

EVENT: NCOP DEBATE

**TOPIC: PROGRESS IN RESOURCING OF THE POLICE SERVICE
STATIONS TO WAGE A CONCERTED BATTLE AGAINST CRIME AND
CRIMINALITY**

VENUE: NCOP (VIRTUAL - ZOOM)

DATE: 1 NOVEMBER 2022

**ADDRESS BY: WESTERN CAPE MINISTER OF POLICE OVERSIGHT AND
COMMUNITY SAFETY, REAGEN ALLEN**

Honourable Chairperson
Honourable Minister
Honourable Deputy Minister
Honourable Members

To this day I have to say that the men and women in blue across this province are working their socks off to keep residents safe and to ensure they fulfill their Constitutional mandate.

The unfortunate reality is, many of the officers are working in and under conditions that are not conducive to effective crime fighting. How can it be expected of these committed officers, the men and women in blue to be effective in what they're doing if they are continuously hamstrung by not having or by having very little resources – the basic resources that are required in their job? This is something that will never make sense.

Today's topic is quite fitting, as there is a realisation that if the expectation is for SAPS officers to be effective in their crime fighting efforts, they have to be well-resourced.

It is a known fact that the Provincial Executive does not have any powers of resource allocation in the province. Resource allocation, fixed establishments and the number and grading of posts are all determined at a national level. This is a matter that requires an urgent amendment, as these allocations should be determined at, at least a provincial level. You cannot sit 1 500km's away and decide on the allocations of resources.

There's quite an irony in the number of recruits that the Western Cape is due to receive in the current financial year. Initially, there was an allocation of **1 939** new recruits. Now, only **1 118** will arrive. This is **821** fewer officers. We haven't been informed why we're receiving fewer officers. It could be that ESKOM, or another SOE requires a bailout. That we're due to receive a much lower number of new recruits, is highly significant, as already the province is grossly under-resourced. We are sitting with a **10%** vacancy rate in the province.

The Western Cape's granted establishment is just over **21 300**. The actual number of SAPS officials are **19 505**.

Chairperson, the Equality Court ruling in **2018**, clearly states that the Theoretical Human Resource Requirement (THRR), HR allocation in the Western Cape discriminated on the basis of race and poverty. This is still a fact to this day, which is an indictment on the National Government.

Combatting crime and ensuring the safety of the people of the Western Cape is **not** a priority for the National Government. If it were, then Cloetesville SAPS station, which is located in Stellenbosch and outside of the Cape Metro, would not have a police to population ratio of **1:1118**. Harare in Khayelitsha would not sit at **1:879**, Khayelitsha (Site B) itself would not be at **1:628**, and nor would Kraaifontein be at **1:728**. I could run through the entire list and highlight how skewed the allocations are, particularly if you consider the Cape Town Central SAPS stations sitting with **1:100**. Then we expect SAPS officers to be effective in their crime fighting efforts.

Let's take it further, as in 2018, Harare was **1:811**, Site B, **1:580** and Kraaifontein, **1:689**. If safety and combatting crime was a priority for the national government, they would allocate resources to these areas, not reduce them.

We're constantly hearing that this province is in fact the most resourced, as amongst others there is an Anti-Gang unit, which other provinces do not have. The truth is, these are not new members that came into the service or the unit – these are members taken from other sectors and stations, but they have not been replaced at those sectors and stations. Adequate resourcing is clearly not a priority.

A caring national government is not found in South Africa – at least not for the people of the Western Cape.

Chairperson, this is part of the reason why we have made safety a priority in the province. We refuse to be idle in the fight against crime and given how the national government do not have an appetite to strengthen SAPS' hand in this province, we've decided to do so. In **2020**, in partnership with the City of Cape Town, we launched our Law Enforcement Advancement Plan, better known as the LEAP officers. These officers, who are deployed in murder hotspot areas across the Cape Metro, stems from the Western Cape Government's Safety Plan.

Chairperson, we now have **1 261** LEAP officers that are currently deployed in **thirteen** areas, of which 10 areas form part of the top 10 murder areas in the Western Cape. These include areas such as Delft, Gugulethu, Harare, Khayelitsha (Site B policing precinct), Kraaifontein, Mfuleni, Mitchells Plain, Nyanga, Philippi East, and Samora Machel. The other high crime areas where they are deployed to, are Atlantis, Bishop Lavis and Hanover Park, and recently Lavender Hill, Steenberg and Grassy Park.

It is important to note that the placements of these officers are not done on an uninformed or willy-nilly basis, but rather strategically and backed by data.

In addition to the LEAP officers, and in being innovative and incorporating technology, earlier this year, the Western Cape Government launched its **Provincial Safety Dashboard**. This dashboard, which is updated every three days, provide real-time data to provincial safety stakeholders. The significance of a dashboard such as this, is that it helps to ensure data-led and evidence law enforcement-based deployments of the LEAP officers, while also guiding us in terms of our violence prevention interventions. This means we're able to direct the LEAP officers into areas, places and spaces where they are mostly needed.

There is a lesson to be learnt on resource allocation, as this is on the ground, in a province, in a Municipality, effective deployment of law enforcement, as we know what our needs are. SAPS officers will inform you about how these LEAP officers have assisted in making their jobs a little bit easier.

It is a fact that nothing can beat boots on the ground and visible policing, as this is the very first step in crime prevention.

When resources are deployed and utilised effectively, it bolsters the crime fighting efforts. These LEAP officers are clearly showing it. Since commencing in 2020 until June this year, they've confiscated 212 illegal firearms and arrested over 8 000 suspects. Areas, where LEAP was deployed, showed an overall **3%** reduction in murder rate in the period **January to June 2022**, when compared with 2019. During the same period, murder increased by **21%** in the country and **4%** in the Western Cape. This might be a much lower increase than in the country, but to us, one murder is one too many.

CONCLUSION

As I conclude, the National Minister of Police is fully aware that S 206(1) of the Constitution requires him to determine national policing policy after consulting the provincial governments and taking into account the policing needs and priorities of the province. Unfortunately, there is **no** clear indication that the annual PNPs of the Western Cape have been taken into account.

It is for this and many other reasons that we believe the SAPS Act should be amended to assign specific powers to provincial executives, that there should also be Constitutional Amendments to allow for policing powers to be delegated to the province.

The status quo will only change once policing powers are devolved to a capable provincial government such as ours.

Thank you