

# CHAPTER 1

## INTRODUCTION

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### Introduction

In the 14 member-state Southern African Development Community (SADC),<sup>1</sup> organised crime is a concept that has increasingly featured in the media and in comments by law enforcement officials. However, the extent to which organised crime has been prioritised by law enforcement, or the extent to which the term ‘organised crime’ has become part of standard policing vocabulary, varies significantly from country to country.

A common understanding of what organised crime actually is still has to be developed in the SADC region. The phenomenon came to the fore in Southern Africa much later than in other parts of the world. Those that have been focusing on it, namely law enforcement agencies and some researchers, have engaged mainly in the primary research task of collecting information about the nature and extent of organised crime in SADC states, based on a broad and undefined understanding of what organised crime is. Understandably, the general approach of researchers has been, “lets find out what is happening before we try to understand exactly why and how it is happening”.

According to police agencies in the region, organised crime has increased in most SADC member states.<sup>2</sup> Politicians, officials and international bodies regularly comment on the gravity of the threat posed by it. South Africa has been referred to as “an important centre for international criminal activity”.<sup>3</sup> Transnational organised crime is said to “wreak havoc” in almost all Southern African countries.<sup>4</sup> The possible disastrous consequences for good governance and the economy have been highlighted, and it has been stressed that a political will is required to “confront the phenomenon head-on with all the might and ruthlessness that can be summoned”.<sup>5</sup>

While very few in Southern Africa will doubt that organised criminal activity has increased over the past two decades or that it constitutes a threat, the statements that public figures make about it, and what researchers (including the Institute for Security Studies) publish on organised crime begs the question, “what do they mean by it?”. Is it being used in Southern Africa merely as a catch-all phrase

for all serious crimes that involve a degree of organisation and a profit motive? A 2000 survey of SADC police agencies showed that agencies in five of the nine participating countries had not adopted a definition of organised crime, while the remaining four used definitions that differed from one another.<sup>6</sup> This certainly suggests that a 'gut feel', popular understanding of organised crime is often relied upon. It also illustrates that the mere adoption of a definition does not necessarily provide for greater clarity on what is actually meant. In short, the reality is that we do not know what exactly the various spokespersons and law enforcement agencies in Southern Africa mean when they refer to organised crime.

Some scholars have considered whether organised crime in Africa has different characteristics from what is found in other regions, such as North America. Opolot posed the question:

If organised crime exists in Africa, does it take on the forms and aspects that characterize it in Western societies, especially in the United States? In other words, in what respects is the African version of organized crime unique and to what extent does it resemble its counterpart in other parts of the world?<sup>7</sup>

He ventures a definition which he believes could explain the 'African version' of organised crime as it manifests itself in some parts of the continent.<sup>8</sup> The inadequacies of the attempted definition are not the subject of discussion in this paper. Much has changed in many parts of Africa since Opolot's article was written. What is positive in Opolot's focus on organised crime in Africa, however, is his readiness to take into account political and historical factors and to let a definition emerge from his study of organised crime in Africa, as he understands it.

There appears to be a growing scepticism among analysts and scholars about the bland use of the term 'organised crime'. Andrè Standing, in a critical examination and historical overview of the subject, puts forward the argument that "organised crime has become a muddled analytical concept in mainstream discourse due to a combination of poor empirical research and popular misconceptions about notorious crime groups such as the American Mafia".<sup>9</sup> He suggests that the concept of organised crime should be replaced with that of 'illicit enterprise' and that the analytical focus should change away from criminal groups towards specific commodity and service economies.

This monograph does not enter into these debates. Not only is it a complex and contested terrain which would require an in-depth study and analysis—

something that the project which produced this monograph was not designed to do—but the needs of policy and decision makers in Southern Africa would at this stage probably be better served by assisting in obtaining more information about organised criminal activity in the region. Once more information about the nature and extent of organised criminal activities in Southern African countries is available, a critique about definitional and conceptual issues will be more fruitful.

