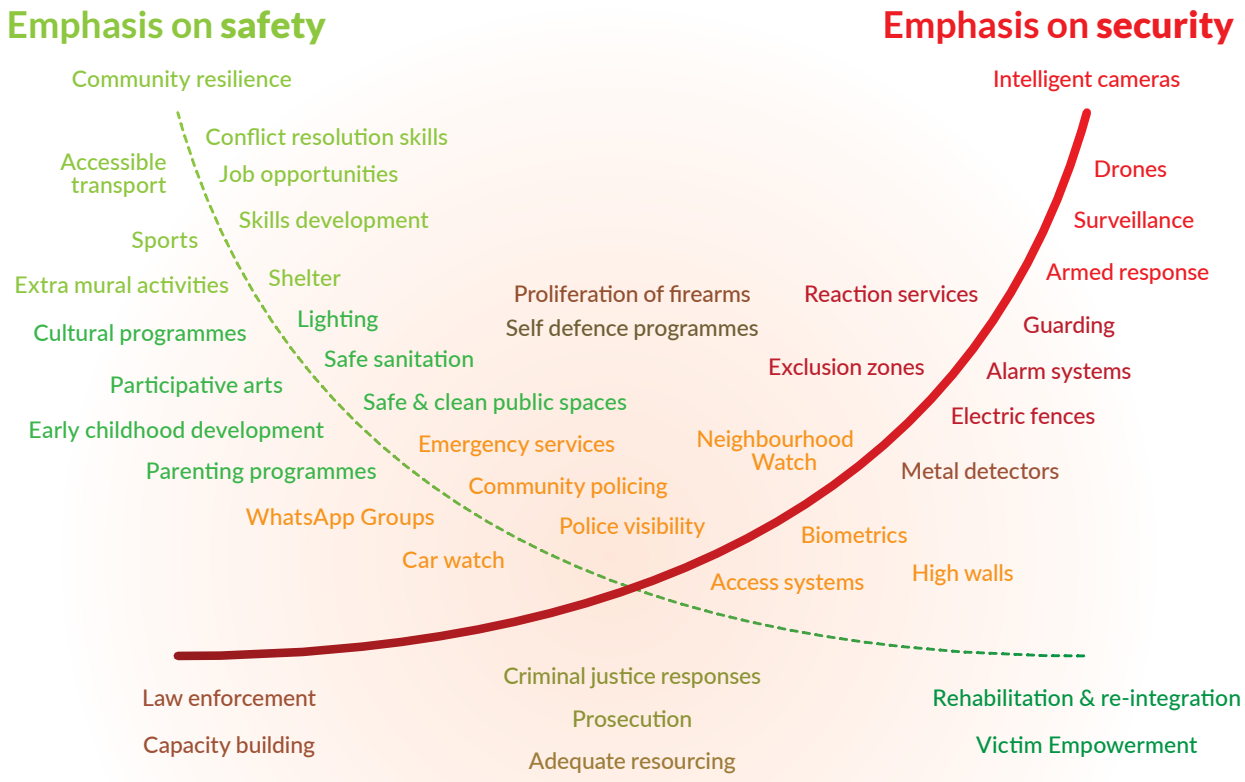
Responsibility for city safety is housed with **Public Safety, Safer Cities, the Office of the Chief of Police** in different forms in different cities, incorporating not only the law enforcement unit, but also other aspects of urban safety and security.

These offices are typically in charge of city-wide safety strategies and plans, on the basis that they should be able to leverage capacity and resources from other local government departments according to specific and related mandates, but this is rarely the case.

By-law enforcement is an important piece of city safety. In the City of Joburg for instance, a multi-agency law enforcement task team comprises environmental health, planning, building control, Emergency Management Services (EMS), Johannesburg Metro Police Department (JMPD), and other relevant departments. Nazira Cachalia comments: ***'It brings about an understanding of the dependencies when dealing with safety issues, and reinforces what we as practitioners have learned, that if you're going to work just as one department, you can't resolve that problem. Working together has a positive impact on all these directorates and officials'.***

Another important function of these offices is to establish and sustain collaborative partnerships with external stakeholders, both within the other tiers of government and with civil society partners who bring useful knowledge, skill and experience to crime and violence prevention, and to safety interventions.

There is also a clear divide in the way that these two disciplines measure safety; for the first, crime statistics and trends are the only credible scientific source and are used to plan targeted policing interventions as well as for longer term strategies. For those who work in cross-cutting prevention and safety, a more subtle and systemic set of indicators, based on perceptions of safety, wellbeing, freedom of movement of community members, access to opportunities and use of public spaces. Until these two approaches are interwoven, there is a threat that 'hard' and often technology-based strategies will take preference over those that are responsive to lived experience of city users.



Crime statistics, while important, cannot provide the whole picture, they do not for instance record what people (in particular women) *do not* do because they fear crime, so they avoid places they perceive to be dangerous. Crime statistics do not capture the impact of poor or corrupt policing on people who are too fearful to report and they do not provide insights into the way in which improved safety might elevate the role of women who, freed from the burden of anxiety about their own vulnerability, of the vulnerability of their children, relatives with disabilities or who are old and frail, would be able to access opportunities that are currently not available to them.

Those focused on crime and crime statistics aim for less crime and **violence**, whereas for those focused on prevention, the aim is for more vibrancy, community participation in leisure, culture, sports and arts activity and activism, as well as a more inclusive economy. Linking these outcomes to safety offers a motivating vision to practitioners and communities alike. Measuring both crime and these proxies, offers the opportunity to triangulate and to better understand where and why perceptions of safety and incidents of crime and violence do or do not align.

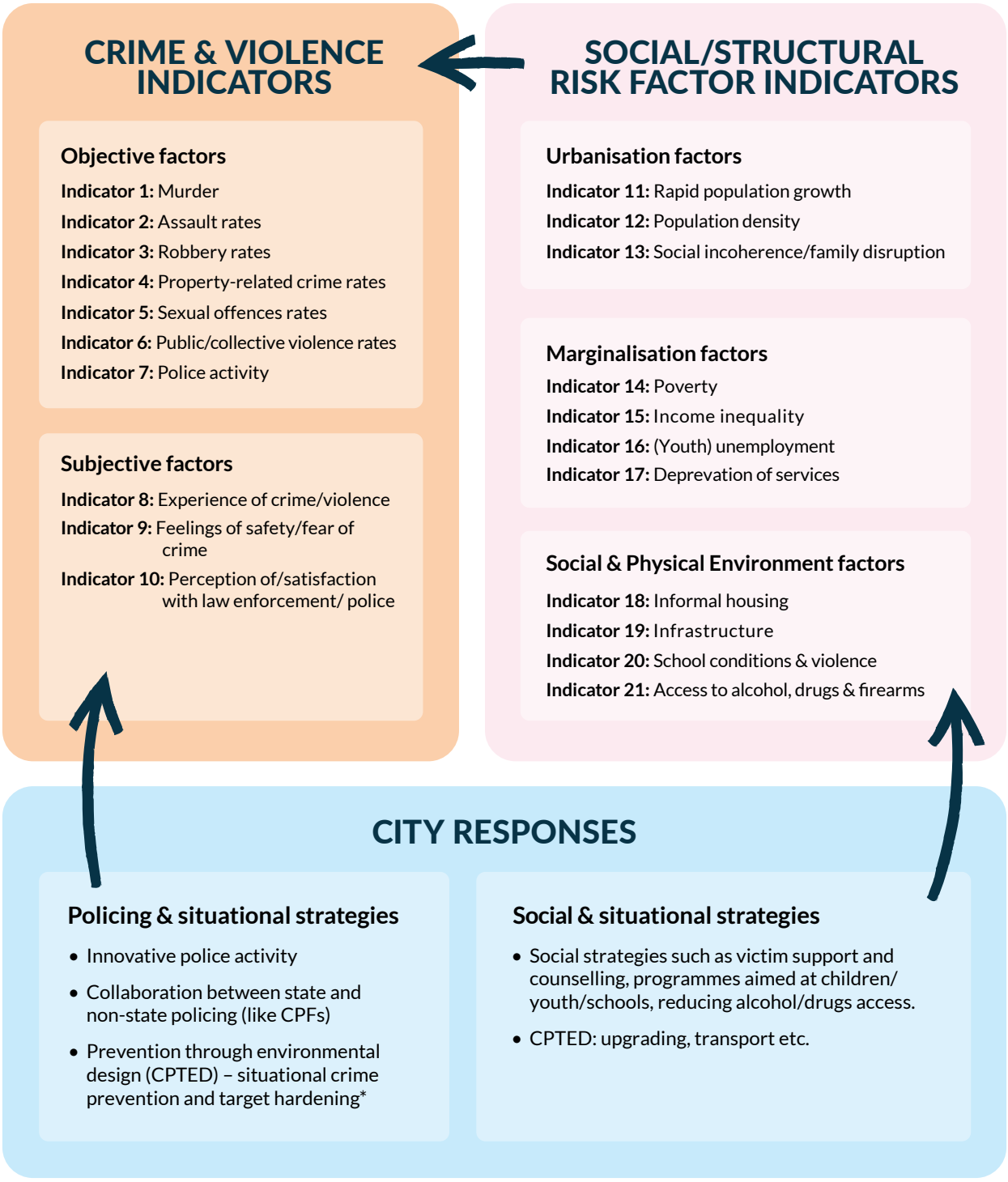
Evidence and Private Security

The **private security industry turns over more than R45 billion annually and has grown 43% in the last decade.** Lack of trust in the police is often cited as a contributing factor to the rapid growth of private security, while the private security industry is not held accountable for increases in crime in the same way as are either cities or the South African Police Service (SAPS). As non-governmental service providers private security can also choose which areas and which services to provide, while government cannot, and must serve the places that are least safe.

The rapid growth of CCTV and other surveillance and access control systems in South Africa also reflects both the push towards data-driven intervention and the power of marketing. The private security industry thrives in South Africa, and has significant resources to allocate to marketing securitisation products. In SACN's **Urban Safety Brief 1 of 2022,** it was concluded that there is insufficient evidence to demonstrate that surveillance systems deliver a return on spend comparable to investment in community safety interventions and that municipalities should apply the same principles of evidence-led decision making to these technologies as they require for other safety interventions. The burden of maintenance and response systems should also be factored into choices about CCTV, as few if any municipalities can afford enough dedicated and trained officials to be able to respond at the consistent rate that would make their value optimal. There is also no evidence that the loss of privacy that comes with ubiquitous surveillance is justified, yet many cities are partnering with private security to provide these systems, often with full support of community members.

Safety Indicators

Because crime statistics do not accurately capture the status of city safety in a way that informs strategy and practical responses, planning and maintenance, the USRG undertook to develop indicators that relate to drivers of urban unsafety. It was agreed that these should be situated in three categories significant to urbanisation, marginalisation and the state of the social and physical environment. The intention is that data should be localised to small areas or neighbourhoods of the city, to be able to triangulate with other data, such as high rate of crime in a particular place, and provide comparable analysis across the city.



* The measure of strengthing the security by increasing the required effort to commit crimes to or at an object.

Measuring safety through auditing tools and processes

Several cities have undertaken safety audits over the past decade. Methodologies vary from place to place, but the principles remain consistent. A safety audit gathers quantitative and qualitative data from comprehensively diverse sources. These include demographic data, crime statistics, social and infrastructural information, academic research, public surveys and community engagements. These diverse sources combine to provide a systemic understanding of crime, violence, hotspots, safer spaces, current theories and good practices, to inform a city or community strategy. In the city of Tshwane, **Charmaine Sutil, a safety practitioner in the office of the Chief of Metro Police, undertook a safety audit** across the whole city. Making innovative use of limited resources, leveraging the Integrated Development Plan (IDP) and Public Employment Programme (PEP) Units among others, she integrated the City's public employment objectives with the need to gather local lived experience data, while improving knowledge and practice so that community members are better equipped to keep themselves safe. This project saw a cohort of unemployed people who were registered with the PEP capacitated to conduct a comprehensive city-wide safety audit in Tshwane, generating extensive data on perceptions and experiences of safety in the city. The project also leveraged the opportunity of the interface between the trained auditors and the community, by equipping them as safety ambassadors, offering information and insight into community safety to the respondents who they interviewed.

Photo by Rachel Martin on Unsplash

GBV and Data

Crime statistics on GBV and crimes where women are victims of opportunistic crime and violence for instance, are known to be significantly under-reported. It is also probable that women avoid danger wherever they can, and so places that are dangerous to them may not appear to be so from the statistics. It is also reported that other crimes, for instance muggings, thefts and even robberies, are under-reported where the victims are uninsured, since there is a perception that nothing will come of such a report.

Harsha Dayal, Director of Research and Knowledge Management at the Department of Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation (DPME), describes the way that the GBVF National Strategic Plan uses what she calls a 'synthesis methodology' for the integrated GBVF monitoring dashboard. This approach uses multiple sources of evidence, collaboration, and a pluralism approach to deliver a synthesis of what is relevant.

Diverse Data Sources, including data not usually available in policy development, including:

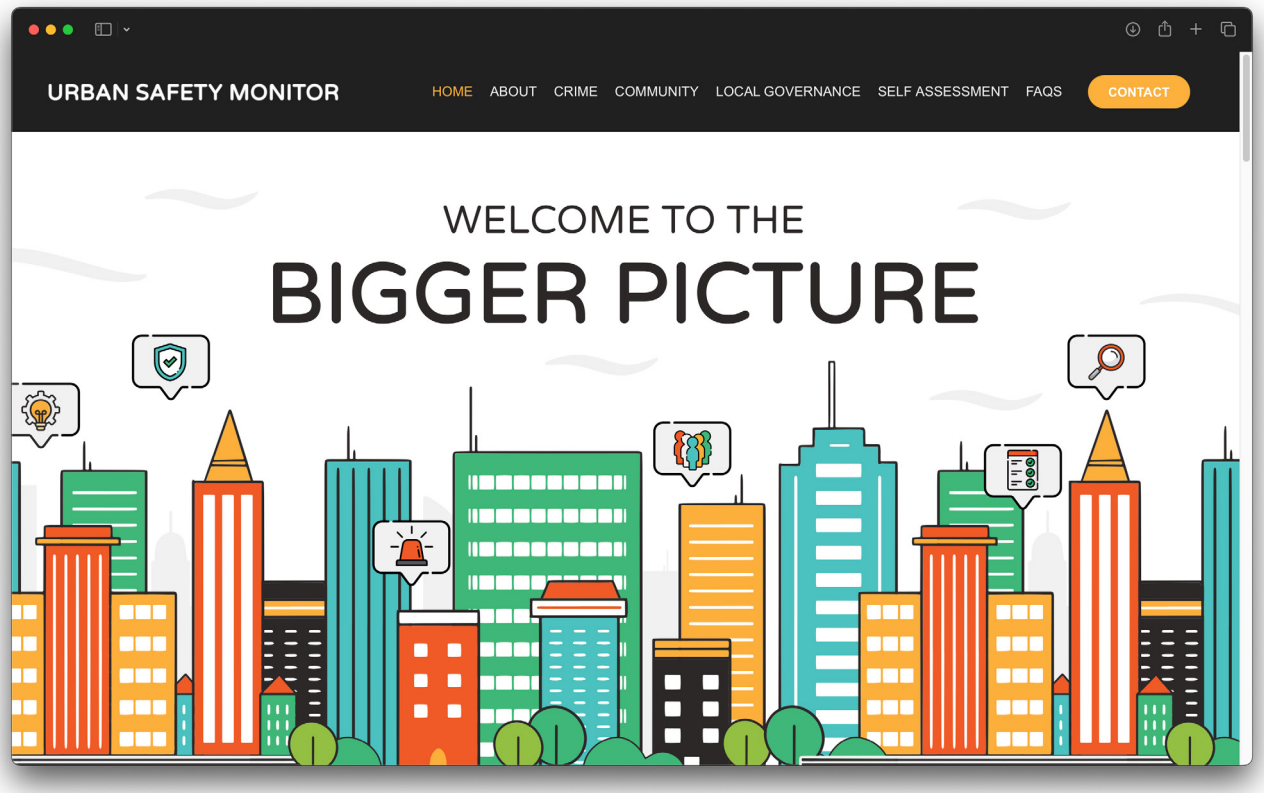
Scientific Data
Emerging from primary data collection, and not necessarily collected by government, for instance, Medical Research Council reviews.

Spatial Data
Municipal spatial data which can be analysed at neighbourhood, district or regional level for instance mapping where services are available, and were the incidence of GBV reports are highest.

Social Media
X/Twitter, TikTok, YouTube, Instagram, where citizens speak about their experiences and views.

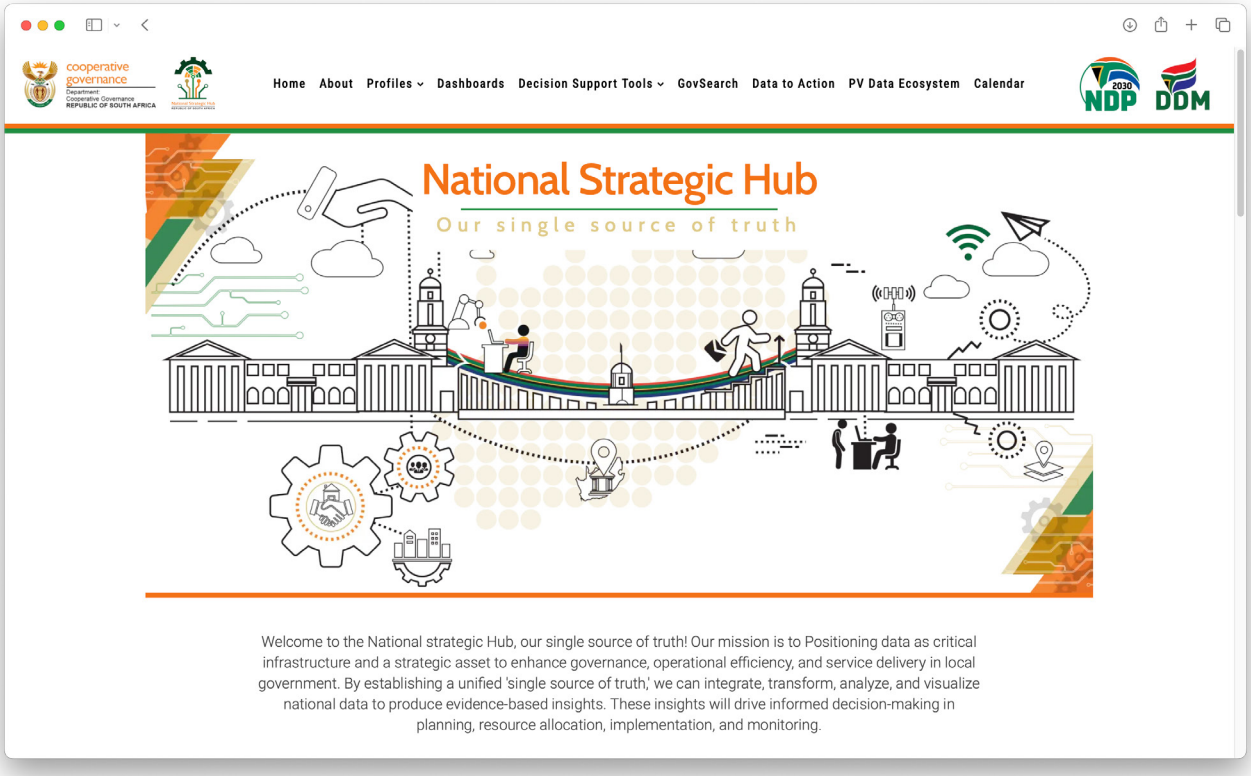
Local Lived Experience
Surveys and direct engagement to understand attitudes, beliefs, behaviours and experiences that are not reflected by administrative data.

Administrative Data
Collected by government relating to its services and outcomes.



Urban Safety Monitor (USM)

In 2023 the USRG and other South African partners played key roles in the development of the **UN Habitat-led USM project** to advocate for evidence-driven safety practice. This tool offers a widely inclusive range of indicators for safety, includes a self-assessment tool to support individual practitioners to reflect on the status of their own city's knowledge journey, and to then diagnose opportunities to support strengthened local knowledge systems to enable improved safety practice. The USM is an innovation that begins to consider behaviour change elements to the work of shifting data and knowledge practice in municipalities: acknowledging the behavioural barriers to evidence-driven practice: the intimidation of technology, the limited capacity, the overwhelm of technical terms and large numbers of unfamiliar indicators.



National Strategic Hub

Dr Sandile Mbatha, National Chief Data Strategist, COGTA, has moved on to COGTA following his development of the **eThekwini Data Dashboard,** where he recently launched the **National Strategic Hub for Data,** leveraging his comprehensive knowledge of both data availability and data challenges at local government level to open new approaches and possibilities for local government planning, budgeting and reporting, aligned to the IUDF. It may take some time for local governments to fully benefit from the available data, but the hub has full political support, as it clearly represents a sea change in the way that data is used at local level. Dr Mbatha is now exploring a specific safety sector knowledge hub that can leverage the work of the USRG and the lessons learned about operationalising evidence driven practice, the advocacy of the USM and take more steps towards realising and institutionalising this approach in municipal institutions across the country. Watch this space!

3

Chapter Three:

Working Together

Inter-Governmental Cooperation

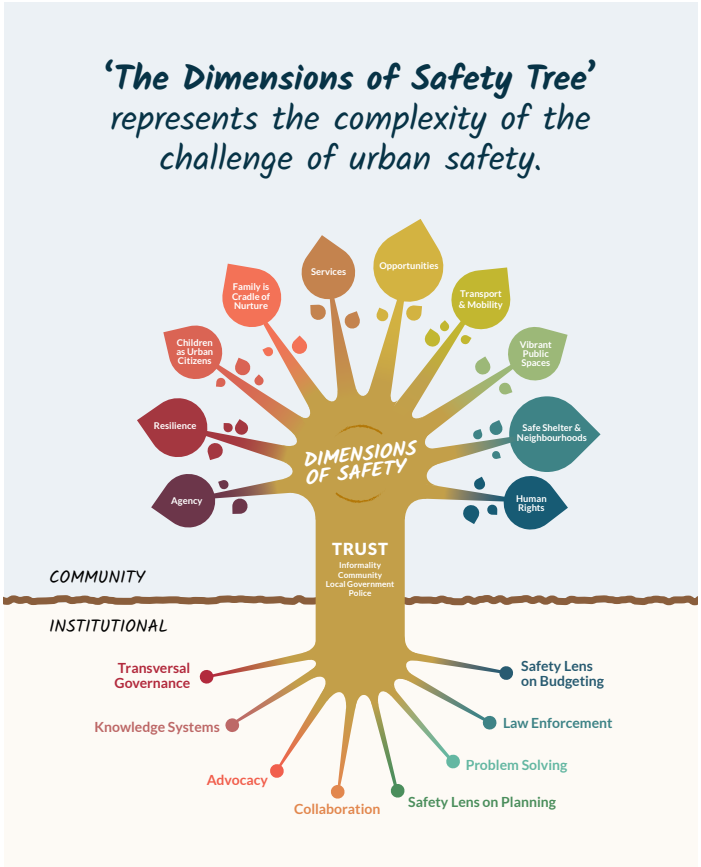
Whole of Government Approach

The Integrated Crime and Violence Prevention Strategy adopted in 2022 (ICVPS) advocates for a 'whole of government and society approach' in reducing crime and preventing violence. Lillian believes this policy represents an opportunity to deliver against local safety imperatives, but only if ***'...resources can be pulled together. We do not need more policy than this, we need to work as a collective, and that's hard for government. We need a sense of urgency, not to worry about who owns what policy, we must get up in the morning and be determined to implement, to make it happen, together'.***

> The ICVPS gives expression to the vision of safe communities, articulated in the National Development Plan 2030; ***'where people are and feel safe, at home, school, work and their communities and where women feel free to walk in streets, travel on public transport, access opportunities, and where children are safe on the way to and from and at school and can play outside freely'.***

The dimensions that make up this systemic strategy are:

- An effective criminal justice system;
- Early interventions in preventing crime;
- Victim support interventions;
- Effective and integrated service delivery;
- Safety through environmental design; and
- Active public and community participation.



The Dimensions of Safety model, also known as the Tree of Collective Knowledge, developed through four violence prevention programmes implemented by the German Development Cooperation and repeatedly updated by one of the programmes, the GIZ-VCP, has been used to create and expand an understanding of the role of multiple stakeholders in local safety. It demonstrates that safety is the complex interplay of a number of outcomes, which are owned by various government role-players, from Law Enforcement to Local Government to Knowledge Systems.

The trunk of the tree is the interface between government (local and the police) and community.

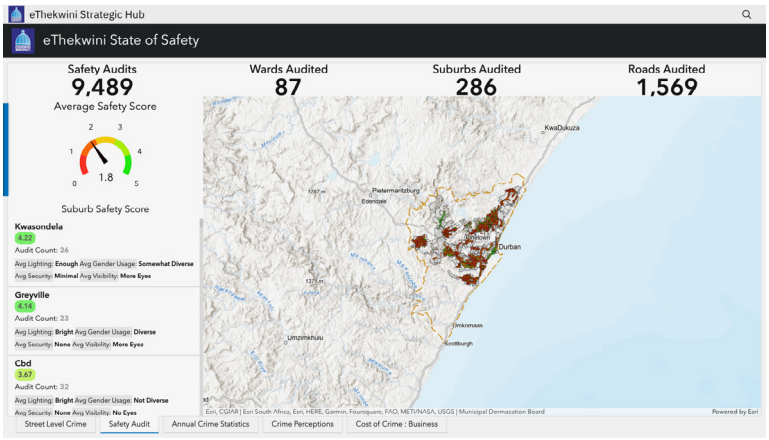
Grounding and rooting the tree, are the institutional arrangements that give life to institutions striving to deliver the outcomes in the canopy of the tree.

The branches and **canopy of the tree** represents the social factors in the community which together represent safety.

Transversal City Safety Mandates

Public safety offices vary in their positioning in municipalities. Depending on where safety is positioned in the hierarchy of the city, and the seniority of the official who leads it, safety can be more or less a of transversal priority across the city. In theory, given the broad sweep of activities that impact safety, safety requires collaborative leadership throughout the city, but this is often difficult to implement, unless the departments within the city incorporate safety indicators and budgets into their plans.

