

FreeFACTS

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SA continues to lose the war on crime

The latest statistics released by the South African Police Service (SAPS) show that a number of serious crimes are on the increase, in particular murder.

In 2018/19 the number of murders in South Africa breached 21 000, for the first time since 2002/03. The rate of murder (the number of people murdered for every 100 000 South Africans) was 36, after having been as low as 31 in 2011/12.

This uptick in murders is concerning. In the mid-1990s the rate of murder in South Africa was a staggering 68, but this began to decline at a steady rate, reaching 31 in 2011/12. Since then murder (both the rate and the number) has again been on the increase. This is likely primarily due to a lack of capacity in the SAPS which, like many other institutions in this country, had its capacity undermined after Jacob Zuma became President in 2009. Also concerning is that this could indicate a broader breakdown in South African society as the capacity of the state continues to fail.

Another worrying statistic is that on a year-to-year basis, all serious crimes (such as rape, aggravated robbery, and assault) all showed increases.

There were two small glimmers of good news in the statistics however. Most property crimes (such as burglary) showed a small reduction or stayed relatively static, both on the ten-year trend and the year-on-year trend. And the number of drug-related crimes dropped by nearly 100 000, from 320 000 to 230 000 on the year-on-year trend. This is likely due to the effective decriminalisation of marijuana.

We at the IRR have put forward a number of suggestions to turn the tide against crime. These include: Increasing staffing and resources for Family Violence, Child Protection and Sexual Offences Units; Improving the process of applying for protection orders and firearms for self-defence; Establishing an inquiry and public hearings into criminality within the police; Increasing the powers of Community Police Forums; and Granting communities the power to elect station commanders.

Winning the war on crime will take innovative solutions.

— **Marius Roodt**

JOIN US

The IRR is an advocacy group that fights for your right to make decisions about your life, family and business, free from unnecessary government, political, and bureaucratic interference. FreeFACTS publishes evidence that communities are better off when individuals are free to make decisions about how they want to live, be educated, work, access healthcare, think, speak, own property, and protect their communities. If you agree with the issues we stand for, welcome to the team. There are millions of people just like you who are tired of South African politicians, activists, and commentators attempting to rein in your freedom to decide. Take control and make sure your voice is heard by becoming a friend of the IRR.

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Crime

Twenty-five-year tally of the most serious crimes, 1994/95-2018/19		
Type of crime	Number	Proportion of total ^a
Contact crimes (crimes against the person)	17 423 374	31.9%
Murder	506 209	0.9%
Attempted murder	566 754	1.0%
Sexual offences	1 425 761	2.6%
Serious assault	5 407 929	9.9%
Common assault	5 106 339	9.4%
Robbery with aggravating circumstances	2 814 758	5.2%
Common robbery	1 595 624	2.9%
Contact-related crimes	3 325 791	6.1%
Arson	183 793	0.3%
Malicious damage to property	3 141 998	5.8%
Property-related crimes	14 927 544	27.5%
Residential burglary	6 501 323	12.0%
Non-residential (business) burglary	1 882 739	3.5%
Theft of motor vehicles and motorcycles	1 974 476	3.6%
Theft out of motor vehicles	3 731 933	6.9%
Stock theft	837 073	1.5%
Crimes heavily dependent on police action for detection	4 831 214	8.9%
Illegal possession of firearms and ammunition	365 303	0.7%
Drug-related crime	3 278 266	6.0%
Driving under the influence of alcohol or drugs	1 187 645	2.2%
Other serious crimes	13 863 622	25.5%
All other theft	10 437 008	19.2%
Commercial crime	1 709 656	3.1%
Shoplifting	1 716 958	3.2%
Total	54 371 545	100.0%

Source: South African Police Service (SAPS), www.saps.gov.za, accessed September 2008, 19 September 2014, 29 September 2015, 24 October 2017, 10 October 2018, and 12 September 2019

a Sub-totals in the column may not add up, owing to rounding.

Since the end of apartheid over 500 000 South Africans have been murdered and there have been nearly 1.5 million sexual offences. Over ten million South Africans have been victims of common or serious assault. By any measure this indicates the high levels of crime that South Africans have experienced over the past 25 years.

