

# FreeFACTS

No 7/2018 / November 2018 / Issue 7

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## Is South Africa losing the war on crime?

**This edition of *Free FACTS* looks briefly at the latest crime statistics.**

One key finding is that crime, after a long period of decline, is again on the increase. Although some crimes have declined (notably sexual assault), other serious crimes are showing a worrying uptick. For instance, the trend over the past five years for rates of murder and aggravated robbery (which is robbery with the use of a weapon) is upwards.

This is also reflected in the perceptions of ordinary people. Some 42% of South Africans believe that violent crime has increased over the past three years – a quarter believe it has decreased, and nearly three-in-ten people are of the opinion that there has been no change.

This increase in crime, as well as perceptions around it, are further reflected in how people think about the police and the broader criminal justice system.

For example, the proportion of South Africans who say they have never seen police in their neighbourhood has increased from 15% in 2012 to nearly a quarter in the most recent year, along with a decline in people's satisfaction with the police. One of the most worrying statistics in this *Free FACTS* is the level of satisfaction people have with how the courts punish criminals. This has declined from nearly two thirds in 2013/14 to just over 40% in 2017/18. Such a marked decrease has significant implications for issues around social cohesion and the authority of the state, in general.

Coupled with the findings of the third *Broken Blue Line* report recently released by the Institute of Race Relations (IRR), that there are still high levels of police involvement in serious and violent crime, the prognosis regarding South Africa's war on crime looks bleak.

However, all need not be lost. Sensible leadership and a commitment by the police to weed out unsavoury elements, coupled with implementing IRR recommendations, would go some way in turning the tide against crime and making South Africa a safe and secure place for all.

— Marius Roodt

## JOIN US

The IRR is an advocacy group that fights for your right to make decisions about your life, family and business, free from unnecessary government, political, and bureaucratic interference. FreeFACTS publishes evidence that communities are better off when individuals are free to make decisions about how they want to live, be educated, work, access healthcare, think, speak, own property, and protect their communities. If you agree with the issues we stand for, welcome to the team. There are millions of people just like you who are tired of South African politicians, activists, and commentators attempting to rein in your freedom to decide. Take control and make sure your voice is heard by becoming a friend of the IRR.

