

# **THE CHALLENGE TO CONTROL SOUTH AFRICA'S BORDERS AND BORDERLINE**

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## ABBEVIATIONS

<b>AMP</b>	<b>Arms Management Programme</b>
<b>BAC</b>	<b>Business Against Crime</b>
<b>CCOSI</b>	<b>Cabinet Committee on Safety and Intelligence</b>
<b>CIAC</b>	<b>Crime Information and Analysis Centre</b>
<b>CLETG</b>	<b>Customs Law Enforcement Task Group</b>
<b>CPF</b>	<b>Community police forum</b>
<b>FIRE</b>	<b>National Firearms Project of the Arms Management Programme</b>
<b>IFIU</b>	<b>Illegal Firearm Investigation Units</b>

<b>NGOs</b>	<b>Non-governmental organisations</b>
<b>NIA</b>	<b>National Intelligence Agency</b>
<b>NICOC</b>	<b>National Intelligence Co-ordinating Committee</b>
<b>NIDS</b>	<b>National Inter-Departmental Structure</b>
<b>NIM</b>	<b>Network of Independent Monitors</b>
<b>SADF</b>	<b>South African Defence Force</b>
<b>SANDF</b>	<b>South African National Defence Force</b>
<b>SAP</b>	<b>South African Police</b>
<b>SAPS</b>	<b>South African Police Service</b>
<b>SARPCCO</b>	<b>Southern African Regional Police Chiefs Co-ordination Organisation</b>
<b>UK</b>	<b>United Kingdom</b>
<b>UNODCCP</b>	<b>United Nations Office for Drug Control and Crime Prevention</b>

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## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

The aim of this research project was to establish how effective South African border control mechanisms are in preventing the illegal smuggling or movement of firearms across South Africa's international land borders. The research consisted of an analysis of the existing border controls initiatives, an analysis of two case studies of border areas and an opinion survey among police members at South Africa's 52 land border posts.

Firearm-related crime is increasing at alarming rates in South Africa. Some illegal firearms enter the South African market as a result of smuggling activities across borders. However, the majority of firearms entering the illegal pool in the country do not originate from outside South Africa.

The analyses undertaken during the course of this study and the opinion survey demonstrated that illegal firearms, as well as crossborder crimes involving drugs, illegal immigrants, contraband and vehicles, are of concern to the South African government, the South African Police Service (SAPS), the Department of Home Affairs, the South African Revenue Service (SARS), the South African National Defence Force (SANDF) and non-governmental organisation (NGOs) alike.

The findings of the research can be summarised as follows:

- There is substantial interest in improving border control in South Africa both from a national and an international perspective.
- There is substantial interest from the private sector to assist the SAPS and the SANDF in strengthening their capabilities with a view to improve the successful combat of border crimes.
- Structures have been in place for some time now to facilitate co-operation between the different government departments involved in border control on South Africa's international borders. Although this collective approach has been followed for nearly six years, problems are still experienced such as a lack of proper communication on all levels.
- South Africa loses revenue as a result of border crimes that lead to the non-payment of duties.
- Crossborder crimes happen at will, including the illegal smuggling of firearms, across South African borders.
- Border posts are understaffed and some even lack the basic facilities to undertake effective border policing such as facsimile machines, a consistent electricity supply, proper living quarters for police/customs/immigration officers, vehicles and proper search and



storage facilities.

- There is a lack of communication between the agencies working in the same field, resulting in the loss of valuable information on crime and crime syndicates.
- There is a lack of trust between the agencies involved in border control at ground level, resulting in accusations of corruption.
- Corruption is a fact that needs to be dealt with immediately.
- The existing border control structure created to act as a co-ordination agency between the different departments involved is not reaching ground level.
- New initiatives to address problem areas and conditions at border posts are welcomed.

## **Chapter 1**

### **BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE OF RESEARCH**

The proliferation of firearms originating from across South Africa's international borders is a problem identified some years ago by the South African Police Service and the South African government. It is recognised by the government that firearms smuggled across the country's international borders are playing a role in violent crimes in the country. The SAPS has therefore identified firearms as its number one policing priority since 1996. It has been included in the National Policing Strategy and Objectives since 1995. In the Operational Priorities for the period 2000/2003, the SAPS has listed firearms and the proliferation of firearms as one of their focus points under organised, serious and violent crimes. The National Commissioner of the SAPS, Jackie Selebi, indicated in his speech in August 2000 to the Parliamentary Portfolio Committee on the proposed Firearms Control Bill that the capacity of the Border Police will be enlarged at the 20 border posts handling most of the movements of firearms in an attempt to address the problems experienced with firearms entering or leaving South Africa. According to the Commissioner, the capacity of other police units will also be increased to address the problem of legal and illegal firearms.<sup>1</sup> Internationally, the South African government is becoming more involved in the issue and in some instances, is leading the international debate on small arms proliferation in Southern African.

#### **Sources of firearms entering South Africa illegally**

Large numbers of firearms are still in circulation in Southern Africa as a result of the two civil wars in Mozambique and Angola. The failure of peacekeeping operations in Mozambique to disarm former soldiers properly is largely seen as one of the most significant reasons for this. This raises fears that the region could be flooded with firearms in the event of a cease-fire or peace in Angola.

After the end of the civil war in Mozambique, large numbers of firearms and small arms were hidden in arms caches, instead of being handed in by former combatants or collected by the United Nations peacekeeping operation in the country as envisaged. The ONUMOZ (1993-1995) only collected 190 000 weapons of between 0.5 to 6 million weapons estimated to be circulating in the country.<sup>2</sup>

In Angola, UNAVEM II and III both failed to fulfil their mandate to disarm the warring parties in the country. There are fears in South Africa that this failure may lead to an increased flow of

illegal firearms to South Africa when the conflict ends in Angola. News reports have shown that, with the ongoing conflict in Angola, soldiers from the Angolan Army (FAA) have tried to sell automatic firearms to buyers in the northern Namibian region of Kavango.<sup>3</sup> The Namibian police have reported a significant surge in firearm-smuggling, with sources indicating that arms originate from Angola.<sup>4</sup>

It is evident that weapons not collected during peace operations after conflicts have ended up in Southern Africa. These often fall into criminal hands in neighbouring countries like Zimbabwe, Zambia, Malawi and South Africa, and may even have been used to start new conflicts in the region. As Vines puts it:

"although the conflict ended, the networks controlling light weapons supplies simply found new customers, using existing caches and networks to traffic weapons to neighbouring states, specially South Africa."<sup>5</sup>

Within South Africa, the growing demand for firearms is largely attributed to the rise in violent crime in recent years. The demand for firearms has not been offset by the subsidence in politically motivated violence. There are two main sources of demand for firearms in South Africa.<sup>6</sup> After the 1994 elections in South Africa, political violence showed a slight decrease, but the root cause of the tensions between the African National Congress (ANC) and the Inkatha Freedom Party (IFP), especially in KwaZulu-Natal still remain.

Violent crimes involving firearms have increased while crime rates in general have mostly stabilised. Although the number of murders reported since 1994 has been declining, the number of murders committed with a firearm has increased. In 1998, some 12 267 out of 24 875 (49.3%) murders were committed with a firearm, indicating a 41.5% increase from rates recorded for 1994 and 1995. The proportion of robberies committed with a firearm increased slightly from 76% to 79%.<sup>7</sup> The increase in crime is not only limited to South Africa, but is also evident in other Southern African countries such as Zimbabwe, Angola, Zambia and Malawi.

There is a strong link between the rising demand for firearms and the rise in violent crimes in South Africa. In 1999, levels of violent crime increased faster than in any other year since 1994. In comparison with 1998, violent crime increased by almost 10%, more than any other crime category.

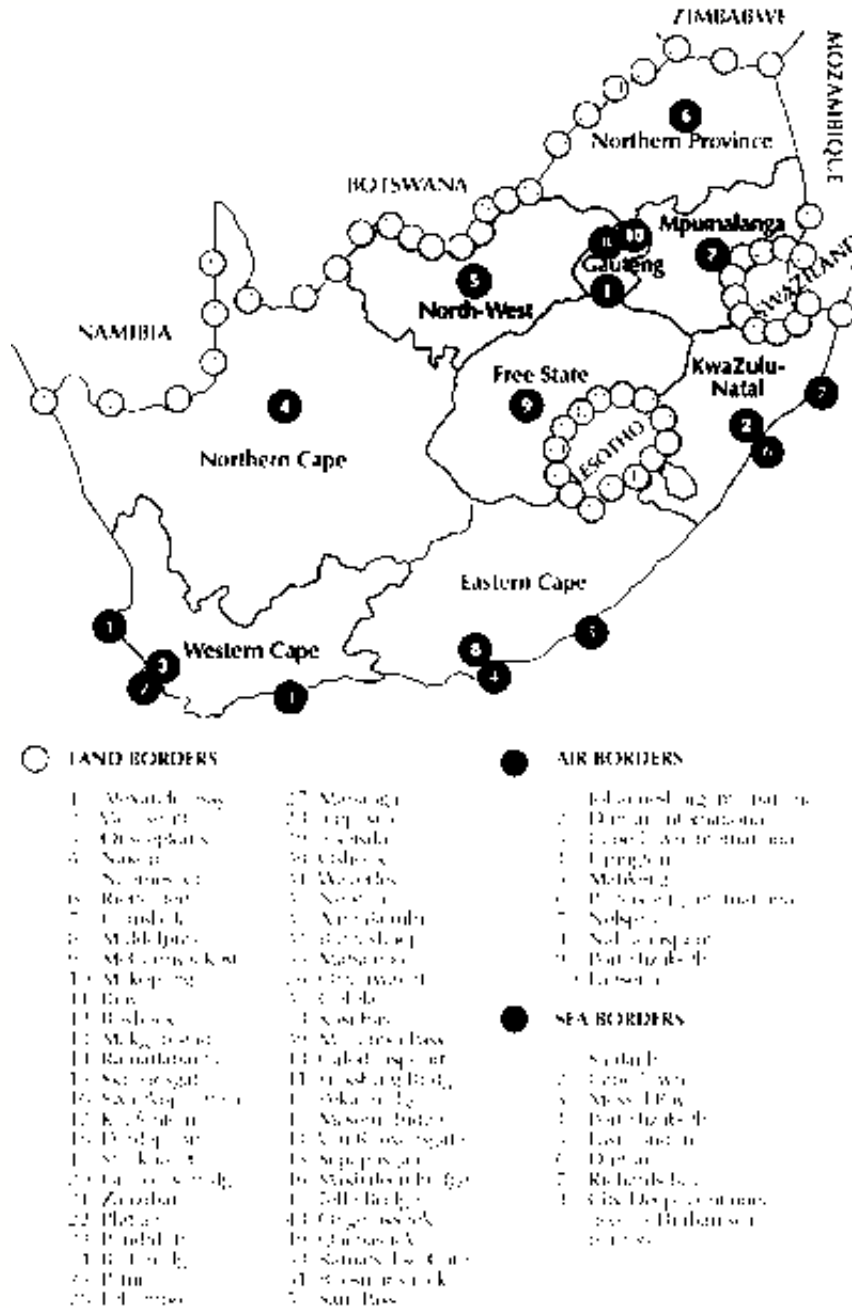
Most firearms smuggled into South Africa are not meant for common or petty criminals on the street as they can more easily obtain a firearm from local sources. Firearms smuggled into South Africa are mostly meant for organised crime syndicates and for a specific purpose, such as cash-in-transit robberies and political assassinations.

Two of the sources readily able to supply these firearms to criminal groups in South Africa are hidden arms caches in Mozambique and firearms sold in the northern Namibian area of Rundu and Kavango near the border with Angola.

The smuggling routes and networks are in place to move firearms and other illegal goods to the market in South Africa. Some of these routes and pipelines were those used by the liberation movements and rebel groups in Southern Africa in their struggle for freedom and during the civil wars. These existing smuggling routes have been used for some time by organised crime syndicates. Countries like Mozambique and Angola are increasingly used as supply bases from which illicit firearms and other illegal commodities move to criminals and organised crime groups inside South Africa by criminal elements familiar with the operational mechanisms of these

routes and pipelines.

**Map 1: South Africa's borderline and the distribution of border posts**



Source: Source: SAPS Border Police Head Office, Pretoria.

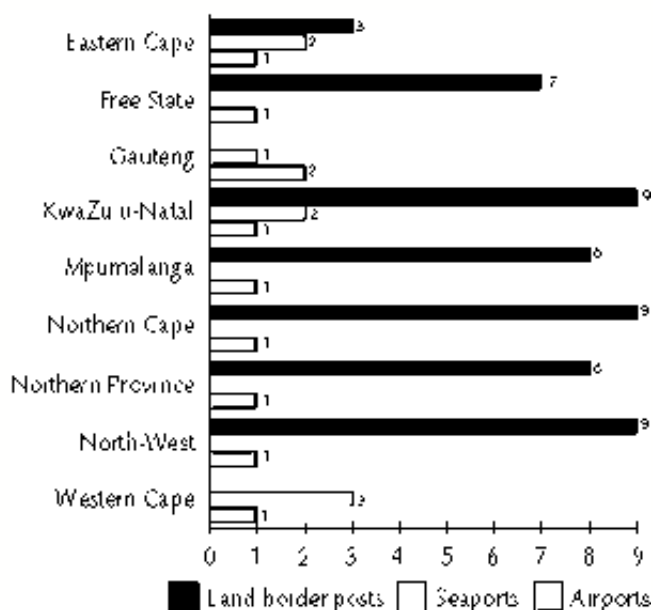
### South African land borders

South African has an extensive land borderline which it shares with six other countries - Mozambique, Zimbabwe, Botswana, Namibia, Lesotho and Swaziland. The total distance of land borders of South Africa is approximately 3 500 km.

There are 52 land border posts in South Africa. Only 19 of these are designated for the movement of commercial goods. The land borders are all rated according to the level of service provided at the border post. The rating ranges from A to C. At an 'A' status border post, all three of the main government departments involved in the control of the movement of people and

goods across the border post are present. These include Customs and Excise (South African Revenue Service), Immigration (Department of Home Affairs) and the South African Police Service (SAPS). At the 'B' border posts, only two of the departments are present, and at the 'C' status border posts, only one department is present. The South African border police are present at all land border posts in South Africa (see figure 1).

**Figure 1: National distribution of border posts per province**



Source: SAPS Border Police Head Office, Pretoria.

### **Border control before 1994**

Prior to 1994, the South African government applied strict movement control measures on people entering or leaving the country. In addition, large numbers of South African Defence Force (SADF) soldiers and South African Police (SAP) officers patrolled its international borders.<sup>8</sup> This forced firearm smugglers to create sophisticated smuggling techniques and to use very remote areas on the borders when entering the country with firearms. These were normally well-planned operations, even though firearms were recovered from time to time by the SAP at border posts, inside the country in caches, or while being transported. Smuggling routes were well planned and often remained a complete secret to outsiders. Some of these are still shrouded in secrecy and are used by criminal elements to smuggle arms and other commodities like drugs and vehicles across the South African border.

### **Border control after 1994**

After 1994, the staff complement of the SANDF was scaled down, resulting in the numbers of soldiers being reduced on borders. The SAPS was also downsized as there was no perceptible external threat to the security of South Africa or to the new-found freedom of all South Africans.

Along with the new democratic dispensation in South Africa a new threat emerged. Transnational organised crime syndicates identified the country as an untapped market for their criminal activities. This became evident in the sudden influx of drugs, the greater incidence of prostitution, money-laundering, the sudden increase in organised crimes, particularly violent crimes like vehicle-hijackings and cash-in-transit robberies. The new democracy in South Africa

also meant that international investors saw the country as an investment opportunity giving rise to the creation of new employment opportunities. With this came an increase in the flow of illegal immigrants into South Africa. This cannot necessarily be tied to the higher crime levels, but when someone crosses an international border illegally this in itself is a crime. The arrest of illegal female immigrants working as prostitutes in the country also occurred more frequently. Nigerian drug syndicates also started operating in South Africa. Organised crime syndicates are known to use unemployed illegal immigrants, for example, to drive stolen vehicles from South Africa to Mozambique for R2 000 a trip. If a person gets caught, the syndicate simply replaces him with another willing to work for this amount of money and prepared to run the risks associated with it. South Africa also started experiencing an increase in the illegal importation of counterfeit goods into the country. Through these illegal imports, the country loses an estimated R17 billion in uncollected duties per year.<sup>9</sup>

On borders where the SAP was previously responsible for all control measures - customs, immigration and crime prevention duties - with a large number of officers available to fulfil these tasks, the numbers of SAPS offices and SANDF soldiers were reduced and they were still responsible for all the different duties at some of the border posts. Budgets cuts in both departments seriously hampered the effective execution of those border control duties.

All these factors accompanied by the lack of resources and the gradual degradation of facilities at border posts started to have a negative effect on border control and gave rise to an increase in border-related crimes.

Corruption is another factor starting to become synonymous with border posts and officials responsible for border control activities. Crime syndicates sometimes bribe police, customs, immigration and SANDF officials to turn a blind eye to crime at borders that involved the smuggling of drugs, cars, prostitutes, endangered species products and firearms across South Africa's international borders.

In view of these constricting factors — of being understaffed, the lack of resources, corruption, long borderlines to patrol and the negative perceptions of border control officials held by some of the communities in the vicinity of border posts - it is not surprising that the morale and attitude of officials at some of the border posts are very negative. This may also be a contributing factor in the decrease of search and seizures figures of the border police.

## **Research rationale**

The South African government has committed itself to the eradication of violent crimes. The South African government has been the leader, with various partners, in the Southern African region in addressing the proliferation of firearms. It has also committed itself to co-operation agreements with some of its neighbours, the training of specialised police units and the setting up of new police structures to address the illegal possession and smuggling of firearms. It has undertaken to improve the working and living conditions at border posts and to provide resources for its border policing units. The government is supported by different government departments and non-governmental organisations (NGOs) in addressing the poor border controls as already identified in 1996.

The demand for firearms within South Africa will continue for the foreseeable future. Legal firearm owners will insist that they have a need to own a firearm to defend their lives and property against criminal elements. As long as the citizens perceive the government as unable to protect its citizens from criminals and criminal masterminds, the demand will remain. There is

some form of control over the legal firearms in South Africa and the government has recently promulgated new legislation to tighten this control. If the pro-gun fraternity can associate itself with the need to be responsible in the way these firearms are managed, it will result in more responsible firearm owners and better control over legal firearms.

The focus of this study, however, is the illegal smuggling of firearms into South Africa, which plays a large role in political and criminal violence in the country. How effective is the border control mechanisms on South African borders? How effective should they be to have an impact on the illegal smuggling of firearms into the country?

### *Purpose of the research*

The main purpose of this research was to make an assessment of the effectiveness of South African border control mechanisms to prevent the illicit trafficking in firearms in to South Africa.

Secondary aims included:

- to identify those points of entry of illegal firearms into South Africa;
- to identify the routes and pipelines used by illegal firearm traffickers to smuggle firearms into South Africa;
- to understand the reasons behind the current state of border controls; and
- to identify training and resource needs which donors could address as part of the implementation programmes of the Southern Africa Action Programme on Light Arms and Illicit trafficking and the Southern African Development Community (SADC) Draft Protocol on Small Arms and Light Weapons.

### *Research problem*

Growing concern about the increase in firearm-related crime and injury once more raises questions about the extent to which firearm flows are controlled within South Africa. Although most aspects of firearm ownership and possession are regulated in South Africa, inefficient bureaucratic functions and the low prioritisation of responses to minor transgressions by the criminal justice system hamper policing mechanisms. This impinges on the accuracy of police records of who may legally be in possession of firearms, and people arrested on counts of illegal possession can therefore not be sufficiently penalised by the courts. The extent to which the government controls illegal firearms is therefore the main problem addressed in this study.

As a demonstration of the problem, attention was given to the national land borders, and the extent to which the movement of weapons across these borders was controlled or regulated.

### *Description of methodology*

Given the nature of the research problem, it was necessary to use a mixture of qualitative and quantitative research methods in the project. The qualitative approach allowed for deeper investigation of the research problem, while the quantitative methods provided confirmation of the scope and substance of the problems experienced with policing the borders. The project was divided into three phases: background information gathering; quantitative assessment surveys; and two case studies. The different research processes provided complementary



information, which allowed for an holistic review of the research problem, and for the critical appreciation of the dynamics affecting the permeability of the national borders from the official at the border post to the head office level. The use of different types of methods to collect information assisted in the validation of the information collected in the course of the research.

### *Background information*

There are three major aspects concerning the background information that is available on South African land borders. There is significant material available on the topic. The existing literature is extensive and comprehensive. There was little that this study could contribute to the analysis of the national borders as such. However, there was a major lack of the evaluations of the extent to which recommendations of previous reports have been implemented. A startling gap was also evident in the existing literature on the permeability of the South African land borders in terms of controlling the free flow of firearms. Significant research has been commissioned in the past on the state of the national border, and copious recommendations have been published. However, very little of the time invested in research has been realised in fixed improvements along the borders. This raises questions about the utility of the research, and the level of commitment of the government to improve border policing.

There was also a complete absence of evaluations and analyses of the impact of poor border controls on crime and firearm flows. This was disappointing, given the outspoken commitment of the government to issues firearms.

### *Assessment survey*

An opinion survey designed by the ISS was also distributed to all 52 land border posts for completion by police officers on border duty at these posts. The opinion survey was meant to give a valuable reflection on the effectiveness of the mechanisms in place in South Africa to control the illegal flow of firearms and other illegal goods into the country through border posts.

Two different quantitative surveys were undertaken at each of the 52 land border posts. The first survey was completed by the senior police officer in charge, while a second survey was completed by each of the other officers on border duty. Information was therefore collected from two perspectives.

The use of a dual survey was necessary as police officers at many border posts are not on permanent duty. This often results in a low level of understanding of the duties and functions of the border post.

### **Case studies**

Two border areas were selected for more focused research into the operational issues around the permeability of the land border with regard to firearm flows. The two case studies were both on major pipelines, or established routes along which firearms are smuggled. The two areas were also identified because of current and historical factors involving the illegal smuggling of firearms in the areas. Research for the case studies involved field trips to the areas and interviews were conducted with border police officials, the SANDF, community leaders, NGOs involved in the areas, customs and immigration officials and other interested parties such as nature conservation staff. Based on this selection, the problem of firearm flows could be more acutely studied, and more information would become available for the identification of policing options available to curb the problem.

The two areas selected for the case studies were the South Africa/Namibia border, and the Swaziland/Mozambique/South Africa border.

To ensure that the research could be undertaken in depth, it was necessary to conduct confidential interviews with different individuals in an attempt to assess the situation concerning border controls at ground level. Permission to visit and conduct interviews with SAPS officials at identified border posts was obtained from the SAPS Border Police Unit's Head Office in Pretoria.

### **Assumptions and limitations of the research**

As a result of the lack of resources — both time and financial — the ISS was unable to undertake more than two case studies along the country's national borders. However, it is recognised that certain land borders are better patrolled than others, and the dynamics and factors underlying the specifics of such borders are not always captured in the two case studies. However, to minimise the error caused by generalisation, the use of the assessment survey was critical to ensure that a universal picture of the border police structures and resources across all land borders was obtained.

At the outset of the project, the ISS was concerned about the ability and willingness of the SAPS land border police to participate in the study. Clearly, this would impact on the validity of the findings and the ability to survey all border posts. The ISS was also aware of the extreme cutbacks within the SAPS land border police budget, and the high number of vacancies. Regardless of these constraints, the ISS had their full co-operation and assistance in the execution of the study. This was important as the research findings are meant to complement existing initiatives and actions within the SAPS land border police. High priority is placed on making recommendations that are realistic, implementable and within the existing scale of priorities.

When undertaking research into the dynamics and flows of firearms, often very little information is collected at the transit points about these activities. Usually, the origin and destination of firearms have proven to be more valuable. Thus, the research project made no concerted attempt to confirm the regional dynamics of firearm flows at specific border posts. Rather, the relevant background information was gathered from other ISS activities related to this type of information gathering.

Information was only collected from the perspective of the South African authorities, while the permeability of national land borders is clearly also impacted upon by the actions of neighbouring countries. No interviews were undertaken or information collected about neighbouring countries, although some information did emerge, especially in terms of the relationship between the South African border police and their counterparts.

### **Notes**

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## Chapter 2

### **THE ROLE OF THE SAPS IN SOUTH AFRICAN BORDER CONTROL MECHANISMS**

The Border Police was established on 11 August 1995 as a national component within the Division Operational Response Services to ensure the effective policing of South Africa's international borders. The key roleplayers in terms of regulatory functions on South Africa's borders are:

- Department of Home Affairs
- South African Revenue Services
- South African Police Service
- South African National Defence Force
- Department of Trade and Industry
- Department of Transport
- Department of Health
- Department of Agriculture.

The Department of Home Affairs designates ports of entry and handles the administrative control of the entry and departure of persons. Customs and Excise, a division of the South African Revenue Services (SARS) is responsible for the designation of a specific port of entry that may be used for the importation and exportation of goods, as well as for the administrative control and levying of excise duties and taxes on imported or exported goods. The departments of Trade and Industry, Environmental Affairs, Health and Agriculture are also involved in the administrative control at ports of entry. For example, the imposition of quarantine measures on perishables and livestock is the joint responsibility of the departments of Health and Agriculture.

The main functions of the Border Police are the prevention and detection of crossborder crime and the illegal movement of people and goods into or out of South Africa, both internally and at the country's borders. The Border Police also perform functions on an agency basis for the Department of Home Affairs (Immigration) and SARS (Customs and Excise).

In this section, the following will be discussed:

- command and control of the border police;
- functions and responsibilities;
- the collective approach of the National Interdepartmental Structure for Border Control;
- initiatives to improve border control;
- projects to address crossborder crime;
- co-operation and communication;
- information management;
- recommendations to improve border policing; and
- the way forward.

