



INCLUSIVE SOCIETY INSTITUTE

Media Release

TRUST DEFICIT BETWEEN CIVIL SOCIETY AND SAPS IS FLAMING LAWLESSNESS IN SOUTH AFRICA Recent horror tavern killings again underscore the country's inability to tackle crime

As the Inclusive Society Institute's CEO, Daryl Swanepoel, pointed out in a recent eNCA interview, the current system is stacked in favour of criminals, and they know it. He was speaking on the high prevalence of lawlessness experienced in communities. This despite ballooning budgets in support of the police service.

The SAPS's annual budget increased by more than R40 billion between 2012 and 2020 without a visible accompanying reduction in crime levels over the same period. This makes it clear says Swanepoel, that inefficient management is driving the policing crisis and not a lack of funds. Rather, he says it's the judicial system that requires more funds to boost operations and ensure successful prosecutions of the guilty individuals. The underfunded criminal justice system instills confidence in criminals that they can get away with illegal activities while it erodes the trust of civil society, which often spurs on communities to take matters into their own hands.

South Africa's rampant crime problem has far-reaching consequences. For one, says Swanepoel, it impedes foreign direct investment. President Cyril Ramaphosa, alongside some members of his administration have been actively wooing investors for funds to kickstart South Africa's limping economy (which in turn could uplift impoverished citizens). Without a clear grip on the crisis, including rife corruption, however, investors are likely to choose safer destinations.

It will take more than just money to combat the crime scourge. Trust in the police and judicial services needs to be restored. About a third of South Africans believe their personal safety is deteriorating and around half do not trust the police. Chastising those in civil society that are frustrated with the high levels of crime, doesn't help to improve the situation.

To restore this trust and to set policing and the administration of justice on the right path, Swanepoel suggest a constructive ***national dialogue on the criminal justice system***, hosted at the highest level. The Presidency is leading the drive for FDI; the Presidency should lead the fight against crime. This will grant government the opportunity to hear input from those actively working in the criminal justice system, and from communities plagued by crime, on how to address the crisis. At the heart of this should be a renewed focus on restoring trust between civil society and in particular, SAPS. Without it, South Africa will continue on its lawless path.

Issued by: Inclusive Society Institute
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Date: 21 July 2022