

POLICE AND PRISONS CIVIL RIGHTS UNION [POPCRU]

DECLARATION: POLICING INDABA

25 AUGUST 2023

We, the delegates of the Police and Prisons Civil Rights Union's (hereafter POPCRU) Policing Indaba convened at the Birchwood Hotel and Conference Centre in Boksburg, Gauteng, from the 23rd until the 25th of August 2023 under the theme "***Building Ideal Policing and Corrections in the 21st Century***". This august occasion brought together the leadership of POPCRU representing approximately 150 000 members organized within the South African Police Service (SAPS), the Department of Correctional Services (DCS), Traffic Department and other Agencies of the Department of Transport.

We convened over the three days to robustly deliberate on a range of topical issues aimed at remodeling the Criminal Justice System in-line with the provisions of the democratic South Africa. This august event created a significant platform of vigorous discussions and subsequently mapped a way forward on building ideal policing and corrections. We attribute the success of this Indaba to all the participants who meaningfully contributed on a range of topics which shaped the outcome of this event, including various components of the Criminal Justice System: The South African Police Service, the Department of Justice and Correctional Services, and Border Management Agency. Other key stakeholders who added meaningful contribution to this Indaba were from the private security industry, Gun Free South Africa, Proudly South African, experts from the academic fraternity, the former Statistician General of South Africa, Dr Pali Lehohla and our very own Safer South Africa Foundation.

This august event was also graced by the messages of support from the President of COSATU, Zingiswa Losi and the SACP General Secretary, Solly Mapaila. We were also honoured by the presence of our international allies the Lesotho Police Staff Association (LEPOSA); Royal Eswatini Police Association, (REPOSA); Zambia Union of Government and Allied Workers (UG); Botswana Public Employees Union (BOPEU); Botswana Land Board and Local Authorities and Health Workers Union (BLLAHWU); Labour Resource and Research Institute (LARRI) from Namibia; ECOSSA, World Federation of Trade Unions (WFTU) and the Trade Union International – Public Service and Allied (TUI-PS&A).

This Indaba noted that high crime rate poses a serious threat to our democracy and the socio-economic development of our country. We further noted that the current method of collecting and publishing crime statistics does not provide a true reflection of the crime trends faced by our communities. This Indaba also observed with a grave concern continuous attacks and killings of law enforcement officers. We also expressed that lack of adequate personnel and resources among the components of the Criminal Justice System, including lack of integrated systems, impedes the objective of effectively preventing crime in the country. Our porous borders also have a direct impact on increased crime, thereby making South Africa a hub for a range of cross-border related crimes. Overcrowded Correctional Facilities have adverse impact on proper rehabilitation of inmates whilst also creating unconducive working conditions for correctional officers. We have also noted a dire need for a major shift to technological advancement among all the components of the Criminal Justice System to improve service delivery to the majority of South Africans.

We acknowledge that the worsening crises of capitalism, demonstrated by high rate of unemployment, poverty and inequalities, has a diverse effect on the fight against crime. We noted that the current neoliberal policy on austerity budget cuts hinders effective functioning of the Criminal Justice system, thereby contravening the objective of ensuring that South Africa is a safer place for all the inhabitants, including women and children. We remain resolute in our commitment to build ideal Policing and Corrections by advancing fundamental discussions which will provide a better understanding on the causal factors which impedes effective operations of the Criminal Justice System and further map a way forward on attaining the ideal policing as envisaged by a range of policy propositions recommended by this Policing Indaba.

We note that this Indaba is taking place at a time whereby Gender Based Violence and Femicide are declared as a pandemic in South Africa. Substance abuse is also ravaging our youth, destroying their lives and rendering their future redundant. We have also noted with a grave concern that South Africa has a serious challenge of illegal ownership of firearms; with direct effect to increased murder rate and other categories of crime. We further applaud the role that Safer South Africa Foundation plays in mobilising under-resourced communities and schools to build partnership and awareness in the fight against crime.