Cities contribute to each of these dimensions, in a range of ways. For instance, while they do not necessarily deliver services within the criminal justice system, they offer access to it. Cities make direct contributions through their municipal mandates for early intervention, service delivery, environmental design of public spaces and transport systems, and of course their close relationships with communities. Local government arguably engages more directly with people to whom it delivers services than does any other tier. Local government officials also live in the communities that they serve and therefore live with the successes and failures of their services on a daily basis.



During a three-year intervention aimed at delivering women's safety through transversal municipal responses to crowd-sourced local lived experience data, the eThekwini municipality was empowered to respond according to its transversal mandates to data gathered by women on the Safetipin App in specific communities, based on their experiences of traversing the city for work, to access services or for social and leisure purposes. Women identify places that are unsafe and relate the danger to different environmental characteristics: lighting, visibility, access etc. The city is alerted to targeted problems and the intention is that it responds as a priority to those issues, as well as learning from the characteristics, how to design, manage and maintain space to promote women's safety. eThekwini Municipality partnered with Safetipin, Soul City and Fixed Africa to develop the Safe Women, Safer Cities Guidebook, which details the relationship of each and every municipal mandate to safety. It demonstrates that it is not possible for any single directorate or event cluster to deliver safety - all municipal directorates have collective and integrated roles to play. It also demonstrates that safety is crucial to the effective delivery of all municipal services and mandates: no directorate can claim to be fulfilling its mandate if its services are undermined by crime, violence, vandalism, mitigated access, unsafety. Once a safety lens is cast on municipal and other mandates, it becomes clear that crime and violence prevention is not an extra or unfunded burden for municipalities, but is instead logically central to their work and to the work of many if not all their departments.

Addressing crime and violence has direct benefits for the city as a whole, too. Crime and violence has negative impacts, on a macro level in terms of reputation and ability to attract investment and people, but also on a micro level, where opportunistic crime and violence make delivery of services more difficult and expensive. This should provide added motivation and justification, although not necessarily added resources, for municipalities to address issues of unsafety.

Protection of Public Infrastructure

Systemic safety work is itself hampered by the cost of crime and vandalism to the city. Whereas a city may have plans to take its integrated safety work forwards, it often takes second place to the need to replace or repair existing infrastructure or repeat work that has been undone by criminality since implementation.

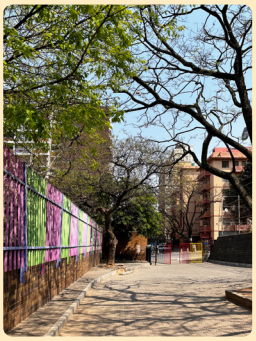
This demonstrates the need for planning and design to take into account risks of crime, and for metro police to work closely public safety teams, to prioritise the protection of public spaces and infrastructure, once activated. For most of the last ten years, this problem has been exacerbated by periods of loadshedding, during which these types of crimes have surged. This also demonstrates the most basic of crime prevention principles – that light and visibility are essential to safety. All member municipalities reported increased crime and vandalism during black outs, with significant additional impact on their budgets. Reliance on power to protect infrastructure includes reliance on mobile signals, cameras, and lighting. When any or all of these become unreliable, opportunistic crime abounds.

How Municipalities Become Better Partners

Understanding the need for transversality and collaboration takes us only to the gateway of practice. While community consultation is required by law, it is easily misunderstood. Local government is more often than not reluctant to expose vulnerabilities such as lack of resources or capacity to communities and typically tries to contain consultation to check the box, but not to establish a working collaboration. **SACN's Community Engagement Guide** explores the opportunities inherent in undertaking sustained consultation and collaboration, emphasising that effective collaboration requires a shared vision of what will be achieved and negotiated and agreed terms of engagement, where each partner is expected to offer their best and to be useful.

Learning from Successful Relationships: eKhaya Park

Community led interventions are often not highly valued by cities, who do not have a mechanism to place a value on the cost of partnering with communities when they seek to do so. Bafikile Mkhize, coordinator of Hillbrow eKhaya Improvement District, has however managed to forge a long term partnership with the Johannesburg Development Agency and Joburg Parks and Zoo, and they have undertaken numerous projects together. The latest collaboration has been the transformation of what was previously a rundown and unsafe place, as a park for women and girls in the troubled Hillbrow area. Bafikile leverages her relationships with both the city and the community, to assist in a constant effort to upgrade safety in the area and to make inhabitants safer. The city values her knowledge and sees her as providing an opportunity to reduce the cost of crime and violence in the area.



Many community members **do not differentiate between** the tiers or sectors of government and they tend to hold local government accountable for their quality of life, including their experience and perceptions of how safe or unsafe they are. This places a burden on local government officials to be the first line of intervention when things go wrong. The relationship between officials and communities is often fraught and difficult to manage. Local government officials need to be skilful convenors, facilitators and negotiators – and must understand and be able to diagnose the cross cutting issues that impact communities.

There is **generalised low trust in law enforcement** – with abiding perceptions that the police (both national and at metro level) as well as some municipal officials, are responsible for reducing crime and are either corrupt, disinterested and/or incompetent. This makes the work of officers and officials who have integrity harder and more unpleasant. They are often faced with distrust and aggression, low expectations and disrespect from community members who assume that they will not deliver or that poor service delivery, high crime rates and chaotic environments are their **fault.**

Municipalities are not structured or set up to be good partners, either internally or externally. **Chandré Gould (ISS and VPF)** expanded on why it is often so difficult: ***'We have a deficit of trust in South Africa'*** she said ***'and very often, people do not want to invest the time on forming trusting relationships'*****,** and instead want to ***'get on with the action'.***

Violence Prevention Community Dialogue

An example that effectively demonstrates this is the experience in Hoekwil/Touwsranten where a municipal proposal to provide toilets for inhabitants in an informal settlement was initially abandoned because a community member threatened to 'burn them down' if they were not what was wanted. Following the establishment of a community dialogue and formation of trusted relationships, the municipality undertook not to allow the temporary toilets to become permanent, communities undertook not to burn them, and together they worked on providing the toilets.

The threat of violence and burning of infrastructure has a relatively long history in South Africa and is often received without question. It offers a reflection of low expectations and lack of trust, in which community members expect that the municipality will not deliver what they need, and the municipality, lacking the necessary skills to engage constructively, will back away rather than trying to find a compromise that works.

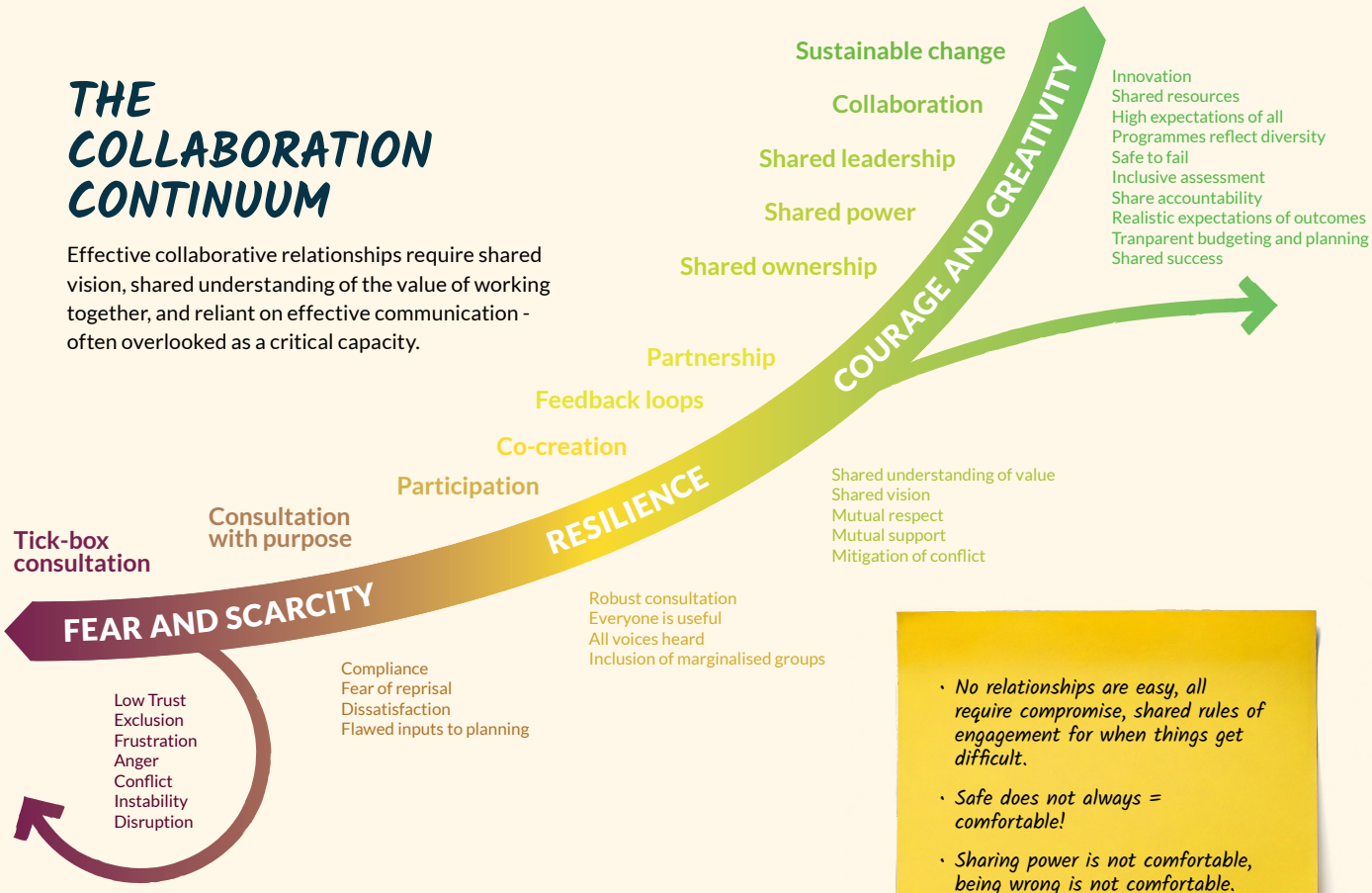
The Community Dialogue method underpins the VPF, first convened by ISS Africa in 2015 to bridge the gap between research, policy and practice and to enable practical use of evidence of what works to prevent violence. The VPF methodology promotes open communication, empathy, active listening and deep democracy, promoting and enabling skills that make it possible for stakeholders from different sectors to engage without hierarchical barriers. VPF programmes now reach national and provincial governments, schools and international networks, and it is now expanding its potential impact into the provinces, government departments, schools and rural communities.

Chandré says that partnership is about 'deep democracy' in which minority voices are as valued as those of the majority, and it requires very specific facilitation skills. If there is an intention to sustain partnership, everyone must be clear about the objectives and everyone must be safe to express themselves and to change their minds about things, if necessary. Facilitation requires the skill to navigate different points of view, however strongly they are felt or held. Chandré differentiates between convening and facilitating saying the a convenor of a group or collaboration should be someone credible and independent, who can bring people together for a purpose; and it must be someone who is capable of straddling different perspectives, sectors and needs.

This approach offers practitioners and communities alike the opportunity to hear and be heard, and to gain confidence through engagement. These are skills that are desperately needed in South Africa, where inter-generational trauma causes division and confusion, and where expectations of one another are often low. As consultation evolves into participation, both government and communities become stronger through their partnership, and this requires both sides to learn to live with discomfort, to push through early stages of relationships and to trust that there is a purpose worth achieving.

THE COLLABORATION CONTINUUM

Effective collaborative relationships require shared vision, shared understanding of the value of working together, and reliant on effective communication - often overlooked as a critical capacity.



- *No relationships are easy, all require compromise, shared rules of engagement for when things get difficult.*
- *Safe does not always = comfortable!*
- *Sharing power is not comfortable, being wrong is not comfortable.*
- *Both are essential to sustainable collaboration.*

Power-Sharing

The Collaboration Continuum proposes that the more courageous partners are about sharing: information, successes, failures, power, resources, the more valuable the outcomes of the collaborative relationship can be. Transparency can be very uncomfortable, particularly where a municipality is unable to deliver against certain community demands, yet it is essential if the city wishes to learn from communities, and if a compromise or shared solution is to be found. Multi-sectoral relationships are always tricky, where expectations and work cultures differ, and capacity is not frequently directly allocated to building truly transformative relationships, resulting in missed opportunities for shared accountability for safety outcomes between municipalities and civil society/community groupings.

Hierarchies Can Be Disempowering

Municipal officials also suffer from imbalances in hierarchy, often making them seem unreliable, as they are either not in a position to forge partnerships or as they are drawn away from partnership commitments by more senior officials and politicians. There is often a need to engage with senior managers and politicians to negotiate the importance of relationships forged by officials, and to agree rules of engagement at all levels in the hierarchy, something that officials can sometimes perhaps not achieve in current power structures. In workshops, officials often say: ***'I wish my supervisor was here, he needs to hear this'*** or ***'I v say this to my manager, she will think I'm being rude'.*** The scarcity mindset in environments where demands by far exceed the ability to respond, often becomes a punitive environment and this makes officials reluctant to question instructions, however uncomfortable or misplaced they believe them to be, while leadership structures assume that their needs are paramount.

Collaboration and Communication

Local government is the primary interface with the citizenry of our country, the frontline of the relationship between government and our people. Local government has a unique opportunity to build collaborative relationships with communities which are collaborative, where local development efforts of the municipality are protected and strengthened through the participation of communities, and likewise, the efforts of communities are leveraged by the municipality. The overwhelming majority of community members are not criminals, do not have criminal intent, and want to have agency in changing the nature of their communities, and improving their lives.

Communication is a neglected function in local government. Communications officers are drawn in to events or projects with very little insight into the history or purpose of what is happening, or an understanding of barriers to success. Those barriers are sometimes a lack of participation or interest, or commitment of stakeholders, but they invariably need more than 'awareness' or 'information' to raise their level of success. Communications should be a part of planning for every intervention. In a recent Round Table at the completion of the GIZ-VCP Municipal Case Studies project, there was a call to action regarding municipal communications, to more embrace the transformative possibilities inherent in purposeful communication.

Social Behaviour Change Communication

Communication has the power to connect people, convey messages and influence attitudes, beliefs and behaviours. Social behaviour change communication is a sub-set of communication which can shape the nature of the relationship, enable shared accountability for safety outcomes. The public health sector provides many examples of behaviour change programmes. Examples in South Africa include HIV Aids, COVID-19 and Tuberculosis, all available on public websites. There is much to be learned from them in the way they focus on desired behaviour and potential solutions, rather than on what not to do. The old idea that 'honesty is the best policy' works at every level of communication and is ultimately probably the biggest tool for collective achievement.

Principles of effective behaviour change messaging

1 Positive messaging

'Pick up your litter, be part of a more beautiful and safe world for us all!' is more likely to prompt positive action than 'Do not be a bad person who does not care about your environment'. People are inspired and feel a feeling of connection with positive messaging and can be alienated by negative messaging.

2 Call to action

A message which has a clear and direct action which can be taken is more likely to influence behaviour - if it is clear to people how they can respond when they feel inspired by the message they are more likely to take the action.

3 Clear

The message should be simple and clear. People are overwhelmed with information and if the action require too much concentration or thought it will be forgotten, lost in the noise of the day.

4 Useful

The action which is prompted should be useful to both the local government and to the audience, and if possible this usefulness should be clear from the message.

5 Relevant

The message must relate to the priorites and interests of the audience, if it is important to the community to feel safe, to have improved mobility, to save money - the call to action should demonstrate a link between this objective and the action which prompted.

6 Accurate

The message must be based on evidence of what actions will have the desired effect.

Principles of inclusion, community consultation and co-design offer creative and innovative solutions, if these mechanisms are sustained and are based on sound relationships.

SACN's **Good Hood Case Studies** offer optimistic good practises, providing insights into the possibilities inherent in such programmes. Just a small sample of these are:

The **Agriculture Initiative** in City of Joburg, to create jobs and provide entrepreneurial opportunity, while enabling households to access nutritious and fresh food grown by someone in their community.

The Langa Bicycle Hub, an opportunity to stimulate a cycling culture that offers new opportunities for transport (a bike bus for safe cycling to work), delivery and business. **Gender Responsive Services** in Knysna's informal settlements, improving women's access to safe sanitation, taking into account risks and fears of inhabitants who previously were too scared to use toilets at night.

Good news stories have a very important part to play, particularly where and when times are tough. They offer hope that things can improve, while at the same time celebrating partnerships, their successes, and exposing good practices that have worked.

Internal communications and communications with external partners are all better with clear boundaries and based on sound principles of having high expectations of one another and how we'd like others to communicate with us. For everyone to be useful, everyone must be allowed to contribute to conversation.

4

Chapter Four:

Area-Based Violence Prevention Intervention

Effective development of cities is dependent on knowing and understanding where city users and inhabitants want and need to be, how they get there and what they want to do when they arrive, and enabling them to achieve these.

Access, visibility and natural oversight are three of the most important principles of environmental design for safety. People will not use spaces for their intended purpose if they feel unsafe – and when the intended users turn away, spaces invariably become less safe, and occupied by opportunists who seek a new place to engage in anti-social activities, which threaten the safety and well-being of the community.

Area-based crime prevention incorporates principles of safety that are logical, 'common sense' and often more about doing the same thing differently than about doing something totally new. Clean and well-managed, uncongested spaces, well-lit access routes, clear, simple and visible directions, comfortable places to rest, that take into account different purposes for different users, in different parts of the space, are all sensible and logical.

Community Spaces

Communities need shared spaces and opportunities to connect and relax. It is possible to transform spaces into inclusive, safe and clean parks that meet the needs of families, peer groups, young and old. The process requires investment in **internal alignment** across city departments to understand different roles and tasks, engagement with **stakeholders**. Parks have proved to be more than green open spaces; they are **dynamic part of neighbourhood's social fabric,** partnership and collective action are essential of any project, park users are not homogeneous group.

The impact of community led interventions is important here, demonstrating again the need for the city to be a good partner, and to consult with depth that reflects the value of the inputs it receives.

The development of area-based or locality specific community safety plans combines community ownership with evidence-based intervention based on exploration of area specific issues. The USRG has consistently supported and refined evidence driven, area-based approaches. The City of Tshwane, inspired and guided by the USRG Safety Audit Policy Brief, worked closely with internal and external stakeholders (Metro police, Local Economic Development (LED), street trader associations, School Governing Bodies (SGBs), Community Policing Forums (CPFs)) to develop a **safety plan for the complex, high crime Central Business District of Hammanskraal,** traversing complex tensions while working in a systemic way to produce a plan that resonates with local context, needs and resources.

The much-documented End Street North Park project supported by GIZ-VCP and converging multi-stakeholder partners in the City of Johannesburg created the space for new collaborations to emerge, not only across City departments but with the community of users, as well as the SACN, SALGA and UN Habitat Global Public Spaces Programme.

Ayanda Roji, Senior Manager: Environmental Education and Research and programme lead from City of Johannesburg, understood the need to dig deep into her relationship with local community members, to understand the local demography, the needs of school children and visitors to the area before embarking on any design. She recognised the needs of people experiencing homelessness, waste collectors, informal traders – all of whom would become the eyes and ears of natural surveillance in the park. A safety audit was conducted alongside community consultation, to better understand the way that the surrounding area functions, with the intention of finding mechanisms for social control by activating the space and supporting the implementation of rules that would protect not only the investment but also the intended beneficiaries of the space.

INDAWO is a gamified tool that enables co-designing safer communities. The game is a partnership product of GIZ-VCP through consultation sessions, testing, development, and workshops with key stakeholders and field experts.

INDAWO learning tool offers immersive learning about planning an integrated area-based approach to violence prevention interventions. Players adopt the roles of different relevant stakeholders, tasked with planning an area- based approach to violence prevention in the simulated informal settlement of INDAWO, while teaching:

- The value and process of planning and implementing area-based approaches that speak to the relevant social, spatial, institutional complexities of a given spatial context.
- Evidence-based approaches for interventions through policy,
- Co-design and integration of different government departments, service providers, key stakeholders, and community members in the decision-making process, with a common goal.
- Components of planning interventions such as social, infrastructure, processes, and budgets that impact feasibility and sustainability.
- How and why there is a need to develop indicators for monitoring and evaluation, as well as to allow for more strategic approaches.
- The crucial undertaking of monitoring and evaluation to measure intended and unintended impacts of the interventions.
- The importance of evidence and the need to continuously practice knowledge management from the early stages of the planning process as an opportunity of learning and contributor to monitoring and evaluation.

BUILDING SAFER NEIGHBOURHOODS TOGETHER

Area-based violence prevention interventions (ABVPI) respond to the risk factors to crime and violence in a particular area, and increase the protective factors that build resilience to these risk factors. It combines social, spatial and institutional approaches and involves meaningful community participation as well as inter-sectoral and multi-stakeholder engagement.

By focusing on lived realities and place-making in a defined spatial context, ABVPI aims to build socially just, inclusive and safe neighbourhoods where all women, men, youth and children can live, work and play, without fear.

Safer neighbourhoods are inclusive to all.

SAFER PLACES: RESILIENT INSTITUTIONS AND NEIGHBOURHOODS TOGETHER
SPRINT

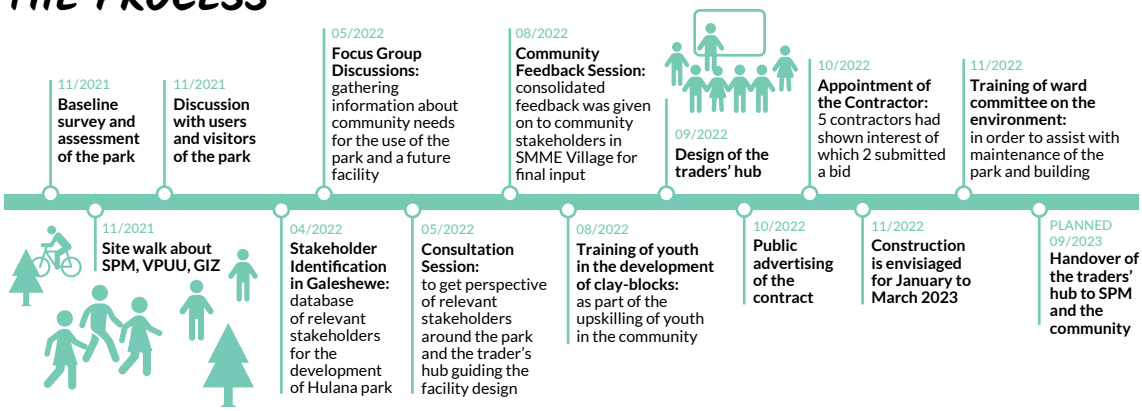
An initiative of the South African-German Development Cooperation:

Implemented by:

The Safer Places, Resilient Institutions and Neighbourhoods Together (SPRINT) programme weaves the principles of area-based interventions and community collaboration into capacity enhancement that was initiated in response to the devastating impact of COVID-19 on many municipalities and communities. Fragmented social cohesion put many at risk of increased criminal and violent behaviour. This approach is creative and inclusive, offering very different sectors an opportunity to participate, be heard in terms of their needs and see their ideas reflected in the proposed solutions.

Safer Places: Resilient Institutions and Neighbourhoods Together (SPRINT), in parternship with the Violence Prevention through Urban Upgrading (VPUU) in **Galeshewe,** demonstrates the complex and inter-woven timeline that is required to insure that **new infrastructure is responsive to local needs** and contexts, as well as the investment in local skills and labour, so that there is local ownership and pride in what is delivered, and an understanding of how it is designed to be safe, and how it can be maintained as safe.

THE PROCESS



The Active Box project was designed to respond to the challenges experienced on a daily basis by women traders in Galeshewe, Sol Plaatjie Municipality (SPM): unsafe routes to and from trading sites, unsafety in the sites themselves, lack of shelter from the elements, lack of toilet facilities, competition for desirable trading sites. It was also intended to contribute to broader integrated development goals and processes in Galeshewe by establishing a safe hub for the women, food gardens for community members, revitalising the Hulana Park and integrating with municipal area-based management of the future Mike Weir Uprising Precinct, activating a vision of non-motorised transport and helping map heritage asserts. The project was supported by a Neighbourhood Development Partnership Grant (NDPG) from Treasury and aligns to the SPM **Urban Network Strategy.**

The project suffered inevitable delays, but in the end, it achieved the shared objectives of the beneficiaries, including for local economic empowerment: ***"the informal traders hub does not only support female entrepreneurship but also contributes to the safety of the whole area. It is very beneficial for our community to place the hub and its elevated viewpoint within the activity route at the Hulana area where many young people are going in and out every day, making sure that the area is safe day and night."*** (Sobuza Mathebula, Local Economic Development, SPM).

Photo by Tlou Manamela on Unsplash

Public Toilets and Women's Safety

The design of public sanitation to respond to the needs of women and girls incorporates a deep understanding of the threats to their safety. They need to be able to tell from the outside if someone is inside, no walls hiding the point of entry, and the entry point for men should be as far as possible from the entry point for women, so they have no reason to be there. Public or shared sanitation for women is an essential element of women's safety, and also of dignity, health and well-being. It should be explicitly designed to cater for the needs of girls and women when they are menstruating and when they are pregnant or with small children. Perhaps as a hangover from colonial days, toilets are often placed out of the way, hidden behind bushes in parks or some distance from the most used parts of schools or public spaces. This only adds to the risks for women and girls. There should be natural surveillance that sees who goes in and who comes out. There should be no tolerance for outdated concepts of privacy or delicacy about the positioning of toilets for women. Properly designed and with good lighting and natural oversight, there should not be a need for women to have to seek a key to use toilets. Advances in technology mean that low flush, grey water systems can now be used, and of course solar power, bringing sanitation in line with climate considerations, while new toilets are harder to vandalise and easier to clean and maintain.

Municipalities struggle to find good management systems for public toilets and complain about vandalism, as well as other criminal behaviours taking place in toilets. Many sports fields that were built with toilets now see illegal drug deals happening in those toilets, with broken windows and stripped of their fittings. Once again, there is a need to build trust and relationships in co-designing the toilets, and to negotiate their use and management with local users. Another proven principle of urban safety is that when people value and feel ownership of outcomes, they are much more likely to protect them from harm.