For present purposes the broad and indirect definition of organised crime that was adopted by the UN Convention Against Transnational Organised Crime (the Palermo Convention) was taken as a guideline. The compromise agreed upon during the negotiations leading to the Palermo Convention did not explicitly define ‘organised crime’. Instead it provided a definition for an ‘organised criminal group’ and then proceeded to criminalise participation therein.<sup>10</sup> Article 2 of the Convention provides that:

- ‘Organized criminal group’ shall mean a structured group of three or more persons, existing for a period of time and acting in concert with the aim of committing one or more serious crimes or offences established in accordance with this Convention, in order to obtain, directly or indirectly, a financial or other material benefit;
- ‘Serious crime’ shall mean conduct constituting an offence punishable by a maximum deprivation of liberty of at least four years or a more serious penalty;
- ‘Structured group’ shall mean a group that is not randomly formed for the immediate commission of an offence and that does not need to have formally defined roles for its members, continuity of its membership or a developed structure...

## **A perspective of the historical development of organised crime in Southern Africa after World War II**

The chapters that follow provide an insight into some of the organised criminal groups and their activities in Southern Africa. They did not suddenly appear on the map during the 1990s. They constitute part of the continuously changing pattern of organised crime in the sub-region that goes back three or four decades. Little is known about its earlier manifestation and about the historical, social, and political factors that contributed to the development of organised crime in Southern Africa.

This introduction makes a brief incursion into that terrain with the hope of providing a background against which present-day manifestations of organised crime in the sub-region can be assessed and possibly better understood. However, much more work needs to be undertaken in this field before anything close to a detailed history of the development of organised crime can emerge.

### ***The 1950s: Relative stability—limited markets and opportunities***

The impact of World War II resulted in far reaching social, political, and economic changes for Southern African countries, most of them still colonies. The war had resulted in the relative isolation of African countries from their colonial capitals and from those who supplied products manufactured in Europe. As a result, a significant degree of self-reliance had to be fostered in the colonies and colonial governments encouraged the establishment of secondary industries. This resulted in the first significant wave of industrialisation in many of the Southern African countries. Local markets could no longer be supplied with imports from the colonial capitals and newly established secondary industries therefore aimed at meeting the needs of those markets by producing some mass consumption goods such as soap powder, matches, beer and cigarettes. Some of the more up-market goods that were produced were aimed at the more affluent sections of the local population, especially in countries where significant populations of European or Asian origin resided, such as in South Africa and Southern Rhodesia. New job opportunities for Africans were therefore created in most of the large cities in Southern Africa.<sup>11</sup> Large-scale migration to towns and cities occurred because of improved prospects for jobs. As a result, an accelerated process of urbanisation took place in many Southern African countries. This was the beginning of a wave of entrants into urban areas, many of them failing to find employment, thereby adding to the mass of poverty in the expanding urban areas. Major cities often more than doubled their population during the war. For example, in Luanda, the capital of Angola, the pre-war 1934 population of 40 000 rose to 190 000 by 1955. Salisbury (Harare), the capital of Southern Rhodesia, experienced a similar development. Its pre-war 1936 population of 33 000 increased to 168 000 by 1956.<sup>12</sup>

Most of the African job seekers who streamed to urban areas from their rural subsistence existence were illiterate and destitute. Squatter areas around cities, in which poverty was rife, expanded significantly. In the pre-war years colonial governments did not place much emphasis on education or social

welfare, but this changed after the war. The new approach of encouraging industrialisation and a growth in the manufacturing sector brought home to colonial governments the need for a better qualified and stable African working force. The result was a new post-war emphasis on social welfare.<sup>13</sup> In most colonies state support for primary education grew dramatically after the war.

In addition to the massive urbanisation among Africans, the immediate post-war period in sub-Saharan Africa also saw a significant increase in the European settler population. This was inspired largely by a need for their skills to expand secondary industries and to enhance infrastructure, such the transport system. These settlers became a relatively well-paid urban middle class, well served by the advantages accorded to European colonials, including relatively efficient law enforcement services in urban areas.

In South Africa, where the urbanisation process commenced in earnest well before World War II due mainly to the impact of gold mining and its ancillary industries, the impact of the war accelerated that process. The percentage of

urbanised Africans in South Africa in 1911 was 13%, but by 1946 this had risen to 24.3%.<sup>15</sup>

The other smaller racial groups in South Africa, namely Whites, Asians, and Coloureds, were by 1946 almost 70% urbanised.

