

Press Release

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SOUTH AFRICAN
INSTITUTE OF
RACE RELATIONS

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Justice a death too far in municipalities with the highest murder rates

Three local municipalities have murder rates close to 200 per 100 000 people, six times the national murder rate of 31 per 100 000 people. The municipalities are Richmond (KwaZulu-Natal) with a rate of 192, Sunday's River Valley (Eastern Cape) at 178, and Victor Khanye (Mpumalanga) at 177.

The latest *South Africa Survey*, published by the South African Institute of Race Relations in Johannesburg this week, lists the murder rates of all 278 local municipalities in 2011/12. Only three other local municipalities have murder rates above 100 per 100 000 people.

The three municipalities with the highest murder rates stand out in terms of limited access to police stations and law courts relative to the size of their respective areas.

Richmond local municipality has one police station per 314 square kilometres and one court per 628 square kilometres. Sunday's River Valley has 1 police station per 999 square kilometres and one court per 5 994 square kilometres. In Victor Khanye there is a police station and a court every 224 and 784 square kilometres respectively.

The figures are in stark contrast to those of Johannesburg and Cape Town, which had lower murder rates of 29 and 36 respectively in 2011/12 despite high rates of other types of crime.

In Johannesburg there is one police station every 37 square kilometers and one court per 103 square kilometres. Cape Town has one police station for every 42 square kilometers and a court every 122 square kilometres.

In the case of the three municipalities with the highest murder rates, there was not a particularly strong correlation with socio-economic factors often associated with serious crime, such as unemployment and poverty.

'SAPS researchers have shown that around 80% of murders occur between people who know each other. The information presented by the Institute suggests that some squabbles may be prevented from deteriorating into murders in areas with better access to justice. Easy access to police stations and law courts to resolve such disputes may prove to be important in preventing more serious crimes,' said Kerwin Lebone of the Institute's research department.

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