

Address by President Cyril Ramaphosa at the 2025 Policing Summit Emperor's Palace,
Ekurhuleni 8 April 2025

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Emperors Palace, Kempton Park, Gauteng

Programme Director,
Minister of Police, Mr Senzo Mchunu,
Premier of Gauteng, Mr Panyaza Lesufi,
Ministers and Deputy Ministers,
Chairperson of the Parliamentary Portfolio Committee on Police, Mr Ian Cameron,
National Police Commissioner, General Fannie Masemola,
Deputy National Commissioners, Provincial and Divisional Commissioners,
Senior Officers,
Representatives of Municipalities and Municipal Police Departments,
Chairperson of the National Community Police Consultative Forum, Ms Francina Lucas,
Representatives of Community Policing Forums,
Representatives of POPCRU and SAPU,
Representatives of civil society,
Guests,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

Allow me to congratulate the Ministry of Police for convening this critical summit.

Safeguarding our nation's safety and security requires that we are proactive, innovative and solutions-oriented in our approach.

As a frontline service, the police interface with our communities daily.

As such, the police need to be guided by the Batho Pele principles of high service standards, consultation, equal access to services, and treating citizens with respect, dignity and empathy.

The SAPS mission is to investigate and prevent crime and ensure that offenders are brought to justice; to counter threats to community safety and security; and importantly, to participate in efforts to address the root causes of crime.

Crime is both a cause and a symptom.

It is a cause of insecurity and instability in communities. It weakens the social fabric.

Crime has a direct impact on the economy. It discourages investment, disrupts business activity and leads to increased security costs for companies.

Crime is also a symptom of wider problems in a society.

Poverty and inequality, unemployment, lack of opportunity, patriarchy and misogyny, and broken family structures are just some of the issues that contribute to crime and criminality.

Addressing crime without understanding its root causes is like a doctor treating a patient for a fever without diagnosing the underlying illness.

It is therefore encouraging that this summit has as one of its key objectives adopting a more holistic approach to law-enforcement, encompassing not just the police but the entire policing system.

It is also encouraging that this summit brings together stakeholders from the safety and security establishment, communities and civil society, business, the interfaith sector, labour and other sectors.

Just as crime is an all-of-society problem, overcoming crime must be an all-of-society effort.

In doing so, we must marshal our full support behind the hardworking men and women of the South African Police Service.

The policing terrain of today is complex and multi-faceted.

The police strive to fulfill their mandate in the context of emerging threats.

These threats include transnational organised crime, illegal mining, extortion syndicates, the theft of economic infrastructure, money laundering and terror financing.

And yet, even in this extremely challenging environment, the South African Police Service continues to register successes in fighting crime in its various operations.

To build on these successes, we need to restore public trust and faith in the police.

We need to improve the relationships between the police and the communities they serve.

We need to work to improve the morale of SAPS members, many of whom are battling heavy workloads, insufficient resources and outdated systems.

Even as the SAPS budget has increased over the past ten years, the reality is that the number of police personnel has been declining while the country's population has been growing.

The resources of the police are stretched extremely thin.

This means that we must work better and smarter by using existing resources more effectively.

We know that communities are the most potent resource for fighting crime.

Crimes happen in communities and criminals are often known to communities.

From this summit we need a clear plan on how to better involve communities in crime prevention and detection, and on harnessing the potential of CPFs in line with relevant legislation and regulations.

Citizens must be empowered to actively participate in crime prevention efforts through collaboration, awareness and community-driven initiatives to create safer neighbourhoods.

This can no longer be seen as an add-on. It is critical to an effective policing strategy.

Forging partnerships with other stakeholders, such as business, is equally important.

We have seen the value of the support of the private sector, whether it is by supporting CPFs, resourcing victim support centres or donating equipment and services.

We welcome the progress made through the partnership between government and business, which has focused on key interventions to strengthen our crime-fighting capabilities.

We need to build on existing best practice and develop sustainable cooperation models that deliver measurable results.

A holistic approach to policing includes deepening collaboration with other government departments, such as the Department of Social Development.

It includes deepening cooperation with community leaders and community-based organisations that have the capacity to tackle some of the social causes of crime.

Data plays a pivotal role in policing and law-enforcement. And we need to apply a socio-economic lens when analysing such data.

The data may tell us, for example, about a community with a high prevalence of housebreaking and robbery, in which substance abuse is also rife.

Understanding the connections revealed by this data should inform the approach to policing in that community.

There is ample data on the linkages between alcohol abuse and the prevalence of gender-based violence.

A holistic policing approach would, for example, need to involve working with local authorities to enforce municipal by-laws for establishments selling alcohol.

We need to harness modern technologies to support crime-fighting.

We therefore welcome the focus of this summit on exploring the role of technology in modern policing, investigation and intelligence.

Technology is particularly crucial when analysing crime trends and patterns.

It is also valuable in empowering citizens.

As part of facilitating access to SAPS services, it is encouraging that discussions are planned for how to leverage innovative digital platforms such as mobile apps, online reporting systems and virtual communication channels to improve the public's interaction with the police.

To turn the tide against crime, we need better collaboration among the different agencies in the law-enforcement space.

There is a proliferation of organised crime in South Africa, including the manufacture of illicit drugs, kidnapping for ransom and money laundering.

This is taking place alongside a growth in illegal mining, extortion in the construction sector, and the theft of public infrastructure.

As much as the specialised police units devoted to these particular crimes continue to register progress, they heavily rely on actionable intelligence and traditional policing and detective work.

That is why we need to deepen collaboration between law-enforcement agencies to ensure better coordination and information and data sharing.

Corruption is a scourge that has left no aspect of society untouched, including the SAPS.

Alongside measures to protect whistleblowers, implement the National Anti-Corruption Strategy and strengthen accountability, we have to urgently look at strengthening the fundamentals of policing.

It is not enough to demonstrate that we are prosecuting SAPS members guilty of corruption. We have to instil a culture of honesty and integrity in the police.

It is our expectation that this summit will devote the necessary attention to promoting ethical behaviour, accountability and measures to rebuild confidence in law enforcement.

Respect for the rule of law and of the authority of the state is a cardinal priority for this summit.

Instilling a culture of ethics forms part of wider efforts to professionalise the SAPS.

This includes programmes to attract the right calibre of candidates to the SAPS through a rigorous selection process, as well as providing opportunities for training, education and career development.

This landmark summit has much to consider and many issues to address.

If the SAPS is to fulfil its crucial mandate, we have to emerge from these few days with a clear plan on how to address the systemic deficiencies that are negatively impacting policing.

As a country we owe the SAPS our full support.

As government we remain committed to turning the tide against crime and to making our communities safer.

It is our hope that the recommendations emerging from this summit translate into deeper collaboration, more effective methods and a promising future for policing in South Africa.

I thank you.