



POLICY BRIEF

South Africa's thin blue line The budget challenge facing the SAPS

Lizette Lancaster, Romi Sigsworth and David Bruce

Resourcing for the South African Police Service remained relatively constant in real terms between 2011/12 and 2024/25. Yet personnel numbers declined while major forms of serious crime increased, although recent statistics show some improvement. More effective ways to optimise the SAPS' limited resources need to be considered. Current approaches to strengthening SAPS lack clarity and focus. Emphasis should be placed on a targeted set of measures to enhance the senior leadership system and other key capabilities.

Key findings

- ▶ In inflation-adjusted real terms, the South African Police Service (SAPS) budget remained largely unchanged between 2012 and 2025.
- ▶ Police salaries increased faster than both inflation and the SAPS budget over this period, limiting the number of personnel the SAPS could fund.
- ▶ The number of SAPS employees per capita of the South African population fell from 381 to 301 per 100 000 people, a 19% decrease.
- ▶ The share of the SAPS budget spent on employee wages and benefits rose from 75% in 2011/12 to 80% in 2024/25, potentially reducing funding for equipment.
- ▶ The SAPS allocates new recruits to its programmes in a fairly standardised way, although recruitment between 2023 and 2025 expanded the Visible Policing programme.
- ▶ While the number of SAPS members declined, murders increased. Police officers per murder fell from 13 to eight between 2011/12 and 2024/25.
- ▶ In current fiscal conditions, SAPS personnel numbers are unlikely to grow significantly.
- ▶ This raises the question of whether and how SAPS effectiveness can be improved within these financial constraints.

Recommendations

- ▶ Strategies to strengthen policing and reduce crime and violence in South Africa should focus on strengthening the SAPS without increasing personnel numbers.
- ▶ Emphasis should be on effectively implementing targeted measures that can improve the quality and impact of the SAPS.
- ▶ To ensure uniformed personnel are optimally deployed, the SAPS should plan and deliver visible policing as a service, using integrated crime and operational data to target where and when it is most needed.
- ▶ Attention should be given to how community, business, local and provincial government capabilities outside the SAPS can complement its work.
- ▶ The Minister of Police and SAPS leadership should agree on a set of focused strategic measures and establish a clear framework for their sustained implementation, monitoring and adaptation.
- ▶ Steps should be taken to support the use of evidence-based policing methods. This should include improving SAPS provincial, district and station leadership access to and understanding of crime data and its use to enhance police crime prevention impact.
- ▶ SAPS leadership should strengthen its crime-prioritisation and prevention approach, to improve its impact on the most harmful crimes, including gender-based violence and firearm violence.

Introduction

Policing is a central focus of public attention in South Africa. In 2025, two public inquiries focused on police corruption and the links between senior police officers and associates allegedly linked to organised crime.¹ At the same time, violent crime in the country remains high. Trust in the police is strained, with the Human Sciences Research Council recording the lowest levels in 27 years, at 22% between 2022 and 2025.²

The South African Police Service (SAPS) has repeatedly stated that it is struggling with resource constraints, which negatively affect the quality of policing.³ The budget allocated to the SAPS remained relatively stable in real terms between 2011/12 and 2024/25. However, the declining number of SAPS personnel per capita has reduced the availability of police services. Police performance has fallen during this period, most notably with a 67% decrease in murder detection rates.⁴

Policing should be measured by the appropriateness and quality of its responses to crime

This policy brief seeks to understand how to optimise the resources allocated to the SAPS. Using data from 2011/12 to 2024/25, it examines the relationship between police resourcing and crime, SAPS budget allocation and resource trends across selected crime types. It concludes by discussing how the SAPS can improve organisational performance, efficacy and efficiency to optimise its budget and resources.

Relationship between police resourcing and crime

An ongoing debate in criminology and police studies centres on whether and to what extent policing influences crime rates and which types of policing are most effective.

Crime levels are overwhelmingly driven by factors outside police control, such as demographic variables, socio-economic factors and social norms. These include changes in population age structure, especially the number of young men, levels of unemployment,

poverty, exceptionally high levels of inequality, prevailing attitudes towards women and the use of violence to resolve disputes.

This view holds that policing has a marginal impact on crime levels. Instead, policing should be measured by the appropriateness and quality of its responses to crime, including efforts to enforce the law, deter crime, apprehend perpetrators and treat communities and victims professionally.

These responses can involve any combination of policing activities, including:

- Receiving reports of crime and responding to victims in distress at crime scenes and community service centres or ‘charge offices’
- Analysing crime data
- Visible policing operations, including staffing roadblocks and patrols and conducting crime prevention activities
- Mobile responses to emergencies and other calls for service
- Border security
- Protecting national key points and senior public officials
- Investigating crime, including gathering evidence, analysing forensic material, arresting suspects and conducting surveillance
- Public order policing of protest and other unrest
- Escorting vehicles carrying dangerous criminals and tactical response to medium- and high-risk violent and dangerous situations

While all these activities require resources, their impact depends heavily on how effectively these resources are used, both in designing and implementing interventions. The impact of police resourcing also depends on which crimes are prioritised. The range of resources, skills and activities needed to tackle organised crime is quite different from those required to address gender-based violence, and both differ from combating corruption or threats to public order. If the police focus on one type of crime, they devote fewer resources to others.

Moreover, some types of crime are more likely to be reduced through effective policing than others. For

example, a relatively small proportion of the population are involved in firearm crime and violence. If police intelligence and investigative resources are effectively used to target the individuals and networks involved, significant reductions in firearm crime can be achieved. By contrast, social and other factors drive crimes of interpersonal violence, such as assault and gender-based violence, so policing alone is unlikely to reduce them. Some murders are linked to interpersonal violence, while others are linked to robbery, gang violence and vigilantism.

The diversity of potential police priorities and activities makes it impossible to assume a mechanistic link between police resources and crime levels. Changes in resources may shift police priorities or the activities they undertake, affecting crime levels in different ways.

However, it is undesirable for police resourcing to decline while crime increases, even if it is difficult to say precisely how police personnel numbers and resources affect crime.

