



Changing step: crime prevention policy in South Africa

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The South African government's approach to crime prevention is contained in two primary policy documents: the 1996 National Crime Prevention Strategy (NCPS) and the 1998 White Paper on Safety and Security. However, it is the operational plans of the South African Police Service (SAPS) and the availability of funds from the national treasury which have had the most impact on the development of government crime prevention programmes.

The development of the NCPS

Opening parliament in February 1995, the then President Nelson Mandela explicitly addressed growing public concern about crime in the country:

The situation cannot be tolerated in which our country continues to be engulfed by the crime wave which includes murder, crimes against women and children, drug trafficking, armed robbery, fraud and theft. We must take the war to the criminals and no longer allow the situation in which we are mere sitting ducks of those in our society who, for whatever reason, are bent to engage in criminal and anti-social activities. Instructions have therefore already gone out to the Minister of Safety and Security, the National Commissioner of the police service and the security organs as a whole to take all necessary measures to bring down the levels of crime.¹

In direct response to this, officials commenced with the parallel development of the SAPS Community Safety Plan—a package of short term, visible policing measures—and a longer term crime prevention strategy which would become known as the National Crime Prevention Strategy (NCPS). The intention was that the long-term strategy would tackle the social and developmental factors thought to facilitate crime. The short-term Community Safety Plan would deliver a more high profile and effective police response to increasing levels of public fear of crime.

In May 1995, an inter-departmental strategy team, composed largely of civilian officials, began the process of drafting the NCPS. At the same time, an entirely

separate team, consisting largely of police officers, developed the tough crime combating Community Safety Plan. Such bifurcation characterised subsequent policy development in the safety and security field and, as indicated below, has been largely responsible for the shift in government thinking in the five years since the NCPS was adopted.

Government's intentions regarding the actual content of the NCPS were vague. The ministers responsible for initiating the strategy did not give detailed guidance to the drafters. Instead, they encouraged an extremely broad approach:

Cabinet has asked us to design the process which will eventually culminate in a comprehensive and holistic National Crime Prevention Strategy. The NCPS which eventually emerges should be owned by the broadest possible cross-section of South Africa's population, and should go beyond a mere police response to crime... In considering the process which should be followed, this Committee should bear in mind the complexity of the causes of crime and therefore pay proper attention to political, social and economic causes and manifestations of crime... If this Committee succeeds with its task, the NCPS could result in answers to the question: What is crime prevention all about? It could result in a recognised and co-ordinated government response to crime, and in a greater role for civil society and communities in the prevention of crime.²

Despite this vagueness, the NCPS was granted symbolic importance through its inclusion in government's economic development strategy of the time: the 1996 National Growth and Development Strategy. In an obvious effort to integrate crime prevention into an over-arching socio-economic development approach, the NCPS was termed one of the 'pillars' of the National Growth and Development Strategy:

We can already define the six pillars of our Growth and Development Strategy. They are not new. In fact they have emerged by clustering the key areas identified in departmental and provincial policies and plans. Their power is their simplicity. Although not every issue of importance to every department is covered explicitly, these pillars aim to encompass and crystallise all our work. They are as follows:

- Investing in people as the productive and creative core of the economy, especially the poor majority.
- Creating employment on a massive scale, while building a powerfully competitive South African and Southern African economy.
- Investment in household and economic infrastructure, both to facilitate growth and to improve the quality of life for the poor.
- A national crime prevention strategy to protect the livelihood of our

- people, secure the wealth of the country and promote investment.
- Building efficient and effective government as a responsive instrument of delivery and empowerment, able to serve all South Africans while directing government resources primarily to meet the needs of the poor majority.
- Welfare safety nets which aim to draw the poorest and most vulnerable groups progressively into the mainstream of the economy and society.³

The contextualisation of crime prevention within government's key economic policy made links between crime and economic development which had not been seen before in government policy. For the first time, crime prevention was recognised as a key government priority. This recognition has remained, despite the thorough revision of government's economic policy and the abandonment of the National Growth and Development Strategy not long after the NCPS was adopted in May 1996.