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# Major crime trends

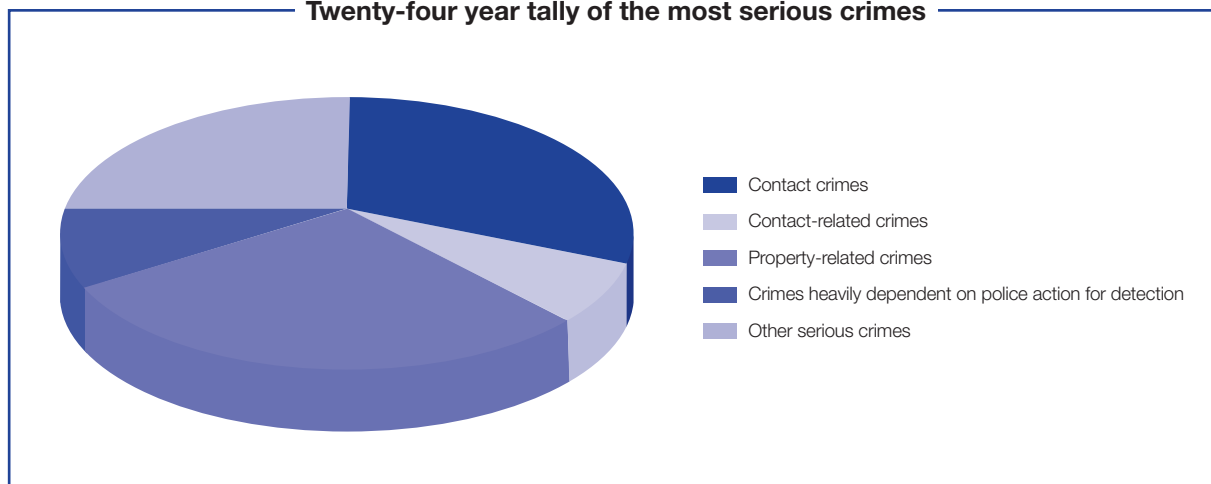
## Twenty-four year tally

Type of crime	Number	Proportion <sup>a</sup>
<b>Contact crimes (crimes against the person)</b>	<b>16 806 164</b>	<b>32.0%</b>
Murder	485 187	0.9%
Attempted murder	547 774	1.0%
Sexual offences	1 373 341	2.6%
Serious assault	5 236 950	10.0%
Common assault	4 944 327	9.4%
Robbery with aggravating circumstances	2 674 726	5.1%
Common robbery	1 543 859	2.9%
<b>Contact-related crimes</b>	<b>3 208 799</b>	<b>6.1%</b>
Arson	179 890	0.3%
Malicious damage to property	3 028 909	5.8%
<b>Property-related crimes</b>	<b>14 544 953</b>	<b>27.7%</b>
Residential burglary	6 280 458	12.0%
Non-residential (business) burglary	1 811 515	3.5%
Theft of motor vehicles and motorcycles	1 926 152	3.7%
Theft out of motor vehicles	3 719 427	7.1%
Stock theft	807 401	1.5%
<b>Crimes heavily dependent on police action for detection</b>	<b>4 499 939</b>	<b>8.6%</b>
Illegal possession of firearms and ammunition	349 597	0.7%
Drug-related crime	3 045 609	5.8%
Driving under the influence of alcohol or drugs	1 104 733	2.1%
<b>Other serious crimes</b>	<b>13 419 175</b>	<b>25.6%</b>
All other theft	10 136 551	19.3%
Commercial crime	1 625 833	3.1%
Shoplifting	1 656 791	3.2%
<b>Total</b>	<b>52 479 030</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

Source: South African Police Service (SAPS), [www.saps.gov.za](http://www.saps.gov.za), accessed September 2008, 19 September 2014, 29 September 2015, 24 October 2017 and 10 October 2018.

a Sub-totals in the column may not add up, owing to rounding.