### **Command and control of the border police**

The Head of the Border Police has executive authority regarding all activities of the component. The Deputy Heads of Operations resort directly under the command of the Head, and are responsible for all operational functions executed by their respective subcomponents. The Deputy Head of Development and Support Services also resorts directly under the Head and is responsible for the development of training, the management of infrastructure and the support functions of the component, as well as for *liaison* and co-ordination with the intelligence community on relevant matters.

The Operational Heads of Sea, Air and Land borders and of the Internal Tracing Units<sup>1</sup> resort under the direct command of the relevant Deputy Heads of Operations and are responsible for the *national* management of their respective subcomponents.

The Provincial Head of Operational Response Services is under the direct command of the Provincial Commissioner for the purpose of operational functioning.

Provincial Managers/Co-ordinators are accountable to the Provincial Head of Operational Response Services for the day-to-day management and operation of all border police activities in their respective provinces. Unit commanders, whose status is similar to that of station commissioners, are accountable to their respective Provincial Managers/Co-ordinators.

### **Functions and responsibilities**

The aim of Border Police is to ensure the effective and efficient policing of South Africa's international borders. Their vision is to establish and maintain an integrated, well-managed and sustainable border police infrastructure that can meet South Africa's needs to control and police its international borders. The main purpose of the Border Police is to prevent and detect crossborder crime.

The primary function of the component is derived from section 205 of the Constitution (Act 108 of 1996) and the Police Act (1995). The Border Police therefore assumes responsibility for:

- the prevention of crossborder crime (line functions);
- the detection of crossborder crime;
- enforcement of the law applicable to crossborder crime; and
- intelligence and investigation (secondary support functions).

The support functions are primarily undertaken by the National Detective Service in terms of a co-operation agreement in support of the line functions of the Border Police.

Borderline control is the responsibility of the South African National Defence Force (SANDF) as set out in a bilateral agreement. However, it will remain the responsibility of the SAPS (Border Police) until the SANDF is in a position to perform this function in its entirety.

*Ad hoc* functions regarding immigration control and customs and excise are agency functions that are also rendered by the Border Police on behalf of the Department of Home Affairs (Immigration) and SARS (Customs and Excise).

The objectives of border policing include:

- the execution of acceptable and effective approaches and methods to control and police South Africa's international land, sea and air borders;
- the control and policing of the illegal movement of contraband, narcotics, weapons and vehicles;
- the control and policing of the illegal movement of persons;
- the co-ordination of all related activities and the involvement of all roleplayers to ensure a multidimensional approach aimed both at internal issues and external borders; and
- the development of capacity, personnel information and the technological resources required to meet operational objectives in an effective, efficient and sustained manner.

Within the ambit of the illegal (transnational) movement of people and goods, the aim of border policing is, among others, to:

- detect corruption;
- detect and identify fraudulent documentation;
- detect the illegal trade in human beings, drugs, vehicles and firearms;
- take action against any form of assistance given to illegal immigrants and
- smugglers;
- stop the illegal movement of criminal elements across borders:
- detect illegal people and goods with the aim of eradicating source points within the country;
- plan and launch joint operations in the Southern Africa subregion to curb the activities of

criminal organisations;

- complete and implement project plans of the NCPS to address vehicle crime, illegal firearms and organised crime; and
- ensure that border crossings occur as uncomplicated and speedily as possible without compromising effective crime prevention.

To realise the objectives and aims of the Border Police, an organisational division was established. The Border Police consist of three subcomponents, responsible for land borders, sea borders and air borders.

At ground level, the land border unit is responsible for the following land border posts between South Africa and neighbouring countries:

6 — Namibia

17 — Botswana

1 — Zimbabwe

13 — Mozambique

11 — Swaziland

14 — Lesotho

At 14 of these land border posts, the complete border control function, including immigration and customs and excise, is performed by the Border Police. The Border Police also supports Customs and Excise control measures at 34 South African Customs Union (SACU) land border posts not designated for the movement of commercial goods, where there is no permanent Customs and Excise personnel. During Project Biya, 19 land borders were designated for the movement of commercial goods to ensure enhanced control.

There are 730 registered airports of which ten are designated international airports for immigration and Customs and Excise purposes, and seven are set up for border policing purposes. The ten designated international airports include Johannesburg (Gauteng), Durban (KwaZulu-Natal), Cape Town (Western Cape), Lanseria (Gauteng), Port Elizabeth (Eastern Cape), Pietersburg (Northern Province), Nelspruit (Mpumalanga), Bloemfontein (Free State), Upington (Northern Cape) and Mafikeng (North-West).

Seven South African seaports have international status, 92 are considered small harbours (safe havens) and eight are set up for border policing purposes.

### **The collective approach of the National Interdepartmental Structure for Border Control**

The lack of co-operation and ineffective co-ordination between key roleplayers in border control necessitated the search for a common goal in pursuit of improved border control. Approval was therefore obtained from the Ministers' Forum of the National Crime Prevention Strategy (NCPS), as well as from directors-general of the SAPS, the Department of Home Affairs and SARS to promote greater co-operation between the different roleplayers. The approach was ratified by

cabinet in 1997, and implemented with the establishment of the National Interdepartmental Structure for Border Control (NIDS).

NIDS can be seen as an interdepartmental mechanism that draws together the efforts and endeavours of all roleplayers. Within this context, the key departments have retained their specific line functions. NIDS is responsible for the facilitation of co-ordination, as well as to define and validate improved mechanisms that would ensure effective border control. The Structure currently manages 15 projects aimed at improving border control.<sup>2</sup>

### **Initiatives to improve border control**

The Border Police is committed to the priorities of the NCPS and the National Commissioner's Strategic Priorities Plan to address the high incidence of crossborder crime that is currently experienced. Several initiatives have been instituted to address particular needs within the Border Police.

To rectify personnel shortages in the short term, the following actions were undertaken:

- Critical personnel shortages were addressed at identified hot spots through a system of detached duties.
- Multidisciplinary mobile response units were established to address the lack of capacity. The objective of these units is to improve the overall effectiveness of static and internal border control operations by means of flexible and mobile service delivery. The focus is on the detection and initial investigation of the illegal importation and exportation of goods. This initiative also supports the collective approach promoted in the NCPS.

Long-term initiatives to address personnel shortages, include the following:

- A strategic personnel plan was compiled, which indicated that a total of approximately 2 000 police officers were necessary to provide efficient border policing. Due to the present national personnel shortages, this goal will not be achieved in the near future. However, the existing personnel shortages are addressed on a continual basis.
- Several internal recruitment campaigns were launched with limited results due to the personnel shortages experienced countrywide.
- The Border Police was identified as a key service provider in the Resource Utilisation Programme and an additional 132 Public Service Act personnel were employed.
- Furthermore, two Mobile Response Units were established at national level to address identified problems countrywide on short notice and with rapid deployment. These units concentrate on the detection of the illegal movement of people and goods at all land and air ports of entry. The establishment of similar units is envisaged at provincial level.

### **Projects to address crossborder crime**

Since the inception of the Border Police, several projects and/or operations were launched to address the illegal crossborder movement of people and goods. Various monthly operations are conducted in the respective provinces with significant success. International operations have included the following:

- *Operation Midas* was jointly conducted during 1998 by Zimbabwe, Swaziland, Mozambique and South Africa. The focus of the operation was on the detection of drugs and stolen vehicles.
- *Operation Stone* was conducted during 1998, with the participation of Namibia, Botswana, Zimbabwe and South Africa. The focus of the operation was on the detection of precious stones and gold.
- *Operation Umlambo* was conducted during 1999, and Swaziland, Mozambique and South Africa participated. The focus of the operation was on the detection of stolen and hijacked vehicles.

A number of national operations were also successfully undertaken, including:

- *Operation Sentinel* was conducted from 1996 to 1999. The focus of the operation was on the detection of contraband and counterfeit, as well as the illegal import of second-hand vehicles.
- *Operation Makhulu* was conducted countrywide at all land ports of entry during 1999. The focus of the operation was on the detection of stolen and hijacked trucks and trailers.
- *Operations Alpha, Bravo, Delta and Echo* were conducted at identified flashpoints at land ports of entry in Mpumalanga, KwaZulu-Natal, the Northern Cape and the Northern Province through the deployment of additional detached duty officers to assist permanent Border Police officers. This is an ongoing process and the Border Police is in the process of implementing an improved detach duty concept. Police officers will perform border duties for a six-month period under this initiative.
- *Operation Charlie* was conducted in the Eastern Cape close to the Lesotho border during 1996. Informants were recruited from the community for duty at ten observation posts on the borderline. An excellent working relationship was established between the Border Police and the community, important information was gathered and significant successes were achieved. The focus of the operation was on stock theft and the detection of cannabis. This is an ongoing process.
- *Operation Brutus* was initiated at all sea borders during 1999. The focus of the operation is on the detection of the illegal movement of people and goods. This is an ongoing process.
- *Operation Venus* is conducted by means of a zero tolerance approach. All ports of entry are informed on short notice to perform monthly crime prevention operations for short predetermined periods.
- *Operation Neptune* was initiated at sea borders in the Western Cape during 1999 and is the responsibility of Sea Border Units in the area. The focus of this ongoing operation is on the detection of the illegal smuggling of marine resources.
- *Operation Jacuzzi* is an ongoing process undertaken by Air Border Units since 1997. The focus of the operation is on the control of the illegal movement of people and goods at all airports.



- The *Kosi Bay Stolen Vehicle Task Team* was established to develop strategies to address transnational crime at the South Africa-Mozambique borders.

Research to date has demonstrated that, without the proper technological aids, the policing of ports of entry will not produce the successes necessary to stop crossborder crime. The following initiatives were therefore undertaken to enhance border policing:

- Technological equipment for the tracing of stolen vehicles at ports of entry was procured on contract by the Vehicle Theft Unit, and was installed countrywide at identified border posts.
- Two 14.7 metre vessels were obtained for use by Sea Border Units and taken into commission at Port Elizabeth and Saldanha harbours, respectively.
- Eight mobile x-ray scanners were obtained and are utilised to search baggage. These units are deployed and redeployed according to specific needs.
- An x-ray scanner capable of scanning containers to detect contraband was purchased by Portnet for use by the Border Police and Customs officials in the Durban harbour. A second scanner was also ordered.
- Four fibre-optic scopes (tailgating equipment) were procured for the detection of contraband concealed in confined spaces.
- The United Nations Office for Drug Control and Crime Prevention (UNODCCP) has made funds available for the procurement of itemisers, drug-testing kits and fibre-optic scopes for distribution to particular border posts between Swaziland and Mozambique.

### **Co-operation and communication**

To enhance regional and international liaison and co-operation, the Border Police is represented on a variety of forums, committees and organisations, such as the District Liaison Committees (DLC) on the Lesotho border, the Southern African Regional Police Chiefs Co-ordinating Organisation (SARPCCO), as well as several bilateral and trilateral forums between South Africa and some of its neighbours.

The involvement of farmers and communities in a partnership policing approach along the country's borders is an identified priority and receives regular attention. Ground level commanders actively participate in the activities of existing community police forums in an effort to involve border communities in policing on South Africa's borders.

To enhance control over the import and export of firearms, conventional weapons and weapons of mass destruction, excellent co-operation has been established between the Central Firearms Register, the Directorate for Conventional Arms Control and the Border Police.

During the annual conference of the International Association for Air and Sea Ports (IAASP) in June 1999 in Saudi Arabia, the South African Commander of Air Borders was unanimously elected as a board member of the Association. The IAASP is an international association that ensures global liaison between all airport and seaport police institutions. His election has cemented the acceptance of South Africa as an international global partner in air and sea port security. An integrated global strategy to address crossborder crime and to ensure the safety

and effective control of borders is the only approach that will be effective in the longer term. Involvement in the IAASP will ensure that Africa keeps abreast of developments in this field through exposure to internationally accepted best practices.

## Information management

A Management Information Centre has been established at Border Police Head Office to ensure the development of an accurate database for statistical purposes and operational intelligence, as well as to assist and guide personnel. Intelligence networks are being developed to interface key information systems that could help to control the movement of people and goods. Access to information systems that deal with the movement of people and goods is available at all ports of entry countrywide to be utilised in the tracing of wanted persons. These include, among others, the Circulation Systems for vehicles, persons, firearms and stock, and the Movement Control System.

## Training

The Border Police places the highest premium on training. The shortage of personnel dictates that everything possible should be done to improve the knowledge and skills of existing personnel. Training programmes are therefore presented on a continual basis in close co-operation with other roleplayers. The co-operation with external border control training agencies has resulted in the presentation of several international training courses by, for example, US Customs and US Immigration and Naturalization Services.

The UNODCCP has also initiated the establishment of a regional drug control capacity at the Durban harbour that conduct operations based on profiling and available intelligence with great success. It has also funded several border control training initiatives that involved SARPCCO member countries.

The Border Police has participated in the development of an interdepartmental introductory training course for all border control officials. This initiative has been supported by international experts.

**Table 1: Comparative statistics of annual arrest and seizures by border police, 1997-1999**

Arrest	1997	1998	1999
Stolen/hijacked vehicles	410	498	1 053
Illegal firearms	49	106	183
Illegal substances/drugs	493	514	630
Illegal immigrants	21 576	33 474	39 755
Aiding and abetting	238	356	392
Corruption	68	98	43
Fraudulent/falsified/illegal documentation	986	1 402	1 312
Contraband/counterfeit goods	180	198	563
Marine products	138	124	341
Seizures			
Vehicles	819	1 009	1 358
Firearms	61	106	266
Illegal substances			



Dagga (kg)	803 347	298 681	29 800
Mandrax tablets	1 931	2 865	1 575 363
Extacy tablets	2 050	121	100 034
Cocaine (kg)	4	915	12
Marine products			
Abalone (units)	10 370	9 664	53 385
Crayfish (units)	32 414	48 980	21 904

## Recommendations to improve border policing

The future of effective border policing lies in:

- the recognition of departmental responsibilities and an integrated and co-ordinated approach as prescribed by the Constitution;
- a co-ordinating structure/authority with muscle to co-ordinate the efforts of departments and agencies involved in border control; and
- targeted collective information management and profiling.

The following challenges and realities remain to be addressed:

- Resources: Insufficient capacity is a reality not only for the SAPS, but also for other departments involved in border control and is mainly related to the state of the country's revenue resources. This sometimes results in very poor levels of service delivery.
- Collective information, intelligence and profiling systems: The absence of these systems leaves operations with an insufficient information base. The lack of information is further compounded by the non-availability of interfaced and updated information systems.
- Corruption: The absence of a common value system leads to corruption and maladministration, which pose a serious threat to effective border control.
- Co-operation with SANDF: The SANDF supports the SAPS in borderline control (land, air and sea), but operates under severe financial and other restraints which restrict their operational capacity. Large parts of the South African borderline are thus in fact under no control.

**Table 2: Comparative statistics of annual arrest and seizures by border police, January to March 1999 – January to March 2000**

	Jan 1999	Jan 2000	Feb 1999	Feb 2000	Mar 1999	Mar 2000
<b>Arrests</b>						
<b>Stolen/hijacked vehicles</b>	53	69	74	48	74	64
<b>Illegal possession/stolen firearms</b>	13	18	12	5	7	32
<b>Illegal possession/smuggling</b>	46	35	62	69	99	88

of drugs						
Illegal possession/smuggling of						
marine products	17	42	24	26	30	16
Illegal possession/smuggling of						
contraband/counterfeit products	34	30	8	85	29	61
Illegal possession of South Africa						
identity documents	201	87	127	18	125	12
Use of fraudulent documentation	78	49	29	75	4	14
Illegal immigrants	5841	4459	4127	1872	3966	4494
Aiding and abetting	42	12	40	11	81	12
Corruption	0	2	6	0	6	2
Seizures						
Vehicles	67	109	88	66	106	88
Firearms	12	13	12	17	9	34
Drugs						
Dagga (kg)	3498	922	1597	4679	7081	2924
Dagga plants	-	-	-	5800	4787	6850
Mandrax tablets	197	35	1200000	50	1	50
Exstasy tablets	100000	2036	-	209	4	6
Crack rocks	4	-	-	-	-	500 gr
Cocaine (gm)	-	100	-	9	-	500
Marine products	Units					
Abalone	3281	1279	5473	6209	19	3870
Crayfish	7359	288	3292	64	187	256
Oysters	-	2334	-	-	107	208
Mussels	-	260	-	-	-	134
Counterfeit/contraband (value)	1593610	7805400	801385	7675799	442095	1674288

## The way forward

Inhibiting financial restraints, personnel shortages, lack of training, and other problems face the Border Police. However, these are factors that plague the total public service of most countries. They should be seen as part and parcel of the transformation process in South Africa and managed as such. The statistics showing arrests and seizures demonstrate that, although there are constraints that must be faced, the border police are still functioning to the best of their ability.

## Notes

1. In 2000, the SAPS disbanded the Internal Tracing Units. There were 16 Internal Tracing Units situated at various strategic points throughout the country.
2. NIDS was created in 1997 to enhance co-ordination of the functioning of departments in

order to improve border control. It was created as a programme under the now defunct National Crime Prevention Strategy (NCPS). It consisted of personnel from the three pillar state agencies involved in border control, the SAPS, SARS and the Department of Home Affairs, reporting to a director seconded by SARS. NIDS was disbanded by the Director-General Cluster for Justice, Crime Prevention and Security (JCPS) in February 2001. Since NIDS was created at ministerial level, the final decision to dissolve it still hangs in the balance, pending a final ministerial decision.

### **Chapter 3**

## **THE ROLE OF THE SANDF IN SOUTH AFRICAN BORDER CONTROL MECHANISMS**

The involvement of the SANDF in border control, in co-operation with the SAPS, derives from section 82(4)(B)(ii) on the maintenance of law and order of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa (Act 200 of 1993). The function of borderline control was approved by parliament in a cabinet memorandum on 30 April 1999. The SANDF is a co-player in the collective approach of the government to execute borderline control on the country's borders.

In this section, the following will be discussed:

- the legal position of the SANDF in deploying to undertake borderline control tasks;
- the concept of border safeguarding;
- borderline control tasks;
- command and control;
- the deployment of SANDF members and successes achieved; and
- the way forward.

### **The legal position of the SANDF in borderline control tasks**

The SANDF, in co-operation with the SAPS, is used to undertake borderline control tasks in various areas of South Africa, as well as on certain international borders. This occurs according to Section 82(4)(B)(II) of the 1993 Constitution which allows for the SANDF to assist the SAPS in upholding law and order in the country. This includes the traditional borderline control functions of the SANDF.

Based on the 1993 Constitution, the legal position with regard to border control functions is as follows:

- The functions of the SAPS (section 205) include the prevention of crime; the investigation of any crime, or alleged crime; the maintenance of law and order; and the protection of the internal security of South Africa.
- The functions of the SANDF (Section 200 and 201) include service in defence of South Africa to protect the sovereignty of the state and its territorial integrity; service to comply with international obligations; service to protect lives and property; service to maintain essential services; service to maintain law and order in co-operation with the SAPS; and service in support of any state department for socio-economical upliftment.
- When the SANDF is employed by the President for any of the above functions, its members will be entrusted with the powers and authority required to perform these functions. On 19 June 1996, the SANDF was employed by the President for the maintenance of law and order countrywide. This is specifically linked to the development,

implementation and execution of the National Crime Prevention Strategy (NCPS).

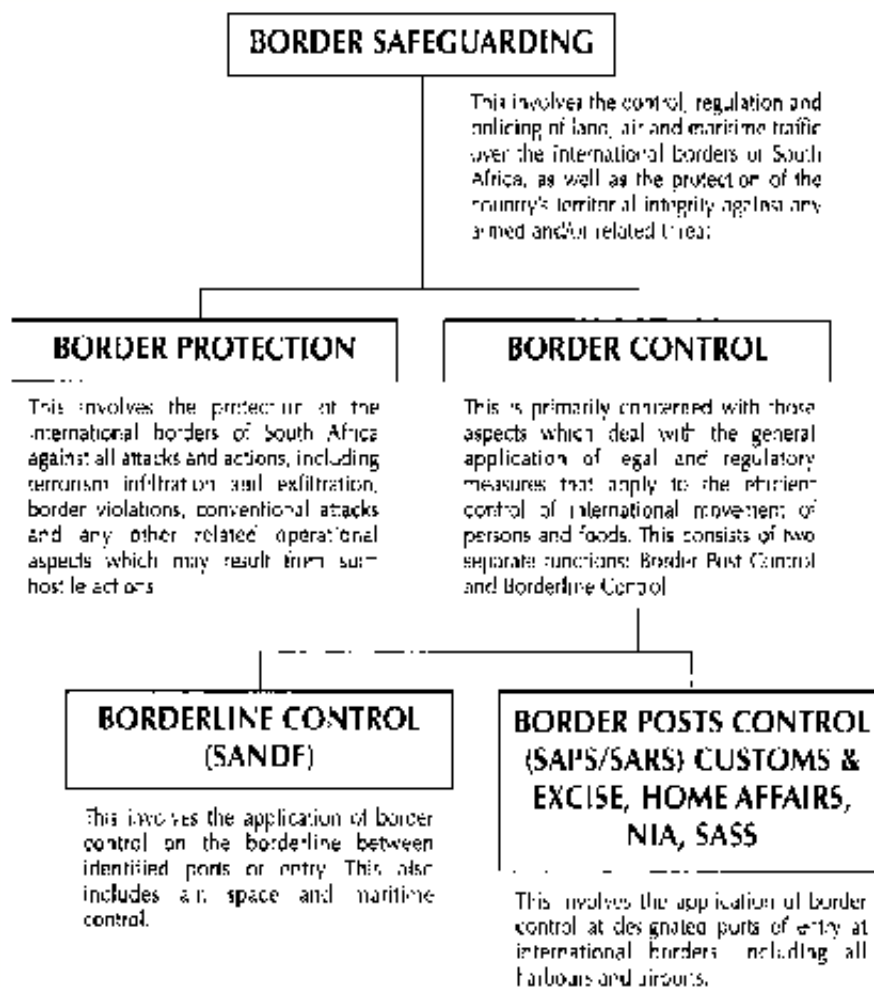
The role of the SANDF in crime prevention is focused on preventive actions and excludes investigation, which is primarily the task of the SAPS. The general role of the SANDF in combating crime includes, *inter alia*, the following:

- The SANDF should not be involved in the prevention of routine (petty) crime.
- The SANDF should concentrate on crime that threatens the constitutional order;
- the prevention of crime in concurrence with international customs/standards;
- the prevention of serious crime prevalent in society; and
- the protection of the country's sea and land borders, as well as its airspace.

## Border safeguarding

The role of the SANDF in border safeguarding includes several functions. Border protection involves the protection of South Africa's international border against all hostile action, conventional attack, and other similar events. This relates to a time of war and will not be discussed further (see diagram 1 for more information).

**Diagram 1: Aspects of border control and safeguarding**



Borderline control is the responsibility of the SANDF and involves the application of border control on the borderline between identified ports of entry. It also includes air space and maritime control. Strategically, the SANDF must guarantee the border of the country through the

effective monitoring of the border, control over illegal border crossings and the prevention of the violation of territorial integrity. In this regard, the SANDF deploys an effective monitoring system with a high-intelligence integrated (detective) value. This system is supported by an effective follow-up ability to neutralise border crossings. Force multipliers are optimally utilised as part of the monitoring system. During tactical operations, greater emphasis is placed on effective monitoring and follow-up actions, especially when the border obstacle system cannot be utilised to the optimum.

Community safeguarding operations (in the interior) also aim at detecting and neutralising illegal immigrants and armed persons who have crossed the border. This includes directional action such as movement control, follow-up actions and search operations. Regional Task Forces have reaction forces that can be utilised for this purpose.

### *Borderline control tasks*

The SANDF is responsible for borderline control tasks. This is undertaken by the Regional Joint Task Force which, in turn, may delegate such functions to the Joint Group Headquarters in their areas of responsibility. It is also involved in joint planning, co-ordination and implementation at national, provincial, area and ground level within existing co-ordinating structures.

The SANDF undertakes the monitoring of the borderline between official border posts. This includes the erection or deployment of aids such as sensors, barrier systems and border monitoring systems; remote controlled aircraft; night sight equipment; and long distance TV (LDTVs) and SONOP.<sup>1</sup> It is also responsible for the deployment of observation and listening posts.

The SANDF undertakes the patrolling of the borderline between official border posts. This includes border patrols in the 'agreed area' which consist of foot, vehicle, mounted, motorcycle and air patrols. It also involves the use of patrol or tracker dogs. Patrols adjacent to the border monitoring systems are undertaken, as well as in-depth patrols of the 'agreed area' and roads to the borderline to counter in-depth penetration. In this regard, it is responsible for the employment of reaction forces, the authorisation and deployment of roadblocks and vehicle control points within the 'agreed area', and the monitoring of flights crossing the border.

Searching by the SANDF includes the cordoning off and searching of premises suspected of containing illegal immigrants or goods; the searching of persons crossing the border illegally; the searching of persons and vehicles at roadblocks and vehicle control points; and the use of the Military Explosive and Drug Detecting System (MEDDS) during searches.

The following tasks and activities are associated with the monitoring and patrolling of the borderline:

- the arrest of suspects based on information based on information or reasonable grounds and the handing over of those arrested to the SAPS;
- the seizure of illegal goods and the handling over of such goods to the SAPS;
- the cordoning off and transfer of a crime scene to the SAPS for investigation;
- the recording of evidence and the furnishing of proof and exhibits;

- the restriction of custody and guarding of suspects prior to handing them over to the SAPS;
- the provision of food and medical services to temporary detainees; and
- the transport of detainees.

The collection, collation and dissemination of intelligence by the SANDF in the borderline area must be done in accordance with current intelligence policy and in close co-operation with the National Operational Co-ordinating Mechanism.