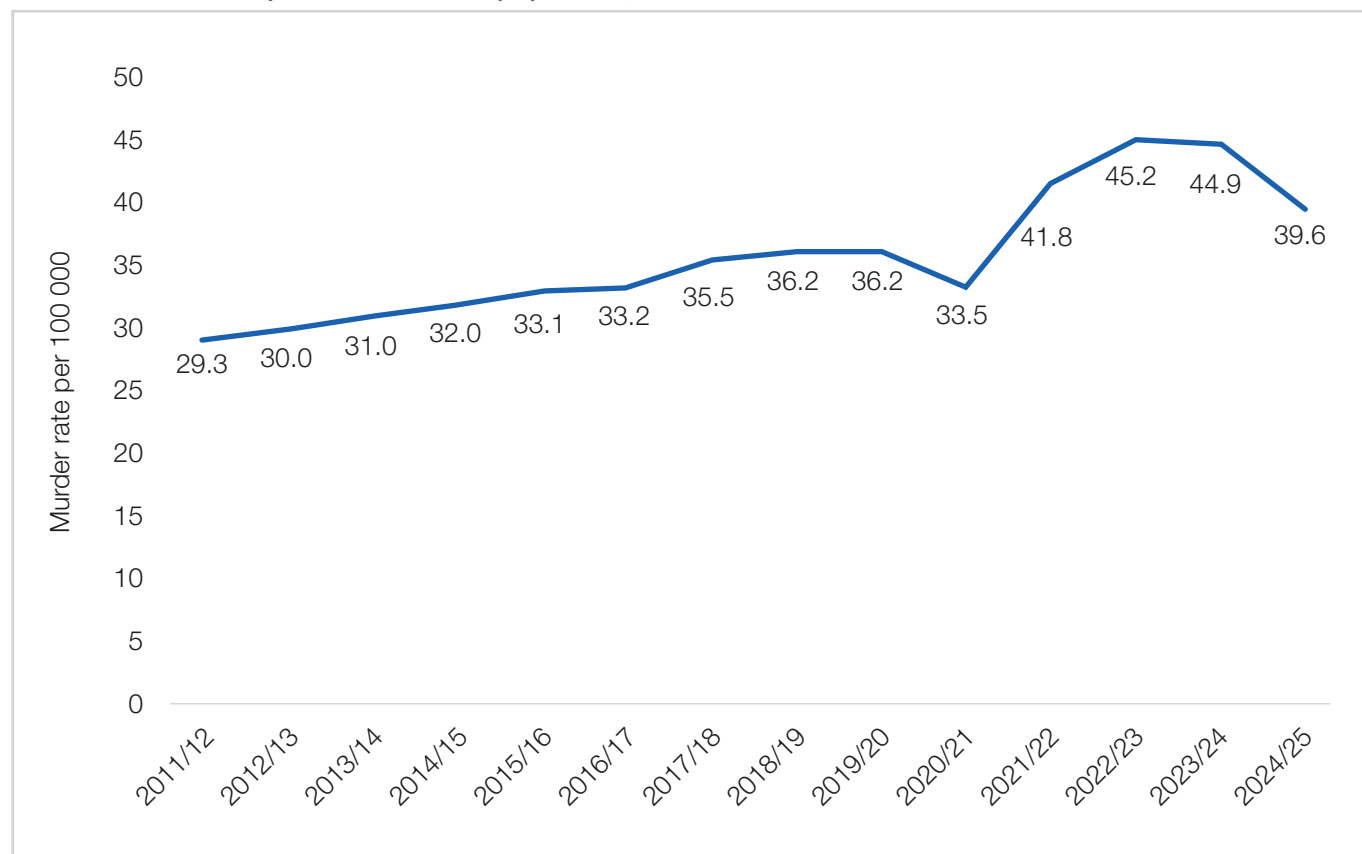
South Africa's changing crime rates

All other factors being equal, the number of crimes committed in a country should increase at the same rate as its population. However, serious crime in South Africa increased faster than the population, at least until 2023/24. Although crime rates have decreased significantly since then, they remain high.

Between 2011/12 and 2024/25, the South African population grew by about 19%.⁵ Over the same period, the number of murders increased by 59% (from 15 554 to 24 692). Per 100 000 of the population, the murder rate increased from 29.3 in 2011/12 to a peak of 45.2 in 2022/23, before falling to 39.6 in 2024/25 (Chart 1). Preliminary quarterly SAPS statistics indicate further decreases in 2025/26.

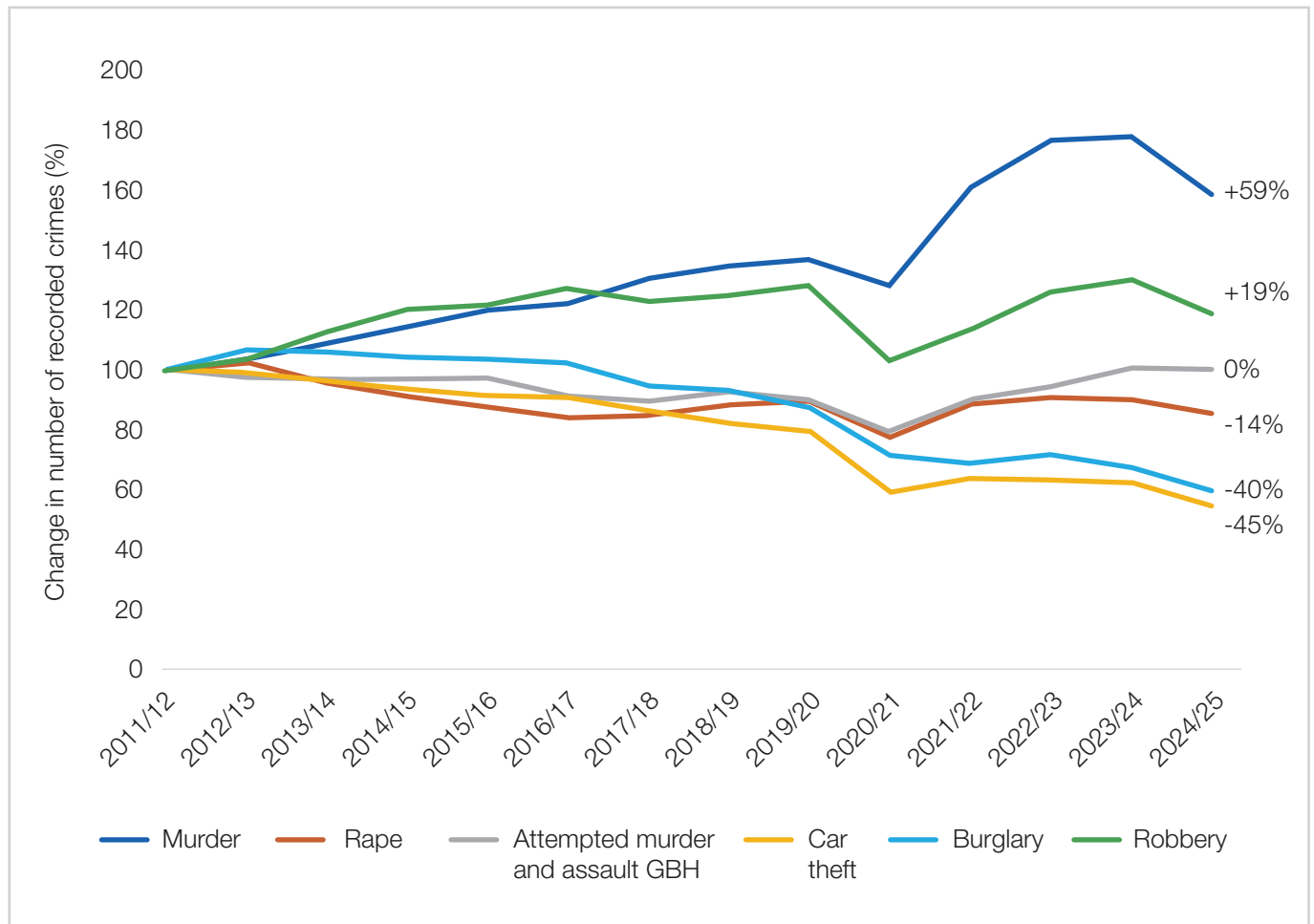
Over the same period, reported aggravated robberies increased by 19%, peaking at 30% in 2023/24.⁶ However, major categories of property crime decreased, some by double digits: burglary by 40% and car theft by 45% (Chart 2).