During the 1950s, therefore, Southern African

countries, most of them still colonies, experienced relatively stable periods of moderate economic growth. Employment and education levels rose significantly. These developments in turn fuelled the further expansion of the already large unemployed and impoverished African populations that settled in shantytowns on the fringes of urban areas. Domestic markets for consumer and manufactured goods expanded, but the conditions also provided an environment for the development of criminal markets. This did not apply so much to the relatively small and more conservative, privileged, and well-protected European components in the urban centres, where the market for illicit goods

**Table 1: Growth in the European settler population<sup>14</sup>**

Country	1935/6	1950-53
Southern Rhodesia	55,419	160,000 ('53)
Angola	30,000	78,826 ('50)
Belgian Congo	18,680	76,764 ('52)
Northern Rhodesia	9,913	50,000 ('53)
South-West Africa	31,049	49,612 ('51)
Mozambique	17,997	42,200 ('53)

was relatively weak. However, within the large black urban population, now part of an increasingly industrialised society, but subject to racially discriminatory laws and without the normal avenues for social mobility or entrepreneurial advancement, the demand for illicit goods was bound to increase.

During the 1950s the criminal markets that developed were, by today's criteria, relatively harmless and in the eyes of many not even 'criminal'. They often focused on those consumer goods for which there had always been a demand but for which there were no legal supplies available, for example, cannabis or liquor. In many areas, Africans were not allowed to purchase liquor lawfully, and the illicit brewing and distribution of liquor was the obvious consequence. Organised criminal groups, often consisting of unemployed locals, stepped in and ensured the ready supply of such commodities.

In South Africa urban criminality and the number of street gangs increased during the 1950s. In the Johannesburg and Pretoria areas groups of youths known as *tsotsis* were often the forerunners of more hardened organised criminal structures. In addition to supplying cannabis and illicit liquor, criminal groups in the port city of Durban increasingly smuggled contraband through the harbour. A number of well-structured and notorious gangs came to the fore during this period. The Msomi gang and the Sheriff Khan Organisation can serve as examples.<sup>16</sup> While the conditions for organised crime and criminal markets were more favourable in South Africa than in many Southern African colonies, profitable organised crime was being kept in check by the vigorous application of discriminatory laws. Legislation controlled the daily lives of black South Africans and inter-racial contact and cooperation was problematic. Freedom of movement for the majority of citizens was restricted and borders were tightly controlled, particularly as far as black South Africans or foreigners were concerned.

The 1950s therefore saw a slow emergence of organised criminal groups throughout the SADC region and a growth in the criminal markets that they supplied. However, the opportunities remained relatively limited and the criminal markets small. It must be assumed that the smuggling of diamonds, gold and other precious metals occurred, but little information is available and such activities were not perceived to constitute a significant threat to the state or society. Policing by colonial authorities, although unevenly distributed, remained relatively effective throughout this period.

## ***The 1960s and 1970s: Post independence instability, growth in cross-border crime***

### *Establishment of regional networks*

Many anti-colonial independence struggles in Southern Africa colonies gathered momentum during the 1950s, culminating in independence at various stages during the following 40 years: from the Belgian Congo in June 1960 until South Africa's first democratic election in April 1994. Tanzania, Malawi and Zambia achieved independence in 1964, Botswana and Lesotho in 1966, Angola and Mozambique in 1975, Zimbabwe in 1980 and Namibia in 1990.

The staggered sequence of independence impacted on the political and economic environment of the entire region and also affected the way in which organised crime developed. The uncertainty and crises that followed the attainment of independence in some countries resulted in economic decline and in the departure of significant numbers of Europeans. After the Belgian Congo attained independence in 1960, the first country in the region to do so, some Belgians and others living there left for Southern Rhodesia and South Africa. Some retained contact with associates in the former colony and set about establishing whatever legitimate or illegitimate trading and smuggling links could be established for profit. Diamonds, cobalt and other minerals or semi-precious stones constituted valuable illicit smuggling items and were relatively easily obtainable in the low-risk environment that existed during the sometimes chaotic period of transition in the Congo. Not only did these new, although still unsophisticated, smuggling networks spearhead cross-border smuggling routes in the region, they depended on identifying or creating new, appropriate criminal markets through which they could sell their smuggled items. Transport routes through Zambia and Botswana into South Africa were, for example, developed to transport smuggled cobalt for export.

