

THE MURDER OF MEMBERS OF THE SOUTH AFRICAN POLICE SERVICE: SOME FINDINGS ON COMMON CAUSES AND PRACTICAL PREVENTATIVE STEPS¹

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INTRODUCTION

In America they call the police their finest – in South Africa it's fine that the police is the target (Captain, SAPS: Gauteng Focus Group Interviews. February 2000).

The murder of a policeman is not taken seriously, the politicians in Parliament, in contrast to overseas, never discuss the matter in Parliament or call a parliamentary meeting – they just plain ignore it. It's not important to them [politicians]. ...It's sad that police deaths don't even reach the front page of the newspapers (Gauteng: Investigating Officers Focus Group Interview. February 2000).

From the above it would appear to be obvious that police members are angry, and justifiably so, that their colleagues continue to be killed and are specific targets of attack. They consider themselves to be “forgotten” or “neglected” victims; that the authorities and, in particular, their own organisation do not care about their safety and security and fail to do anything concrete about the situation. In their view, the overall perception is that the South African Police Service (SAPS) appear to be reluctant to do anything. This feeling was further compounded when during the political campaigning in the lead up to the national elections in 1999, the then Deputy President, Thabo Mbeki, at a rally in the Western Cape, was reported in the media as having made a remark concerning the

murder of police officials and attributing the high levels of such killings largely to the fact that they were being killed because they were corrupt, consorted or were involved with criminals. This was subsequently denied by the Deputy President's office. However, the damage was done and members of the SAPS, including representatives of the two police unions, the South African Police Union (SAPU) and the Police and Prisons Civil Rights Union (POPCRU), were extremely indignant about these purported remarks and insinuations.

As a result, a National Multi-disciplinary Committee (MDC)² was appointed by the then Minister of Safety and Security, Sidney Mufamadi, in May 1999. The Research Sub-committee³ of the MDC was instructed to examine the reasons why the attacks on and killing of police members have continued at such high levels and also to investigate what could be done to protect the members of the police service, not only in their work environment but also off-duty and in their homes, from attack and murder. In essence this was the first official and public recognition that members of the police could be considered as "victims" as opposed to merely having to accept injuries or death as an acceptable risk in the normal execution of daily work or as a "target".

The research

The Research Sub-committee accordingly undertook a research review of existing research done on the matter, inclusive of international studies, as well as doing new research. The first research step was a re-analysis of the actual murder event as reported to the

SAPS Medical Board in terms of intensities, modus operandi, perpetrators, type of wound and weapon used in the murder etc. The results of this analysis assisted the Research Sub-committee in raising specific issues for further examination and ascertaining the right direction to take, as well as assisting in the formulation of the protective and preventative strategies necessary to protect police officials. Furthermore, the Research Sub-committee undertook additional research which started in 2000, in an effort to better understand why police officials continued to be killed in South Africa, as well as to formulate and recommend preventative, interventionist and protective strategies and measures to reduce the number being killed every year. Three components to the research were implemented, namely a survey questionnaire of victims who had experienced an attack or had a partner or colleague

killed, which was administered to a sample of police officials in four provinces (Gauteng, KwaZulu-Natal, the Eastern Cape and Western Cape); focus group interviews with police officials and investigating officers as well members of the community in the same four provinces; and interviews with convicted murderers of police officials in selected prisons in Gauteng.

These offender interviews were split into two components – one dealing only with their motive/s in killing a police official; and the other dealing not only with perpetrators' perceptions around the actual murder and their modus operandi, but also the development of an offender profile.

EVENT ANALYSIS OF THE MURDERS OF POLICE OFFICIALS

Intensities/number of murders

TABLE 1: THE NUMBER OF MEMBERS OF THE SOUTH AFRICAN POLICE SERVICE MURDERED IN THE PERIOD 1991-2002: ON DUTY/OFF DUTY AND ANNUAL TOTAL

Year	On duty	Off duty	Total
1991	65	99	164
1992	116	137	253
1993	104	176	280
Subtotal: 1991-93*	285	412	697
1994	81	184	265
1995	84	156	240
1996	76	146	222
1997	90	154	244
1998	92	145	237
1999	84	120	204
2000	60	125	185
2001	67	96	163
2002	41	95	136
Subtotal: 1994-2002	674 (36%)	1 222 (64%)	1 896
Totals: 1991-2002	959	1 634	2 593

Source: SAPS Crime Information Analysis Centre (CIAC), Pretoria/Medical Board of SAPS, Pretoria; Directorate

for Police Safety, Division: Crime Prevention, SAPS, Pretoria

* These figures are only for the SAP policing districts and exclude those of the former TBVC states (Transkei, Bophuthatswana, Venda and Ciskei) and self-governing homelands of Lebowa, Gazankulu and KwaZulu.

The statistics reviewed in this section refer only to the years 1994 to 2002 as representing the period of the new South African Police Service (SAPS) when the eleven policing agencies within South Africa were undergoing the process of amalgamation. The murder of police officials' statistics for the old South African Police (SAP) policing areas excluding the former self-governing homelands of Lebowa, Gazankulu and KwaZulu and the independent states of Transkei, Bophuthatswana, Venda and Ciskei are given for comparative purposes for the period 1991 to 1993).

In addition, these deaths exclude the murder (on and off duty) of the so-called Traffic or Metro/ Municipal Police. Furthermore, it also excludes the accidental deaths of policing personnel in motor vehicle accidents and other incidents, as well as suicides of SAPS members.

The figures in Table 1 clearly indicate that the number of murders per annum has remained almost constant at above 200, with the first drop below this figure occurring in 2000, and reaching its current lowest figure of 136 in 2002.

Obviously such high levels of murder of South African police members must seriously affect and impact on the morale of members while also traumatising those colleagues who witness such incidents. Moreover, the randomness and apparent targeting of police members even while off duty would inevitably increase members' feelings of unsafety and insecurity.

Even though a greater proportion of SAPS members were killed while off duty (1 222 (64%) for the years 1994-2002, as compared to 674 (36%) than while on duty, this does indicate the randomness of the attacks

as well as the fact that police members are being singled out as targets for attack irrespective of being in or out of uniform. In other words, they are known and identified in their neighbourhoods as police personnel.

International comparisons

As far as the researcher has been able to ascertain, such a high annual level of police officers murders is almost unprecedented in the international arena. For the period 1987-1997 a total of 696 police officers were murdered in the USA⁴ giving an approximate annual average of 70 killed every year. In the United Kingdom⁵ (England and Wales, excluding Scotland and Northern Ireland) for the years 1987-1996 a total of only 17 police officers were killed while on duty. This gives a low average of just on two per year. In Australia for the period 1994-1997 a total of 24 policing personnel were murdered giving an annual average of six.⁶ In New Zealand the figures are even lower at fewer than five per year while in Holland only one police officer was murdered in 1997. The only other two countries in respect of which it has thus far been established that similar high levels of police officer murders occur, is China, where apparently the annual average has increased from 200 per year in 1993 to almost 400 in 1997 (no official consolidated statistics, however, exist for these police deaths in China);⁷ and India that has averaged 586 per year for state policing agencies, and 386 for the same period for central (national) policing organisations for the period between 1993 and 1997⁸ (with the latter including members of the Indian security forces killed during policing operations or operations enforcing law and order in civil unrest areas or insurgencies such as in Kashmir). Furthermore, Russia would appear to experience an annual rate of police officer

murders in the order of 365 while the Ukraine displays a figure of approximately 250. Indications from South America are that the Brazilian police force had approximately 300 officers killed in 1999⁹. These are all approximations since there are no accurate statistics kept on a national basis for any of these countries. However, both China and India have populations in excess of one billion and large law enforcement agencies with many personnel (India in 1997 had a policing strength of 1,37 million). Therefore, per 100 000 of the population South Africa's rate would in comparison appear to be the highest in the world.

