

Press Release



SOUTH AFRICAN
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For immediate release

19 January 2012

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Armed response the popular choice as private security ceases to be preserve of rich provinces

The number of private security armed response businesses shot up by 264% while total active registered security businesses grew by 61% over a five-year period. This information appears in the latest *South Africa Survey*, to be published by the South African Institute of Race Relations next week.

Between 2005 and 2010 the total number of registered private security businesses grew from about 4 600 to almost 7 500, that is, by 61%. Companies offering armed response services rose from 743 to 2 701, or by 264%. Cash-in-transit firms grew from 856 to 2 183 (155%), while those guarding businesses increased from 3 410 to 5 752 (69%).

The proportion of all private security companies that are located in the three provinces that drive the country's economy — Gauteng, KwaZulu-Natal, and the Western Cape — dropped from 72% in 2005 to 63% in 2010.

In 2005, there was only one active registered security company in the Northern Cape. By 2010, the number of such firms had grown to 91. The Free State and Limpopo followed with large increases of 259% and 161% respectively. Firms in the Free State grew from 71 to 255 while those in Limpopo increased from 376 to 981.

By 2010, Limpopo had replaced the Western Cape as the province with the third largest number of private security firms, *Survey* data showed.

The minister of police, Mr Nathi Mthethwa, recently lauded the private security industry for having played a role in the reduction of crime. In the period under review, the number of sworn police officials went up by 37% while that of active registered security officers went up by 236%.

'Furthermore, businesses and households show that they have adopted a hardened attitude towards crime by increasingly opting for armed response,' said Mr Kerwin Lebone of the Institute's research department. 'This means they are paying for security twice over — via tax to fund the police and again to purchase private security.'

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