

Press Release



**South African
Institute of
Race Relations**

South Africa's Leading Research and Policy Organisation

For immediate release

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Murder more rife in rural areas

A person in South Africa has the highest likelihood of being murdered in the Cacadu District municipality of the Eastern Cape, sexually assaulted in the Xhariep District of the Free State, violently robbed personally or at their business premises in the City of Johannesburg, and is most vulnerable to attack if they own a home in the Metsweding District of Gauteng, according to the South African Institute of Race Relations.

The 2009/10 *South Africa Survey*, to be published by the Institute in Johannesburg next week, compares the 46 district municipalities and the six metropolitan municipalities using four serious crime categories — murder, aggravated robbery, sexual offences, and drug-related crime — and two subcategories — robberies at business and residential premises.

Of the ten district municipalities with the highest murder rates, nine were situated in the rural areas of the Eastern Cape (three), the Free State (one), and KwaZulu-Natal (five). eThekweni Metropolitan municipality in KwaZulu-Natal had the third highest murder rate out of all the profiled municipalities while Ekurhuleni had the lowest murder rate when compared to other metros.

The Cacadu and Xhariep districts had the first and second highest rates of murder respectively and exchanged places for the top two positions when it came to sexual offences. Municipalities with the six highest rates of drug-related crime all came from the Western Cape.

The City of Johannesburg had the highest rates of aggravated and business robberies, and the second highest rate of residential robbery — after the Metsweding District municipality. All six metros were included in the list of ten areas with the worst rates of aggravated robbery.

Districts with rural municipalities that made it in to the top ten worst list of robberies were Ilembe (KwaZulu-Natal) — under aggravated and residential robbery; Motheo (Free State), Bojanala Platinum (North West), Xhariep — under business robbery; and Bojanala, Ilembe, Uthungulu (KwaZulu-Natal), and Ehlanzeni (Mpumalanga) — under residential robbery.

Raw figures from the South African Police Service and population figures from the South African Local Government Association were used by the Institute to calculate the municipalities' crime rates per 100 000 people.

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The list of the ten areas with the highest rates of sexual offences was characterised by an equal mix of urban and rural areas. The Alfred Nzo and OR Tambo districts of the Eastern Cape are among the ten districts with the lowest incidence of sexual offences even though the areas are rife with incidents of child abductions and rapes, owing to the perversion of the traditional custom of *ukuthwala* (forced marriage).

In general, violence against persons was more prevalent in rural areas while offenders in urban areas seemed more preoccupied with the violent appropriation of material possessions. Kerwin Lebone of the Institute's research department said a significant proportion of murders in urban districts could be a by-product of violent robberies.

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