As is evident from Table 2, over the period 1998-2002 the Gauteng province experienced the highest

number of murders of police personnel (330) followed by KwaZulu-Natal (269), the Eastern Cape (125) and the Western Cape (55) respectively. However, in this regard it should be remembered that these four provinces have the largest number of police personnel; the highest population densities as well as levels of urbanisation.

Furthermore, in most crime categories these four provinces lead the way to high crime levels. The numbers of police killed in the other provinces for this period are as follows: Mpumalanga (41); North West (38); Freestate (37); Limpopo (27); and the Northern Cape (3).

Provincial distribution

TABLE 2: THE MURDER OF MEMBERS OF THE SOUTH AFRICAN POLICE SERVICE IN THE PERIOD 1998-2002: ON DUTY/OFF DUTY AND ANNUAL TOTAL BY PROVINCE

Prov	1998			1999			2000			2001			2002		
	On	Off	Tot	On	Off	Tot	On	Off	Tot	On	Off	Tot	On	Off	Tot
Gauteng	46	49	95	28	40	68	29	33	62	20	34	54	14	37	51
KZN	15	44	59	20	37	57	14	46	60	21	36	57	13	23	36
E Cape	17	21	38	8	20	28	7	21	28	7	9	16	3	12	15
W Cape	6	7	13	8	4	12	1	1	2	11	3	14	6	8	14
Freestate	0	7	7	5	7	12	3	6	9	2	2	4	3	2	5
Limpopo	2	3	5	4	4	8	1	6	7	0	2	2	1	4	5
Mpumala Langa	2	9	11	4	5	9	2	5	7	4	7	11	0	3	3
N o r t h West	5	3	8	7	3	10	3	5	8	2	3	5	1	6	7
N Cape	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	2	2	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total	92	145	237	84	120	204	60	125	185	67	96	163	41	95	136

Source: SAPS Crime Information Analysis Centre (CIAC), Pretoria/ Medical Board of SAPS, Pretoria; Directorate for Police Safety, Division: Crime Prevention, SAPS, Pretoria

Victim profile

In terms of the victim profile by rank the largest proportion of murdered members for the period 1996-2002 belonged to the rank of constable and sergeant (both approximately 35% of the total number killed), with that of inspector just below 10%. These ranks

represent all the non-commissioned officer ranks and, in fact, make up just more than 80% of all police murders. This imbalance can be explained as follows: A constable is the first rank a recruit attains once he or she has passed the initial training. A constable is usually tasked with active duties, placing him or her in direct contact with the lawless within a community.

Obviously these rank groups, representing the largest groupings of rank and file members, would of necessity be in the firing line, seeing that they are active in investigations, and following up of information, while they are also involved in crime prevention operations and the apprehending of suspects. It would then follow that very few of the management cadres were killed. What the victim analysis also indicated was that those being killed were largely uniformed members and not members of specialised units, whose members were in fact the ones receiving the additional specialised and SWAT training. Therefore a logical conclusion would be that specialised training should be extended not only to new recruits but also to members operating at grassroots level and performing basic policing duties (this was confirmed by the analysis of the type of event/incident in which they were killed and the emphasis on weapon retention to prevent their weapons being stolen).

Cause of death and weapons used

The greatest cause of death was from gunshot wounds (approximately 80%) with knife stabs and assaults with a blunt or sharp instrument (including stoning or a beating) a distant second. The manner of the murder (killing by firearms) would be traumatic in itself for members who witness the murder as well as for the families of the victims.

In terms of the weapons used, although a high proportion were of an unknown calibre (which merely points to the fact that the murder was not witnessed or witnesses do not come forward and that no empty cartridges are left behind for forensic evidence), significant numbers were killed with 9mm pistols or a police service pistol while AK 47s were responsible for death in about 2 percent of cases. A further disquieting fact is that in a high proportion of the gunshot murders many were multiple gunshots, received in the back and side of the head (close-up

execution-style) or back wounds. This form of attack would seem to indicate the deliberate targeting of police members for attack. This is also linked to the various *modus operandi* used by the attackers.

***Modus operandi* used by attackers**

The first important point here is that there were a significant number of incidents (4%) in which members were killed by colleagues, most often in the work environment. This points to high levels of work-related stress since arguments appear to have precipitated a large number of the attacks. (Some of the murders were by colleagues retaliating or in self-defence to an attack by another member, although some were killed during the commission of a robbery, i.e. by police responding to a crime and killing the robbers who in these cases were policemen). Family disputes also played a role in a number of the killings (2%) while fights with girlfriends and boyfriends or a love triangle situation (i.e. being killed by an ex-partner) were contributing factors in 2 percent of the cases.

A further indication of stress-related aggressive behaviour is the number of incidents where police members were involved in fights or arguments with members of the public (5%) while a number of incidents also occurred either at shebeens, taverns or in hotel bars (1,5%).

In terms of police members either responding to a complaint, investigating a case, following up on information or doing a search, apprehending a suspect, conducting a crime prevention operation or doing patrolling duties, responding to or being caught up in a robbery in progress or during a car chase, i.e. in the normal line of duty, a high number of murders occurred (20%).

More worrying in this sense has been the high level of murders where a member was robbed of his service

pistol and more often than not actually shot with his own gun. Considering the high status attached to owning a gun in some areas of the townships (8%), one can assume here that the attack was primarily for the reason of obtaining a gun, usually by criminal or gang elements. It should, however, also be mentioned that the theft of the service pistol in some cases occurred in an opportunistic fashion, i.e. the murder may not have been directly motivated by wanting to steal the pistol but once the killing had occurred, the opportunity to steal the pistol was seized. In addition, the element of surprise or ambush attacks was also a factor in a large number of murders, some of which were targeted attacks on members in their homes/residences (including where the attackers knocked on the door, shooting the member when he or she answered the door - another indication of specific targeting in an attack) (5%). Lesser instances of murder occurred during cell/prison/court escapes; attacks on a police station/satellite station; and in car hijacks/theft of a motor vehicle (all representing approximately 1% of the cases).

Some of the attacks were linked to the undisciplined behaviour of a small minority of police members. Furthermore, perceptions concerning the levels of corruption, criminality and collusion with known criminal elements also gave rise to the view that police could be attacked to rid communities of their corrupt presence or involvement in crime. However, such attitudes had more to do with the low levels of trust, and the fact that the police are still seen to treat the public badly, were often thought to be involved deeply with criminals or were corrupt - all of which justified in the eyes of some the ongoing attacks on members of the service.

The above analysis pointed the research in other directions in order to ascertain why police officials continued to be killed, even after the April 1994 democratic elections. The high levels of murder of police officials prior to 1994 had traditionally been

explained away within the context of high levels of political violence and as being part of the "struggle".

SEARCHING FOR EXPLANATIONS

As part of the additional research undertaken by the Research Committee focus-group interviews were undertaken in the four selected provinces of Gauteng, the Western Cape, Eastern Cape and KwaZulu-Natal.

Focus-group interview perceptions¹⁰

The main perceptions and views emanating from the focus-group interviews (four main questions were posed to the groups, namely: i) *How do you feel when a member of the police is attacked or murdered?* ii) *Why do you think policemen are being attacked and killed – the main reason?* iii) *Do you think policemen should be allowed to take their firearms home with them?* iv) *What do you think are the solutions?*) carried out by the Research Sub-committee, especially pertaining to opinions about why/what the reason is for the killing of police officers, are given below. The analysis also deals with some of the suggestions and recommendations of what should be done to prevent such murders.

QUESTION: Why do you think policemen are being attacked and killed – the main reason?

This question in particular elicited a wide range of responses dealing, inter alia, with the following issues:

- Lack of respect of the community for the police;
- poor levels of trust and co-operation between the two;
- corruption within the police and involvement with criminals;
- poor service delivery; inadequate resources and lack of backup;
- inadequate training (or the lack thereof);

- attitude of criminals towards police;
- the death penalty and jail time being no punishment, etc;
- the police were being killed because of the way they treated the community; and
- that criminals wanted their firearms.