Twenty-four year tally of the most serious crimes



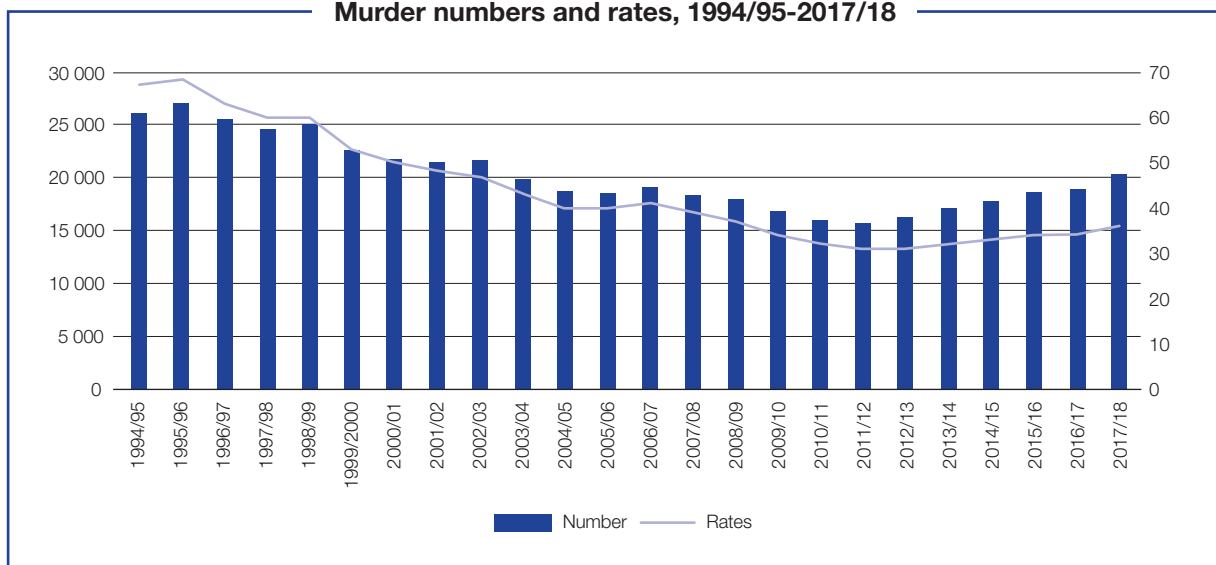
# Murder Trends

**Murder numbers and rates, 1994/95-2017/18**

Year	Number	Rate
1994/95	25 965	67
1995/96	26 877	68
1996/97	25 470	63
1997/98	24 486	60
1998/99	25 127	60
1999/2000	22 604	53
2000/01	21 758	50
2001/02	21 405	48
2002/03	21 553	47
2003/04	19 824	43
2004/05	18 793	40
2005/06	18 455	40
2006/07	19 106	41
2007/08	18 400	39
2008/09	18 084	37
2009/10	16 767	34
2010/11	15 893	32
2011/12	15 554	31
2012/13	16 213	31
2013/14	17 023	32
2014/15	17 805	33
2015/16	18 673	34
2016/17	19 016	34
2017/18	20 336	36

Source: SAPS, [www.saps.gov.za](http://www.saps.gov.za), accessed September 2008, 19 September 2014, 29 September 2015, 24 October 2017 and 10 October 2018.