By early 1996, the drafting of the NCPS was in its final phases, and Business Against Crime had been established and began to assist the process. An early draft of the NCPS was presented to key African National Congress (ANC) ministers and officials from their departments before the first presentation to the Cabinet Committee on Security and Intelligence. At that meeting, the ANC ministers expressed their unease with a strategy that was purely long-term in nature. They instructed the drafters to add an additional component to the strategy document, reflecting current actions and the short-term plans of the government departments involved in crime reduction. Already the ministers were aware that their constituency was hungry, not for 'more plans'—the popular interpretation of the plethora of government policy making that characterised the early transition period—but for a tough approach to criminals.

In response to the ministers' concerns, a chapter was added to the draft strategy that described the measures already being implemented by different departments to address prioritised crimes. Having satisfied the ministers, the NCPS was approved by Cabinet and launched in May 1996—to the acclaim of all parties in the Government of National Unity.

The NCPS proposed new approaches to crime prevention in four categories or "pillars":

- Re-engineering the criminal justice system: aimed at providing an efficient and legitimate criminal justice system as the foundation for crime prevention, law enforcement, and the protection of human rights.
- Reducing crime through environmental design: aimed at limiting environmental or situational opportunities for crime, and maximising constraints by, primarily,

ensuring that safety and crime prevention considerations were applied in planning new developments, and in the re-design and upgrading of existing infrastructure.

- Community values and education: aimed at harnessing community participation and involvement in crime prevention, to ensure a positive impact on the way society engages with and responds to crime and conflict.
- Transnational crime: aimed at addressing the enormous influence of international and regional criminal syndicates and involving improved border control, the addressing of cross border crime and regional co-operation.

Further, the NCPS identified seven national priority crimes:

- crimes involving firearms
- organised crime
- white-collar crime
- violence against women and children
- violence associated with inter-group conflict
- vehicle theft and hijacking
- corruption in the criminal justice system.

However, in a massive public relations gaffe, the NCPS was launched just after the National Commissioner of the SAPS, George Fivaz, announced the launch of the 1996 Annual Police Plan, which built on some of the ideas developed in the previous year's Community Safety Plan. To the public, the NCPS became 'just another plan'. For government, the resultant confusion between the SAPS' strategy and the government's long-term crime prevention agenda created a conceptual gulf between immediate short-term policing responses to rising crime rates, and the need for a developmental approach aimed at the causes of crime—a gulf that still exists today.

Despite the problems associated with its public launch, the NCPS began to introduce a new paradigm for dealing with crime in South Africa. Some of the key concepts introduced were:

- Government cannot deal with crime on its own. The institutions of government, on all three tiers (national, provincial and local) must work together and with civil society to reduce crime.
- Law enforcement and criminal justice responses alone are inadequate for addressing crime.
- The criminal justice system cannot operate effectively unless there is better co-operation between the departments that constitute the system, and integration of their activities.
- Crimes are different, and must be 'dis-aggregated' if effective prevention strategies are to be designed and implemented.

- Prevention efforts need to be focused on victims and potential victims, and not merely on perpetrators, as is the case with traditional systems of criminal justice.
- Prevention efforts need to take cognisance of the fear of crime, as well as of actual crime patterns.

The NCPS provided a framework for problem-solving in which national government departments, different tiers of government, and organisations from civil society would be brought together to identify and implement multi-agency solutions to specific problems. In doing so, the NCPS aimed to provide the means by which the police, other government departments, the private sector and the non-governmental community could link their anti-crime activities. Responsibility for facilitating the implementation of the NCPS was allocated to the newly established national Secretariat for Safety and Security.

Implementing the NCPS

The NCPS was based on the key assumption that integrated programmes involving a range of government departments and other role-players would improve inter-departmental co-ordination. The strategy proposed a range of structures to enable improved inter-departmental planning: a national committee of director-generals, of ministers, and of senior departmental officials. Similar structures were proposed at provincial and local government levels.

While the NCPS document proposed a number of national programmes, it provided scant detail on how these programmes should be developed and implemented. Rather, it was assumed that co-operation between the departments would arise naturally and spontaneously when they were required to work together on the identified cross-sectoral national programmes. Successful implementation of the NCPS was predicated on the assumption that inter-departmental co-operation was achievable, and that government departments and other role-players would be able (and willing) to agree on joint priorities and share information.