The responses are discussed in greater detail under the following headings:

Attitude of criminals towards the police

It was generally felt that criminals had no respect for the law or for the police nor feared – at least sufficiently – being caught. One reason offered for this attitude was that firstly, they were hardly ever convicted, and if they were sentenced the sentences were too light, they were released early (did not serve full sentences) or were paroled early, or it was easy to escape from prison. Furthermore, that they had “an easy time in prison” – it was not tough inside.

The law not a deterrent and the return of the death penalty

This attitude of the criminals towards the police was ascribed to the fact that the law was not a deterrent (i.e. there was insufficient deterrence in terms of penalties and conviction rates and success in catching the perpetrators). In other words, there was no or a low risk of being caught after murdering a policeman (the reasons for this were also given and will be discussed at a later stage).

Members of the police in the focus groups generally supported and called for the return of the death penalty specifically for the murder of police, especially since current sentences were perceived not to be a sufficient deterrent.

Corruption

In general, corruption and bribery within the SAPS was considered one of the factors (albeit on a lesser level) that lead to the death of police officers. The perception of corruption as a motive existed on two levels namely that

- corrupt police officers organise the murder of fellow police killed because they were getting too close to exposing their corrupt activities of the aforementioned; or
- the involvement of police members with criminals (either through protecting certain members or being corrupt or bribed to supply information or even “losing” dockets) result in these members being "taken out" by fellow members or by members of the community.

Inadequate training

Inadequate training, incorrect training or the lack of specialised training were all cited as important reasons for why police officers are killed. Much of this referred to firearms training, the handling of firearms in arrest or crime scene situations or the fact that firearms are not properly safeguarded when a police officer is off duty. The fact that police also go into the wrong places with a firearm (i.e. a shebeen), coupled to poor awareness of how to carry a firearm and secure it on your person at all times, also exacerbates the situation.

Obviously proficiency and skills (even specialised skills) are important factors in terms of empowering police officers to be able to properly protect themselves from attack and in crime or arrest situations.

High levels of danger in work and visibility in community

The fact that police personnel are known and highly visible in their communities was also given as a

reason for attacks on them, i.e. that they were easily identifiable targets and are known to carry firearms.

In addition, the fact that police work is also highly dangerous also plays a role. They work under difficult and dangerous conditions, terrain is often not conducive to good and effective policing, nor is the community they are working in co-operative, i.e. in informal settlements.

Theft of member's firearm

Robbery (i.e. the theft of a firearm) was also put forward as an important reason for attacks by criminals on police. At issue here is the fact that within the criminal fraternity and in certain communities the ownership of a firearm provides status and standing within that community. A firearm is also a symbol of power and authority. Policemen are thus targeted specifically in order to acquire a gun, since according to one perspective:

The man with a gun becomes the hero in the community (Eastern Cape: Community Focus Group No.2)

Furthermore, the fact that it is often easy to attack, rob (his firearm) and kill a policeman (to prevent him from acting as a witness) was also put forward as a specific reason why policemen are killed.

Poor weapon retention and handling of a firearm were also highlighted as possible reasons for attacks.

Off-duty killing and theft of firearms

One reason giving for either an attack on police or the murder of a member is the fact that when they are off duty they go drinking in the wrong places or take their firearms into places of entertainment instead of

locking up (safeguarding) such firearms in a gunsafe at home.

Use of Force regulations (section 49) as a hindering factor

A number of respondents expressed the strong feeling that section 49 of the Criminal Procedure Act (the provision dealing with the use of force by police personnel in an arrest situation) was more of a hindrance than a help in trying to protect them from attacks by criminals or when they have to effect an arrest, i.e. it makes them hesitant to shoot, as one respondent said:

...Our policeman are hesitant to shoot, as they know that if they shoot they are in big trouble – there are too many complications around the use of force (Western Cape: Investigating Officers Focus Group No.1).

Poor service delivery, inadequate response times and no backup

In terms of poor service delivery, response times and no or inadequate backup it would appear that all three in varying degrees contribute towards the fact that police members are being killed. In other words, the manner in which policing is done would mean that police personnel on the ground are put into situations which could result in to them being killed. Members sometimes patrol on their own and when they find themselves in a dangerous situation there is no backup provided from either their home police station or from the special units, or there are delays in responding – these delays might be because of staff shortages, lack of resources or functioning vehicles. These all create life threatening situations for police personnel, and indirectly play a role in making police officers vulnerable to attack and therefore easier to kill.

Obviously the above calls into question the whole issue of implementing proper safety procedures as a matter of course during their daily police work and the necessity of utilising backup personnel for any potentially dangerous situation in order to safeguard their own lives.

Another element is the respect or lack thereof in the relationship between communities and the police. To earn this respect it was emphasised repeatedly in the focus-group interviews that police must act professionally and improve their delivery of service to the communities they are supposed to serve. In terms of service delivery and professional conduct of police members concerns were expressed that many policemen are either careless (negligent) while performing their duties, too aggressive, macho or do not wait for backup to arrive (reckless and not careful enough) when approaching a crime scene or making an arrest or are unaware of the potential dangers in a situation (not security conscious of the dangers inherent in certain situations). All these aspects of performance can lead to a police member being attacked or killed.

Additional reasons given for possible poor service delivery (which accordingly impacts on such issues as gaining the trust and co-operation of the community, investigating the murder of police personnel, and endangering police members lives), included the following:

- Lack of equipment;
- insufficient computer terminals (to analyse crimes properly and conduct efficient and effective investigations);
- too many dockets carried by one detective;
- postponement of cases, spending too much time in court, long delays and not securing convictions;
- insufficient patrol vehicles that are operational;

- shortage of staff (impacts on sending out backup personnel to crime scenes);
- no backup getting sent out timeously, slow response times;
- lack of co-operation between uniform and detective branches;
- poor attitude of community towards police especially in black townships;
- poor pay which leads to police members being exploited and open to corruption and bribery;
- poorly trained community constables;
- language as an issue, not understanding or being unable to converse clearly with complainants or suspects, not understanding orders properly;
- incompetence in taking statements, obtaining evidence and opening the docket properly;
- poor discipline; and
- a lack of checking or monitoring work (i.e. quality control is lacking and management is not strict enough).

Poor equipment and shortage of bullet-proof vests

Besides inadequate training many felt that the shortage of bullet-proof vests was a factor in the killing of police members. Moreover, the type of bullet-proof vests issued was also an issue (too heavy, cumbersome, not adequate protection provided to head and throat as well as side). The vests also hindered movement in and out of a motor vehicle.

Ancillary motives for the murder of police members

A number of motives of lesser interest were also listed namely:

- A wife is the perpetrator/instigator of a killing to claim insurance money/pension.
- Killed by a partner in crime.

- Criminal syndicates hire hitmen or put up a reward for the killing of a selected police officer.
- Police officers who take sides (lack of impartiality), for example in faction fights or in taxi wars.
- Being too successful in policing work and thus becoming a threat to criminals.

QUESTION: Do you think policemen should be allowed to take their firearms home with them?

This was an emotive question for both serving police officers and members of the community. Interviewees were largely supportive of the idea that members of the police should be allowed to take their firearms home for a number of reasons. The main ones being that it was dangerous out there and that police personnel needed to have the means not only to protect themselves but also their families. Moreover, they needed to be able to “put themselves on duty” when the situation arose (i.e. needed to act as a police officer if they witnessed a crime occurring when they were off duty). They would therefore need to have their issued service pistols with them so that they could accordingly be more effective.

However, there were also suggestions about improvements to the system of issuing firearms and training police officers in firearm use and retention. Among these were regular inspections of members’ houses to check whether proper gunsafes have been installed and that regular refresher courses in firearms training and use of firearms (firing at a target practice range) are instituted. Emphasis in this training was placed on such issues as correct firearm carrying techniques, proper holsters and the position of the firearm on the body, approach of a suspect and arrest procedures, firing in a crime-scene situation, weapon retention and self-defence techniques, search and enter techniques, and the use of force regulations.