**Murder numbers and rates, 1994/95-2017/18**



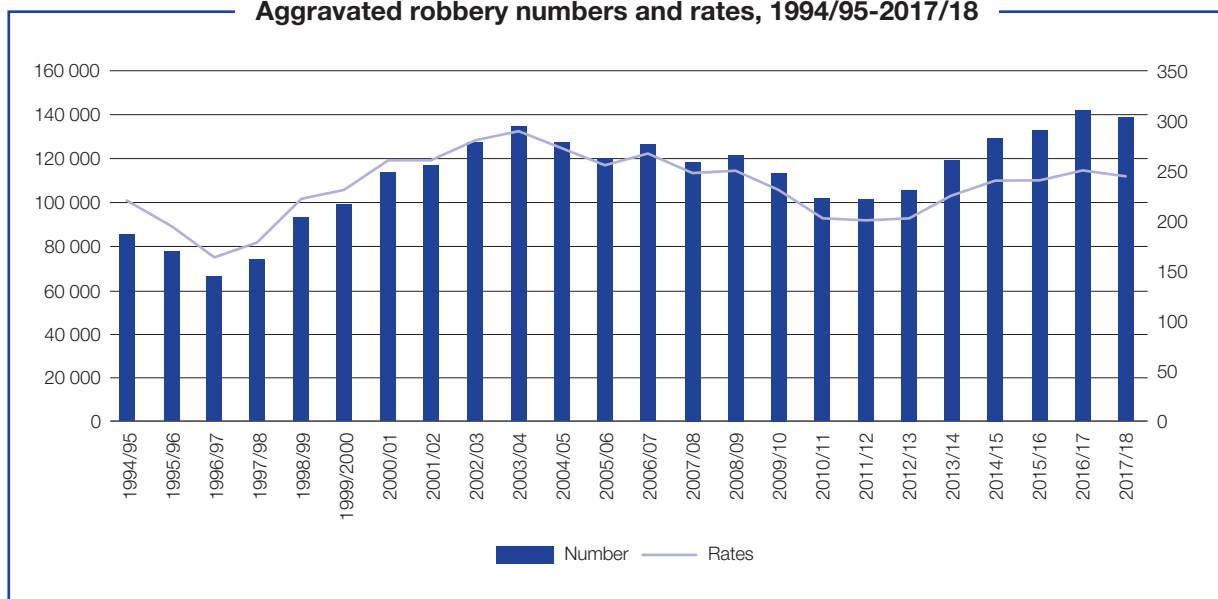
# Aggravated robbery trends

**Aggravated robbery numbers and rates, 1994/95-2017/18**

Year	Number	Rate
1994/95	84 785	219
1995/96	77 167	195
1996/97	66 163	163
1997/98	73 053	178
1998/99	92 630	221
1999/2000	98 813	230
2000/01	113 716	260
2001/02	116 736	261
2002/03	126 905	279
2003/04	133 658	288
2004/05	126 789	272
2005/06	119 242	255
2006/07	126 038	267
2007/08	117 760	247
2008/09	120 920	249
2009/10	113 200	231
2010/11	101 039	203
2011/12	100 769	200
2012/13	105 488	203
2013/14	118 963	225
2014/15	129 045	239
2015/16	132 527	241
2016/17	140 956	249
2017/18	138 364	244

Source: SAPS, [www.saps.gov.za](http://www.saps.gov.za), accessed September 2008, 19 September 2014, 29 September 2015, 24 October 2017 and 10 October 2018.