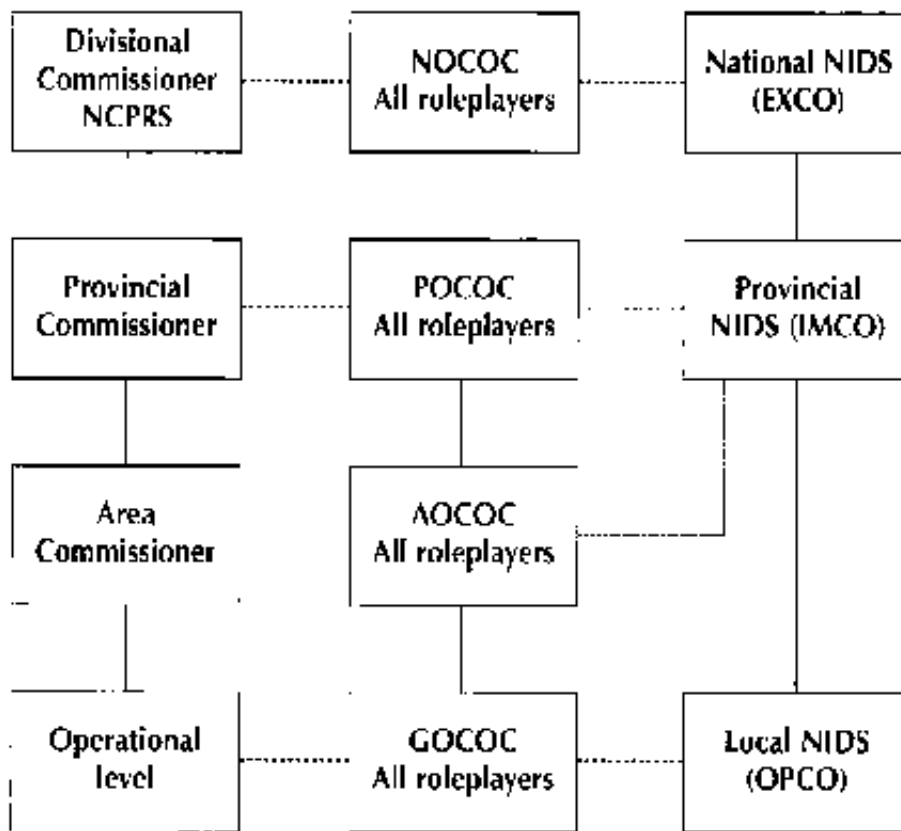
In terms of support for the operational task, the following is required to support borderline control operations

- the provision of patrol roads;
- detection systems, barrier systems, sensors and border monitoring systems;
- operational basis and patrol shelters in cold areas;
- tactical airfields;
- the provision and maintenance of an effective communication system;
- communication operations;
- logistical support;
- liaison with neighbouring countries responsible for borderline control in their countries through the appropriate level of the National Operational Co-ordinating Mechanism;
- co-ordination with other departments and roleplayers involved through the National Operational Co-ordinating Mechanism at all levels.
- Current doctrine to keep abreast of, among others, new techniques and equipment; and
- up to date maps.

### *Command and control*

Co-ordination between the borderline control functions and the border post control occurs through the National Operational Co-ordinating Mechanism. Border post control is based on a collective approach between the Department of Home Affairs, SARS and the SAPS (see diagram 2 for more details).

### **Diagram 2: Interaction between the National Operational Co-ordinating Mechanism and the National Inter-Departmental Structure**



## Deployment and successes of the SANDF

The SANDF is currently deployed in priority areas for borderline control operations. Due to budget constraints, the SANDF has to prioritise its deployment and deploy forces according to the priorities. These are:

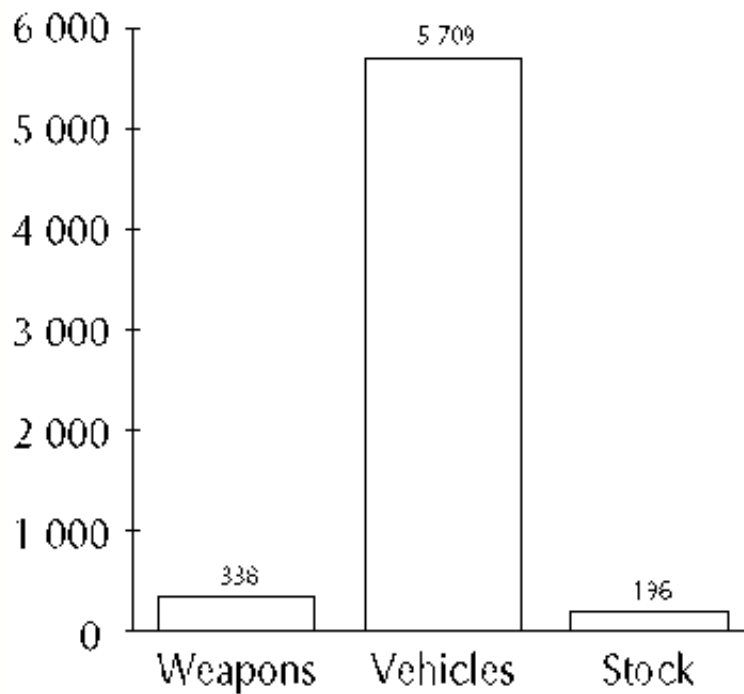
- *Priority 1:* Borderline control on the Mozambique and Zimbabwean borders;
- *Priority 2:* Borderline control on the Swaziland and Lesotho borders; and
- *Priority 3:* Borderline control on the Botswana and Namibia borders.
- Forces are currently only deployed in Priority 1 and Priority 2 areas.

From the statistics in table 3 and 4, it is clear that most successes are achieved with arresting people who cross borders illegally. Success with the confiscation of firearms is not significant. This probably indicates that the proliferation and movement of arms take place in an organised manner.

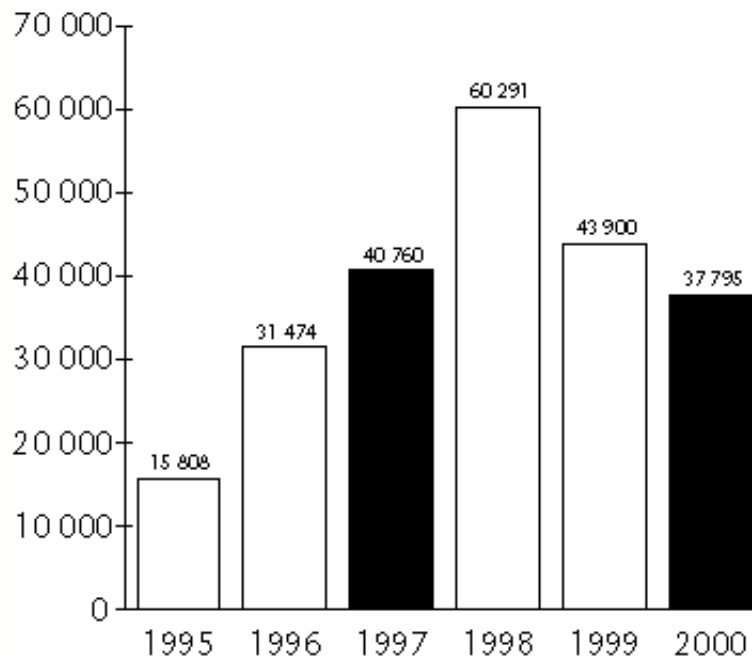
Arrests in the interior of people who crossed borders illegally show that there are many illegal immigrants in the country. During 1998, 3 475 illegal immigrants were arrested by the SANDF and between January and July 1999, 2 221 illegal immigrants were arrested.

The SANDF has also established Crossborder Liaison Forums to communicate with the border officials of most of the neighbouring countries. The aim is to attend to issues that could prevent the illegal crossing of international borders and crossborder crime, including health care facilities, schools and employment opportunities for members of communities close to the border.

**Figure 2: Operational statistics of recovered goods, 1995 - 2000**



**Figure 3: Illegal border crossings, 1995 - 2000**



### The way forward

The current situation with illegal border crossings and crossborder crime points to the imminent deployment of the SANDF in the short to medium term to assist in preventing the illegal crossing of borders and crossborder crime.

The SANDF concentrates on the priorities identified by the National Operational Co-ordinating Committee, such as crossborder crime, firearms-smuggling, drug-smuggling and organised crime, for example, vehicle theft syndicates.



The SANDF also takes part in operational planning within the context of SARPCCO to conduct crossborder crime prevention operations.

**Table 3: Borderline control successes by province, 1998**

Incidents	EC*	KZN*	FS*	NW*	NP*	MP*	NC*	Total
<b>Weapons found</b>								
AK-47 rifles		1			1			2
Rifles		1			2			2
Hand weapons	3					1		4
Other		1						1
<b>Narcotics confiscated</b>								
Dagga (kg)	56	5 397	765.18			4.26		6 204.44
<b>Stock recovered</b>								
Cattle	27	122				9		158
Small stock	50							50
Other								
Illegal immigrants arrested	29	13 365	191	78	12 502	35 939	1	62 105
Criminals arrested	8	32	3		1	12		4 884
Stolen vehicles recovered				1		4		5
*EP – Eastern Cape KZN – KwaZulu-Natal FS – Free State NW – North-West NP – Northern Province MP – Mpumalanga NC – Northern Cape								

**Table 4: Borderline control successes by province, 1 January to 31 July 1999**

Incidents	EC*	KZN*	FS*	NW*	NP*	MP*	NC*	Total
<b>Weapons found</b>								
AK-47 rifles		1						1
Rifles	4	8	1			1		14
Hand weapons	8	25	1		7	1		42
Homemade weapons		14						14
<b>Narcotics confiscated</b>								
Dagga (kg)	35	3478.52	805.324		69.7	4.26		4388.5
<b>Stock recovered</b>								
Cattle	30	34	197			9		261
Small stock	14		313					327
Other	3		9					12
Illegal immigrants arrested		8 865	154	74	13506	10076	3	32678
Criminals arrested	25	35	31		22	5		118
Stolen vehicles recovered		9	2		1			12
*EP – Eastern Cape KZN – KwaZulu-Natal FS – Free State NW – North-West NP – Northern Province MP – Mpumalanga NC – Northern Cape								

Note

1. ONOP is a device used by the military to see over long distances.

## **Chapter 4**

### **PRECEDING INITIATIVES TO STRENGTHEN BORDER CONTROL**

According to a report delivered by the Permanent Mission of South Africa to the United Nations in New York on 24 June 1999, the South African government has declared the combating of small arms proliferation as the SAPS's highest priority. This strategy represents an integrated and holistic approach to the introduction of stricter control measures. The government's goal is to remove the causal factor in small arms proliferation; to stop the flow of illegal arms into South Africa; to prevent arms in legal possession from becoming illegal; to mop up the existing pool of arms in South Africa; and to educate South Africans on the possession of firearms.

The report indicates that firearms entering South Africa illegally often find their way to criminal elements inside the country, but that this flow is not the main source of firearms to criminals in the country. It points to legal firearms becoming illegal as the main source of firearms to criminals. The report furthermore states that the SAPS is taking concrete action to address the problem of the illicit trafficking in small arms through:

- training and briefing members of the Border Police Unit and Dog Units;
- a new curriculum for courses presented to members of Illegal Firearm Investigation Units;<sup>1</sup>
- training members to etch serial numbers on firearms; and
- initiatives to ensure that the issuing of export permits is centralised by the Central Firearm Register.

In addition, the SAPS has taken steps to address the problem regionally, including:

- trilateral meetings with Swaziland and Mozambique in order to exchange information and devise joint initiatives;
- joint monitoring operations with Swaziland and Mozambique concentrating on shared border posts and areas;
- training of Mozambican police officers and conservation officials working close to border areas in order to combat the problem.<sup>2</sup>

In this section, the initiatives undertaken to strengthen border controls in South Africa will be discussed according to those roleplayers that have implemented them, in the following sequence:

- the South African Police Service;
- the UNODCCP office in Pretoria, South Africa,
- Business Against Crime; and
- the US Immigration and Naturalization Services.

Reference will also be made to other relevant comparative studies focused on the issue of border control.

## **South African Police Service**

The SAPS Border Police Head Office has embarked on an intensive recruitment drive among police officials to do six months detached border duty at identified problem border posts and areas.

The detached border duties involve the recruitment of 140 police members from all divisions in the SAPS for a six-month voluntary uninterrupted contractual border duty at a particular border post. Such contractual border duty is seen as a temporary transfer to the border police.

Members passing the recruitment, selection and training process will be provided with accommodation at the border post, but officers are responsible for their other personal needs like food and transport. Police officers volunteering for these detached duties or temporary transfers will get an extra allowance and remuneration for their duties besides their normal police salary and allowances.

The SAPS Border Police believes this concept of detached border duties will improve service delivery. Proactive planning and higher productivity become possible with fewer disciplinary problems.

This method of detached duties is undertaken on a trial basis to evaluate the feasibility of the concept. The implementation of detached duties started on 18 September 2000 and ended in February 2001.

This new programme has been carefully considered and, if implemented with right-minded and positive police officers willing to do extended detached duties, it can be successful. The close monitoring and evaluation of the programme are crucial so that problems can be identified and rectified at an early stage to keep the programme on track and make it work. Because of its interest in the border project, the ISS will independently evaluate this new method of detached duties.

## **UNODCCP office in Pretoria, South Africa**

The United Nations Office for Drug Control and Crime Prevention (UNODCCP) for Southern Africa has instituted a programme focused on assisting the governments of Mozambique, South Africa and Swaziland to strengthen their capacity to counteract drug-trafficking and firearms-smuggling, and curb the movement of stolen vehicles across their borders.<sup>3</sup>

The UNODCCP contracted an independent consultant, Bill Scholes, who is a law enforcement expert, to undertake a five-week mission to examine control on the South African, Swaziland and Mozambican borders. An assessment was made of the:

- vulnerability of the contiguous border regions, paying special attention to the smuggling of drugs, firearms and stolen vehicles;
- the respective governments law enforcement capabilities; and
- any apparent gaps or weaknesses in primary legislation.

Mr Scholes held meetings in South Africa, Swaziland and Mozambique with senior officials from the different police, customs and immigration services. He also held discussions with drug

control units, border police and various other departments concerned with the co-ordination of national efforts, specialised and crossborder operations, as well as intelligence and training units.

According to the report on the assessment, the mission was well received and supported by people who were interviewed. Useful information was provided and good ideas and suggestions were put forward during the meetings.

"There was real readiness to accept shortcomings and discuss difficult issues of co-operation between departments and countries, corruption, lack of motivation, an absence of a culture of intelligence within the disparate organisations and a feeling at grass roots level that they sometimes lacked leadership and a sense of direction. These comments are not universal and do not fairly reflect the situation in every sphere, in each country."

This remark reflected the exact experience of ISS researchers when making their assessment of border control in South Africa.

The Scholes report identified the South African, Mozambique and Swaziland land border area as one of the principal routes for the flow of illegal goods in the region. The report further states that proper border policing in this area is hampered by the type of terrain,

"which is inhospitable and remote. They cross bush, veldt, sand dunes and mountainous areas with often no fencing at all or fences more suitable for preventing livestock from straying and delineating the boundary than preventing incursion."

Proper border policing is also hampered by insufficiently trained personnel and a lack of equipment.

The report also identified the lack of suitable facilities to do proper searches on vehicles or people. If searches are conducted on large cargo-carrying vehicles, this results in huge congestion at border posts. The lack of suitable office space and equipment was also identified in the report as a problem at some border posts.

At the conclusion of the expert mission, a two-day workshop with senior government officials was held in Pretoria where conclusions and recommendations were presented and discussed. The Training Sub-committee was established with the objective to elaborate a detailed training programme.

All three governments have signed to participate in the project (RAF/E06 — Capacity Building Against Drug Trafficking and Organized Crime in Southeastern Africa). The project is worth US \$600 000 and is funded by the government of Italy.

The project objectives are as follows:

- *Phase 1*: an assessment of the extent of the problem; and the provision of equipment to address the most immediate needs.
- *Phase 2*: the establishment and training of specialised border control teams; and the strengthening of legal and institutional frameworks.

## *Project activities*

Aug 1999: Project approved by the UNODCCP.

Sep 1999: Phase 1 assessment mission undertaken by Mr Scholes.

Sep 1999: Workshop to finalise the project held in Pretoria. Representatives from Mozambique, South Africa and Swaziland attended. Following the workshop, a costed workplan was developed that provided for the project's immediate equipment needs under phase 1, as well as a list of equipment and a suggested training schedule/curriculum for the commencement of phase 2.<sup>4</sup>

Sep 1999: Swaziland signed the Letter of Agreement.

Dec 1999: Telecommunications and surveillance equipment provided to the Royal Swaziland Police.

May 2000: South Africa agreed to join the project.

May 2000: South Africa provided its request for equipment.

July 2000: Mozambique signed the Letter of Agreement.

July 2000: The first Project Steering Committee meeting.

July 2000: The second meeting of the Training Sub-committee.

July 2000: South Africa signed Letter of Agreement.

Sept 2000: The South African National Inter-Departmental Structure on Border Control (NIDS) executive committee meeting endorsed the use of the NIDS operations committee structure in support of the project's joint task team concept.

Oct 2000: The tri-border training strategy elaborated.

Oct 2000: Surveillance, drug detection and search equipment provided to SAPS Border Police.

Although the project places heavy emphasis on equipping the border police in each of the three countries, as well as fostering crossborder and interdepartmental co-operation, the most important contribution will be training. The training curriculum will cover:

- *Theoretical training:*

- Teamwork, communication skills and conflict management

- Profiling/selecting a targeting system

- Identification of narcotics

- Searching methodology and concealment techniques

- Risk assessment of suspect vehicles and searching procedures

- Documentation verification

- Document examination and inspection

- Basic investigative procedures

Handling of exhibits  
Identification of suspect vehicles and precursor chemicals  
Introduction to controlled delivery procedures/powers of seizure  
Sources of information  
Interviewing/questioning techniques

- Practical training:

Venue: four priority border posts — Oshoek/Ngwenya (SA/Swaziland), Lebombo/Ressano Garcia (Mozambique/SA), Golel/Lavumisa (Swaziland/SA) and Lomahasha>Namaacha (Swaziland/Mozambique).

Trainees: Priority to trainees who have received theoretical training.

Trainers: Practical training to be done by 2 teams of mentors consisting of 2 people who have given theoretical training.

Practical group size: Average 3-4. Maximum 6.

Duration: 2 days on each side of the border (i.e. 2 + 2 days).

Timing: 3 phases per year.

It should be noted that the training in the specialised equipment provided under the project will be included in the delivery of the equipment by the service provider. Importantly, a briefing to senior officers will be arranged primarily as an internally driven exercise within each of the services with no cost implications for the project. This is to ensure that new approaches and training outcomes are fed up the chain of command.

The Training Sub-committee is developing a curriculum for the course, using the model developed by the Southern African Regional Police Chiefs Co-ordination Organisation (SARPCCO).

Although the UNODCCP project is mainly concerned with narcotics interdiction, it will serve to strengthen border controls for all forms of interdiction. It is hoped that such projects will be extended to further borders in Southern Africa as the increase in the trafficking in illegal goods starts to affect all countries in the region. Tighter border controls can thus be one of the measures to curb the illegal flow of firearms and smuggled vehicles in the Southern African region.

The UNODCCP project can be a model and a practical initiative for other donors to follow and become involved in.

## **Business Against Crime**

The Business Against Crime border project aims to result in the:

"Improvement of regulation of movement and persons and goods in and out of the country through enhanced control of ports of entry and co-ordinated management of border control."<sup>5</sup>

The Business Against Crime project concentrates mainly on vehicle crime. Its objective is to assist in the removal of the commercial benefit of the trade in stolen vehicles and vehicle parts by participating in the following projects:<sup>6</sup>

- the facilitation of the creation of partnerships in which government departments and private enterprise have controlled access to the NaTIS database;
- to upgrade the technology and procedures at South African border posts to ensure that stolen vehicles are not taken out of the country;
- to enforce comprehensive parts-marking on existing vehicles and all new vehicles;
- to investigate the possibility of incorporating a microchip into vehicle licence discs to assist the SAPS in combating vehicle crime;
- to undertake the regular verification of all vehicles in order to ascertain that they are roadworthy and that the numbers displayed are original and are in accordance with the NaTIS database;
- to ensure the integrity and security of input and amendments to core data on the NaTIS system;
- to investigate and implement changes to obviate fraud involving clearance certificates and SAPVIN numbers;
- to investigate and implement changes to improve the effectiveness of Vehicle Theft Units;
- to implement changes at the Vehicle Safeguarding Units to comply with SAPS national instructions;
- to investigate and implement changes to improve the effectiveness of Licence Offices and Vehicle Testing Stations; and
- to draft new legislation to combat vehicle crime.<sup>7</sup>

From these objectives, it is clear that there is a need to share information and on databases, particularly with regard to vehicle thefts.

## **US Immigration and Naturalization Service**

In the US Immigration and Naturalization Services' report, an assessment was made of conditions at South African land borders, airports and seaports by the US Immigration and Naturalization Service.

Problem areas in terms of land borders identified by the report were situated along the Lesotho/South African border where crossborder crimes like stock theft and drug-smuggling were identified as the main criminal activities taking place.

On the South African/Mozambique/Zimbabwe/Botswana border, crossborder crimes included the illegal crossing of people and cargo, and the smuggling of firearms, vehicles and drugs. Contraband and 'round-tripping' seemed to be the order of the day.



The report also found that there is a lack of resources, personnel infrastructure and equipment that seriously hamper proper border control. It was suggested that the South African government should make the control of all movements across its borders one of its top priorities.

Other observations made in the report included the following issues:

- *Command structure*: confusion over grey areas in terms of roles exist between customs, immigration and the SAPS;
- *Military role*: presence of the SANDF on the borderline creates negative public perceptions;
- *Technology*: lack of technical tools to aid in border control is critical at most border posts;
- *Personnel and training*: personnel shortages at all border posts, and laws governing border control are not enforced due to the lack of training and knowledge;
- *Equipment*: lack of basic equipment is apparent at all border posts like radios, nightvision devices and four-wheel drive vehicles;
- *Corruption*: recruitment of personnel does not take integrity into account;
- *Designing and upgrading of border posts* (physical layout): a lack of security measures in transit areas at all border posts; and
- *Detention facilities*: a lack of detention facilities at border posts to deal with illegal immigrants.

The Border Control Operational Working Team made use of the US report as a guideline to compile a structured implementation plan on the collective approach without disrupting the line functions of border control. The team pointed out that one of the conclusions in the US report was that there appeared to be a disjointed border control command structure in South Africa. The recommendation was the creation of one unified Border Police command, with divisions including immigration, customs, internal investigations and border control.

### **Other comparative studies**

Since establishing that South African border control is in a very weak state and that something needs to be done to improve the situation, the following comparative studies were done on the issue:

- National Intelligence Co-ordinating Committee (NICOC), report to the Cabinet Committee on Safety and Intelligence (CCOSI);
- the Customs Law Enforcement Task Group (CLETG) document for the executive head of SARS;
- a draft document prepared by Mr I Lambinon for the Department of Home Affairs; and
- the South African Assessment Document by the US Immigration and Naturalization



As is indicated in the report on the Collective Approach Implementation Plan by the Operational Working Team on Border Control, the authors of the above documents all indicated that a collective or joint approach should be taken to controlling or managing border control in South Africa.

## Conclusion

The UNODCCP and Business Against Crime initiatives are still ongoing and their assistance to the SAPS Border Police Units is some of the most valuable provided by outside organisations to improve the control on South African borders. Assistance by other countries such as France and the United Kingdom in training aspects is also very valuable as this is one of the areas identified by all as among the weak points in Southern African border control.

The new detached duties initiative by the SAPS Border Police Unit is also a step in the right direction in addressing the problem of expertise and corruption. It will improve service delivery in the form of more arrests and seizures of illegal people and goods.

One other initiative that is not discussed here in detail but is very valuable to the border police is that of UNICODE. UNICODE provides a database of stolen vehicles to the SAPS at border posts, as well as handheld systems for officers to test vehicles when they are not close to a computer to establish whether they are stolen or not. The system and the database are being upgraded, a process which will also involve other businesses in South Africa. It is believed that this type of database can be improved to include stolen firearms, household goods or any stolen commodity where a serial number of some kind is present. This type of access to a database with a wide range of circulation capability of reported stolen goods, accompanied by dedicated police officers at border posts, will make it harder for stolen goods to leave the country. It will also assist insurance companies to determine if false claims are made or to trace and find stolen cars in neighbouring countries.

## Notes

1. The Illegal Firearm Investigation Units were integrated into the Serious and Violent Crime Unit, Detective Service early in 2001.
2. Ibid.
3. *Quarterly newsletter of the Regional Office for Southern Africa of the United Nations Offices for Drug Control and Crime Prevention (UNODCCP).*
4. B Scholes, *Final report: Mission to assess needs for capacity building against drug-trafficking and organised crime in Southeast Africa.*
5. Business Against Crime, <[www.web.co.za/bac/projects.htm](http://www.web.co.za/bac/projects.htm)>.
6. Ibid.
7. Ibid.