Moreover, it was further stipulated that control should be exercised in respect of where police personnel go to for relaxation and recreation. They should be very aware of their security in public places.

Although a broad consensus existed that police officers should be allowed to take their service pistols home with them when they go off duty, it was also widely indicated that all police members should be tested or monitored as to suitability, competency, emotional stability and stress management, and that this would determine their suitability to take their firearms home with them.

QUESTION: What do you think are the solutions?

The solutions suggested by interviewees were varied but mainly dealt with a number of specific approaches, namely improving the trust and co-operation between the community and the police and obtaining the former’s full support for police work; better training; improving service delivery and provision of resources and equipment so that the police can perform jobs better; as well as improving the actual working conditions of police personnel themselves to address such issues as morale and better facilities. All these, it was held, would assist the police in better protecting their members from attack and deterring the criminals from murdering them. In addition, it was also postulated by some that stiffer sentencing for police murderers should be instituted, possibly even bringing back the death penalty for such crimes. Moreover, it was also emphasised that specific efforts should be made to change the attitude of the communities towards the police, to get them to trust the police, report crime and co-operate in giving information. One way this could be done was said to be a public awareness campaign working against the current negative perception towards the police and thereby improving the public image of the SAPS.

Other issues which would assist in improving the image of the police – thereby gaining the trust of the community and hopefully cutting down on the attacks on and murder of police members, were the following:

- Recruitment of better quality/type of persons and recruiting more new members;
- rewarding and publicising successes and good behaviour of police;
- police should act more professionally;
- police should carry their service pistols more visibly and in the correct position on the hip (not in the waist of the pants, behind the back or high up against the kidney);
- doing duty in an area that is well known to the member so that they do not make mistakes while patrolling;
- police murders should be investigated by a special team of specialists;
- the provision of facilities (such as lockers and showers) so that police members can change out of uniform before going home (i.e. thus not be conspicuous as a police member);
- provision of transport, especially for those SAPS members staying in the townships, to and from the police station since police personnel are often targeted on public transport (buses, trains and minibus taxis);
- at home members must keep firearms (service pistols) in a gunsafe, which should be provided by the state; while police members' houses should be inspected to ensure that adequate gunsafes have been installed;
- enforcement of standing orders concerning police who drink, visit places that are off-limits (e.g. certain shebeens that are not safe), are involved in domestic violence, suffer from stress in order to identify warning signs for putting themselves at risk in crime, arrest or off duty situations;
- the provision of counselling and stress management courses to police personnel;
- test competency (skills) for carrying and use of firearms and provide frequent refresher/retraining courses to personnel;
- institute better controls over service pistols and the issuing of firearms;
- more recognition should be given to police reservists and, if possible, they should be paid for their work (reservists can make a big contribution in combating crime especially over the weekends);
- improve service conditions, salaries and pay;
- government should provide police with better resources and equipment so that they can do the work more effectively;
- attend to the problems (backlogs) in the courts;
- provide more training especially of a specialised nature;
- reinforce good discipline within the SAPS;
- the community should become more involved;
- educate the public through awareness campaigns about the job of the police – emphasise that they are there to protect and serve communities; and
- the police should visit the schools in their area on a regular basis.

It was also generally felt that a major factor contributing towards the safety of police personnel was ensuring they did not go to the wrong places for entertainment and relaxation.

All these perceptions assisted the Research Subcommittee and the newly formed SAPS Directorate for Police Safety to formulate and make recommendations for improvements to existing measures and suggest new preventative strategies to protect police officials.

In addition, the perceptions of perpetrators also assisted in giving insight into the actual murders and further clarified a number of assumptions and “myths” about police killings. The interviews conducted with convicted murderers of police officials also assisted in the analysis of the current situation and gave further pointers as to what kind of responses were needed to protect police officers from further attack.

Perpetrator perceptions and offender profile¹¹

Modus Operandi

From the descriptions of the circumstances of the event (attack and killing of a police official) a number of patterns and trends emerged.

City/town where attack occurred

More attacks (54%) occurred in a city or large urban area than in a small town/peri-urban area (31%) or rural area (12%) (4% unknown/not declared). A clear assumption here is that there is more crime, and hence the chances of police intercepting perpetrators that much higher, in the cities than in small towns or rural areas.

Place and location of event

Of far more significance in this regard was the fact that the most frequent location (just more than a third of the incidents) occurred "in a street". The following were the most frequent places of attack:

- In a street 35%
- In a house/shack 19%
- At a shebeen¹² 8%
- In the vicinity of shops/
at a shopping complex 8%
- Open field 8%

Event description

With regard to the circumstances surrounding the attack the following categories were of significance, namely:

To avoid being arrested (42%)

This was the largest category in terms of circumstances leading to the murder of a police official, although there were also a number of subcategories to the description of the event. However, the highest frequency (19%) within the broad circumstance of trying to avoid arrest occurred during police response to a crime and while trying to apprehend the suspects, for instance, during or just immediately after a robbery/hijacking of a vehicle.

Direct attacks on police (31%)

Direct attacks on police officials was the next biggest category. However, most of these attacks can be construed as ambushes under the following circumstances:

- A deliberate and premeditated attack on police with specific target selection in order to release prisoners being transported.
- An attack in which the aim is to steal a police officer's service pistol.
- The attempted murder of a police officer in his private car and theft of his firearm.

During the commission of a crime (12%)

Attacks on colleagues (8%)

Opportunistic attacks (4%)

Overall in exactly half of the cases (50%), a crime (excluding the actual murder) was in progress during the attack (for example housebreak, vehicle hijacking, robbery or theft of firearm). In a number of these cases (35%) a police official's firearm was also stolen or taken during the attack. In only one case was it specifically indicated that the motive (intention) of the attack was the theft of the police official's service

pistol. In other words, their firearms were taken as the opportunity to do so presented itself (spur of the moment) or during the attack (response to the police's presence) to avoid arrest. Moreover, in a number of cases the police official was alone (i.e. had no back up or was a specific target or victim).

Police as easy targets

Respondents largely recognised the vulnerability of policemen responding to and entering (in some instances the perception was of rushing in recklessly without any thought for personal safety) a crime situation and the fact that things develop very quickly, which puts policemen who do not take proper and adequate precautions at greater risk of being killed.

These perceptions direct attention towards, and to a certain extent, link up with possible training and preventative strategies.

Intention when entering the situation leading up to the attack

In most of the cases the intention was largely to either:

- just release prisoners
- take his gun but not kill him
- avoid being arrested
- get the money but, not to shoot them (police)
- get away from the crime scene
- only threaten him (He grappled with me and was going to shoot me, I was afraid)
- stop them as I thought they were robbers from the township
- stop them because I thought the policemen (in plainclothes) were coming to help the gangster I was fighting with
- offer an excuse, e.g. I was just the driver
- to protect myself because he came to kill me and was pointing his gun at me.

Premeditation or even a planned and deliberate attack in order to murder a policeman are both conspicuously absent from the descriptions of the attack event or of their stated intentions in entering the situation leading up to the death of the victim (police official).

Post-attack analysis

Do you know of other people who have attacked police?

In contrast to the fact that for 88 percent of the respondents this was apparently their first attack/involvement in such an incident, 31 percent said that they knew of people (outside of prison) who had perpetrated such attacks on the police, although some of these attacks occurred during the political violence of the late 1980s and early 1990s.

Respondents were also asked whether they knew why these other people had attacked police and the responses are interesting in terms of general perceptions concerning the main reasons for attacks and killing of police, particularly with reference to the theft of service pistols (75% of those who said they knew of people who had attacked and killed police referred to the acquisition of firearms as the main reason for these attacks). These respondents all highlight a public perception and belief that most of the attacks on police are for the theft of their service pistols and for use by criminals in crime. While this may well be the case in a certain proportion of police killings, findings from other research done for this report would indicate otherwise. It is, therefore, obvious that a specific public awareness campaign needs to be instituted to educate the public about the frequency of other reasons other than only the theft of police firearms.