Chart 1: Murder rate per 100 000 of the population, 2011/12–2024/25



Source: ISS calculations based on SAPS crime statistics (www.saps.gov.za) and Statistics South Africa's mid-year population estimates

Chart 2: Crimes recorded by the SAPS, 2011/12–2024/25



Source: SAPS crime statistics (www.saps.gov.za)

Interpreting trends in recorded crime statistics is complex.⁷ Many crimes go unreported, and some reported crimes do not end up in police records. Murders are among the most reliable crime statistics because they are both well-reported and well-recorded. Car theft is also well-reported and documented because most cars are insured. Conversely, rape and domestic violence statistics are notoriously unreliable, as cases are under-reported and under-recorded.⁸ The same is true of burglaries, because many home and business owners do not report them.

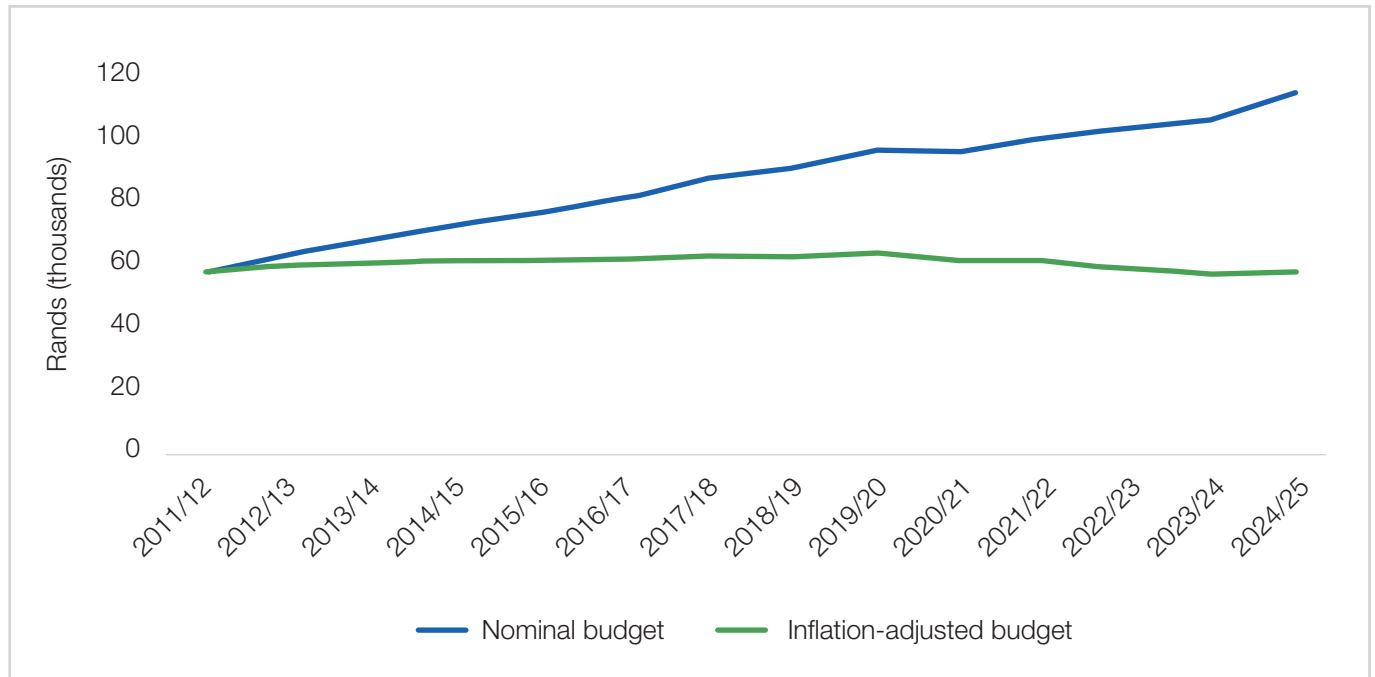
It is difficult to provide a plausible theory of crime and policing that reconciles a 19% increase in recorded robberies with a 40% decrease in burglaries without assuming some dramatic and widespread change in property owners' ability to secure their belongings. These statistics therefore may reflect changes in crime reporting and recording rather than actual changes in the incidence of these crimes.

Notwithstanding recent decreases, South Africa's high murder rate is alarming. South Africa's 2024/25 of 39.6 rate is more than five times the global average of 5.8 per 100 000 people and three times Africa's average of about 12.7 per 100 000 people.⁹ Given that reported murders are a reliable reflection of actual crime, high levels of violence remain embedded in crime in the country.