## Chapter 5

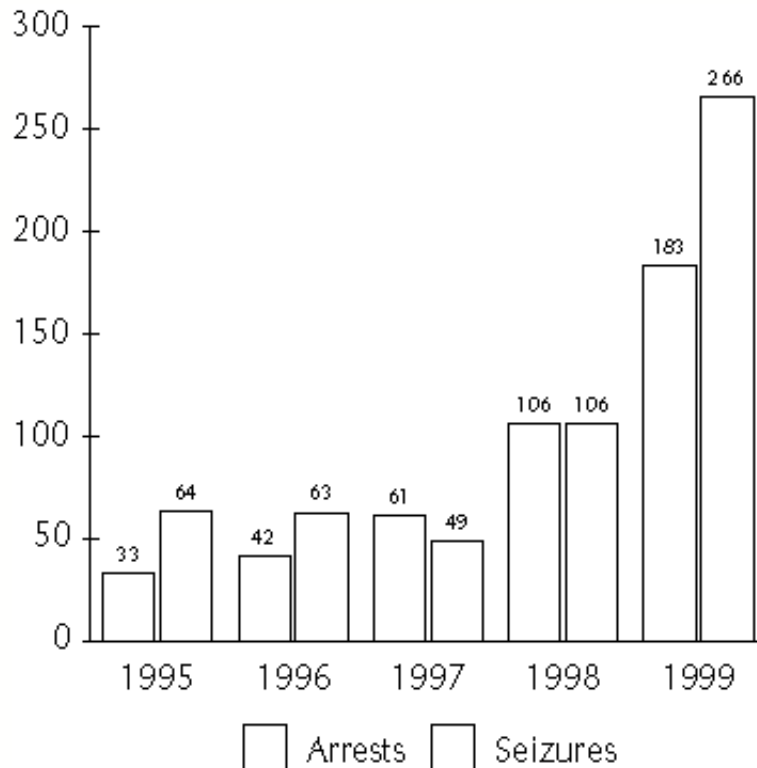
## EFFECTIVENESS OF LAND BORDER CONTROLS IN SOUTH AFRICA

One way of measuring if a police function or unit is delivering positive results, is to gauge its success based on the numbers of arrests, seizures, investigations in hand and those successfully completed. In determining the effectiveness of land border controls in South Africa, the results of firearm seizures and arrests by SAPS Border Police Head Office are used.

The seizure of illegal firearms does not necessarily mean that there are increased numbers of these firearms available, but it may mean that the police are stepping up their attempts to uncover these arms and are improving their capabilities in this regard. The statistics available from the SAPS Land Border Police Head Office indicate that arrests and firearm seizures are increasing.

Figure 4 shows a steady increase in arrests and firearm seizures by Border Police Units. In 1998 and 1999, a dramatic increase in arrests and firearm seizures is clear, which may also be seen as an increase in the smuggling of firearms across national borders, as well as an increase in productivity by border police units and border posts. The statistics of the border police for 2000, especially with the new detachment duty started at 'hotspots', should show whether this positive trend will continue. The figures presented here include all ports of entry into South Africa and not only the country's land borders.

**Figure 4: Number of seizures of firearms and arrests by SAPS Border Police Units per year, 1995 - 1998**

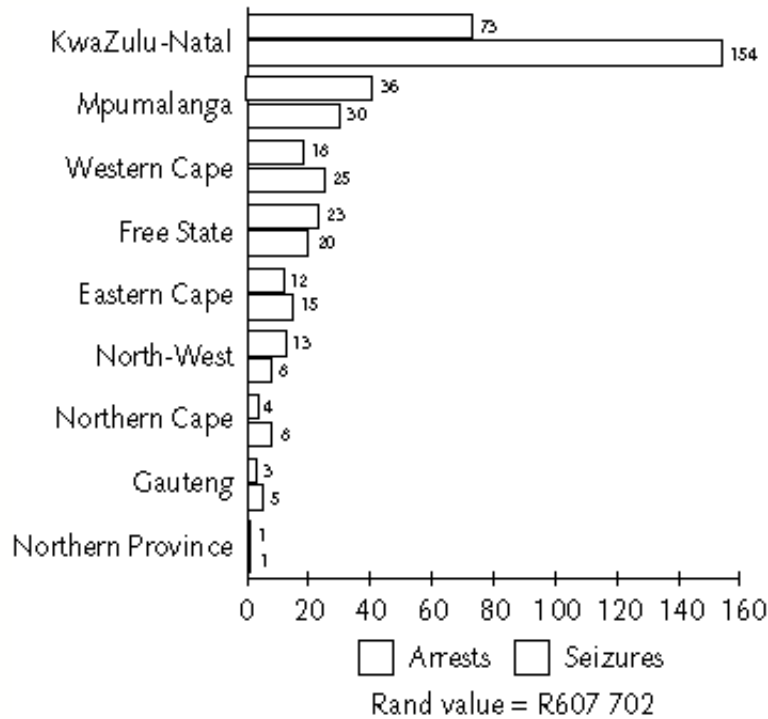


Source: SAPS Border Police Head Office, Pretoria.

When considering provincial seizures during 1999 (figure 5), it is notable that KwaZulu-Natal had the highest seizure and arrest rate of all the provinces. The province with the next highest level of seizures is Mpumalanga followed by the Western Cape. Both KwaZulu-Natal and Mpumalanga border Mozambique and Swaziland, which are known as the major areas from

where firearms are illegally entering South Africa. The Northern Province, Gauteng and Northern Cape border police showed the lowest firearm arrest and seizure rates during this period.

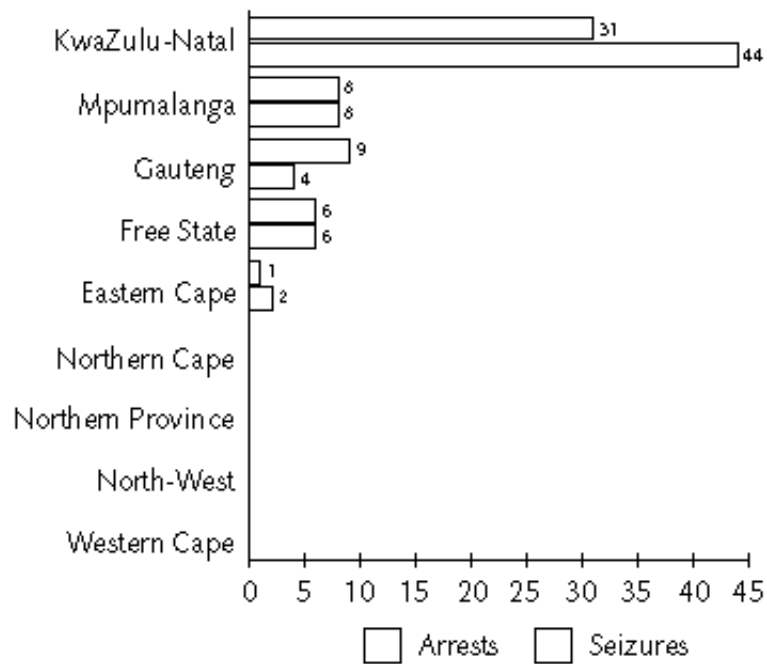
**Figure 5: Number of firearms seizures and arrests made by SAPS Border Police Units by province, January - December 1999**



Source: SAPS Border Police Head Office, Pretoria.

Firearm-related arrest and seizure figures for the first three months of 2000 show again that KwaZulu-Natal is the province with the most success in uncovering illegal firearms (see figure 6). Gauteng shows the second highest rate for arrests only, while the Northern Cape, Northern Province, North-West and Western Cape show no arrests and seizures at all.

**Figure 6: Firearms arrests and seizures by SAPS Border Police Units by province, January - March 2000**



Source: SAPS Border Police Head Office, Pretoria.

### Crossborder operations

In 1994, South Africa and Mozambique identified a common enemy in the form of the availability of illegal firearms. One of the successful ways of combating this scourge is joint operations to control the illegal entry of firearms into South Africa, called Operations Rachel. A formal co-operation agreement between South Africa and Mozambique was put in place to address small arms proliferation between the two countries through a series of joint operations. These operations are conducted by the police services of both countries and arms caches are destroyed in Mozambique in an effort to stem the flow of arms to the illegal market in South Africa. In the first four operations, a total of 11 997 firearms were destroyed.<sup>1</sup> Further operations will cover the whole of Mozambique, including the most remote northern parts of the country. The European Union donated ECU 200 000 in 2000 for the continuation of Operations Rachel.

Figures released by the SAPS on the seizure of AK-47 assault rifles indicate a decrease over the last few years, believed to be partially due to the successes of Operations Rachel.

**Table 5: AK-47 assault rifles seized by SAPS Illegal Firearm Investigation Units, 1994-1998**

1994	1995	1996	1997	1998
1 589	1 392	1 169	803	527

Source: R Chetty (ed), *Firearms use and distribution in South Africa*, Secretariat for Safety and Security, Pretoria, 2000.

**Table 6: AK-47 assault rifles destroyed during Operations Rachel**

Rachel I 95/08/11- 95/08/26	Rachel II 96/09/30- 96/10/05	Rachel III 97/09/21- 97/08/09	Rachel IV 98/10/05- 98/10/19	Rachel V(1) 99/02/21- 99/02/27
685	294	1 177	2 009	79

Source: South African Police Service Illegal Firearm Investigation Unit.

<b>Rachel V (2)99/04/18- 99/04/26</b>	<b>Rachel V (3) 99/07/13- 99/07/17</b>	<b>Rachel V (4)99/10/13- 99/10/23</b>	<b>Rachel VI (1- 5) 2000</b>	<b>Rachel VII (1) 2001</b>
3	346	350	1 515	770

**Table 7: Other types of firearms seized by SAPS Illegal Firearm Investigation Units associated with crossborder smuggling, 1994-1998**

	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998
<b>Rifles</b>					
Nagant	27	33	45	0	14
<b>Pistols</b>					
Makarov	164	172	221	176	133
Tokarev	56	58	263	206	184
<b>Machine pistols</b>					
Stechkin	10	4	2	2	4
Scorpion	16	33	3	4	7

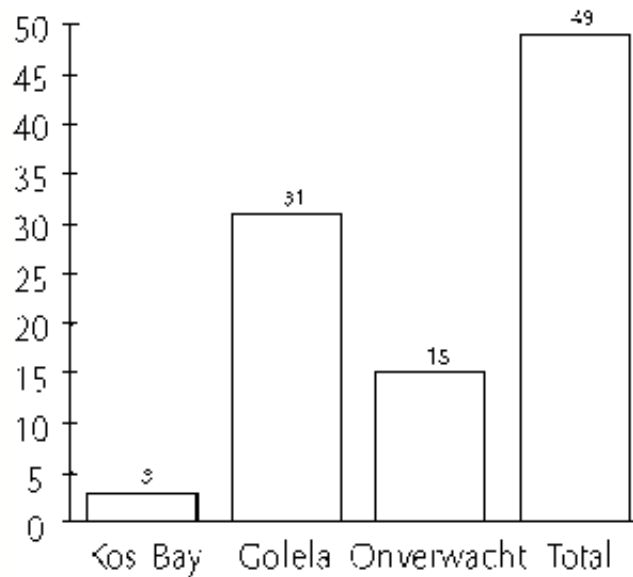
Source: R Chetty (ed), *Firearms use and distribution in South Africa*, Secretariat for Safety and Security, Pretoria, 2000.

Besides Mozambique, Namibia is the next most significant external source of firearms to South Africa. No formal programme of co-operation exists between Namibia and South Africa, but an informal working group involved in joint operations and intelligence sharing has been in place for some time.<sup>2</sup> The sharing of information is crucial in any crime-fighting initiative, but it seems as if communications have collapsed between South African police officers and their counterparts in Namibia, especially on firearm-smuggling.

### **Statistics derived from the two case studies: KwaZulu-Natal and the Northern Cape**

In both case studies, three individual border posts were identified in a particular area. These are not the only border posts in these areas or provinces, but are the closest to one another (see figure 7).

**Figure 7: Illegal firearm seizures by the border posts in the case study area, northern KwaZulu-Natal, 1998/1999**



Source: SAPS Border Police Head Office, Pretoria.

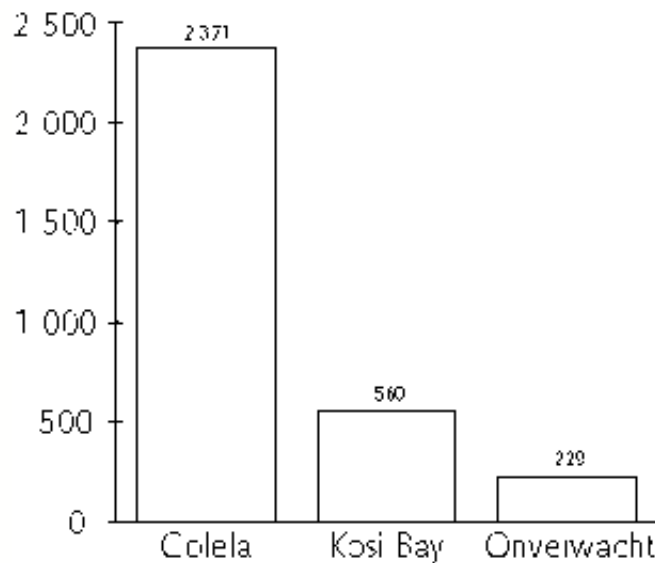
### *Northern KwaZulu-Natal*

In KwaZulu-Natal, only three of the nine land border posts were visited. None of the seaports or airports were included in the study.

The three KwaZulu-Natal border posts included in the research are Kosi Bay, Golela and Onverwacht.

The number of seizures provided in figure 7 is a reflection of the size, personnel, resources and volume of traffic moving through the three border posts. Of the three, Golela is the biggest and the only one with 'A' class status, while the other two are classified as 'B' class border posts. Golela has the most personnel, nearly double that of Onverwacht and seven times more than Kosi Bay. With more resources and personnel than the other two border posts, it is obvious that it will have more seizures than the other two. The Golela and Onverwacht border posts are geographically close to each other and can draw on each other's resources to combine forces against crossborder crimes, but the same cannot be said of Kosi Bay. Kosi Bay is in a very remote area and has difficulty in combining forces with the other two border posts in fighting crossborder crime. A combined task team consisting of members of the SAPS and SANDF was created recently to address crossborder crime in the Jozini/Kosi Bay area. This structure is functional, and it will be informative to monitor the task team's arrests and seizures independently.

**Figure 8: Number of firearms declared and handed in for safekeeping at border posts in the case study area, northern KwaZulu-Natal, 1998/1999**



Source: SAPS Border Police Head Office, Pretoria.

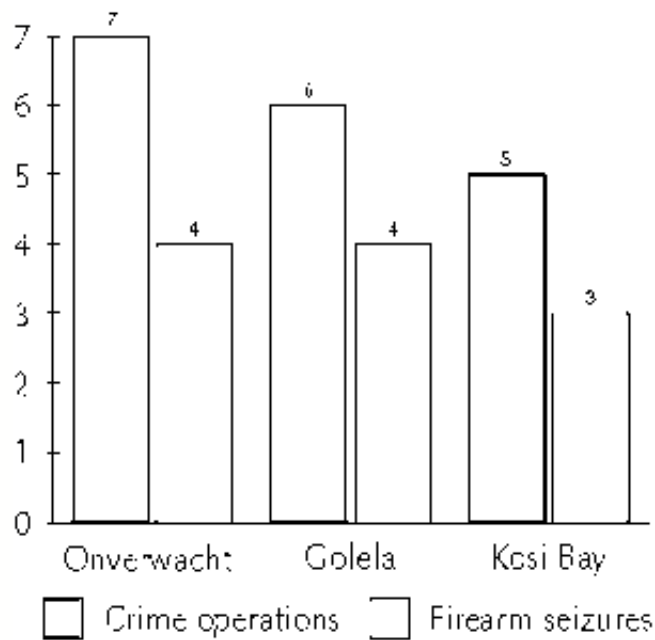
A large number of firearms are handed in for safekeeping before travellers leave South Africa to enter either Swaziland or Mozambique. The largest number of firearms handed in during 1998 and 1999 were at the Golela border post followed by Kosi Bay and Onverwacht. It is no surprise that Golela showed the largest number of firearms handed in, but it was interesting that Kosi Bay had double the number of firearms handed in compared to the Onverwacht border post. This may be as a result of the recent attacks on tourists in northern KwaZulu-Natal and the high rate of hijackings in the Black Rock area that travellers feel more safe travelling with firearms through the area to Mozambique.

It can also be concluded that the police at these three border posts are asking travellers if they have firearms with them and informing them that they are not allowed to take these firearms into neighbouring countries. Only Kosi Bay has fined a traveller for not declaring his/her firearm at the border post in the period 1998/1999. Kosi Bay is also the only border post that seized a firearm from the legal owner for not declaring it at the border post in the same period.

Figure 9 indicates the total number of crime prevention operations undertaken in 1998 and 1999 by the personnel of the Onverwacht, Golela and Kosi Bay border posts. These crime prevention operations did not solely concentrate on the seizure of firearms, but were focused on illegal immigrants and the seizure of smuggled goods. However, firearms are often seized as part of border crime prevention operations. If more emphasis was placed on the finding of illegal firearms, as opposed to stolen vehicles, perhaps more illegal firearms could be located. In order to find illegal firearms, the police involved in the roadblock would need to know how to undertake a search of a vehicle specifically for the location of firearms.

**Figure 9: Number of crime operations undertaken by the three border posts and firearm seizures resulting from these operations, northern KwaZulu-Natal, 1998/1999**





Source: SAPS Border Police at Golela, Onverwacht and Kosi Bay border posts.

It was mentioned by one of the border police officers that four-fifths of all seizures occurred away from the actual border post itself. Personnel at the Onverwacht border post are taking the lead in crime prevention operations, which mainly consist of roadblocks on the roads leading to the border post or into Pongola. The Onverwacht border police realised that criminals involved in crossborder crime avoided the actual border post to move their goods across the border, and for this reason increased roadblocks in an around Pongola.

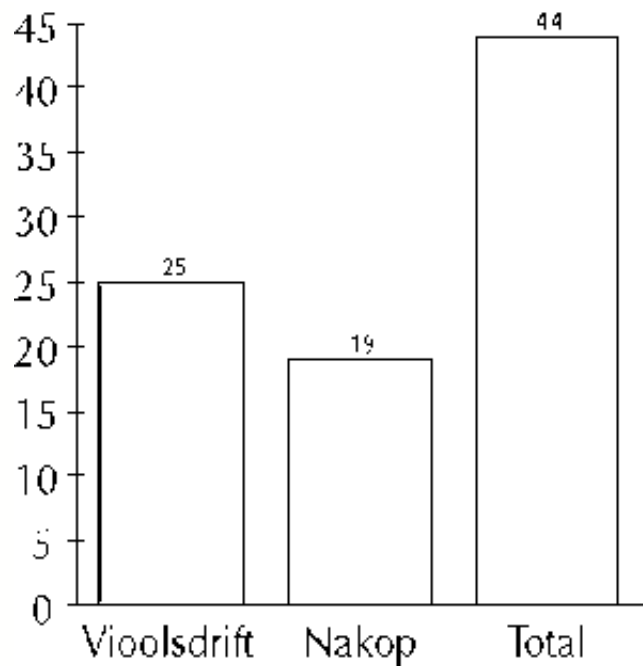
### *Northern Cape*

In the Northern Cape, only three of the nine land border posts were studied. The Northern Cape does not have an official seaport and has only one international airport.

The three border posts included in the case study in the Northern Cape were Alexander Bay, Vioolsdrift and Nakop.

The number of seizures in figure 10 reflects the size, personnel and resources available to these two border posts. Vioolsdrift and Nakop are the biggest border posts in the province, while Alexander Bay is very small especially in terms of personnel compared to the other two. The volume of people moving through Vioolsdrift and Nakop is bigger than at Alexander Bay, but the value of goods moving through Alexander Bay is the same if not greater than that of the other two border posts. Both Vioolsdrift and Nakop are 'A' class border posts, while Alexander Bay is a 'B' class border post. All three border posts are very far from one another. Alexander Bay and Vioolsdrift concentrate their efforts on fighting crossborder crimes. At all three border posts concern was expressed about legal firearms exiting and entering South Africa without being declared by their owners as required by law.

**Figure 10: Illegal firearm seizures by the border posts in the case study area, Northern Cape, 1998/1999**



Source: SAPS Border Police at Vioolsdrift and Nakop border posts.

No data is available on the number of crime prevention operations undertaken by the individual border posts and the number of firearm seizures during such operations.

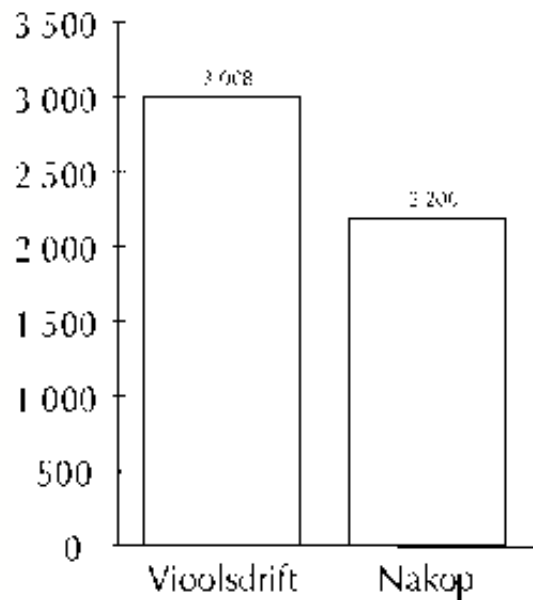
There was no data available from the Alexander Bay border post at the time of writing. Thus, only statistical data from Vioolsdrift and Nakop have been included in this section.

Again, a large number of firearms are declared at these border posts. It is believed that a high number of firearms are declared and handed in at this border post per year. The high rates of declarations made at these border posts may also be contributed to hunters going on hunting trips to Namibia.

At the Vioolsdrift border post, 23 fines were given to individuals for not declaring their legally held firearms at the border post. A total of 1 046 firearms were held by the border police because they were not allowed into the neighbouring country as travellers' export permits were not in order. These firearms are not seized or confiscated, but are handed back to owners on their return.

At the Nakop border post, no fines were given to travellers and no firearms were held because they were not allowed into Namibia.

**Figure 11: Number of firearms declared and handed in for safekeeping at border posts in the case study area, Northern Cape, 1998/1999**



Source: SAPS Border Police at Violsdrift and Nakop border posts

### **Trends in the effectiveness of border control and factors informing these trends**

From 1995 when police statistics became more reliable than before, there was an increase in the arrests related to, and seizures of, firearms on the international borders of South Africa. This increase indicates that there is both an increase in firearms moving across the country's borders and that the border police are seizing increasing numbers of firearms every year, albeit with limited capacity and resources. Statistics for the first three months of 2000 show that the upward trend in firearm seizures is continuing.

The implementation of the new detached duty initiative with police officers undertaking six-month assignments in 'hotspot' areas may have a positive effect on the seizure of firearms and other illegal goods being smuggled across the international borders of South Africa. An independent evaluation of the new detached duty initiative by the ISS is under way, and if it shows positive outcomes, it can also be implemented in other border areas in the Southern African region.

In 1995, the border police were responsible for 33 arrests and 64 seizures of illegal firearms compared to 266 arrests and the seizure of 183 illegal firearms in 1999. That is an increase of 87.6% in arrests and a 65% increase in illegal firearm seizures over four years. Looking at the condition of some of the border posts compared to the increase in seizures, it is a miracle that some border posts seize firearms at all. One of the reasons for this success is that some border police officers know they have to do the job with the resources that are available. All they need further is some positive encouragement and recognition for their achievements. The seizures of firearms do not look promising if it is taken into account that there are approximately 70 international ports of entry into South Africa and that only 183 illegal firearms were seized at these ports of entry in 1999.

Although firearm-related crime, including the proliferation of firearms, is a priority according to the SAPS, it is not the only crossborder crime that is increasing. The smuggling of drugs, motor vehicles and illegal immigrants, to name but a few, also confronts the understaffed border police units and posts. What makes matters worse is the recent closure of the border police internal tracing units. These units were responsible for the detection and tracing of illegal immigrants,

goods and contraband already inside the country. With no other police or departmental unit yet in place to take over this task, a further loss of tax income to South Africa will occur. The understanding is that these units will undergo name and other structural changes in the near future.

KwaZulu-Natal has the highest number of illegal firearm seizures and arrests by the border police compared to the other case study area, the Northern Cape. In KwaZulu-Natal, there have been 154 seizures of illegal firearms by the border police compared to eight seizures by the Northern Cape border police during 1999. When the seizures of illegal firearms by the Illegal Firearm Investigation Units (IFIU)<sub>2</sub> of the two provinces for 1999 are compared with each other, there is again a huge difference with KwaZulu-Natal at 11 115 seizures compared to 148 seizures by Northern Cape units.

It is known that illegal firearms in KwaZulu-Natal are originating from different sources and not only from foreign sources. With the seizure of well over 500 AK-47s in KwaZulu-Natal in 1999, it is clear that all of them could not have originated from within South Africa. In the Northern Cape, there has been no seizures of AK-47s in 1999. But with the vast open areas and the lack of manpower to patrol and police the border areas, it is not impossible for AK-47s to have crossed into South Africa. There is also a history of AK-47s moved by trucks from northern Namibia into South Africa. With the possibility of peace in Angola and the Democratic Republic of Congo and current reports of rebels and Angolan soldiers selling their assault rifles in northern Namibia, it is believed that the availability of firearms from these areas to the illegal markets in South Africa will increase. The head of the SAPS Illegal Firearm Investigation Head Office, Senior Superintendent Joubert, expressed the following warning about the movement of illegal firearms to South Africa if peace would come to Angola: "When the war ends, there will be a lot of hungry people looking for an income. The weapons will come flooding into South Africa. It will not be a happy day."<sub>4</sub> If this is the prediction by firearm specialists in the SAPS, then it must be a priority of the SAPS to train and provide the necessary resources to the border police on the country's northernmost borders in preparation of an increase in the smuggling of firearms when peace is made in these countries.

It is already clear from the arrest and seizure numbers that there is an increase in the flow of illegal firearms across South Africa's international borders. The flow is not as big as it was maybe ten years ago, but the fear is expressed by senior police officers that, when peace and stability are established in some Southern African countries currently involved in internal conflicts, this may change and the flow of firearms into South Africa will increase. Current structures involved in border control in South Africa therefore need to be assisted and personnel should be trained to be more effective in handling this anticipated inflow of illegal firearms into the country.