Similar developments occurred during the immediate post-independence period in other countries. When Angola gained its independence in 1975, a considerable number of Portuguese colonists moved to Namibia and South Africa. Again, new smuggling routes were established between Namibia and Angola and between South Africa and Angola. The fact that Angola was richly endowed with alluvial diamonds inevitably resulted in Angolan diamonds becoming a key commodity for the illicit market. These were not yet large-scale smuggling operations involving international syndicates, but primarily small-scale transactions aimed at providing an income for the former Angolans.

A similar development occurred after the independence of Mozambique in 1975. Again, a considerable number of Portuguese Mozambicans moved to South Africa. Some of them, using their contacts in Mozambique, established lucrative cross-border contraband smuggling operations.

Many countries in the region therefore experienced the development of smuggling networks in the aftermath of independence, albeit on a relatively small scale, between South Africa, Southern Rhodesia and South West Africa and a range of newly independent countries to the north of them. Cross-border or transnational organised crime, not necessarily always driven by conventional criminals, was slowly laying the basis for the increased and more extensive cross-border crime that was to follow some years later.

It must be remembered that in virtually the entire sub-region, newly independent states were grappling with post independence problems and crises. Some of the independence processes were associated with conflict, instability, and a rapid withdrawal of expertise and capital by departing colonial rulers and beneficiaries. In some countries, increased lawlessness followed. In Angola and Mozambique civil wars ensued, stoked by the involvement of South African and Rhodesian military forces respectively. The new governments in the region had to focus on the fundamental transformation of their societies and institutions. All this inevitably contributed to the weakening of state structures, including the police and those responsible for border controls. In general, turmoil and weaker policing contributed to a low-risk environment that helped criminals identify criminal markets that could be serviced, also by way of cross-border smuggling.

During the 1960s and 1970s, the white minority governments in South Africa, South West Africa and Southern Rhodesia were increasingly beleaguered, both politically and economically. The international trade sanctions which followed Southern Rhodesia's Unilateral Declaration of Independence (UDI) by Ian Smith in 1965, led to state-backed 'sanction busting' initiatives from the Smith government. With close cooperation from the business sector, a network of illicit trading channels was established involving, among others, the marketing of tobacco abroad, the importation of oil, the laundering of funds, and the utilisation of existing criminal networks.

South Africa was increasingly using its security forces, including the police, to counter the growing threats posed by liberation movements operating from outside its borders. Security forces used the nascent networks of professional smugglers as sources of intelligence and instruments of subversion. It was the

policy of destabilising neighbouring states that brought South African intelligence officers into complicity with the smuggling networks, which became, from the 1970s onwards, an increasingly important resource in the political economy of the region. During the same period, the application of international trade sanctions against South Africa caused a variety of government departments to become engaged in the international smuggling of major goods and commodities, including oil and weapons. As South African intelligence officers became smugglers and money launderers, some individuals developed criminal relationships for purely personal enrichment, several of which lasted well beyond the change of government in 1994.<sup>17</sup>

In addition to the expanding smuggling links between newly independent countries, which focused mainly on the growing criminal markets in South Africa, the period therefore also witnessed the expansion of state-backed organised criminal activities in the region. From the 1970s onwards, Southern Africa therefore experienced a significant growth of a regional economy of crime.<sup>18</sup>

### ***1980s and 1990s: International links and greater sophistication***

In the 1980s the small cross-border smuggling networks established during the 1960s and 1970s expanded with increased involvement by foreign middlemen and professional criminals. As related by a former undercover agent operating in the region,<sup>19</sup> an increasing numbers of ‘fortune hunters’ arrived in Southern African states such as Zaire, Zambia and Zimbabwe from some of the former colonial powers—France, Portugal and Britain—but also from Greece, Lebanon, India, Israel and some Central European states. Many set up small import/export businesses to use as a guise for legal or illegal business opportunities, which they sought to establish. Once established, they made contact with local African entrepreneurs, smugglers and criminals to explore business opportunities. The locals had contacts that gave them access to illicitly obtained goods such as cobalt, ivory, diamonds, or drugs such as mandrax (methaqualone).

A marriage of convenience was often forged between foreign fortune hunters and local operators, to their mutual benefit. Local Africans could supply the goods while the foreigners were in a position to buy and smuggle these to the ‘rich’ markets of South Africa. The relatively tightly controlled border posts and airports and the harsh discriminatory laws in place in South Africa at the time made it very risky for Africans from states to the north to enter the country in order to dispose of their goods or to make contact with local criminal groups.

