

Conflict Prevention and Risk Analysis (CPRA) –Pretoria



CPRA Daily Briefings

Week 26

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The **CPRA Daily Briefings** are held weekday mornings in the CPRA Pretoria's Situation Room and the Briefing Notes are the minutes of this meeting during which each regional expert of the Programme reports on the latest human security developments in his/her region, followed by general discussions around the table. An intern then compiles a summary of the meeting, which is reviewed by the respective researchers, and a senior researcher edits the report and provides quality control before returning it to the intern to prepare it for dispatch to the mailing list to which you have subscribed.

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**Today's Briefings
Compilation**
Ms Tarryn Warries

Summary of Briefings

Southern Africa

South Africa: former Police Chief takes the fight to President Zuma

Former National Police Commissioner, Bheki Cele, recently filed papers in the Gauteng North High Court in a bid to review President Jacob Zuma's decision to fire him. President Zuma took this decision after a board of inquiry found Cele to be dishonest and that he failed in his duty with regards to his role in the R1.7 billion lease deal to obtain new police headquarters. In his 93-page founding affidavit, Cele claims that the board of inquiry was biased and didn't take into account the successes achieved during his term of office. He alleged that Judge Jake Molo's behaviour in court was "judicially unethical" and President Zuma's decision to dismiss him was "irrational" and "arbitrary". Cele argues that during his stay in office between July 2009 and June 2012, crime reduced, police killings dropped and police morale improved.

It appears as if Cele is taking a long shot by going to court given that on his own version he didn't adhere to the standard of responsibility required of him. For example, he admitted not reading documents he signed and did not know where the money would come from to pay for the lease. Furthermore, his claims of achievement are debatable when carefully assessed. While crime decreased during his short term of office, he was not the reason for it. Total crime levels in South Africa peaked in 2002/03 and since then have decreased by 24%. Therefore overall crime levels had been decreasing consistently for seven years before Cele's term of office started. Particular violent crimes such as residential and business robbery that had increased substantially since 2005 started to decrease in the year that Cele was appointed. However, this was because of strategies that were being implemented prior to Cele's appointment.

With regards to the killings of police officials, while Cele made this a national priority, he did so only in 2011. The purpose was seemingly as a response to growing public anger after the death of Ficksburg civil activist Andries Tatane who was killed by police in April 2011 while protesting against poor service delivery. At the time, Cele misled the nation by stating that the killings of police officials had increased, while in fact they were at their lowest level in years. While he seemed to be genuinely concerned about murdered police officials, a problem that over the years has received much attention and is of concern to all those who work with police officials, it seemed that the real reason he focused on the killings of police officials when he did, was to deflect attention from the dramatic rise in police brutality and the killing of civilians by police, which had doubled between 2007 and 2009.

In terms of police moral, although he enjoys support from a number of police officials, as he was very visible in the media highlighting the challenges facing the police, a study has not been conducted to evaluate this assumption. As much as there are police officials that support him, there were many who were embarrassed by his often-careless public remarks, his immodest dress sense and his association with people under suspicion of fraud and corruption.

Moreover, Cele was linked to a number of irregular promotions of police officials, particularly those who had been body-guards to President Zuma and himself while he was the MEC for Community Safety in KwaZulu-Natal. Some jumped many ranks in a single promotion against SAPS policy and procedure. Such decisions undermined police morale amongst many who have not been promoted in years despite evidence of good work. Under Cele's command there was little evidence that key problems in police were being effectively addressed. On the contrary, it emerged that he had allowed hundreds of new recruits who had failed basic training to be appointed as police officials and an internal SAPS audit report found that over 27 000 serving officers did not possess the minimum competency for handling firearms.

The board of inquiry recommended that a full criminal investigation be undertaken into the role played by Cele, previous Minister of Public Works Gwen Mahlangu-Nkabinde and businessman Roux Shabangu in the illegal SAPS Headquarter lease deal. Both Cele and Nkabinde repeatedly acted against the law, in spite of being warned by their subordinates, to ensure that a single businessman would profit to the tune of many hundreds of millions of Rands over ten years through inflated rentals. No proper investigation had yet been undertaken to ascertain why this was the case and if corruption was involved. However, it is unlikely that President Zuma will order an investigation in the run up to the upcoming ANC National Conference in Mangaung. Cele is an important political figure within Kwa-Zulu Natal (KZN) and the support of the province at Mangaung is integral to the re-election of President Zuma as president of the ANC.

SA at a tipping point

The blurring of lines between the ruling political party and government for some time has been a serious problem hindering service delivery in South Africa. Unfortunately, under President Zuma's administration it has become particularly bad in the criminal justice system due to his record of poor appointments. As well-known analyst and commentator Clem Sunter's latest scenarios for the next five years argue, South Africa has the adequate resources to become a 'Premier League State' (to use a soccer analogy) but we require good inclusive and sound leadership to build on our human and capital resources. During an address at the Thinkfest, which is part of the annual National Arts Festival in Grahamstown, Sunter said the uncertainty concerning the ability of our national political leaders to foster coherence and consensus around clear economic policy is limiting both foreign and local investment in the economy. Sunter states that South Africa is at its 2nd tipping point and decisions by our leaders will determine whether we flourish as a nation or whether our key problems such as unemployment, poverty and poor education, get worse.

The issue of leadership is key in the run-up to the ANC National Conference in Mangaung and whoever becomes the President of the ANC will need to address the nature of leadership to ensure that our complex challenges are addressed. There are a number of promising proposals in the ANC discussion document on organisational renewal, but it will take selfless and bold leadership to implement these recommendations given the extent to which corruption and greed have infiltrated the ruling party at its highest levels.

The End