## Notes

1. M Chachua, Arms Management Programme: Operations Rachel 1996-1999, ISS Monograph 38, Institute for Security Studies, Pretoria, June 1999.
2. J Potgieter, The price of war and peace: A critical assessment of the disarmament component of United Nations Operations in Southern Africa, in V Gamba (ed), Governing arms: The Southern African experience, Institute for Security Studies, Pretoria, 2000, pp 29-59.
3. The Illegal Firearm Investigation Units were integrated into the Serious and Violent Crime

Unit, Detective Service early in 2001.

4. J Steinberg, Detectives in pursuit of Cold War's weaponry, *Business Day*, 19 July 1999.

## **Chapter 6**

### **CASE STUDY 1: KWAZULU-NATAL BORDER WITH SWAZILAND AND MOZAMBIQUE**

The study sought to assess the capacity of border controls in northern KwaZulu-Natal to prevent illicit firearm-trafficking into South Africa. The northern KwaZulu-Natal area, bordering Swaziland and Mozambique, was selected for the case study as it has been one of the most significant transit routes for illicit firearms entering South Africa in the past. Considering the ongoing violence in the province, it may still be the case.

The large quantities of weapons not recovered after the war in Mozambique, much of it buried in caches, have created a plentiful source of supply to the illicit markets in Southern Africa. This border area contains many of the main routes formerly used by the liberation movements for smuggling weapons into South Africa. Political violence decreased after the 1994 elections, but tensions still remain significant in the province until today. The assassination of the mayor of Nongoma and other political leaders are good examples of the political tension prevailing in the province.

The selected border area starts on the Mpumalanga provincial border, borders on Swaziland, up to the Ndumo Game Reserve on the Mozambican border. It is mountainous terrain and difficult to explore or patrol by vehicle. The wetlands and swamps on the Mozambican-South African border from Swaziland up to Kosi Bay on the Indian Ocean hamper movement by vehicle, especially during the rainy season.

#### **Border posts**

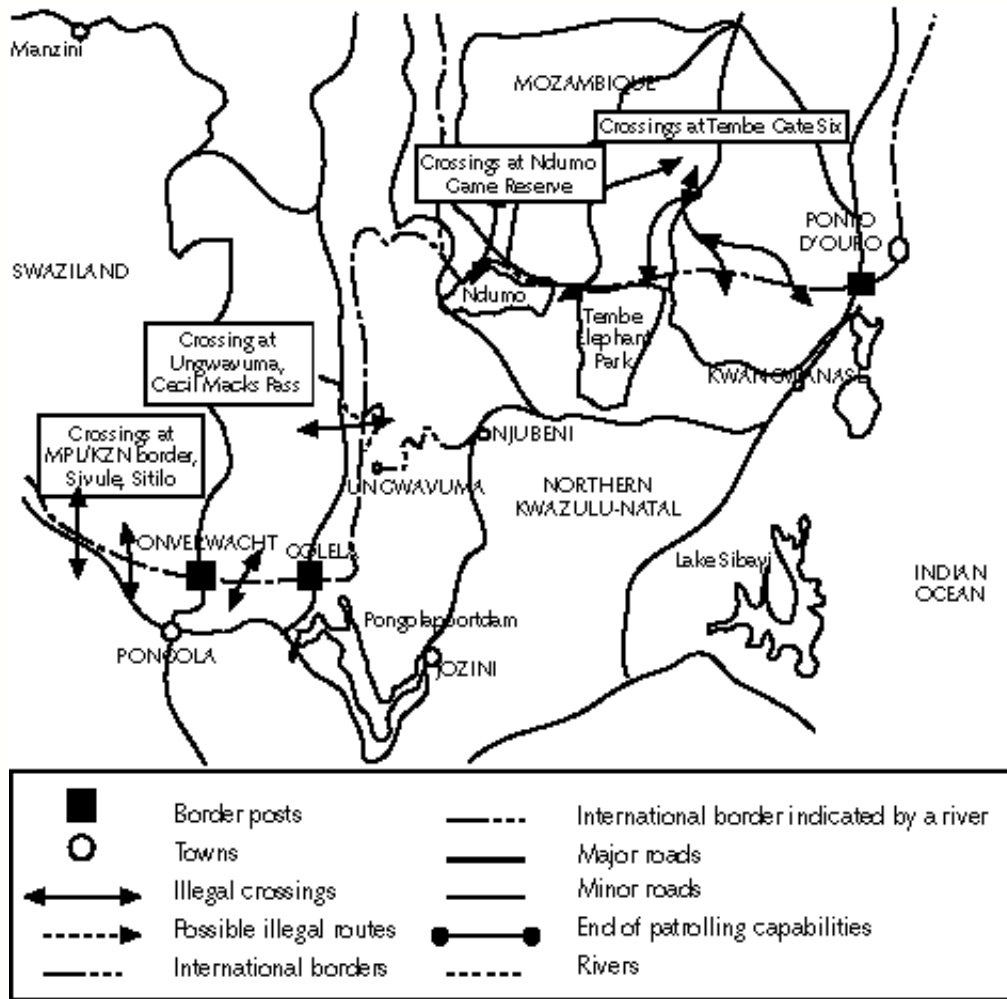
There are three official 'ports of entry' on this stretch of border - the Onverwacht, Golela and Kosi Bay border posts. Only the Golela border post is staffed by personnel of the SAPS Border Police Unit, the Department of Home Affairs (immigration) and SARS (customs and excise). The other two border posts, Onverwacht and Kosi Bay are only staffed by personnel of SAPS and Home Affairs.

Seizures of illegal weapons at the border posts have dropped dramatically since before 1994. Only 44 illegal firearms have been seized at these three border posts in 1999 and 2000 and 1% of all seizures made by the border police at Onverwacht are actually made at the border post itself. The rest of the seizures are made at roadblocks or away from the actual border post.<sup>1</sup> The police believe that this is because the border fence was rigorously patrolled by the South African Defence Force and the South African Police before 1994. Border posts themselves were therefore actually the best point of entry. With the presence of the SAPS and SANDF on border posts reduced, the posts themselves have become the main points of control and it has become much easier for criminal groups to smuggle weapons across the fence on the borderline.

#### **Routes and crossing points identified**

The terrain in this area could almost have been designed for illicit trafficking. "Smuggling is very easy", said one police officer.<sup>2</sup> There are apparently 67 active paths in current use by traffickers in a stretch of 80 kilometres on the South Africa-Mozambique border in northern KwaZulu-Natal.<sup>3</sup> This figure is believed to be twice that of the known illegal crossings in the area.

**Map 2: Main firearm-smuggling routes along the border between South Africa, Swaziland and Mozambique**



A four-foot wire fence runs along the borderline, but it has been cut in so many places and frequently used paths can be clearly seen running from one side of the fence and continuing on the other side. In many places, there are tyre marks on both sides of the border where stolen vehicles have transited recently.

Certain paths are apparently used particularly for stolen vehicles and others mainly for smuggling contraband. The section of the border with Swaziland in the Pongola area is apparently a major transit route for illegal immigrants and goods entering South Africa. It is very close to the national road (N2) and illegal immigrants can easily find a taxi to take them inland.<sup>4</sup>

Another main crossing area for the entry and exit of people and stolen vehicles is in the Mhlosheni Hills area. The Sitilo area, close to Pongola, was identified as one of the old liberation routes. It is still extensively used today to smuggle goods across the border.<sup>5</sup> Illegal immigrants and goods are mainly transported to Mpumalanga or Gauteng from here.

Illegal firearms, immigrants and goods enter at the farthest northern section of KwaZulu-Natal bordering on Mozambique at places like Muzi, Gate Six, the Ndlumo Game Reserve through the Suthu river, and in the Kosi Bay area between the border post and the Indian Ocean.<sup>6</sup> Illegal goods and immigrants entering South Africa are normally transported either to Durban or Johannesburg.



The area bordering Swaziland and Mozambique between Ingwavuma and the Ndumo Game Reserve was also identified as a smuggling route for firearms in the past. It is still in use by gunrunners. The area is very difficult to patrol due to the mountainous terrain and lack of suitable roads. The local population make no secret that they move freely through the Cecil Mack's pass area and that criminals also use these routes.

The Onverwacht border police are responsible for patrolling and enforcing all border policing functions in this section from the Mpumalanga/KwaZulu-Natal provincial border with Swaziland up to the Golela turn-off from the N2 highway. On this stretch, it was clear that uncontrolled crossings from Swaziland into South Africa happen on a daily basis. The border fence has been cut at regular intervals and there are many crossing points that could easily be used by illegal immigrants and smugglers. There are a number of houses very close to the border on both sides of the fence and the police believe some are used to store smuggled goods.<sup>7</sup>

Specific crossing places are known as places where smugglers prefer to smuggle contraband and illegal goods like cigarettes, music tapes and false identity documents into South Africa from Swaziland, and others are identified as those where stolen vehicles would be smuggled out of South Africa. At one such a crossing point, a stolen Toyota pick-up truck (*bakkie*) was found. It was stuck in the mud just 100 metres from the border. The criminals simply stripped all the spare parts and carried them across the border into Swaziland.<sup>8</sup>

The border divides many communities and families which creates problems in itself. Families live on both sides of the divide and it is very difficult to control their movement. Economic opportunities, education and the price of goods are often better in South Africa than in Swaziland or Mozambique. This provides strong incentives for illegal immigrants to cross the border in search of cheaper food or to give their children better education opportunities.

According to some of the soldiers patrolling the area, illegal firearms are not as much a problem, as they rarely find or seize illegal firearms coming across the border. They regarded stolen vehicles and contraband as the main smuggled items.

By definition, it is impossible to gauge the quantities of illicit firearms and other goods crossing into South Africa accurately. By all accounts, the quantities appear to have dropped since the peak at the height of political violence in the run-up to the 1994 election. The police believe that the number of illicit firearms entering South Africa from Mozambique and Swaziland has dropped. This view was echoed by SANDF soldiers and community leaders who were interviewed.

However, all agreed that illicit firearms are still crossing the border. It is clear that there are many opportunities for enterprising smugglers. If stolen vehicles, contraband and illegal immigrants can cross the border seemingly at will then, it cannot be very hard to smuggle an AK-47 across the border. Law enforcement agencies appear to lack the capacity to enforce border controls rigorously.

### **Issues undermining effective border control**

A number of key issues emerged from the research that have to be addressed if border controls are to be effectively implemented.

*Co-operation between government departments at border posts*



Border posts appeared to vary in terms of the effectiveness of their operations. Key factors seemed to be personnel, motivation and co-operation between government departments.

At Onverwacht, there appeared to be good co-operation between the police and immigration officers at the border post. It seemed as if they were coping in handling the customs duties as well. However, the absence of customs officials at the Kosi Bay border post appeared to be a problem. In this situation, police officers were meant to undertake the customs responsibilities, but their view was that it was not their job.<sup>9</sup> As a result, there was no evidence of cars being searched or revenue being collected on goods exported from the country. People were witnessed walking freely through the border post in both directions without being stopped, searched or having their passports checked. These crossings were apparently made by the local population who were known to the police at the border post. If vehicles are not inspected or searched at a border post and people are allowed to come and go as they please, it is not surprising if there is not a knock-on effect on security, illegal immigration and revenue collection. It is sometimes the person who is a regular at the border post and who does not pose any security or criminal threat who is the smuggler or the informant of the smuggler.

#### *Co-operation between the SAPS and the SANDF*

Close co-operation between the SAPS and SANDF is vital for effective border control. With such enormous distances to cover and not enough people to do so, sound communication and the best deployment of available resources are vital. This was not always evident, with SANDF soldiers on the borderline mainly concentrating on arresting illegal immigrants entering South Africa.

SANDF soldiers patrolled the border around the clock, but there were some accusations of corruption facilitating illegal trafficking. From the police, there is clearly a problem with trust.<sup>10</sup> One reason for this distrust could be the lack of liaison between police and soldiers on the ground. Co-ordination at a national and provincial level seems to be more effective with the National Inter-Departmental Structure (NIDS) in place, but it does not appear to have filtered down to co-operation along the borders themselves. It is good to have weekly meetings at management level, but the workforce on the ground needs to communicate and get to know one another. One simple problem that must be addressed is the lack of direct radio communication between the police at border posts and the SANDF. Information exchange and reaction times to border incidents both seem to suffer from this state of affairs.

On a subsequent visit to the border area by ISS researchers, the co-operation between the police and the defence force seemed to have improved and a new combined task team was formed in the Jozini/Kosi Bay area in an attempt to address the high level of crossborder crime, especially vehicles leaving South Africa illegally.

#### *Co-operation between the SAPS and the National Intelligence Agency*

The gathering and use of intelligence are critical in tackling the illicit traffic in firearms, particularly given the lack of resources and the size of the border. The intelligence officer responsible for information-gathering on the Swazi border area appeared to be well informed of criminal groups operating from Swaziland in South Africa and shared his information with the border police at the post.

During an internal operation in January 2000, the Onverwacht border post in conjunction with the Golela border post, the SANDF, the National Intelligence Agency officer and other

government departments concerned arrested 780 illegal immigrants, including one Somali, four Burundians, two Congolese and two Mozambicans. What is interesting about the arrest of the two Mozambicans is that both had false South African identity documents with which they had successfully applied for handgun licenses in South Africa.

#### *Co-operation between the South African border police and Swaziland police and military*

Illicit trafficking is a transborder problem that requires a transborder approach to tackle it effectively. Co-operation between the South African border police and the Swazi police and military appears to be good at the border post itself, but very poor elsewhere along the borderline.

This was somewhat surprising as monthly or tri-monthly meetings take place between the different forces and services involved in crossborder crime and border control on both sides of the border. At these meetings, problems and possible co-operation are discussed and information is exchanged, for instance, on common criminal activities. But this occurs at management level and it may be that the involvement and discussions at management level are not filtered down to the ground level, where distrust and professional jealousy consequently set in. Soldiers and police officers patrolling the fence do not know one another and, for this simple reason, will not communicate effectively.

South African police officers claim that the Swazi soldiers who patrol their side of the border warn people not to cross the border when they know that the South African police or military are on patrol. This is unfortunately only the view of a South African police officer and no comment was available from the Swazi military personnel patrolling the other side, as they refused to be interviewed and simply walked off when approached.

It is estimated that there are 236 criminal gangs operating just in the stretch of border between Mpumalanga and Golela.<sup>12</sup> One South African farm, approximately 200 metres from the border, has been attacked six times in two years by armed gangs operating from Swaziland, resulting in one death on the farm during this period.

The lack of co-operation between the South African and Swazi police and military, however, limits the action taken to prevent these crimes. South African police cannot cross the border in pursuit of suspected criminals without the permission of the Swazi's and vice versa.

In the light of the 'grievances' of police officers, it has to be considered that there are political agreements in place between South Africa, Swaziland and Mozambique for following up on information about criminals, but that permission must be obtained through the right channels for any police officer to be allowed to do so. These complaints can be as a result of an eager police officer who is frustrated because he can see his suspect getting away, but he knows he must first obtain political permission to cross the border.

#### *Co-operation between the South African border police and Mozambican police and military*

Co-operation between the SAPS and the Mozambican police and military at the Kosi Bay border post seems to be effective. However, once away from the border post itself, the co-operation seems to deteriorate into distrust and there is little evidence of effective co-operation to prevent crime.

South African soldiers are only placed at the border for three months and do not get to know

their Mozambican counterparts well, and cannot build up a good information network. Although it is not the prime function of soldiers to build up information networks, this can clearly assist them to understand the nature of crime on the border and improve the information passed on to intelligence networks.

### *Co-operation between the SAPS and local communities*

Co-operation between the police and local communities along the border has to be improved as a matter of urgency. There are 48 community police forums in the northern KwaZulu-Natal area but relations appeared to be poor with the local police stations. A series of interviews with local community leaders and members of community police forums indicated that local people have substantial information about illicit firearm-trafficking that appears not to be utilised. There was a high level of distrust of the police among the people interviewed and many accusations of corruption were levelled at the local police.

The political situation in KwaZulu-Natal is still very tense with pronounced rivalry between political parties. This creates a difficult environment in which the police have to operate with certain actions bound to be perceived as 'political'. However, the poor community relations seemed to be exacerbating this situation and hampering efforts to stem the influx of illicit firearms. One of the most worrying accusations was that certain police stations in the area did not respond to information supplied by local people about individuals involved in firearm-smuggling syndicates. This has sometimes led members of community police forums to take police matters into their own hands and seize firearms from the homes of suspected criminals.<sup>13</sup> There were other allegations that weapons handed in to a local police station subsequently 'disappeared' and were not accounted for.<sup>14</sup> It could be that increased transparency would allay many of the local fears, but, until the flow of information to the community is improved, suspicions are bound to linger.

The interviews and information gathered from the local communities indicated that there is a flow of illegal firearms entering from Swaziland and Mozambique and moving to criminals in South Africa.

### *Personnel and resources*

Insufficient personnel and resources were two of the biggest problems identified. At the Onverwacht border post, there are currently only four permanent border police officers responsible for control of the border. However, this number was increased with the new detached duty programme at the affected border areas. The commanding officer believed that, to be more effective in fighting crossborder crime and to do proper searches at the border post itself, he would need another 14 police officers.<sup>15</sup>

Accommodation for border police is a long-standing problem that has been identified before as needing attention. The permanent accommodation available at Onverwacht is occupied by local police officers from Pongola.<sup>16</sup> This means that the border police have to pay high rent for accommodation on local farms, a situation that could understandably lead to a drop in morale. The border police base at Pongola is in a poor state and is urgently in need of upgrading.

The resources at the Kosi Bay border post also leave much to be desired. There are only two permanent border police officers, supported by the new detached police officers and sometimes by two police dog handlers with one trained to find explosives and the other drugs. There is also no facsimile machine at the border post and officers have to make use of the one at the local

police station some 20 kilometres away. This can sometimes lead to a delay in the transmission of urgent information from other police units to the border post or confidential information landing in the wrong hands.<sup>17</sup> Another area of concern is the frequent breakdown of the generator that supplies electricity to the border post, which also results in damage to computer systems at the post.

The project by the UNODCCP regional office in South African will assist with equipment such as vehicle search kits, communication systems like facsimile machines and radios at the border posts, including the Kosi Bay border post on both sides of the post.

Due to a lack of manpower and the shortage of vehicles, the border police in the northern KwaZulu-Natal area tend to leave the actual patrolling of the borderline to the SANDF.

At the Kosi Bay border area, SANDF soldiers are deployed in two sections. One section of 20 men is responsible for patrolling the area between the sea and the border post itself.<sup>18</sup> The other group is responsible for patrolling the larger area from the border post to the Swaziland border excluding the borders of the two nature reserves (Ndumo Game Reserve and Tembe Elephant Park) against the international border. Patrolling of the nature reserves is done by nature conservation security personnel.

The SANDF group responsible for the area between Kosi Bay and the Swaziland border had no transport or functional communication systems at the time the research was carried out. Twelve soldiers were responsible for patrolling a 53 kilometre stretch of border between the border post to Swaziland.

#### *Co-operation between the South African border police and Illicit Firearms Units*

The SAPS has a number of local Illicit Firearms Units.<sup>19</sup> The two in the northern KwaZulu-Natal area are in Jozini and Pongola. Excellent regular communication between these units and the border police could be expected, but there was little evidence of this. Indeed, some of the border police interviewed were under the impression that the Illicit Firearms Unit in Jozini had closed down. The commander of the Jozini unit died in 1999 and it does not appear as if there has been any substantial activity since then at the unit.

The Illicit Firearms Unit in Vryheid is fully operative, but says that its main area of concern is the poor control of weapons within South Africa and that it would react only on information about crossborder smuggling if the information was given to them. The unit only co-operates with the border police when acting on specific information, not as a matter of routine.<sup>20</sup> All the Illegal Firearm Investigation Units are now under the control of the Serious and Violent Crime sections after the closure of some specialised units earlier this year.

#### *Corruption*

Almost all of the people interviewed for this case study mentioned that there was corruption that facilitated illicit trafficking. The accuracy and precise nature of this corruption are difficult to ascertain and most allegations are therefore not published in this monograph.

Many members of local communities who were interviewed perceived police corruption to be the biggest problem. It was a common view that most crime was perpetuated as a result of the deliberate negligence of the police. There were claims that the police officers had to sneak out

of their living quarters at night during special police operations in the area so that they would not be seen by corrupt colleagues who would alert crime syndicates of the police presence or planned operations.<sup>21</sup>

Corruption will always be an issue in border areas where there are financial rewards to be reaped. It complicates the task of the many honest, hard-working SAPS border police and SANDF members. Corruption must be comprehensively addressed if efforts to stem illicit firearm flows into South Africa are to be effective.

## **Conclusion**

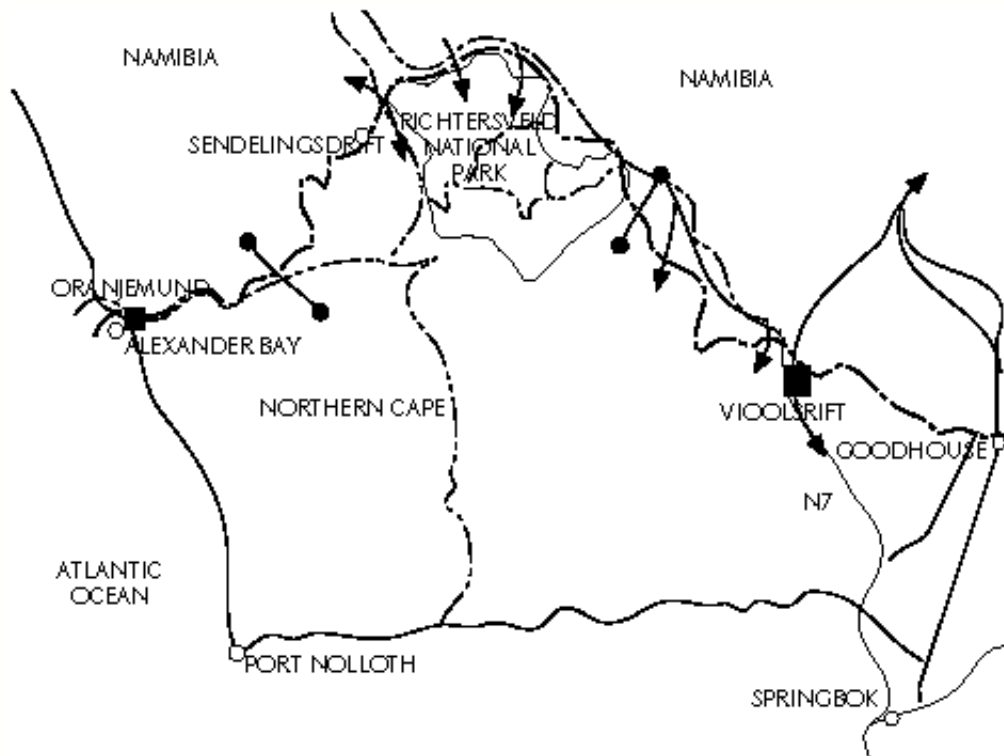
Border policing in the northern KwaZulu-Natal area was set to improve mainly because of the assistance of the private sector. This area can become one of the most popular tourist attractions in South Africa. Roads are being upgraded and access to many areas have become much easier than in the past. Co-operation between the police and the defence force is improving as is evident in the creation of the joint task team to address crossborder vehicle crime in the area. But all will be in vain if the relationship with the communities and corruption are not tackled as matters of urgency, and if all types of crossborder crime are not seriously addressed.

## **Notes**

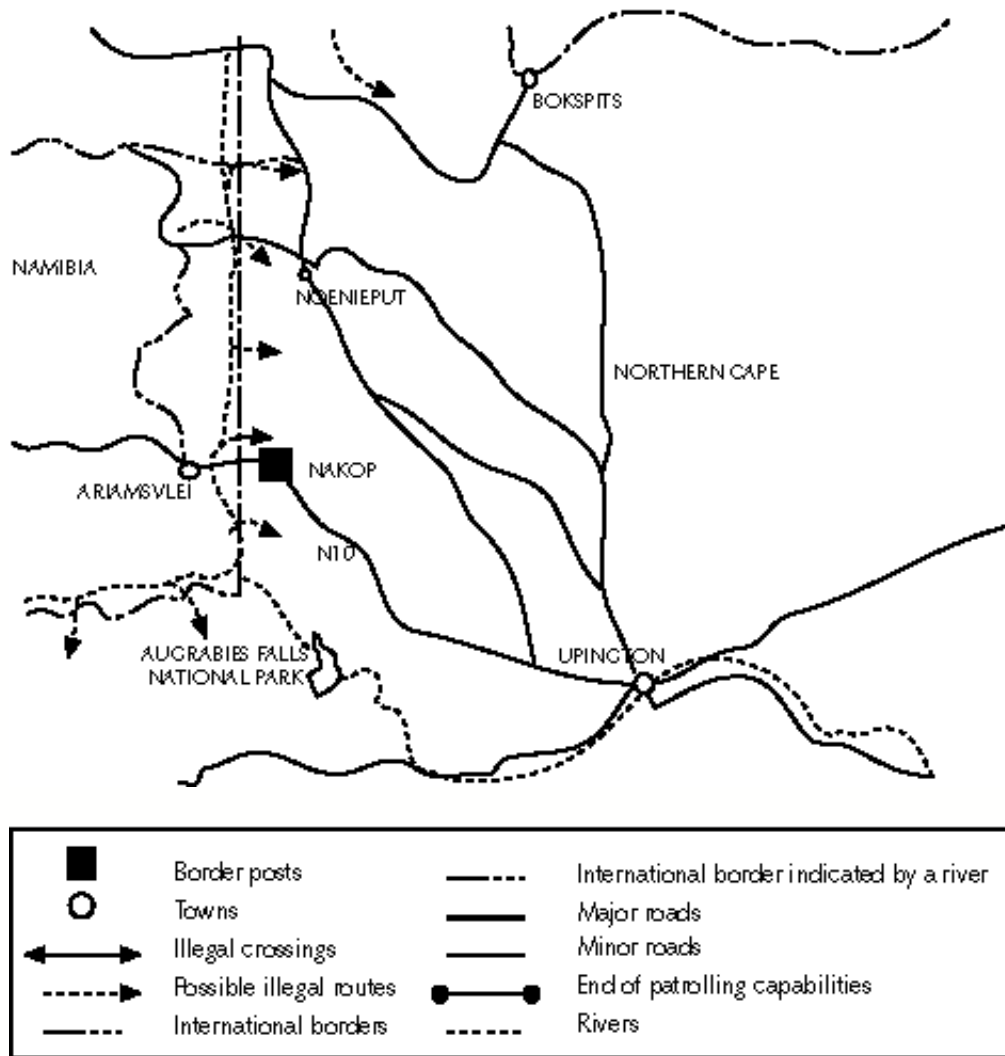
1. Interview with border police officer, 4 February 2000.
2. Interview with border police officer, 4 February 2000.
3. Interview with nature conservation officer, 10 February 2000.
4. Interview with border police officer, 4 February 2000.
5. Interview with border police officer, 4 February 2000.
6. Interviews with border police and community groups, 4 February 2000 and 5 February 2000.
7. Interview with border police, 4 February 2000.
8. Interview with border police, 4 February 2000.
9. Interview with border police, 5 February 2000.
10. Interview with border police, 4 February 2000.
11. Interview with border police, 5 February 2000.
12. Interview with border police, 4 February 2000.
13. Interview with members of community police forum, 6 February 2000.
14. Interview with members of community police forums, 5 February 2000.