For white foreigners living in Zaire or Zambia this was less problematic. They could visit South Africa and establish contact with existing syndicates. It was only in the early 1990s, when political changes were apparent and when discriminatory laws were relaxed, that increasing numbers of Africans and Asians from neighbouring states could enter South Africa legally to link up with the more lucrative criminal markets in South Africa.

The most popular route used to smuggle illegal goods into South Africa from the Congo (or Zaire) and Zambia, was the heavy transport road from Zambia to South Africa used by large trucks and trailers. Ivory, copper, cobalt and large quantities of mandrax were transported in this way by the newly formed syndicates, also involving South African transport drivers. Occasional cash flow problems and the frequent inability by South African purchasers to pay in hard currency led to barter transactions becoming common. Motor vehicles stolen in South Africa soon became key items in the barter trade. They were driven across the borders in payment for illegal goods supplied from the north and sometimes shipped by way of containers to countries along the African coast and beyond. Police who followed these developments are of the view that the rapid expansion of cross-border criminal transactions in the second half of the 1980s led to an ever-growing demand for stolen cars to enable South African criminal groups to pay for the goods received. As a result, car hijackings dramatically increased in South Africa and became a common way of speeding up payment. South African crime statistics indeed showed an astonishing increase in motor vehicle theft during the 1980s. The number of reported cases rose by 87% between 1980 and 1990, from 36,762 to 68,649.<sup>20</sup>

A factor that influenced the nature of crime generally throughout the region was the ready availability of firearms as a result of ongoing conflicts and civil wars in Southern Africa. The armed conflicts in Angola and Mozambique throughout the 1980s fuelled regional networks of arms smugglers and resulted in crimes throughout the SADC region being increasingly perpetrated with the threat or use of firearms. Semi-automatic rifles such as the AK47 were available throughout the region at relatively low prices. On the border between Mozambique and South Africa an AK47 could, at one stage, be exchanged for as little as a bag of maize meal.<sup>21</sup>

In general, the political and economic environment that pertained in large parts of Southern Africa during this period had a direct bearing on the expansion of organised criminal networks throughout the SADC region. From the end of the 1970s, the economic and political situation in most of the post-independence countries in Southern Africa had deteriorated substantially: the

1980s were marked by a decline in agricultural and industrial production and per capita income, a drop in trade and growing debt.<sup>22</sup> As a result of developing debt crises, countries such as Mozambique and Tanzania experienced an acute shortage of imported goods, a situation that lent itself to illicit smuggling. Black market activities expanded in an effort to fill the gap.

Many countries had no option but to accept loans with strings attached that aimed at the fundamental restructuring of their economies. In exchange for loan facilities, governments were required to adopt structural adjustment programmes (SAPs), as advocated by the World Bank. Aid donors insisted that, for example, the number of civil servants be cut, that certain state assets be privatised or sold, and that market prices alone should regulate production and distribution.

Many recently independent states were then faced with the overwhelming task of managing a double transition, namely from state-led to market-led economies, and from autocratic rule to transparent democratic politics. With some exceptions, such as Botswana, the SAPs tended to produce unintended consequences. Besides being ineffective on a macro-economic level in many countries, there were elements in the political leadership and in bureaucracies who skilfully managed the reforms in a way to suit themselves. These elements were able to use the new ideological changes to engage in 'practices of accumulation', by staking out for themselves profitable areas for their own business activities. They straddled positions of public office with positions of accumulation, inevitably leading to corruption. This development was bound to impact on corruption and organised crime. The corrupt practices of so-called accumulators in high positions brought them into contact with 'middlemen', increasingly foreigners, and other entrepreneurs who were operating in the criminal markets. One of the symptoms of the changes that occurred in many post independent states undergoing such dramatic transformations was therefore:

the growing implication of African economic and political entrepreneurs (or European, Arab, Asian and Latin American operators who are based in Africa) in activities which may be considered illegal or criminal, according to Western criteria which have tended to be adopted by the international system as a whole.<sup>23</sup>

Developments in South Africa in the 1980s and 1990s followed a different route from that experienced by post-independence countries in the region. The political turmoil of the 1980s, involving wide-scale township revolts and violent repression, resulted in greater lawlessness and in the weakening of an

already discredited criminal justice system. Law enforcement resources were deflected from normal crime prevention tasks towards combating political opposition and containing political demonstrations and conflicts in townships. Attempts to seal South Africa's long borders against incursions by guerrilla groups placed a strain on the manpower of the military and the police, while officials at regular border posts became more corrupt. Despite the impression of strict border control, an increase in the trafficking of illicit goods across border posts occurred.