In the original NCPS document, the intersection between the four pillars and the seven priority crimes was not well conceptualised or articulated. This led to a belief that the main implementation approach should be a focus on the pillars—an approach which saw the establishment of structures and processes isolated from the content of the crimes they were intended to deal with.

Also, the NCPS did not allocate dedicated government funding to implementation, but rather encouraged departments to rationalise existing resources and allocate

them to NCPS national programmes. State budgeting occurs in a medium-term expenditure framework, which runs on a three-year cycle. As a result, those tasked with implementing NCPS projects faced a situation in which their three-year budgets had no provision for new NCPS activities.

Lacking detailed guidance and dedicated funding, the national Secretariat for Safety and Security sought support for implementation from Business Against Crime (BAC). BAC responded by providing a kick-start to the activities envisaged in the first pillar of the NCPS, the programme dealing with reform of the criminal justice system. BAC arranged for Andersen Consulting to conduct a pre-scoping exercise to identify key blockages and possible points of intervention in the criminal justice system. Thus the first significant activity in the life of the NCPS was focused on the criminal justice system, rather than on the situational or social approaches to prevention envisaged in the other pillars.

The BAC consultants recommended a priority list of areas for intervention:

- To develop methods for enterprise-level (system-wide) management of people, processes and information, including information technology in the criminal justice system. This sent a strong message to government about the problems created by each department working in isolation from, and often at odds with, the others involved in the criminal justice process.
- To improve systems of crime reporting, recording and investigation at police stations and in detective units.
- To improve processes and administration in the courts—although the depth of problems in the courts was probably not entirely evident at this early stage.
- To provide social support which would prevent people from becoming victims or perpetrators of crime, and support people who were victims of crime. This echoed the original NCPS' emphasis on a victim-centred approach, and provided a foundation for the evolution of subsequent victim empowerment policies.
- To improve the administration of juvenile justice and the systems for dealing with incarceration of juvenile suspects and offenders. These issues were being dealt with in a separate process outside the NCPS, led by the Department of Welfare.
- To improve sentence enforcement, and reduce escapes and parole violations.

As these priorities were being developed and debated, the Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP) made available a cross-departmental fund of R174 million to support implementation of the NCPS in September 1996. The decisions on allocation of these funds were based on the above findings of the BAC-Andersen Consulting investigation. The RDP funds were used largely to build, renovate or replace infrastructure in key areas of the criminal justice system. This meant that the

bulk of the money actually spent did not represent the implementation of crime prevention policy, but instead a resource for replacing infrastructure—an expenditure that could, alternatively, have been the responsibility of the departments concerned. Examples of how this RDP grant was spent include:

- The improvement of security infrastructure at prisons to reduce the number of escapes from custody.
- The purchase of furniture and equipment for offices of the Department of Justice in former Bantustan areas.
- The building or renovation of structures to house juvenile offenders.

The fact that these projects had been funded from additional RDP funds was not lost on the beneficiaries. Indeed the impression was quickly created that the NCPS could provide a source of funds with which departments could supplement their budgets, rather than a source of funds for genuinely new prevention activities.

Then, in October 1996, following the closure of the RDP office, Dr Bernie Fanaroff (formerly the head of the RDP in the president's office) was appointed to the Secretariat for Safety and Security as co-ordinator of the NCPS. His appointment gave the NCPS some political stature within the senior echelons of government, and he was able to interact with a wide range of government departments, many of whom had previously never considered themselves players in crime reduction. Together with the Secretary for Safety and Security, Azhar Cachalia, Dr Fanaroff set up a range of structures for decision making and support for the NCPS, and maintained a strong relationship with BAC. Chief among these structures were a ministers' and director's-general forum which functioned to provide high-level decision making about priority areas for government action, and a departmental co-ordinating mechanism which was intended to enable such priority programmes to be implemented and integrated at project level.

In mid-1997 the process of provincial mobilisation for implementing the NCPS was initiated, as envisaged in the final chapter of the strategy document. The national Secretariat for Safety and Security began holding provincial crime prevention summits intended to:

- Identify provincial crime prevention priorities.
- Identify provincial role-players for possible crime prevention programmes.
- Identify location and responsibility for provincial programmes.
- Establish provincial co-ordination teams for crime prevention programmes.
- Involve all government departments and civil society organisations in crime prevention activity in the provinces.