Misalignment between the SAPS budget, population and crime trends

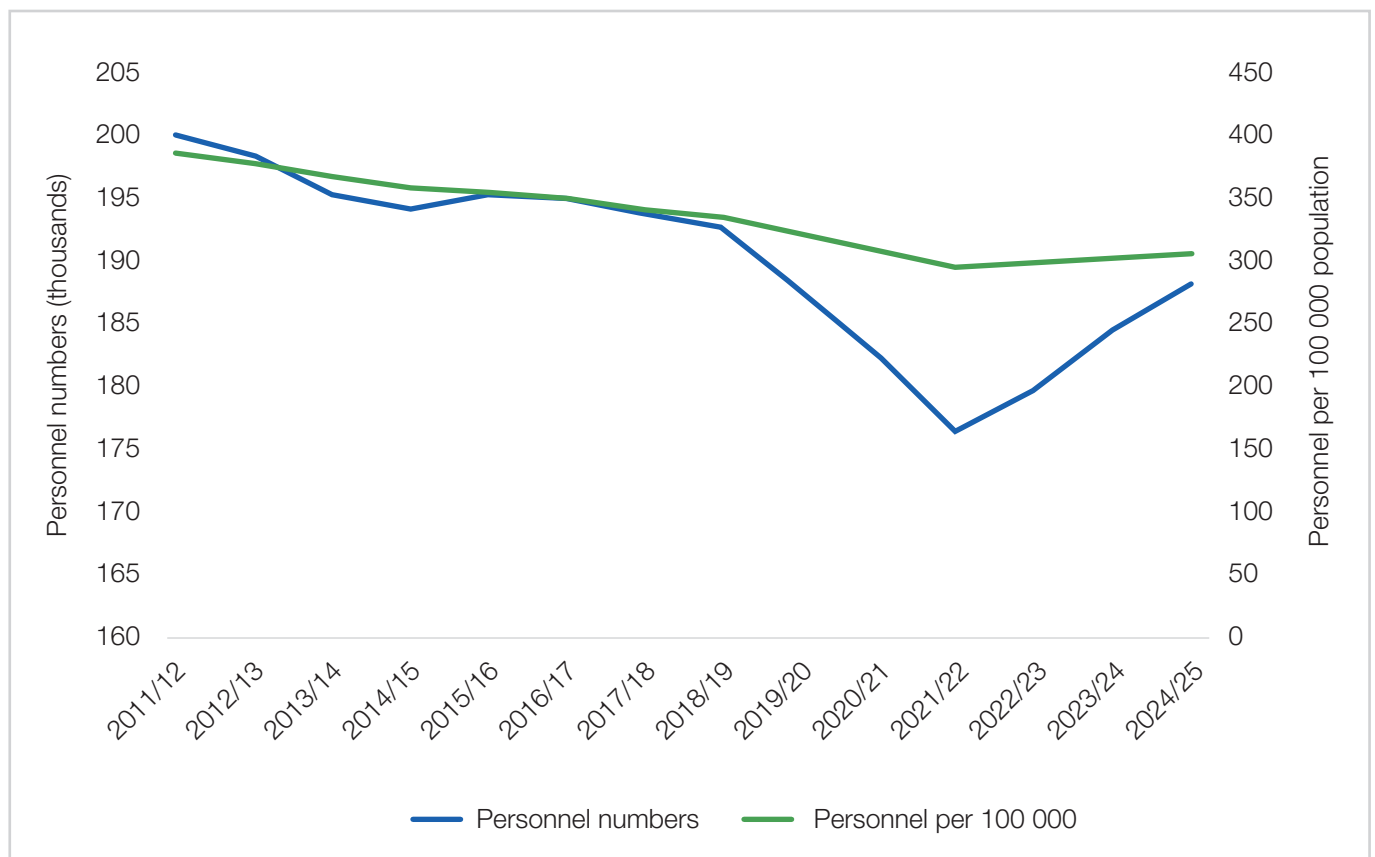
The SAPS budget increased by 96% between 2011/12 and 2024/25, from R58 billion to R113.6 billion.¹⁰ Adjusted for inflation using the Consumer Price Index, this represents a 0.03% decrease over the period. Despite minor fluctuations, the SAPS 2024/25 budget is very similar to its 2011/12 budget in real terms (Chart 3).¹¹

Chart 3: Police budget in nominal and inflation-adjusted terms, 2011/12–2024/25



Source: ISS calculations based on national budget documentation (www.gov.za/national-budget-0) and South African Reserve Bank data (www.resbank.co.za/en/home/what-we-do/statistics/releases)

Chart 4: Number of SAPS employees versus number of SAPS employees per 100 000 of the population, 2011/12–2024/25



Source: ISS calculations based on SAPS Annual Report employment data and Statistics South Africa's mid-year population estimates

However, the data reflected in Chart 3 overstates the stability of the police budget over these 12 years for two reasons, as outlined below.

Population growth and declining police numbers

Between 2011 and 2024, South Africa's population grew from 52.285 million to 62.328 million.¹² During that time, SAPS personnel numbers decreased from 199 345 to 187 681.¹³ This means the number of SAPS employees per capita fell from 381 to 301 per 100 000, a 21% decline (Chart 4).

Police salary increases

If the budget remained largely constant in real terms, why was there an overall decline in the number of SAPS personnel?

Since 2011, average remuneration for SAPS personnel has risen by about 1% above inflation each year.¹⁴ There were some years when inflation exceeded the increase in average police remuneration, specifically when the government withdrew from the three-year wage agreement signed in 2018 (Chart 5).¹⁵

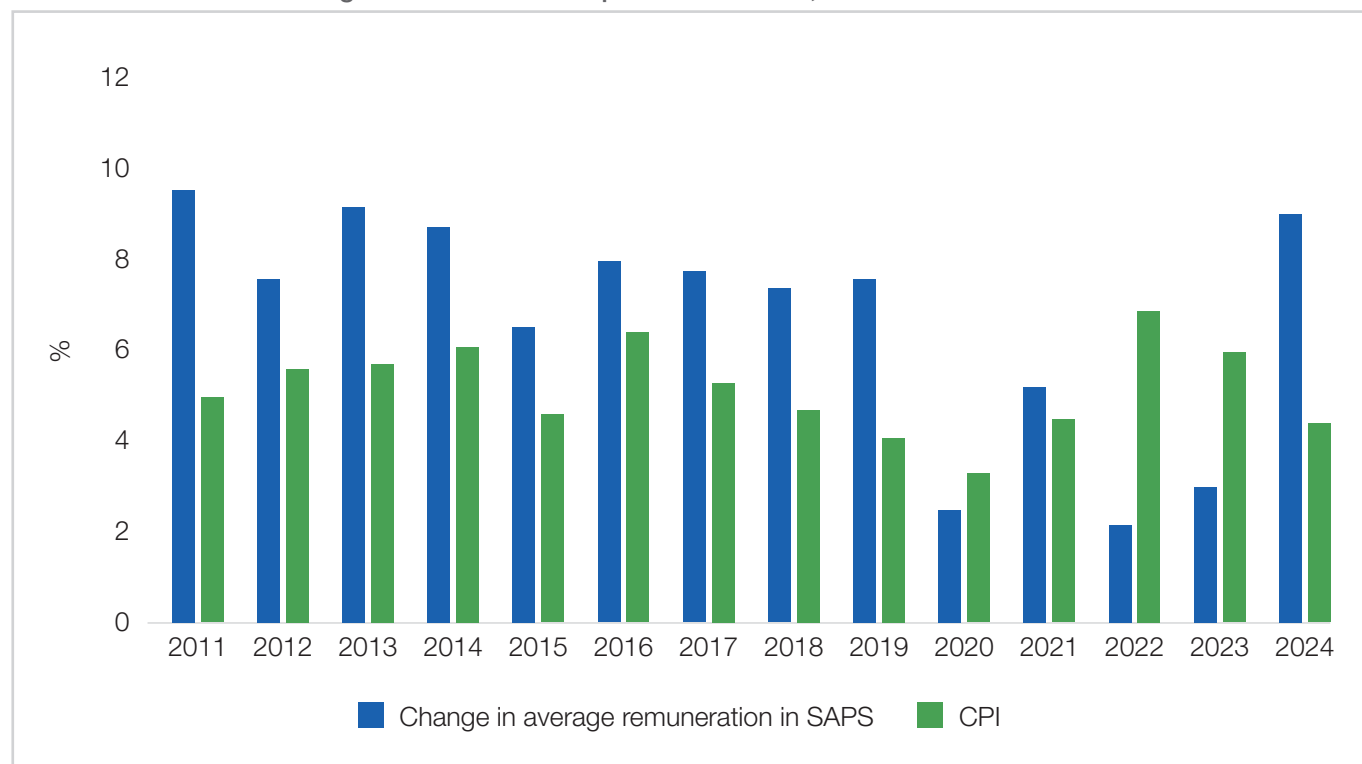
As average salaries have risen faster than the SAPS budget, the number of police personnel the SAPS could fund has decreased. The rise in inflation-adjusted average remuneration, combined with the stability of the SAPS budget in real terms, has led to a 6% decline in the number of SAPS personnel (Chart 4).