15. Interview with border police officer, 4 February 2000.
16. Interview with border police officer, 4 February 2000.
17. Interview with border police officer, 5 February 2000.
18. Interview with SANDF patrol, 6 February 2000.
19. At the time of the research, the Illegal Firearm Investigation Units were still operational. These units were integrated into the Serious and Violent Crime Unit, Detective Services, early in 2001.
20. Interview with illicit firearm unit, 7 February 2000.
21. Interview with community police forum 6 February 2000.

**Map 3 and 4: Main firearm-smuggling routes along the border between South Africa and Namibia**







## Chapter 7

### CASE STUDY 2: NORTHERN CAPE BORDER WITH NAMIBIA

#### Introduction

Understanding the permeability of the Northern Cape-Namibia border is a crucial element in the assessment of border control mechanisms to prevent illegal firearm flows. The Northern Cape-Namibia border is the closest South African border to the raging conflict in both Angola and the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC). These facts mainly informed the decision to use the area as a case study in the project. In addition, previous experience showed that, during periods of peace, firearms continued to flow from these conflict regions into South Africa.

The Northern Cape borders on both Namibia and Botswana. It comprises South Africa's longest international land border covering a distance of 1 400 kilometres. The border area is very remote and sparsely populated, and consists of harsh arid terrain characterised by large open plains surrounded by mountains. The stretch of border between South Africa and Namibia is demarcated by the Orange River and a fence marks the remainder of the border with Namibia and Botswana. The fence is merely a marker, and is not higher than four feet at some places.

Due to the vast expanse of the border, the research concentrated on a specific stretch of



border. The focus of this study was the South African-Namibian border area from Alexander Bay to the Nakop border post. In this area, three specific border posts were visited: Alexander Bay, Vioolsdrift and Nakop. In contrast to the KwaZulu-Natal case study,<sup>1</sup> the researchers were accompanied by two border police officers from the SAPS Border Police Head Office. The use of a police plane during this field trip also gave researchers a better understanding of the difficult terrain and the vastness of the border, as well as more insight into the obstacles faced by the border police.

### **Historical firearm-smuggling routes**

The flows of illegal firearms through what was often referred to as illicit pipelines historically occurred between South Africa and the conflict areas in Angola and the DRC. From these conflict areas, weapons are currently funnelled through these existing routes down to Windhoek in Namibia, from where they are usually transported by truck to South Africa.

Both the volumes of firearm flows and their net direction are heavily influenced by the level of conflict in Angola and the DRC. This was demonstrated during the short peace period in Angola in 1994. As the prospects of a short cease-fire became a reality, an increase was witnessed in the movement of firearms. It was reported that organised crime syndicates were enticing women from Gauteng to buy or exchange clothing for firearms in northern Namibian towns close to the border with southern Angola. These women, usually with between one and three firearms in their possession, brought them back to South Africa by obtaining lifts from long-distance truck drivers. The firearms would be hidden in the cargo on the trucks, the woman would travel with the truck and, close to the South African/Namibian border post, would leave the truck and cross the border at another crossing point. She would then join the truck once it has passed through the border post. There were two pipelines or routes used for this movement - either trucks travelling from Windhoek to Cape Town, and then on to Gauteng, or via Botswana to Gauteng.<sup>2</sup>

The pertinent question is whether the current border control mechanisms are able to handle the anticipated influx of firearms that will occur if peace is achieved in Angola and the DRC.<sup>3</sup> In addition, what is the minimum threshold of peace that needs to occur before the demand for or value of firearms in South Africa outweighs their utility in the Angolan and DRC conflicts? Although this research did not aim to answer the latter question, it is indisputably a matter of urgency to ensure that border control mechanisms are enhanced in the Northern Cape to prevent the anticipated inflow of firearms.

### **Overview of the case study**

At each of the three border posts that were visited, interviews were conducted with border police officers on duty. This included both permanent and detached police officers. Detached police officers were from police stations throughout South Africa and some from specialised police units such as the Narcotics Unit, Vehicle Theft Units, Dog Units and Firearms Investigation Units.

The border posts are inaccessible to one another as a result of the mountain range or rivers dividing them. In order to drive from one border post to the other involves major detours that cover large distances and are costly. This poses a problem as motor vehicles cannot patrol the entire borderline.

Informal crossings exist along the border at a number of points. The main crossings were identified at Sendelingsdrif, Grasdrift (or Aussengehr as it is known on the Namibian side),

Seizures of firearms at these border posts have dropped in the last few years. The main reason identified by the border police was that licensed firearms brought over the border post by legal owners were not declared and the border police no longer had the capacity to search vehicles regularly.

According to the border police, legal firearm owners from South Africa are seldom allowed to take handguns into Namibia. Another problem experienced at border posts is that travellers from both countries do not have the correct documentation for exporting or importing firearms. Over time, the level of reporting licensed firearms has decreased as more legal firearm owners choose not to declare their firearms at the border post - especially South African licensed firearm owners travelling to Namibia.

The border police are disillusioned by the situation. As stated by a border post commander: "if we are unable to track or control legal firearms crossing the border, how can we possibly hope to find or track illegal firearms crossing the border."<sup>5</sup>

## **Nakop**

The Nakop border post is an 'A' grade border post. As a designated land border post, it is operated with representatives from all three government agencies involved in border control: the SAPS, SARS (customs and excise) and the Department of Home Affairs.

At the Nakop border post, there were 15 SAPS officers to handle all border control functions. They were both permanent and detached officers from other stations undertaking border duties.

The border post checkpoint is 31 kilometres from the Namibian border post and approximately 15 kilometres from the actual borderline. The Nakop border post was built away from the border as this was the only suitable area for offices with accommodation available for the border police. A small mountain range and vast pans that are filled with water during the rainy season make the terrain closer to the actual border unsuitable for building. A new border post closer to the borderline is presently planned and funds have been made available for this. The pans and sandy semi-desert plains with the small mountain range also make patrolling the border by vehicle and foot difficult.

An interesting provincial police working arrangement exists at the Nakop border post at the time of the research. The model relies on the rotation of police officers from specialised units to the border post. The rationale underlying this is to increase the level of specialised policing skills at the border post and the capacity of the border posts by increasing the number of police officers at the posts. The system makes use of the Upington-based SAPS specialised unit officers at the Nakop border post. These officers drawn from the Narcotics Unit, the Illegal Firearms Investigation Unit and the Vehicle Theft Unit.<sup>6</sup> Under the temporary assignment, police officers work for three days at the border post before returning to their permanent units. The provincial border police office, based at Upington, established the system.

This initiative aims to increase the level of expertise in the fields of narcotics, firearms and vehicle thefts, which enhances the operational capacity of the border post. It must be seen if this exercise will continue with the closing of some specialised units in the SAPS. Over time, it is hoped that this expertise will be transferred to the border police in terms of specific search and identification techniques used to find illegal drugs, stolen vehicles and illicit firearms. Some of

the limitations of this system are the following:

- The different specialised units do not have access to other specialised units' computer functions for the testing of firearms or vehicles. This means, for example, that should a member of the Illegal Firearms Investigation Unit not be on duty, another border police officer would not be able to check if a firearm is stolen or who the owner is. Providing access to the different specialised units' functions on the computer would rectify this problem.
- It also appears that certain specialised unit officers, especially those with an assigned police vehicle, do not stay at the border post for the duration of their assignment. This is the result of the work overload of their permanent assignments, as well as the lack of desirable accommodation at the border post.
- Finally, the different specialised units are not trained to work in multidisciplinary teams. By the very nature of their specialised unit training, they are inwardly focused. It appears as if the level of competition between the different units undermines their ability to work as a single unit on the border post. This could be overcome through the use of strategies, such as better leadership, training and longer assignments to the border post to encourage teambuilding.
- The desired number of police officers to fulfil all border control duties sufficiently at Nakop is 30 police officers.

## **Violsdrift**

The Violsdrift border post is an A grade border post. As a designated border post, it is staffed by the SAPS, SARS and the Department of Home Affairs.

At the Violsdrift border post, there were 12 SAPS officers to handle all border control duties. The use of a police officer from the Violsdrift police station for detached duty at the border post resulted in a positive change in his attitude towards border crime. Through the placement of the first detached police officer from the local police station at the border post, recognition was gained for the fact that border crimes affect the broader community. It was anticipated that this realisation would spread to other detached police officers.<sup>z</sup>

At the Violsdrift border post, there are no clear demarcations of the area for which the border police unit is responsible. The border police generally patrol the same area as the local police station. This comprises a stretch of 80 kilometres to either side of the border post on the Orange River.

Two main problems were experienced by the Violsdrift border police:

- *Lack of personnel:* This was partially addressed by the use of officers from the local police station as a temporary measure until more permanent border police officers can be assigned to the border. The desired number of personnel at the border post is 30 police officers.
- *Low firearm declaration by legal firearm owners crossing the border:* International visitors to South Africa often bring legal handguns into the country. The measures to ensure that they also leave South Africa with their firearms are weak. These firearms are often lost or

sold in South Africa and these transactions are not reported to any South African authority.<sup>g</sup> The implication of not declaring legally held firearms to the border police, is that no measures can be taken to halt the flow of legal firearms to the illegal firearm pool. Firearm owners know that the police cannot search every vehicle crossing the border. In addition, when the police do search vehicles, they seldom find firearms as they are in a hurry to search as many vehicles as possible and to keep the queue of vehicles moving. It stands to reason that if the border police are having difficulty in controlling legal firearms, they most certainly will not have a significant impact on illegal firearms crossing the border, since arms traffickers use more sophisticated hiding techniques than legal firearm owners. It would be extremely difficult to stop the flow of illegal firearms.

## **Alexander Bay**

The Alexander Bay border post is a B grade border post. This implies that the border police and immigration officials are responsible for all border control functions, including immigration (Home Affairs) and customs and excise (SARS). Although a B grade border post, the movement of goods through the post is almost equivalent to that of the Vioolsdrift border post. It is estimated that about R50 million worth of goods are exported through Alexander Bay per month.<sup>g</sup>

The jurisdiction of the Alexander Bay border post follows the Orange River from the Atlantic Ocean for approximately 140 kilometres. The first 30 kilometres upriver from the ocean are well patrolled and guarded as this is a restricted diamond area and mine security officials are responsible to ensure that no illegal crossings take place. Outside this restricted diamond area, illegal crossings are fairly easy as it is only the border police and, on occasion, the SANDF that patrol the rest of the 140 kilometres. The sea area falling under the border police's jurisdiction, which is also supposed to be patrolled, stretches from the Orange river mouth southwards for 400 kilometres up to the Groen River.

The mountainous terrain on the South African side of the border hampers patrolling as the mountain forces the road away from the river. As a result, it is almost impossible to monitor the river without specialised methods and resources.

At the Alexander Bay border post, there is a police rubber dinghy that is piloted by the police officer in charge of the border post. This boat is used in both sea and river patrols. Land-based patrols are done by vehicle on an *ad hoc* basis.

At this border post, firearm declarations by legal firearm owners are very low and the seizure of illegal firearms is nearly non-existent.

The Alexander Bay border post is an old garage used by diamond miners from Alexander Bay to park their cars while at work in Oranjemund. It first belonged to the De Beers mining company which donated it to AlexCor after the independence of Namibia. The latter made it available to the police as a border post with the understanding that the Department of Public Works would be responsible for its maintenance. But the officers stationed at the border post often use their own resources to maintain the post. For example, they used their own funds to erect floodlights and paint the building.

At the Alexander Bay border post, there is one permanent and six detached police officers. The detached police are assigned on a two-monthly rotation basis. The main problems associated with the rotation system are:

- *Lack of training of detached police members in border control duties:* Every new detached police officer stationed at the post must be trained in the task and functions of border control. Usually, this is the responsibility of permanent members.
- *Training is time-consuming:* The training in the procedures, regulations and legal requirements relevant to the policing of South Africa's international borders is time-consuming and utilises resources that could be used for border patrols.
- *Short period of time for detached police officers to serve at border:* By the time detached police officers are fully functional at the border post, it is usually almost time for their return to their permanent stations. By this time, they start to focus on going home and stop putting in the extra effort required to combat border crimes.<sup>10</sup>

These problems are seen as by-products of postings that take people away from their homes and families, usually with poor accommodation and benefits for a short period of time.

### **Issues undermining effective border control**

A number of key issues emerged from the research that have to be addressed if border controls are to be effectively implemented.

#### *Co-operation with other South African government departments involved in border control*

This section considers the level of co-operation between the border police and other agencies. It was found that the level of co-operation was case-specific. It is important to understand this as the ability to prevent the smuggling of firearms is largely information-driven. Given the lack of police capacity to search vehicles, the police need to be tipped off in advance of vehicles suspected of transporting illicit goods.

Of the three border posts visited in the Northern Cape, two are designated, A grade posts, Vioolsdrift and Nakop. This means that they are the main export and import ports in the region and are staffed by officers from customs and excise (SARS), immigration (Home Affairs) and the border police (SAPS). At these two border posts, there is a high level of co-operation between these three agencies and the infrastructure is good. There were facilities for the searching of vehicles and trucks. There were computers available for checks on people's movements, and on vehicle registrations and firearm ownership of South African citizens. However, these two posts varied in the level of effectiveness of their operations. This was influenced by the lack of personnel, resources and motivation.

The situation at the Alexander Bay border post was bleak, not in terms of the level of motivation, but the disparity of resources. Since only border police and immigration officials are stationed at Alexander Bay, there is no daily contact with the other government departments. The border post is the main link between the diamond-rich areas of South Africa and Namibia. A great deal of mining equipment and other goods are regularly moved by truck from South Africa to Namibia. The arrangement at the border post is that the border police are responsible for executing SARS functions. With one permanent member responsible for all relevant documentation, it can easily take up to four hours per day.<sup>11</sup> This is time that could have been better spent on border police functions. An estimated R50 million worth of goods are exported through Alexander Bay per month, of which 14% value added tax (VAT) can be reclaimed by the exporters.



## *Co-operation between the SAPS and the National Intelligence Agency*

Staff of the National Intelligence Agency seemed to be more often present at the Vioolsdrift border post than at the other two posts.<sup>12</sup>

Information is available from the SAPS on organised diamond syndicates operating in the area, especially in Port Nolloth. However, there is little or no information on syndicates involved in firearms, drugs and other illegal goods.<sup>13</sup> The main reason is the lack of communication flowing from intelligence sources in urban centres, such as Cape Town and Johannesburg. Since firearms are delivered and used in these urban centres, information needs to be fed back to border posts on the profile of the syndicates involved and the firearms used. As one police officer explained:

"We do not know who or what these syndicates are or the profile of the arms smuggler, for example, who are the smuggling syndicates taking firearms to the vigilante groups in Cape Town. We do not know whom to inform of this type of information if we come across such suspicious groups travelling through the border post and we are not informed of this type of information."<sup>14</sup>

The shortage of NIA operatives at these border posts is put down to the lack of personnel at provincial offices and nationally. The available NIA personnel are routed to identified 'hotspots'. However, the gathering, interpretation and dissemination of information and the launch of a reaction to the information are usually time-consuming. Normally, when one 'hotspot' is under control, others have developed in the meantime.

There seems to be a new drive within the NIA to address the problem of border crimes and threats to South Africa's national borders. Plans are under way to set up a 'border desk' within the NIA where all relevant information and statistics will be collected for interpretation and dissemination. This information will originate from all institutions and departments involved in border control. Planning will subsequently be done by those involved on the proper reaction to a problem identified by the 'border desk'.<sup>15</sup>

## *Co-operation between the SAPS and the SANDF*

At the Vioolsdrift border post, co-operation between the SAPS and the SANDF improved after the appointment of a new SANDF commander at Upington. Roadblocks jointly undertaken by the SAPS and SANDF occurred more frequently and, according to one border police officer, "the correct procedures concerning roadblocks are now followed by the SANDF personnel compared to the past."<sup>16</sup>

At the Alexander Bay border post, there was also a good relationship between the SAPS and the SANDF. Regular interaction took place between them and the broader spectrum of police personnel in the area.<sup>17</sup>

However, no defence force presence was observed at any of the border posts visited, nor were defence force patrols seen on the border with Namibia.

## *Co-operation between the South African border police and their Namibian counterparts*

At each of the border posts visited, there was a sufficient level of co-operation between the SAPS border police and their Namibian counterparts. This was based on a mutual

understanding of the problems that they faced, and was evident in the information exchanged.<sup>18</sup> Namibian border police are not rotated on a regular basis and, as a result, a good relationship is formed with permanent SAPS border control officers.<sup>19</sup>

The long distance between Nakop and the Namibian border post does not impact on the level of interaction between South African border officials and their Namibian counterparts. The level of interaction is similar to that found at Alexander Bay or Vioolsdrift.<sup>20</sup>

### *Co-operation between the border police and the local communities*

It is difficult to assess the level of co-operation between the border police and the local communities. The Northern Cape comprises a sparsely populated farming community. Interaction between the police and the local community police forums facilitates co-operation more at local police station level than at the level of the border police.

For the border police to recruit informants in these communities is extremely difficult as police officers are well known to the local population and interaction with any member in the community under abnormal circumstances would draw suspicion. The border police officers also indicated that they required better skills in the handling of informants.<sup>21</sup>

Interaction with farmers in the border area takes place on a regular basis and the farmers or their labourers often try to inform the police of any evidence of illegal crossings.<sup>22</sup> The reaction by the police to this information often appears inadequate, because of the long distances and difficult terrain. As a result, both the farmers and labourers do not always bother to report suspected illegal activities.<sup>23</sup>

### *Co-operation between the border police and Illegal Firearms Investigation Units*

Besides the Upington Illegal Firearms Investigation Unit<sup>24</sup> which posts officers at the Nakop border post, officers of these units only visit the border posts when reacting to information concerning illegal firearms crossing at the border post.

The arrangement by the Illegal Firearms Investigation Unit and the border police at Nakop to send investigators with specific expertise on three-day rotational shifts to the border post is an effective good practice, as it allows for the transfer of skills specifically in terms of techniques to search for firearms. However, the system would work better if detached members from specialised units were on duty full-time and only responsible for border duties during their assignment.

### **Limitations undermining effective border controls**

The border police felt that they were weak opponents in the face of illegal crossings of people and goods. As stated by a border police officer:

"The border posts and lines are seen by the criminals as a soft target. They cross the border with illegal firearms because they know we are understaffed and cannot search every vehicle entering South Africa, let alone also patrol the border at the same time."<sup>25</sup>

Due to the vast open landscape and the long distances between border posts, crossing points on this border are more difficult to pinpoint than on the KwaZulu-Natal-Mozambican border. In addition, it is only possible to identify the crossing points if the information on illegal crossings is



reported by local residents, or when evidence is discovered during police patrols. There are usually no arrests after reports of illegal crossings as transgressors are mostly gone by the time the police investigate the scene. The majority of the illegal border crossings along the Orange River take place without the knowledge of the police or the local population.

Illegal crossings take place by boat or raft at places where it is impossible for the police to get close to the river due to the dense vegetation on the riverbanks. Neither do roads always lead up to the river, nor do they follow the river's contours like on the Namibian side.<sup>26</sup> The terrain is more difficult to patrol on the South African side of the border due to the mountains. This is compounded by the fact that roads are not maintained for use on a daily basis. The river has to be patrolled by a rubber dinghy in an attempt to find these illegal crossing points, which is often difficult due to the level of the river being too low and rocky to use the dinghy.<sup>27</sup>

The border police identified the Richtersveld National Park as an illegal crossing point for people with illegal firearms. It is an area frequently visited by tourists and roads in the park lead up to the river and are in a better condition than other roads in the area. According to police sources, some gun runners would enter this area disguised as tourists. Once within the park, they meet gun runners from the Namibian side to transfer firearms for use in South Africa.<sup>28</sup> As stated by a border police officer, there are many "whites involved in smuggling syndicates making use of the Richtersveld National Park to smuggle in firearms."<sup>29</sup>

In the Vioolsdrift area, crossings also take place along the river with boats and rafts as in any other area of the Orange River. For the whole stretch of river from Alexander Bay to Vioolsdrift and beyond, there is only one police rubber dinghy available for patrols, stationed at Alexander Bay. If a need is identified by the border police at Vioolsdrift to use the rubber dinghy to patrol the river under its jurisdiction, it has to be brought up from Alexander Bay at night to avoid alerting criminals in the area that the boat would be used at Vioolsdrift.<sup>30</sup>

At the Nakop border post, the border police found it difficult to obtain information on illegal crossings. This was attributed to a number of factors, such as:

- the lack of information exchange between the police and intelligence sources;
- the vast, flat, open terrain between the South African and Namibian border posts; and
- the lack of border patrols due to the shortage of personnel and vehicles.

Other illegal crossing areas identified in the Alexander Bay area are those at Sendelingsdrif, the Richtersveld National Park and the Grasdrift/Aussengehr areas.<sup>31</sup>

An uncontrolled crossing point of interest is the Grasdrift/Aussengehr area. On the Namibian side, development is under way for a new grape farm that would employ approximately 5 000 seasonal workers. This new development also includes a shopping centre with a liquor store. On the South African side, there is an existing diamond mine and nomadic sheep farmers. There is no doubt that miners and sheep farmers would most certainly cross into Namibia to make use of these new facilities.<sup>32</sup> The border police are aware that they have insufficient infrastructure and capacity to handle the potential problem of illegal crossings.

### **Personnel and resource shortages**

Similar to the rest of South Africa, the Northern Cape border police are understaffed and under-resourced. Compared to the rest of South Africa, however, the Northern Cape border control mechanisms are still functioning and do receive resources.

It is not surprising that the lack of personnel hampers the effective functioning of border control mechanisms. This merely reflects the personnel shortage in the SAPS as a whole. According to police officers interviewed, the Northern Cape is relatively well off in terms of resources and equipment when compared to other border units in South Africa. This was attributed to a strong SAPS provincial office that is responsible for the allocation of resources to border units. The Northern Cape SAPS provincial office appears determined to provide as much resources as possible from the different available police budgets.<sup>33</sup>

In the Northern Cape, it is not merely matter of increasing the number of staff, but also of improving the calibre of police officers. To strengthen the capacity of the Northern Cape border police, it requires an increase of only a few dedicated police officers who are willing to work in remote areas for long periods of time with limited resources and with somewhat unsuitable accommodation. It also requires specialised training in a range of search and seizure skills, as well as skills in working with informant and information-gathering.

Resources, such as computers, facsimile and x-ray machines are available in the Northern Cape in higher numbers than in some other parts of South Africa. However, training to operate the equipment is only available to a few select police officers. As a result, equipment is not used to its full potential.

The Northern Cape border police still lack proper and dedicated responses from other national police unit headquarters, such as the Central Firearm Register (CFR), Illegal Firearms Investigation Units, and others. In many cases, border posts require an immediate answer to an enquiry on a firearm's status. An example to illustrate the lack of communication between the border police and the CFR was a handgun confiscated by the Namibian police from a South African entering Namibia without declaring it to either the South Africans or the Namibians. The Namibian police requested their counterparts on the South African side of the border to provide information on the status of the ownership of the firearm and were willing to hand over the suspect with the firearm to the South Africans if all was not in order. The South African border police sent an urgent message to the CFR and asked for a reply within the hour as the Namibians could not hold the person indefinitely. The request was answered by the CFR one week later.<sup>34</sup>

The issue of specialised equipment to improve the effective patrolling of the Northern Cape border was extensively discussed. The main problems of patrolling were linked to the scale of the border and the difficulty experienced in patrolling the Northern Cape border by motor vehicle. Some of the suggestions involved the use of off-road motorbikes, micro-light planes and hovercrafts. Any equipment provided for the purpose of border patrolling needs to be evaluated in terms of the following:

- *Purchase price and maintenance cost*: The extremely long distance between the Northern Cape and urban centres where specialised mechanical skills are located needs to be taken into account in order to ensure that the equipment is sustainable.
- *Specialised training*: The training investment in police officers to use specialised equipment would be significant.
- *Reaction time*: The reaction time between reports of illegal crossings and identifying crossing points by the police is critical to prevent crossings from occurring.

- *Suitability to the geographic conditions and topography*: The ability and suitability of the equipment to overcome the obstacles of the vast open space, mountains and the lack of river access are crucial.