Crime

Number and rate of murders, 1994/95-2018/19

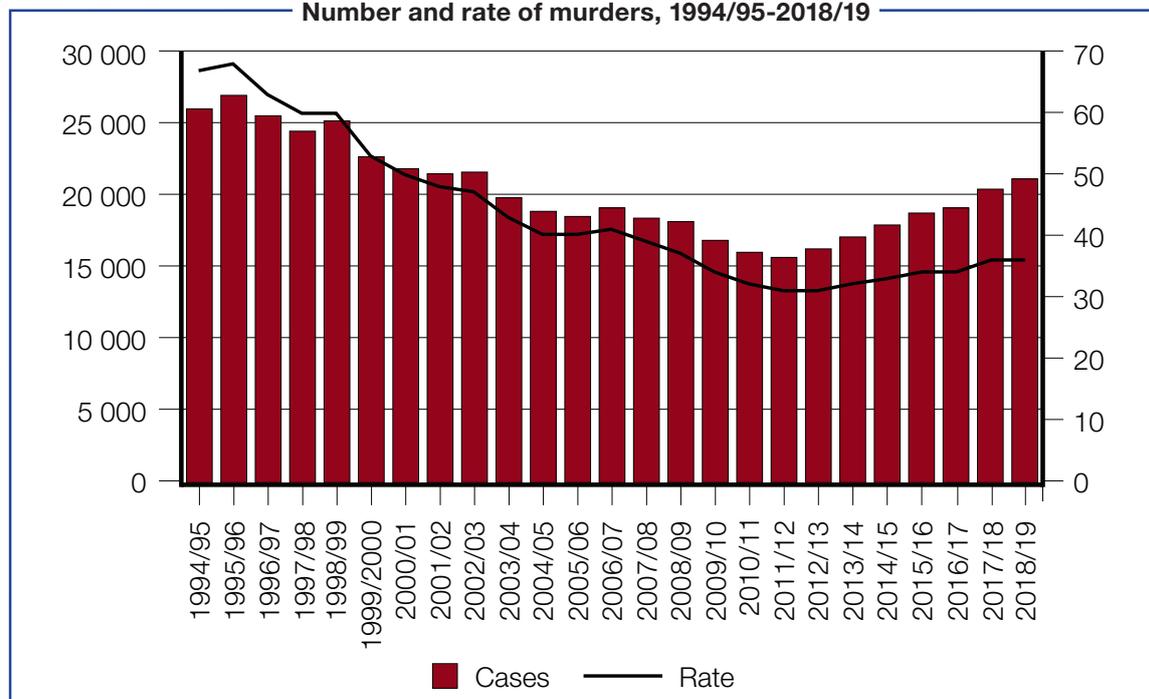
Year	Cases	Rate	Year	Cases	Rate
1994/95	25 965	67	2007/08	18 400	39
1995/96	26 877	68	2008/09	18 084	37
1996/97	25 470	63	2009/10	16 767	34
1997/98	24 486	60	2010/11	15 893	32
1998/99	25 127	60	2011/12	15 554	31
1999/2000	22 604	52.5	2012/13	16 213	31
2000/01	21 758	50	2013/14	17 023	32
2001/02	21 405	48	2014/15	17 805	33
2002/03	21 553	47	2015/16	18 673	34
2003/04	19 824	43	2016/17	19 016	34
2004/05	18 793	40	2017/18	20 336	36
2005/06	18 455	40	2018/19	21 022	36
2006/07	19 106	41	1994/95-18/19	-19.3%	-46.3%

Source: SAPS, www.saps.gov.za, accessed September 2008, 19 September 2014, 29 September 2015, 24 October 2017, 10 October 2018, and 12 September 2019

Peak year

Murder was on a steady downward trend from the mid-1990s up until the 2011/12 reporting year, when the murder rate had halved from its mid-1990s peak. However, since that low point the rate has ticked up again. The reasons behind this will be complex but some of the rise can be linked to the hollowing out of the SAPS (along with many other South African institutions) after Jacob Zuma became President.

