



**South African Police Union**

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**Input by the South African Police Union (SAPU)  
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## **Introduction**

Since the advent of democracy in 1994, South Africa opened out to world, which resulted in many South Africans playing a significant role in the United Nations organized peace missions in post conflict countries. Consequently, South Africa is one of the 25 African police contributing countries amount to 27% of the deployed UN police manpower globally. The contribution of the South African Police Services (SAPS) to the UN peace missions in Africa although has increased since the 1994, it remains significantly small compared to what developed contribute. According to the United Nations (UN), there are 512 178 UN police officers deployed in peace missions worldwide of which nineteen African countries contribute only 10% of these officers. It is interesting to note that the top African troop contributing countries (Nigeria, Kenya and Ghana) are also significant police contributing countries. Moreover, four SADC countries, including South Africa were contributing a total of 141 police officers to the UN in 2003 and this has increased.

According to the legislation which governs the deployment of security forces to conflict/post conflict regions, holds that the Department of Safety and Security has an obligation to contribute, in a structured way, police officers for service in international peace missions. As provided for by the UN statutes, the legislation requires that such deployment must not be done to the detriment of the internal security of the country. Given the high crime situation in South Africa there have been significant challenges to deploying very large SAPS officers abroad on peace missions. As a result, the role of the SAPS officials has been different in different countries. Their role has largely been in the area of skills transfer, training and providing technical expertise.

The SAPS is currently playing a role in the following UN and African Union (AU) peace missions, Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), Burundi, Sudan, Angola, Ethiopia, Eritrea, Sierra Leone and in Nepal. Whilst the South African National Defence Force (SANDF) has more that 2000 soldiers deployed in each country, the SAPS has less than 500 police officers deployed in each country.

### **Expected future demand- trends in demand?**

Whilst there is a clear demand for a greater SAPS involvement in the UN/AU post conflict missions, it is unlikely that the numbers will be substantially increased. There is an increasing pressure on the police to address the crime problem which continues to spiral out of control every year. More recently, South Africans have been experiencing serious and violent crimes such as murder and rape. It is the view of SAPU as South Africa gets closer to hosting the biggest soccer spectacle, the 2010 world cup, the pressure to address the crime problem will be even greater. Clearly, the reason why South Africa's participation in the peace

missions has not caused concerns has largely been due to the fact that the number of police officials deployed has been significantly low.

Besides participating in the AU/UN peace missions police officials in South Africa play an significant role in the SADC region with regard to addressing the problem of organized crime that operate in the region. The SAPS and the member countries have been addressing this problem through sharing of police intelligence, strengthening detective capabilities as well as cooperation. It must be noted that the region remains politically fragile and unstable. The influx of refugees from most parts of Africa has increased the demand for policing in South Africa to ensure that criminal who enter the country are detected and arrested and that innocent refugees are safe.

### **Whether Civilian members are deployed**

The South African Police Services (SAPS) reporting does not distinguish between civilian members and uniformed police/ sworn in police officers in the SAPS. It is possible though that, civilian members are deployed to provide training in administration, financial management, systems administration and information management. For example, SAPU is aware of the role played by police officials in the DRC is past and recent election both in logistical support and administration.

### **Any key issues from your Association, jurisdiction's perspective**

Since the last time we met, SAPU is happy to report to this meeting, tremendous strides that the organization continues to made in working in tandem with other police unions in the region. We are currently working in about 10 countries in Africa and we continue to grow. Our vision is to assist towards the creation of a professional police service which is non party political and articulate the needs and aspirations of police officials. We are extremely humbled by the commitment of our partners in the region whose members work in very difficult and often life threatening situation. Our members in South Africa despite better resources and facilities work in very hostile and dangerous communities. Many police officials in South Africa are targets of dangerous criminals who use sophisticated weaponry such as AK47 and other military type of weapons.

As a result, while SAPU welcomes the use of less lethal weapons is of the firm belief that police officials in South Africa must be equipped with high caliber weaponry to match the guns used by the criminals. Some of these criminals are actually former liberation combatants who were not reintegrated into the army at independence. As a result of their exclusion and disillusionment with the government which has marginalized them, resort to crime as a way of survival. We also believe that failure to equip police officers with less lethal weaponry is also problematic as police officers may resort to use lethal force where it is not warranted. When lethal force is used on minor criminals brings the professional work of police officials into disrepute.

The professionalism of police officials as a result of conduct of our members is increasingly under question. As an organization would like to see a situation in which membership to this organisation is based on shared values and vision. There must be certain prescripts which members to this organisation must abide to so as to bring back the glory, power and prestige which was once associated with the police badge. We feel uncomfortable and extremely challenged to seat in the same room and deliberate issues with associations which bring policing as a profession into disrepute. As an organisation, we hope to table this motion to be adopted which will result in this issue refereed to the secretariat to deliberate on this issue and make recommendations to this meeting.