By-Law Enforcement

Cities have direct responsibility for the enforcement of by-laws, many of which are directly related to public safety, for instance dumping of wet and dry waste, and even littering – it is an acknowledged principle of safety that a well-managed space is less likely to attract criminal behaviour than one that appears uncared for. Women and children also know that where there is illegal dumping or open urinating, they are less safe, and they will often take indirect routes to where they are going, rather than try to traverse a space that is used for illegal or antisocial purposes.

Tshwane has established a formal Integrated By-law Enforcement Committee (IBEC) chaired by the Chief of Police with the Chief of Emergency Services as the Deputy Chairperson. Representatives from various municipal departments as well as external law enforcement agencies are part of the Committee. The IBEC addresses various issues such as the revision of by-laws, joint operating procedures, joint identification of hotspots and joint operational planning. Interventions are monitored and reported.

Alcohol, Unsafety and Enforcement

Alcohol abuse is a major threat to public safety and to public spaces, yet in most places, the Provincial Liquor Board grants licenses and SAPS enforces license conditions. The City of Tshwane conducts joint law enforcement operations at liquor outlets with all role-players (SAPS, Environmental Health Practitioners, Fire Safety inspectors, etc) to improve safety around unregulated liquor premises.

Where alcohol is consumed, there is increased violence – and a perception the space is unsafe. Alcohol can typically not be sold within a set distance from a school, cannot be sold to anyone under 18 years old, to a pregnant woman, to someone who is visibly intoxicated, for use in public spaces, and retailers cannot sell for resale unless the purchaser has an events license to resell. Regulations are set to protect the public, yet these are very often violated, without consequence. Public drinking puts everyone at risk, and drinking and driving causes additional harm. It also contributes to littering and public disorder.

In workshops about community safety, alcohol is frequently raised as a 'social ill', yet communities rarely have ideas of how to shift it. Part of the problem is the commercial interests of the alcohol industry to promote the sale and distribution of alcohol.

The Belhaven Harm Reduction Centre's work in eThekwini showcases what is possible when cities, working with other partners, in this case most significantly, universities, have a systemic understanding and co-produce an impactful approach.

SA and Alcohol Abuse

- Alcohol is the primary drug of abuse in SA.
- It is responsible for nearly half of all motor accidents.
- Over 30% of our population have an alcohol problem or are at risk of having one.
- Alcohol affects 17.5 million South Africans.
- Studies show that people who start drinking before the age of 15 are four times more likely to become alcoholics.
- 10 million South Africans who consume alcohol drank the equivalent of 196 six-packs of beer or 62 bottles of spirits, which is about 20.1 litres of pure alcohol each person per year.
- SA has an estimated 182,000 illegal shebeens.
- 122 out of every 1000 Grade 1 pupils in the Northern Cape town of De Aar have foetal alcohol syndrome – the highest incidence of the syndrome in one population anywhere in the world.
- 18-22 year olds are the group of heaviest alcohol abuse.
- 35% of high school kids are problem drinkers who drink at least 9 units of spirits, 1 litre of wine or 2 litres of beer.
- During the CDA study, 20% of 14-year-old boys and nearly half of 17-year-old boys drank in the previous month. Girls were a bit lower, with 18% of 14-year-olds and 35% of 17-year-olds in the same period. (CDA)

No strategy, intervention, nor response to the complex problems of alcohol and other substance abuse are as effective or affordable as prevention. While it is estimated that some 28 million people in South Africa suffer some form of addiction, the capacity to treat addiction is very low.

A preventative approach that comes with extensive evidence was adopted in the Seven Passes community led project, also a subject of the Municipal Case Study featuring community driven interventions. Based on the Planet Youth project originally from Iceland, it activates parents with information and simple tools so they can help their children avoid alcohol and drugs, giving parents a different perspective for supporting their children, while improving their own drinking habits, health and relationships with their children. Because this is part of a broader partnership programme dealing with other aspects of community development and cohesion, it benefits from strengthened relationships in the area and from optimistic and supportive communications mechanisms, such as a carefully curated What's App group. The Planet Youth programme, now also implemented by George municipality, has demonstrated significant results in Europe.

Hammanskraal project is another example of a successful alcohol-based violence prevention initiative (ABVPI), as well the Park Activation Coordination Programme (Watch case study video).

5

Chapter Five:

Gendered Safety Lens

When we speak of a gendered lens on safety, conversation often jumps to women who are victims of gender based violence (GBV). Yet there is much more to this. Women are not just victims, they are – as has often been said, the backbone of our communities, the core of our care-taking capacities for those who are the most vulnerable, and they represent the greatest potential in our society, to take us from a place of deep unsafety to a place where everyone thrives and lives their potential. For this to happen, there must be a conducive environment, and it is primarily local government that can enable this.

WHY WOMEN?

Creativity

- Have to be creative about navigating the City because of their unique experience of unsafety.
- Community problem solvers who care for and solve the problems of the most vulnerable

Women's specific needs

- Sanitation (toilets)
- Travel differently
- Safety needs
- Children's needs are women's needs
- All vulnerable people in communities' needs are women's needs

Ensure full participation

- Directly including women themselves
- Women include the vulnerable

Women's safety is community safety

Women are structurally excluded, if you intervene without an emphasis on women, you are effectively excluding women / If you want to include women, you have to foreground their needs and experiences

Where women's lives are lived

Local government operates where women live, it has a unique opportunity to improve the lives of women

Professor Naeemah Abrahams, in a 2023 USRG GBV Call to Action video, suggests that municipalities should look inwards at the way they address gender and the status of women within, alongside attempting to shift attitudes and behaviours outside of the organisation. Nomfundo Pheta, the Gender Focal Person for eThekwini, concurs, referring to the need for gender mainstreaming within the city: ensuring women officials are free from harassment, that the pay gap is closed, that women officials working in the community are safe, however difficult and long-term these objectives might be. This concept was first discussed and documented in 1995 at the fourth UN Conference on Women in Beijing, yet most cities around the globe still struggle to implement it, and change has been insignificant in the past two decades.

NATIONAL STRATEGIC PLAN ON GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE & FEMICIDE
NSP GBVF
Learning from experience
Learning from response to strengthen preventions
CONCEPTUAL SOUND EVIDENCE BASE
EVALUATION
CRIMINAL JUSTICE
Information Sharing
Maintain Infrastructure
LOTS OF Light
A GENDER LENS ON EVERYTHING WE DO: EQUAL OPPORTUNITY, EQUAL TREATMENT
TRANSVERSAL MUNICIPAL COLLABORATION WITH CBOS
Violence isn't Love
WOMENS RIGHTS FIRST!
VICTIM RESPONSE AND SUPPORT HERE
CAPACITY FOR RAPID RESPONSE
NO Misogyny
Knowledge Management
Adaptive learning changing policy
Community Services
Constant Electricity
GENDERED MUNICIPALITY TRANSVERSAL ACTION
GENDER MAINSTREAMING: A MICROCOSM OF THE SOCIETY IT SERVES
Safe parks with spaces & facilities for women
Safe Sanitation
By law Enforcement
Services
Info on GBV & Gender rights
Safe Transport
Community consultation & feedback
PUBLIC TOILET
TARGET HARDENING
Report GBV
Visible safe leisure space
CALL TO ACTION
SA CITIES & GENDER BASED VIOLENCE
South African CitiesNetwork
german cooperation
giz
In partnership with Canada
VCP INCLUSIVE PREVENTION
urban safety reference group
1 Ownership of space, positive environment, visibility, access
2 Mandate-related crime prevention through environmental design
Gender labels are socially constructed often regulated or determined characteristics; norms, behaviours, activities, attributes, power, relationships.
Gender based violence refers to violence directed against a person because of their person's gender.

The complexity of GBV demands a long-term, systemic response. While there are still reports of sexual harassment in municipalities themselves, they represent a microcosm of the societies they serve. Mainstreaming of gender sensitive approaches, and the promotion of women to positions of leadership in cities still requires significant attention, and the impact will only be visible when there is a consistent gendered approach to policy, with a gender focus on services, knowledge management, law enforcement, public transport, sanitation and the design and activation of public spaces.

Cities can also incorporate behaviour change messaging in both internal and external communications, to shift attitudes and behaviours, so that women are treated with respect and without violence.

To make women safe, the City needs to commit to changing the way it thinks about women. When women cannot move freely around the city, they are excluded from many opportunities. When they cannot access services for dependents who are for instance frail or have a disability, women find it difficult to be reliable in showing up for work, or carrying out other tasks, because they spend their time in caring for others. Where children cannot walk safely to and from school, women have to manage their time around school hours, once again struggling with other commitments. Local Government is best placed to implement mandate-aligned interventions that impact women's safety in public spaces, and enable improved access to services and opportunities.

The USRG response to GBV has been robust, exploring gender-responsive safety planning, as well reflecting on ways to shift patriarchy deeply entrenched in government institutions, where there is resistance to both understanding and shifting perspectives and treatment of women, both within the municipality and as external stakeholders.

In 2021, the USRG undertook a short term project focused on the 'second pandemic' in South African cities. This was captured in the USRG's Impact Report-END-GBV Workshops Series (SACN, 2023), aimed at supporting GBV survivors and preventing GBVF. It was focused on precinct-based interventions for gender mainstreaming and urban safety, growing capacity to use and apply evidence in making decisions.

The workshops incorporated 20 hours of experimental learning, involving 40 participants, locally and in New York City. The report emphasised similarities between cities, not only in the oppressions of GBV but also in the efforts of resilient and caring officials, made to provide better care and services to victims of GBV, more effective criminal justice access and responses, and preventative interventions. In emphasising the impact of historical oppression on the vulnerability of women to GBV, the sessions also inspired local officials to acknowledge that this is a global challenge and that responses are better where there is collaboration.

In 2023, the **USRG initiated a competition to find and support innovative, youth-led, community focused GBVF prevention interventions in urban neighbourhoods**. The project worked with fifteen participants from six youth-led organisations working in widely varying approaches, from using art to convey public messages, to mobile apps for psychosocial support. Three of the organisations were selected by experts to receive seed funding for their interventions, enhancing their capacities, supporting sustainability and scalability, while there was ongoing mentorship for the others.

The **incidence of GBV** in South Africa has been extensively reported. The ICVPS estimates that 51% of South African women have experienced GBV with 76% of men admitting they have perpetrated GBV. SA reports killing of women at a rate 5 times higher than the global average, and this is the fourth-highest female interpersonal death rate out of the 183 countries listed by the World Health Organization.

Domestic violence is also closely linked to alcohol consumption, as alcohol reduces the ability to make good choices, and removes inhibitions. SACN's own analysis of crime trends over the years, picks up on alcohol as the main driver of / most likely to culminate in assaults, assault GBH and murder.

Studies show that the majority persons believe addictions and substance and alcohol abuse are the cause of violence against women and children. What is often forgotten in this equation is the vulnerability that comes from intoxication – girls and women are at higher risk of sexual abuse – and while they may report sexual abuse, they often withdraw their complaint as they fear being blamed for having been intoxicated at the time of the incident.

51%
of South African women have experienced GBV

76%
of men admit to being GBV perpetrators

National Strategic Plan on Gender-Based Violence and Femicide

South Africa, like most countries in the world, has had an intense focus on GBV and femicide (GBVF) over the past decade. In April 2020 following significant protests, a national summit and extensive consultation both within and outside of government, the Presidency published the National Strategic Plan on Gender Based Violence and Femicide (NSP GBVF). Implementation of the NSP has been strengthened by the establishment of a National GBV Fund, and by Implementation Plans that aim to operationalise the plan.

The NSP identifies historical contexts of violence and crime against women and girls:

- A culture of violence, where violence is normative as the way to resolve conflict;
- Apartheid legacy, where inequality, poverty, lack of access to services and opportunities, marginalisation and militarisation of men were contributory;
- The institutionalisation of violence during the apartheid era;
- Exceptionally high levels of drug and alcohol abuse;
- Disintegration of families;
- Violence as an expression of anger and a means of asserting power;
- Absent parents, particularly fathers;
- Unemployment;
- Patriarchal social norms and belief systems; and
- Gender inequality.

The vision of the NSP is for a South Africa free from GBV directed at women, children and LGBTQIA+ persons. Local government can expand this vision to encompass not only a reduction of violence, but also improved conditions, conducive environments, local inclusive development and transformation. This envisions environments in which, without fear, women access their rights to freedom of movement and association, as well as education, services and opportunities that enable them to participate fully in the economy and in leadership, both in civil society and government.

The NSP takes a multi-sectoral approach of ***'roles, responsibilities, resources and commitment across government departments, different tiers of government, civil society, movements, youth structures, faith-based structures, traditional structures, the media, development agencies, the private sector, academic institutions and all other stakeholders'.***

The NSP identifies key implementing areas of focus for municipalities, playing a key role in the establishment of the **Emergency Response Action Plan.**

This plan is based on five interventions:

1. Urgently respond to victims and survivors of GBV.
2. Broadening access to justice for survivors.
3. Changing social norms and behaviour through high-level awareness raising and prevention campaigns.
4. Strengthening existing architecture and promoting accountability.
5. The creation of more economic opportunities for women who are vulnerable to abuse because of poverty.

Cities have embarked upon the implementation of Rapid Response Teams, which have a pivotal role in identifying violence hotspots, conducting community dialogues, and recruiting community engagers for safety audits and door-to-door campaigns, fostering active community involvement in promoting safer environments for women. What is not however in the NSP is alignment of existing local government mandates to outcomes that relate to women's safety.

Conclusion

Crime and violence remain major obstacles to achieving peaceful and thriving cities in South Africa. In the past ten years, there has been a constriction of capacity and resources in many cities, and the job of creating and sustaining safe cities in South Africa is arguably harder than ever before. Infrastructure is aging and there are scarce resources for upgrades or for desperately needed additional capacity to address a range of social, environmental and economic woes and shortfalls of service delivery.

The spread of lawlessness in many cities poses dramatic challenges: there is a need to address everything from the increasing numbers of drivers who disregard traffic signals and the rules of the road, to the risks of mugging when walking many South African streets day or night, to crimes against public infrastructure and serious property and violent crime.

This report has not engaged with all vexatious issues impeding city safety in South Africa; proliferation of, and easy access to firearms and the ever present threat of xenophobic violence for instance, remain subjects for future review.

Despite low trust in the Criminal Justice System (CJS) and low reporting rates of crimes across the spectrum, courts are backlogged and prisons are overly full. To avoid the necessity of doubling the size of the CJS over the next ten years, efforts must be redoubled to prevent crime and violence.

Cities and safety practitioners benefit now from 10 years of the USRG, with the significant body of work and experience delivered against its founding intention to bridge the knowledge gap and improve practice. The USRG has provided practice guides and notes on the desired ways of working under a strained fiscus that lacks capability to integrate, work across sectors and enable complex roles, responsibilities, capacities and resourcing.

This report has captured some of the work that has been delivered by safety practitioners, researchers and city teams over the past tumultuous decade, under the auspices of the SACN and GIZ-VCP and the USRG. It highlights only some of the learning, of which much more is available at the various references in this document.

Reviewing the journey, a thread emerges that suggests that much of the work that has been done and much that still needs doing is not only about the principles of crime and violence prevention, but much more about learning to communicate and work with one another. This should not be surprising; despite Arch Bishop Tutu's wish that we should be a 'Rainbow Nation', deep divides still exist and for many the historical trauma of previous generations has been carried through although while not enough has been done to heal it.

> Nomfundo Mogapi, one of South Africa's leading trauma experts says:
> ***"This conversation, which should have been at the forefront 30 years ago, revolves around facing the deep psychological and emotional traumas of our country that continue to permeate the personal, institutional, communal and leadership sphere. This trauma affects our ability to participate in constructive dialogue, leading to escalation of conflicts that could otherwise be avoided. This neglect perpetuates a cycle of pain and resentment that undermines our efforts to build a cohesive and democratic society".***

The VPF, convened by the USRG and the ISS convened have been about relationships; across sectors, across approaches, across cultures and beliefs. People previously isolated from one another, in spaces where they struggled to be heard or to make a difference to safety, are connected and are mutually supportive. In discussion, all practitioners who are regular participants in the USRG reinforce this perspective. ***'I know that safety is everyone's business'*** says Nazira Cachalia. ***'But it's difficult to get the attention of other departments sometimes, they are all so overburdened already. In the USRG, we all talk the same language, and we get strength from each other and ideas about how to make it stick in our own environments'.*** Charmaine has the benefit of having worked in almost every internal division of the office of the Chief of Police in the City of Tshwane, and she too finds solace and strength in the USRG. ***'I have learned so much from colleagues in the USRG. I feel like I'm part of a team that faces the same challenges, and we share our frustrations, but we also share stuff that's worked, and that's very useful'.***

These benefits need to be expanded to include local politicians, many of whom do not yet fully understand the value of these practitioners to city safety. A decision was made at the establishment of the USRG that it would be working with officials rather than with politicians, and perhaps it is now time to recruit local politicians into the group. While politicians sometimes stay only one term in a particular portfolio, many move from portfolio to portfolio and this can be very useful if they take their knowledge of safety as a cross-cutting imperative with them as they move.

Amongst USRG practitioners and researchers there is trust and therefore there is transparency. Urban safety is as difficult a sphere in which to make a sustainable impact as any, yet they encourage and affirm one another, learn from one another, share failures and successes without fear of the response. To assess safety in South Africa's cities in 2024, we must also assess safety practice – and that, in this network, is world class.

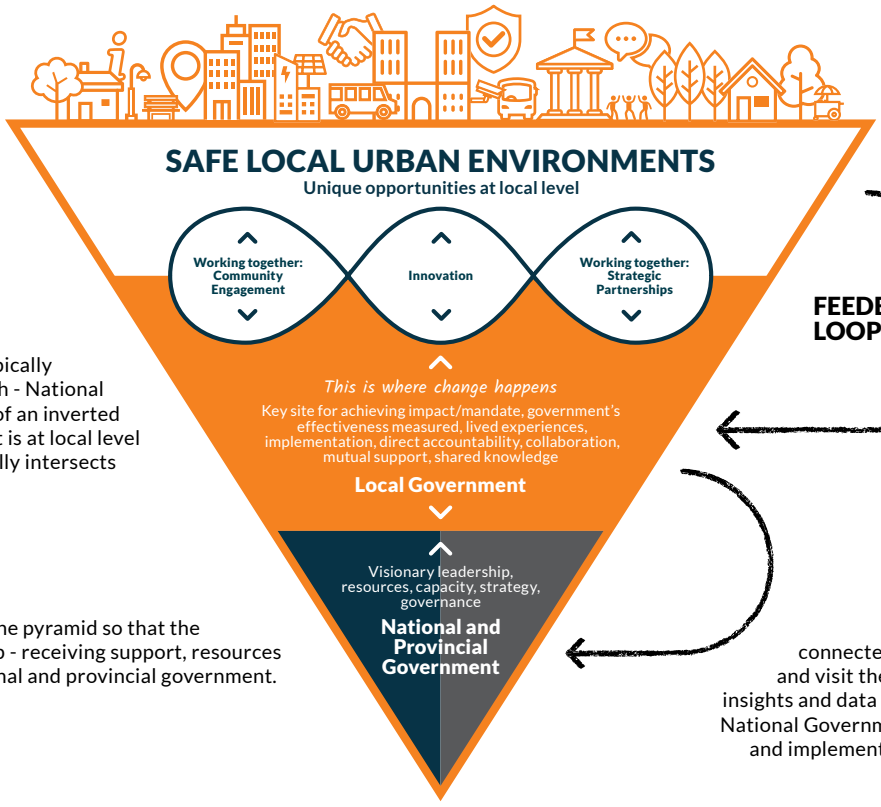
There are many stumbling blocks between where we are and where we aim to be as the crime statistics show. But lessons learned will provide added impetus to systemic safety practice in South Africa for a long time to come.

Lessons Learned, Insights for Future Practice

Upside-Down Leadership

While leadership in South Africa is typically seen as a pyramid with local government and communities at the bottom, a local-centric model proposes that communities and municipalities are seen as being at the top of a fragile structure that must put all its effort into supporting the local government/community interface. Since national government as the seat of policy making is the furthest from the intended beneficiaries of policy, it is wholly dependent on feedback from the local level – and this possibly explains the well-worn mantra that ***'we have world class policy, but implementation is our problem'.*** If policy is not implementable by the capacity and resources allocated to it, then that policy arguably reflects the wishes of policy makers rather than the reality of the environment for which it is intended. The better the relationship between local government and communities, the better the feedback that can be offered into the policy making and treasury functions of national government.

WHY LOCAL GOVERNMENT



The municipality is arguably the most important sphere of government; it is here that change can and must happen.

FEEDBACK LOOPS

Whereas hierarchies typically depict - and operate with - National Government at the top of an inverted pyramid, reality is that it is at local level that government naturally intersects with citizens.

Our approach is to flip the pyramid so that the municipality is at the top - receiving support, resources and capacity from national and provincial government.

The municipality, closely connected to those who live, work and visit their city, provides valuable insights and data that assist Provincial and National Government to develop, resource and implement response policies for all.

This approach renders tools such as Community Dialogue, as practised within the VPF and showcased in the Hoekwil/Touwsranten case study, to be of exceptional value to safety practitioners keen to improve opportunities for collaborative and multi-sectoral interventions, as well as to influence policy to enable improved local safety.

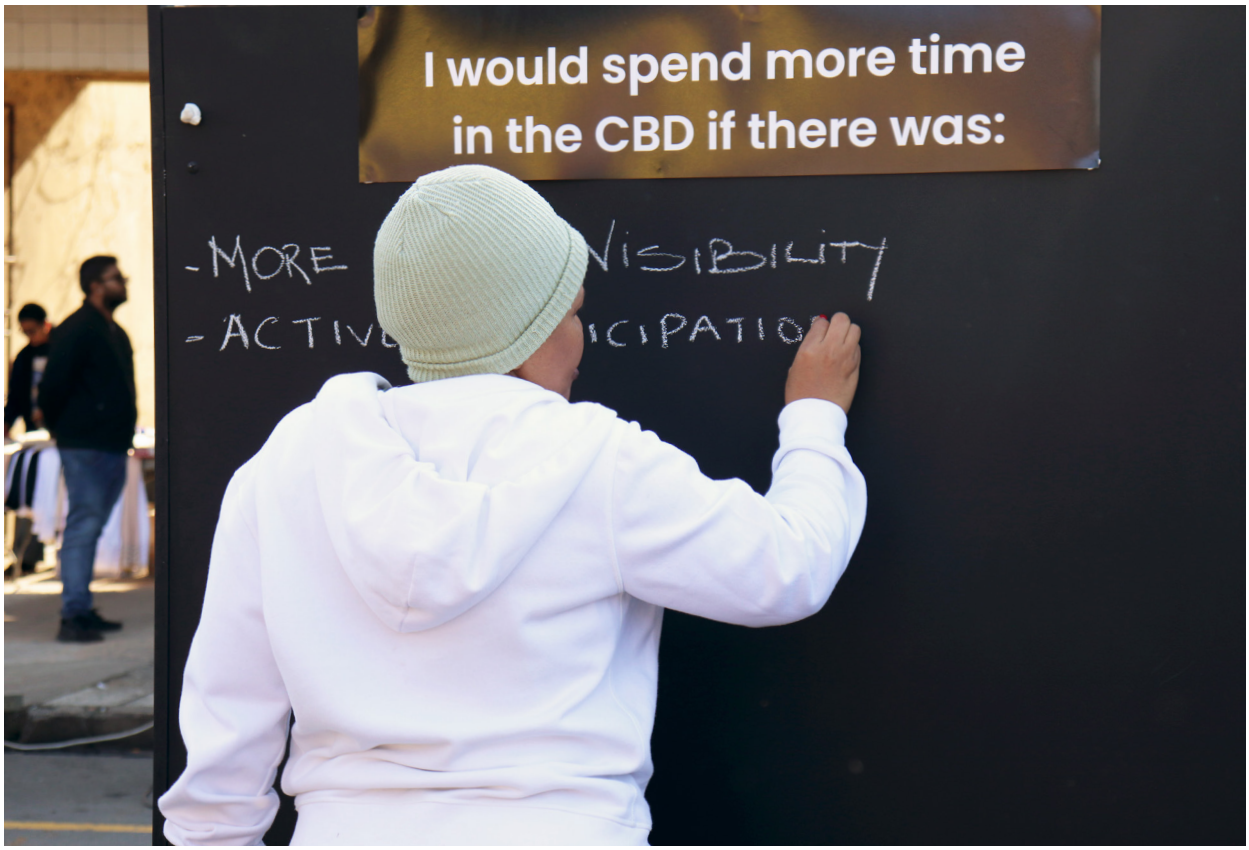
Charmaine says there needs to be a committed effort to close the gaps between the tiers of government failing which, local government will always be overburdened by policy that does not reflect the reality of what cities can actually do.

Ugeshni joins other members of the USRG in regarding the relationship between the different tiers of government as being inadequate to support the demands made on local government for public safety. While safety policy must inevitably be implemented by the tier of government closest to the people, it often does not include insights from local government, nor take into account important inter-dependencies with other government departments. Without explicit arrangements to enable relationships and unlock collaboration, local government is often left to deal with challenges that extend way past its mandates and sphere of influence, with neither the capability nor the resources to address them. For government at any level to succeed, policy must reflect both lived experience and the experience of local government officials, and be explicit about the way that policy links to mandates, whether local, provincial, or national, and intentions for managing multi-tiered implementation. In answer to the pressing question of which might be the most appropriate institution to drive this change, Ugeshni answers: ***'COGTA? SALGA? DPME? All of us? Maybe that's exactly what we need'.***

Lillian agrees: the more connection, the more trusting the relationships between policy makers and local government, the more impactful the policy. ***'The USRG provides us with space to think things through together. It's not about going out to ask questions because you're developing a policy, it's about having exposure to real experience of the environments that the policy needs to work for'.***

Internal advocacy, bringing the learnings to those outside of the USRG, but who have influence on the work that is still to be done, is important and urgent. As Chandré points out: ***'if we want to be safe, we need to help municipalities figure out how to deliver caring services – and in such a way that those who deliver them feel cared for too'.***

This may only be possible when those at the 'top' of the government hierarchy see themselves in a support role rather than in a position of power and authority. The USRG, with its strong focus on relationships, offers practitioners resources and tools that support them to influence their own status within the system, hopefully moving closer to a place where the depth of their understanding and experience will shift that way that public safety is positioned in cities.