Number and rate of murders, 1994/95-2018/19



Crime

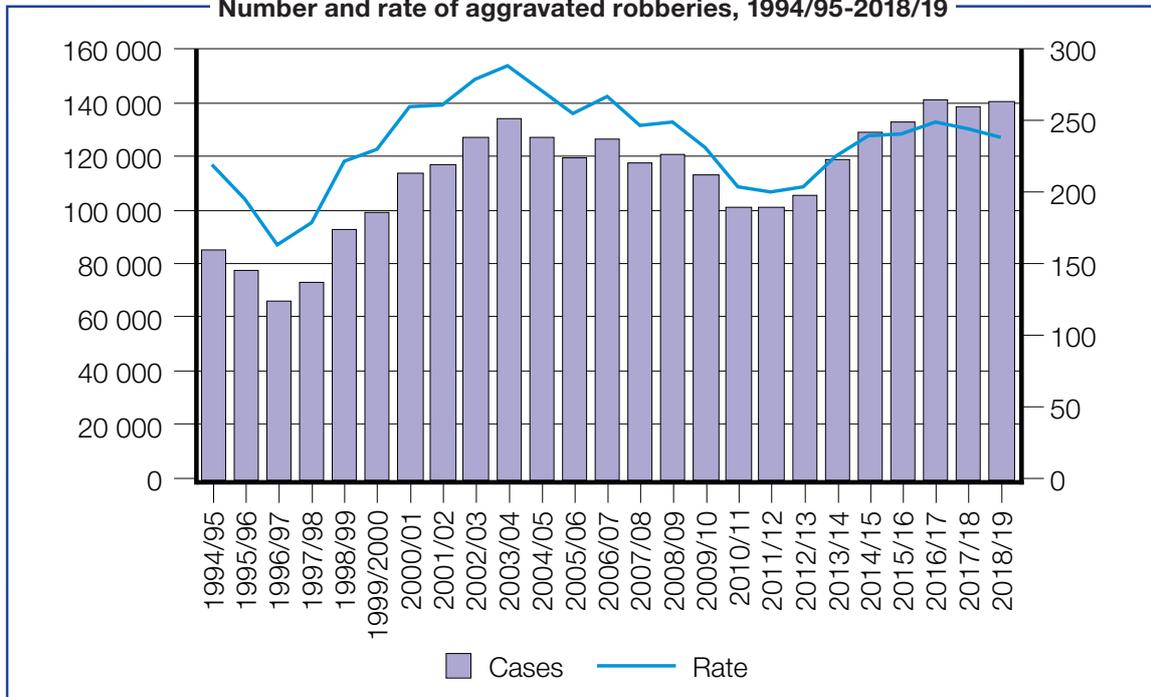
Number and rate of aggravated robberies, 1994/95-2018/19

Year	Cases	Rate	Year	Cases	Rate
1994/95	84 785	219	2007/08	117 760	247
1995/96	77 167	195	2008/09	120 920	249
1996/97	66 163	163	2009/10	113 200	231
1997/98	73 053	178	2010/11	101 039	203
1998/99	92 630	221	2011/12	100 769	200
1999/2000	98 813	230	2012/13	105 488	203
2000/01	113 716	260	2013/14	118 963	225
2001/02	116 736	261	2014/15	129 045	239
2002/03	126 905	279	2015/16	132 527	241
2003/04	133 658	288	2016/17	140 956	249
2004/05	126 789	272	2017/18	138 364	244
2005/06	119 242	255	2018/19	140 032	238
2006/07	126 038	267	1994/95-18/19	65.2%	8.7%

Source: SAPS, www.saps.gov.za, accessed September 2008, 19 September 2014, 29 September 2015, 24 October 2017, 10 October 2018, and 12 September 2019

