

CHAPTER 13

PERCEPTIONS OF POLICING AND HOW TO IMPROVE SAFETY

Key points

- 80% of people said they used some form of protection against crime and violence, mostly burglar-proofing, fences or walls, a dog and a weapon.
- Although these measures are relatively simple, 68% said they felt fairly safe as a result of using them.
- 56% thought government should provide more visible police and security guards and a better distribution of police posts.
- 44% said that, compared to previous years, the quality of policing has stayed the same; 39% thought it had declined.
- Access to the police was less of a problem (two-thirds reached the police within half an hour) than the lack of visible policing and patrols: 36% never saw a police officer on duty and 17% said they saw an officer less than once a month.
- Visible policing should be targeted in the suburbs. In new suburbs, 62% said they never saw the police and 48% in established suburbs said the same. These people were much more likely than those in other parts of the city to think crime has increased. They also displayed high levels of fear of crime.
- When asked how individuals can improve safety, 62% said they could cooperate with or join the police, security guards, SunguSungu or neighbourhood watch organisations. This shows the inability of the police to fulfil this role and the need for some security presence as a priority.
- People seemed more inclined to support SunguSungu-type initiatives than the police. Despite this and the fact that 53% thought these community initiatives improve safety, only 25% of all respondents said that community initiatives actually exist in their neighbourhoods.
- Between 14% and a quarter said there was nothing they could do to improve safety. None mentioned taking precautions or being more alert, which suggests a limited knowledge about crime prevention and risk avoidance behaviour.

All respondents, victims and non-victims, were asked a range of questions about possible measures to improve their personal safety, as well as that of the city in general. This data provides an important guide for officials when planning crime reduction strategies. It reveals what people are currently doing to enhance their safety, as well as what they believe the city government’s priorities should be in this regard. These perceptions are important for a crime prevention strategy, not only because they indicate what the public want the most, but also because they assist in the management of public relations around the strategy.

The following issues are covered in this section:

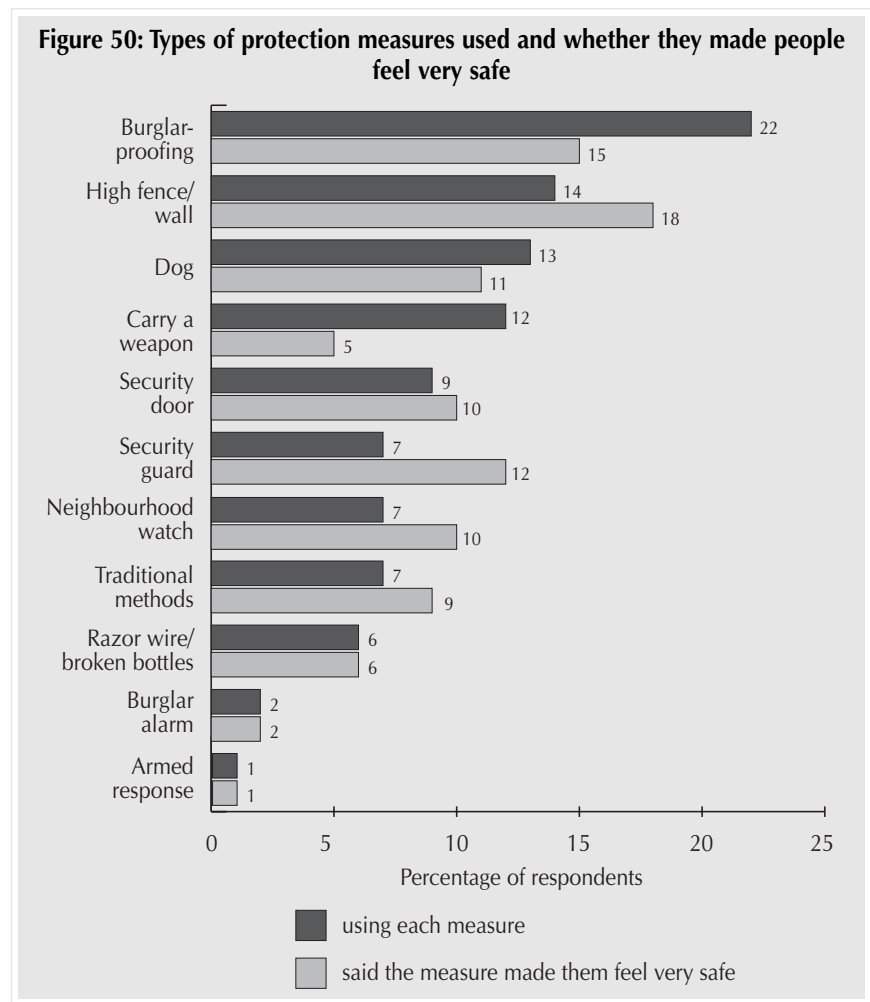
- what people do to protect themselves from crime and violence, whether these measures make their users feel safer and how they could be improved;
- what government should do to make Dar es Salaam safer;
- access to, and attitudes about, policing in the city; and
- what individuals thought they could do to make Dar es Salaam safer.