Towards the late 1980s a growing number of refugees, including criminal elements, entered South Africa legally and illegally. Organised criminal groups from within the entire Southern African region and beyond took the gap and exploited this environment of confusion and lawlessness. The turmoil in South Africa not only resulted in greater lawlessness but also in the significant expansion of its criminal market. It had a larger population, greater wealth, and was more developed, industrialised and urbanised than others in the region. In addition, the iron grip which apartheid laws had for many years exercised over the movements of its population weakened considerably during the 1980s, making it possible for those classified as 'non-white' to start moving into formerly white city-centre areas, such as Hillbrow in Johannesburg. The easing of travel restrictions for both South Africans and foreigners led to improved regional mobility. Refugees and illegal immigrants from various parts of the world found their way to 'grey' areas such as Hillbrow, which had become a cosmopolitan melting pot. During the second half of the 1980s foreign nationals became increasingly involved in crime, including Nigerians who were at that time identified by the South African Police as being involved mainly in small-scale drug peddling in Hillbrow.

The greater accessibility of the South African criminal market was also seized upon by nascent criminal groups in neighbouring countries, who found it difficult to expand within their own national borders because of limited markets. Linking up with South African criminal networks enabled them to increase the cross-border flow of illicit goods, and to thereby expand their own domestic criminal markets.

The trade in stolen motor vehicles, already referred to, best illustrates this regional development. It is common cause that organised criminal groups are responsible for a high percentage of motor vehicle thefts and that this crime category serves as a good indicator of the state of organised crime. The rapid increase of motor vehicle thefts in South Africa was partly due to the growing demand from new criminal markets in other Southern African states. The growth

of these markets was in turn fuelled by improved mobility in the region and less restricted access to South Africa.

In his annual report to parliament for 1990 the Commissioner of the South African Police reported that about 45% of stolen vehicles were taken to neighbouring states.<sup>24</sup> This means that during 1990 more than 30 000 stolen vehicles were smuggled from South Africa to other Southern African states. These vehicles were often exchanged for firearms, drugs and other illicit commodities, which were then smuggled back to South Africa to be disposed of in its own growing criminal market. In the same 1990 report, the Commissioner reported with surprise that:

Confiscation of astronomic quantities of heroin, cocaine and methaqualone suggests that international drug cartels have identified South Africa as an important market.<sup>25</sup>

It therefore appears that by 1990, obscured by the major transformation processes and turmoil that were experienced during the post-independence years and by the political conflicts in South Africa during the 1970s and 1980s, transnational organised crime had come of age in the SADC region. The precise causes of its growth are complex and multiple and differ from country to country in region. However, one experience that all SADC countries went through after independence was a fundamental transformation process. As a general rule, the growth of organised crime is most rapid in those countries, which experience not only a significant political change, but also an associated economic one.<sup>26</sup> This has certainly been the case in a number of SADC states. However, the transition processes experienced in these states differed in content and intensity, and took place over different periods of time. It would therefore be too simplistic to ascribe the growth of organised crime in the region solely to the political and economic transitions that followed independence.

Police commissioners in the region appeared surprised to find out in the early 1990s how extensive criminal networks had become and how widely international criminal networks had become involved. By 1995 they had developed an initial regional response, establishing the Southern African Regional Police Chiefs Coordinating Organization (SARPCCO)<sup>27</sup> as a platform from which cross-border organised crime could be jointly combated. Its main goal was to combat "all forms of cross-border and related crimes with regional implications".

Developments since then have been the subject of various studies and published reports. Domestic organised criminal groups not only became more ac-