Peak year

Number and rate of aggravated robberies, 1994/95-2018/19



Crime

Number and rate of sexual assaults, 1994/95-2018/19

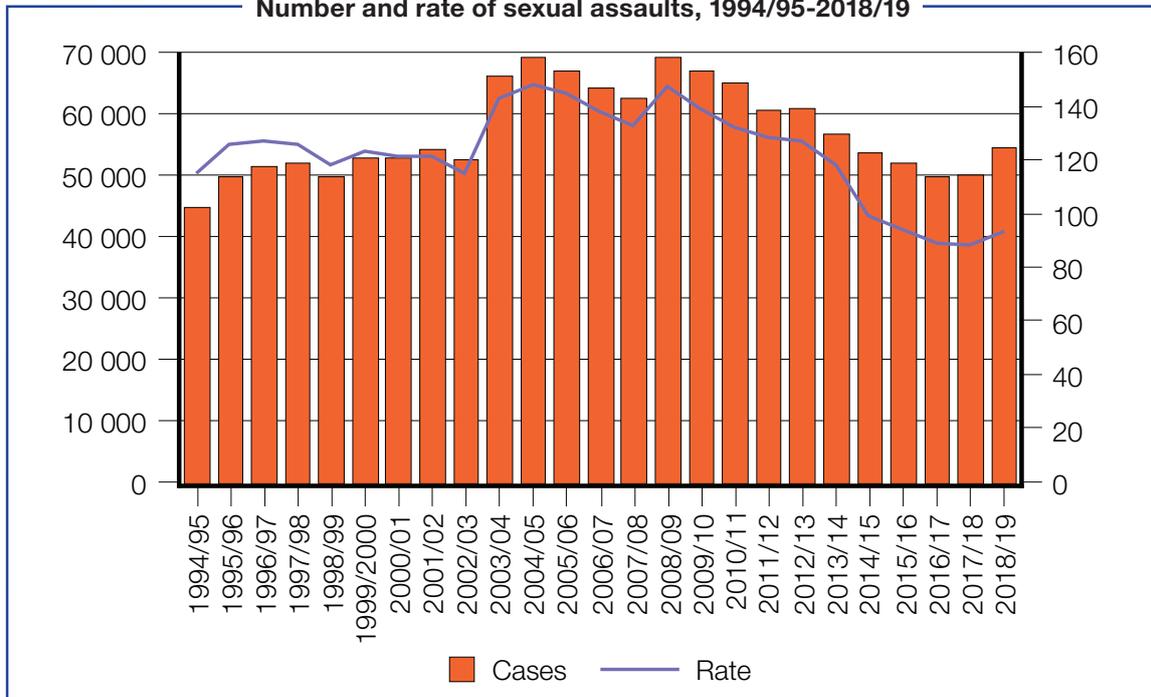
Year	Cases	Rate	Year	Cases	Rate
1994/95	44 751	115	2007/08	62 484	133
1995/96	49 813	126	2008/09	69 197	147
1996/97	51 435	127	2009/10	66 992	139
1997/98	51 959	126	2010/11	64 921	132
1998/99	49 679	118	2011/12	60 539	128
1999/2000	52 891	123	2012/13	60 888	127
2000/01	52 872	121	2013/14	56 680	118
2001/02	54 293	121	2014/15	53 617	99
2002/03	52 425	115	2015/16	51 895	94
2003/04	66 079	143	2016/17	49 660	89
2004/05	69 117	148	2017/18	50 108	88
2005/06	67 064	145	2018/19	54 420	93
2006/07	64 071	138	1994/95-18/19	21.6%	-19.1%

Source: SAPS, www.saps.gov.za, accessed September 2008, 19 September 2014, 29 September 2015, 24 October 2017, 10 October 2018, and 12 September 2019

Peak year

A somewhat surprising statistic is that sexual offences have (in general) been on something of a downward trend since the end of apartheid. However, unlike murder, a sexual offence does not have to be reported to the police, and there are many studies that show rape (and other sexual crimes) are underreported, so it may well be the case that the true figure is somewhat higher.