There is inadequate accommodation and living quarters for detached police officers doing border duties at all three border posts. As one border police officer remarked:

"I can motivate policemen to be positive and to give that little extra when working at the border post but how do I keep them motivated if their sleeping quarters are rotting and they have to eat cold food every night."<sup>35</sup>

The lack of accommodation was problematic. Residential complexes were badly run down and poorly maintained as a result of neglect over the years. One reason may be the lack of financial commitment by government for this purpose. In some cases, the available accommodation had also been allocated to local police officers as a result of the smaller numbers of detached border police using the facilities.<sup>36</sup> The same officer remarked that:

"The mere provision of additional police officers will not solve the problem, they must have suitable, clean living quarters with warm water and warm food. First get the accommodation in place before sending me more police officials."<sup>37</sup>

Given this largely negative critique of the infrastructure at the Northern Cape border posts, the physical infrastructure at the border posts had improved since 1994. At all three border posts there were proper working facilities such as sheltered structures with proper lighting for the inspection of vehicles and their cargo at night.

## **Corruption**

In sharp contrast to the KwaZulu-Natal case study, there was no mention of border police or local police involvement in corruption. This could be attributed to the fact that few interviews were conducted with people from the local communities in the areas. Corruption will always be an issue in border areas where there are financial rewards to be reaped.

## **Conclusion**

Overall, the Northern Cape border police are optimistic and working to the best of their ability, given their current resource and personnel constraints. In the past couple of years, the infrastructure at the border posts had increased, although it was still degraded. The living conditions of the border police and the lack of support from the NIA would enhance their effectiveness, as would prioritised support for requests sent to the CFR. The need for specialised training in search and seizure techniques, as well as the handling of informants was also identified.

## **Notes**

1. Refer to chapter 7 for more information on the KwaZulu-Natal/Mozambique case study.
2. Interview with Illegal Firearm Investigation officer in Pretoria, 6 June 2000.
3. J Potgieter, The price of war and peace: A critical assessment of the disarmament component of United Nations operations in Southern Africa, in V Gamba, *Governing Arms: The Southern African experience*, Institute for Security Studies, Pretoria, 2000.

4. Interviews with border police officers, 3-5 April 2000.
5. Interview with border police officer, 3 April 2000.
6. Interview with the SANAB member at Nakop border post.
7. Interview with Vioolsdrift border police head, 3-4 April 2000.
8. Interview with border police officers, 3 April 2000.
9. Interview with border police officers, 4 April 2000.
10. Interview with border police officers, 3-5 April 2000.
11. Interview with border police officer, Northern Cape, 4 April 2000.
12. Interview with border police officers, Northern Cape, 3-4 April 2000.
13. Interviews with border police officer, Northern Cape, 3-5 April 2000.
14. Interview with border police officers, Northern Cape, 3 April 2000.
15. Interview with NIA representative, NIDS Secretariat, 31 June 2000.
16. Interview with border police officer, Northern Cape, 3 April 2000.
17. Interview with border police officer, Northern Cape, 4 April 2000.
18. Interviews with border police officer, Northern Cape, 3-5 April 2000.
19. Interview with border police officers, Northern Cape, 3 April 2000.
20. Interview with border police officers, Nakop border post, 4 April 2000.
21. Interview with border police official in Northern Cape, 3 April 2000.
22. Interview with border police officer, 3-5 April 2000.
23. Interviews with border police officer, Northern Cape, 3-5 April 2000.
24. At the time of the research, the Illegal Firearm Investigation Units were still operational. These units were integrated into the Serious and Violent Crime Unit, Detective Services, early in 2001.
25. Interview with border police officer, Northern Cape, 3 April 2000.
26. Interview with border police officer, 4 April 2000.
27. Researchers taken out on SAPS boat to experience difficulty of river patrolling.

28. Interviews with border police officers, Northern Cape, 4 April 2000.
29. Interview with border police officer, Northern Cape, 4 April 2000.
30. Interviews with border police officers, Northern Cape, 4 April 2000.
31. Interviews with border police officers, Northern Cape, 4 April 2000.
32. Interview with border police officer, 4 April 2000.
33. Interviews with border police officer, Northern Cape, 3-5 April 2000.
34. Interview with border police officer, 3 April 2000.
35. Interview with border police officer, 3 April 2000.
36. ISS Researchers shown living quarters of border police, 3-5 April 2000.
37. Interview with border police officer, 3 April 2000.

## **Chapter 8**

### **A NEEDS ASSESSMENT ON BORDER CONTROL**

As an essential component of the national border control mechanism, members of the Border Control Police are specialists in border policing. With less than 1 000 police officers enlisted in the Land Border Police Units, their opinions are highly valued as sources of information on the nature, limitations and needs of border policing in South Africa. In order to canvass the opinions of the border police, a qualitative survey was designed and randomly distributed among border police officers. The self-administered quantitative surveys comprised two components, the border survey and the resource survey. In both surveys, the sample comprised mainly border police. However, the resource survey was targeted only at the most senior officers at each border post.

The *border survey* was used to obtain opinions about the following:

- allocation of time to various border policing issue areas (such as policing illegal immigrants, stolen vehicles, firearms, drugs and contraband, etc.);
- allocation of time to the various border police functions (such as administration, customs duties, information gathering, investigations, and more);
- identification of the main partnerships with other roleplayers (such as other specialised police units, agencies and government departments);
- assessment of the effectiveness of border control mechanisms;
- assessment of the significance attached to the policing of firearms; and
- recommendations for improved border policing.

The *resource survey* was administered among the most senior officers in charge at border posts. It was used for qualitative information against which the utility of the more extensive border survey could be gauged. The resource survey obtained opinions about the following:

- review of the border post’s resource needs (such as personnel, vehicles and communication systems); and
- assessment of the main priority areas and needs of units

It was vital to obtain the opinions of senior officers in charge as they have a better sense of the real or actual needs of the border post. It can be argued that detached officers — due to their short term of duty — do not fully appreciate the strategic needs of the border post. In most cases, the information obtained in the resource survey confirmed or supported the findings of the border survey.

### Sample

The maximum sample for the border survey was 1 100 respondents and 52 respondents for the resource survey. Although the Land Border Police Head Office distributed surveys to all national land border posts, only some border posts were able to return the questionnaires. In total, there were 110 completed border surveys and 20 resource surveys. This is a sufficient sample from which to draw valid conclusions. The 10% return on the border survey and 38% return on the resource survey were relatively good for self-administered questionnaires.

**Table 8: Sample size**

Survey	Number of returned surveys	Maximum number of respondents
Border survey	110	1 100
Resource survey	20	52

Table 9 outlines the number of border and resource surveys completed at each land border post. The instruction was given that each police officer at the border post should complete a border survey. One member of the internal tracing unit was therefore eligible to complete a survey form.

**Table 9: Border posts where surveys were completed**

Border posts	Number of border surveys	Number of resource surveys
Alexander Bay	5	1
Violsdrift	11	1
Onseepkans	1	1
Nakop	8	1
Gemsbok	3	1
Middelputs	2	1
McCarthy’s Rest	4	1



Skilpadsgate	1	1
Swartkopfontein	1	1
Lebombo	16	1
Mananga	6	1
Jeppes Reef	8	1
Oshoek	16	1
Waverly	1	1
Nerston	1	1
Emhalaltinhi	4	1
Bothashoop	3	1
Mahamba	11	1
Onverwacht	3	1
Kosi Bay	4	1
Internal Tracing		
Unit (N Cape)	1	Not applicable
<b>Total</b>	<b>110</b>	<b>20</b>

Overall, representatives from 20 of the 52 land border posts participated in the survey. Higher returns were received from certain provincial borderline areas. Most notably was a strong and prompt return from Mpumalanga, Northern Cape and the KwaZulu-Natal (bordering Mozambique) provincial landborders (see table 10).

**Table 10: Border posts where surveys were completed by province**

Province	Border post	Count
Northern Cape	Alexander Bay	5
	Violsdrift	11
	Onseepkans	1
	Nakop	8
	Gemsbok	3
	Middelputs	2
North-West	McCarthy's Rest	4
	Skilpadsgate	1
	Swartkopfontein	1
Mpumalanga	Lebombo	16
	Mananga	6
	Jeppes Reef	8
	Oshoek	16
	Waverly	1
	Nerston	1
	Emhalaltinhi	4
	Bothashoop	3
KwaZulu-Natal (border with Mozambique)	Mahamba	11
	Onverwacht	3
	Kosi Bay	4

The experience of border police officers was measured in terms of two variables: their overall



experience in the SAPS and their specific experience in the specialised border control units. Both variables are important to consider, as these will determine, among others, determine the extent of their ability to fulfil their responsibilities in terms of their level of border experience and expertise. On the whole, it was found that police officers in Land Border Control Units had long-standing careers in the police. It was found that 69.5% of the border police sample had been in service for more than 10 years, and 25.1% of the sample had been in the specialised border police for more than 10 years. The lower number of years' service in the border police, compared to the general police force, was attributed to the fact that a police officer first have to serve as an ordinary police officer before being able to join a specialised police unit (see table 11).

**Table 11: Experience of respondents in the police service**

	Years as a police officer		Years as a border police officer	
	Count	Percentage	Count	Percentage
> 5 years	3	2.8	59	54.6
5-9 years	30	27.8	22	20.4
10-14 years	41	38	18	16.7
15-19 years	16	14.8	7	6.5
20-24 years	11	10.2	2	1.9
25+ years	7	6.5	0	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>108</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>108</b>	<b>100</b>

It has to be borne in mind that some of the border police officers were on permanent duty, while others were on detached or temporary duty. When considering the length of time in the border police by type of appointment, it was found that detached police officers clearly had less experience in the border police (see table 12). All detached police officers were serving either a few days on or off, or a full two-month assignment, while permanent border police officers had been assigned for a variety of periods. In the survey, there was approximately one detached member for every four permanent members who answered the survey.

**Table 12: Experience of respondents in the police service by type of duty**

Period	Detached duty	Permanent duty
> 5 years	17	42
5-9 years	0	21
10-14 years	0	15
15-19 years	0	7
20-24 years	0	2
<b>Total</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>87</b>

### Allocation of time to border crime issue areas

To determine the crimes that the border police particularly focus on in real terms, respondents were asked to identify the proportion of their time allocated to the different crime issue areas. The control of people and vehicles was the top priorities, followed by drugs and firearms. This

confirms the qualitative findings of the border case studies in which it was found that illegal immigrants and stolen vehicles were the top priorities of the Border Police Units.

In terms of crime in South Africa, it would be desirable to see the border police distribute their time allocation more equitably across all crime issue areas. In attempting to understand the reason for the skewed distribution of time, two aspects are pertinent. Firstly, population movement procedures at border posts are better established as individuals have to have the correct documentation that is routinely checked as they are required to leave their vehicles and report at the border post office upon entry into and exit from South Africa. In addition, it is well recognised that people trying to enter South Africa illegally often use those places with fewer controls and less chance of interception, such as the areas between border posts.

**Table 13: Proportion of time spent on different crime areas**

Proportion of time	People	Vehicles	Drugs	Firearms	Consumable goods	Gold, diamonds, platinum
<b>Percentage</b>						
A lot of my time	72	69.1	64.1	63.4	55.3	43.3
Some of my time	16.8	17.8	14.2	18.3	28.2	21.2
Not much time	11.2	13.1	21.7	18.3	16.5	35.5
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>
	<i>n=107</i>	<i>n=107</i>	<i>n=106</i>	<i>n=104</i>	<i>n=103</i>	<i>n=104</i>

Secondly, people and vehicles are large and difficult to conceal, in comparison to smaller items such as drugs and firearms. Hence, less time and effort are allocated to search for smaller items such as drugs, illegal firearms, precious metals and diamonds. There are several reasons for this. Firstly, these goods are easier to hide because of their size. Secondly, these items are less often found due to the lack of specialised search techniques by the border police, as well as the lack of specialised equipment and time for undertaking searches. Thirdly, the returns, or gains, from searching for smaller items are lower as the multiple possible hiding places demotivate the border police from searching for these items. Furthermore, in those cases where specialised equipment is available, detached officers often do not know how to use it, while certain permanent members are sent on special training courses. This is ironic if the division of labour between detached and permanent border officials is taken into account. Detached members undertake the bulk of the searching, as this is usually manual work. Permanent members usually specialise in office tasks such as keeping the various population movement registers and checking documentation. Although the permanent police (81% - as indicated in the following section) spend a greater proportion of their time on searches than the detached police (70.6%), this does not always mean that they are undertaking the physical searches themselves. It needs to be added that this is not always the case. At some border posts, permanent border officials lead by example and undertake their fair share of physical searches. At these border posts, the morale is higher and arguably more effective searches occur. The style of management at the border post is a significant factor determining the motivation of all levels of border police officers, as well as the effectiveness of the border post in terms of seizures.

**Allocation of time to various border policing functions**

It was critical to understand the actual allocation of time to various border policing functions, such as searches, administration, customs duties, and others. This provides information on which to evaluate whether or not the police have the capacity to fulfil their policing responsibilities in terms of crossborder crime prevention. Clearly, the border police allocated the greatest proportion of their time to searches. It was found that 79% of the police spent ‘a lot’ of their time on searches. This mainly involves the searching of cars, trucks and their contents. Searching of trucks is often difficult as these are mostly heavily loaded, or carry containers that are sealed. In order to undertake thorough searches, it is both physically demanding and time-consuming. The necessary time is often not available due to a queue of other vehicles at the border post. Apart from time constraints, the border police have to consider other limitations. For example, in the Northern Cape, the border police are often sympathetic to fresh produce trucks. Drivers are reluctant to unpack their produce as it will spoil in the hot sun and the trucks are often on tight schedules to reach the market before the close of day. The specialised and sophisticated search facilities required for such searches are unavailable at most land border posts.

The second greatest proportion of time of the border police is spent on patrolling. This involves moving along the borderline searching for illegal crossing points and even the possibility of intercepting illegal crossings. However, the latter seldom occurs since the border police are visible from far off and smugglers often work at night. In addition, the border police have constraints such as a heavy workload in terms of administration and high traffic volumes at the border post, as well as a shortage of appropriate vehicles.

The third greatest proportion of time is spent on tracking or tracing people. This is mainly an administrative function undertaken from the police office at the border post. Each person wishing to cross in or out of South Africa is entered into the Department of Home Affairs’ Population Movement Register. In addition, random background checks are undertaken by the police.

**Table 14: Proportion of time spent on police functions by the border police**

	Searching	Patrolling	Tracking/ tracing people	Immigration duties	Adminis- tration	Custom duties	Intelligence/ information gathering	Investi- gations
<b>Percentage</b>								
A lot of my time	79	44.9	40.2	36.1	33	31.4	30.1	20.2
Some of my time	12.4	32.7	32.7	33.3	38.7	31.4	31.1	26.9
Not much time	8.6	22.4	27.1	30.6	28.3	37.2	38.8	52.9
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>
	<i>n=105</i>	<i>n=107</i>	<i>n=107</i>	<i>n=108</i>	<i>n=106</i>	<i>n=105</i>	<i>n=103</i>	<i>n=104</i>

Only 20.2% of the respondents spent ‘a lot’ of their time on investigations. It is debatable to what extent the border police are able and intended to undertake their own investigations, or to what extent they should pass on information to other specialised police units on crossborder crimes.

It was found that detached and permanent border police officers spent different proportions of their time on specific police functions. The detached and permanent border police allocated a similar proportion of time to searches, immigration duties, patrols and investigations. Permanent border police spent significantly more time than detached border police on administration, customs duties, tracking or tracing people, and intelligence or information gathering. A factor influencing the time allocated by the detached border police is the lack of expertise in the more complex administrative processes. The usual two-month duty of the detached police is too short to allow for their training in more than one or two key functions.

**Table 15: Proportion of time spent on police functions by border police by type of duty**

Functions	Time spent	Detached duty	Permanent duty
<b>Percentage</b>			
Searches	A lot of my time	70.6	81
	Some of my time	11.8	13.1
	Not much time	17.6	6
	Total	100	100
Patrols	A lot of my time	55.6	43.5
	Some of my time	27.8	34.1
	Not much time	16.7	22.4
	Total	100	100
Tracking/tracing people	A lot of my time	17.6	44.2
	Some of my time	41.2	31.4
	Not much time	41.2	24.4
	Total	100	100
Immigration duties	A lot of my time	29.4	36.8
	Some of my time	29.4	35.6
	Not much time	41.2	27.6
	Total	100	100
Administration	A lot of my time	11.1	39.3
	Some of my time	38.9	38.1
	Not much time	50	22.6
	Total	100	100
Customs duties	A lot of my time	11.8	35.7
	Some of my time	41.2	28.6
	Not much time	47.1	35.7
	Total	100	100
Intelligence/information gathering	A lot of my time	11.8	35.4
	Some of my time	11.8	32.9
	Not much time	76.5	31.7
	Total	100	100
Investigations	A lot of my time	17.6	21.7
	Some of my time	29.4	25.3
	Not much time	52.9	53
	Total	100	100
		<i>n=17</i>	<i>n=93</i>

When comparatively ranking the time allocated to various police functions by the detached and permanent border police, it is evident that the main priority for the detached police by a large margin were searches and patrols, followed by customs duties. The permanent police, on the other hand, had a more significant number of top priorities, such as searches, tracking or tracing people, patrols, as well as a range of specific administrative duties.

### Partnerships with other roleplayers

The frequency of contact between the border police and other roleplayers differs. It was found that comparatively more contact occurred between the border police and the immigration and customs department, than with the specialised police units focusing on stolen vehicle, narcotics and firearms (see table 16). Arguably, the immigration and customs functions undertaken by the border police are as important, as the deterrence and interception of crime. However, it was expected that the border police would have more frequent contact with other police specialised units than these other agencies.

**Table 16: Frequency of contact with various agencies, government departments and specialised police units**

Nature of contact	Immigration	Customs	SAPS Vehicle Theft Units	SAPS Head Office	SAPS Narcotics Units	SAPS Illegal Firearm Investigation Units	South African Secret Service	National Intelligence Agency	Scorpions Units
<b>Percentage</b>									
Close	67.9	58.8	58.3	32.4	24.1	20.2	11.3	10.4	5.8
Some-times	23.9	28.4	17.6	15.7	19.4	30.3	12.3	13.2	4.8
Distant	8.2	12.8	24.1	51.9	56.5	49.5	76.4	76.4	89.4
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>
	<i>n=109</i>	<i>n=109</i>	<i>n=108</i>	<i>n=108</i>	<i>n=109</i>	<i>n=109</i>	<i>n=106</i>	<i>n=106</i>	<i>n=104</i>

The frequent contact between the border police and immigration and customs officials is a result of being physically located at the same border posts. However, border police activities could be enhanced by the specialised training and knowledge gained from other specialised police units. There is concern that, in requiring the border police to undertake many of the immigration and customs functions, time is lost that could be used for searches of people in contravention of the law. Providing the border police with more time to fulfil their policing functions would only be effective for crime prevention if systems were put in place to ensure that the additional time could be used for more thorough searches.

### Assessment of the effectiveness of border control mechanisms

The aim of the survey was not to undertake an assessment of the effectiveness of border control mechanisms in South Africa. In order to do this, a completely different research methodology would have to be applied. However, the survey presented an opportunity to obtain the opinions of border police officers on whether they felt that the effectiveness of the South African border control mechanisms, compared to previous years, had increased, decreased or stayed the same. This provided a useful indication that there was no clear conviction that border policing had deteriorated (see table 17). Rather, if anything, there was a significant indication that the sample felt that border policing was functioning better than in previous years (37.6% felt border policing was 'better' and a further 5% felt it was 'very much better'). This is a finding that

provides great optimism for the future. It needs to be borne in mind that the result could be positively skewed, since it is often the more optimistic respondents who are motivated to participate in a self-administered survey.

**Table 17: The effectiveness of border control mechanisms in comparison to previous years**

	Count	Percentage
<b>Very much better</b>	5	5
<b>Better</b>	38	37.6
<b>The same</b>	28	27.7
<b>Worse</b>	27	26.7
<b>Very much worse</b>	3	3
<b>Total</b>	101	100

The cross-tabulation of the opinions of the border police by demographic information shows that the permanent border police were relatively more optimistic about border policing than the detached border police (see table 18).

**Table 18: Change in the level of effectiveness of border control mechanisms by type of duty**

Effectiveness	Type of border police member	
	Detached duty	Permanent duty
	Percentage	
Very much better	0	6.2
Better	25	38.3
The same	43.8	24.7
Worse	31.3	27.2
Very much worse	0	3.7
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>
	<i>n=16</i>	<i>n=81</i>

Furthermore, among the permanent border police, those with 15 or more years' experience in the border police had the most negative view of the effectiveness of border policing (see table 19).

**Table 19: Change in the level of effectiveness of border control mechanisms by years of service in permanent border police**

Effectiveness	Number of years as a permanent border police member			
	>5 years	5-9 years	10-14 years	15+ years
	Percentage			
<b>Very much better</b>	2.6	9.5	15.4	0

<b>Better</b>	<b>38.5</b>	<b>47.6</b>	<b>30.8</b>	<b>25</b>
<b>The same</b>	<b>25.6</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>23.1</b>	<b>37.5</b>
<b>Worse</b>	<b>30.8</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>23.1</b>	<b>37.5</b>
<b>Very much worse</b>	<b>2.6</b>	<b>4.8</b>	<b>7.7</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>
	<i>n=39</i>	<i>n=21</i>	<i>n=13</i>	<i>n=8</i>

### Assessment of the significance attached to policing of firearms

This survey was undertaken with two objectives in mind. The first was to provide information to Land Border Units to enhance their operational ability. The second was to determine the extent to which current border control mechanisms provide an obstacle to the illegal movement of firearms and to identify areas where policing action to capture illegal firearms can be enhanced.

In terms of legal firearms, it appears that most holders of licensed firearms declare them upon entry into South Africa, although this clearly varies (see table 20). For example, during the visit to the Northern Cape, border control officers expressed the feeling that many of the farmers merely hid their firearms when crossing the border between South Africa and Namibia for short periods of time.

**Table 20: Frequency with which people declare firearms upon entry into South Africa**

<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Count</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Always	49	45.4
Almost always	31	28.7
Sometimes	10	9.3
Seldom	7	6.5
Never	11	10.2
<b>Total</b>	<b>108</b>	<b>100</b>

However, the reliability of the finding that 28.7% of the people with firearms ‘almost always’ and 45.4% ‘always’ declare their firearms upon entry into South Africa is questionable, in the light of the finding that firearms are seldom uncovered during searches (see table 21). In addition, it is usually only licensed firearms that are intercepted during searches (see table 22). The border police survey indicated that people who do not declare firearms during searches are usually arrested (54.4%). However, there was little evidence at the border posts that this was the case (see table 23).

**Table 21: Frequency of firearms found when searching people at border posts**

<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Count</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Very often	5	4.6
Often	8	7.4
Sometimes	45	41.7
Hardly ever	24	22.2
Never	26	24.1
<b>Total</b>	<b>108</b>	<b>100</b>



**Table 22: License status of firearms uncovered**

Status	Count	Percentage
Licensed	95	91.3
Unlicensed	6	5.8
Do not know	3	2.9
<b>Total</b>	<b>104</b>	<b>100</b>

**Table 23: Action taken when a firearm is found during a search**

Action	Count	Percentage
Arrest	56	54.4
Confiscation of firearm	11	10.7
Fine	15	14.6
Other	21	20.4
<b>Total</b>	<b>103</b>	<b>100</b>

The border police were of the opinion that the level of control over the flow of firearms across South Africa's borders is significantly better than in other Southern African countries. Overall, 20.4% felt that South African border controls were 'very much better' and 35.2% felt they were 'better'. Yet, the effectiveness of the current control mechanisms were seen to be average, with only slightly more respondents feeling that border controls were very effective (12.1%) or effective (23.4%) as opposed to very ineffective (3.7%) and ineffective (23.4%) (see table 25).

**Table 24: The level of control over the flow of firearms across South Africa's borders in comparison to other Southern African countries**

Level of control	Count	Percentage
Very much better	22	20.4
Better	38	35.2
Same	20	18.5
Worse	25	23.1
Very much worse	3	2.8
<b>Total</b>	<b>108</b>	<b>100</b>

**Table 25: Effectiveness of the current control mechanisms at stopping the flow of illegal weapons across borders**

Level of effectiveness	Count	Percentage
Very effective	13	12.1
Effective	25	23.4
Average	40	37.4
Ineffective	25	23.4
Very ineffective	4	3.7
<b>Total</b>	<b>107</b>	<b>100</b>

Confirming many suspicions, it is relatively easy to smuggle firearms across the South African land borders. It was found that 32.7% of border police respondents felt that it was 'very easy'

and 14.4% felt that it was 'easy' to smuggle firearms across borders (see table 26). Understanding the reasons why it is relatively easy to smuggle firearms across the South African border was one of the motivations for the Arms Management Programme undertaking the survey. The more obvious reason would be the absence of regular patrols along the borderline between border posts. The survey alluded to some other reasons such as the need to enhance current methods of undertaking searches and the partnership between the border police and other specialised police units, as well as providing training and incentives for border police. These suggestions for improving border policing are explored in more rigorous detail below.

**Table 26: Ease with which firearms are smuggled across land borders**

Degree	Count	Percentage
Very easy	34	32.7
Easy	15	14.4
Average	19	18.3
Difficult	25	24
Very difficult	11	10.6
<b>Total</b>	<b>104</b>	<b>100</b>

### Suggestions for improving border policing

A range of items were identified that could improve border policing, such as more resources, better search methods, training and incentives, enhanced partnerships, and replacing and monitoring existing staff (see table 27). These five categories were informed by the responses provided in the survey and represent a cluster, or category of similar responses. Respondents were able to identify as many suggestions as they thought appropriate. On average, each respondent gave approximately two answers per question, but some respondents gave as many as four suggestions.