**Aggravated robbery numbers and rates, 1994/95-2017/18**



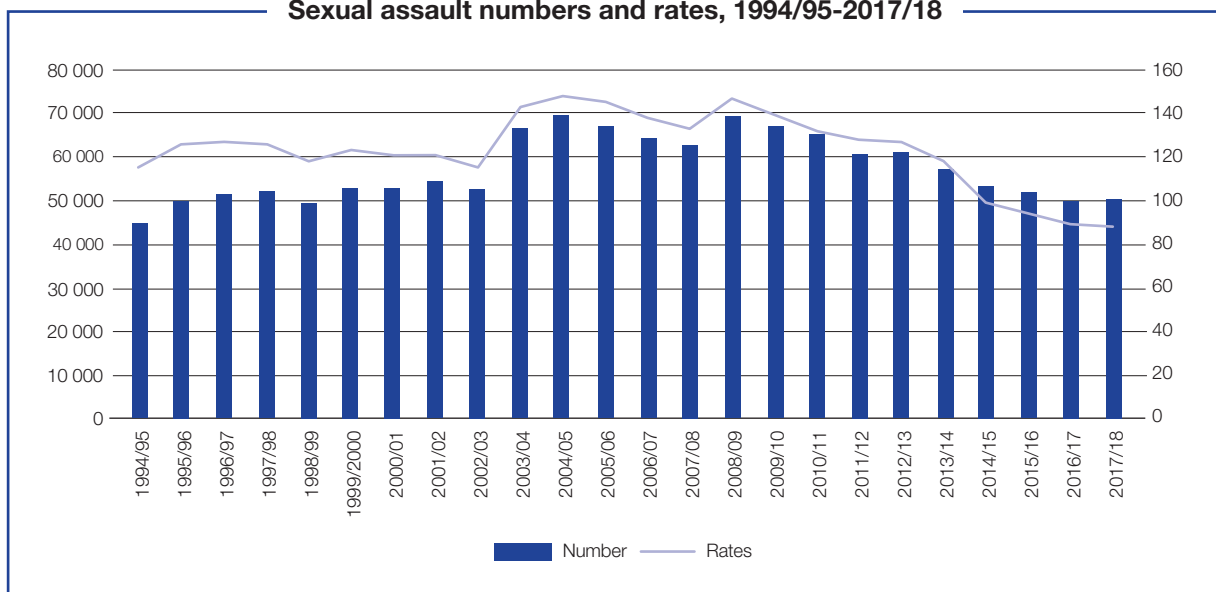
## Sexual assault trends

**Sexual assault numbers and rates, 1994/95-2017/18**

Year	Number	Rate
1994/95	44 751	115
1995/96	49 813	126
1996/97	51 435	127
1997/98	51 959	126
1998/99	49 679	118
1999/2000	52 891	123
2000/01	52 872	121
2001/02	54 293	121
2002/03	52 425	115
2003/04	66 079	143
2004/05	69 117	148
2005/06	67 064	145
2006/07	64 071	138
2007/08	62 484	133
2008/09	69 197	147
2009/10	66 992	139
2010/11	64 921	132
2011/12	60 539	128
2012/13	60 888	127
2013/14	56 680	118
2014/15	53 617	99
2015/16	51 895	94
2016/17	49 660	89
2017/18	50 108	88

Source: SAPS, [www.saps.gov.za](http://www.saps.gov.za), accessed September 2008, 19 September 2014, 29 September 2015, 24 October 2017 and 10 October 2018.

**Sexual assault numbers and rates, 1994/95-2017/18**



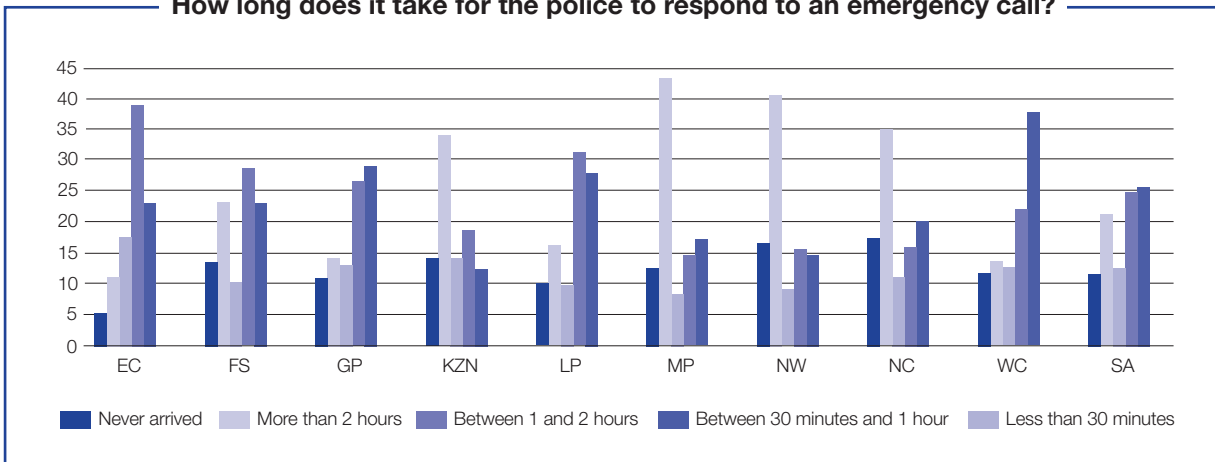
# Police response and visibility

## How long does it take for the police to respond to an emergency call?

Response	EC	FS	GP	KZN	LP	MP	NW	NC	WC	SA
Never arrived	5.1%	13.4%	10.8%	14.0%	10.0%	12.4%	16.5%	17.3%	11.6%	11.5%
More than 2 hours	11.0%	23.2%	14.1%	34.1%	16.1%	43.3%	40.6%	35.0%	13.5%	21.1%
Between 1 and 2 hours	17.5%	10.1%	12.9%	14.1%	9.7%	8.3%	9.0%	11.0%	12.5%	12.5%
Between 30 minutes and 1 hour	39.0%	28.7%	26.6%	18.7%	31.2%	14.5%	15.6%	15.8%	22.0%	24.8%
Less than 30 minutes	23.1%	23.0%	29.1%	12.3%	27.9%	17.1%	14.6%	20.1%	37.8%	25.6%

Source: Statistics South Africa (Stats SA), *Victims of Crime Survey*, 2018, Statistical release P0342, p83.

