

## **Prayer for Peace, Hope and Justice**

Our prayer focus today is on the South African Police Service (SAPS) and the injustice that is manifest when the SAPS are less than they should be. In letting us down, they are in fact causing pain, suffering and hardship. Do citizens have faith in the police. This is a troubling question, asked so often as the constant stimulus of heinous crimes highlight the failure of the SAPS. Their real successes are in fact, often blotted out.

It was reported recently, that that some Limpopo police officers were apparently ignorant of a law, in place since 2010, that gives investigators access to the Dept of Home Affairs fingerprint Data Base, for them to identify and catch criminals. That database is the most comprehensive in South Africa. It was brought to their attention by a local activist.

*Vision of SAPS: To create a safe and secure environment for all people in SA.*

*Mission Statement of SAPS: To prevent and combat anything that may threaten the safety and security of any community; investigate all crimes that threaten the safety and security of any community; ensure offenders are brought to justice; and participate in efforts to address the root causes of crime.*

All citizens of south Africa and citizens from elsewhere, who live, work, and visit here should be able to believe that the SAPS should be well trained, be trustworthy, behave ethically and be reliable, as they strive under difficult circumstances to achieve their mission.

Another statistic for us. The SAPS comprises of 182,000 personnel in all categories including administration. (2021). This is a ratio of 1:413 of the population. We know, however, that many communities, especially those without basic services also have no proper policing. The Security industry has 564,000 employees. (2021). A ratio of 1:106 of the population. This distribution of private security services is also heavily skewed based on economics.

Let us pray

Divine creator of all things good and beautiful, we celebrate your love for each and everyone of us. Lord, we live in a complex world and a complex South Africa. We pray today for greater safety for all communities.

We know the ravages of violence, its causes and its consequences so well. For too many it is a daily fear and horror. We have overcome much as a nation but at too great a cost in preventable suffering, violence, and loss of life, due to a high crime rate. Our Children, our elderly, and our women, are subjected to constant fear of violence especially in communities with little or no basic services and devoid of real policing.

O Lord who touched and listened and wept, forgive our ways of arguing, judging, and settling disputes which often cause violence.

Some policemen are part of the criminal activity and others have been killed or work in fear for their own lives. We are concerned, O God, with increased militarization of the private security sector with more guns, in society.

Yet God, there are signs at times that give us hope. When we experience proper policing, when we can salute brave policemen, courageous civic members, safety and security activists, relevant NGOs, and ordinary people. We are also thankful for people who provide shelters, places of hope and care for serial victims of abuse and crime.

Lord the need for trust is so great. We pray for better resourcing in all aspects of police work and the supportive technology needed and needed timeously. We pray for the accountability structures like IPID to be more present in all communities. We pray for real political leadership.

All embracing God, embrace us with your spirit of truth, as we live in hope. As we do all that we can, and more. As we expose ourselves to be in the solution. To co-create a “safe and secure environment for all”.

May the spirit of the risen lord be with us all.  
Amen