SAPS salaries accounted for roughly 75% of budget expenditure in 2011/12 and over 80% in 2024/25

To curb the decline, the SAPS began allocating an increasing share of its budget to salaries. Salaries accounted for roughly 75% of budget expenditure in 2011/12 and over 80% in 2024/25.¹⁶ As a result, the share of funding for equipment and other goods and services declined.

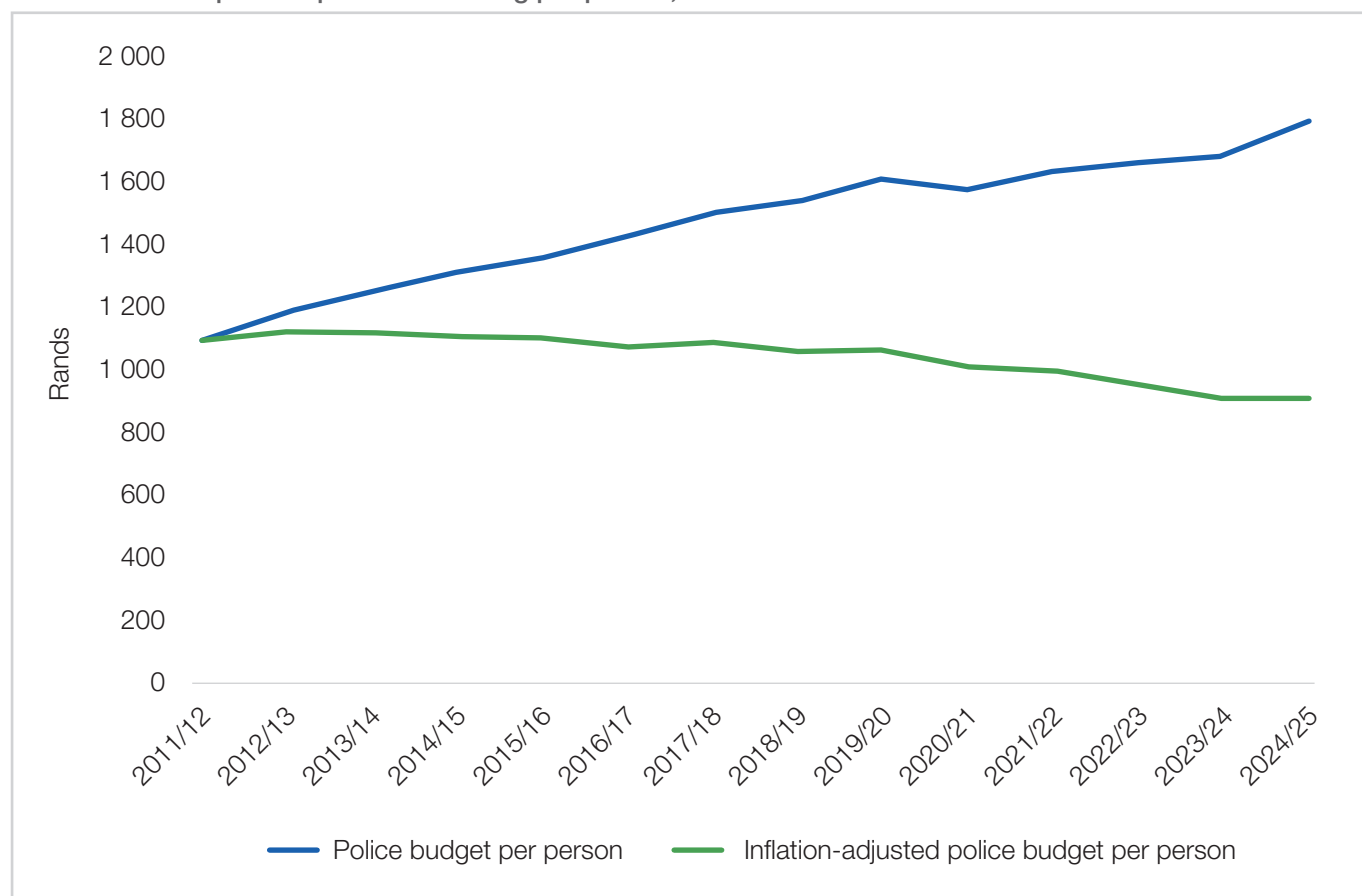
Measured against South Africa's population, per capita spending on policing rose from about R1 100 in 2011/12 to about R1 803 in 2024/25.¹⁷ In nominal terms, this is a 63% increase. However, in inflation-adjusted terms, the

Chart 5: Increases in average remuneration compared to inflation, 2011–2024



Source: ISS calculations based on national budget documentation (www.gov.za/national-budget-0) and South African Reserve Bank data (www.resbank.co.za/en/home/what-we-do/statistics/releases)

Chart 6: Rands spent on police resourcing per person, 2011/12–2024/25



Source: ISS calculations based on national budget documentation (www.gov.za/national-budget-0) and Statistics South Africa data (www.statssa.gov.za/?page_id=1866&PPN=P0141&SCH=74009)

real per capita value fell from R1 100 in 2011/12 to about R919 in 2024/25, a 17% decrease (Chart 6).

To summarise, the overall financial resources available to the SAPS in 2024/25 were very similar to those in 2011/12 in real terms. However, while SAPS budgetary allocations kept pace with inflation, they did not keep pace with population growth. In addition, police salaries increased at a rate higher than inflation during this period. As a result, not only did the number of SAPS personnel decline, but personnel per capita fell even more sharply.