Should we ask questions if we do not have the capacity to respond to the answers?

While both the eThekwini Safer Women Safer Cities and the Tshwane Safety Audit studies place a strong emphasis on the value of local lived experience data, and both offer inclusive methodologies for soliciting this data, neither city could fully respond to the findings. The more data a city elicits directly from communities, the more they will be exposed to demands, some of which they have not anticipated. Communicating directly with community members, as long as the purpose of the communication is clear to everyone, is always an opportunity to forge new relationships and this was an outcome in both of these examples.

Safety audits are comprehensive, and they need not be conducted in full. The intention to do a safety audit provides an opportunity to engage all the relevant internal stakeholders and agree what data to collect from communities, based on their plans, resources and capacities to respond. It may be that a more concise questionnaire will deliver more targeted information that will align better to existing capabilities.

Engagement generates useful data and simultaneously builds trust: people who perceive their city to be interested in their experiences are more likely to believe that the city has their well-being at heart. In the contemporary political and social climate, this trust-building should be built into all work that the city undertakes.

Communication is not just about awareness or campaigns

There is a gap in the toolbox for local safety interventions, and that is the power of communication to influence behaviour and promote shared accountability for safety, and more broadly for development outcomes. Government communications tend to be about things and events, campaigns. During COVID-19, government communications had a purpose; to make people comply with emergency regulations, wash hands, wear masks, isolate, get tested, get vaccinated and to not consume alcohol.

In South Africa 38,717,957 **COVID-19 vaccinations** were administered. That is a significant success. Over the period, murder was down 35.8%, attempted murder by 39.7%, rape by 40.4% and assault with intent to cause grievous bodily harm by 41%. The number of convictions for driving under the influence went down by 85.5% and drug-related crime also dropped by 53% nationwide. Hospitals reported empty trauma units, even on holidays. This offers a profound lesson on government communications.

2020 SNAPSHOT

Murder	35.8% ↓
Attempted murder	39.7% ↓
Rape	40.4% ↓
Assault with intent to cause grievous bodily harm	41% ↓
Drunken-driving convictions	85.5% ↓
Drug-related crime	53% ↓

In many of our cities, disregard for the rule of law is visible on our roads. Drivers cannot always be expected to stop at red lights, or to observe other rules of the road. This behaviour feeds into a state of lawlessness. Similarly, littering and illegal dumping are widespread, also feeding into disorder and unsafety.

Communication with the direct purpose of changing these behaviours can assist in creating shared accountability for law abiding and properly regulated societies. Hope may be at the centre of this messaging, a realistic but optimistic shared vision of what could be in our cities, if as a society South Africans were prepared to make whatever sacrifice it takes, to contribute to clean, healthy, safe cities, where all lives are better. The links between well managed space and safety are widely understood, as are the benefits of working in **collaborative** partnerships with communities.

Innovation is the key to a different future and democratic participation is key to collective accountability. The safety sector in South Africa has spent the last ten years investing in evidence based practice in South African cities, building tools and resources, networks and communities of practice, and the question for the next ten years, is how to embed these approaches across government, to enable truly systemic and collective action.

Dreams of Safe South African Cities: the Future of the USRG and How it can Contribute

urban safety reference group

The USRG has many lessons, for its members and for the cities they serve. Fora and networks in South Africa rarely survive a decade, as they tend to attract less engagement over time, yet the USRG has become stronger, and its members more committed.

The initiation of the USRG was inspired by UN Habitat Safer Cities, when they invited representatives from South African metros to a meeting in Nairobi. Nazira Cachalia, in conversation with fellow participants, said ***'We really shouldn't have to travel to Nairobi to talk with one another'.***

Terence Smith took the idea of a local group back to GIZ-VCP and undertook to find funds. SACN provided the perfect home, since their core business is sustaining local government networks with events, research and publications. Siphelele Ngobese was appointed to lead the implementation of the USRG in 2014 and has sustained it with GIZ-VCP funding and active participation. Allaying any fears of it being a 'talk shop', the USRG has, as is reflected in this review, produced and published reports, resources and tools that are practically useful, of exceptional quality and they have been widely distributed.

One of the key lessons of the USRG is that institutions are made up of individuals and they are also more than the sum of their parts, they are embedded in their history and they change trajectory slowly. The work of influencing municipalities to adopt innovative practices requires a long-term view, and work with and by individuals to shift mindsets, offer new, proven tools, and enhance capacity to test new approaches.

Capacity enhancement is a key deliverable for the USRG. The value and range of capacity enhancement tools and resources now available to practitioners seeking to strengthen safety practice in local environments is considerable. These tools cover aspects of institutional transformation and community transformation: providing insights into transversal governance, interactive and inclusive knowledge systems, an integrated safety lens on planning, collaboration and communication. The intention is to equip cities to have the skills that can embrace systemic safety in communities: a focus on families, human rights, vibrant public spaces, transport and mobility, access to opportunities.

Yet there remains relatively low institutional capacity for evidence-driven safety practice in municipalities, reflecting that more advocacy is required for this shift, and that the work of the USRG is by no means yet done.

GIZ-VCP has provided technical support that has given impetus to USRG members, aligned to both the institutional and the community outcomes associated with evidence-driven systemic safety practice. This has reinforced linkages between safety interventions and mandates that sit well beyond public safety and law enforcement units. Lack of participation by law enforcement officers in capacity enhancement programmes for such programmes confirms the divide between the two approaches, yet there is hope that, alongside resources from the USRG and from SALGA and others, mindsets are changing, with access to knowledge, planning and practice in urban safety.

The GIZ-VCP and the USRG have greatly influenced urban safety practice in our municipalities and metros. For the GIZ-VCP, 2024 is the end of the road. It leaves a powerful legacy, and will be missed by many, not only those who have participated in the USRG, also many who access the reports and who work with practitioners, and for whom it is the source of information, ideas and connections. There is a need for a huge vote of thanks to GIZ-VCP, who took a lonely, isolated, disparate sector and over ten years supported it to professionalise, to consult, to collaborate and to gain confidence through exposure to evidence and collective thought.

It is unthinkable that the USRG should fade away with the closure of the GIZ-VCP programme, yet a very important question remains unanswered: how will this programme continue, without the support of the GIZ-VCP? As the USRG celebrates the achievements of the past 10 years, collaborators must explore ways to drive a movement for the continuation of this work, with its important learning and exchange components.

Dr Sandile Mbatha, with his passion for data and his need to see it make a difference to resourcing, capacity and impact at local level, agrees. He believes that it is impossible to solve intractable problems like crime and violence without understanding all the perspectives, and without knowing as much about what does not work and why, as about what works. The USRG offers a safe space for practitioners, policy makers and those who understand the big picture, to make sensible, logical choices about what to do next, for the best possible return on investment. Dr Sandile Mbatha and his team have created a significant resource at COGTA, to organise and make accessible data that is useful to municipalities in their budgeting, planning, capacitation and implementation of safety interventions, for cities to step up and deliver with less waste of resources and less frustration and for greater, more visible impact. Lillian is excited about the COGTA programme. ***'We really need to think differently about data, it needs to be available to everyone who can use it, not sitting in some database that nobody can access'.***

The USRG may need to reshape to continue. The dream of safe cities in South Africa has been articulated clearly and practically. In the course of the collective work and learning of the past decade, the USRG, supported by GIZ-VCP and convened by SACN, has articulated the vision and produced the resources to move towards the vision, and it has also identified the work that is yet to be done. Significant among other communities of practice, the USRG is made up of experts who are curious, eager to learn, who read, debate, discuss and process, and the evidence they gather makes it ever more possible to embrace the complexity of crime and violence in our cities.

Photo by Karabo Mdluli on Unsplash

Annexures

Annexure A: Individual City-specific Crime Profiles

Each city-specific crime profile is provided below, including the 21 indicators set out in Section 2. A relative comparison of city performance is illustrated below through vertical intensity graphs indicated together with the indicator value in the table below. Of the 21 indicators, indicators 13, 14, 15 and 19 remained unchanged because updated indicators were not available.

QUICK LINKS

- City of Johannesburg →
- City of Cape Town →
- eThekwini →
- Ekurhuleni →
- City of Tshwane →
- Nelson Mandela Bay →
- Mangaung →
- Buffalo City →
- Msunduzi →

City of Johannesburg

Category		Indicator	
Objective indicators		1 Murder rate	44
		2 Assault rate	246
		3 Robbery rate	355
		4 Property-related crime rate	541
		5 Sexual offences rate	67
		6 Public/collective violence rate	
		7 Police activity (higher is positive)	331
Subjective indicators		8 Experience of crime/violence	3.2%
		9 Feelings of safety/fear of crime	80%
		10 Perception of/satisfaction with/ Trust in law enforcement	53%
Social / structural indicators	Urbanisation	11 Rapid population growth	2.6%
		12 Population density	3 710
		13 Social incoherence / family disruption	14%
	Marginalisation	14 Poverty	0.73
		15 Income inequality	0.62
		16 Unemployment	19.0
		17 Deprivation of services	9%
	Social/physical environment	18 Informal housing	20%
		19 Infrastructure	1.00
		20 School conditions and violence	
		21 Access to alcohol, drugs, firearms	109
		- Access to alcohol	125
		- Access to drugs	174
		- Access to firearms	28

Legend

City is doing relatively well compared to the other cities

City is doing average compared to the other cities

City is doing relatively poorly compared to the other cities

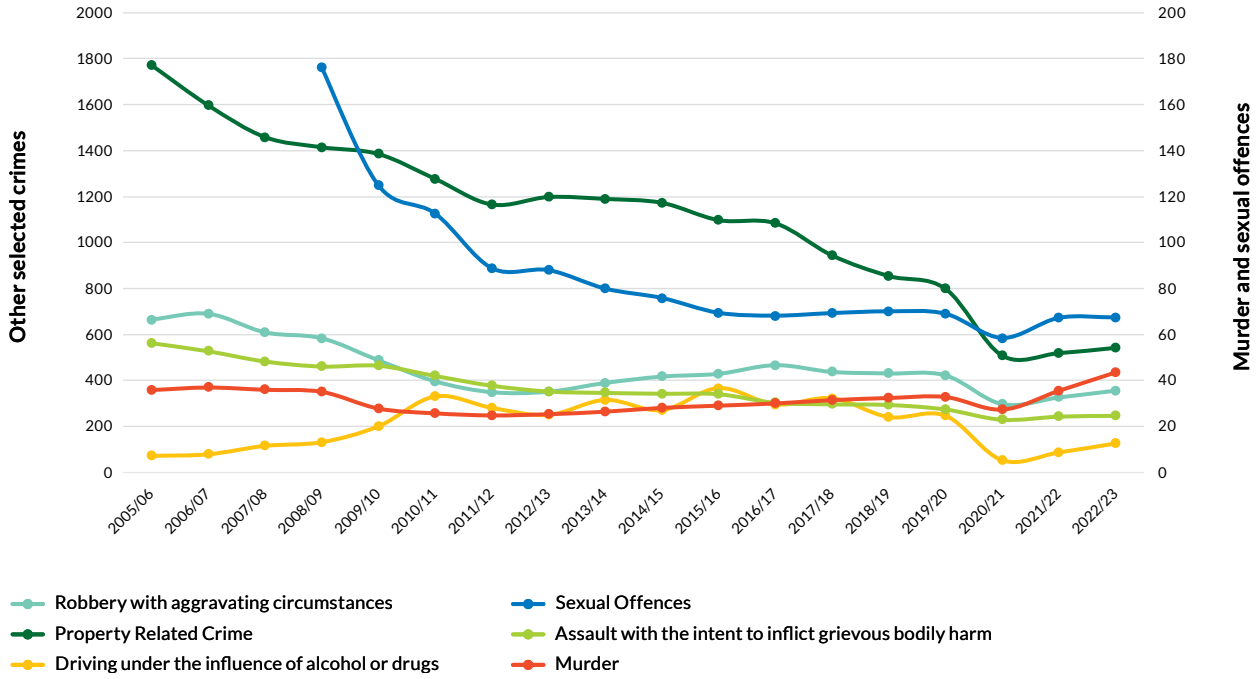
Data unavailable

TABLE 6: City-specific crime profile – Johannesburg

Johannesburg's rankings appear to have deteriorated in terms of most objective indicators. The city's violent interpersonal crime rates remain low compared to other cities. Johannesburg has maintained a relatively low murder rate compared to its coastal counterparts. Johannesburg has recorded relatively low levels of police activity (as measured by recorded rates of all police activity, including driving under the influence of alcohol or drugs).

Using the available data for the subjective indicators on perceptions and experiences of crime and violence, Johannesburg appears to now have the second-highest levels recorded for experiences of housebreaking. However, perceptions of safety indicate that residents of Joburg feel more unsafe than in any other city except for Cape Town. The data from the 2022/23 Victims of Crime Survey, which now measures trust in policing rather than satisfaction levels, indicate the fourth lowest level of trust in the police at 54%.

FIGURE 13: Long-term trends in selected crimes recorded per 100 000 people in Johannesburg (2005/06-2022/23)



Johannesburg ranks the highest for rapid population growth with 2,6% - a substantially lower rate than the 2020/21 levels of 3,7%. While the covid-pandemic may have slowed urbanisation rates, this factor has been central to crime and safety challenges in the city. The city has the highest population density, with a density rate nearly twice that of its neighbour Ekurhuleni (with the second highest density levels) or six times the rate of Tshwane. The 2022 Census data may have a substantial impact on these indicators if adopted by the city after its full interrogation in 2024/25.

The 2022 Household Survey puts Joburg's informal housing percentage at 20%, a significant increase from the percentage mentioned in 2018/17. This puts Joburg on par with Ekurhuleni and third only to Cape Town and Tshwane. This gives rise to the highest rate of unemployment measured in the 2022 Household Survey.

This reflects the importance of combating the negative consequences of rapid urbanisation and inequality in pursuit of progressive safety planning for the city. The 2021 infrastructure vulnerability indicator (indicator 19) places Johannesburg at the lowest end of the vulnerability spectrum.

All crime rates displayed increased over the past two to three years after the easing of lockdown restrictions. The murder rate has increased by more than 23% year-on-year. This decline in the murder rate during the Covid-19 period was lower than anticipated, considering limitations on movement and other restrictions brought about by the lockdown regulations of the Disaster Management Act. This continues the trend over the past ten years of an increase in the murder rate at 39%. However, the notable increase in the past two years year must be investigated.

Most cities have seen increased recorded police action since 2018/19, except for a dip during Covid-19. This sharp reduction of 60% over the past five years can be explained in terms of the reprioritisation of police activities to police the lockdown restrictions and the implementation of alcohol bans, and fewer arrests for cannabis possession. For the current year, police action has increased by 27%, indicating that routine police actions have commenced as lockdown restrictions have been eased. Driving under the influence increased by 46% in the last year, motivating increased police action.

Property-related crimes have significantly decreased by up to 43% in the past decade, an impressive improvement accompanied by a sharp reduction in robberies with aggravating circumstances, which declined by 19% in the same period. However, in the last year, armed robberies increased by 9% and property-related crime by 4%.

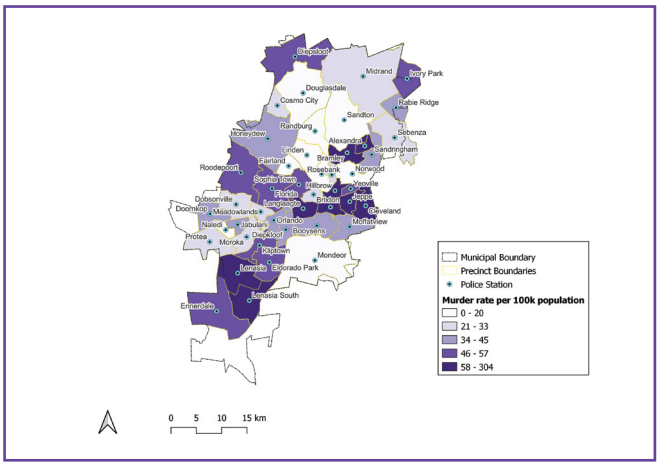
Both assault with the intent to inflict grievous body harm (GBH) and sexual offences have steadily declined, by 56% and 62%, respectively, since 2005/6. This trend can, however, represent a continuously declining confidence in reporting such crimes to the police. However, in the last year, reported sexual offences remained unchanged and serious assaults increased by 1%.

Spatial Mapping of Crime Statistics: City of Johannesburg

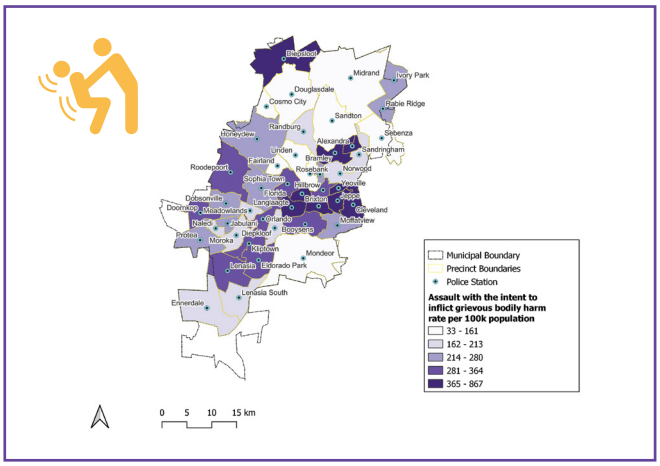
INTRODUCTION

The State of Urban Safety in South Africa Report 2024 contributes further to a critical longitudinal view of crime in cities and its associated risk factors over an 18-year period (2005-2023). This incremental database supports evidence-driven approaches at the city level and the tracking of the impact of actions by safety actors, and environmental and economic changes in Cities. SACN participating Cities have, over time, lobbied for further sub-categorisation of indicators by location. This is to enable an exploration of the inter-relationship between crime and the spatial development goals of South African Cities, especially given the legacy of spatial segragation, which is one of the chief exacerbating factors of urban crime and violence. The spatial illustration of crime, its incidence and distribution in a cirt is also intended to enable Cities to taget hotspots and implement interventions in a transversal or multidisciplinary way. These spatialised, per-city crime maps are the 2nd round in continued efforts by the Urban Safety Refernce Group to provide cities with reliable evidence and are aggregated from the 2022/2023 objective crime indicators supplied by the SAPS.

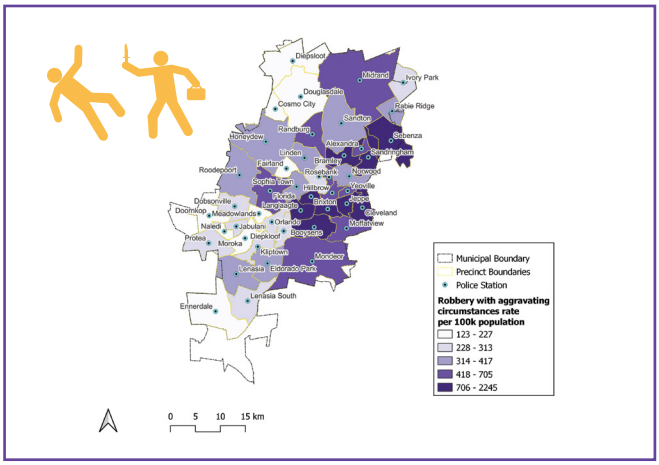
Murder rate



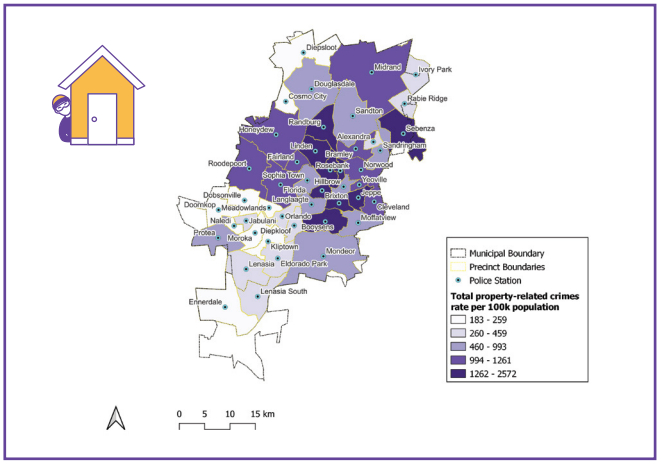
Assault with the intent to inflict grievous bodily harm



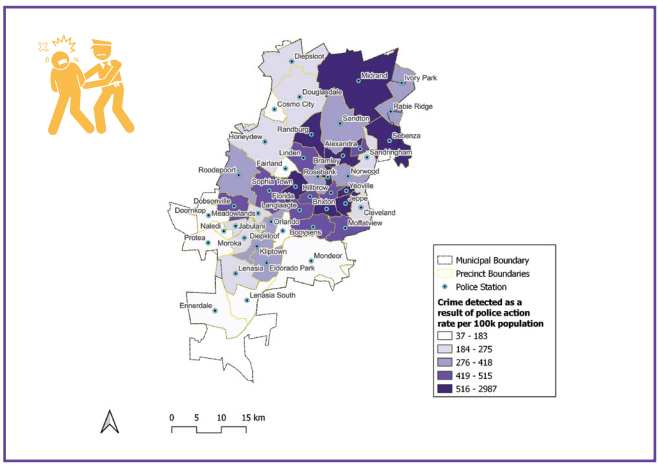
Robbery with aggravating circumstances



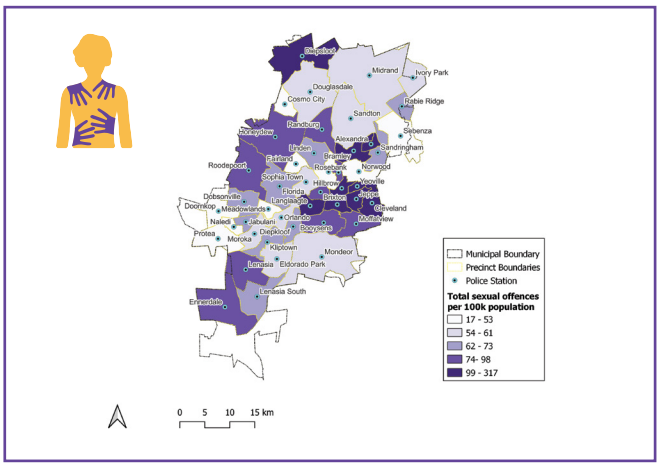
Property related-crimes



Crime detected as a result of police action



Sexual offences detected as a result of police action



IMPORTANT! The methodology and full details of the data as reported per police station can be found in the State of Urban Safety Report 2024.

City of Cape Town

Category		Indicator	
Objective indicators		1 Murder rate	68
		2 Assault rate	227
		3 Robbery rate	392
		4 Property-related crime rate	838
		5 Sexual offences rate	96
		6 Public/collective violence rate	
		7 Police activity (higher is positive)	1100
Subjective indicators		8 Experience of crime/violence	2.8%
		9 Feelings of safety/fear of crime	80%
		10 Perception of/satisfaction with/ Trust in law enforcement	53%
Social / structural indicators	Urbanisation	11 Rapid population growth	1.9%
		12 Population density	1 949
		13 Social incoherence / family disruption	14%
	Marginalisation	14 Poverty	0.75
		15 Income inequality	0.62
		16 Unemployment	10.3
		17 Deprivation of services	6%
	Social/physical environment	18 Informal housing	18%
		19 Infrastructure	3.10
		20 School conditions and violence	
		21 Access to alcohol, drugs, firearms	366
		- Access to alcohol	103
		- Access to drugs	947
		- Access to firearms	50

Legend

City is doing relatively well compared to the other cities

City is doing average compared to the other cities

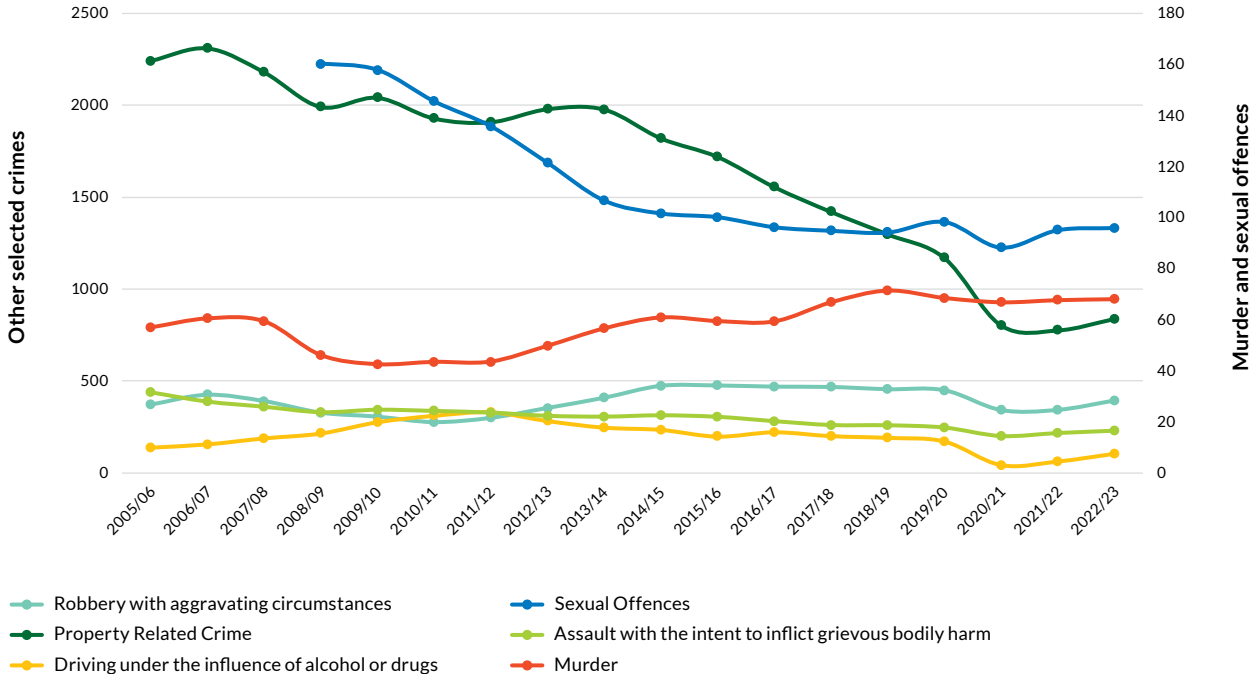
City is doing relatively poorly compared to the other cities

Data unavailable

TABLE 7: City-specific crime profile – Cape Town

Although Cape Town continues to experience very high crime rates, there have been some reductions in the past few years, resulting in the city moving from being the highest ranked to second in respect of property-related crimes and third in terms of murder and robbery rates. The city is ranked third for sexual offences and sixth for assault. During the covid-19 pandemic, the city experienced a sharp decrease in police activity (measured by recorded rates of driving while under the influence). As with other cities, the sharp reduction can be explained by reprioritising police activities to police lockdown restrictions and implementing alcohol bans. However, in the previous reference period, police activity increased substantially by 2308% to rates well above the other cities. It further increased by 11% in the past year. Drug access remains exceptionally high, placed first compared to other cities.