This Indaba thus served as a crucial milestone of developing practical and impactful solutions towards the realisation of ideal Criminal Justice System. We are of a firm view that the recommendations and outcomes of this Indaba will further translate into concrete policy and implementable initiatives for Ideal Policing and Corrections. We therefore align this declaration to the vigorous deliberations ensued in various commissions, and finalized at plenary. We remain steadfast that these deliberations and proposed interventions are our greatest strengths as we move towards building ideal Corrections and Policing for South Africa. We therefore resolve and declare that:

- ✓ All components of the Criminal Justice System should be synergised and establish integrated data systems to ensure efficiency in the fight against crime.
- ✓ The Cluster must be technologically advanced in line with the 4th IR developments for effective implementation of smart policing (inmate tracking systems; digitized docket system, surveillance drones, biometric system)
- ✓ There must be a collaborative efforts between the state and non-state actors in the prevention and combating of crime in the country.
- ✓ The interdepartmental efforts should be strengthened to appropriately address the legislative or policy framework and development.
- ✓ We call for the legislative amendment to declare the killing and attacks of law enforcement officers as treason.
- ✓ We call for complete restructuring and transformation of the Criminal Justice System for an effective implementation of Ideal policing and Corrections.
- ✓ There is a need for a joint strategic planning and effective monitoring systems of government on crime fighting and prevention mechanisms.
- ✓ We should develop a legislative framework to promote and enforce the objectives of an integrated and co-ordinated criminal justice system.
- ✓ There should be an integrated and credible method of collecting and publishing of crime statistics, with the inclusion of other agencies responsible for law enforcement.
- ✓ The government should prioritise the integration of all relevant departments to ensure improved management of border control and subsequently curbing of cross-border crimes.
- ✓ The long-standing challenge of overcrowded correctional facilities should be addressed through alternative sentencing for minor offences.

- ✓ The DCS must urgently review its parole system, rehabilitation programmes and further expand the self-sustainability programmes to successfully address the increased rate of recidivism.
- ✓ The DCS should develop improved safety measures to protect officers from the attacks by inmates.
- ✓ Infrastructure within various components of the CJS must be refurbished and modernized according to respective objectives of each component.
- ✓ Services provided in this Cluster must be easily accessible to the majority of our people.
- ✓ The Criminal Procedure Act 1977 (57 of 1977) must be repealed; a new legislation must be enacted in-line with the provisions of the democratic era. This should further address the gap provided for in Section 49 of this Act.
- ✓ The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa must be amended to protect the rights of victims of crime.
- ✓ The 1996 Crime Prevention Strategy must be reviewed in line with the latest strategies and methods of fighting crime.
- ✓ Moral regeneration programmes must be established to address a range of social ills within the communities.
- ✓ We should establish smart coalitions which are community-centric and impact-oriented so as to promote the role of the community and other partners in the fight against crime.
- ✓ The long overdue development of an electronic Firearms Control System (FCS) must be realized to ensure effective tracking and monitoring of firearms in the country.
- ✓ The key pieces of legislations enacted in 2022 (The Criminal Law (Sexual Offences and Related Matters) Amendment Bill; Criminal and Related Matters Amendment Bill and the Domestic Violence Amendment Bill) must be effectively implemented to ensure optimum protection of victims. Awareness programmes should be conducted to inform South Africans on the provisions of these legislations.
- ✓ All police stations must be capacitated with victim friendly services, Gender-Based Violence Desk and evidence collection kits for effective investigation, prosecution and conviction of perpetrators.
- ✓ The backlog at SAPS's Forensic Laboratory Services must be addressed to ensure speedy finalisation of cases.
- ✓ There is direct correlation between socio-economic challenges and increased crime rate in the country; all government departments should then play their role in ensuring that services are effectively delivered to the majority of South Africans.

- ✓ Law enforcement officers should be provided with official residential area (Barracks) to enhance safety and restore their dignity
- ✓ There is a need to improve environmental and spatial design in collaboration with the local government.
- ✓ The government must review legislative framework governing the Criminal Justice Cluster in order for South Africa to attain the vision of ideal Policing and Corrections.

We further declare that the outcomes of this august occasion shall be shared for consideration and implementation by all components of the Criminal Justice System.

This declaration was adopted by all delegates and participants of the Policing Indaba on the 25th of August 2023 at Birchwood in Boksburg – Gauteng Province.

LONG LIVE POPCRU LONG LIVE!