EDITORIAL

Crime and Violence in Formal and Informal Urban Spaces in South Africa Citizen Security Dialogues Dispatches from South Africa: Foreword

Lorenzo Wakefield[*] and Sean Tait[†]

Murder is a good indicator of how violent a society is. Twenty-one years into democracy, South Africa could celebrate that murder rates have been on a steady decrease. However, South Africa's latest crime statistics show that murder rates are currently at 32.2 murders per 100,000 persons.[1] These rates are still five times higher than the global average, with areas such as Khayelitsha reporting a rate of 150–200 murders per 100,000 persons.[2] This is among the highest rates anywhere in world for a country at peace.

The normalisation of violence is prevalent in all aspects of society. A poly victimisation study done in a working class urban community in Cape Town found that out of 617 adolescents between the ages of 12–15 years 98.9 per cent had witnessed community violence, 68.9 per cent had seen someone get shot in their neighourhood, and shockingly 47.7 per cent had seen a dead body in a street (Kaminer et al 2013).

Against this backdrop South Africa is rapidly urbanizing. It is projected that by 2030, 70 per cent of South Africa's population will be living in cities and towns, and primarily in informal settlements (Department of Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs 2015). Exacerbating this trend is the fact that urban areas in South Africa continue to be hampered by the legacy of racial segregation, poverty and exclusion, from social and economic opportunities (Department of Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs 2015). In addition, family disintegration is occurring at alarming rates coupled with the impact of migrant labour from rural areas to urban areas. The prospects are thus dire if no proper planning is put in place to accommodate the rate of urbanization.

Development approaches are therefore central to addressing the crime and violence risk factors associated with urbanisation. A development approach requires attention to all risk factors associated with the crime and violence from the individual, family, community and structural position. For example, building resilience would be a central approach to addressing individual risk factors, while the formalization of informal spaces could address risk factors associated with the community by way of environment design.

In response, South Africa has developed a rich and progressive policy framework to guide efforts in crime and violence

* Consortium on Crime and Violence Prevention, South Africa
lorenzo@apcof.org.za

† African Policing Civilian Oversight Forum, South Africa
sean@apcof.org.za

prevention. These frameworks and policies acknowledge that law enforcement alone is not the answer. Integrated and long-term developmental strategies are needed to address socio-economic and development risk factors. Access to safe basic education, early childhood development, proper housing, and health care must be provided. However, the large number of risk factors, their disbursement over multiple environments from town planning to health make realizing the concerted and coordinated efforts of all, (as espoused in the 1996 National Crime Prevention Strategy) a complex and daunting task. Implementation has fallen foul due to competing priorities, poorly aligned planning, and unfunded mandates.

Despite these challenges, South Africans have continued across multiple disciplines to strive to make the country safer. These efforts, over two decades, are producing exciting learning and insights.[3] The Citizen Security Dialogues was initiated to take a south-south learning approach to understanding what works and what does not. This project, funded by the International Development Research Centre in Canada (IDRC), is a partnership between the Igarapé Institute in Rio de Janeiro, the Foundation for Ideas for Peace (FiP) in Bogotá, the Institute for Security and Democracy (INSYDE) in Mexico City, and the African Policing Civilian Oversight Forum (APCOF) in Cape Town. The purpose of the Citizen Security Dialogues Project is to compare lessons learnt from these countries in the global south. This special edition of *Stability* is one of the outcomes of such learning and documents quality research on certain aspects related to citizen security in South Africa.

This special edition profiles four articles on crime and violence prevention in South Africa. Each article provides a lens to examine questions that continue to challenge us. The risks of target hardening and the unintended consequences of isolation on risk; non-state efforts and the risks of vigilantism; the challenges of measuring the impact of crime and

violence prevention efforts that ultimately compete for the same funds.

In the first article, by Monique Marks from the Urban Futures Centre at the Durban University of Technology and Chris Overall from the Durban Metropolitan Police, investigates the impact high walls (or fortresses) in suburbs of Durban have on policing and safety and security. This paper sets out to investigate whether solid walls are in fact an aid or hindrance to policing and security management.

