



# MONITOR

*A monthly briefing sheet to keep communities informed about what is happening in Parliament*

Did you know?	The Importance of Gender Budgeting
<p>According to the recent crime statistics, Free State is now the safest province in South Africa. SAPS reported that murder rates have increased by a total of 4.6% in the country between April 2014 and March 2015 – reaching a new high of <b>17 805 murders</b> in that 12-month period. Free State, however, experienced a decline of 7.9% during that same time. KZN recorded the most murder incidents.</p> <p>The Minimum Competency Levels (MCL) for municipal officials responsible for financial and supply chain management will be effective as of next month. The MCL seek to <b>professionalise the local government sector</b> and require officials to have minimum higher education qualifications; work related experience and core managerial and occupational competencies. Municipal officials had eight years to attain the prescribed requirements. In preparation for the implementation of the regulations, National Treasury, provincial treasuries and other stakeholders across government undertook financial and capacity building to support municipalities to comply with the requirements.</p> <p>The Department of Home Affairs launched a pilot project with First National Bank and Standard Bank to issue <b>smart ID cards</b>. The partnership between the banks and the Department seeks to accelerate the replacement of the green bar-coded ID book. The Department plans to replace about 38 million green IDs in five years' time.</p>	<p>Parliament held a two-day roundtable to discuss the National Development Plan (NDP) as it related to women, as well as the role of gender responsive budgeting in attaining the goals set out in the NDP.</p> <p>Delegates heard that the goal of gender equality had progressed by leaps and bounds in the past two decades since the advent of democracy in South Africa. Notwithstanding this achievement, women in South Africa still faced many challenges. About 51.3% of female headed households were poor, compared to 29.5% of male headed households. About 56% of female homicides were committed by an intimate partner and cervical cancer affected one out of every 41 women and killed approximately eight women daily. Dismantling patriarchy was still a central goal towards achieving substantive equality for women.</p> <p>Many speakers highlighted that a key measure for ensuring gender transformation and equal participation between men and women was the allocation of budget. Gender responsive budgeting meant that in planning, programming and budgeting processes, there had to be a focus on gender equality and efficiency. In most countries, poverty and gender were loosely linked and women were typically the poorest. Economic resources should be accessible to women in order to reverse inequalities between them. If this was not done, women would continue to be kept out of employment and denied economic opportunities. This then had an impact on the economic growth of the country.</p> <p>Participants noted that there were policies and regulations in place but things were not happening on the ground. Across different departments there was a mixed experience on gender equality, as many higher positions were still held by males. Further, there were departments that had made significant progress in achieving gender parity internally, but could not deliver on their core business and impact on women in the community and therefore their work would count for nought. The private sector was still lagging behind and there still remained concerns about the provision of education for girls.</p> <p><b>Parliament plays a major oversight role in budgets and could therefore ensure gender issues are taken into account</b>, in as far as reducing the levels of inequality and poverty. For too long, it was said that budgets were only the job of financial officers, but if there was no understanding at all levels, women would be side-lined. There needed to be insistence on transparency in how programmes and budgets were formulated and whether women were part of the budget processes. There needed to be participation of organisations, especially grass-roots organisations which were vital. Female Members of Parliament were asked to mobilise themselves as women parliamentarians and not as members of political parties to ensure proper gender mainstreaming in the NDP. Parliamentarians were reminded that women's oppression affected all women, irrespective of their political affiliation or race.</p> <p>During the event, Parliament launched a new publication titled, <b>“Mainstreaming – Gender, Children’s and Disability Rights”</b>. The manual was developed to assist MPs and the Provincial Legislatures to effectively undertake their roles as duty-bearers by fulfilling, protecting and promoting the rights of women, children and persons with disabilities during the Fifth Parliament (2014-2019).</p>

