

# Press Release

## For immediate release

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### **Latest stats show police losing the war on violent crime – IRR**

The IRR has warned that crime data released by the Minister of Police today show that the police are losing the war on violent crime in the country.

IRR crime analyst Kerwin Lebone, who has tracked South Africa's crime and violence statistics for over 15 years, said that "despite the positive spin put on the latest data, there is no conclusion to be reached other than that the police are overwhelmed and failing to hold back the criminal onslaught directed at citizens of the country".

Lebone said that "while the murder rate, a critical benchmark for public safety, fell steadily from a high point of 68 murders per 100 000 people in the country in 1996 to 31 per 100 000 in 2012, that downward trajectory has been broken".

"Between 2012 and 2017 the rate increased from 31 per 100 000 to 34 per 100 000, suggesting that this critical benchmark for public safety has stabilised."

The trouble, according to Lebone, "is that the murder rate has stabilised at a very high level".

"International comparisons show that South Africa's murder rate is today almost 30 times higher than that in Australia, Germany, Ireland, Italy, Portugal, and the United Kingdom. Given that South Africa is a leading liberal democracy its crime data should be compared to other free and open societies. Yet even when comparisons are made to emerging markets South Africa performs poorly, demonstrating a murder rate that is five times higher than in Mexico and ten times higher than in India.

"Very few countries including Honduras, Jamaica, and Colombia rival South Africa's murder rate. A shocking fact is that approximately half a million South Africans have lost their lives due to violence since 1994," said Lebone.

The trend for other serious crime categories, particularly armed robberies of businesses and homes, is equally concerning. According to the data released by the minister today:

- The number of armed robberies has increased by 20% over the past decade.\*

- The number of home invasion robberies has increased by 54% over the past decade
- The number of business robberies has increased by 110% over the past decade.

Lebone said “these are the types of high-priority crimes that should be used as a benchmark of police efficiency. That their numbers are increasing suggests that the police are failing to get the upper hand in the fight against serious and violent crime”.

\*Decade-long trends give a very useful sense of the efficiency of the police in any society.

**Ends.**