Preventing such attacks

Generally the respondents felt that the police can do a number of things to prevent such attacks on them. One respondent, however, emphatically stated that:

There is very little they [the police] can do to prevent attacks as they never know when the attack will occur (Interview No. 12).

Such sentiments point to the fact that members of the police need to be better prepared and trained in techniques, to be more alert and careful when entering any crime situation, searching for suspects or attempting to arrest a person.

Some of the advice also relates to procedure, for example:

They should have told me why they were arresting me, shown... produced their ID, they should also have told me where they were taking me (Interview No. 24).

Other advice to prevent such attacks dealt with a number of ancillary policing issues such as:

- obtaining advance information (and making more use of informers) so that the police can have prior knowledge of when and where crimes will be committed and thus can prevent them.
- rooting out corruption within the ranks of the SAPS, i.e. SAPS should have a strong anti-corruption programme in place.
- conducting proper investigations of crime and, according to one respondent "they mustn't falsify evidence" while another highlighted the fact that: "They must be better educated [and] taught how to investigate better, how to arrest people"

(Interview No. 17).

- undergoing better firearms training. In this instance a number of responses were received, namely:

When they arrest members they [police] must shoot properly, it is the only way to escape from such a situation [attack] (Interview No. 2)

They can train their people better especially with firearms. If they train them better they will be able to handle the situation much better. The policeman must know that he can shoot and that he is protected [by Section 49 (Use of Force) of the Criminal Procedure Act] when he shoots a criminal (Interview No. 12).

- making use of body armour (bullet-proof vests). The perception of one respondent was that not only poor firearm use but also the fact that body armour was not adequate protection were factors in the death of policemen, namely that:

The police shoot too quickly as they arrive [at the scene of a crime]. They just begin shooting. The police die from their mistakes. If they shoot I will shoot back. The police only wear body armour on the main body so in fact you can shoot them in the head (Interview No. 13).

- improving community/police relations so that firstly the community will learn to trust the SAPS more and not "hate them", and secondly so that the community will be more

prepared to co-operate and report crime (and inter alia come forward to identify the criminals who attack and kill the police). The issue of community policing was also raised and two respondents advised as follows:

I think it is part of police management to maybe give some lectures to the police [on the ground] on how to live in the community. They think it's the community's duty to understand police work -- they [police] are there to protect. Let the community become aware of the presence of police, they are always there (Interview No. 11).

You see policing the community is bad, there must be a good relationship between the community and the police. If the relationship is good they [the community] will give money and help the police [to fight crime] (Interview No. 17).

- the fact that off-duty police should avoid public places such as shebeens and not become drunk (which places them in a vulnerable position) or alternatively, they should not carry their service pistols with them when off-duty. The respondents stated the following:

In a public place like a shebeen they mustn't be there even though if he is there he mustn't carry his gun or something – must be like other people [i.e. be unarmed] (Interview No. 16).

- recognising the danger and difficulties involved in their jobs and the issue of better support services (psychological counselling, debriefing after experiencing an attack situation and being taught proper stress-management were also mentioned as helping police to perform better).
- improving discipline. One perception of the respondents was that " Discipline is not what it used to be."
- expecting the police to respect human rights and avoid the abuse or use of force and violence. In other words, as one respondent put it:

...and when they [police] arrest suspects they must not hit the suspects or cause them injury. And it can happen that when they arrest that suspect after a time and hit him and he is outside on the street again. And when he is outside he sees the police as the enemy and if they arrest him again they must take it [the case] into court and see that the case and evidence is properly gained. In other words the policemen must treat members of the public much better so that they don't develop a hatred for the police. They must co-operate with everyone (Interview No. 19).

Circumstances of arrest

Of particular significance in terms of the circumstances of their arrests is that in 54 percent of the incidents the perpetrators were caught on the basis of information received either from the public (eyewitnesses), a family member, an informer or directly from a co-accused that had been arrested. In

the light of the low rate of arrests of copkillers in South Africa over the last five years the large proportion of arrests being made on the basis of information received must surely point to the fact that it is essential that greater use must be made of informers in the pursuit of the perpetrators, as well as possibly offering rewards for information leading to their arrest. Moreover, members of the public should be further encouraged to provide the police with information, in particular on those who attack the police since the police are the first line of protection against criminals for all members of a community. Furthermore, witnesses must be reassured that in coming forward they will be protected by means of entering a safe and effective witness protection programme.

Although there were multiple combinations of the circumstances (for example a co-accused could have been arrested on the basis of information from an eyewitness, but in turn would inform on his fellow co-accused etc.), the following were the circumstances in reaction to which these arrests were made:

- Of the arrests which were undertaken on the basis of information received, 21 percent were on the basis of information received directly from members of the public.
- Another 14 percent of arrests were as a result of being identified by an eyewitness (one of the cases being an identity parade).
- However, in 64 percent of the information-received arrests a co-accused had informed on a fellow co-accused.
- Of these, 22 percent of the co-accused were themselves arrested on information received from witnesses, another 22 percent on information received from informers (members of the public) while 11 percent were arrested on information supplied directly to the police by a family member.

Even though they were arrested at a later stage, 31 percent of the respondents were not worried at the time of the attack that they would be caught, mainly because: "... the policemen were now dead you see we did not worry about being caught..." (Interview No. 1); "I was not worried about being caught by the police, I was far away from the scene" [by the time other police arrived] (Interview No. 5); "At that stage I never foresaw that I would be caught, only afterwards I realise that I could be caught" (Interview No. 12); and "No, I wasn't worried they would catch me" (Interview No. 23).

When asked if they were afraid that the police would have shot them during the attack, 35 percent answered yes and among the reasons given were that: "Because they also trained like me to shoot and carry firearms" (Interview No. 8); "I was scared that he would shoot me because he asked me to come closer" (Interview No. 14); "During the attack I was scared that they would shoot me, that they were hiding behind the name of the police and if they had guns they could have shot me" (Interview No. 24); and "Yes, because he was pointing at me with his firearm" (Interview No. 26).

In contrast, 19 percent of the respondents said they were not afraid of being shot mainly because: "...you see if you pull the gun first you can kill them" (Interview No. 1); "I was not worried that the policeman would shoot me" (Interview No. 2); "No, I was not worried that the police would shoot me as I did not expect the police would be there" (Interview No. 12); "I was not worried that the victim would shoot me because we had disarmed him" (Interview No. 18); and "No, I was not scared I would be shot by the victim because he did not have a firearm with him" (Interview No. 20).

All these perceptions and opinions emanating from the focus-group interviews as well as the interviews with convicted perpetrators of police murders,

assisted with the formulation of a comprehensive preventative and protective strategy on the part of the SAPS itself in order to ensure that its members are safer and more secure in the execution of their daily work as well as their travelling to and from work.

PREVENTATIVE MEASURES IMPLEMENTED POST-1994 AND PRE-1999

In terms of practical preventative measures aimed at protecting police members from attack, training programmes, e.g. training in Special Weapons and Tactics (SWAT, were restructured in 1997 around situations which show a high possibility or potential for fatal attacks. Other preventative measures have been the implementation of an "Alert System" (initiated on the basis of the analysis of crime statistics by the Crime Information Management Centre – renamed in 1998 as the Crime Information Analysis Centre (CIAC) – whereby members were warned against entering certain high risk ("hot spots") areas without physical backup or support. All members were further encouraged to wear their bullet-proof jackets when going out on patrol or investigating/ apprehending suspects. Unfortunately, for a number of years there existed a twofold problem with the use of bullet-proof vests by police out on patrol, namely the shortage of supplies and the resistance by members themselves to the wearing of bullet-proof vests. The vests are seen to be cumbersome, hamper getting out of patrol vehicles quickly, are uncomfortable when wearing seat belts and finally the members do not like wearing them as they are perceived to impinge on the macho image of "action cops".