Dr Fanaroff's NCPS co-ordinating office in the national Secretariat for Safety and Security was increasingly given responsibility for new government initiatives related

to crime. New projects were added to the NCPS programmes, mainly by the ministers who had to deal with increased public pressure and a series of crises in the criminal justice system. These included the implementation of improved security systems at prisons to reduce escapes, investigations into bail administration, management of the awaiting-trial prisoner population, border control and illegal immigration, drug abuse, gangs, domestic violence, and school safety.

There were two key reasons for the concentration of government's crime prevention efforts around the NCPS co-ordinating office. Firstly, the office was staffed largely by people who were (politically) trusted by the ANC ministers: it was made up mainly of civilians, rather than police officers, most of whom had joined the public service after the ANC's first election victory. Secondly, the ministers had their hands full trying to direct the process of transformation in each government department.

In the security sector, this entailed not only rebuilding public confidence in the institutions of government, but also managing complex organisational change processes and supporting the Truth and Reconciliation Commission. The ministers were largely concerned with restructuring and re-directing their departments, and had little or no capacity to develop innovative responses to the burgeoning crime problem. They were also sceptical of some of the crime-fighting tactics proposed by senior officials in the criminal justice system, most of whom had served the apartheid regime. They therefore tended to assign an increasing number of complex crime and criminal justice issues to a small group of trusted civil servants in the NCPS office and in their respective ministries.

It soon became obvious to these civil servants that inter-agency co-operation did not arise naturally or spontaneously, because almost all of the financial and performance incentives in government acted against co-operation and integration. Very few of these incentives, if any, rewarded co-operation directly. To develop and maintain co-operation therefore required a great deal of effort, leadership, and the maintenance of project management and management information systems. These were skills in short supply.

By the end of 1997, it was clear that the NCPS was trying to manage too many initiatives with too little capacity, and that a review of the implementation of the NCPS was required.

Reviewing the NCPS

The government's review of NCPS activities, conducted internally, recommended that:

- A summary of the NCPS should be redrafted to capture the original intentions in a clearer way, and to incorporate the programme-driven approach by means of which the NCPS was then being implemented.
- A national victim survey should be conducted.
- The priority focus for the NCPS for the medium-term should be the reduction in the incidence of serious violent crime, especially gun crime, and the reduction of corruption in order to create public confidence in the criminal justice system.
- NCPS programmes should be prioritised in departmental budgets, and the NCPS should be reflected in the strategic objectives of the various participating departments.
- Systemic reform of the criminal justice system and the long-term preventive approach should not be sacrificed in the face of short-term pressures to respond to changing crime trends.
- More attention should be devoted to the problem of organised crime, and in particular transnational organised crime.
- Attention should be given to fast-tracking the diversion of offenders before they entered the criminal justice system, by means of measures such as spot fines, admission-of-guilt fines, or a points system for traffic offenders, in order to reduce the burden on the system.
- An appropriate strategy for implementing 'zero-tolerance' law enforcement should be agreed within the NCPS framework, taking into account the priority problem of violent crime and the issues of capacity and diversion.
- Alternative (non-custodial) sentencing options should be considered.
- Renewed focus should be placed on the management of courts, including human resource development, infrastructure and training in the justice and prosecution sectors, to unblock the justice system.
- Medium- to long-term programmes should not be developed in isolation from the short-term initiatives at the operational level. One way of achieving this, the review suggested, would be to implement pilot projects in order to test new tactics.
- A link between longer-term programmes and shorter-term operational initiatives within each department should be created and maintained, as well as similar links between departments. It was proposed that a national operations co-ordinating committee should be established to deal with purely operational matters between the NCPS departments.
- The high rate of recidivism (repeat offending) should be taken up more actively within the NCPS.

The identification of these issues played a prominent role in informing subsequent developments in government crime reduction approaches, and continues to shape the policy agenda today.

Two important conceptual links were made in this period: the need to link enforcement and prevention, and the need to link immediate or short-term actions against crime with the longer-term approaches envisaged in the original NCPS.