Type of protection measures used

The vast majority of people in Dar es Salaam (80%) used some form of protection against crime and violence. The remaining 20% – a significant minority – had no means of protection. A wide variety of measures were used. The most common type of protection was burglar-proofing, followed by fences or walls, a dog and a weapon. These are cheaper than devices such as burglar alarms and armed response services which were used by comparatively few people (figure 50).

Over two-thirds of respondents said the protection measures they used made them feel fairly safe (68%). For the rest, 14% said they still felt a bit unsafe and 5% felt very unsafe, while 13% felt very safe. This suggests that the devices currently used – although fairly simple – enhanced feelings of safety among the vast majority of people. The measures most likely to make people feel very safe were a high fence or wall, burglar-proofing, a security guard and a dog (figure 50). Interestingly, although 12% of respondents said they carried a weapon, only 5% said this made them feel very safe.

The overall level of safety provided by these measures may partly explain why, when asked what else they could do to improve their own safety, most respondents (66%) said there was nothing else they could do. Alternatively, it may also be true that people were unaware of how else to become involved in crime reduction, or that they believe it is government’s job rather than their own to provide security.



Those with formal and informal employment were less likely to say there was nothing they could do (60% and 63%, respectively) than those dependent on other income (70%) and the unemployed (71%). Nevertheless, affordability was not the key determinant since a majority of employed respondents still maintained there was nothing they could do to improve their safety.

Among the 34% who did have ideas about how to enhance their safety, most said they could participate in community-based initiatives such as SunguSungu,

neighbourhood watches or police patrols. The remainder mentioned carrying a gun or other weapon, followed by more conventional target-hardening measures such as building high walls, better lighting and burglar-proofing.