Finally, in recognition of poor service delivery and its human rights record the SAPS have launched a number of programmes to address the way they do their job. The first was the acceptance of the transformation of the way that they police - from a repressive apartheid supporting stance to a more

community democratic-orientated way (community policing). Secondly, courses/workshops were held throughout the service to educate police officers with regard to human rights and their constitutional responsibilities as contained in the new Constitution (1996) and the Bill of Rights. Thirdly, other programmes such as Diversity Training and *Ubuntu* (humanness/equality) workshops were offered in order to fundamentally change the mindsets of members (particularly whites) concerning human rights, cultural diversity and equity. The establishment of Community Police Forums (CPFs) has also gone some way in making the police more accountable to their communities, as well as improving service delivery and bringing them closer to the people they are supposed to serve. This has helped to break down the old perceptions of distrust and mistrust and assist in re-establishing trust and good relations between them and residents. The establishment of an Independent Complaints Directorate (IDC) to investigate any concerns and complaints by the public against the police, has also provided a more constructive avenue for the channelling, as well as an outlet, of negative perceptions and actions by the public. Another initiative to address public concerns on the corruption and involvement in crime by police has been the setting up of a National Anti-Corruption Unit (with provincial branches) in 1995 (these units have subsequently at the beginning of 2003 been absorbed into the restructured detective units on organised crime. The public are able to anonymously phone in information about police members involved in corruption to a toll free telephone number. All these measures were in part aimed at lessening the negative perceptions the public have of the police and, in a sense, to do away with the previous reasons (unjustified as they may have been in certain instances) for the attacks and killing of police officers in South Africa. With regard to service delivery the so-called Service Delivery Improvement Programme was launched in 1999.

With reference to other plans for safeguarding police which emanated from the Research Committee's work, the following have been implemented post-1999.

SAFEGUARDING PLANS POST-1999

With the appointment in May 1999 of the National Multi-Disciplinary Committee (MDC) to investigate the whole issue of the murder of members of the SAPS and to assist with the formulation of action steps in order to curb the killing of and attacks on them, a whole new initiative was launched in terms of viewing police officials as victims and thus worthy of specific protective measures.

One of the first conclusions of the MDC was that throughout the SAPS there was a shortage of suitable equipment which prevented police officials to function effectively. One of their first recommendations was that bullet-proof vests in sufficient numbers be purchased and issued to the operational police in the high-risk areas. A number of immediate steps were also implemented:¹³

- A standing reward of R250 000 was offered to any person who provides information that leads to an arrest and conviction of a suspect responsible for a murder of a police official.
- An awareness campaign was launched within the SAPS by means of seminars, workshops and internal circulars countrywide. A victim profile was also circulated so that those members in the high-risk group (26-35 year old males in operational situations) could take specific safety precautions and prepare more thoroughly to prevent such incidents. In other words, the aim of the campaign was to alert members who fit the victim profile against possible attack. In addition, a communication strategy both externally and internally was launched through which

Personal Safety Guidelines were circulated.

- All commanders in the SAPS were informed that they needed to ensure that any member who experienced an attack or witnessed the killing of a colleague must receive the necessary debriefing within 24 hours of the occurrence of such an incident.
- The Provincial Commissioners in the high-risk provinces, i.e. those experiencing the highest rate of police official murders (Gauteng, KwaZulu-Natal, the Eastern and Western Cape) were instructed to issue all SAPS members who were operationally deployed in flash-point areas or "hot-spots" with a bullet-proof vest. Members were to be compelled to wear such bullet-proof vests at all times while on duty.
- Furthermore, the Provincial Commissioners were requested to ensure that all SAPS members operationally deployed within flash-point areas in these four provinces who had not yet completed the Special Weapons and Tactics (SWAT) course, attend such a course as soon as possible. Moreover, in-service training was to be presented in the high-risk areas, while preference was to be given to the vulnerable 26-35 year old group.
- An evaluation by the Security and Advisory Service section within the SAPS was launched immediately in order to investigate the security levels of all police facilities in high-risk areas with the aim of upgrading the security at these premises.
- Finally, the National Commissioner was instructed to establish a unit at Head Office aimed specifically at the development and maintenance of preventative measures designed to protect members from attacks and being murdered. The purpose of such a directorate would be to develop and implement guidelines, policy, standards as

well as monitoring the implementation thereof. (The Directorate: Police Safety in the Division: Crime Prevention with Dir. Riaan van Staden was formally established in January 2000).

- In a later instruction, which was issued after the establishment of the Directorate for Police Safety, Provincial Commissioners were instructed to compile Provincial Police Safety Plans. These had to be compiled in accordance with new safety guidelines (to be developed by the new Directorate for Police Safety). Responsibility for implementation of these Plans would be at all levels, i.e. unit/station/area and provincial

STEPS TAKEN¹⁴ TO PREVENT ATTACKS ON POLICE OFFICIALS

In the light of the continuing high level of the murder of police officers the management of the SAPS placed renewed emphasis on the organisation itself wanting to do something about the situation. The establishment in January 2000 of the new directorate, the Directorate for Police Safety, was a direct result of their stated intentions to try and protect members from attacks and murder.

As part of formulating safety guidelines for the police service, various assessments were undertaken by the new Directorate for Police Safety. One of these assessments was the identification of shortcomings at police stations. In July 2000 Dir. Van Staden and Insp. Nel had undertaken an inspection tour around the country to assess the situation on the ground. In each of the flashpoint provinces (Gauteng, KwaZulu-Natal, the Western and Eastern Cape) two police stations were selected (except the Western Cape where only one was selected) on the basis of a high number of police deaths occurring in that policing area. An evaluation was made of what courses had been

undergone by personnel at these stations and the resources available (basic logistical shortages which might have an influence on the effectiveness of policing, e.g. a shortage of handcuffs etc.). These identified police stations would then receive the necessary logistical support and training to see what impact this would have on the levels of murder of police officials.

The abovementioned assessment revealed a number of interesting issues and shortcomings which indirectly impact on the continued killing of police members.¹⁵ Among the most obvious shortcomings encountered were the following:

- Provincial Police Safety Plans were not comprehensively executed.
- No proper command and control at station/unit level existed.
- Quite a number of operational members had not yet attended specialised training courses nor tactical training due to the (non-availability of members).
- No tactical training programme for on-the-job training was available.
- There was a lack of tactical trainers' capacity at provincial- and area level.
- Members were found not to be safety conscious or oriented towards full awareness of the dangers facing them in everyday policing.
- Incorrect application of tactical policing procedures whilst attending complaints, searching suspects or vehicles and in arresting suspects) was apparent.
- Ineffective utilisation of policing accouterments (handcuffs, torches, batons etc.) was commonplace.
- The visiting of police cells and implementation of restraining mechanisms were not being applied in accordance with organisational instructions.

- A shortage of bullet-proof vests for detectives was being experienced.
- The lack of community involvement in the prevention of police killings was problematic.
- Minimal debriefing of traumatised members did not improve matters.
- Limited progress was made with regard to the upgrading of police premises.

Many of these issues could be linked to the research findings and all needed to be addressed in a holistic manner.

Accordingly one of the first tasks undertaken by the head of the Directorate for Police Safety after his appointment, was to revise the tasks of the MDC's working groups. In line with this the Logistics Working Group was instructed to evaluate the whole question of the adequacy and utility of primary "policing tools" namely firearms, uniform, handcuffs, batons, body armour etc, as well as the effectiveness of so-called "supporting equipment" such as hand-held radios, radios in vehicles and patrol cars themselves. Thirdly, physical security in terms of buildings and premises was also assessed.

A second working group was tasked to examine the question of securing personal environment. Such issues (which were all recognised as long-term) as salaries, allowances, medical benefits and the identification of high-risk areas for the payment of danger allowances (criteria for this) were examined.

