Parliament of the Province of the Western Cape

FIRST SESSION, SIXTH PARLIAMENT

Question Paper No 03- 2019

Friday, 12 July 2019

**WRITTEN REPLY**

1. **Mr M Kama to ask Mr A T Fritz, Minister of Community Safety**:
2. How many murders were reported in the province per month between June 2018 and June 2019, and for each case provide the (a) weapon used, (b) age of the deceased and (c) location where murder took place;
3. whether his Department has put measures in place to address the scourge of drugs and gangs, and the high murder rate in the province; if not, why not; if so, what are the relevant details;
4. whether the high murder rate is a consequence of poverty, inequality and unemployment in the province; if so, what plans does his Department have to address this?

**MINISTER OF COMMUNITY SAFETY TO REPLY**

**2.** **The South African Police Services informed me as follows:**

(1) **PLEASE BE ADVISED:**

(a) - (c) No crime statistics may be released in the public domain prior to the Minister of Police approval and presentation to cabinet.

 (2) **South African Police Service response:**

 Yes, the South African Police Service in conjunction with other role players have implemented Operational Lockdown, a multi-disciplined, integrated and intelligence led operation focussing on hotspot areas for murders, attempted murders, carjacking, and gang activity.

 The Operation has been in place since 2019-07-11

 This operation follows a five Pillar approach:

* Pillar 1: Intelligence gathering, analysis and co-ordination
* Pillar 2: Proactive approach
* Pillar 3: Combat and reaction approach
* Pillar 4: Reaction through detection including organised crime
* Pillar 5: Communication and liaison

To date lockdown operations have been conducted in the following areas:

* Steenberg
* Philippi East
* Delft
* Khayelitsha

**The Department of Community Safety’s response:**

The Department of Community Safety has a close working relationship with SAPS, CPFs, Neighbourhood Watch Structures, Faith Based and Community Organisations.

Safety is everyone’s responsibility. In line with the Departments’ Community Safety Improvement Partnership (CSIP) strategy, the Department will promote professional policing through effective oversight as legislated, capacitate safety partnerships with communities and other stakeholders, and promote safety in all public buildings and spaces”.

One of the Department’s strategic outcome oriented goals is to promote professional policing through effective oversight, in terms of section 206 of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa.

Further to this, the Department has performed a supporting role in deterring violence in our communities in the following ways:

• Funding support provided to CPFs for their performance on the Expanded Partnership Programme based on their legislative mandate in accordance with section 8 of the SAPS Act.

• The Department has hosted consultative workshops with stakeholders. The engagements focused on strengthening healthy and sustained partnerships between the Department, CPFs, Cluster Boards, and the SAPS on all levels (local, cluster and provincial), full participation on the EPP, and the importance of collaboration between the Department, SAPS, Neighbourhood Watch (NHW) structures and other role players, including government departments and organisations in communities;

• Supporting CPFs in the funding of matching grant safety projects which are aligned to the community safety plans of their respective areas;

The Department of Community Safety conducts its flagship Youth Safety and Religion Partnership (YSRP) Programme in conjunction with faith-based organisations during the June/July and December/January School Holidays. This initiative of the Department was established to create a safe environment for children and youth during school holidays.

The YSRP school holiday programme is part of the Department’s Community Safety Improvement Partnership (CSIP) strategy, and is conducted throughout the Western Cape Province in conjunction with faith-based organisations. Priority is given to areas with a high prevalence of gang activity and violence.

During the June/July 2019 school holidays the department funded 199 projects with a total investment of R3 723 000. The total number of youth reached was 12 422.

The department will again run similar projects during the December 2019 and January 2020 school holidays.

**(3) The Department of Community Safety’s response:**

There is no evidence that poverty, inequality and unemployment, in the Western Cape or elsewhere, are the direct and exclusive determinants of a high murder rate.

 There are numerous determinants to high levels of murder, and the relationship between these determinants is very complex. Murder is the best proxy indicator for violence and addressing the multiple determinants of violence requires a coordinated response from a multitude of stakeholders. The determinants include individual, relationship, community and societal risk factors that should be tackled holistically.

 The Western Cape Government actively participates in several forums aimed at increasing collaboration in the fields of safety and security. This includes the ProvJoints Priorities Committee on Murders, chaired by the Provincial Police Commissioner and the Head of Department: Community Safety. Meaningful partnerships between all spheres of government based on trust and transparency are required to be able to effectively tackle the determinants of violence, including murder.

 Another major issue to effectively tackle murders is to address the high number of illegal firearms circulating in our communities. The overall increase in homicide rates in the Western Cape can be attributed to an increase in availability of firearms. The data from the Western Cape Department of Health shows that homicide rates due to assault with a firearm doubled in males between 2010 and 2016, which corresponds to the overall increase in homicide rates in the province over the period. The SAPS crime statistics for the 2017/18 financial year place the widespread access to firearms as a primary risk factor for murder, with firearms being used in 42% of murders.

 Thousands of those illegal firearms were sold by former police colonel Chris Prinsloo to the Cape Flat gangs. It is the responsibility of SAPS to now recover these illegal firearms. Our oversight data indicates that between July 2017 and March 2019, SAPS lost a total of 91 firearms and recovered 55 of those firearms. The Province made available a reward of R10 000 to any person who would provide information that would lead to the recovery of an illegal firearm.

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