Gail Super from the Centre for Criminology at the University of Cape Town writes on the complex subject of non-state actors and vigilantism in informal urban communities, on the outskirts of Cape Town. Against the glaring shortcomings of the criminal justice system, she examines why vigilantism or mob justice serves as means of governance by which the community pursues justice.

The third article is co-authored by Tali Cassidy, Richard Matzopoulos, Melikaya Ntsingwa and Jakub Galuszka. The authors investigate the appropriate methodologies for evaluating the impact of multi disciplinary safety interventions in informal urban communities.

The final article for this special edition is by Tariro Mutongwizo, Lezanne Leoschut and Patrick Burton from the Centre for Justice and Crime Prevention. They explore the challenges of partnerships and measuring the impact of social crime and violence prevention interventions in environments that are characterized by resource and data constraints.

At a time when the world debates the inclusion of 'safety' and 'justice' as development goals, the lessons provided by these papers are import internationally, and especially for South Africa. Fifteen years after the adoption of the National Crime Prevention Strategy, South Africa still grapples with the challenges of implementation but increasingly line ministries are recognizing and responding. The Department of Social Development adopted the Integrated Social Crime Prevention

Wakefield and Tait: Crime and Violence in Formal and Informal Urban Spaces in South Africa Citizen Security Dialogues Dispatches from South Africa

Art. 26, page 3 of 4

Strategy as a key strategy position to guide its delivery across areas such as early childhood development, family preservation, social assistance, and domestic violence and victim empowerment programmes, amongst others.

In the local government sphere, the Integrated Urban Development Framework[4] attempts, albeit weakly, to mainstream crime and violence prevention initiatives in urban planning.

The White Paper on Safety & Security[5] holds the promise of providing effective implementation mechanisms supported by a legislative framework that will ultimately allow funds from the fiscus to be expropriated to support crime and violence prevention. This will be supported by a proposed National Crime Prevention Centre, the first in South Africa's history, to assist local initiatives.

Notes

[1] See http://www.saps.gov.za/resource_centre/publications/statistics/crimestats/2014/crime_stats.php [Last accessed 28 March 2015].

[2] See: http://www.issafrica.org/uploads/5th-Crime-Conf-2014/011-Ian-Edelsten.pdf [Last accessed 30 March 2015].

[3] See for example the South African Crime Quarterly Journal where innovative programmes and practices are showcased: http://www.issafrica.org/publications/south-african-crime-quarterly/south-african-crime-quarterly-51

[4] See: http://www.iudf.net for more information about this framework [Last accessed 26 March 2015].

[5] See: http://www.policesecretariat.gov.za/downloads/bills/white_paper_safety_and_security_notes.pdf for the draft that went out for public comment [Last accessed 26 March 2015].

References

Department of Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs 2015 *Draft Integrated Urban Development Framework (IUDF)*. Available at http://www.iudf.net [Last accessed 26 March 2015].

International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) Understanding and reducing urban violence in South Africa: Initial findings from 3-year Khayelitsha Violence Reduction Panel Study. Available at http://www.issafrica.org/uploads/5th-Crime-Conf-2014/011-Ian-Edelsten.pdf [Last accessed 30 March 2015].

Kaminer, D, du Plessis, B, Hardy, A and **Benjamin, A** 2013 Exposure to Violence Across Multiple Sites Among Young South African Adolescents. *Peace and Conflict: Journal of Peace Psychology.*

South African Crime Quarterly Journal Available at http://www.issafrica.org/publications/south-african-crime-quarterly/south-african-crime-quarterly-51

South African Police Service (SAPS) 2014 *Crime Situation in South Africa*. Available at http://www.saps.gov.za/resource_centre/publications/statistics/crimestats/2014/crime_stats.php [Last accessed 28 March 2015].

The Civilian Secretariat for Police 2015 Draft White Paper on Safety and Security. Available at http://www.policesecretariat.gov.za/downloads/bills/white_paper_safety_and_security_notes.pdf [Last accessed 26 March 2015].