The reassessment by the Trauma Working Group led to the re-activation of a debriefing process for all police officials who had been attacked or experienced the killing of a colleague. This was a consequence of the recognition of a number of factors that had led – although such processes or services were available and being offered by the psychological services within the SAPS – to this service not being used or

utilised sufficiently. Among those factors that had led to the under-utilisation were the following:

- The lack of personnel (understaffing) of the so-called Helping Professions' Services (psychological, social, counselling and religious comfort services) within the SAPS.
- The fact that these services are unfortunately largely grouped at Head Office in Pretoria.
- Reluctance by police officers themselves to make use of or be seen to make use of the services (a result of erroneous perceptions that availing themselves of "counselling" is a sign of weakness, that they are somehow "flawed" and in contradiction to their macho images as action police officers all of which are further reinforced by ascribing to the outdated concept "that cowboys don't cry" as well as the preference of many to rely on the "buddy" system whereby they only confide in their working partners, close friends and possibly family members).
- Commanding officers are often not aware of these services, do not know the correct procedures to follow, or who to refer or channel personnel to.
- An unwillingness to instruct such officers to undergo "counselling" as this would then be noted on their files and might hamper promotion prospects etc. (this attitude is linked to the above perceptions that making use of these services would somehow "taint" the character of a police officer).
- The workload pressures of many police officers make them and their commanding officers reluctant to set aside time for debriefing and counselling sessions.

Obviously the situation was exacerbated by a lack of an effective communication strategy for communicating information about these services. To overcome this situation commanding officers countrywide were instructed that every police official

under their command that who been a victim of an attack or experienced the killing of a colleague, had to undergo at least an initial debriefing session. This debriefing, in fact, had to be done by their commanding officers using a specific management tool developed for this purpose, after which an assessment whether further counselling was needed would be done. This involved re-activating the process for debriefing training. Commanding Officers themselves were instructed to undergo the basic training course in debriefing offered by the SAPS Psychological Services (a train-the-trainer programme already in existence). Furthermore, the SAPS Helping Professions were encouraged to develop specific stress management programmes to assist police officers in dealing with the stress and trauma being experienced, not only in attack and killing situations, but also in their daily police work.

An important aspect in the reassessment exercise by the Directorate was the emphasis on changing and improving existing training modules. The assessment of these found that while specialised training (such as SWAT) was largely being given to the specialised units, in particular Public Order Policing, the so-called functional or line police officers on the ground were receiving no or very little of this specialised training outside of their basic training. Moreover, a number of so-called Guardian Committees,¹⁶ who were responsible for the development of training modules and curricula, were already in place. In January 2000 all these committees were disbanded and the Training Division of the SAPS established one Guardian Committee chaired by Dir. Van Staden to oversee the development of all the training modules for officer survival.

Furthermore, a Tactical Policing Training (TPT) Level 2 course was developed and designed for presentation to new recruits immediately on completion of their basic training, and run for a period of three weeks at six of the Police Special Training

Centres (Maleoskop; Jakkalsdraai; Slagboom; Oudsthoorn; Pietermaritzburg; and Graaff-Reinet). This course was launched at the beginning of August 2000. The TPT was prioritised to accommodate untrained operational members.

In addition, a three-day Preventative Survival Tactics course was also developed for presentation to the personnel and units at police station level countrywide. This was primarily an information, awareness and sensitising exercise to inform all members of the situation in the country with regard to police killings (e.g. that they are "always a target") as well as provide information on other issues such as stress management, management of personal finances, dealing with domestic violence or alcohol abuse/overuse of alcohol etc.. However, trainers first had to be trained and the first of such courses was started on 1 August 2000, where after it was taken around the country.

Other issues that were investigated for future implementation were those concerning body armour and the issuing of pepper spray. Furthermore, in 2001 a National Instruction went out to all Provincial Commissioners that it would be compulsory for every police officer on functional duty to be issued with an "outer" garment for the wearing of body armour. Every police officer going out on duty will be expected to wear the standard issue kevlar waistcoat with the "outer" in which, if they want to, they can slip in the steel body armour plates for added protection. Although there are complaints that this body armour is cumbersome and too heavy it does provide good protection. The purchase and effectiveness of lighter kevlar vests (next to the skin) have been investigated, but they are costly and the SAPS are not at this stage able to afford buying them for all members. In addition, the wearing (carrying on person or in vehicle) of handcuffs, torches and a tonfa baton were made compulsory. The possibility of adding armour to existing vehicles was also assessed

while a review of shooting practices was undertaken. Proposals for the production and issuing of pepper spray have been assessed by the Logistics Division, and the Directorate has been able to formulate a policy proposal for its production and issue. Subsequently pepper spray has been issued to certain members in a pilot project, whereafter its impact will be assessed for issuance to all members.

Currently the Directorate is also evaluating the use of the tough cable-tie type of handcuffs, but this is still under consideration. The same applies to the continued use of the tonfa baton. Although this baton was designed largely for use in crowd management situations (by Public Order Police (POP)) it has been standard issue for many years to all police members. It is, however, somewhat cumbersome to use in close-quarters arrest situations and is often left in a patrol vehicle and not carried on a police officer's person. The effectiveness of other types of batons, notably the "telescope" steel type that can be carried on a police officer's belt without hindering movement, is being investigated.

The whole matter of the issuing of service firearms to members off-duty remains a sensitive issue and the Directorate has been asked to relook at the situation and to possibly revise the current position in consultation with all role-players. (The Research Subcommittee also extensively examined this issue.) Draft proposals revolve around the issue of visibility of police members when off duty and the possibility of police officers reporting for duty in civilian clothes specifically in those high-risk areas that have already been identified. This, however, has practical implications in terms of providing each member with a locker for his personal use at a police station and other structures such as showering facilities. All these have cost implications, which the SAPS will not currently be able to afford.

Irrespective of all these measures undertaken and

implemented from July 2000 onwards it was reported that the Directorate had found in its analysis of the murder of police officials for the last six months of 1999 that approximately 64% of the police deaths involved an off-duty police member, some of whom were being specifically targeted for their service firearms. What was of further concern to the head of this Directorate, Dir. Riaan van Staden, was the fact that off-duty police officers represent an easy target as well as a source of a firearm. Moreover, there was very little that could be done to prevent such killings since the police official was usually alone, i.e. not accompanied by a fellow officer, was off duty and therefore tended to relax and drop their on-duty vigilance hence becoming most vulnerable. According to Dir. van Staden there was an obvious need to sensitise both the police as well as the public to the realities of the situation. In the case of the 35 percent of policemen who were killed on-duty Dir. van Staden cited negligence, dedication or desire to gain recognition (for an arrest) or, in effect over-zealousness, as the main causes for their murder. According to Dir. Van Staden:

In many of these cases policemen confronted with a possible hostile situation are not calling for back-up. Instead, over-confident policemen, driven by the desire for recognition from their superiors, try to arrest five armed men and get shot (Webb 2000).

Overall, since mid-1999 there has been a concerted effort from the side of the SAPS management not only to ensure that its members are better protected but also that they will operate in a more secure environment. Furthermore, there was a drive to make certain that all are provided with the requisite minimum safety equipment and that every functional member receives the appropriate training, especially the additional specialised training which would no

longer only be reserved for the special units. Although the killing of police officers has continued up to the present time, in the year 2000 the total annual number of police killed for the first time fell to below the 200 mark as well as representing a substantial reduction of 10 percent over the 1999 figure and a 22 percent reduction over the 1998 figure. This decrease in the numbers killed continued into 2001 (a 12% reduction over 2000 figure) and a bigger decrease in 2002 (17% over the 2001 figure). The 2002 figure in fact represented a 49 percent reduction in the annual figure from the high reached in 1994 when 265 were killed. Hopefully all the measures currently being implemented will continue to lead to a reduction in the number of police officials killed in South Africa.