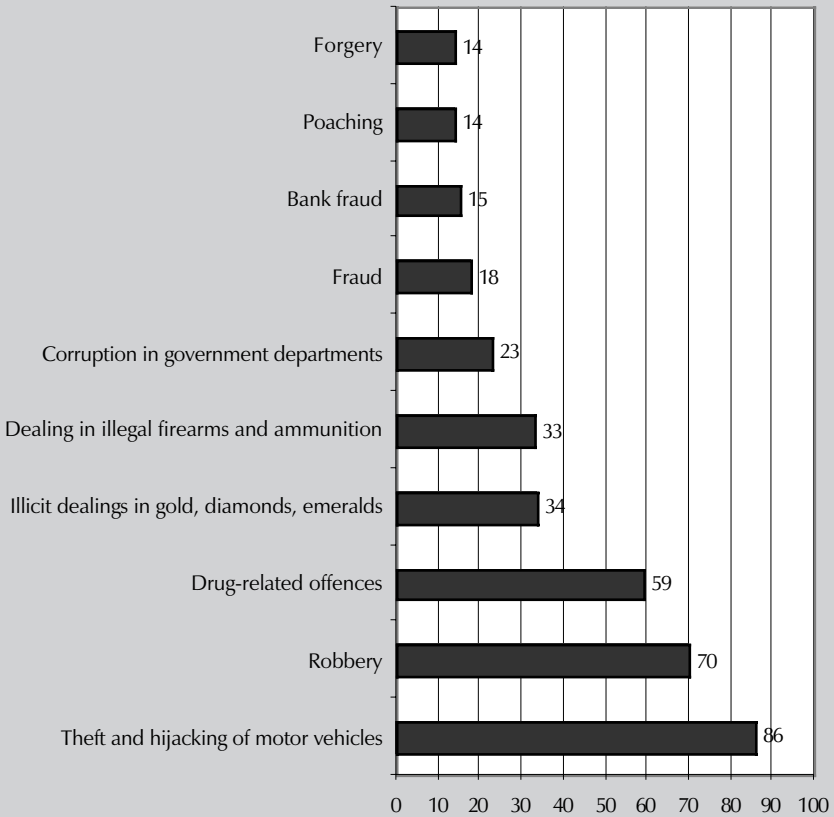
tive within their countries' borders, but also expanded their links and activities throughout the SADC region. International criminal groups were also quick to identify new opportunities and became active in most of the SADC countries.

Joint police operations, involving a number of Southern African police agencies, were organised by SARPPCO in various SADC countries. There was a growing appreciation of the need to complement domestic strategies against organised crime with regional strategies. SARPPCO therefore endeavoured to identify regional trends and priority crimes by relying on formal and informal crime reports and on information obtained through questionnaires sent out to member countries. The results of these endeavours have not been made public and it is not known what regional trends SARPPCO has identified or what cross-border crimes it regards as priorities. However, the targets of joint police operations that have been conducted in the SADC region since 1995 suggest that the following cross-border crimes are being prioritised: theft and smuggling of motor vehicles, drug cultivation and trafficking, trafficking in firearms, diamond smuggling and illegal immigration.<sup>28</sup>

This corresponds largely with the conclusions of a survey conducted by the ISS among nine SADC police agencies in 2000. The police agencies that responded were from Botswana, Lesotho, Namibia, Malawi, South Africa, Swaziland, Tanzania, Zambia and Zimbabwe. Among other things, they were requested to indicate the ten specific organised crime activities that they perceived as a threat to their country and to rank them in terms of the seriousness of the threat that they posed. An attempt was then made to translate that information into a regional threat or 'priority crime' indicator. The result is set out in Figure 1.

The country studies that follow in the two volumes of this monograph provide ample material for further research and analysis. However, not all SADC countries are covered and considerably more primary information on organised crime is required before regional analyses and assessments can be regarded as realistic and accurate.

**Figure 1**  
**Regional threat indicator:**  
**Categories of crimes committed by organised criminal groups**  
**that constituted the most serious threat to nine countries**  
**in the SADC region in 2000<sup>29</sup>**



The weighting is based on the assessment provided by each of the police agencies. Points ranging from 10 to one were allocated to the 10 crime categories that constitute the most serious threat to each of the countries. The crime category that constituted the most serious threat was weighted with 10 points and, through a sliding scale, the category that constituted the ten least serious threat was weighted with one point.

