

*Thursday, 18 June 2026]*

No 56 - 2026] THIRD SESSION, SEVENTH PARLIAMENT

# PARLIAMENT OF THE PROVINCE OF THE WESTERN CAPE

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## ANNOUNCEMENTS, TABLINGS AND COMMITTEE REPORTS

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THURSDAY, 18 JUNE 2026

### COMMITTEE REPORT

#### **Report of the Standing Committee on Police Oversight, Community Safety, Cultural Affairs and Sport on the 2025/26 Policing Needs and Priorities (PNP) Report**

The Standing Committee on Police Oversight, Community Safety, Cultural Affairs and Sport having considered the 2025/26 Policing Needs and Priorities (PNP) Report in accordance with its constitutional and statutory oversight mandate, reports as follows:

The Committee's authority to review and comment on the PNP Report is rooted in both the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996 and the Western Cape Community Safety Act. Section 114(2) of the Constitution empowers provincial legislatures, which includes the Western Cape Parliament, to maintain oversight over the exercise of provincial executive authority and any provincial organ of state. In the policing context, section 206(3) specifically provides that every province is entitled to monitor police conduct, oversee the effectiveness and efficiency of the police service, promote good relations between the police and the community, assess the effectiveness of visible policing, and liaise with the Cabinet member responsible for policing.

The Western Cape Community Safety Act, 2013 (Act 3 of 2023), gives practical effect to these constitutional powers. In terms of the Act, the Provincial Minister responsible for police oversight must annually table a Policing Needs and Priorities Report in the Provincial Parliament after consultation with municipalities, Community Policing Forums, neighborhood watches, and other stakeholders. The report identifies the most pressing safety concerns in communities across the Western Cape and sets out recommendations to the national Minister of Police and the South African Police Service.

The Standing Committee is mandated to scrutinize this report, test whether it accurately reflects the realities experienced by communities and assess whether its recommendations address the systemic weaknesses undermining public safety in the province. In performing this function, the Committee may call for people, documents and reports, conduct hearings, and make recommendations to both the Provincial Executive and the National Government.

The Committee's consideration of the 2025/26 PNP Report takes place against the backdrop of an ongoing and escalating policing crisis in the Western Cape, characterized by persistently high murder rates, severe personnel shortages, unsustainable detective caseloads, and weakened crime intelligence capacity. These structural deficiencies directly impair the ability of SAPS to fulfil its constitutional mandate under section 205(3) to prevent, combat and investigate crime, maintain public order, protect and secure the inhabitants of the Republic and their property, and uphold and enforce the law.

Indeed, the deployment of Operation Prosper, of the South African National Defense Force deployed to areas of the Metro, has not brought down the murder and shooting rate and can arguably be seen as a distraction from the ongoing destruction of SAPS' capacity.

In exercising its oversight responsibility, the Committee is guided by the principle that effective policing is not merely a matter of resource allocation, but of constitutional accountability. The recommendations contained in these comments are intended to ensure that the priorities identified by communities are translated into measurable interventions that strengthen policing performance, improve detection and conviction rates, and restore public confidence in the criminal justice system.

The Committee accordingly submits the following comments and recommendations on the 2025/26 Policing Needs and Priorities Report.

In essence, four top issues have been identified:

1. Fill vacancies at the stations where murder is highest.
2. Reduce detective caseloads to improve detection and convictions.
3. Rebuild crime intelligence to dismantle gangs and firearm networks.
4. Overall physical resourcing at station-level.

It is so that there are many issues that could be identified, but the Committee deems it more efficient to restrict themselves to a smaller number of recommendations in order to underline the importance thereof.

## **1. Vacancies**

If SAPS is serious about reducing murder in the Western Cape, the priority must be to fill critical vacancies at the stations with the highest crime rates.

Under the South African Police Service's constitutional mandate in the South African Constitution Section 205(3), the police must "prevent, combat and investigate crime; maintain public order; protect and secure the inhabitants of the Republic and their property; and uphold and enforce the law." This mandate cannot be fulfilled while frontline and investigative capacity remains dangerously depleted.

SAPS faces severe structural and operational constraints, including a 40% staffing shortage, making it impossible to effectively fulfil its constitutional mandate to prevent, combat, and investigate crime. The Western Cape does not only have a crime crisis; it has a policing capacity crisis. Thousands of funded SAPS posts remain vacant while communities with the highest murder rates are left with too few officers, too few detectives and too little intelligence capacity.