SAPS budget allocation

By personnel distribution

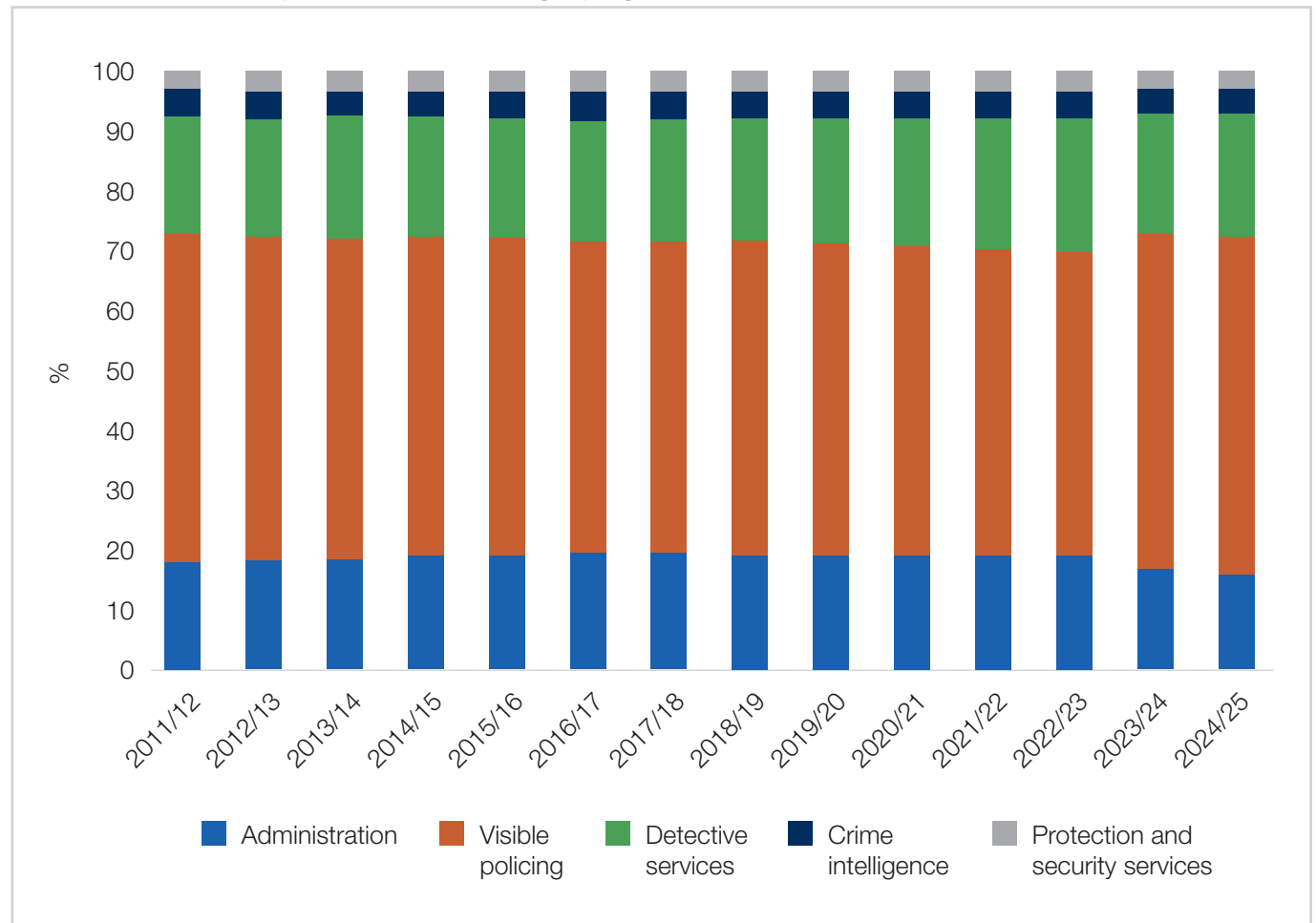
A somewhat crude way to understand SAPS resource allocation is to examine how its budget is distributed across its five main programmes: Administration, Visible Policing, Detective Services, Crime Intelligence and Protection and Security Services.

Since 1994, the SAPS recruitment strategy has focused overwhelmingly on recruiting matriculants. The police service has allocated recruits to its programmes in a fairly standardised way, with little change in personnel distribution across the five programmes between 2011/12 and 2024/25 (Chart 7).

Assessing how police manage resources is likely to be more effective and more closely linked to achieving desired outcomes

The most substantial shifts are noticeable between 2023 and 2025. SAPS increased its personnel by 18 541, assigning most new personnel to Visible Policing, including police stations and Public Order Policing units. Visible Policing accounted for 106 399 personnel in March 2025, an increase from 51% to 57% of all personnel. Administration personnel dropped sharply,

Chart 7: Distribution of personnel across budget programmes, 2011/12–2024/25



Source: ISS calculations based on SAPS Annual Report data

from 19% to 16% of all personnel, and in March 2025 reached its lowest level since 2011/12, at 29 819. The number of Protection and Security Services personnel also reached its lowest level since 2011/12 in 2024/25, at 5 657.

Assessing changes in *what* police officers do is enormously difficult. But it is only one of the problems in assessing whether and how changes in police resources affect crime. Assessing *how* police manage and deploy resources is likely to be more effective and more closely linked to achieving desired outcomes, such as reducing serious-violent crime and improving public trust in the police.

By crime type

Both the quantity and quality of police work influence crime levels, which in turn determine how much attention officers can devote to individual crimes.

Reporting crime requires police to answer calls for service, take statements, attend crime scenes, gather evidence, arrest suspects, attend bail hearings and prepare dockets for prosecutors. Not every crime generates the same set of activities, and some types of crime are handled perfunctorily. For example, police often open cell phone theft cases solely to give victims a case number for insurance purposes. For various reasons, police sometimes do not record crimes or close cases as unfounded when investigations determine the incidents are not crimes, or when victims do not want to proceed.¹⁸

Nevertheless, the main point holds: the more crime there is, the greater the workload for police officers. The greater the workload, the less attention each case receives.

From 2011/12 to 2024/25, SAPS records show a consistent ratio of one employee to every four recorded