In the review, and in the Presidential Review Commission of the same period, the difficulties of facilitating or encouraging system-wide co-operation and integration without compromising the requirements of public financial accountability and performance management were elaborated upon. This, together with the knowledge that in almost all of the multi-agency projects of the NCPS there was a stage in which the project had to be driven from the centre, provided a strong argument for the retention of some central capacity to oversee and co-ordinate all NCPS activity. These analyses informed many of the provisions related to crime prevention contained in the 1998 White Paper on Safety and Security.

The 1998 White Paper on Safety and Security

The 1998 White Paper on Safety and Security attempted to deepen government's policy approach to crime prevention in South Africa, and proposed ways to revise the original NCPS, based, in part, on the recommendations of the 1997 NCPS review. The White Paper entitled "In Service of Safety" was approved by Cabinet in September 1998 and was intended to provide the policy framework for government's provision of safety and security until 2004. In brief, the White Paper focused on three key areas: law enforcement, crime prevention and institutional reform to meet delivery goals.

Law enforcement

The focus areas identified in the White Paper to ensure effective law enforcement and service orientated policing were intended to:

- improve the investigative capacity of the SAPS
- implement targeted visible policing
- improve services to victims of crime.

Crime prevention

The White Paper provided a wide new definition of crime prevention: "all activities which reduce, deter or prevent the occurrence of specific crimes firstly, by altering the environment in which they occur, secondly by changing the conditions which are thought to cause them, and thirdly by providing a strong deterrent in the form of an effective criminal justice system." This was an attempt to encapsulate both criminal justice and crime prevention within government's crime reduction agenda.

In the area of crime prevention, the White Paper introduced new approaches such as "developmental" crime prevention aimed at young people and families; "situational crime prevention" and "community crime prevention", to be targeted at specific geographic areas. The latter approaches also included an emphasis on criminal justice system reform. The White Paper advocated targeted, multi-agency crime prevention strategies focusing on offenders and victims, and the environment in which they live, as well as on the root causes of particular crime types.

To assist delivery of such strategies, it proposed a National Crime Prevention Centre to be housed in the national Secretariat for Safety and Security. The centre would function as a central co-ordinating mechanism for supporting the delivery of crime prevention initiatives.

Institutional reform

At national level, the policy interventions outlined in the White Paper sought to clarify issues of accountability and operational independence by:

- Strengthening the position of Secretary for Safety and Security to become the accounting officer (financial head) of the Department for Safety and Security (and hence giving the civilian secretary financial control over the SAPS).
- Clarifying the roles of the various components of the Department, in an attempt to reduce tensions between the civilian secretariats and the SAPS.

At provincial level, the White Paper created an active role for provincial administrations in crime prevention. In particular, the White Paper advocated that provinces should:

- Initiate and co-ordinate social crime prevention programmes.
- Mobilise resources for social crime prevention.
- Co-ordinate a range of provincial functions and role-players to achieve effective crime prevention.
- Evaluate and support local governments in crime prevention programmes.
- Establish public and private partnerships to support crime prevention.

At local level, the White Paper advocated a much greater role for local government in the delivery of crime prevention initiatives. For municipalities, the White Paper detailed the following functions:

- Initiate, co-ordinate and participate in targeted social crime prevention.
- Work with local police to set joint local safety priorities and possible areas for local government intervention.
- Align municipal resources and objectives with a crime prevention framework to ensure that development projects take account of crime prevention.
- Effective enforcement of municipal by-laws.

- Assist victims of crime through the provision of information regarding available support services in the municipal area.

Further, the White Paper endorsed the establishment of local or municipal police services, which would enforce road traffic laws and by-laws and perform visible policing. Legislation enabling and regulating the establishment of such municipal police services was passed in 1998.

Finally, to balance the greater role given to local government, the White Paper also outlined some new roles for Community Police Forums (CPFs):

- Co-operate with local government to jointly set crime prevention priorities.
- Assist in the development of targeted crime prevention programmes.
- Identify flashpoints, crime patterns and community anti-crime activities.
- Mobilise and organise community based campaigns and activities.
- Facilitate regular attendance by local councillors at CPF meetings.