**Table 27: Suggestions for improved border policing**

Suggestion	Detached duty	Permanent duty	Total
<b>Percentage</b>			
More resources	63.6	50	51.8
Better search methods	12.1	19.3	17.8
Training and incentives	15.2	15.3	16.8
Partnerships	9.1	14	12.6
Replace and monitor	0	1.3	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>
	<i>n=33</i>	<i>n=150</i>	<i>n=191</i>

The most popular suggestion for improved border policing was to allocate more resources to border posts (51.8%). More resources include items such as more staff (60.6% of respondents

who identified 'more resources'), better infrastructure (33.3%), and easier access to appropriate transport (6.1%) (see table 28).

**Table 28: Suggestions for improved border policing through the provision of more resources**

Suggestion	Count	Percentage
Staff	60	60.6
Infrastructure	33	33.3
Transport	6	6.1
<b>Total</b>	<b>99</b>	<b>100</b>

The second top suggestion for improved border policing was the need for better search methods. Approximately one-third of respondents supported the second suggestion. Overall, 17.8% of the recommendations for improved border policing involved ways to improve the outcome of each search. Considering only those responses under the 'better search methods' category, it was found that 47.1% of the suggestions were for increased patrols along the borderline, 35.3% for more advanced equipment for searches and 14.7% were for the use of better search methods. A recurring problem seems to be the inadequacy of the current search methods (see table 29). With the relatively small sample base (a count of 34 responses), more research is required into the nature of the inadequacy of the current search methods. This should particularly focus on the extent to which current search methods are influenced by the lack of skills, specialised equipment, time, motivation and appropriate search facilities.

**Table 29: Suggestions for improved border policing through the use of better search methods**

Search method	Count	Percentage
Patrol along the border line	16	47.1
More advanced equipment for searches	12	35.3
Use better search methods	5	14.7
Improve control over the flows of people and vehicles	1	2.9
<b>Total</b>	<b>34</b>	<b>100</b>

The third suggestion for improved border policing was to provide better training and incentives. Of the suggestions for improved border policing 16.8% involved better training and incentives (see table 30).

**Table 30: Suggestions for improved border policing through training and incentives**

Suggestion	Count	Percentage
Better training	14	43.8
Improved staff morale	8	25
Improved salaries of staff	5	15.6
Implementing permanent/long-term appointments	2	6.3
Better recruitment practices	1	3.1

Better accommodation	1	3.1
Improved working conditions	1	3.1
<b>Total</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>100</b>

Another suggestion for improved border policing was to enhance existing partnerships with other agencies, government departments and specialised police units. It was found that 12.9% of the responses indicated that partnerships with the various other agencies, government departments and specialised units should be changed in some manner to enhance their effectiveness (see table 31).

**Table 31: Suggestions for improved border policing through enhanced partnerships**

Suggestion	Count	Percentage
More dog handlers stationed at border posts	6	25
Work better with other government departments at border posts	7	29.2
Deploy the SANDF along the borderline	4	16.6
Increase the number of customs officials	1	4.2
Make better use of informants and information from the community	6	25
<b>Total</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>100</b>

Only the permanent border police raised the issue of 'replace and monitor'. This involved suggestions such as rotating staff to improve experience and reduce corruption.

### Main obstacles facing the border police

The final section of the border survey aimed to define what the main obstacle was that affect the border police's ability to undertake their responsibilities as members of a Border Police Unit. Detached members were slightly more affected by 'bread-and-butter' issues concerning accommodation, lack of after-hours entertainment, as well as the need for more training and incentives. While these were also of concern to permanent members, they felt that better search methods were also a major obstacle (see table 32).

**Table 32: Main obstacles facing border police by type of duty**

Obstacle	Detached duty	Permanent duty	Total
	<b>Percentage</b>		
Resources	61.5	53.9	55.3
Training and incentives	26.9	17.4	18.6
Better search methods	7.7	16.5	14.7
Partnerships	0	9.6	8.7
Replace and monitor	3.8	2.6	2.7

<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>
	<i>n=26</i>	<i>n=115</i>	<i>n=150</i>

Similar to the main suggestion for improved border policing, the main obstacle was the lack of resources. It was found that 55.3% of the respondents indicated that the main obstacle to their work as border control officers were the lack of resources. Both detached and permanent border police ranked this as their top priority. The main resource was identified by a long margin as the lack of personnel (see table 33).

**Table 33: Main obstacles to border police identified under ‘more resources’**

<b>Resources</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Lack of personnel	62.7
Poor transport	13.3
Poor quality of infrastructure	8.4
Availability of infrastructure and buildings	8.4
Poor radio communication	3.6
Lack of financial resources	2.4
	1.2
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>
	<i>n=83</i>

Overall, 18.6% of the border police felt there was a need for more training and incentives. More detached police (26.9%) than permanent border police (17.4%) were of this opinion (see table 34).

**Table 34: Main obstacles to border police identified under ‘training and incentives’**

<b>Training and incentives</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Lack of motivated/inefficient staff	25
Increased length of stay of detached members	25
Training	14.3
Absence of benefits/staff poorly paid	10.7
Poor working conditions at border post	10.7
No permanent staff posted to borders/staff often transferred	7.1
Lack of procedures on arrests	7.1
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>
	<i>n=28</i>

In response to the question, what the main obstacles are for the border police, 14.7% of respondents indicated the need for better search methods (see table 35).

**Table 35: Main obstacles to border police identified under ‘better search methods’**

<b>Search methods</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
-----------------------	-------------------

No x-ray machines	4.5
Poor patrolling methods	13.6
Irregular border patrols	18.2
Absence of control beyond border points	22.7
"Poor quality, lack of searching machines"	40.9
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>
	<i>n=22</i>

It was found that 8.7% of the sample, comprising only permanent border police, felt that action had to be taken to enhance the existing partnerships with other agencies, specialised units or government departments (see table 36).

**Table 36: Main obstacles to border police identified under ‘partnerships’**

<b>Partnerships</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Lack of co-operation from the public	1
Lack of information	1
Poor relationships with community and neighbours	1
Lack of co-operation from other units	10
<b>Total</b>	<b>13</b>

Finally, four responses were given about the need for better management of the border police at border posts, as well as strategies to address corruption (see table 37). It is interesting that so few of the responses spoke of corruption, which is often thought to be a significant problem at national land borders. However, the fact that this was a voluntary self-administered survey meant that it would most probably not canvass these types of responses.

**Table 37: Main obstacles to border police identified under ‘replace and monitor’**

<b>Replace and monitor</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Poor management	1
Lack of discipline	1
Corrupt staff members	2
<b>Total</b>	<b>4</b>

### **Findings of the resource survey**

The analysis of the results of the border survey clearly assisted in defining and understanding the issue of the problems facing border police. In order to assess the findings of the survey rigorously, these need to be refereed by what the most senior officers in charge at border posts felt were the pitfalls and limitations of border policing.

The nineteen border posts that completed the resource survey were asked to provide information profiling the minimum information about their personnel deployed at the border

posts, such as the number of police staff, administrative staff and staff vacancies (see table 38). The high proportion of vacancies indicates that the recurring concern expressed about obtaining more personnel was an actual need. On average, there were eight police staff, two administrative staff and 13 staff vacancies. These averages are based on the assumption that all needs are equal at the land border posts in South Africa, although this is not the case. Various border posts are differentiated by, among others, the flow of people and vehicles, the value of imports and exports, and the geographic or strategic importance of the post. These factors influence the personnel needs at the various border posts. Further research should be undertaken to increase the value of the exercise by obtaining information across all 52 land border posts, as opposed to a sample of 20 border posts, differentiated by Grade A, B and C designated border posts.

**Table 38: Review of the personnel resources at a selection of border posts**

<b>Post</b>	<b>Number of police staff</b>	<b>Number of administrative staff</b>	<b>Number of police staff vacancies</b>
Alexander Bay	7	1	Unknown
Bothashoop	3	2	8
Emhalatinhi	4	1	12
Gemsbok	No information	No information	Unknown
Jeppes Reef	9	1	5
Kosi Bay	2	0	13
Lebombo	19	4	35
Mahamba	12	1	23
Mananga	8	1	13
McCarthy's Rest	4	1	2
Middelputs	2	1	2
Nakop	15	2	Unknown
Nerston	4	2	2
Onseepkans	1	No information	Unknown
Onverwacht	6	1	Unknown
Oshoek	19	4	21
Skilpadgate	15	4	5
Swartkopfontein	6	No information	Unknown
Violsdrift	12	2	27
Waverley	4	1	3
<b>Average</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>1.8</b>	<b>13.2</b>

Some border posts have sufficient transportation to patrol the distance of land border under their jurisdiction, while others are largely underresourced. It was found that Alexander Bay, Middelputs and Mahamba had the longest distance to cover with each of their vehicles. Without taking the grading of the border posts and the topography into account, among others, it is difficult to assess what the vehicle-to-distance ratio implies for the research. It provides a useful tool for monitoring progress within the border police, and the information provides a baseline against which future data of this kind can be compared. With the relatively small sample base and the qualitative tendencies of the resource survey, it highlights the need for more research to evaluate the objective needs of the various border posts in terms of transportation.



**Table 39: Review of transport resources at a selection of border posts**

<b>Post</b>	<b>Distance of land border jurisdiction (km)</b>	<b>Number of motor vehicles/ motorbikes</b>	<b>Average distance for each vehicle (vehicles/km)</b>
Alexander Bay	157	2	79
Middelputs	150	2	75
Mahamba	200	3	67
Lebombo	270	5	54
Jeppes Reef	100	2	50
Nakop	200	4	50
Violsdrift	150	3	50
Gemsbok	125	3	42
Waverley	35	1	35
Kosi Bay	100	3	33
Emhalatinhi	30	1	30
McCarthy's Rest	60	2	30
Onverwacht	50	2	25
Bothashoop	60	3	20
Skilpadgate	20	1	20
Swartkopfontein	20	1	20
Mananga	35	2	18
Oshoek	70	4	18

While undertaking the background research for this border project, the issue of the adequacy of the communication system was questioned. The research team was under the impression that it was grossly inadequate. However, 15 of the 19 senior officers in charge reported that their communications systems were adequate (see table 40). More research needs to be undertaken to understand this contradiction in findings.

**Table 40: Review of communications systems at a selection of border posts**

<b>Post</b>	<b>Adequate communications system – yes/no</b>
Bothashoop	Yes
Emhalatinhi	Yes
Gemsbok	Yes
Jeppes Reef	Yes
Mananga	Yes
McCarthy's Rest	Yes
Middelputs	Yes
Nakop	Yes
Nerston	Yes
Onseepkans	Yes

Oshoek	Yes
Skilpadgate	Yes
Swartkopfontein	Yes
Violsdrift	Yes
Waverley	Yes
Alexander Bay	No
Kosi Bay	No
Lebombo	No
Onverwacht	No
Mahamba	Difficult to say

The resource survey should be considered as an expert survey. Although the number of responses is not large enough to calculate valid percentages, the rank order of the various responses is significant and clearly determines the degree of importance attached to the response.

The top border police priorities (identified in the resource survey), when compared with those identified in the border survey under the 'allocation of time to various border policing issues areas', supported the findings on all aspects except on the absence of the prioritisation given to drugs. The responses in the border survey highlighted that the majority of time was allocated to patrolling people and vehicles, followed jointly by drugs and firearms, while these top border police priorities made no specific mention of drugs.

**Table 41: Top border police priorities**

Priority	Count
Illegal movement of stolen goods	11
Illegal movement of persons/illegal immigrants	9
Prevention/detection of crossborder crime	7
Illegal movement of firearms	4
Illegal movements of goods/contraband	3
Crime prevention	2
Illegal movement of stolen vehicles	2
Illegal movement of protected wildlife/animals parts	1
Patrolling the border fence/border patrols	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>40</b>

The main needs of the Border Police Units reinforced the ideas raised in the border survey, especially in terms of the need for more personnel, equipment, infrastructure and vehicles (see table 42).

**Table 42: Main needs of Border Police Units**

Need	Count
Personnel	15
Improved equipment and infrastructure	5
Vehicles	4

Metal detectors	2
Motivation	2
Electricity	1
Search facilities	1
Sniffer dogs	1
X-ray machines	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>32</b>

It is interesting that the main place where firearms cross is the borderline and not the border post (see table 43). This means that, in order to curb the proliferation of firearms in South Africa, as well as in the subregion, the effective patrolling of the country's borderline should be addressed. The responsibility for patrolling the national borderline is delegated to the SANDF. Visits to the borders and interviews with senior border police indicate that this is currently not occurring adequately given the lack of operational co-ordination among the agencies, government departments and specialised border units involved in aspects of national border management. In addition, the SANDF has serious budget constraints, which hamper its ability to deploy sufficient personnel along the borderline.

**Table 43: Main methods of smuggling firearms**

<b>Smuggling methods</b>	<b>Count</b>
Entry through border fences/informal crossing points	8
"Cars (such as in petrol tanks, door panels)"	4
On person	1
By use of false documentation	1
Cargo trucks/in crates	1
Do not declare firearms	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>16</b>

The solutions to the problem of firearms crossing national land borders are integrally wound up in those for improving the effectiveness and capacity of the Land Border Police Units (see table 44).

**Table 44: Solutions to firearm-smuggling**

<b>Solutions</b>	<b>Count</b>
<b>Deploy more personnel</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>More technical resources for searching</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Deploy more dog units</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Patrol border fences and main roads</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Make use of informants</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Better searching of people and vehicles</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>18</b>

## Conclusion

The aim of the survey was to gather information on the activities the Border Control Units spent their time on. It was found that border police spent more time on certain issue areas, such as illegal immigrants and stolen vehicles, while relatively less time was spent on searches for firearms and drugs. Relatively more time was spent on undertaking searches than on any other border police function, including investigations, information-gathering, customs duties and administration. With the information on time allocation, border police officers will be better able to align the actual time allocation with the desired time allocation. For instance, it may be better to increase the current time allocated to information-gathering and investigations to generate better profiling to inform the selection of who is searched.

National land border management is premised on the idea of working partnerships. For example, at lower grade borders, the border police undertake customs functions based on a partnership, or the border police rely on the dog units for searches. Although these working relationships between the border police and other agencies, government departments and other police units are formal and regulated by instructions, both in the national legislated framework and through institutional co-operation agreements, they do not necessarily operate at maximum efficiency. From qualitative interviews, it was found that the partnerships which work (function near to operative maximum efficiency), among others, relied on the goodwill of the individuals involved. The data presented in this report shows that the enhancement of these partnerships is necessary to improve border policing. It was found that 12.6% (third highest recommendation) of the respondents identified the enhancement of these partnerships as critical, while 8.7% of respondents identified these same partnerships as the main obstacle to border policing.

Similar to the time allocation, the survey determined the relative frequency of interaction between the border police and other agencies, government departments and police units. This was measured by the 'frequency of contact'. This frequency does not necessarily mean that the border police and the various agencies, government departments and police units have a good relationship, but it does imply that there is some working understanding. It is a well-established fact that frequent contact allows the opportunity for fostering a working understanding. It was found that the border police had the highest level of contact with immigration (Department of Home Affairs), followed in joint second place with customs (SARS) and the SAPS Vehicle Theft Unit. There are a number of police units that could be expected to have a higher frequency of contact with the border police, such as the Illegal Firearms Investigation Unit and the Narcotics Units, as well as the National Intelligence Agency. It would be preferable to see the contact between these agencies and the border police improving. More specifically, in visits to border posts, it was found that the border police lacked and identified the need for many of the specialised skills involved in searching for both firearms and drugs. In addition, the border police need operational intelligence to guide their search actions in order to increase their chances of success.

Searching was the one police function that used the greatest proportion of the border police's time. However, this was one of the suggestions for improved border policing by 17.8% of the respondents, and identified by 14.7% as a current obstacle to border policing. In the survey, the border police felt they lacked both the skill and equipment to undertake effective searches and, as previously identified, access to intelligence-driven information that would more effectively guide the identification of people and vehicles to be searched. The latter point is particularly pertinent in light of the fact that significant numbers of border control officers are on detached duty. Thus, they are unable to spend long periods of time at border posts to develop their own sense of those people and vehicles that should be searched.

## Chapter 9

### CONCLUSION

Through this research done by the FIRE project of the Arms Management Programme at the Institute for Security Studies, two case studies were undertaken to establish how effective border control mechanisms are in combating the illegal flow of firearms across South African borders. The conclusion can be drawn that the goals set out by the South African government in its quest to address poor border controls are still far from being reached.

Although no figures are available and an estimate cannot be made of the number of firearms crossing illegally into South Africa, the belief is that firearms and other illegal goods are flowing across the country's borders without being controlled effectively or in a way that would be acceptable to the South African public. It is believed that South Africa's international land borders are not in a healthy state and not controlled at a desirable level of effectiveness.

From all accounts, the permeability of South Africa's natural borders is excessive. The assessment of South Africa's land borders has shown that there is very little control over the flow of firearms, people and goods across borders. Even at border posts, there is insufficient capacity to undertake proper searches. Preventing the free flow of firearms is not a priority of the SAPS border police stationed at border posts, although the SAPS indicated that fighting firearm crimes has been the number one police priority for the last few years.

The problems on South Africa's international land borders do not solely fall into the domain of the border police or of the other government involved at border posts. It is the result of a combination of factors as identified below.

#### **Problem areas**

Problem areas identified by the research in the two case studies and supported by the two opinion surveys include the following issues.

- resources
- facilities
- training
- corruption
- communication
- illegal crossings.

#### *Resources*

- *Human resources*: Border posts are at least 50% understaffed.
- *Vehicles*: Lack of available and suitable vehicles at border posts like 4x4 trucks and motor cycles (four wheelers).
- *Boats*: Boats are shared between border posts, removing resources from one border post at a time when they may be needed more.
- *Communication*: At some border posts, there is no communication between the SAPS and the SANDF on the ground. Sharing crime intelligence between the agencies involved does not occur.

- *Electricity*: The frequent failure of electricity supplies at some border posts allows for stolen vehicles to pass through as the computer system cannot work during power failures. Power surges and failures also result in damage to computer equipment.
- *Search equipment*: Lack of search equipment like mirrors, x-ray machines.
- *Office equipment*: Lack of facsimile machines, computers, filing cabinets.
- *Specialised equipment*: Night vision and surveillance equipment.
- *Tracing units*: Specialised units as part of border policing are needed to trace illegal goods and contraband already inside the country, and to investigate crossborder crimes to improve the conviction rate of these criminals.

### *Facilities*

- *Search facilities*: Some border posts lack properly fenced and controlled searching facilities for vehicles and people.
- *Storage facilities*: Border posts generally lack proper and controlled storage facilities for confiscated goods.
- *Holding cells*: There is a lack of proper and decent holding cells for arrested suspects.
- *Interview facilities*: There is a lack of proper and private interview facilities at some border posts.
- *Office space*: Some border posts lack proper and decent office space for administrative functions, storing or housing of computers.
- *Accommodation*: Some border posts lack proper, clean and decent accommodation for personnel. Some border posts do have the necessary accommodation for detached personnel, but it is in a poor and run-down condition. Permanent officers often have to live away from the border post while accommodation at the border post is taken up by police officers with no connection to the border post itself.

### *Training*

- The need was identified for ongoing training of border personnel. Particular training needs were the recruitment and handling of informants, search techniques, observation and information-gathering techniques, and the understanding and interpretation of crime trends and statistics.
- The use of specialised equipment at border posts by all personnel should be possible.
- Computer skills and access to all functions available on the police computer network by all personnel would make the testing of vehicles, firearms and other property easier.
- Training is needed for other departments involved at borders on crossborder crimes other than those that are a priority to them, especially for SANDF personnel patrolling the



borderlines.

### *Corruption*

- Urgent and ongoing attention must be given to corruption at border posts. All government and private personnel should be of the highest possible calibre. One way of addressing the problem is the creation of an internal anti-corruption unit within the border police structure.

### *Communication*

- There is a lack of co-ordinated communication at border posts on ground level between the different departments involved, especially between the SAPS and the SANDF. This results in distrust and cross-accusations of corruption especially on ground level and at the lower ranks.
- There is a big gap in communication between the border police and local communities. Better interaction between them will result in better information on illegal crossborder activities, and trust and understanding in the work of the border police.
- There is still a communication gap between the different police services and government departments of the countries stationed at different sides of the border posts or borderlines. It is clear that some interaction is taking place at the border posts, but once away from the actual border post, officers from the different countries do not communicate with one another, but are suspicious of actions taken on the other side of the borderline.

### *Illegal crossings*

- There are too many known informal or illegal crossings that are uncontrolled or not properly monitored.
- Existing laws and regulations concerning special permits for students (school children) and families living on opposite sides of borderlines are not enforced.
- It was also found that border control operations by the police and defence force tend to focus on the more obvious problems of illegal immigrants, stolen vehicles and drugs. Firearms and other crimes like smuggling endangered species products are not considered to be priority crimes. In the nine national operations held by the border police, three concentrated on vehicles, one on stock theft and the illegal smuggling of cannabis, one on identifying flashpoints in four provinces, one on the illegal movement of people and goods at sea borders, one on crime prevention duties on short notice at all border posts, one on the illegal smuggling of marine resources and one on the illegal movement of people and goods at airports. Most of these operations are ongoing but not one focused on the illegal movement of firearms across South Africa's borders. Of the three international operations held in conjunction with neighbouring countries, one focused on drugs and stolen vehicles, one on the illegal smuggling of precious stones and gold and the last one on vehicles. Again, there was no focus on the illegal movement of firearms in the Southern African region.
- Patrols along the border - between border posts - are irregular, of low intensity and under-resourced. The existing mechanisms provide inadequate opposition to the free movement

of people, goods and firearms.

- One of the biggest problems identified by most of the roleplayers interviewed and with whom the border control issue was discussed was the lack of sharing of intelligence on crossborder crimes among roleplayers. This was considered by all respondents as an issue that needs urgent attention. Not sharing crime intelligence on syndicates or organised crime groups among the different law enforcement agencies seems to be a disease plaguing the whole law enforcement environment. This seriously hampers the successful prosecution of members of these criminal organisations.

## **Case studies**

During the research and the field trips, it was found that there was almost no control over the movement of people and goods across the Swaziland/Mozambique/South African border ([chapter 6](#)), while the Namibia/South African border ([chapter 7](#)) had better controls, even though in specific geographic concentrations. Although more case studies would have been valuable, the information collected from the assessment survey ([chapter 8](#)) confirmed that a combination of the factors raised in both case studies was prevalent along all South African land borders.

## **The future**

This ISS project has not been the only to identify problems concerning the mechanisms in place to control crossborder crime. The studies by Business Against Crime and the UNODCCP office, as well as several other research papers identified the same problems of no resources, lack of communication between agencies and countries, and corruption at border posts and on borderlines. The involvement of private sector concerns like UNICODE in border policing is a positive sign. This needs to be encouraged and has to involve more than just the detection of stolen vehicles. It should also include the detection of stolen household goods and stolen firearms.

The South African border police has also identified these problems and are in the process of addressing them. They are unfortunately not always supported in their efforts to address border-related crimes. When a crime occurs, such as the illegal smuggling of drugs, vehicles or firearms across the international border into South Africa, the SAPS is mandated to investigate, gather information and arrest the criminals involved. The border police have the expertise in these fields to do a proper job. It would be a costly exercise and mistake to replace the border police with a variety of units in the different departments to fight crossborder crime. The different efforts should rather be concentrated and the results will speak for themselves.

Because of the personnel shortage in the SAPS, the regular recruitment of personnel for detached duties could not be carried out for the past few years. When police officers voluntarily sign up for detached duties, it is often to escape from their normal day-to-day tasks and not necessarily to become seriously involved in fighting crossborder crimes. It would be difficult to find police officers from specialised investigation units for detached duties. When they are found at border posts, it would be in positions related to their own unit's functions. It was only at the Nakop border post where specialised detectives were found doing border duties for short periods at a time. This is an option that needs to be explored and put to the test to see how effective such specialised knowledge of specific crimes can assist other police officers to become more effective on the international borders of South Africa.

What is a positive sign for the future is that the SAPS and the SANDF, in collaboration with other

government departments, are aware of these problems. A concentrated effort is under way to address these problems with the limited available resources.

Efforts by the SAPS include a new voluntary recruitment drive by the border police to recruit 138 existing police officers to do six-month voluntary border duties at an identified problem or hotspot area. This recruitment drive includes interviews with all applicants and possibly polygraph tests before being accepted. Once accepted, they will receive an extra allowance for the six-month period. Apparently, the number of applications were more than double the number of recruits required. This indicates that there are still motivated police officers in the SAPS, willing to address the problem of border crimes. There were even detectives who applied for these positions, who can clearly assist border police to acquire skills to gather information, investigate and understand what the available information reveals about crimes at border posts. This process will be evaluated to see where improvements need to be made, and to see if it has the desired effect of decreasing border crimes in identified areas.

The SANDF has acknowledged that it is mainly concentrating on illegal immigrants crossing the South African borderlines. It has admitted that this is not the only crime occurring across borders and that they need to understand all types of crossborder crimes. This will be very difficult, however, if reports are considered in the media on the status of the SANDF and its capability to keep its deterrent factor on the borders. The report in the *Mail & Guardian* of 6 October 2000 stated: "The SA Army cannot maintain its deterrent capabilities at an acceptable level and at the same time deploy the number of companies and platoons required for border control and support the SAPS." If this is the true state of affairs, it will place an even bigger burden on the SAPS border police, which are already understaffed and lack the proper resources to fight crimes on the borders.

The UNODCCP is also involved in continuing its programme to assist border posts in South Africa, Swaziland and Mozambique with capacity-building, training and the provision of resources.

A new initiative by the United States is also in place. It is co-ordinated by the Embassy in Pretoria and aims to assist identified border posts in the Southern African Development community with capacity-building, upgrading and training border police officers.

With these new initiatives under way, some supported by international agencies, the improvement of existing border control mechanisms to address crossborder arms-smuggling seems to get more attention than in the past. But whether this new approach and the different initiatives will assist in stemming the flow of illegal firearms into South Africa from the Southern African region will have to be seen. Further research needs to be done, including on airports and seaports and involving all roleplayers concerned with combating crimes that extend across South Africa's international borders.