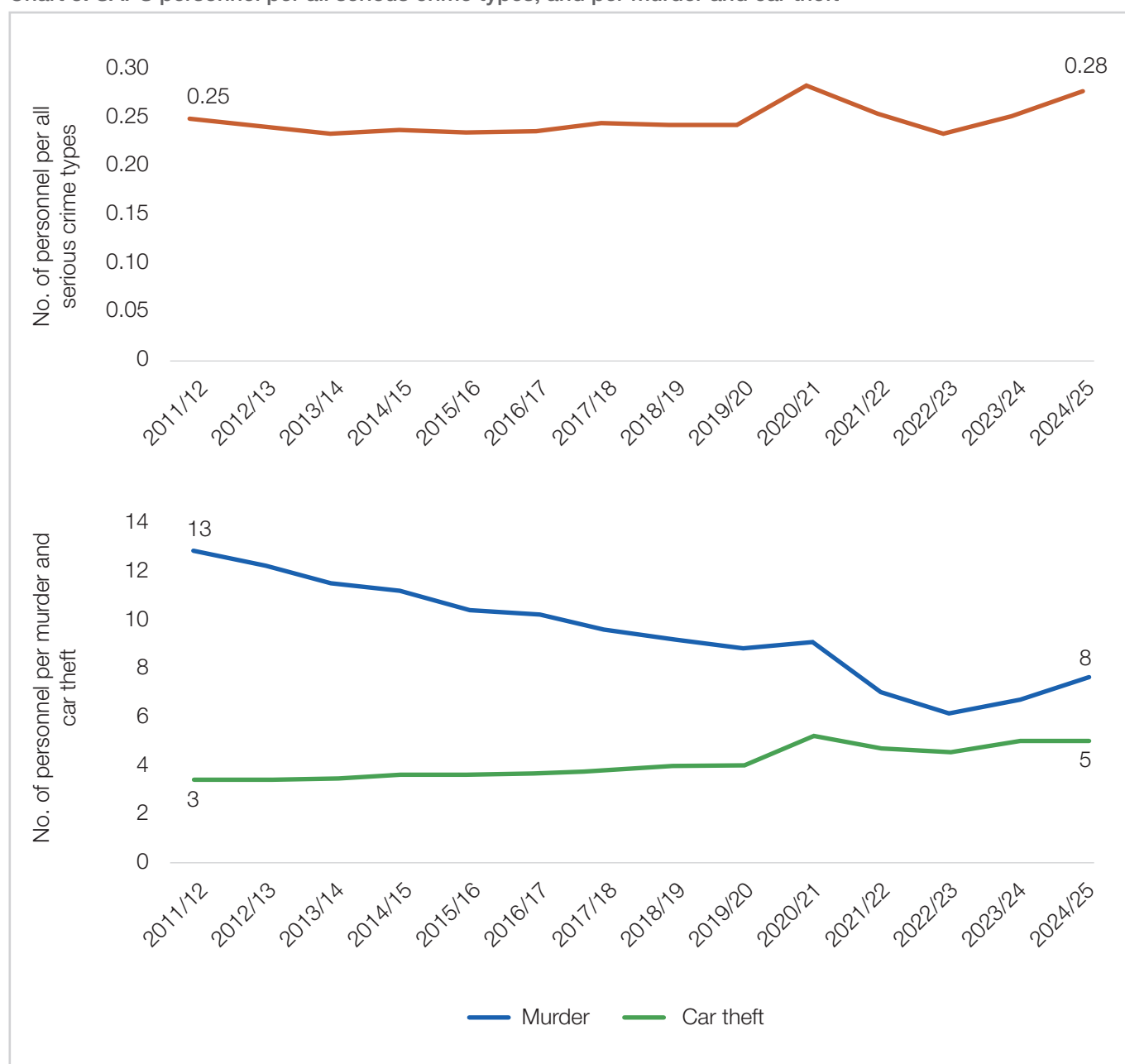
serious crimes, including murder, rape, assault, robbery, burglary and car theft (Chart 8). However, the picture is more complex when examining individual crime types. Due to the rise in murders, the number of personnel per murder has fallen from 13 in 2011/12 to eight in 2024/25. For car thefts, the number of personnel has risen from three in 2011/12 to five in 2024/25.

However, different crime types receive varying levels of response from the SAPS. On average, each murder receives far more resources and attention than each car

theft. Additionally, rising murders will disproportionately increase the workload of officers involved in murder investigations, such as specialised detectives and forensic scientists, even as other crimes decline.

The increase in murders may have negatively affected SAPS's overall performance. This impact would be particularly acute in areas with high murder rates and within units crucial to murder investigations. This would be likely to have ripple effects in other areas and units, which may have been deprived of personnel as a result.

Chart 8: SAPS personnel per all serious crime types, and per murder and car theft



Source: ISS calculations based on SAPS crime statistics and Annual Report employment data

Is the SAPS under-resourced?

Resourcing is not only about budget size, but also about personnel numbers relative to crime incidents. As outlined above, although overall SAPS resourcing remained relatively constant in real terms between 2011/12 and 2024/25, SAPS personnel numbers fell both in absolute terms and more sharply relative to the population. This decline in personnel coincided with major increases in some of the most serious forms of crime, notably murder, robbery and violent organised crime, at least until 2023/24.

It is not possible to definitively establish that the increase in crime is due to the absolute or relative decline in SAPS numbers. However, even if falling police numbers relative to South Africa's population contribute to rising crime, it would be unwise to question the prioritisation of police personnel numbers in isolation.

No initiative to improve the SAPS's effectiveness and credibility can address all these challenges at once. Given the government's precarious fiscal position and the country's low economic growth forecast, the SAPS is unlikely to receive significant additional resources in the short- to medium-term. While resourcing is important, several other factors must be considered when determining the need for, and allocation of, additional resources. The current approach is not working and expanding resources without examining what is going wrong is unlikely to be effective.

A well-considered strategic approach is needed, focusing on strengthening SAPS capabilities most critical to improving the organisation's functioning and performance. Increasing police resourcing is worth considering if it enables this process and ensures the resources provided are used more effectively. It makes much less sense to argue for increased resources if, for example, police management cannot ensure that the SAPS adopts effective strategies to address crime.

Targeted measures to optimise SAPS resources

The SAPS's current response to its challenges is overly broad and lacks a focus on implementing clearly defined measures. A more focused approach, such as the ISS's 2024 strategic measures to strengthen the SAPS, is critical to ensuring that its budget delivers greater value.¹⁹

The Minister of Police and senior SAPS leadership must agree on the details of any measures implemented to strengthen the SAPS. These measures need to focus on improving respect for and trust in the police and include measures to strengthen its ability to address crime and tackle other critical challenges, such as police integrity.

Increasing resources without examining what is going wrong with the current approach is unlikely to be effective

One set of measures should promote evidence-based policing by using research and evidence to guide policing decisions.²⁰ In 2024, the SAPS, the Western Cape government and City of Cape Town implemented a pilot intervention that showed how targeted, data-informed approaches could reduce crime without additional resources. By continually assessing whether the police are achieving the desired crime-combating impact and fine-tuning routine practices, limited resources can be deployed more effectively to enhance performance and efficiency, despite current budget constraints.²¹ Specific evidence-based policing measures might include:

- Strengthening the recruitment of crime and policing analysts to support policing at the station level
- Training management at provincial, district and station levels, with a focus on priority stations, to better use evidence-based policing approaches and benefit from analysts' work

Other examples of targeted strategic measures to strengthen the overall effectiveness of the SAPS might include:

- Supporting the National Commissioner and senior management to strengthen the public trust in the SAPS through focused measures
- Building a top-quality leadership development programme to ensure that a high-calibre senior leadership team can be appointed
- Ensuring thorough implementation of the dedicated disciplinary unit roll-out to ensure fair and professional SAPS disciplinary processes

- Establishing and promoting a trusted, reliable mechanism for SAPS personnel to safely report colleagues' involvement in criminality, which would also enhance information on corruption and combat the police code of silence²²
- Identifying the five most critical skills required to optimise the effectiveness of the SAPS and taking steps to strengthen recruitment and retention of personnel with these skills
- Developing an information technology platform for integrated analysis of crime information to advance the investigation of firearm and organised crime

Of course, adopting any set of measures is only worthwhile if a serious leadership commitment to sustained and rigorous implementation supports it.

Conclusion

Persistent and systemic poverty, unemployment and inequality reinforce South Africa's exceptionally high crime levels. The SAPS on its own cannot resolve the crime problem but can play an important role in addressing it. Government needs to enable the SAPS to adopt a strategic approach that maximises its contribution to public safety despite resource constraints.