Government interventions and the need for better policing

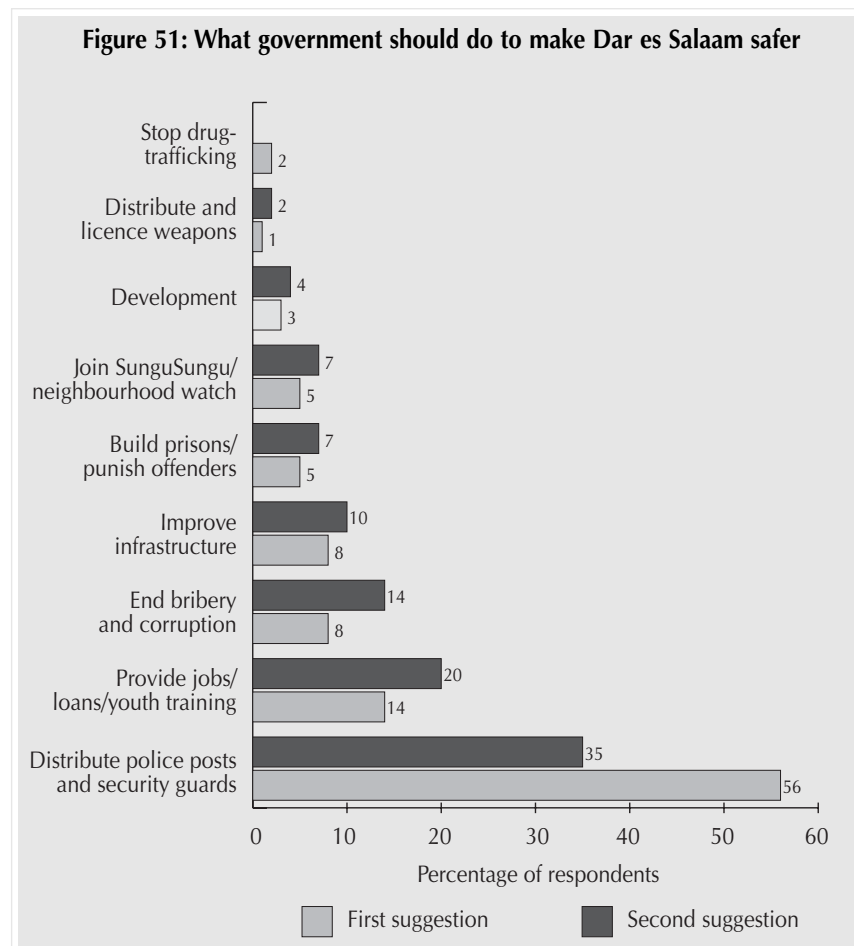
In response to an open-ended question about what government should do to make Dar es Salaam a safer city – in which two suggestions were allowed – most respondents called for more visible police (and security guards) and a better distribution of police posts. Associated with this call for improved policing was the need for government to end bribery and corruption among police members (figure 51). After more visible law enforcement, a common request was for better economic support from government in the form of job creation and the provision of loans and training for the youth.

The results clearly indicate that people want better and more visible policing. Since a city-level crime reduction strategy will need to focus on issues other than just policing, these views must be considered in the planning of the strategy and how it is marketed to various constituencies.

Victim surveys conducted in South African cities revealed similar tendencies, with the vast majority of residents in Johannesburg, Durban, Cape Town and Pretoria calling for better policing and law enforcement and more resources for the police.¹³ One significant difference between the South African cities and Dar es Salaam, however, is that residents in the former were much more likely than those in Dar es Salaam to say that harsher punishment for offenders was required. In South Africa, these views are probably more symptomatic of the need for speedier and more effective processing of offenders by the criminal justice system than about actual sentencing policy.

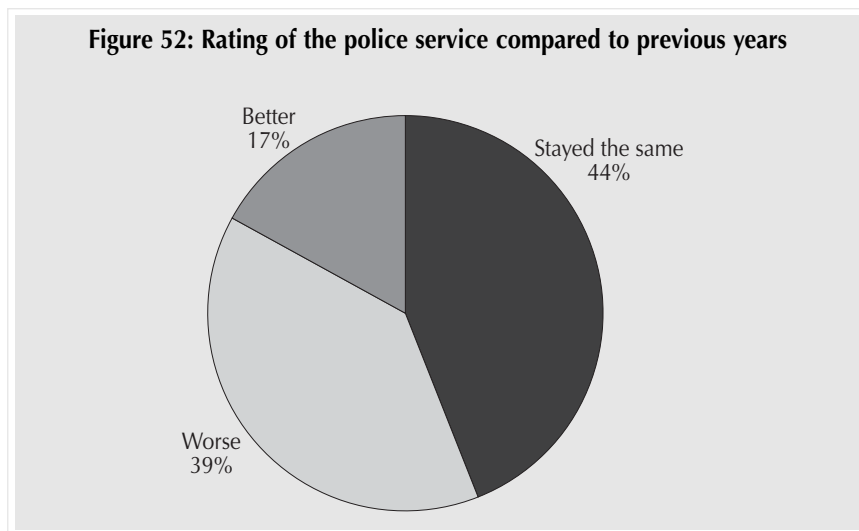
In Dar es Salaam, the need for government to improve policing was confirmed by the view of nearly half of the respondents that compared to previous years, policing in their areas of residence has stayed the same (figure 52). More than a third thought that the standard of policing had declined and only 17% said it was better than in previous years. Bearing in mind that 62% of respondents in the city estimated that crime in their area had increased compared to previous years, it is possible that people believe the level and effectiveness of the police have not kept up with the increasing levels of crime.