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ENDNOTES

¹This article has been extracted from a number of research reports and a conference paper with the statistics having been subsequently updated, namely A. Minnaar. 2000. *Attacks on and murder of police officials: Focus group interview perceptions of police investigators and members of the community*. Research report for the Research Committee of the SAPS Multi-disciplinary Task Team on Attacks of SAPS Members. May; A. Minnaar. 2000. *"Opportunity knocks in the heat of the moment": An analysis of perpetrators' profile and their own perceptions of attacks on and killing of police officials*. Research report for the Research Committee of the SAPS Multi-disciplinary Task Team on Attacks of SAPS Members. June; A. Minnaar. 2000. *An event analysis of the murder of members of the South African Police Service: 1994-1999*. Research report for the Research Committee of the SAPS Multi-disciplinary Task Team on Attacks of SAPS Members. August; A. Minnaar. 2000. *An analysis of attacks on and murder of members of the South African Police Service: Searching for preventative and protective strategies*. Paper presented to the Xth International Symposium on Victimology: *Beyond boundaries: Research and Action for the Third Millennium*. Montreal, Canada. 6-11 August.

²The MDC consisted of the following sub-committees/working groups which were tasked to investigate certain aspects of the killings and to come up with solutions, namely:

- Research
- Justice
- Communications/Consulting
- Operational
- Structural
- Trauma
- Securing of personal environment
- Budget.

³The members of this Research Committee were:

- Snr Supt Jannie Buys, CIAC, SAPS (Committee co-ordinator)
- Dep-Dir Anna Jooste, CIAC, SAPS
- Insp Elsie Nel, CIAC, SAPS
- Ms Celeste van Niekerk, Secretary-General, SAPU (a representative of POPCRU was also invited to sit on the Committee but did not participate)
- Prof. Vincent Maphai, Head: Corporate Marketing, SAB (formerly head of Governance & Democracy Division, HSRC)
- Prof. Herman Conradie, Institute for Criminology, Dept. of Criminology, UNISA
- Dr Anthony Minnaar, Institute for Human Rights & Criminal Justice Studies, Technikon SA

The core research group was eventually reduced to Jooste, Nel, Conradie & Minnaar since the others withdrew due to work pressures, re-assignment or observer status. The Head: CIAC, Dr Chris de Kock, was also involved in a research advisory capacity and management role in obtaining permission to undertake the research in the four

selected provinces and in the prisons.

⁴ In the USA the number of law enforcement officers (duly sworn, federal, state and local having full arrest powers for 7 808 law enforcement agencies covering 68% of the American population – 163 million people; exclusions are the states of Florida, Illinois, Kansas, Montana, South Carolina, Vermont and District of Columbia for which data is not available) killed in duty-related deaths for the years 1987-1996 was 696, an annual average of approximately 70 (no statistics yet available for 1997 & 1998). During 1996, 55 USA law enforcement officers were killed, of whom 53 were male officers and only two female: 22 during arrest situations; 12 investigating suspicious persons/circumstances; 11 while enforcing traffic laws; five ambushed; four while responding to disturbance calls; and one while dealing with a mentally deranged individual. For the years 1987 to 1996 the largest percentage of victim officers were assigned to vehicle patrol. Firearms claimed the lives of 92 % of the total of 696 officers killed in the line of duty from 1987-1996; 71% of which were committed by handguns, 15% with rifles; 5% with shotguns; 8% with other weapons. For 1996 the spatial distribution of killed officers was as follows: Southern states (most populous region): 24; Midwestern states: 15; Northeastern states: 9; Western states: 6; and Puerto Rico: 1. More officers were slain on Fridays than any other day of the week, while the lowest number was recorded on Sundays (*Law Enforcement Officers killed and assaulted: 1996*, pp.1, 3-5).

USA: Law Enforcement Officers killed, 1987-1996: Number killed and type of weapon used									
Year	Total	Handgun	Rifle	Shotgun	Total Firearms	Knife	Bomb	Personal Weapon	Other
1987	74	49	9	9	67	3	0	0	4
1988	78	63	11	2	76	0	0	0	2
1989	66	40	10	7	57	2	0	1	6
1990	66	48	8	1	57	3	0	2	4
1991	71	50	14	4	68	0	1	0	2
1992	63	43	9	2	54	1	1	1	6
1993	70	50	14	3	67	0	0	0	3
1994	79	66	8	4	78	0	0	0	1
1995	74	43	14	5	62	2	8	0	2
1996	55	44	6	1	51	1	0	1	2
Total	696	496	103	38	637	12	10	5	32

Source: US Department of Justice, Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), Uniform Crime Reports, *Law Enforcement Officers killed and assaulted: 1996*, p. 12

⁵ Home Office, UK. Criminal Statistics: England and Wales 1996. p 54.

⁶ Faxed information (July 1998) from Peter Barret, Australian Federal Police, Personnel Division, Canberra, Australia.

⁷ Informal discussions held with Chinese academics at the International Criminology Conference, Seoul, Korea. August 1998.

⁸ E-mail received by Prof. H. Conradie from an Indian academic, May 2000.

Police killings in India - on duty			
Different States		Central (National) Police Organisations	
1993	648	1993	474
1994	604	1994	439
1995	548	1995	320
1996	563	1996	311
1997	<u>566</u>	1997	<u>387</u>
Total	<u>2 929</u>	Total	<u>1 931</u>
Total Indian Police Strength			
1993	1 306 268		
1994	1 340 983		
1995	1 351 047		
1996	1 346 940		
1997	1 374 608		

⁹ Information supplied to author by Prof. Vitali Kvashis, Research Institute, Ministry of Internal Affairs, Moscow, Russia; Prof. P.DeM Neto, University of Sao Paulo, Sao Paulo, Brazil; Prof. A. Povolotskiy, University of Internal Affairs, Kiev, Ukraine at a South African Institute for International Affairs, Wits, Conference: Crime and Policing: Comparative Perspectives. 30 August-1 September 2000.

¹⁰ Minnaar, A. *Attacks on and murder of police officials: focus-group interview perceptions of police investigators and members of the community*. Unpublished Research Report submitted to National Multi-disciplinary Committee, May 2000. The analysis in this report is based on focus-group interviews held in four provinces, namely Gauteng, Western Cape, Eastern Cape and KwaZulu-Natal, during February 2000. In each province focus-group interviews were conducted with different groups, inter alia, detectives (investigating officers) and members of the community.

¹¹ Minnaar, A. *"Opportunity knocks in the heat of the moment": An analysis of perpetrators' profile and their own perceptions of attacks on and killing of police officials*. Unpublished Research Report submitted to Multi-disciplinary Committee, June 2000. The analysis in this report was based on individual interviews undertaken in a number of prisons (Zonderwater, Baviaanspoort, Leeuwkop and Krugersdorp prisons) in Gauteng during January and February 2000 of offenders who have perpetrated attacks on or murdered police officials and who were willing to be interviewed.

¹² An illegal tavern or bar.

¹³ These steps are listed in Nel, E. 1999. *Murder of members of the South African Police Service*. Semester Report: 1 January 1999 to 30 June 1999. CIAC, Pretoria. October, p. 6. Some of the information was updated from R. van Staden. 2002. *Murders of SAPS Officials*. Presentation to a Policing Association of Southern Africa (POLSA) Colloquium on police killings. SAPS Detective Academy, Silverton. 22 November 2002.

¹⁴ Unless otherwise stated the information in this section is drawn largely from a telephonic interview with Dir. Riaan van Staden, Head: Directorate for Police Safety, SAPS, on 2 August 2000 and informal discussions held with

other members of the Multi-disciplinary Committee, in particular Insp. Elsie Nel (SAPS); as well as being updated by drawing information from R van Staden. 2002. *Murders of SAPS Officials*. Presentation to a Policing Association of Southern Africa (POLSA) Colloquium on police killings. SAPS Detective Academy, Silverton. 22 November 2002.

¹⁵ The information below is drawn from R. van Staden. 2002. *Murders of SAPS Officials*. Presentation to a Policing Association of Southern Africa (POLSA) Colloquium on police killings. SAPS Detective Academy, Silverton. 22 November 2002.

¹⁶ The Guardian Committees comprised of police training officers, representatives of certain tertiary institutions and other roleplayers who gave advice and assisted in the development (including of course content and revision of existing modules) of all the different training courses being presented in the SAPS.