The key conceptual guidance provided in the White Paper was that policing (law enforcement) and crime prevention should be integrated and "inter-locking". This aimed to address the historical gulf between the endeavours of the NCPS and those of the SAPS. Also, the White Paper went further than the original NCPS to define the roles of national, provincial and local government in respect of crime prevention; and placed significant emphasis on a new partnership role for municipalities in crime reduction.

However, implementation of the White Paper in the 1998-2000 period focused almost entirely on law enforcement and the infrastructural design of an integrated criminal justice system. The continued abandonment of truly preventive elements of policy was mainly due to government's adoption of a hands-on, tough and speedy approach to confronting the country's high crime levels, which emerged after the appointment of President Mbeki's administration in 1999.

Indeed, shortly before the end of the first Cabinet's term of office, a further review of the NCPS and its activities was commissioned and its findings were hard-hitting:

- Drastic improvements were necessary if there was to be a significant impact on crime and violence. The NCPS could not continue with incremental steps.
- Much more focus was required from the cluster of criminal justice departments, much tighter prioritisation of efforts and resources, and much more integration of the work of the different departments.
- Efforts should be integrated around a small number of high-impact programmes aimed at dealing with priority crimes.
- Government's approach to crime reduction must be based on knowledge and information. It should be informed by successes and failures and monitoring of

progress on a regular basis. Increased contact with international prevention efforts, and exchanges of information and intelligence between government agencies must be facilitated.

- There should be integration of short-term (operational) and long-term (preventive) measures which, together, would reduce the incidence of priority crimes.⁴

After the June 1999 election, these recommendations were made to the new departmental ministers responsible for the primary NCPS portfolios. The findings correlated easily with the approach of the Mbeki Cabinet.

After the second election: crime-fighting rather than crime prevention

The new ministers in the Justice and Constitutional Development, Safety and Security, and Correctional Services portfolios commenced their terms of office with remarks and policy statements intended to clearly differentiate them from their predecessors. This was made clear by the new Minister of Justice and Constitutional Development, Penuell Maduna, soon after his appointment:

As our country embarks on the second democratic term, we have to reflect on the shortcomings of the previous term, and resolve to improve significantly on performance. While over the last five years the Department was able to lay a solid legislative and indeed infrastructural foundation for a strong and responsive justice system, many problems continue to plague our justice system; at times evoking public sentiments that the new democratic order is more sympathetic to human rights concerns of criminals and less sensitive to the plight of victims of crime and the general sense of insecurity that continues to besiege our country.⁵

His colleague, the Minister of Safety and Security, adopted a tough tone from the outset:

The criminals have obviously declared war against the South African public... We are ready, more than ever before, not just to send a message to the criminals out there about our intentions, but more importantly to make them feel that *die tyd vir speletjies is nou verby* [there is no more time for playing games]. We are now poised to rise with power and vigour proportional to the enormity and vastness of the aim to be achieved.⁶

The new ministers infused the NCPS with the rhetoric of 'war on crime', distancing themselves from its origins as the 'soft', developmental side of government's strategy

to deal with crime. However, some of the recommendations of the 1998 NCPS review were adopted, and the new administration selected the following issues for prioritisation:

- Crime involving firearms: the easy availability of firearms is a major contributor to the prevalence of inter-personal violence and lethal crime in South Africa.
- Organised crime: much of South Africa's crime problem is organised. By tackling organised crime, government believed it would be able to impact on vehicle crime, drug trafficking, trade in illegal weapons and endangered species and also money laundering and certain forms of commercial crime.
- White-collar crime: commercial crimes, although often perceived as victimless, rob the South African economy of billions of rand every year, thereby reducing opportunities for economic growth and development. A continued focus on white-collar crime would ensure that the NCPS also addressed 'the crimes of the powerful'.
- Inter-group conflict: this type of crime needed to remain a national priority in the light of continuing conflicts in the taxi industry, and problems of vigilantism, criminal gangs (especially in the Western Cape), and ongoing political conflict in KwaZulu-Natal.
- Vehicle theft and hijackings: the figures for vehicle crime in South Africa remained unacceptably high; the violence which has come to be associated with hijacking, in particular, generates high levels of fear.
- Corruption in the criminal justice system: there was a recognition that this problem could undermine all government efforts in respect of crime prevention.
- Inter-personal violence: making more explicit some of the content of the original NCPS, this focus would enable government to prioritise violence against women and children, murder, and assault, which make up the bulk of South Africa's violent crime problem. A new focus would require programmes to prevent young people from becoming perpetrators of violent crimes, and to prevent certain groups of people from becoming victims, and repeat victims, of violent crimes.