Number and rate of sexual assaults, 1994/95-2018/19



Crime

Number and rate of drug-related crime, 1994/95-2018/19

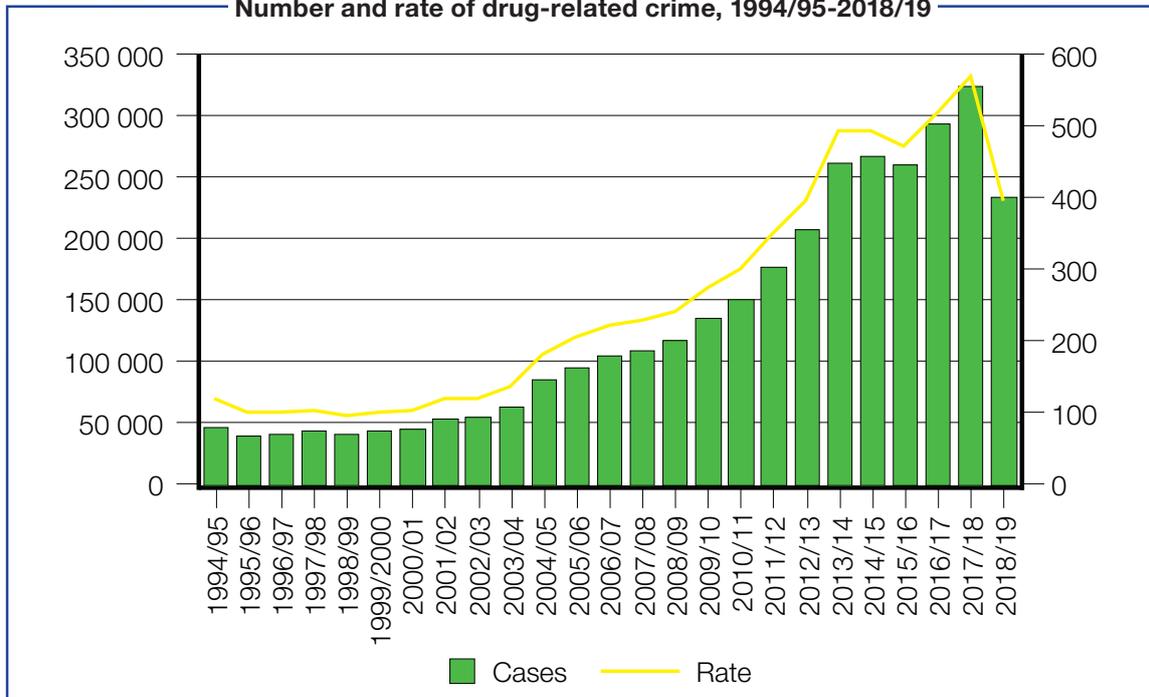
Year	Cases	Rate	Year	Cases	Rate
1994/95	45 928	118	2007/08	108 902	228
1995/96	39 334	99	2008/09	116 949	241
1996/97	40 363	100	2009/10	134 687	273
1997/98	42 452	103	2010/11	150 561	301
1998/99	39 493	94	2011/12	176 218	349
1999/2000	43 602	101	2012/13	206 721	396
2000/01	44 939	103	2013/14	260 596	492
2001/02	52 900	118	2014/15	266 902	494
2002/03	53 810	118	2015/16	259 165	472
2003/04	62 689	135	2016/17	292 689	518
2004/05	84 001	180	2017/18	323 547	570
2005/06	94 792	204	2018/19	232 657	396
2006/07	104 369	221	1994/95-18/19	406.6%	235.6%

Source: SAPS, www.saps.gov.za, accessed September 2008, 19 September 2014, 29 September 2015, 24 October 2017, 10 October 2018, and 12 September 2019

Peak year

The number of drug-related crimes has gone up markedly but this is probably unlikely to be because of a surge in drug use in South Africa, but probably due to changes in laws and stricter enforcement. In addition, the number of drug-related crimes dropped by nearly 100 000 between the 2017/18 and 2018/19 reporting years. This is possibly due to the effective decriminalisation of marijuana in the country.

Number and rate of drug-related crime, 1994/95-2018/19



Crime

Stations with the highest reported number of murders

Position	Station	Province	2009/2010	2010/2011	2011/2012	2012/2013	2013/2014	2014/2015
1	Nyanga	WC	215	197	232	261	305	300
2	Delft	WC	72	70	87	113	144	163
3	Khayelitsha	WC	124	124	160	168	146	146
4	Inanda	KZN	175	156	157	170	164	179
5	Philippi East	WC	56	42	57	47	73	87
6	Mthatha	EC	139	142	151	144	40	92
7	Umlazi	KZN	175	139	144	122	133	170
8	Harare	WC	118	141	154	131	164	141
9	Plessislaer	KZN	138	124	91	105	92	87
10	Gugulethu	WC	110	150	120	129	149	165

Position	Station	Province	2015/2016	2016/2017	2017/2018	2018/2019	% Change (year-on-year)	% Change (ten-year-rend)
1	Nyanga	WC	279	281	308	289	-6.2%	34.4%
2	Delft	WC	143	183	195	247	26.7%	243.1%
3	Khayelitsha	WC	161	179	192	221	15.1%	78.2%
4	Inanda	KZN	169	207	203	209	3.0%	19.4%
5	Philippi East	WC	122	150	205	185	-9.8%	230.4%
6	Mthatha	EC	122	127	160	181	13.1%	30.2%
7	Umlazi	KZN	155	187	223	180	-19.3%	2.9%
8	Harare	WC	166	174	142	166	16.9%	40.7%
9	Plessislaer	KZN	94	129	104	166	59.6%	20.3%
10	Gugulethu	WC	184	136	182	155	-14.8%	40.9%

Source: SAPS, www.saps.gov.za, accessed 12 September 2019.