## How long does it take for the police to respond to an emergency call?

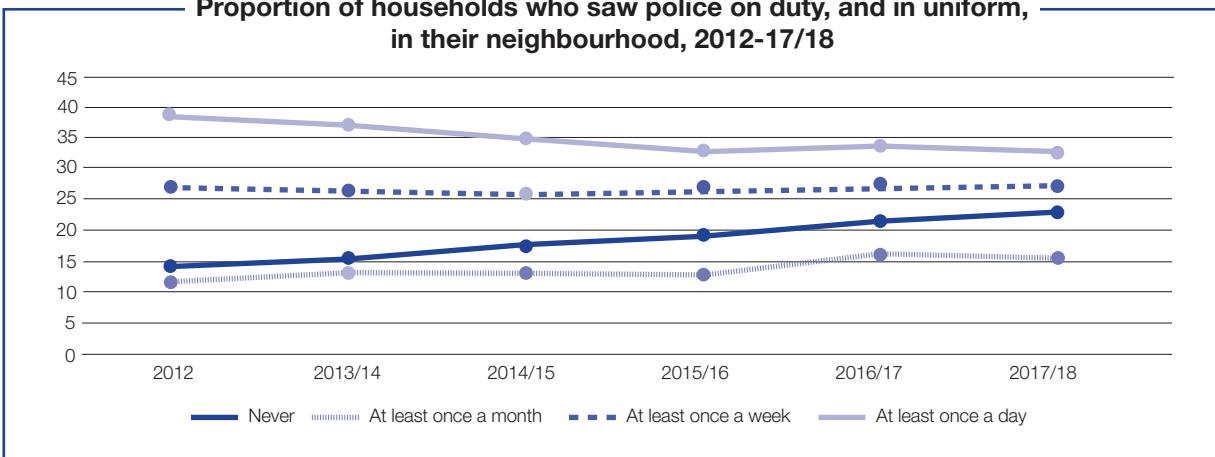


## Proportion of households who saw police on duty, and in uniform, in their neighbourhood, 2012-17/18

Response	2012	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18
At least once a day	38.8%	37.0%	35.0%	33.1%	33.8%	32.5%
At least once a week	27.1%	26.8%	26.0%	27.2%	27.9%	27.4%
At least once a month	11.9%	13.4%	13.3%	13.1%	16.4%	15.8%
Never	14.6%	15.7%	17.8%	19.4%	21.8%	23.1%

Source: Stats SA, *Victims of Crime Survey*, 2018, Statistical release P0342, p84.