The aspect of policing that probably needs the most attention in Dar es Salaam is visible policing and patrols. When asked what government should do to make Dar



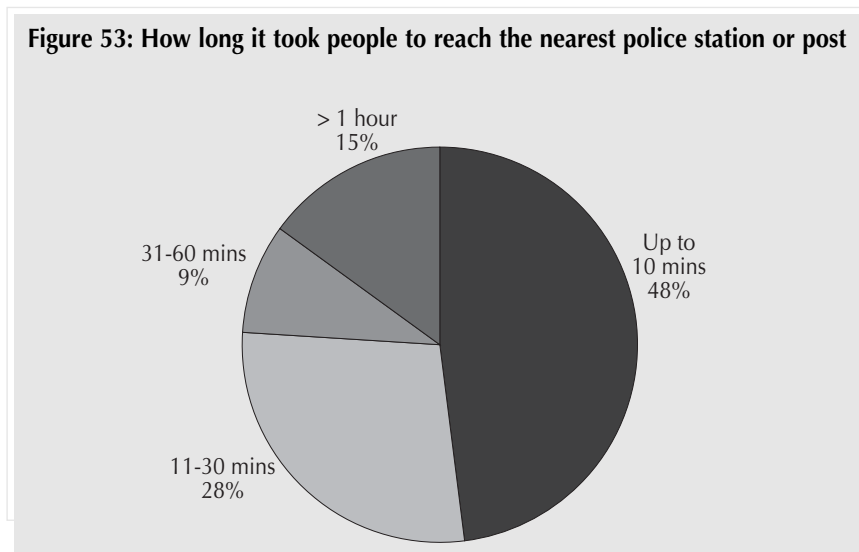
es Salaam safer, most people mentioned a better distribution of police posts. However, more detailed questions about people’s current access to a police station or post suggested that it is the visibility of the police rather than public access to the police that is the problem.

Access to the police was assessed through several questions about the distance to the nearest police station or post, how people get there, how long it takes them and whether they have a working telephone in their home. The vast majority of respondents (87%) said they live within six kilometres of the nearest police station or police post. Although most (68%) had to walk in order to reach the police, two-



thirds arrived there within half an hour with nearly half saying it took them only 10 minutes (figure 53).

Access via telephone was limited, since only 36% of people had a phone in their home and only 32% said their phone was in working order. In addition, because some police stations and most police posts do not have telephones, whether or not



members of the public have a telephone becomes irrelevant as a measure of access to the police. Despite poor telephonic access, the data suggests that people in Dar es Salaam could generally reach the police – at a police station or post – fairly quickly and easily.

Of more concern is that, according to the survey, many people living in Dar es Salaam rarely if ever saw a police officer on duty in their neighbourhood. More than a third never saw a police officer on duty and 17% said they saw an officer less than once a month. Thus, for over half of the respondents, seeing a police officer on duty was a rare occurrence (figure 54).

These findings suggest that, when asking government to improve policing, people in Dar es Salaam were referring more to the need for visible police patrols than for the building of more police stations or posts. A visible police presence may help to reduce some types of crime, but is more likely to reduce the fear of crime. In Dar es Salaam, the vast majority of people who said they never saw a police officer on duty in their area, felt unsafe after dark (table 15).