The selection of these priorities showed that some lessons had been learnt from the early years of the NCPS: violent crime needed to be prioritised, as did organised crime. Further, the adoption of a new 'cluster' system by the Cabinet was intended to result in the NCPS departments working more closely together. There was also the promise that new funding would be found for NCPS activities (or at least for activities that would improve the functioning of the police, courts and prisons as an integrated justice system). The new government's approach to the NCPS included:

- Implementing a project management system to govern all NCPS projects.
- Appointing very senior departmental officials to lead each NCPS project.
- A new approach to 'cluster budgeting' for the criminal justice cluster.
- Learning from experience and enhancing co-operation and co-ordination among officials involved in implementing NCPS programmes.

Perhaps the most significant shift in the government's crime prevention approach in the post-1999 period was the merging of what had previously been described as short-term, operational actions with the longer-term strategies for justice reform and prevention. For the new ministers, there appeared to be little distinction between police and army roadblock operations, and the information technology complexities of the Integrated Justice System Programme: all these were considered part of the NCPS. The new interpretation of the NCPS was evident in the Minister of Safety and Security's first speech after his appointment to the position:

The criminals have obviously declared war against the South African public. In response our Government formulated the National Crime Prevention Strategy which would serve as a basis for the eradication of the criminal activity which has pervaded practically all spheres of life in our country. It is not that Government did not have a plan aimed at ridding our society of this particular scourge. What is required now is a ruthless implementation of that plan.⁷

Indeed, implementation has been so ruthless that large parts of the previous government's policy, contained for example in the Safety and Security White Paper and the Department of Justice's Vision 2000 plan, have been either entirely ignored or adapted to fit the tough enforcement agenda.

For instance, institutional restructuring of the Department of Safety and Security under Minister Tshwete resulted in a significant disempowerment of the national Secretariat, rather than the strengthening envisaged in the 1998 White Paper. Not only were the oversight functions envisaged for the Secretariat retained by the SAPS, but the crime prevention role advocated for the Secretariat was also shifted to the SAPS. Instead of a National Crime Prevention Centre to facilitate and support crime prevention initiatives, a Social Crime Prevention Unit was created in the SAPS, staffed by a handful of former civilian Secretariat staff.

The SAPS' new millennium crime combating strategy

In broad terms, the SAPS' high-profile strategy (adopted in March 2000) to combat crime in particular hot-spot areas over a three-year period, had two primary objectives:

- To reduce or 'stabilise' crime in the targeted areas to the extent that station level policing became 'normalised' and effective. To support this, SAPS projects aimed at improving station level performance, like the service delivery improvement programme, would also be focused on these areas.
- To improve public confidence in the police and to improve public perceptions of safety.

The police strategy had three main components:

- A geographical approach, in which areas affected by high crime rates, and particularly violent crime, were clustered into 'crime-combating zones' which were then targeted for aggressive high-density street-level policing.
- This was accompanied by an intelligence-driven focus on organised crime syndicates operating in these areas, aimed at disrupting syndicate activities by arresting syndicate leaders and 'runners', and by closing down the flow of goods and markets for these goods.
- Finally, these operational activities were meant to be supported by medium-term crime prevention initiatives aimed at addressing the socio-economic and development factors leading to high rates of criminal activity in these areas.

This police strategy continued to drive the government's approach to crime reduction in South Africa until the death of Minister Tshwete in 2002. Its influence was evident in the 2001 Budget Review by the National Treasury which defined government's expenditure priorities for the 2001/02 to 2003/04 period. Those priorities were:

- economic growth and job creation
- reducing inequality and promoting social development
- strengthening the provision of safety and justice.

That safety and justice were regarded as priorities on a par with job creation and development indicated that delivery aimed at reducing crime and violence was, eventually, understood as key to the success of ANC government policy as a whole. The 2001 budget reflected a significant allocation of additional resources to the criminal justice system, in support of the following priorities:

- Improving remuneration for criminal justice officials in all three sectors, while growing personnel numbers in the criminal justice departments modestly.
- Investing in supportive equipment, supplies and infrastructure for the criminal justice departments.
- Investing in more prison accommodation.