## Socio-Economic Rights for All

The Department of Human Settlements was called to account for the poor performance audit it had received on the Rural Household Infrastructure Grant programme. The grant was meant to address water supply and **sanitation problems in rural areas**. The audit covered the period 1 April 2010 to 31 March 2013. 254 sites had been visited where ventilated improved pit (VIP) toilets had been built. The toilets were located in 26 municipalities in seven provinces. The Auditor-General's report had identified poor workmanship as a result of non-compliance with the South African National Standards. The Auditor-General discovered that soil around the toilets had not been properly compacted, doors were damaged, ventilation pipes were broken, most toilets had been built under trees, the roofs of the toilets were not waterproofed, and panels, hinges and locks were broken. In some municipalities, the implementing agents had not fitted the toilets with hand wash attachments, and instead were fitted with empty fizzy drink bottles as hand wash facilities. The MPs also heard that health and hygiene training had not been carried out among the beneficiaries. Posters had been put up mainly in the VIP toilets, with no explanation as to how the toilets should be used. Some beneficiaries had continued to use water and newspaper and this had caused the toilets to fill up faster than expected. In response, the Department of Human Settlements (DHS) said that it was never geared up for infrastructure projects and made use of two implementing agents -- Imvula Trust and the Independent Development Trust (IDT) and their performance had not been satisfactory. DHS admitted that most municipalities had not received the grant because they did not have capacity and clean audits. The provinces were also not geared up for these infrastructure projects. MPs expressed concern about the underspending, lack of planning, lack of capacity, the capability of project managers, norms and standards and poor workmanship. DHS said it had noted the concerns in the AG's report. As a result, it had started to investigate cases of irregularity, collusion and conflict of interest. It had reviewed procurement processes to avoid recurrences, and had identified professional service providers. The Housing Development Agency was going to take over work from IDT and Imvula Trust. DHS had also agreed to improve systems for monitoring and evaluation, payment would be done when work was completed, civil cases would be instituted, and contracts would be revised.

The Department of Basic Education (DBE) briefed MPs on its progression policy. The policy allowed for the **advancement of a learner from one grade to the next**, excluding Grade R, in spite of the learner not having complied with all the promotion requirements. Progression can be used to prevent a learner from being retained in a phase for a period exceeding four years. This system had been vigorously implemented since 2013 and 85 857 (12.7%) learners had benefitted from it. DBE acknowledged the criticism but maintained that it was the best solution, because schools culled learners, which contributed to the drop-out rate. The progression policy meant that the schooling system was able to take on more learners and DBE was working on ensuring that learners who had been progressed were provided with the appropriate support. The MPs were concerned that learners were being progressed to the next grade without absorbing the necessary knowledge from the previous year. They believed that schools were misusing the policy, and that the learners were not being adequately supported, especially in the area of psycho-social support. There were further concerns about the violent incidents where parents demanded that their children be progressed. DBE conceded to the MPs' concerns, but said that the policy was an international practice, but the difference with other countries was that it had good support systems in place. DBE added that the improvement of support for progressed learners was being looked into, in collaboration with the Department of Health.

National Treasury informed MPs that approximately a **quarter of the South African labour force was unemployed** while youth unemployment stood at 36.1% in 2014. This challenge needed South Africa to have high levels of economic growth which required long term structural change to the economy. The **Jobs Fund** was not intended to tackle these challenges; it was a limited and targeted intervention to create jobs in the short to medium term. The mandate of the Jobs Fund was to create 150 000 new jobs, to learn from these innovative models which could contribute towards future policy making and to contribute to poverty reduction. The Fund was established by the National Treasury in June 2011 with R9b of funds. The Jobs Fund operated on a "challenge fund" basis, where the allocation of grant funds was open, competitive and transparent. Partners shared risk by contributing matching funds. The focus of the Jobs Fund was on youth and women. There had been five funding rounds and the target sectors for the Jobs Fund were Business Process Outsourcing, agriculture, construction, the green economy, manufacturing, mining and tourism. MPs said that the R9b investment in the Jobs Fund was a small drop in the ocean for the challenge of unemployment in South Africa and asked if there was an overlap between the functions of the National Youth Development Agency and the Small Business Development Agency. They also asked about the spread of jobs between the urban and rural areas and why certain projects were withdrawn or terminated.

The Department of Water and Sanitation and the South African Police Service (SAPS) reported on the strategies each was taking to handle **polluters and vandals of the country's water infrastructure**. Theft, destruction and reselling of these pipes had been happening frequently in some provinces in the country. The DWS is hoping for the creation of a special department, like USA's Environmental Protection Agency, to help with investigations.