The widening gap between policing requirements and practical delivery is driven by systemic resource depletion across frontline and investigative environments:

This translates into the following:

### **1.1 Chronically Depleted Frontline and Station Capacity**

- 1.1.1 Severe Personnel Shortages: Recent figures indicate that at times less than 50% of officers are actively available for duty. For example, the report calls attention to the abuse of sick leave, absenteeism and how this reflects general morale.
  - 1.1.2 Station-Level Declines: Between 2021 and 2026, station-level personnel allocations were actively reduced in seven provinces. Heavily crime-burdened regions like Gauteng, KwaZulu-Natal, and the Western Cape experienced significant personnel losses despite rising rates of extortion and violent crime. But this is especially acute in the Western Cape where the decline has been most acute.
  - 1.1.3 Fleet Management and Shortages: Frontline response and visible policing are severely crippled by poor asset management, non-fit-for purpose vehicles and long delays in repairs and maintenance.
- 1.2 The Collapse of Investigative and Detective Capacity
- 1.2.1 Massive Caseloads: The detective service faces a huge vacancy shortage which effects the building of cases and gaining of convictions. This forces individual, overworked detectives to carry unrealistic caseloads, sometimes juggling up to a couple of hundred cases at a time.
  - 1.2.2 Loss of Expertise to the Private Sector: Lowered morale, difficult working conditions, and uncompetitive remuneration cause approximately a few highly trained detectives to leave SAPS every month, draining the service of technological, financial, and complex fraud investigation skills.
  - 1.2.3 Declining Conviction Rates: The loss of experienced investigators means cases are frequently thrown out, withdrawn, or dropped in court due to inadequate evidence gathering or administrative errors allowing perpetrators to return to communities.
- 1.3 Financial and Structural Bottlenecks
- 1.3.1 Top-Heavy Budget Consumption: While SAPS utilizes its massive budget (exceeding R127 billion), more than 80% of total funding is consumed purely by administrative personnel costs. This leaves an incredibly small margin for operational resources on the ground.
  - 1.3.2 Technological Stagnation: The service faces severe multi-billion-rand shortfalls in ICT and technology modernization, leaving field officers and investigators without modern data tools to track, map, and process criminal activity efficiently.
  - 1.3.3 Leadership and Oversight Failures: Public trust has plummeted due to internal corruption, with over 14,000 active cases involving police officers being investigated by the Independent Police Investigative Directorate and ongoing drama with higher command, suspensions, criminal investigations and arrests. This internal rot compromises the integrity of the chain of commands.

#### Recommendation 1: Make Staffing Number One Priority

The PNP should explicitly prioritize filling vacancies in:

- Visible policing
- Detectives
- Crime Intelligence
- Family Violence, Child Protection and Sexual Offences (FCS) Units
- Forensic Services
- Witness Protection support
- Administration staff, in particular data capturers

Focus on the highest-burden stations, including:

Mfuleni, Nyanga, Delft, Philippi East, Khayelitsha, Mitchells Plain, Manenberg, Hanover Park, Bishop Lavis, Elsies River, Steenberg, and Kraaifontein.

These communities consistently experience some of the highest murder rates in the country and need to be capacitated to perform the constitutional mandate of SAPS.

## 2. Detective Capacity as a Core Crime-Fighting Tool

Visible patrols, although a critical component of crime prevention, do not solve murders. These may be popular units due to overtime budgets, but it is not the fulcrum for successful convictions. The real crisis is that detectives often carry 150–200 or more dockets each, leading to inaction, resignations and criminals waling free.

The 2025/26 Policing Needs and Priorities Plan should make one principle unmistakably clear: without enough detectives, there can be no meaningful reduction in violent crime. In the Western Cape, where murder, gang violence and firearm trafficking remain concentrated in a relatively small number of precincts, the effectiveness of the criminal justice system depends on whether cases are properly investigated. When detectives are overwhelmed, arrests do not translate into convictions, and dangerous offenders return to the streets.

Detectives are, in terms of the South African Police Service Act 68 of 1995 and the Criminal Procedure Act 51 of 1977, specifically responsible for:

- Securing and analyzing evidence,
- Interviewing witnesses,
- Linking suspects to multiple cases,
- Building prosecutable dockets,
- Opposing bail where appropriate,
- Supporting successful prosecutions.