However, the problem did not affect all parts of Dar es Salaam to the same extent. Those most likely to see a police officer on duty were people living in the inner city – half of whom saw a police officer on a daily basis – followed by residents of rural settlements. The latter were as likely as inner city residents to see police officers on

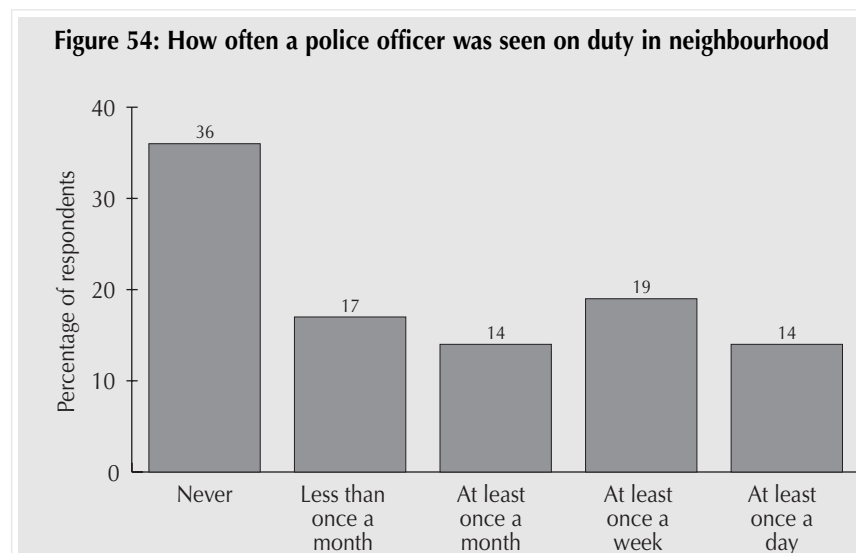


Table 15: How safe people felt after dark in their neighbourhoods in relation to how often they saw a police officer on duty in their area

Feelings of safety	At least once a day (%)	At least once a week (%)	At least once a month (%)	Less than once a month (%)	Never (%)
Safe	43	34	42	59	28
Unsafe	57	66	58	41	72
Total	100	100	100	100	100

duty at least once a week, and more likely than people from any other part of the city to see the police once a month or less than once a month (table 16). Of most concern were people living in new suburbs – 62% said they never saw the police. Nearly half of the residents of established suburbs (48%) said the same.

Efforts to increase visible policing should therefore be targeted in the suburbs. This is particularly important given that people living in these areas were much more likely than those in other parts of the city to believe that crime in their neighbourhood had increased compared to previous years. Suburban residents also displayed a more pronounced fear of crime than those living in the inner city or rural settlements.