## Legislative developments....

President Zuma signed the [Maintenance Amendment Act \(Act No 9 of 2015\)](#) into law. Once in force, it will see parents who default on child maintenance blacklisted and blocked from getting credit while owing maintenance.

The Minister of Cooperative Governance & Traditional Affairs tabled the [Traditional and Khoi-San Leadership Bill](#) in Parliament. The Bill for the recognition of traditional and Khoi-San communities. Once in force, it will repeal the Traditional Leadership and Governance Framework Act and the National House of Traditional Leaders Act. According to critics, the bill “will have a major impact on people’s ability to hold traditional leaders accountable in relation to mining deals on their land”. They also point out that “the thrust of the Bill makes it clear that government plans to forego the opportunity of a new law to give the country’s poorest people equal citizenship rights with other South Africans. The Bill makes it clear that traditional communities can exist only if headed by traditional leaders”.

The Portfolio Committee on Public Service and Administration/Monitoring and Evaluation invites the public to submit written comments on the [Public Service Commission Amendment Bill \[B21-2015\]](#).

Cabinet approved the introduction of the [Refugees Amendment Bill, 2015](#) and the [Border Management Agency \(BMA\) Bill, 2015](#) to Parliament. The former aims to increase the efficiency and effective functioning of the application process of the asylum system, and are part of the broader review of the Migration Policy that is underway. The latter aims to establish the BMA, which will balance secure cross-border travel, trade facilitation and national security imperatives within the context of South Africa’s regional, African and international obligations. This single authority for border law enforcement provides the potential for more cost-effective services, enhanced security and better management of the border environment.

Cabinet approved the submission of the [Extension of Security of Tenure Amendment Bill](#) to Parliament in order to strengthen, clarify and protect the rights of occupiers. The amendments aim to solve tenure insecurities by combining land redistribution measures within effective legal protection and dispute-resolution mechanisms.

The Minister of Health stated that the White Paper on the National Health Insurance (NHI) is finally complete and will be presented to Cabinet for approval soon. It has taken about six years to finalise the document. NHI pilot projects are currently under way in 11 districts across the country.

The Democratic Alliance intends to introduce a Private Member’s Bill in Parliament in order to further regulate the appointment of judicial officers and the composition of the Judicial Service Commission. The [draft Constitution Eighteenth Amendment Bill](#) has been published for comment.

The [Merchant Shipping Amendment Bill](#) and [Agrément South Africa Bill](#) were passed by Parliament.

Recently introduced in Parliament, the [Local Government: Municipal Electoral Amendment Bill](#) aims to provide for the electronic submission of candidate nomination documents and party lists, to provide for different modalities for payment of electoral deposits, to provide for the notification of interested parties where a candidate has been nominated by more than one person or party, to clarify the circumstances in which marked ballot papers may be cancelled at the instance of voters and to clarify the provisions relating to the determination and declaration of the results of by-elections.

Public hearings on the [Promotion and Protection of Investment Bill](#) saw the Department of Trade and Industry having to defend the proposed law against criticism that it would act as a disincentive for sorely needed foreign investment in the country. The Department disagreed with these comments and maintained that South Africa had one of the highest levels of investor-protection, and that once established in the country, foreign investors benefited from the legal protection of property rights in the Constitution.

Public hearings took place on the [Children's Second Amendment Bill](#), which is aimed at better protection for vulnerable children. Stakeholders welcomed the improvements but also pointed out specific flaws in the proposed legislation. The submissions pinpointed problems with the foster care system with applications taking far too long to finalise. Discussion looked at possibility of having a new grant to cater for children in the care of relatives in the form of a kinship care grant until the social worker shortage can be resolved.