FIGURE 14: Long-term trends in selected crimes recorded per 100 000 people in Cape Town (2005/06-2020/22)



The 2021/22 and 2022/23 Victims of Crime Survey provides an assessment of experiences of crime, perceptions of safety and trust in police. The city's trust in law enforcement is among the lowest of the cities – joint with Johannesburg and pipped only by eThekwini. The city has had substantial increases in its ranking of feeling unsafe at night compared to the other cities, ranking on par with Joburg. It has the third highest ranking of experiences of housebreaking.

The city has the highest Human Development Index score (a proxy for poverty) out of cities, which is a positive development indicator. On the flipside, its income inequality gap is on par with the other cities at very high levels. This should be closely monitored.

The city's rapid population growth (third only to Johannesburg and Tshwane) and percentage of residents living in informal housing in 2022 is the third highest on par with Tshwane, third only to Johannesburg and Ekurhuleni. The city's urbanisation factors appear relatively high, but its unemployment rate is the lowest compared to other cities. The infrastructure vulnerability indicator (indicator 19) places Cape Town at the lower end of the vulnerability spectrum, with only Johannesburg and Ekurhuleni having slightly lower scores.

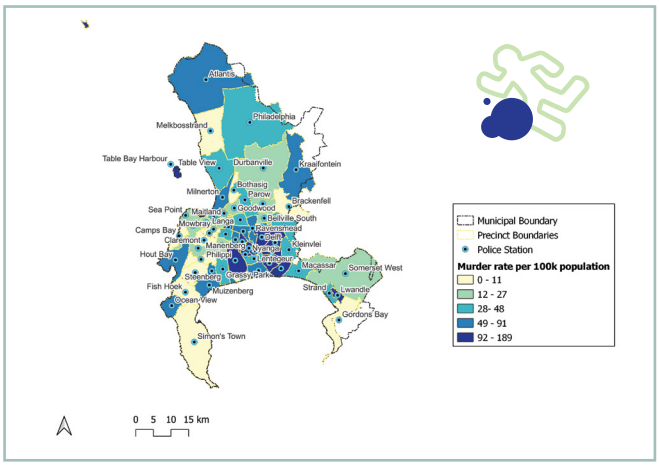
Cape Town has managed to go from the highest murder rate to the fourth highest, showing a nominal increase since 2021/22 – lower than most cities. However, there is still a concern as the five-year increase remains high at 20% since the 2017/18 reporting period. The city equally shows a continued marginal decline in the rate of armed robbery and assault with intent to inflict GBH, which shows a decline of 8% and 3%, respectively, over the past five years. Similar to most other cities, Cape Town displays a continued decline in property-related crimes, with a 35% downward trend since 2016/17 but recorded a 10% increase in the past year. Although there had been a reduction in robbery with aggravating circumstances in the past five years, a 17% increase was reported in the past year. A similarly distinct reduction is recorded in the rate of driving under the influence of alcohol or drugs, decreasing by up to 43% in the past five years but increasing sharply by 72% in the past year. Overall, police action increased by 11% in the past year despite 45% in the past five years. This heavy increase may be correlated with the commencement of routine police operations away from policing lockdown restrictions and the establishment of Operation Shanele by SAPS.

Spatial Mapping of Crime Statistics: Cape Town

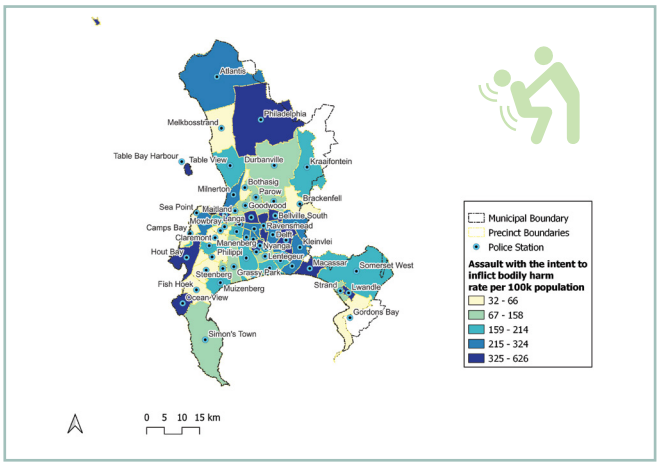
INTRODUCTION

The State of Urban Safety in South Africa Report 2024 contributes further to a critical longitudinal view of crime in cities and its associated risk factors over an 18-year period (2005-2023). This incremental database supports evidence-driven approaches at the city level and the tracking of the impact of actions by safety actors, and environmental and economic changes in Cities. SACN participating Cities have, over time, lobbied for further sub-categorisation of indicators by location. This is to enable an exploration of the inter-relationship between crime and the spatial development goals of South African Cities, especially given the legacy of spatial segragation, which is one of the chief exacerbating factors of urban crime and violence. The spatial illustration of crime, its incidence and distribution in a cirt is also intended to enable Cities to taget hotspots and implement interventions in a transversal or multidisciplinary way. These spatialised, per-city crime maps are the 2nd round in continued efforts by the Urban Safety Refernce Group to provide cities with reliable evidence and are aggregated from the 2022/2023 objective crime indicators supplied by the SAPS.

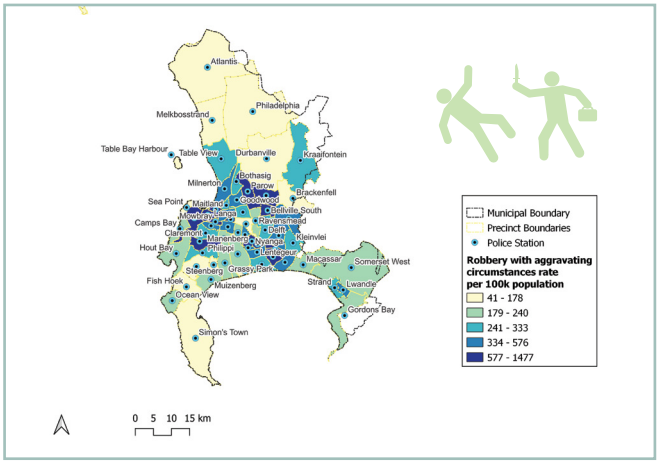
Murder rate



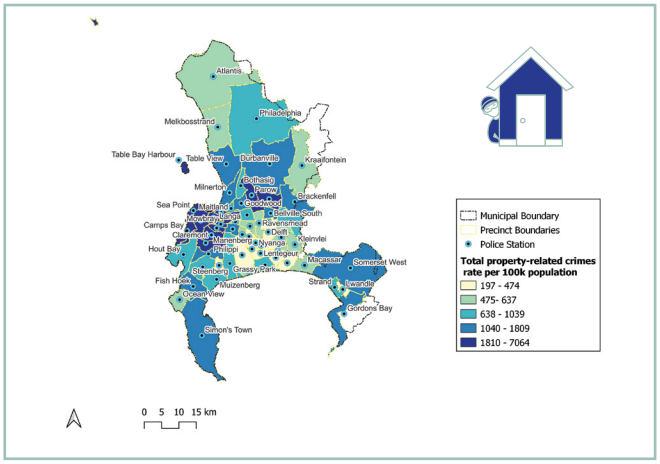
Assault with the intent to inflict grievous bodily harm



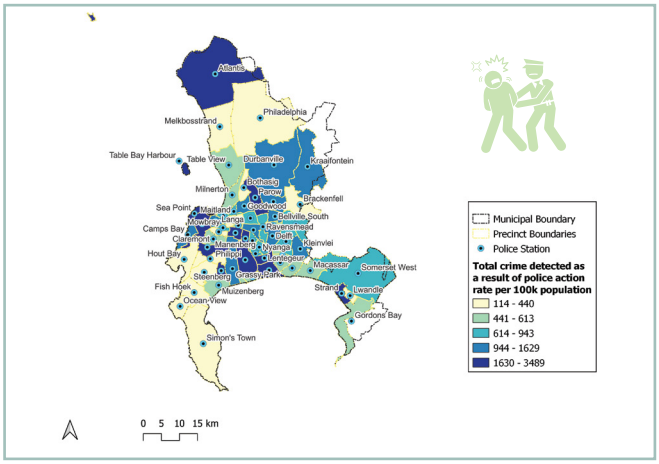
Robbery with aggravating circumstances



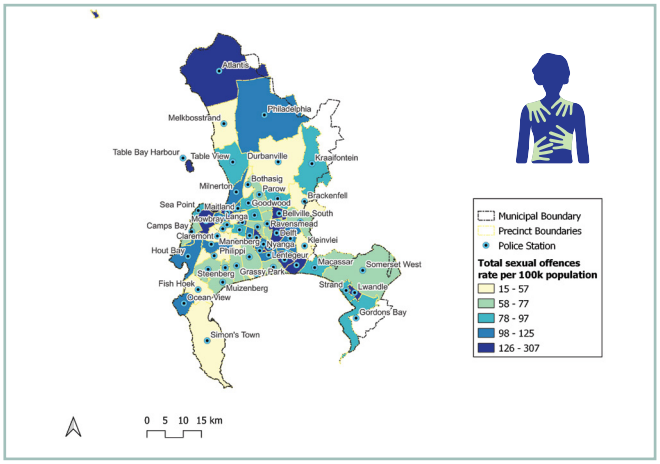
Property related-crimes



Crime detected as a result of police action



Sexual offences detected as a result of police action



IMPORTANT! The methodology and full details of the data as reported per police station can be found in the State of Urban Safety Report 2024.

eThekwini

Category		Indicator	
Objective indicators		1 Murder rate	76
		2 Assault rate	182
		3 Robbery rate	363
		4 Property-related crime rate	620
		5 Sexual offences rate	71
		6 Public/collective violence rate	
		7 Police activity (higher is positive)	352
Subjective indicators		8 Experience of crime/violence	1.1%
		9 Feelings of safety/fear of crime	62%
		10 Perception of/satisfaction with/ Trust in law enforcement	47%
Social / structural indicators	Urbanisation	11 Rapid population growth	1.7%
		12 Population density	1 622
		13 Social incoherence / family disruption	14%
	Marginalisation	14 Poverty	0.67
		15 Income inequality	0.62
		16 Unemployment	13.0
		17 Deprivation of services	13%
	Social/physical environment	18 Informal housing	9%
		19 Infrastructure	6.40
		20 School conditions and violence	
		21 Access to alcohol, drugs, firearms	107
		- Access to alcohol	16
		- Access to drugs	275
		- Access to firearms	31

Legend

City is doing relatively well compared to the other cities

City is doing average compared to the other cities

City is doing relatively poorly compared to the other cities

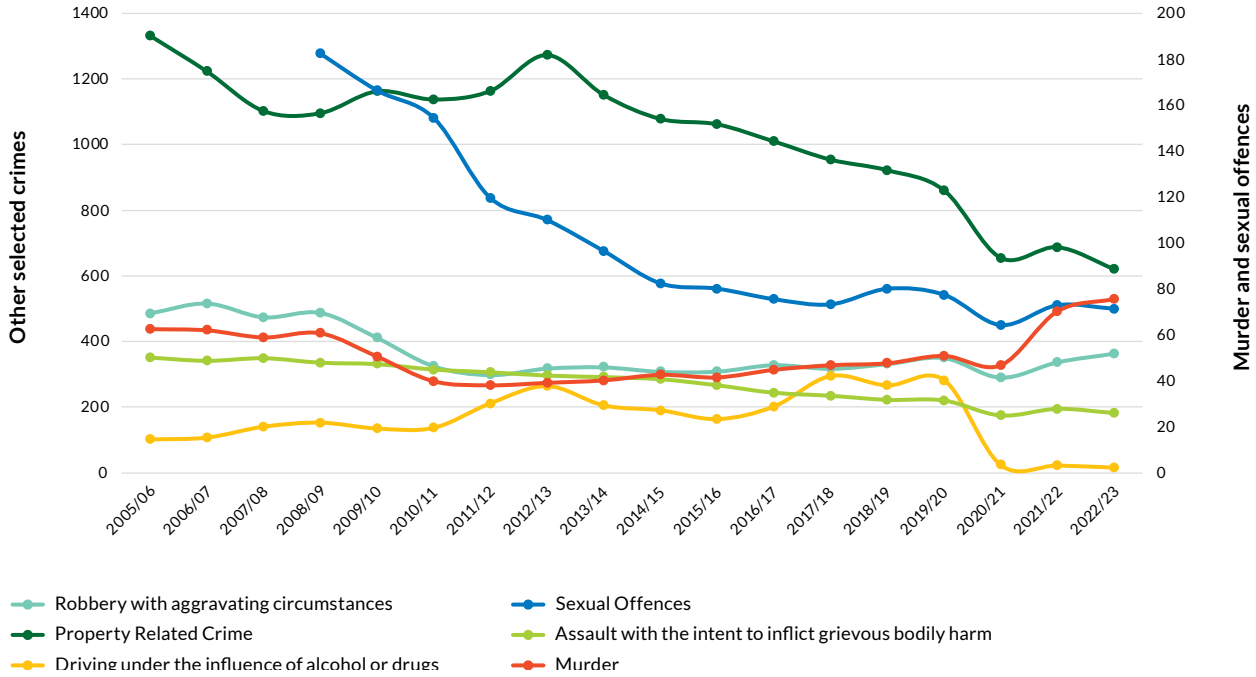
Data unavailable

TABLE 8: City-specific crime profile – eThekwini

In previous reports, eThekwini has managed to maintain a consistent position across the 21 indicators. However, over the past two years, eThekwini, together with Msunduzi, had a significant spike in murder, with the rate increasing by 62% over a five-year period. Between 2020/21 and 2021/22. The murder rate increased by over 50%. Although some of the murders can be related to the 2021 July unrest, the unrest does not account for the 954 more murders compared to the previous year or the 818 more murders compared to the 2019/20 figures before the Covid-19 lockdown restrictions.

The city is now ranked second for murder and third for robbery, moving. Unfortunately, an updated measure for public violence cannot be made because updated data is not available for this indicator. eThekwini continues to hold

FIGURE 15: Long-term trends in selected crimes recorded per 100 000 people in eThekwini (2005/06-2022/23)



a somewhat middle ranking for its sexual offences rate – however, showing a significant increase in the previous year and a marginal decrease in 2022/23. The city shows a significant reduction in recorded police action in recent years but a 4% increase in the past year.

The 2021/22 and 2022/23 Victims of Crime Survey results are available at a provincial and metro level for the three subjective indicators. This includes experiences of crime, perceptions of safety and satisfaction with police. eThekwini is now placed second lowest for housebreaking. It has the second lowest feelings of unsafety compared to the other cities and the lowest trust in law enforcement in the reporting period.

In previous years, the city's social and structural indicators appear to be improving, with a reduction in marginalisation factors through an improvement where deprivation of services is concerned and an improvement in social/ physical environment factors. However, it scores quite highly (second only to Buffalo City) on the physical vulnerability index (6.4). Once an updated score is available, the 2021 July violence and 2022 floods may exasperate this score. The more remote and/ or structurally vulnerable, the higher the physical vulnerability score (1=low and 10=high vulnerability).

Over five years, eThekwini showed significant declines in the rate of assault with the intent to inflict GBH of 35% and had a 10% decrease over the past year. The city displayed the third lowest reported rates of property-related crimes with a 10% reduction in the past year. Unfortunately, robbery rates have increased by about 14% in five years and 8% in the past year. Unfortunately, the murder rate has increased by 62% in the past five years, and 8% in the past year after a 50.5% spike in the previous year. This requires urgent attention. Unlike other cities such as Johannesburg and Cape Town, the city still displays a marginal increase in reported police action now with a 4% increase in the past year for the first time since 2019/20. eThekwini still shows a five-year decline of 68% in police action since the 2016/17 reporting period.

Spatial Mapping of Crime Statistics: eThekwini Municipality

INTRODUCTION

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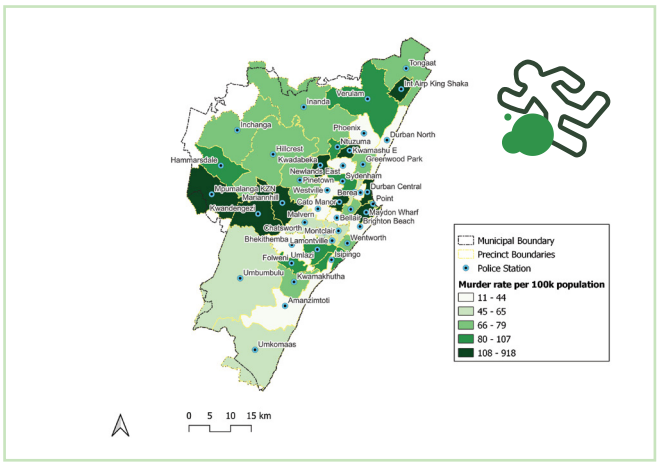
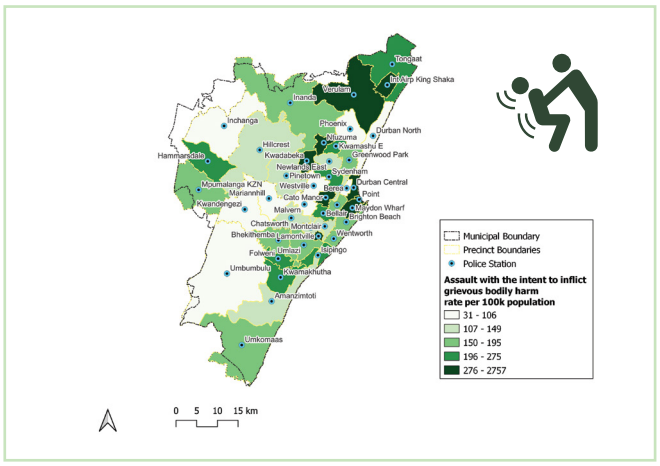
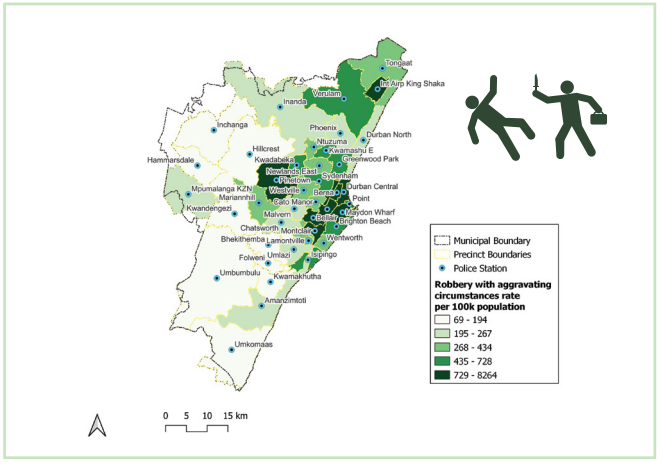
Murder rate



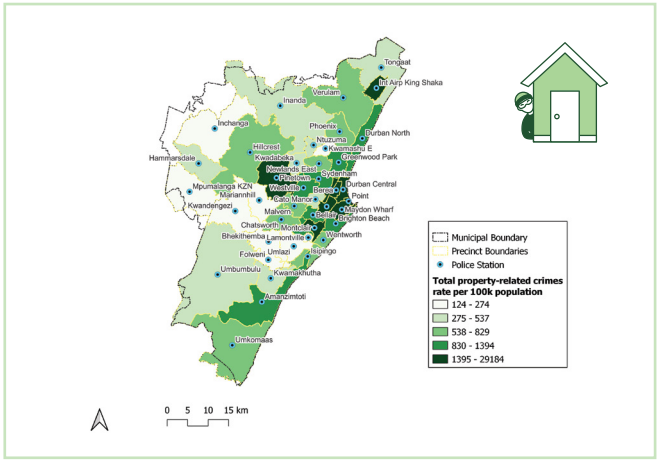
Assault with the intent to inflict grievous bodily harm



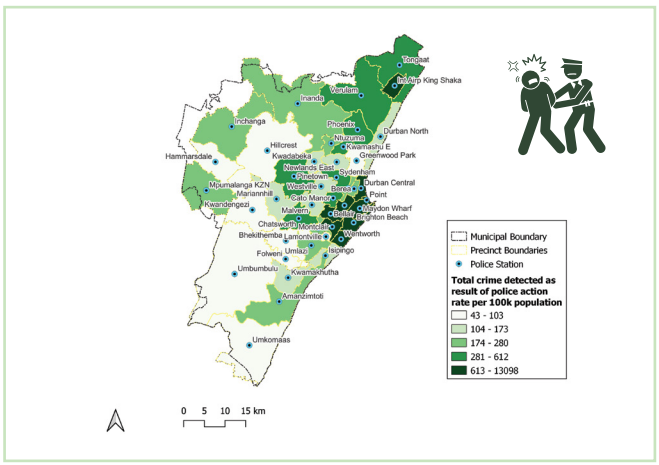
Robbery with aggravating circumstances



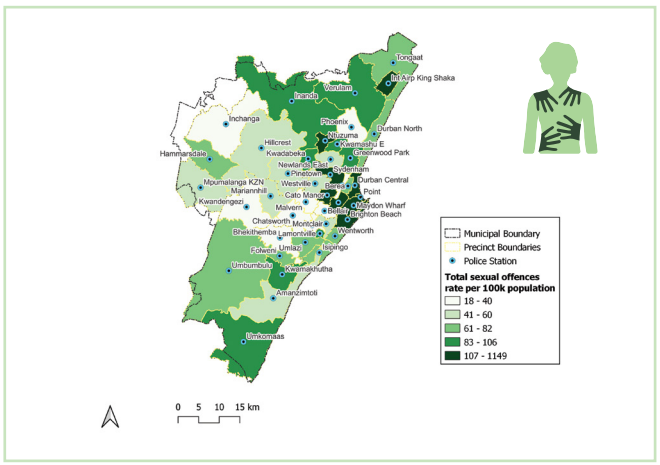
Property related-crimes



Crime detected as a result of police action



Sexual offences detected as a result of police action



IMPORTANT! The methodology and full details of the data as reported per police station can be found in the State of Urban Safety Report 2024.

Ekurhuleni

Category		Indicator	
Objective indicators		1 Murder rate	41
		2 Assault rate	231
		3 Robbery rate	287
		4 Property-related crime rate	490
		5 Sexual offences rate	68
		6 Public/collective violence rate	
		7 Police activity (higher is positive)	375
Subjective indicators		8 Experience of crime/violence	1.7%
		9 Feelings of safety/fear of crime	59%
		10 Perception of/satisfaction with/ Trust in law enforcement	80%
Social / structural indicators	Urbanisation	11 Rapid population growth	1.7%
		12 Population density	2 045
		13 Social incoherence / family disruption	12%
	Marginalisation	14 Poverty	0.71
		15 Income inequality	0.63
		16 Unemployment	17.5
		17 Deprivation of services	10%
	Social/physical environment	18 Informal housing	20%
		19 Infrastructure	2.60
		20 School conditions and violence	
		21 Access to alcohol, drugs, firearms	124
		- Access to alcohol	121
		- Access to drugs	224
		- Access to firearms	27

Legend

City is doing relatively well compared to the other cities

City is doing average compared to the other cities

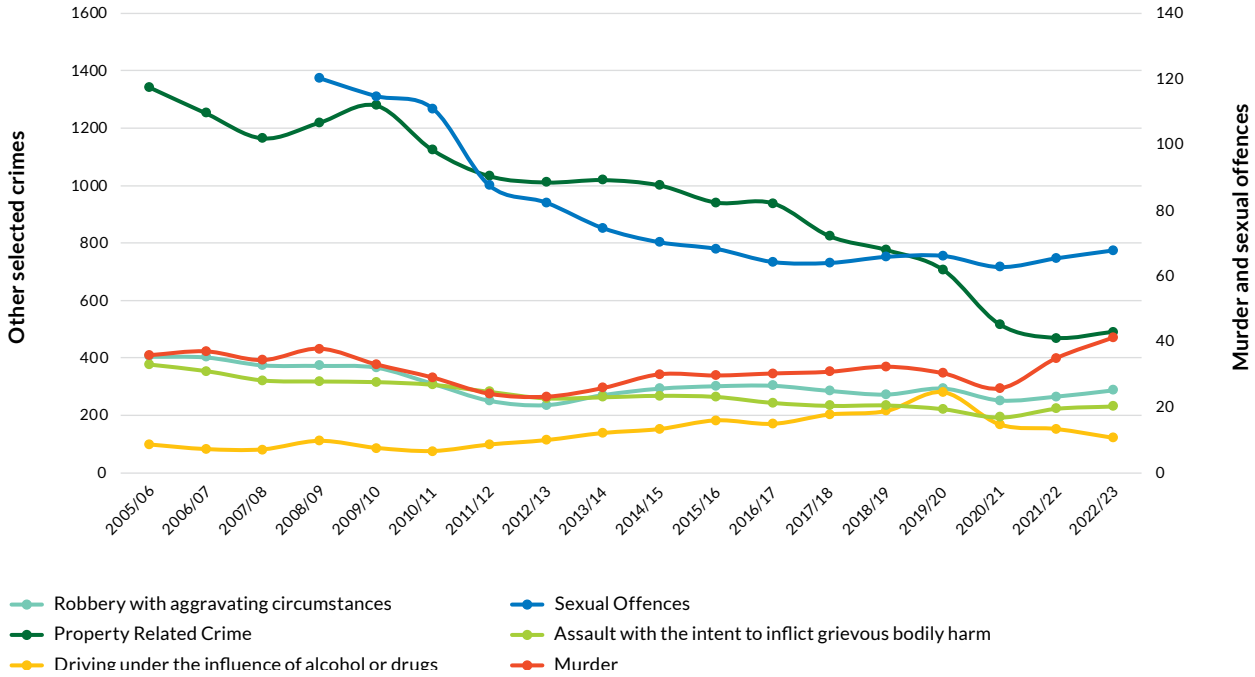
City is doing relatively poorly compared to the other cities

Data unavailable

TABLE 9: City-specific crime profile – Ekurhuleni

Ekurhuleni's crime rates remain relatively low compared to other cities. For the past two years, the city has had the lowest property-related crime, surpassing eThekwini. The city has the fourth lowest assault rate and third lowest sexual offences rate – although this should be read as the reflective rate and not necessarily the true extent of assault and sexual offence events. Ekurhuleni, after Tshwane and Mangaung, ranks third lowest in terms of the murder rate. The city's robbery rate ranks third lowest. As with other cities, public/collective violence data is unavailable for this reporting period. Its police activity indicator (as measured by recorded rates of driving while under the influence), much like other cities, has increased when compared to three years ago. However, the levels of police activity have not yet reached pre-Covid levels. Commencing routine police operations can explain the sharp increase after stopping with the reprioritisation of police activities to police the lockdown restrictions and the implementation of alcohol bans.