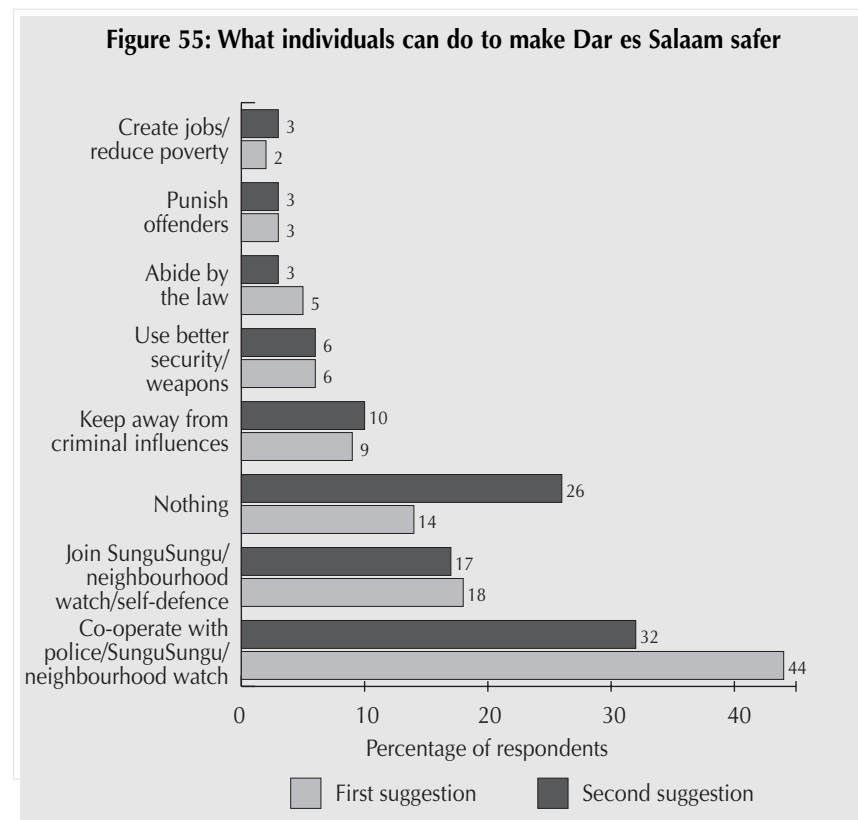
Table 16: How often people living in different parts of the city saw a police officer on duty in their neighbourhood

	Inner city (%)	Established suburb (%)	New suburb (%)	Rural settlement (%)
At least once a day	51	6	4	1
At least once a week	22	18	17	21
At least once a month	7	16	12	19
Less than once a month	7	12	5	50
Never	13	48	62	9
Total	100	100	100	100

What people can do to improve their safety

Effective crime reduction depends on building partnerships and engaging in joint efforts between government actors and members of those communities that are affected by crime. Respondents in the survey were therefore asked, not only what they think government should do to make the city safer, but also what they could do.

The findings confirm the need illustrated by the results above for a more visible presence of guards, either in the form of police officials or non-state agencies such as security guards or neighbourhood watch patrols. More than half of the respondents – using both their first and second suggestions – said they could co-operate with or join the police, security guards, SunguSungu or neighbourhood watch organisations to make the city safer (figure 55). This illustrates the inability of the local police to fulfil this role effectively. On the other hand, it shows that people



believe it to be a priority, since they are prepared to take on the task themselves in the absence of policing.

A concerning trend, also evident in results presented elsewhere (types of protection measures used), is the number of people who said there was nothing they could do to improve safety in Dar es Salaam. In South Africa, by comparison, less people said there was nothing they could do to enhance safety. In the latter, significant proportions said they could take precautions against crime and be more alert (30% in Pretoria, for example). This suggests that knowledge about alternative means of preventing crime or changing behaviour to reduce the risk of victimisation is limited in Dar es Salaam.

However, there are some similarities in the responses of people in Dar es Salaam and South African cities. Policing-type solutions were also most popular in South Africa, although a clearer distinction was made between the most popular choice – better co-operation with the police – and community-based safety initiatives. In Pretoria, for example, 34% said they could co-operate with the police and a further 25% mentioned participating in community-based initiatives. (The latter refers to a range of activities that would include measures alluded to by the Dar es Salaam respondents, such as neighbourhood watches.) This suggests that, in South Africa, people were more inclined to co-operate with the police than in Dar es Salaam. In Dar es Salaam, by comparison, the majority of people described non-state policing options, such as joining and co-operating with SunguSungu, security guards, neighbourhood watches and community groups.

When asked about these non-state policing activities in more detail, only 24% of respondents said that people in their community made arrangements to protect themselves. Virtually all (94%) those who mentioned such arrangements were referring to SunguSungu and neighbourhood watch schemes. The remaining few said people joined community groups or made other *ad hoc* protection arrangements. Importantly, more than half (53%) of the respondents who said their community made arrangements to protect itself believed these initiatives were effective in securing their community.