## Proportion of households who saw police on duty, and in uniform, in their neighbourhood, 2012-17/18



# Satisfaction with the police/courts

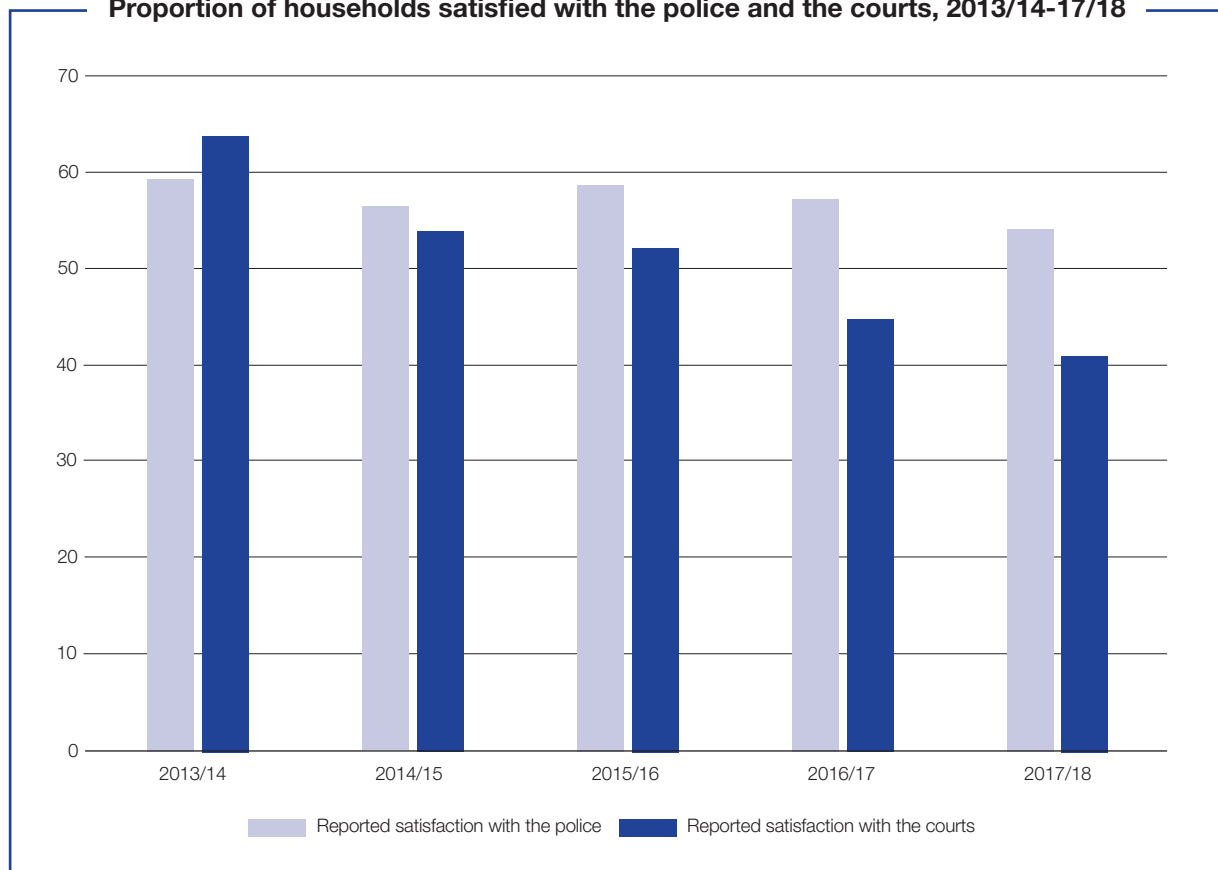
## Proportion of households satisfied with the police and the courts, 2013/14-17/18

Year	Reported satisfaction with the police	Reported satisfaction with the courts
2013/14	59.4%	63.9%
2014/15	56.9%	54.0%
2015/16	58.8%	52.3%
2016/17	57.3%	44.9%
2017/18	54.2%	41.1%

Source: Stats SA, *Victims of Crime Survey*, 2018, Statistical release P0342, p89.

**Note:** Satisfaction levels with regard to the courts reflect the proportion of people who are satisfied with how courts deal with perpetrators of crime.

### Proportion of households satisfied with the police and the courts, 2013/14-17/18



### Perceptions of changes in levels of violent crime by province during the period 2012-17/18<sup>a</sup>

Province	Decreased	Increased	No change
Eastern Cape	21.7%	43.1%	31.1%
Free State	27.1%	47.3%	23.0%
Gauteng	26.5%	37.7%	28.1%
KwaZulu-Natal	28.8%	38.6%	29.1%
Limpopo	26.4%	46.1%	24.5%
Mpumalanga	31.7%	35.4%	29.3%
North West	17.4%	47.5%	30.7%
Northern Cape	23.6%	43.1%	22.1%
Western Cape	12.6%	51.7%	32.3%
<b>South Africa</b>	<b>24.5%</b>	<b>42.1%</b>	<b>28.6%</b>

Source: Stats SA, *Victims of Crime Survey*, 2018, Statistical release P0341, 11 October 2018, p72.

a The question asked of respondents was 'How have violent crime levels changed in your area for the past three years?'  
In each case a small proportion of respondents said they did not know.

### Perceptions of changes in levels of violent crime by province during the period 2012-17/18