FIGURE 16: Long-term trends in selected crimes recorded per 100 000 people in Ekurhuleni (2005/06-2022/23)



The 2021/22 and 2022/23 Victims of Crime Survey results are available at a provincial and metropolitan level for the three subjective indicators. These include experiences of crime, perceptions of safety, and trust in the police. For Ekurhuleni, trust in law enforcement ranks the highest at 80%. Experiences of housebreaking rank third lowest, and perceptions of unsafety are the lowest of all cities.

The city continues to face some challenges in terms of social/structural indicators, ranking third once more in rapid population growth and second in population density. As with Johannesburg, 20% of residents lived in informal housing in 2022. The 202 infrastructure vulnerability indicator (indicator 19) places the city second lowest on the vulnerability spectrum, with only Johannesburg having a slightly lower score.

Ekurhuleni reported increased violent crime rates since 2020/21, which contributed to an increase in the murder, robbery, assault, and sexual offences rate over the five years. The rate of of murder experienced a 45% increase, sexual offences have shown a 15% increase, and robbery and assault had a 9% and 8% increase, respectively, in a year since 2021/22. Reported property-related crimes decreased by 35% since 2016/17 but increased by 9% in the past year.

The recorded crime detected due to police action rate has increased by 5% in the past year. However, this should be read cautiously against the 60% increase recorded in the long term (2005/06). Driving under the influence detected as a result of police action decreased by 35% in five years and 21% in a year.

Spatial Mapping of Crime Statistics: City of Ekurhuleni

INTRODUCTION

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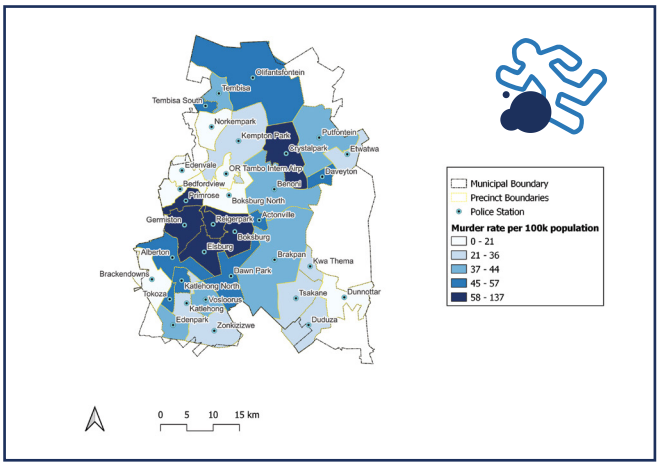
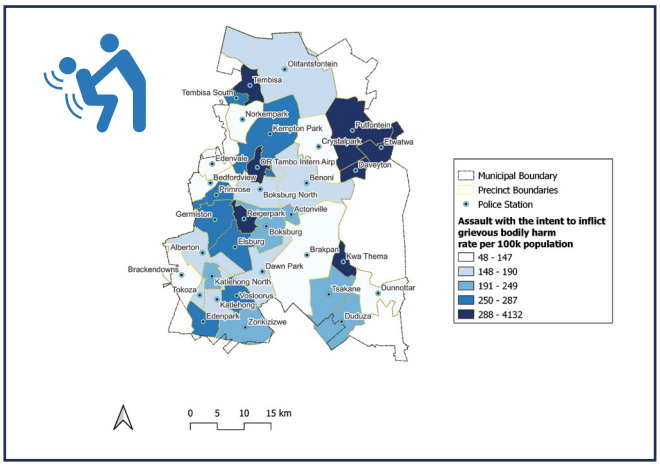
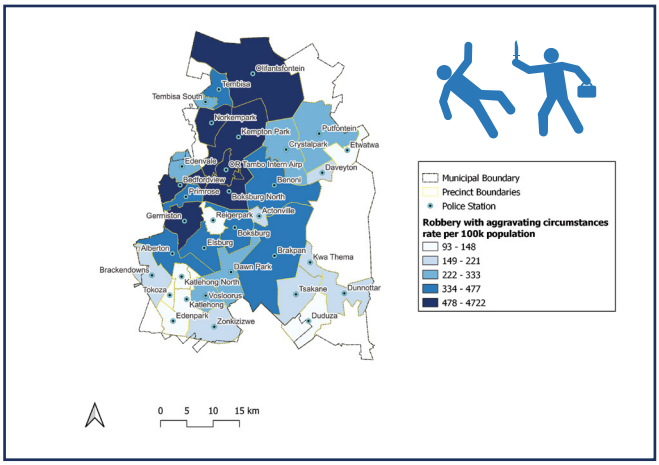
Murder rate



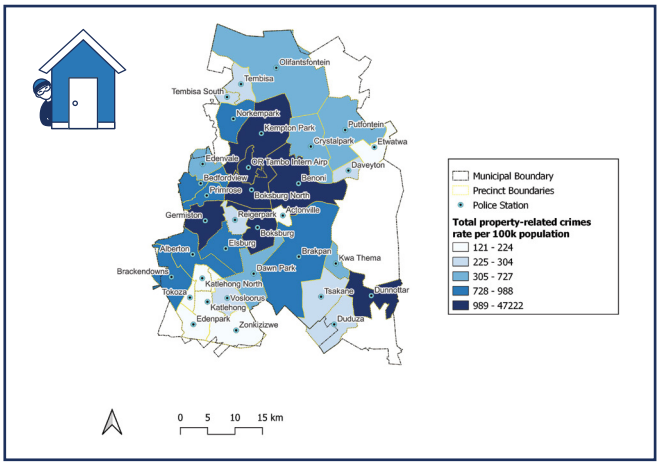
Assault with the intent to inflict grievous bodily harm



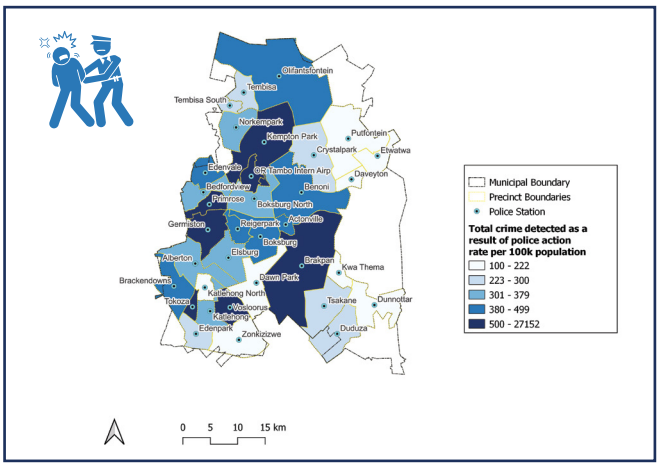
Robbery with aggravating circumstances



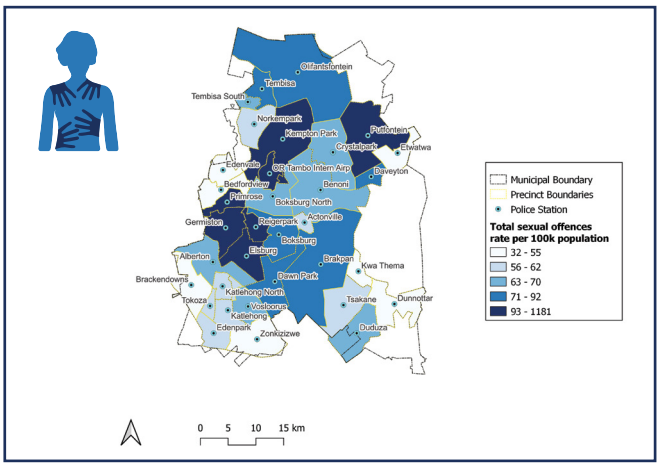
Property related-crimes



Crime detected as a result of police action



Sexual offences detected as a result of police action



IMPORTANT! The methodology and full details of the data as reported per police station can be found in the State of Urban Safety Report 2024.

City of Tshwane

Category		Indicator	
Objective indicators		1 Murder rate	22
		2 Assault rate	168
		3 Robbery rate	338
		4 Property-related crime rate	680
		5 Sexual offences rate	58
		6 Public/collective violence rate	
		7 Police activity (higher is positive)	270
Subjective indicators		8 Experience of crime/violence	4.2%
		9 Feelings of safety/fear of crime	65%
		10 Perception of/satisfaction with/ Trust in law enforcement	54%
Social / structural indicators	Urbanisation	11 Rapid population growth	2.6%
		12 Population density	621
		13 Social incoherence / family disruption	14%
	Marginalisation	14 Poverty	0.73
		15 Income inequality	0.62
		16 Unemployment	12.5
		17 Deprivation of services	12%
	Social/physical environment	18 Informal housing	18%
		19 Infrastructure	4.50
		20 School conditions and violence	
		21 Access to alcohol, drugs, firearms	89
		- Access to alcohol	59
		- Access to drugs	190
		- Access to firearms	17

Legend

City is doing relatively well compared to the other cities

City is doing average compared to the other cities

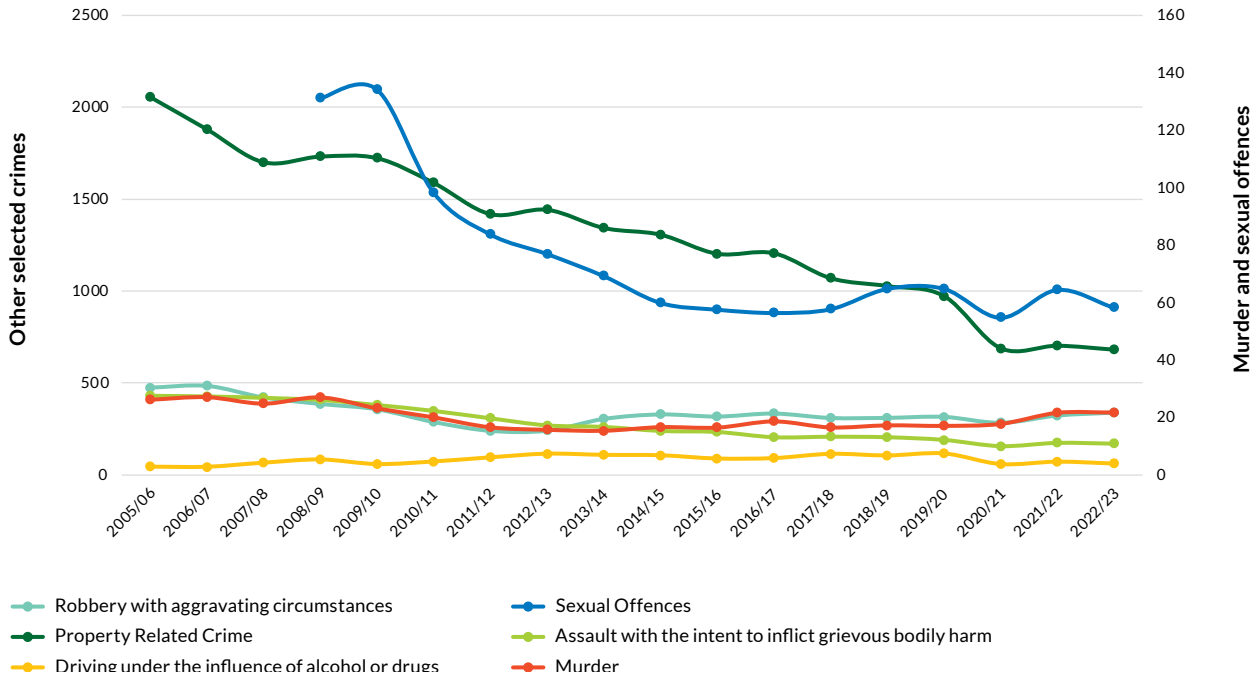
City is doing relatively poorly compared to the other cities

Data unavailable

TABLE 10: City-specific crime profile – Tshwane

Tshwane continues to record relatively low rates of interpersonal violent crimes, with the lowest rates of murder, assault and sexual offences out of all nine cities. The city's murder rate is half that of the national average. Despite marked increases in the past two years, its robbery rate is ranked fifth. The city has maintained a middling ranking for property-related crimes despite a considerable improvement in the rate since the previous year. Unlike the other cities, the indicator of police activity (as measured by all recorded rates of crime detected as a result of police action, including driving while under the influence of alcohol or drugs) has remained unchanged in the past year. The commencement of routine police operations can explain the previous sharp increase after stopping with the reprioritisation of police activities to police the lockdown restrictions and the implementation of alcohol bans. The 2021/22 and 2022/23 Victims of Crime Survey results are available at a provincial and metro level for the three

FIGURE 17: Long-term trends in selected crimes recorded per 100 000 people in Tshwane (2005/06-2022/23)



subjective indicators. This includes experiences of crime, perceptions of safety and trust in the police. Tshwane's trust in law enforcement ranks sixth at 54%. Experiences of housebreaking rank the highest and perceptions of unsafety are ranked joint fifth highest at 65% with Msunduzi. The city continues to face some challenges insofar as the social/structural indicators by ranking joint highest in rapid population growth with Johannesburg but relatively low in population density.

As with Cape Town, 18% of Tshwane residents are living in informal housing in 2022 – just behind Johannesburg and Ekurhuleni. Furthermore, the 2021 infrastructure vulnerability indicator (indicator 19) places Tshwane in the middle of the vulnerability spectrum.

Property-related crime continued downward, with a 28% decrease in the past five years and an unchanged rate in the past year. As noted above, the city has experienced an unchanged rate in the past year and a 53% decrease across five years in crimes detected due to police action cases. Routine roadblocks and other standard police operations in the city have not replaced a focus on policing lockdown restrictions.

Spatial Mapping of Crime Statistics: City of Tshwane

INTRODUCTION

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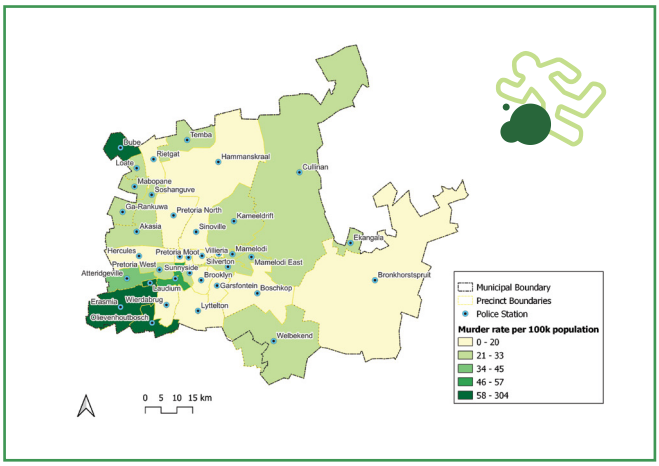
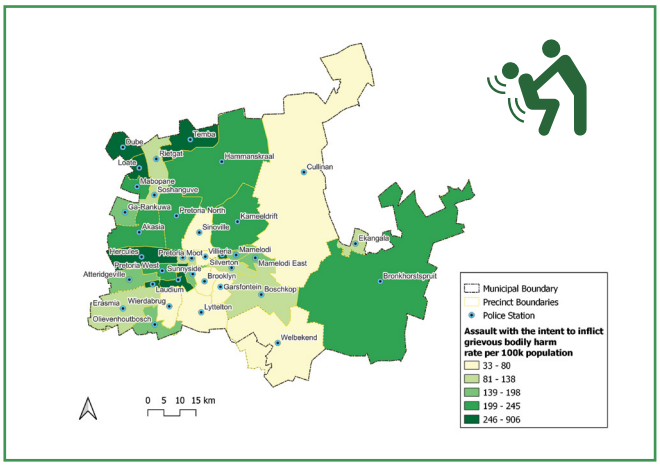
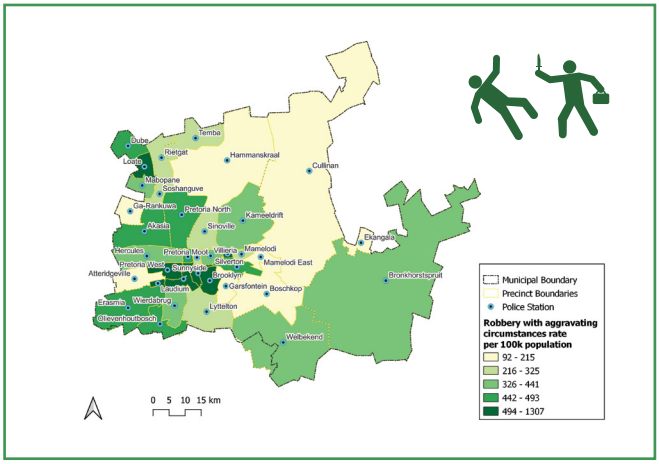
Murder rate



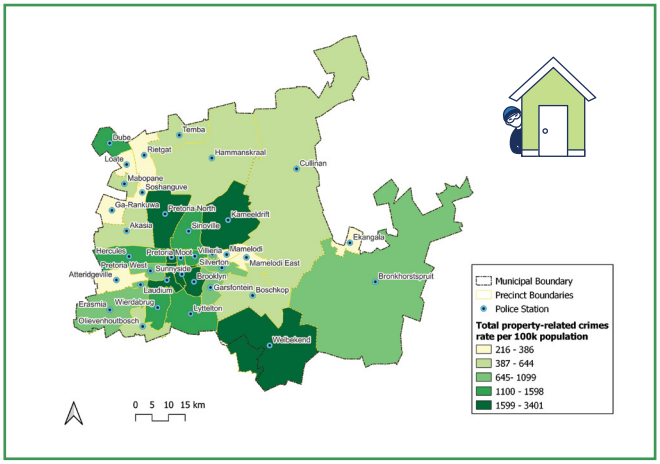
Assault with the intent to inflict grievous bodily harm



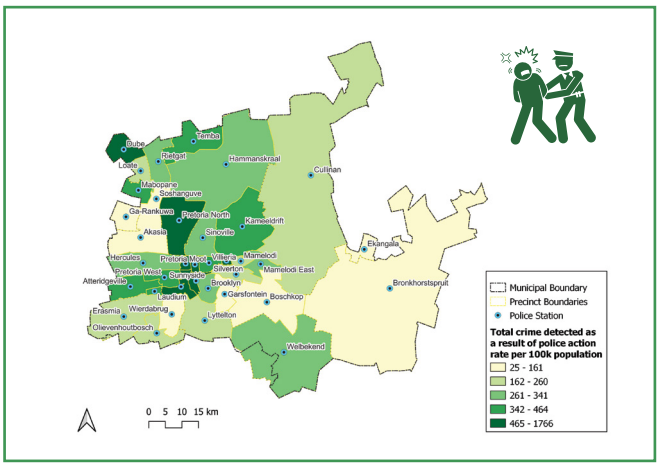
Robbery with aggravating circumstances



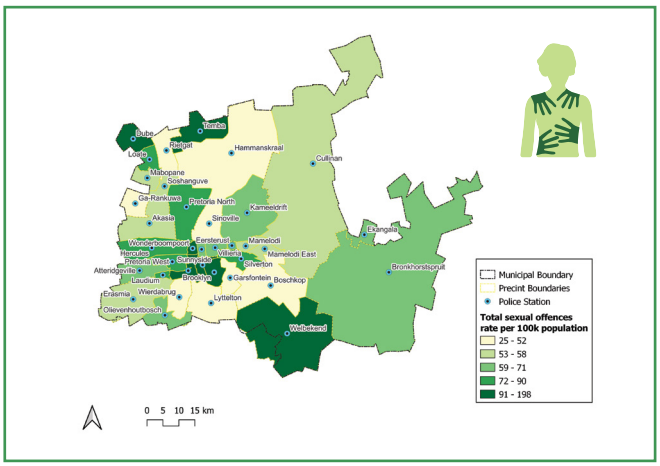
Property related-crimes



Crime detected as a result of police action



Sexual offences detected as a result of police action



IMPORTANT! The methodology and full details of the data as reported per police station can be found in the State of Urban Safety Report 2024.

Nelson Mandela Bay

Category		Indicator	
Objective indicators		1 Murder rate	103
		2 Assault rate	251
		3 Robbery rate	399
		4 Property-related crime rate	702
		5 Sexual offences rate	94
		6 Public/collective violence rate	
		7 Police activity (higher is positive)	457
Subjective indicators		8 Experience of crime/violence	2.2%
		9 Feelings of safety/fear of crime	63%
		10 Perception of/satisfaction with/ Trust in law enforcement	79%
Social / structural indicators	Urbanisation	11 Rapid population growth	0.2%
		12 Population density	620
		13 Social incoherence / family disruption	14%
	Marginalisation	14 Poverty	0.70
		15 Income inequality	0.63
		16 Unemployment	10.4
		17 Deprivation of services	8%
	Social/physical environment	18 Informal housing	6%
		19 Infrastructure	3.90
		20 School conditions and violence	
		21 Access to alcohol, drugs, firearms	152
		- Access to alcohol	80
		- Access to drugs	331
		- Access to firearms	45

Legend

City is doing relatively well compared to the other cities

City is doing average compared to the other cities

City is doing relatively poorly compared to the other cities

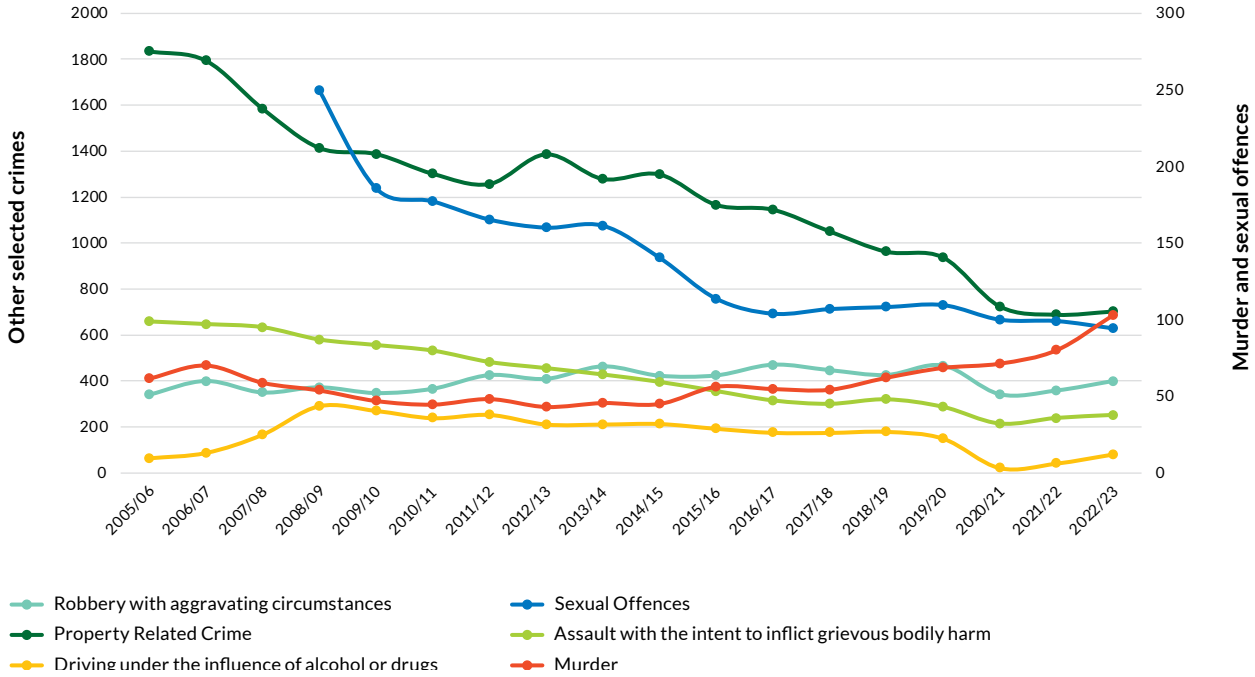
Data unavailable

TABLE 11: City-specific crime profile – Nelson Mandela Bay

Nelson Mandela Bay has a growing problem with violence, with the city recording the highest murder and robbery rate of all cities. The murder rate in Nelson Mandela Bay is especially concerning at 103 murders per 100 000, up by 29% in a single year from 80 murders per 100 000 in the previous year. Their property-related crime rates are the second highest in the cities, after Buffalo City and on par with Mangaung. The city now records the second-highest police activity after recording the fourth-lowest rate of police activities (measured by recorded crimes detected as a result of police action) in the previous year, substantially increasing routine policing activities in the past two years up from the lowest rates two years previous.

The 2021/22 and 2022/23 Victims of Crime Survey results are available at a provincial and metro level for the first two of three subjective indicators. This includes experiences of crime and perceptions of safety. Nelson Mandela

FIGURE 18: Long-term trends in selected crimes recorded per 100 000 people in Nelson Mandela Bay (2005/06-2022/23)



Bay recorded a middling ranking for housebreaking experience with the third lowest feelings of unsafety in the reporting period. For trust in the police, the indicators from the 2022/23 survey put the city ranking second highest at 79%, up from 73% in 2019, indicating possibly greater visibility.

The city's social and structural rankings perform relatively well. Population growth has stagnated. The infrastructure vulnerability indicator (indicator 19) places Nelson Mandela Bay in the middle of the vulnerability spectrum.