While SAPS personnel numbers have fallen sharply in per capita terms since 2011/12, police numbers are unlikely to return to those levels. Though policing is a labour intensive field, simply increasing police numbers is unlikely to improve police performance significantly. With developments in technology proceeding rapidly, the SAPS cannot neglect adequate investment in

strengthening its use of technology, including in personnel at all levels who will enable the SAPS to benefit fully from this technology.

Recommendations

- Strategies to strengthen policing and reduce crime and violence in South Africa should focus on strengthening the SAPS without increasing personnel numbers.
- Emphasis should be on effectively implementing targeted measures that can improve the quality and impact of the SAPS.
- To ensure uniformed personnel are optimally deployed, the SAPS should plan and deliver visible policing as a service, using integrated crime and operational data to target where and when it is most needed.
- Attention should be given to how community, business, local and provincial government capabilities outside the SAPS can complement its work.
- The Minister of Police and SAPS leadership should agree on a set of focused strategic measures and establish a clear framework for their sustained implementation, monitoring and adaptation.
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Acknowledgment

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Notes

- 1 These inquiries are as follows: the Judicial Commission of Inquiry into Criminality, Political Interference and Corruption in the Criminal Justice System, <https://criminaljusticecommission.org.za/>; and the Ad Hoc Committee to Investigate Allegations made by Lieutenant General Nhlanhla Mkhwanazi, <https://pmg.org.za/committee/391/>.
- 2 Human Sciences Research Council, Still feeling blue? Changing patterns of trust in the police in South Africa since the late 1990s, 14 July 2025, <https://hsrc.ac.za/news/latest-news/still-feeling-blue-changing-patterns-of-trust-in-the-police-in-south-africa-since-the-late-1990s-2/>.
- 3 Parliamentary Monitoring Group, SAPS briefing on recent increase in serious violent crime in Western Cape, 12 September 2025, <https://pmg.org.za/committee-meeting/41593/>.
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- 5 ISS calculations are based on Statistics South Africa's 2025 mid-year estimates applied retrospectively for the study period. The annual population growth rate refers to the rate at which the population is increasing or decreasing each year, expressed as a percentage of the base population.
- 6 The ISS gathers crime statistics from www.saps.gov.za and analyses them at <https://crimehub.org/iss>.
- 7 C Gould, Debate about SA's falling murder levels masks a deeper crisis, *ISS Today*, 10 June 2026, <https://issafrica.org/iss-today/debate-about-sa-s-falling-murder-levels-masks-a-deeper-crisis>.
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- 11 Statistics South Africa, Consumer Price Index, www.statssa.gov.za/?page_id=1866&PPN=P0141&SCH=74009.
- 12 ISS calculations are based on Statistics South Africa's 2025 mid-year estimates applied retrospectively.
- 13 SAPS, Annual Reports, www.saps.gov.za/about/stratframework/annualreports.php.
- 14 Statistics South Africa, Consumer Price Index, www.statssa.gov.za/?page_id=1866&PPN=P0141&SCH=74009.
- 15 It should be noted that changes in the composition of the police establishment affect average remuneration, making it an imperfect measure of changes in police salaries. In the run up to the 2010 FIFA World Cup, for example, the SAPS recruited large numbers of student constables. Because they were paid much less than the average police salary, measures of changes in average remuneration in those years suggest that police officers' salaries fell. Instead, the large increase in low-paid student constables lowered the SAPS average. A similar phenomenon explains the low rate of growth of average remuneration in the SAPS after 2021, when increased recruitment depressed the measured increases in average remuneration.
- 16 A Ewinyu, M Sachs and O Shedi, Budget pressures erode capacity of the criminal justice system, 1 December 2022, www.econ3x3.org/article/budget-presses-erode-capacity-criminal-justice-system. The 2024/25 adjusted appropriation was R91 160.6 million, representing 80.2% of total expenditure of R113 623.5 million.
- 17 ISS analysis is from national budget documentation at www.gov.za/national-budget-0 and population statistics at www.statssa.gov.za/?page_id=1866&PPN=P0302&SCH=74263.
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POLICY BRIEF

Beyond boots on the ground Making police presence count

Anine Kriegler

South Africans say a visible police presence, followed by a faster response, would do most to increase their trust in the police. This policy brief argues that the South African Police Service (SAPS) should treat visible presence as a service in its own right, which is planned, delivered and reviewed alongside other duties. Better use of crime and deployment data can direct scarce capacity to where and when it is most needed. More presence everywhere is not the answer.

Strengthening the SAPS for a safer South Africa

Recommendations for police reform



Justice and Violence Prevention Programme,
Institute for Security Studies

June 2024

Tackling police corruption in South Africa

David Bruce and Gareth Newham



There is abundant evidence of high levels of corruption in the South African Police Service (SAPS), metro and traffic police. Police corruption affects all ranks and many police activities. It is a key contributor to low levels of public trust in police, as well as poor policing outcomes. With proper leadership and clear strategic interventions, corruption can be tackled, with many benefits for the SAPS and policing in South Africa.

Criminal protection Illicit uses of South Africa's private security industry

David Bruce



As the South African Police Service and other state law-enforcement agencies face intense scrutiny over alleged high-level corruption, this report examines how criminal interests may also be infiltrating South Africa's private security industry. While many private security companies are an important asset in tackling crime, some are used to exploit criminal opportunities, ranging from irregular procurement to the illicit use of firearms.



POLICY BRIEF

Targeting firearm crime will make South Africa safer

David Bruce

Firearm crime is rife in South Africa. Mapping it can help ensure police resources are used in a targeted way to reduce firearm-related offences. This policy brief illustrates how firearm crime can be mapped by using police data. It focuses on Gauteng province, which has high levels of gun use by criminals.



POLICY BRIEF

Building research evidence that works for policing

Anine Kriegler

There is almost no evidence that policing in South Africa reduces crime or improves feelings of safety. This does not mean that it has no impact. It means only that the link between police activities, and levels of crime, perceptions of safety, fear of crime and community satisfaction with the police has not been competently shown. This brief explains how that conclusion was reached and what it implies.

What works in South African policing?

Anine Kriegler



This report critically reviews the literature for the best available evidence on whether the South African police have achieved their mandate. It offers a reasonable but rigorous evaluation of research for evidence-based policing. Policing research questions should make systematic, empirical observation of a proposed relationship between policing behaviour and policing impact. The report finds that South African police and scholars do not ask the right questions for evidence-based policing.

How to reduce police brutality in South Africa

David Bruce



The weakness of police accountability systems in South Africa contributes to widespread brutality by law enforcement officers. For accountability to be strengthened, the South African Police Service (SAPS) leadership must be directly answerable for how their members use force. On their own, external oversight agencies such as the Independent Police Investigative Directorate cannot ensure accountability in police organisations such as SAPS that do not require accountability for the use of force internally.

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