Every murder solved and every gang leader convicted begins with a competent detective investigation. Many detectives in high-crime precincts carry exceptionally heavy caseloads, often well-above recommended norms. This results in:

- Delays in taking statements,
- Lost investigative opportunities,
- Weak case preparation,
- Witness intimidation,
- Withdrawn cases,
- Low conviction rates.

The consequence is a cycle of impunity in which offenders increasingly believe they will never be held accountable and these drives rising crime figures. International studies have shown that murder reduction depends on detection and conviction – this is the one thing that many studies agree on and thus the importance of a high conviction rate cannot be overestimated.

Visible policing and military deployments may temporarily suppress violence, but long-term reductions in murder depend on increasing the likelihood that perpetrators are identified, prosecuted and convicted. This is particularly important in gang-affected areas, where targeted killings are often carried out by repeat offenders using illegal firearms. The most effective deterrent is not a temporary deployment; it is the certainty that murderers will be caught and convicted.

### Recommendation 2: Prioritizing the Detective Capacity

The 2025/26 PNP should call for:

1. Filling all funded detective vacancies in the Western Cape.
2. Prioritizing additional detective posts at stations with the highest murder burden.
3. Reducing detective-to-docket ratios to manageable levels.
4. Expanding specialist investigative support, including forensic and digital analysis.
5. Improving training and mentoring for inexperienced detectives.
6. Publishing station-level detective vacancy and caseload data.
7. Improved overall resourcing on station-level especially through equipping officials, in particular detectives, with appropriate tools of trade such as modern cell phones, laptops and functional vehicles.

The 2025/26 Policing Needs and Priorities Plan should prioritize increased and adequate detective capacity as a core crime-fighting intervention. Detectives are central to solving murders, dismantling gangs and securing convictions. In many high-crime precincts in the Western Cape, detectives carry excessive caseloads that undermine investigations and allow repeat offenders to evade justice. Filling detective vacancies and allocating investigative resources according to murder rates, firearm-related crime, gang activity and population growth is essential to reducing violent crime.

### **3. Restore Crime Intelligence**

Without functioning crime intelligence, SAPS cannot:

- Identify gang leaders
- Track firearms trafficking
- Preventing retaliatory shootings
- Disrupt organized crime

You cannot out-police organized crime if you are blind to how it operates.

For too long, the national debate has focused on visible policing and short-term deployments, while neglecting the intelligence capability needed to identify gang leaders, trace illegal firearms, map extortion networks and prevent retaliatory shootings. In the Western Cape, where gang violence and firearm trafficking drive a significant share of murders, effective policing depends on a strong and trustworthy intelligence function.

#### **3.1 Fill Critical Intelligence Vacancies**

##### **3.1.1 Crime Intelligence**

It remains undermined by unfilled posts and shortages of experienced analysts and field operatives. Without sufficient personnel, SAPS cannot consistently gather and process information on:

- Gang leadership structures,
- Firearm trafficking routes,
- Drug syndicates,
- Hit squads,
- Corrupt insiders – this indeed appears to be a particular problem in areas such as extortion.

##### **3.1.2 Strengthening Analytical Capacity**

Raw information only becomes useful when it is turned into actionable intelligence. SAPS should prioritize additional analysts, improved data integration and modern analytical tools to:

- Detect emerging gang conflicts,
- Link shootings to common firearms and suspects,

- Identify geographic hotspots,
- Support targeted operational planning.

### 3.1.3 Rebuilding Informant Networks

The most valuable intelligence often comes from trusted human sources. Years of instability, corruption and mistrust have weakened informant networks in many high-crime communities. SAPS should rebuild these networks by:

- Protecting source confidentiality,
- Ensuring secure handling of information,
- Providing proper oversight of source payments,
- Strengthening witness protection links.

Communities know who the gang leaders are; the challenge is building a system they trust enough to tell.

### 3.1.4 Tightening Integrity Controls

Crime Intelligence can only be effective if it is credible. Past abuse of secret funds and allegations of corruption have damaged public confidence and undermined operational effectiveness.

The PNP should call for:

- Regular lifestyle audits – promised by the President but still outstanding,
- Strict vetting and re-vetting,
- Robust auditing of covert expenditure,
- Rapid disciplinary action where misconduct is identified.