In the past year, Nelson Mandela Bay experienced increases in most violent crime. As with all the other cities, Nelson Mandela Bay continues to report a long-term decrease in assault with intent to inflict GBH rates and sexual offences—reporting 15% and 11% in the last five years, respectively. Property-related crimes remain on a downward trend but recorded a 2% increase since the last report. Despite this significant decline, the city has recorded the fifth-highest property-related crime rate for this period.

Nelson Mandela Bay holds the highest ranking for murder and robbery rates. Concerningly, the city has shown an 89% increase in murder in the past five years, with a further 29% in the past year. This represents a 67% increase since 2005/06. The city had a 12% increase in robbery rates in the last year and an 18% increase overall in 18 years. Of great concern, the murder rate increased by 4% in the past year. The murder and robbery rates require urgent attention to determine where, when, how and by whom these murders and robberies are committed. The city has a substantial gang problem with conflict in other areas, such as Cape Town, spilling over to the city.

The rates for crimes detected as a result of police action have increased significantly in the last year. This may indicate a substantive decrease in roadblocks, as routine roadblocks, despite policing efforts now, can be removed from a focus on policing lockdown restrictions.

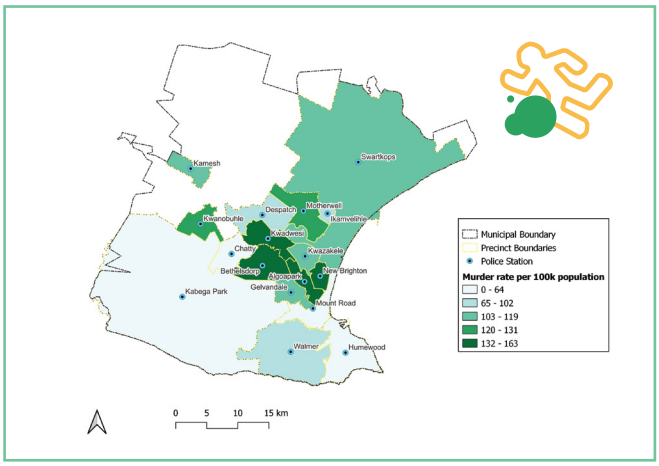
Spatial Mapping of Crime Statistics:

Nelson Mandela Bay

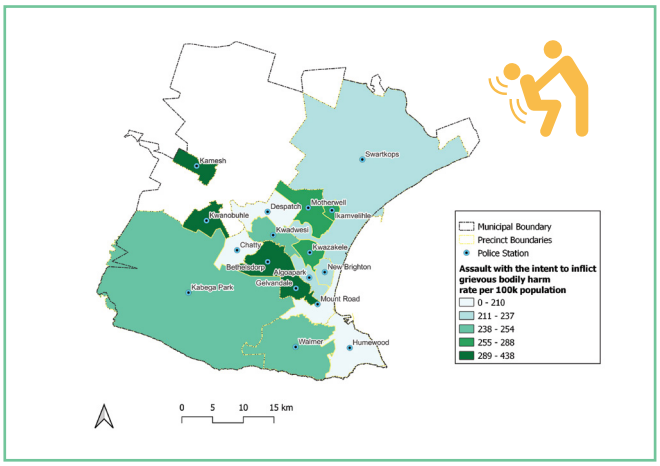
INTRODUCTION

The State of Urban Safety in South Africa Report 2024 contributes further to a critical longitudinal view of crime in cities and its associated risk factors over an 18-year period (2005-2023). This incremental database supports evidence-driven approaches at the city level and the tracking of the impact of actions by safety actors, and environmental and economic changes in Cities. SACN participating Cities have, over time, lobbied for further sub-categorisation of indicators by location. This is to enable an exploration of the inter-relationship between crime and the spatial development goals of South African Cities, especially given the legacy of spatial segragation, which is one of the chief exacerbating factors of urban crime and violence. The spatial illustration of crime, its incidence and distribution in a cirt is also intended to enable Cities to taget hotspots and implement interventions in a transversal or multidisciplinary way. These spatialised, per-city crime maps are the 2nd round in continued efforts by the Urban Safety Refernce Group to provide cities with reliable evidence and are aggregated from the 2022/2023 objective crime indicators supplied by the SAPS.

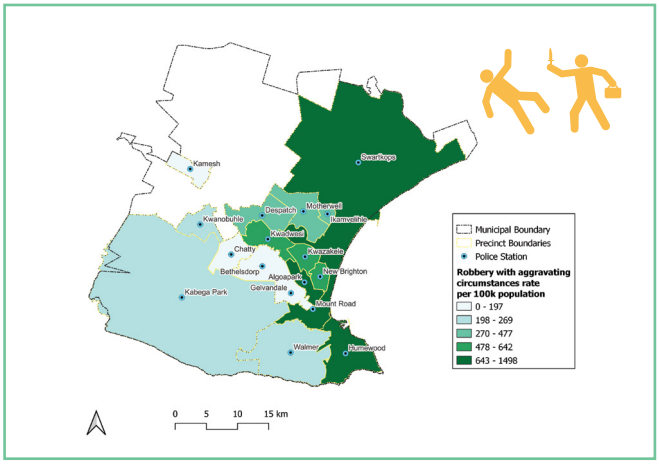
Murder rate



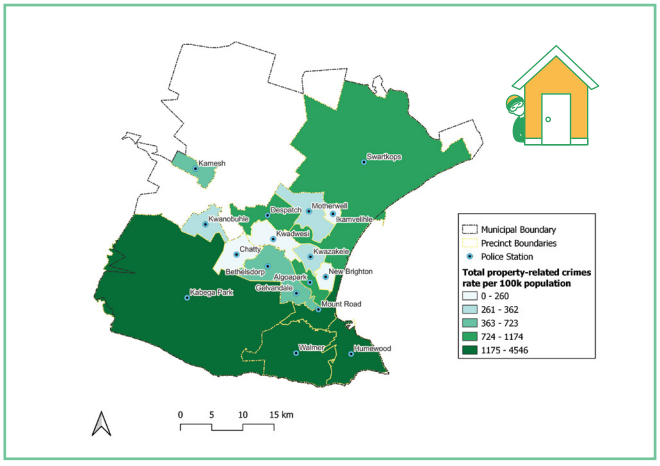
Assault with the intent to inflict grievous bodily harm



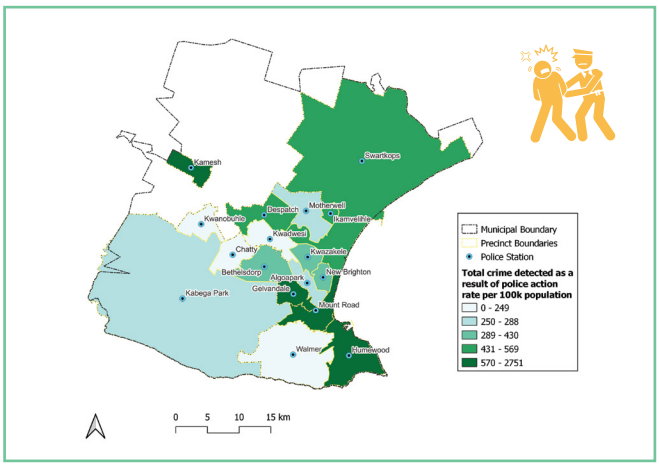
Robbery with aggravating circumstances



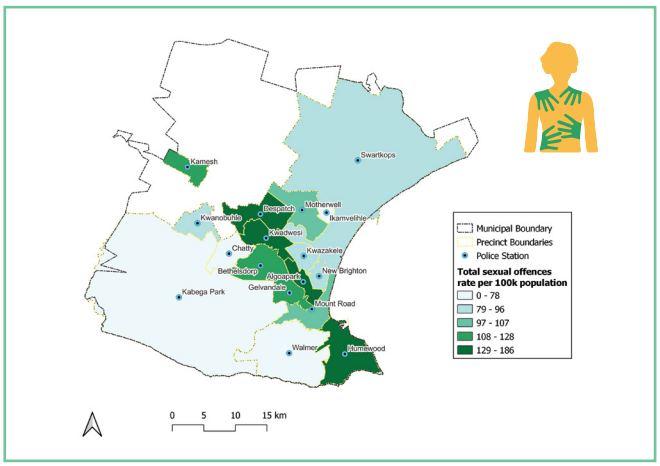
Property related-crimes



Crime detected as a result of police action



Sexual offences detected as a result of police action



IMPORTANT! The methodology and full details of the data as reported per police station can be found in the State of Urban Safety Report 2024.

Mangaung

Category		Indicator	
Objective indicators		1 Murder rate	35
		2 Assault rate	433
		3 Robbery rate	196
		4 Property-related crime rate	838
		5 Sexual offences rate	126
		6 Public/collective violence rate	
		7 Police activity (higher is positive)	456
Subjective indicators		8 Experience of crime/violence	0.5%
		9 Feelings of safety/fear of crime	72%
		10 Perception of/satisfaction with/ Trust in law enforcement	72%
Social / structural indicators	Urbanisation	11 Rapid population growth	-0.1%
		12 Population density	85
		13 Social incoherence / family disruption	15%
	Marginalisation	14 Poverty	0.68
		15 Income inequality	0.62
		16 Unemployment	17.5
		17 Deprivation of services	17%
	Social/physical environment	18 Informal housing	13%
		19 Infrastructure	5.50
		20 School conditions and violence	
		21 Access to alcohol, drugs, firearms	131
		- Access to alcohol	85
		- Access to drugs	280
		- Access to firearms	28

Legend

City is doing relatively well compared to the other cities

City is doing average compared to the other cities

City is doing relatively poorly compared to the other cities

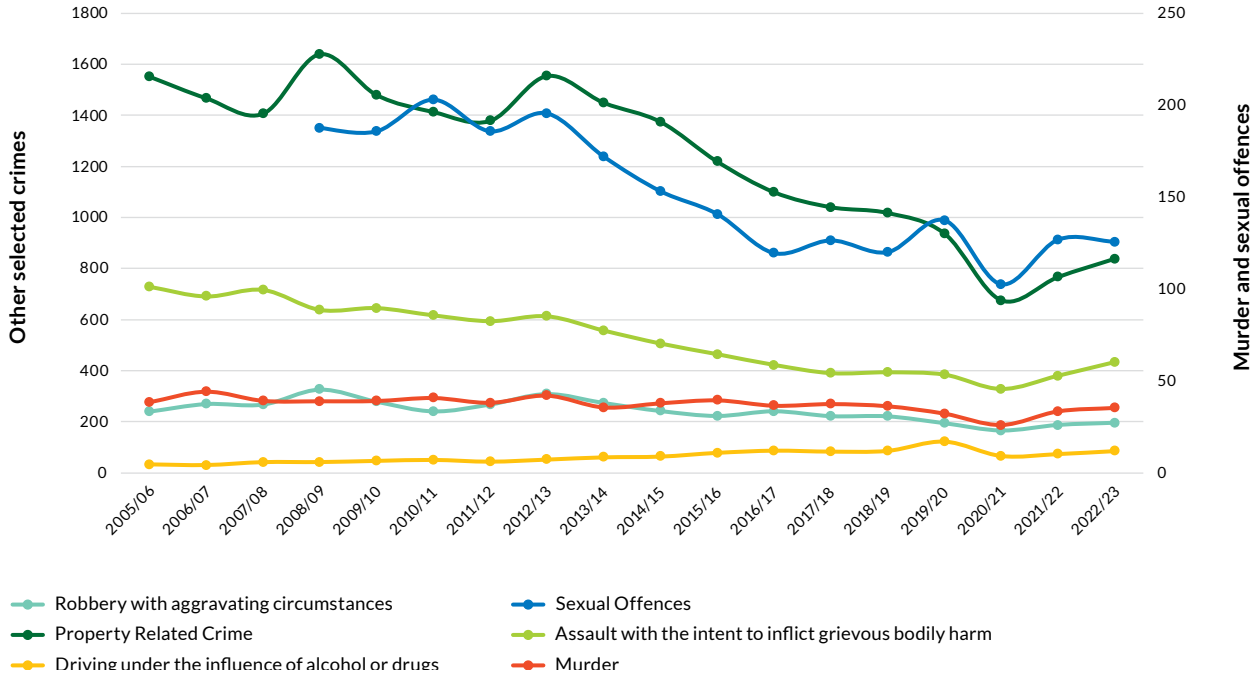
Data unavailable

TABLE 12: City-specific crime profile – Mangaung

Mangaung's murder rate is the second lowest compared to the nine cities. This ranking improved to second place, surpassing Ekurhuleni two years ago but still far higher than Tshwane. The city also ranks second for serious assault and sexual offences. The city remains at the lowest ranking for robbery rates among the nine cities. However, the city has continued to have somewhat middling property-related crimes. Its police activity, is relatively high. However, it increased the previous year significantly, suggesting a substantive increase in police activity.

The 2021/22 and 2022/23 Victims of Crime Survey results are available at a provincial and metro level for the three subjective indicators. These include experiences of crime and perceptions of safety. Mangaung is ranked the

FIGURE 19: Long-term trends in selected crimes recorded per 100 000 people in Mangaung (2005/06-2022/23)



lowest for experiences of housebreaking and fourth highest for feelings of unsafety at night. Mangaung's trust in law enforcement in 2022 ranks relatively high at 72%.

Mangaung's social and structural indicators suggest that urbanisation factors are less likely to be key drivers of crime than in most other cities. Compared to other cities, the city's population growth is stagnating, and it has the lowest population density ranking. The percentage of informal housing for 2022 is the lowest of the cities. Its general unemployment rate is the third lowest. The infrastructure vulnerability indicator (indicator 19) places Mangaung relatively high on the vulnerability spectrum.

Mangaung, akin to other cities, has shown a long-term decrease in its recorded rates of violent crime. However, assault with the intent to inflict GBH is up 11% over the last five years and 14% in the last year. Sexual offences have shown decreases in the past five years and stabilised at a 1% decrease in the past year. Its downward trend in property-related crime over the past five and 18 years has been revered in the past two years with a 9% increase in the past year.

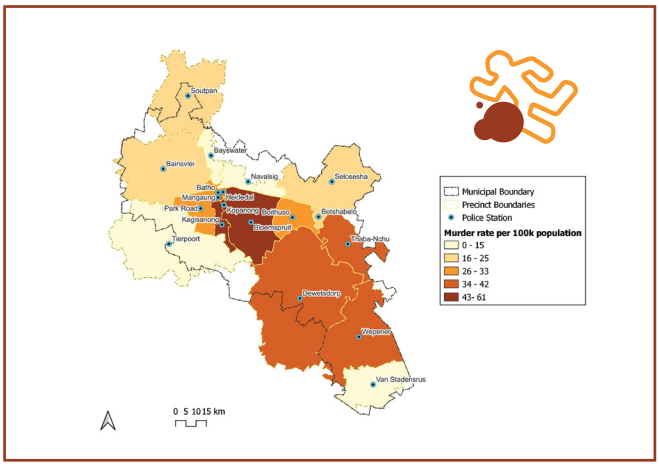
Mangaung's murder rate has shown a 6% increase in the past year, which follows a 29% increase in the previous year, and a decrease of 6% in five years. Its recorded rates of aggravated robbery have fluctuated mostly downwards, decreasing by 12% in the last five years, despite a 5% increase in the last year. The city's recorded rate of police action has significantly increased by 29% over the last year and a 34% increase in the last five years. This past two year's increase may be correlated with the commencement of routine police operations away from policing lockdown restrictions.

Spatial Mapping of Crime Statistics: Mangaung

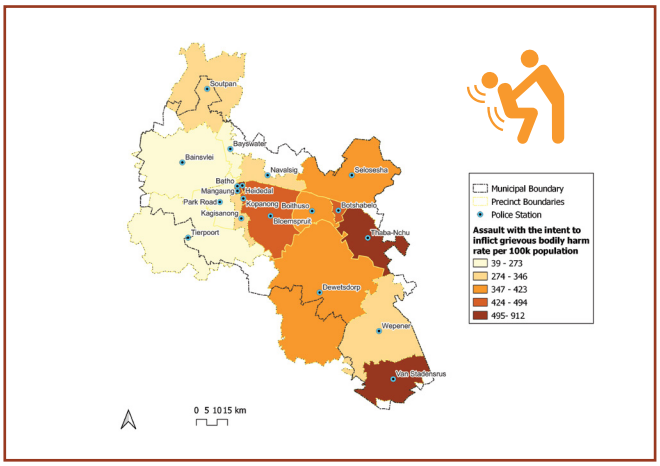
INTRODUCTION

The State of Urban Safety in South Africa Report 2024 contributes further to a critical longitudinal view of crime in cities and its associated risk factors over an 18-year period (2005-2023). This incremental database supports evidence-driven approaches at the city level and the tracking of the impact of actions by safety actors, and environmental and economic changes in Cities. SACN participating Cities have, over time, lobbied for further sub-categorisation of indicators by location. This is to enable an exploration of the inter-relationship between crime and the spatial development goals of South African Cities, especially given the legacy of spatial segragation, which is one of the chief exacerbating factors of urban crime and violence. The spatial illustration of crime, its incidence and distribution in a cirt is also intended to enable Cities to taget hotspots and implement interventions in a transversal or multidisciplinary way. These spatialised, per-city crime maps are the 2nd round in continued efforts by the Urban Safety Refernce Group to provide cities with reliable evidence and are aggregated from the 2022/2023 objective crime indicators supplied by the SAPS.

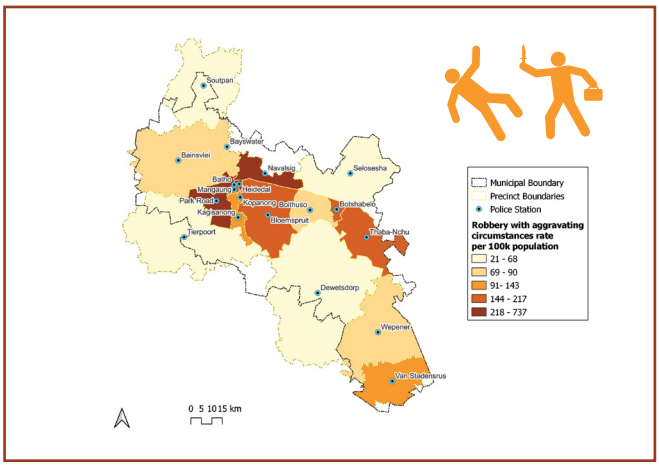
Murder rate



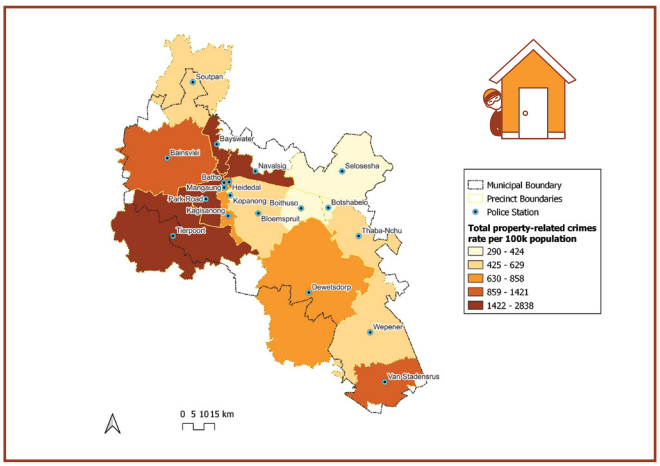
Assault with the intent to inflict grievous bodily harm



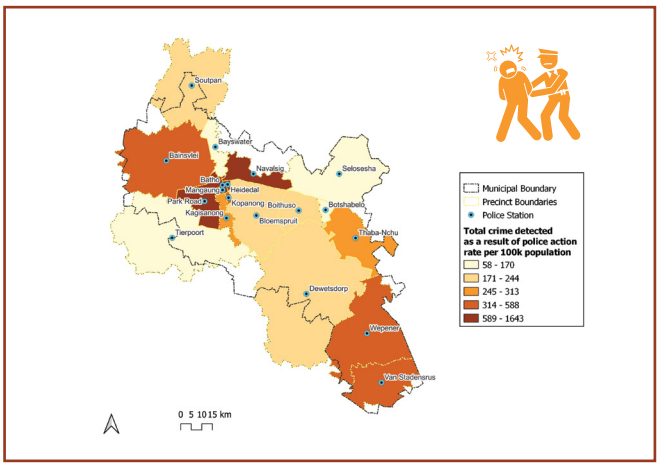
Robbery with aggravating circumstances



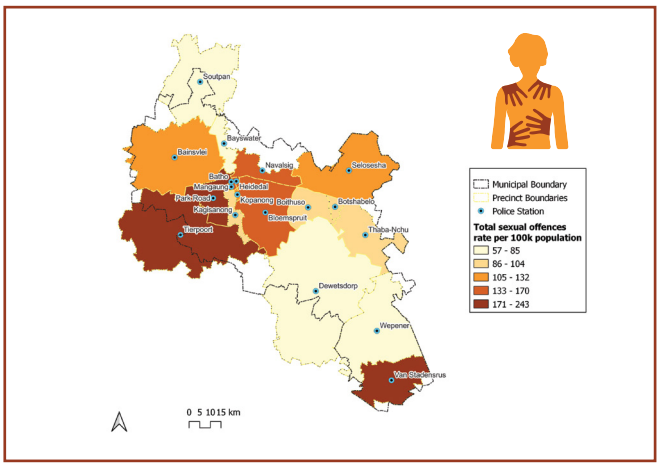
Property related-crimes



Crime detected as a result of police action



Sexual offences detected as a result of police action



IMPORTANT! The methodology and full details of the data as reported per police station can be found in the State of Urban Safety Report 2024.

Buffalo City

Category		Indicator	
Objective indicators		1 Murder rate	65
		2 Assault rate	584
		3 Robbery rate	281
		4 Property-related crime rate	1 120
		5 Sexual offences rate	147
		6 Public/collective violence rate	
		7 Police activity (higher is positive)	214
Subjective indicators		8 Experience of crime/violence	1.7%
		9 Feelings of safety/fear of crime	75%
		10 Perception of/satisfaction with/ Trust in law enforcement	58%
Social / structural indicators	Urbanisation	11 Rapid population growth	-0.1%
		12 Population density	290
		13 Social incoherence / family disruption	16%
	Marginalisation	14 Poverty	0.68
		15 Income inequality	0.63
		16 Unemployment	11.3
		17 Deprivation of services	19%
	Social/physical environment	18 Informal housing	14%
		19 Infrastructure	6.60
		20 School conditions and violence	
		21 Access to alcohol, drugs, firearms	71
		- Access to alcohol	54
		- Access to drugs	137
		- Access to firearms	23

Legend

City is doing relatively well compared to the other cities

City is doing average compared to the other cities

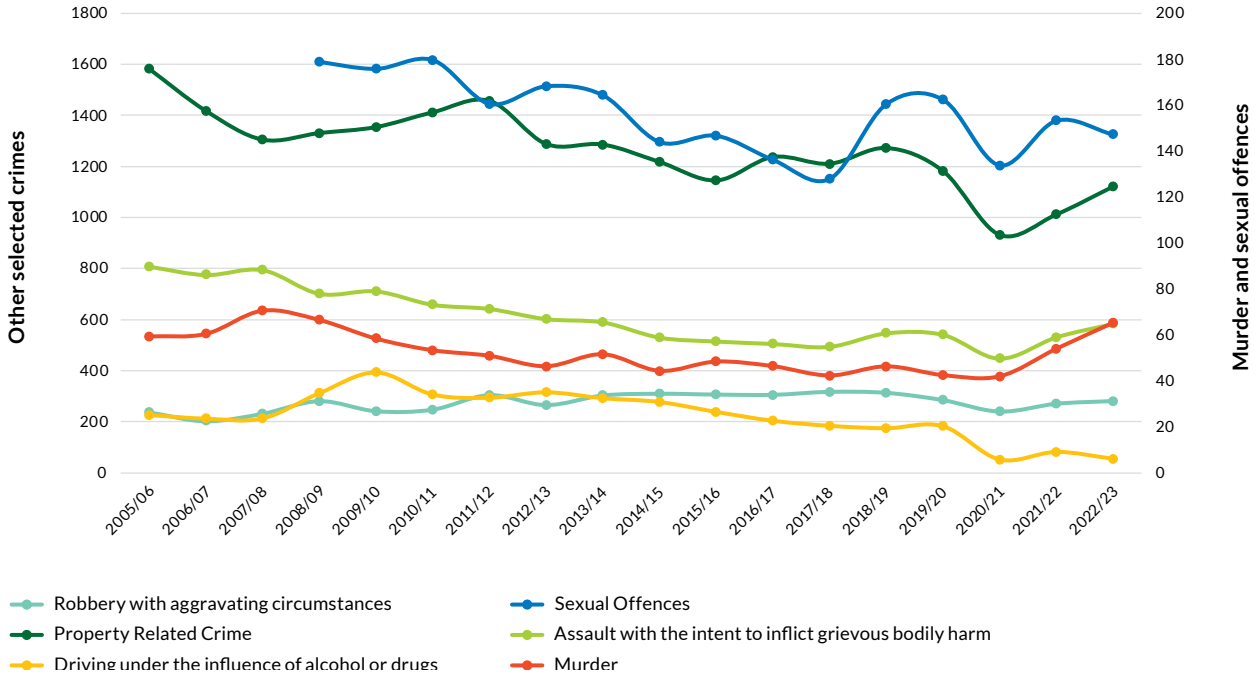
City is doing relatively poorly compared to the other cities

Data unavailable

TABLE 13: City-specific crime profile – Buffalo City

Buffalo City continues to display high levels of violent interpersonal crime, ranking worst among the cities in recorded rates of both assault and sexual offences and average in its rate of murder. Buffalo City experiences a serious assault rate double the national rate and 2.5 times the metro average. Their sexual offences rate is also the highest with the rate nearly double the national rate and double the metro average. Buffalo City has the highest property-related crime rate, more than 1,7 times the national and metro rates, second only to Cape Town. Its indicator of robbery is middling, relatively on par with the national and metro rates. Police activity (as measured by all crimes detected as a result of police actions, including recorded rates of driving while under the influence) ranks the lowest for this reporting period.

