

Media release

National Police Commissioner invited to address the Standing Committee on Community Safety

The WCPP's Standing Committee on Community Safety yesterday resolved to invite the National Police Commissioner to address the committee on a range of issues relating to policing in the Western Cape.

"For some two years now the committee has endeavoured to get clarity, without success, on some critical service delivery issues affecting the daily lives of ordinary citizens," said committee chairperson, Mark Wiley.

The primary concerns are related to minimum service level standards for the Visible Policing unit at station level. This unit, the one the average person will see every day, is the critical first responder to almost every crime scene. Yet, by admission of the Provincial Commissioners office last month, the unit is under strength even by the 2004 census figures, and is due to get even smaller.

Other issues needing urgent clarification are the methodology used to determine the RAG (Resource Allocation Guide) at station level, the scheduled training program and recruitment methodology for new SAPS members, the moratorium on reservist recruitment and the logic behind the current shift system where members on any kind of leave, on courses or detached duty still remain on the active shift list. "The system defies any logic and is made worse because policing is an essential service," Wiley says.

The Provincial Commissioner has repeatedly been asked to explain these matters but on every occasion he, or his deputies, have had to admit that these are all nationally driven policies, hence the decision by the committee to invite the National Commissioner.

"I am mindful of the fact that on a previous occasion, in November last year, the then acting National Commissioner declined to address the committee. However, the committee has felt strongly enough on the seriousness of these critical issues that it also resolved to use its full legal power to ensure the appearance of the National Commissioner. I would be loathe to send a sheriff with a summons to Pretoria, as I have done in the past with another department's HOD, but I am sure that this will not be necessary in this case," says Wiley.

The meeting will be scheduled in the third quarter, after the Parliamentary recess.

Issued by: Mark Wiley, MPP

Cell: 082 452 5712