

MEDIA RELEASE	National Police Day 2025: PSA calls for support
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On National Police Day, the Public Servants Association (PSA) calls on South Africans to remember those public servants who put their lives on the line for the safety of citizens.

South Africa continues to face persistently high crime rates fuelled by socio-economic inequalities, poverty, and high rates of unemployment. The crime rate remains alarmingly high, particularly related to assault, homicide, and gender-based violence. Despite numerous changes in police leadership, citizens have seen little improvement. The South African Police Service is desperately under-staffed and under-resourced. In an attempt to improve the situation, steps have been taken to bolster capacity. An estimated 10 000 newly trained constables were appointed in the 2024/25-financial year. Training of 5 500 recruits will commence in January 2025. An initiative was also introduced to re-enlist former officers and boost detective capacity. The number of detectives has sharply decreased from 26 000 to 17 000, impacting crime investigation and prosecution success rates. These initiatives aim to improve the police-to-population ratio, enhancing public safety. Despite these efforts, 39 police officers lost their lives in the line of duty in 2024, serving as a stark reminder of the dangerous nature of this essential public service.

The PSA urges the Ministry of the Police Service to ensure that the police force is capacitated with all tools of trade to assist them in performing their duties. The number of recruited officers should increase, considering decreasing numbers owing to natural attrition, retirement, and losses to the private sector. Police stations should be provided with more vehicles to ensure prompt responses to crime. Police stations should be staffed with competent employees who can effectively deal with trauma and sexual assault cases in a dignified manner in dedicated rooms for confidentiality. Police station gates should be staffed by trained police officers who have been assigned to light duty rather than private security to restore the dignity and safeguard them. Police officers should further be capacitated to use current technology to combat crime. Each provincial headquarters should have a forensic laboratory staffed with forensic investigators to ensure speedy resolution of cases that entails forensic investigation as the current centralised laboratory is burdened with a huge backlog.

The PSA calls on all South Africans, including businesses, to play a role in supporting these workers. The Minister of Police is further urged to create a professional police service and encourage an integrated approach to safety, whilst building community participation in community safety.

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