Recommendation 3: One of the most urgent priorities in the 2025/26 Policing Needs and Priorities Plan must be the restoration of South African Police Service Crime Intelligence Division.

The 2025/26 Policing Needs and Priorities Plan should prioritize the restoration of SAPS Crime Intelligence through the filling of critical vacancies, strengthening of analytical capacity, rebuilding of trusted informant networks and tightening of integrity controls. In provinces such as the Western Cape, where organized crime, gang violence and firearm trafficking are major drivers of murder, effective policing depends on a capable and corruption-resistant intelligence function.

You cannot dismantle gangs, intercept illegal firearms or prevent targeted killings if the police are operating in the dark. Rebuilding Crime Intelligence is one of the most important steps SAPS can take to save lives in the Western Cape. The SAPS should also prioritize appointing a permanent Provincial Head of Intelligence.

## 4. Resources

Recommendations:

- 4.1.1. The SAPS requires deployment of officials who are competent in the mother tongues of the precincts that they serve. This will ease language barriers that hinder communication between the community and SAPS officials.
- 4.1.2. Ensure vehicle maintenance and availability across all SAPS station-level units
- 4.1.3. Improve general telephony concerns across police stations so that the community can report crime effectively.

## 5. Other matters

The following recommendations are to be considered for the PNP, going forward

- The Department of Police Oversight and Community Safety must submit a timeline for the next PNP to allow the Committee sufficient time to carry out its role and powers in finalising the PNP Report. And, to schedule into its programme (e.g. to plan for Public Hearings and budget projections).
- The PNP should reflect consultation with municipalities about a response to urban design (derelict spaces, and public works owned buildings) and the effects of informal settlements on policing needs. The recommendation is then to also consult governmental Public Works and Infrastructure departments on the use of these spaces.
- Consult ESKOM and municipalities regarding the fixing of streetlights that would help with policing.
- SAPS is recommended to also avail resources to focus on crime prevention (in particular VISPOL).

### Conclusion

The Standing Committee on Western Cape Provincial Parliament concludes that the 2025/26 Policing Needs and Priorities Report identifies many of the challenges confronting communities in the province, but that the severity of the policing crisis in the Western Cape requires a focused and urgent response.

The Committee has deliberately concentrated its recommendations on three strategic priorities that it believes will have the greatest impact on reducing violent crime and restoring public confidence in the South African Police Service:

1. Filling critical vacancies at the police stations with the highest murder burden;
2. Strengthening detective services and reducing unsustainable caseloads to improve detection and conviction rates;
3. Rebuilding Crime Intelligence to identify gang leaders, disrupt firearm trafficking networks, and prevent retaliatory shootings.
4. Improve resourcing.
5. Recommendations to consider for future PNP Reports.

These recommendations are rooted in a simple but unavoidable reality: the Western Cape does not only face a crime crisis; it faces a policing capacity crisis. Communities such as Mfuleni, Nyanga, Delft, Philippi East, Khayelitsha, Mitchells Plain, Manenberg, Kraaifontein, and Hanover Park continue to endure some of the highest murder rates in the country, while the police stations responsible for protecting them remain critically understaffed and under-resourced.

The Committee is of the view that temporary deployments, including military support operations, cannot substitute for a properly capacitated police service. Sustainable reductions in murder and gang violence will only be achieved when SAPS has sufficient personnel on the ground, detectives with manageable caseloads, and a professional, corruption-resistant intelligence capability.

At its core, effective policing depends on increasing the certainty that offenders will be identified, arrested, prosecuted and convicted. When vacancies remain unfilled, detectives are overwhelmed and intelligence structures are weakened, the criminal justice system loses its deterrent effect, and violent offenders operate with growing impunity.

The Committee therefore urges the National Minister of Police, SAPS leadership and all relevant stakeholders to treat these recommendations as urgent operational priorities. The constitutional promise that every person has the right to freedom and security of the person cannot be realized unless the institutions charged with protecting the public are adequately staffed, properly equipped and held accountable for their performance.

The Standing Committee accordingly submits these comments and recommendations in the firm belief that targeted investments in staffing, detective services and Crime Intelligence offer the most practical and evidence-based path to reducing murder, dismantling gangs and restoring safety to the communities of the Western Cape.