

Press Release

For immediate release

28 January 2015



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IRR report into police criminality – ‘The wolf guards the sheep’

The IRR, in conjunction with AfriForum, today released results of an investigation into the extent to which police officers in South Africa plan and execute serious and violent crimes such as murder, rape, and armed robbery. The report is part of the Broken Blue Line, a research project undertaken by the IRR since 2011 to track police involvement in criminality.

The report came to a number of findings including:

- There is extensive evidence of police involvement in serious and violent crimes such as rape, murder, and armed robbery
- These are not ‘isolated incidents’ but a ‘pattern of behaviour’
- Police management is attempting to deal with the problem, but with limited success
- The police may now be heavily infiltrated by criminal elements
- Officers exploit their official status and equipment to perpetrate crimes and rely on that status to escape arrest and prosecution
- Violent crime levels in South Africa won’t turn around while the ‘wolf guards the sheep’
- It is often with good reason that the public fear the police, especially with regard to sexual violence and rape perpetrated by officers against vulnerable women – the most frightening finding of the report
- It is likely that the poor and the middle class alike will increasingly bypass the police and look for other means of safeguarding themselves and their communities

The report also recommended a number of policy interventions to the police commissioner and related interested parties including:

- Re-instilling respect for chain of command
- Creating a university-educated officer corps
- Increasing the resources of the Independent Police Investigative Directorate
- Establishing a new investigative agency within the Department of Justice to hunt, arrest, and prosecute criminals within the police
- Decentralising decision making on station leadership in favour of the communities served by police stations
- Depoliticising and professionalising the appointment process within the police

IRR CEO Frans Cronje said that the project is one of the most disturbing ever undertaken by his organisation, “you would expect the police to safeguard society by infiltrating criminal elements. In our country there is much evidence that criminal elements have infiltrated the police”.

The report can be accessed [here](#) and the IRR said it hoped the findings would help build support for policy solutions to better protect the lives and livelihoods of all South Africans.

Ends.