FIGURE 20: Long-term trends in selected crimes recorded per 100 000 people in Buffalo City (2005/06-2022/23)



The 2021/22 and 2022/23 Victims of Crime Survey results are available at a provincial and metro level for two subjective indicators. This includes experiences of crime and perceptions of safety. Buffalo City had the sixth highest ranking for experiences of housebreaking but third highest for perceptions of unsafety. For Buffalo City, in 2022, the city ranked fourth at 58% for trust in law enforcement.

Buffalo City's social and structural indicators remain overwhelmingly related to marginalisation factors such as the deprivation of services, unemployment, income inequality and poverty as its major challenges. The city continues to rank relatively high in terms of informal housing. Its crime reduction planning should aim to ameliorate these conditions. The 2021 vulnerability indicator (indicator 19) places Buffalo City at the top of the vulnerability spectrum.

Buffalo City has shown dramatic increases in all crime in the past two years. This includes a 21% increase in the murder rate since last year (driving a 54% increase in the past five years). Assault with the intent to inflict GBH increased by 9% in the last year (driving a 17% increase in the last five years). Sexual offences decreased by 4% last year, driving down the increases in the last five years to 14%.

Its disproportionally high recorded rate of property crimes has decreased by 8% in the past year, which has generally increased more unsteadily and slowly than most other cities (up 10% over the last five years). The city saw a 3% increase in robbery rates in the past year. Its recorded rates of police action have been increasing by 4% in the last year despite trending downward since 2017/18 (down 51%), suggesting that police have reprioritised routine roadblock activities.

Spatial Mapping of Crime Statistics: **Buffalo City**

INTRODUCTION

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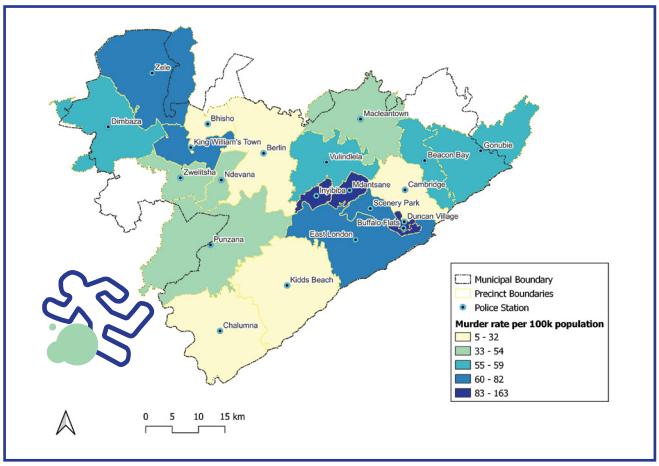
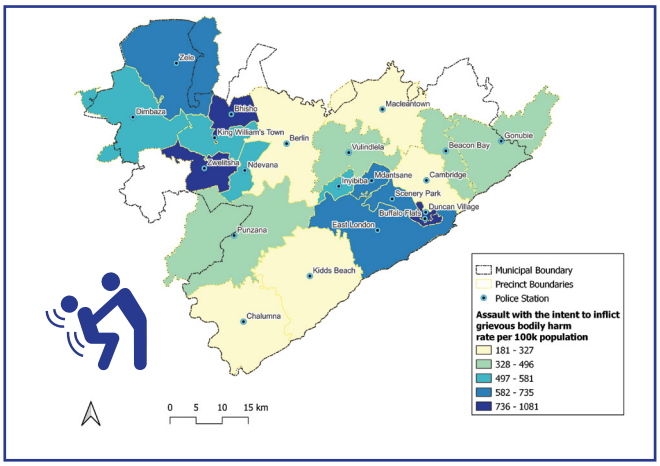
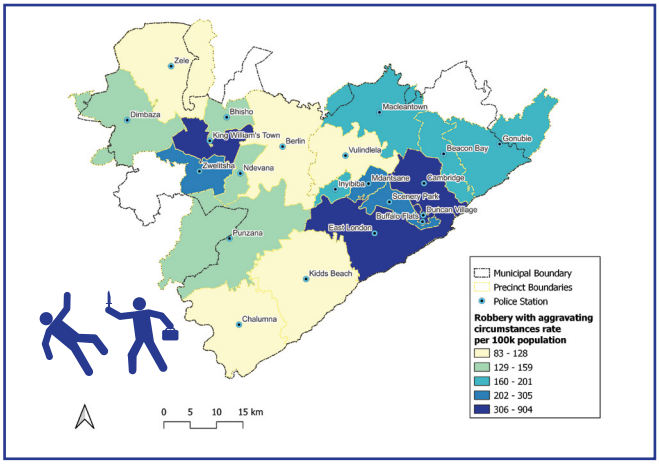
Murder rate



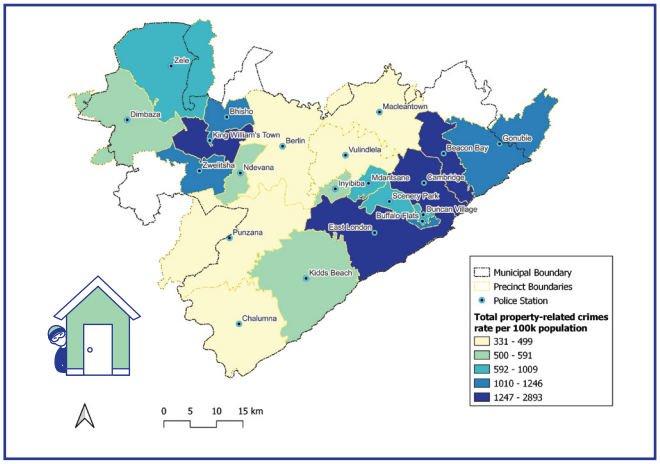
Assault with the intent to inflict grievous bodily harm



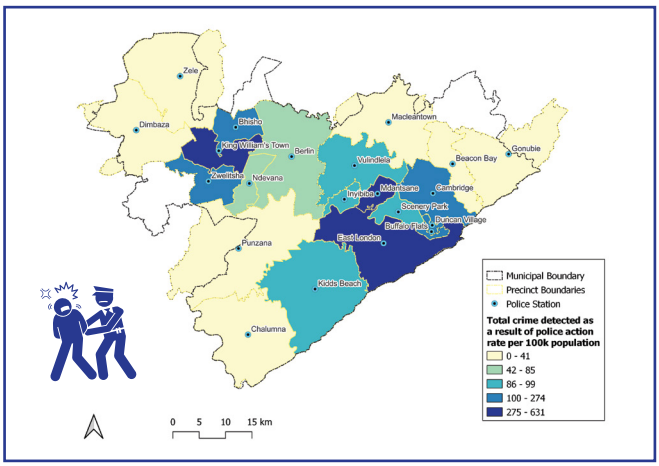
Robbery with aggravating circumstances



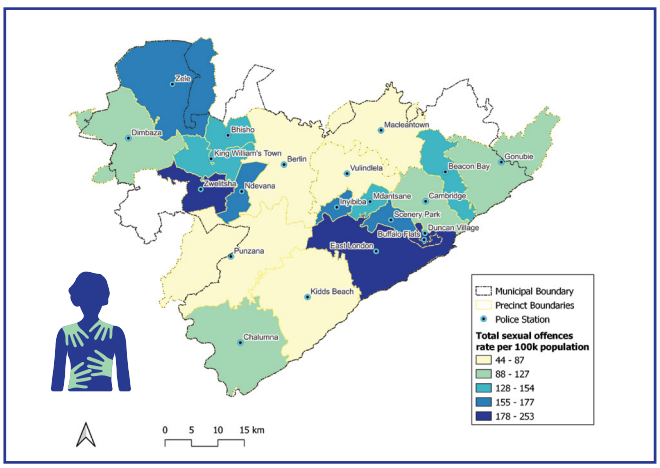
Property related-crimes



Crime detected as a result of police action



Sexual offences detected as a result of police action



IMPORTANT! The methodology and full details of the data as reported per police station can be found in the State of Urban Safety Report 2024.

Msunduzi

Category		Indicator	
Objective indicators		1 Murder rate	69
		2 Assault rate	245
		3 Robbery rate	333
		4 Property-related crime rate	653
		5 Sexual offences rate	89
		6 Public/collective violence rate	
		7 Police activity (higher is positive)	432
Subjective indicators		8 Experience of crime/violence	2.3%
		9 Feelings of safety/fear of crime	65%
		10 Perception of/satisfaction with/ Trust in law enforcement	64%
Social / structural indicators	Urbanisation	11 Rapid population growth	1.7%
		12 Population density	980
		13 Social incoherence / family disruption	18%
	Marginalisation	14 Poverty	0.66
		15 Income inequality	0.63
		16 Unemployment	18.0
		17 Deprivation of services	39%
	Social/physical environment	18 Informal housing	2%
		19 Infrastructure	4.90
		20 School conditions and violence	
		21 Access to alcohol, drugs, firearms	139
		- Access to alcohol	19
		- Access to drugs	364
		- Access to firearms	33

Legend

City is doing relatively well compared to the other cities

City is doing average compared to the other cities

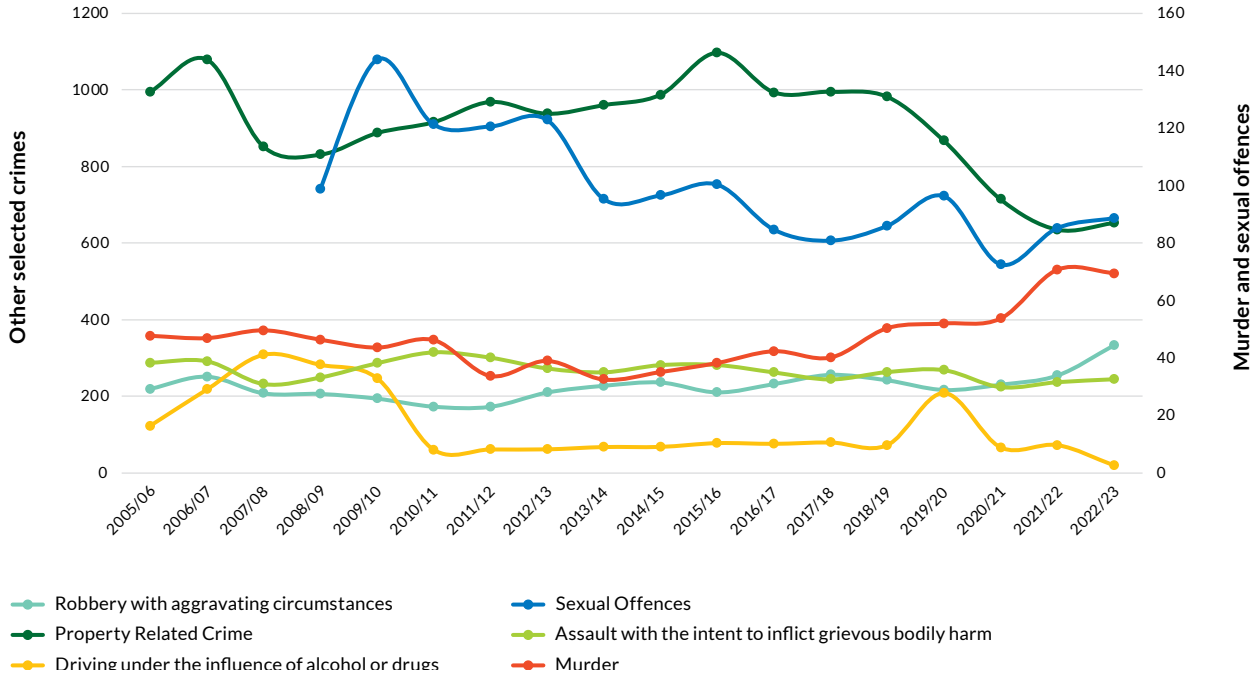
City is doing relatively poorly compared to the other cities

Data unavailable

TABLE 14: City-specific crime profile – Msunduzi

Msunduzi has had a 73% increase in its murder rate in the past five years and is now ranking third highest for murder after Nelson Mandela Bay and eThekwini. Encouragingly, it has had a 2% decrease in its murder rate the past year. Despite this overall spike, it has continued to display middling to low recorded rates of most crime types, as previously reported. Although it has the fourth lowest robbery rate and assault with intent to inflict GBH rate. The city also has fairly middling rates of property-related crimes. There is, however, still a need for the city to focus on addressing its pattern of interpersonal violence crimes, such as sexual offences it has maintained its fifth position in this period.

FIGURE 21: Long-term trends in selected crimes recorded per 100 000 people in Msunduzi (2005/06-2022/23)



The 2021/22 and 2022/23 Victims of Crime Survey results are available at a provincial and non-metro provincial level for three subjective indicators. These include experiences of crime and perceptions of safety. For Msunduzi, using non metro provincial data, the general non-metro provincial rate has the fourth highest ranking in persons feeling unsafe at night. The 2022 survey shows that trust in law enforcement is fifth highest for non-metro KwaZulu-Natal, with a ranking of 64% trust in policing.

The social/structural indicators measure that the city faces many challenges. Compared to other cities, it ranks highest for unemployment, social incoherence, poverty, and deprivation of service. The infrastructure vulnerability indicator (indicator 19) places Mzunduzi relatively high on the vulnerability spectrum.

Msunduzi continues to show notable crime trends, being the smallest of the cities (and the only non-metro). Msunduzi has had fairly middling to low crime rates compared to the larger cities. However, its murder rate of 69 murders per 100 000 population is now the third highest, third only to Nelson Mandela Bay and eThekwini. There is a need for the city to focus on addressing its pattern of interpersonal violence crimes. As is the case with eThekwini, the murder rate soured during and after the 2021 July unrest. In the previous year, the murder rate was 71, which does not the unrest does not account for the 128 additional murders recorded in 2021/22 when compared to 2020/21 or the additional 150 murders when compared to the 2019/20 financial year.

The city's property-related crime trend has shown a substantial decline in the last five years of 34% and an increase in the last year of 3%. Its long-term trend of sexual offences has increased by 10% over the last five years, after a 4% increase in the last year. Similarly, its recorded rates of assault with the intent to inflict GBH have remained unchanged in five years after a 3% increase in the last year.

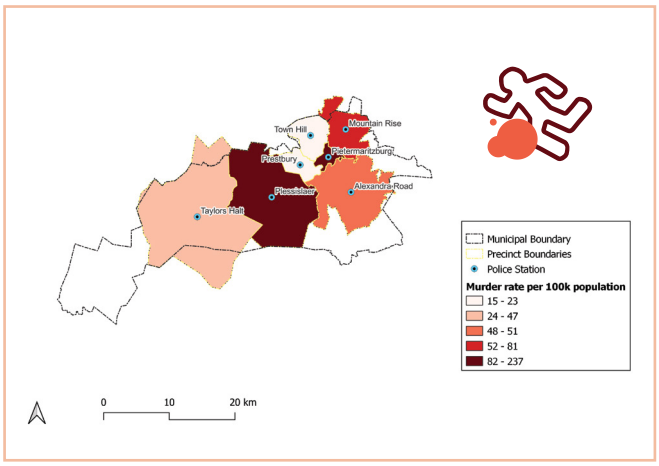
Of concern is the now 73% increase in the murder rate in the past five years, with a more marginal 2% decrease in the last year after a huge 31.5% spike in the previous year. The robbery rate has increased by nearly 30% in five years, driven by more than 31% in the last year. Its recorded rates of police action decreased by nearly 1% over the year. Still, they decreased by 55% in the last five years, perhaps suggesting that the police have substantially reprioritized resources away from roadblocks and other policing operations.

Spatial Mapping of Crime Statistics: Msunduzi

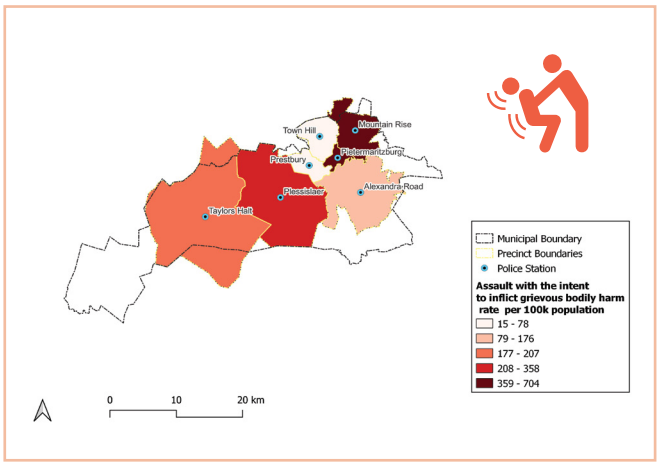
INTRODUCTION

The State of Urban Safety in South Africa Report 2024 contributes further to a critical longitudinal view of crime in cities and its associated risk factors over an 18-year period (2005-2023). This incremental database supports evidence-driven approaches at the city level and the tracking of the impact of actions by safety actors, and environmental and economic changes in Cities. SACN participating Cities have, over time, lobbied for further sub-categorisation of indicators by location. This is to enable an exploration of the inter-relationship between crime and the spatial development goals of South African Cities, especially given the legacy of spatial segragation, which is one of the chief exacerbating factors of urban crime and violence. The spatial illustration of crime, its incidence and distribution in a cirt is also intended to enable Cities to taget hotspots and implement interventions in a transversal or multidisciplinary way. These spatialised, per-city crime maps are the 2nd round in continued efforts by the Urban Safety Refernce Group to provide cities with reliable evidence and are aggregated from the 2022/2023 objective crime indicators supplied by the SAPS.

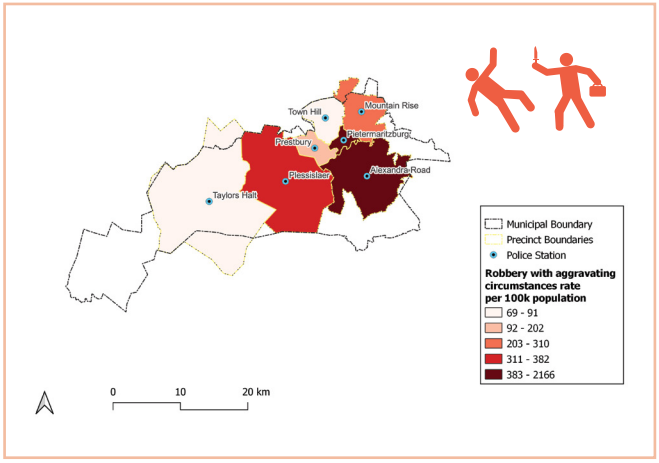
Murder rate



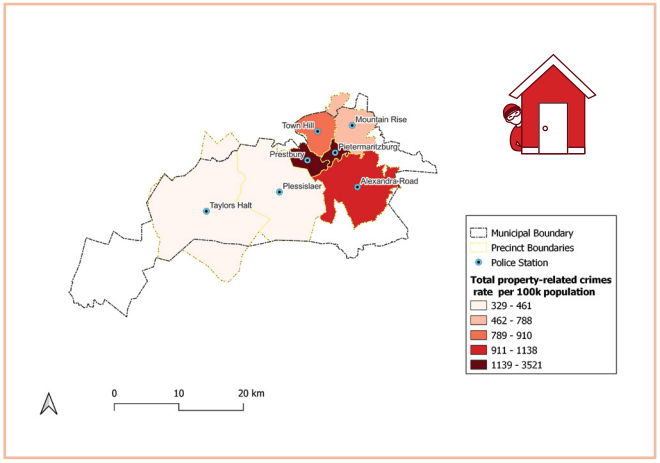
Assault with the intent to inflict grievous bodily harm



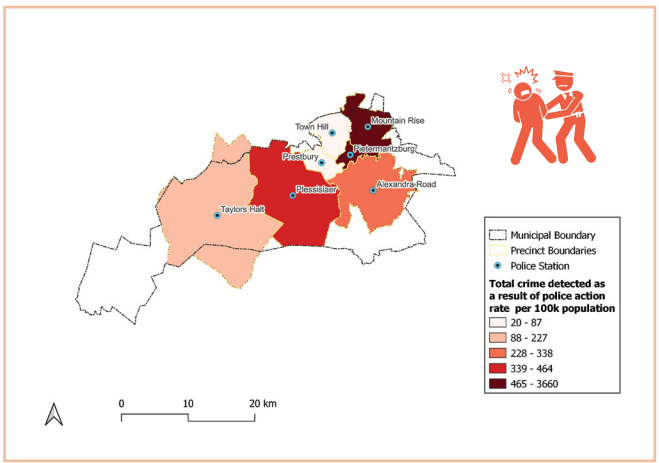
Robbery with aggravating circumstances



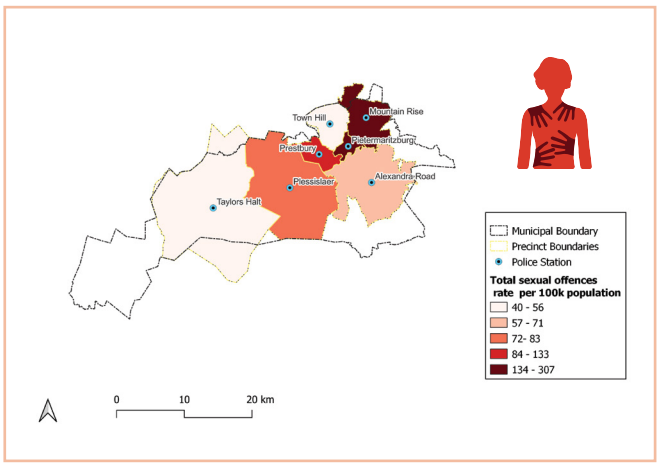
Property related-crimes



Crime detected as a result of police action



Sexual offences detected as a result of police action



IMPORTANT! The methodology and full details of the data as reported per police station can be found in the State of Urban Safety Report 2024.

Annexure B: USRG Members

The Urban Safety Reference Group

The State of Urban Safety in South Africa Report 2024 is a flagship publication of the Urban Safety Reference Group (USRG). Issued biennially, 'state of' reporting is part of a cities led knowledge agenda to support evidence-informed and partnership driven municipal practice. In the alternating years, the USRG issues smaller editions, containing just the city-level crime statistics analysis, called The State of Crime and Safety in South African Cities Reports.

The USRG is the first institutionalised forum in South Africa that enables practice-based learning on urban safety and violence prevention, specifically aimed at government practitioners and at informing improved policy-making, planning, budgeting, implementation and management of city safety programmes. Through its evidence and indicators work, it has influenced global conversations and processes on city safety data, and has been a template for learning across African urban contexts, on how cities can convene and advocate collectively on important issues.

It has proven a valuable platform for peer-to-peer learning and knowledge sharing among practitioners from SACN participating cities, as well as other key government entities with a role in urban safety.

Established in 2014, the State of Urban Safety in South Africa Report 2024 marks 10 years of the USRG in existence. The USRG is convened by the South African Cities Network (SACN) with the technical and resource support of the Inclusive Violence and Crime Prevention (VCP) Programme. VCP was established in 2012 and is a joint South African-German intervention, with co-financing from Global Affairs Canada (GAC). VCP is steered by the South African Department of Cooperative Governance (DCOG), and other departments, and implemented by the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) on behalf of the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ). As VCP ends in November 2024, it will remain an invaluable input and worthwhile investment well into the future. It has generated immense energy, inspired action, made critical connections and created a durable base and strong networks such as the USRG, that must continue to pursue learning, exchange and action towards South African cities that are safe, and where all can thrive.

For further information on the USRG and its knowledge products, please contact:
South African Cities Network
urbansafety@sacities.net
+27 (0)11 407 6471

For more information on urban safety and related topics, please visit:
@safer_spaces
@saferspaces.sa
SaferSpaces
www.sacities.net/urban-safety-reports
www.saferspaces.org.za

NATIONAL PARTNER INSTITUTIONS

national treasury
Department: National Treasury
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Department: Cooperative Governance
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civilian secretariat for police service
Department: Civilian Secretariat for Police Service
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

human settlements
Department: Human Settlements
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

SOUTH AFRICAN LOCAL GOVERNMENT ASSOCIATION
SALGA
Inspiring service delivery

SACN Participating Cities

Name	City or Municipality
Amie Molelekwa	Mangaung Metropolitan Municipality
Ayanda Roji	City of Joburg
Bongumusa Zondo	eThekwini Municipality
Charmaine Sutil	City of Tshwane
Joy-Lynn Jacobs	City of Joburg
Lumka Mbambo	Buffalo City Metropolitan Municipality
Margo Weimers	City of Joburg
Dr Nazira Cachalia	City of Joburg
Nomusa Shembe	eThekwini Municipality
Puleng Lekgoathi	City of Ekurhuleni
Shaun Petzer	Buffalo City Metropolitan Municipality
Sopna Kumar-Nair	Buffalo City Metropolitan Municipality
Thabisa Mandla	Nelson Mandela Bay Metropolitan Municipality
Thandile Matshikwe	Nelson Mandela Bay Metropolitan Municipality
Xola Debe	City of Ekurhuleni

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Lillian Mashele	Civilian Secretariat for Police Service
Martha Molepo	Civilian Secretariat for Police Service
Samantha Govender-Hlahatsi	National Treasury
Ugeshni Naidoo	SALGA

Inclusive Violence & Crime Prevention (VCP) Programme

Johanna Tyrakowski
Thomas Hellmann
Tlholohelo Mokgere

South African Cities Network

Sadhna Bhana
Siphelele Ngobese
Yasmin Coovadia

USRG Knowledge Partners, Sector Experts & Associates 2022 - 2024

Name	Company or Organisation
Dr Alexia Smit	Storythinking Academy
Amisi Matodzi	Independent Evaluation Research Consultant
Dr Barbara Holtmann	Fixed Africa
Emma De Villiers	Fixed Africa
Fred Kusambiza	PLANACT
Glenn Hollands	Mbumba Development Services
Justine Neke	Indlela Growth Strategies
Dr Keneilwe Munyai	Storythinking Academy
Dr Kirsten Harrison	Independent Research Consultant
Lizette Lancaster	Institute for Security Studies
Prof Marie Huchzermeyer	University of the Witwatersrand
Nkosilenhle Mavuso	University of the Witwatersrand
Nomfundo Phetha	Ethekwini Municipality
Nqobile Malaza	university of the Witwatersrand
Dr Paulo Moreira	University of the Witwatersrand
Dr Rael Futerman	Storythinking Academy
Dr Tanya Jacobs	Independent Gender Expert
Dr Tanya Zack	Tanya Zack Development Planners