

# Press

# Release

## For immediate release

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South African Institute of Race Relations

*The power of ideas*

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#### **Police involvement in serious and violent crime a major problem – IRR**

Continuing high levels of police involvement in serious and violent crime is the key finding of the third edition of the Broken Blue Line report released today by the Institute of Race Relations (IRR).

Two earlier editions, in 2011 and 2015, found high levels of involvement in serious crimes by the country's police officers; regrettably, the third edition released today comes to the same conclusion.

IRR researchers found over 100 incidents of police involvement in violent and serious crime between 2016 and 2018, with the vast majority of incidents having been recorded in the past twelve months.

At the same time, violent crime is on the increase, with the five-year trends for crimes such as murder and hijacking showing an increase. This is coupled with a growing lack of trust in the police (and the broader criminal justice system) by ordinary citizens, which further compounds societal problems.

Writes author of the report and IRR Head of Campaigns Marius Roodt: 'There should be no need for such a report as the police should be our primary line of defence against criminal violence. However, in too many cases that line of defence has broken down and the supposed defenders have become perpetrators.'

'As long as the police service remains a home to violent criminals it is very unlikely that South Africa will experience a sustained and significant decline in serious and violent crime.'

Roodt says the report incorporates three proposals the IRR believes will help shore up the country's 'broken blue line'.

'First, we suggest that expenses on security, such as electric fences or payments to a security firm, be made tax deductible,' says Roodt. 'Private security measures contribute to a safer South Africa, and people should be compensated for this.'

'Second, communities should be allowed to vote for – or have a significant influence over the appointment of – their station commander, which would make the head of the local police station directly accountable to the local community.'

'Third, we propose the development of well-organised and resourced Neighbourhood Watch Schemes that are integrated with private security providers – and, ultimately, with the police – so that local communities can, in effect, take control of their own security.'

Roodt argues that implementing these solutions 'will go some way to beginning to turn the tide in the war against crime'.

For this to happen, pressure must be 'brought to bear on political authorities to take police criminality seriously and deal with it effectively', he says.

'Creating such pressure is also one of the most effective means by which South Africans can support the efforts of hard-working and committed members of the police service.'

Read the full report [here](#)

**Ends**