Crime

Stations with the highest reported number of rapes

Position	Station	Province	2009/2010	2010/2011	2011/2012	2012/2013	2013/2014	2014/2015
1	Inanda	KZN	446	377	337	348	297	274
2	Lusikisiki	EC	123	121	124	127	155	137
3	Thohoyandou	LP	256	261	275	242	246	269
4	Umlazi	KZN	410	356	403	339	298	305
5	Delft	WC	157	167	167	190	164	174
6	Nyanga	WC	293	293	306	309	230	202
7	Mthatha	EC	196	218	212	268	46	222
8	Orange Farms	GP	199	181	186	161	138	159
9	Empangeni	KZN	185	191	194	234	227	210
10	Ivory Park	GP	146	159	159	122	150	205

Position	Station	Province	2015/2016	2016/2017	2017/2018	2018/2019	% Change (year-on-year)	% Change (ten-year-rend)
1	Inanda	KZN	272	309	278	338	21.6%	-24.2%
2	Lusikisiki	EC	138	139	191	280	46.6%	127.6%
3	Thohoyandou	LP	230	183	225	268	19.1%	4.7%
4	Umlazi	KZN	284	262	252	262	4.0%	-36.1%
5	Delft	WC	164	158	196	224	14.3%	42.7%
6	Nyanga	WC	247	256	210	217	3.3%	-25.9%
7	Mthatha	EC	217	227	222	204	-8.1%	4.1%
8	Orange Farms	GP	150	173	176	204	15.9%	2.5%
9	Empangeni	KZN	185	195	186	202	8.6%	9.2%
10	Ivory Park	GP	196	182	169	187	10.7%	28.1%

Source: SAPS, www.saps.gov.za, accessed 12 September 2019.

Crime

Stations with the highest reported number of burglaries at residential premises

Position	Station	Province	2009/2010	2010/2011	2011/2012	2012/2013	2013/2014	2014/2015
1	Witbank	MP	1 758	1 062	1 471	1 464	1 546	1 532
2	Park Road	FS	1 073	1 175	1 284	1 829	1 890	1 923
3	Honeydew	GP	2 102	1 923	1 700	2 028	1 753	1 815
4	Plessislaer	KZN	842	805	877	930	1 148	1 136
5	Inanda	KZN	824	871	827	1 144	1 126	1 146
6	Rustenburg	NW	1 885	1 267	1 389	1 603	1 270	1 243
7	Vanderbijlpark	GP	777	708	685	799	917	862
8	Kraaifontein	WC	869	1 014	1 302	1 118	1 247	1 096
9	Dobsonville	GP	856	879	669	851	826	822
10	Alexandra Road	KZN	556	584	815	706	566	670

Position	Station	Province	2015/2016	2016/2017	2017/2018	2018/2019	% Change (year-on-year)	% Change (ten-year-rend)
1	Witbank	MP	1 551	1 616	1 460	1 363	-6.6%	-22.5%
2	Park Road	FS	1 397	1 014	1 288	1 344	4.3%	25.3%
3	Honeydew	GP	1 530	1 340	1 260	1 264	0.3%	-39.9%
4	Plessislaer	KZN	1 402	1 291	1 226	1 219	-0.6%	44.8%
5	Inanda	KZN	1 242	1 054	1 094	1 033	-5.6%	25.4%
6	Rustenburg	NW	1 363	1 175	1 176	1 032	-12.2%	-45.3%
7	Vanderbijlpark	GP	1 041	1 103	944	998	5.7%	28.4%
8	Kraaifontein	WC	1 175	1 122	1 068	972	-9.0%	8.4%
9	Dobsonville	GP	908	888	847	965	13.9%	12.7%
10	Alexandra Road	KZN	842	853	943	955	1.3%	71.8%

Source: SAPS, www.saps.gov.za, accessed 12 September 2019.