All calls for comment on bills can be found here: <https://pmg.org.za/calls-for-comments>

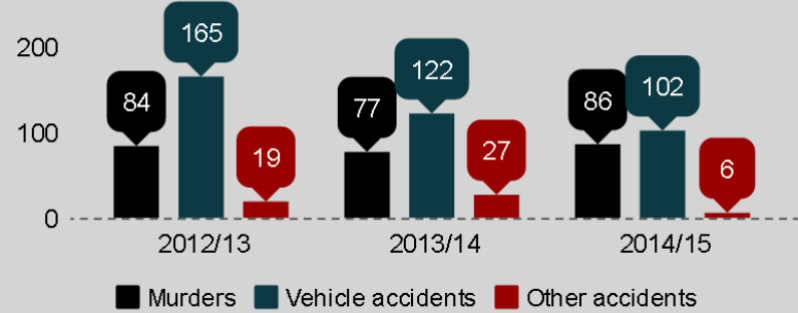
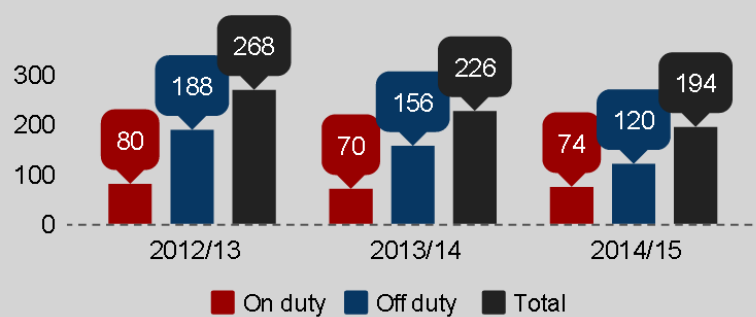
**CONTACT PMG: Phone 021 465 8885, e-mail [info@pmg.org.za](mailto:info@pmg.org.za)**

# Stats: Police Officers Killed On and Off Duty



Decrease of 74 police officers (27.6%) killed during 2014/15 compared to 2012/13

Most police officers killed, on and off duty, as a result of motor vehicle accidents



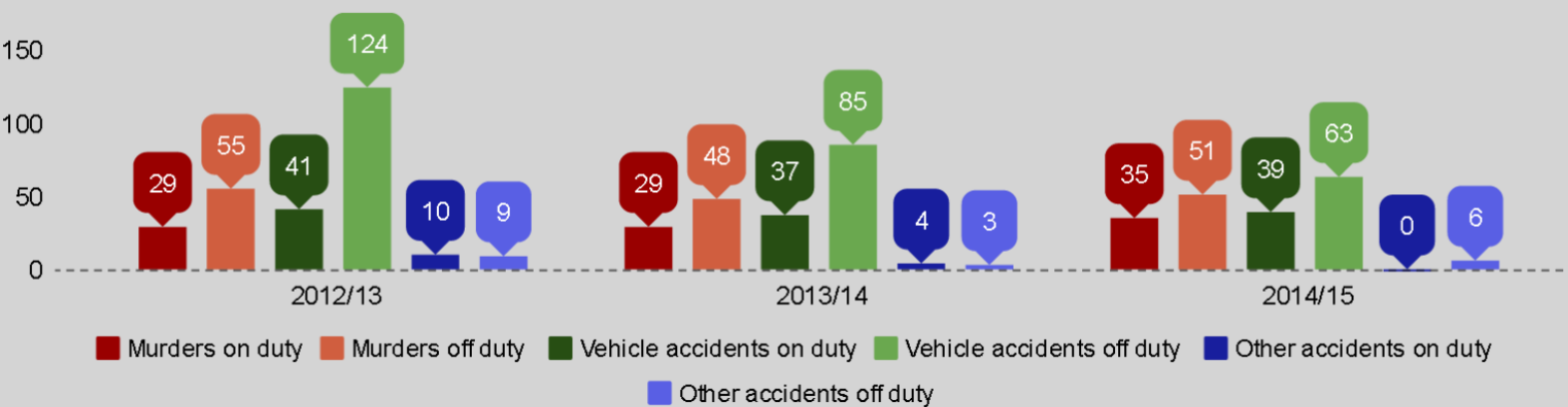
## Further breakdown...



Most police officers killed in violent incidents are shot with a firearm



More police officers are killed off duty than on duty



## Police officers killed in provinces: 1 Jan - 24 Aug 2015



More police officers killed in Gauteng (19) and KZN (12) than any other province

Five police officers stationed at Head Office were also killed, both on and off duty, bringing the total to 58 deaths for this calendar year