## Notes

- 1 SADC member countries are Angola, Botswana, the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), Lesotho, Malawi, Mauritius, Mozambique, Namibia, South Africa, Seychelles, Swaziland, Tanzania, Zambia and Zimbabwe.
- 2 P Gastrow, *Organised crime in the SADC region: Police perceptions*, ISS Monograph No. 60, Institute for Security Studies (ISS), Pretoria, August 2001, p 65. In a 2000 regional survey, three of the police agencies (Lesotho, South Africa and Zambia) reported a major increase in organised crime during the previous five years, four were of the view that there had been a moderate increase (Botswana, Tanzania, Swaziland and Zimbabwe), and two of the police agencies reported that organised crime had remained static during that period (Malawi and Namibia).
- 3 *Beeld*, SA now a world crime hub—FBI, 18 December 2000. According to the CIA and FBI, South Africa could be regarded as an ‘important centre for international criminal activity’ where Russian, Nigerian and Chinese crime syndicates have established bases.
- 4 Commissioner Norman Moleboge, National Commissioner of the Botswana Police, in a paper presented to the Regional Strategic Programme Framework Conference on Drugs and Crime Prevention Priorities in Southern Africa, organised by the UNODC, Johannesburg, 5 August 2002: “It is evident that transnational organised crime is wreaking havoc in almost all our countries nowadays”.
- 5 S Tshwete, (former Minister for Safety and Security in South Africa), *Organised crime in Southern Africa: Assessing legislation*, ISS Monograph No 56, ISS, Pretoria, June 2001, p 9: “Organised crime is a problem in South Africa and in its SADC neighbours, just as it is a problem in most countries of the world. The government is well aware of the fact that the consequences could be disastrous for good governance and the economy in the absence of the political will to confront the phenomenon head-on with all the might and ruthlessness that can be summoned”.
- 6 Gastrow, *op cit*, p 34.
- 7 J Opolot, Organized crime as it emerges in sections of Africa, in R J Kelly (ed) *Organized crime: A global perspective*, Rowman & Littlefield, Totowa, NJ, 1986, p 11.
- 8 Opolot, *ibid*. “A criminal conspiracy to make money through the exploitation of business opportunities and through corrupt practises that are evidence of the existence of political instability”.
- 9 A Standing, *Rival views of organised crime*, ISS Monograph No 77, ISS, Pretoria, February 2003, p 1. Also at [www.iss.co.za](http://www.iss.co.za).
- 10 Articles 2 and 5 of the United Nations Convention Against Transnational Organized Crime, available at [www.uncjin.org/Documents/documents.html](http://www.uncjin.org/Documents/documents.html)

- 11 B Freund, *The making of contemporary Africa: The development of African society since 1800* (second edition), MacMillan Press Ltd, London, 1998, p 170.
- 12 Ibid, p. 168.
- 13 Ibid, p. 173.
- 14 Ibid, p. 169.
- 15 Ibid, p. 164.
- 16 P Gastrow, *Organised crime in South Africa: an assessment of its nature and origins*, ISS Monograph No. 28, ISS, Pretoria, August 1998, p 13.
- 17 J-F Bayart, S Ellis & B Hibou, *The criminalization of the state in Africa*, *African Issues*, The International African Institute in association with James Curry, Oxford, and Indiana University Press, Bloomington & Indianapolis, 1999, p 62.
- 18 Ibid, p 65.
- 19 Gastrow, supra note 2, p 20.
- 20 Gastrow, supra note 16, pp 23 and 28.
- 21 Similar exchanges, but for different reasons, were reported as recently as April 2003. See *The Star*, *Zambians swap goats and chickens for guns*, 16 April 2003, p 5: "Zambian villagers living along the Angolan border have been bartering goats and chickens in exchange for AK-47 rifles from their hungry Angolan neighbours, according to the police. The Angolans, emerging from decades of civil war, are facing a hunger crisis, and a surplus of weapons."
- 22 Freund, op cit, p 253.
- 23 Bayart, op cit, p 8.
- 24 Gastrow, supra note 16, p 28.
- 25 Ibid.
- 26 M Shaw, *Democracy's disorder? Crime, police and citizen responses in transitional societies*, South African Institute of International Affairs, Johannesburg, September 2002, p 15.
- 27 The national police agencies of the following countries are members of SARPCCO: Angola, Botswana, Lesotho, Malawi, Mauritius, Mozambique, Namibia, South Africa, Swaziland, Tanzania, Zambia and Zimbabwe. The SADC state that is not a member is the DRC.
- 28 F Msutu, *Responses to organised crime in SADC: Interpol and SARPCCO*, in C Goredema *Organised crime in Southern Africa: Assessing legislation*, ISS Monograph No. 56, Institute for Security Studies, Pretoria, June 2001, p 17.
- 29 Gastrow, supra note 2, p 53.