In 2001, the Treasury predicted that the overall government budget would grow by 2.9% more than the rate of inflation between 2000 and 2004. It also promised the Department of Justice and Constitutional Development the fastest budget growth (7.6% per year over the 2000-2004 period), with much of that growth concentrated in 2001/02. The Department of Correctional Services' budget was intended to grow at 3.2% per year and the SAPS budget at 1.8% per year. Given that government spending is arguably the most accurate evidence of policy, it is telling to consider the type of spending programmes that these increased allocations were intended to fund:

SAPS

- Recruiting additional staff to stabilise the size of the SAPS.
- Implementing a special salary dispensation for police officers which would see police officers receiving an additional 3% to 4% salary increase in 2001/02, relative to all other civil servants.
- The purchase of new vehicles to improve police response times.
- The financing of the costs of implementing the Automated Fingerprint Identification System.
- The maintenance and upgrading of police stations.

Justice

- Recruiting additional staff in the Directorate of Special Operations (the Scorpions) and the Prosecution Service.
- Improving the salaries of judges and some magistrates.
- The financing of TRC reparations.
- Improving the solvency of the Legal Aid Board while also managing the transition of legal aid to a public defender model.
- Implementing IT systems in, and the provision of IT equipment to, members of the department.

Corrections

- Financing the operational costs associated with the rapid rise in prisoner numbers.
- Providing more prison space over the medium term.

In the Budget Review, the government defined a policy agenda that strongly supported a criminal justice and law enforcement approach. In so doing, it once again neglected the preventive approaches to dealing with the causes of crime as proposed in the original NCPS and the 1998 White Paper on Safety and Security.

Prevention vs enforcement: a never-ending struggle?

The two key challenges facing policy making around crime prevention in South Africa remain integrating enforcement with prevention; and linking long-term prevention measures with short-term operations:

For policy innovation to be effective in a society in transition there has to be an active process of acquiring public support. There is no question that the [long-term crime] prevention agenda is the best vehicle for dealing with violence and crime, but, because we did not have short-term enforcement measures that built popular confidence up-front, the wider prevention agenda was discredited. The people on the ground were not feeling the effect of any short-term safety and security measures. The lesson learnt is not so much about how we strategically defend creative policy interventions, but about how we build the mechanisms which anticipate shifting popular concerns, and build public confidence, at the outset.⁸

South Africa still lacks an up-to-date, coherent and implementable national framework for preventing crime. However, there are a range of prevention programmes currently being run by the SAPS Social Crime Prevention Unit, NGOs, municipalities, and provincial administrations. Perhaps if these projects can be sustained and show positive benefits, they will lead to renewed interest in the long-term, developmental approach to crime prevention. As the destruction of the social fabric of South African society caused by apartheid becomes more evident, government interest in social approaches to crime prevention may increase. The emergence of new calls in government for 'moral regeneration' and voluntarism may be evidence of a new interest in long-term crime prevention. However, the experience of crime prevention practitioners in other countries suggests that the struggle for longer term preventive approaches over the 'war on crime' is an ongoing one:

For the past twenty years, criminal justice practices have been so profoundly ill-conceived that they have been bound to fail. As the failures have accumulated, the justice system has responded by adding more of the same policies. Prison and jail populations in this nation have tripled since 1980, and law enforcement expenditures have quadrupled, but polls show that most Americans do not feel safe. Legislatures lengthen sentences and add more mandatory minimum penalties. More police are hired, more prisons built. Still, we do not feel safe. In response, policy makers continue to expand the same criminal justice apparatus: more enforcement, longer sentences, more prisons. If this 'get tough' strategy worked, the results would be apparent by now. They are not.⁹

Perhaps South African policy makers are already learning the lesson. In his last Budget Vote in Parliament, the late Minister Tshwete conceded that SAPS crime fighting methods "have not yielded the desired result... Let us find an alternative", Tshwete told parliament, "we all underestimated how difficult it would be to transform the SAPS and the whole criminal justice system."¹⁰