



**Western Cape
Government**

Community Safety

VIOLENT CRIME IN 11 PRIORITY AREAS OF THE WESTERN CAPE DURING THE COVID-19 LOCKDOWN

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VIOLENT CRIME IN 11 PRIORITY AREAS OF THE WESTERN CAPE DURING THE COVID-19 LOCKDOWN

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1. Background and research aims

On 23 March 2020 President Cyril Ramaphosa announced a nationwide lockdown in South Africa as part of the COVID-19 crisis response.¹ Initially proposed to run from 27 March to 17 April 2020, the lockdown was later extended to 30 April 2020. On 23 April the President announced a phased re-opening of the economy and on 1 May 2020 the country moved from Alert Level 5 lockdown to Alert Level 4 which allowed for some activity to resume with extreme precautions still being followed.² The lockdown provides a unique opportunity for researching violent crime, particularly in light of the regulations currently in place that may impact violent crime, including restriction on people's movement and the ban on alcohol sales.

In line with a public health approach to violence prevention the Western Cape Safety Plan calls for policing and violence prevention interventions to be evidence-based and data-driven.³ In other words, it is important to determine "what works" when it comes to policing and violence prevention, as well as why and how it works. Thus, the overarching aim of this research project is to monitor violent crime during lockdown (specifically focusing on the first six weeks) in an effort to understand how violent crime may have changed during this time, and what may be contributing to this change. The lessons learnt from this research can be used to support and inform the violence prevention and policing interventions that fall within the ambit of the Western Cape Safety Plan.

2. Methodology

This research project uses a mixed methods approach drawing on quantitative and qualitative data. The quantitative data is homicide data from the Forensic Pathology Services (FPS) in the Western Cape Department of Health as well as assault pick-ups data from the Emergency Medical Services (EMS). The qualitative data was collected via telephonic interviews with learner law enforcement officers who form part of the Law Enforcement Advancement Project (LEAP officials), South African Police Services (SAPS) station commanders, Western Cape Education Department (WCED) residents and non-governmental organisation (NGO) employees. The focus of the research is on

¹ Regulations issued in terms of section 27(2) of the Disaster Management Act, 2002; R398 dated 25 March 2020.

² The Presidency (23 April 2020). *Statement by President Cyril Ramaphosa on South Africa's Response to the Coronavirus Pandemic, Union Buildings, Tshwane*. Available at <http://www.thepresidency.gov.za/speeches/statement-president-cyril-ramaphosa-south-africa%27s-response-coronavirus-pandemic%2C-union-buildings%2C-tshwane>

³ Department of the Premier (2019). *Western Cape Safety Plan. Working Document*. Available at https://www.westerncape.gov.za/sites/www.westerncape.gov.za/files/assets/departments/premier/western_cape_government_safety_plan.pdf.

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the top 11 murder police station areas recording, together, 50% of murders in the Western Cape (referred to in the report as priority areas⁴), with a specific focus on three of these station areas: Khayelitsha, Delft and Philippi (inclusive of Hanover Park). These police station areas were identified as prioritized areas for roll-out of the Western Cape Safety Plan.

The details of the approach followed in collecting and analysing the quantitative and qualitative data for this research project is outlined below.

2.1 Quantitative data collection and analysis: Homicide and assault data

The Western Cape Government receives FPS-recorded homicide data⁵ and EMS assault pick-ups data⁶ on a regular basis. The FPS and EMS data refers to volume of incidents (number of FPS homicides recorded, number of EMS pick-ups for assault) and has not been adjusted to population estimates at area level. Therefore, ratios are used where possible to allow for better comparison. The homicide and assault data was analysed for this report using descriptive statistics to determine the following:

- The frequency of homicides and assaults;
- The nature of the homicides (shot, sharp object, other) and assaults (physical, weapon - gunshot, other, weapon – other);
- The police station area of the homicides and assaults;
- The gender and age breakdown of the victims; and
- The time of the assaults (this information is not provided in the homicide data).

The analysis focused on the first six weeks of lockdown (Weeks 14-19 of 2020) and compared this to Weeks 14-19 of 2019. For the EMS data Week 14 starts on 27 March 2020 at 00:01, which is aligned to the start of the lockdown. For the FPS data Week 14 starts on Sunday 29 March 2020 at 00:01. The latter is due to the standardised data received from the FPS. Alert Level 5 of lockdown was in place during the first five weeks

⁴ The priority areas are Bishop Lavis, Delft, Gugulethu, Harare, Kraaifontein, Khayelitsha, Mfuleni, Mitchells Plain, Nyanga, Philippi, and Philippi East.

⁵ FPS data is provisional and subject to adjustments as new information is received on the patient and/or the incident. This report uses the data received from the FPS on 25 May 2020.

⁶ EMS data only records assaults of such severity that they require an ambulance. It also requires the victim or a relative to call an ambulance, a behaviour that might have been affected by lockdown conditions, and other factors pre-existing the lockdown, such as the waiting time for an ambulance or the fact that ambulances do not serve "red zones" - no-go areas for ambulances due to heightened levels of violence representing risks for the safety of paramedics and ambulances (many red zones are located in the 11 priority areas). Therefore, many victims of assault requiring medical attention may go to a clinic or hospital themselves, without calling an ambulance. Assaults for which no ambulance was called are not recorded by the EMS and therefore not recorded here.

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of this analysis, while Alert Level 4 of lockdown was in place during the last week of the analysis. The respective weekly period runs as follows:

Table 1: Weekly period of FPS and EMS analysis

Week number	FPS	EMS	Alert level of lockdown
Week 14	29 March to 04 April 2020	27 March to 02 April 2020	Alert Level 5
Week 15	05 to 11 April 2020	03 to 08 April 2020	Alert Level 5
Week 16	12 to 18 April 2020	10 to 16 April 2020	Alert Level 5
Week 17	19 to 25 April 2020	17 to 23 April 2020	Alert Level 5
Week 18	26 April to 02 May 2020	24 to 30 April 2020	Alert Level 5
Week 19	03 to 09 May 2020	01 to 07 May 2020	Alert Level 4

2.2 Qualitative data collection and analysis: Telephonic interviews

For the qualitative data in this research project, four groups of participants living or working/deployed in Delft, Khayelitsha, and Philippi police station areas were interviewed:

- 31 Learner law enforcement officers (LEAP officials) who form part of the Law Enforcement Advancement Project (co-funded by the City of Cape Town and Western Cape Government) and have been deployed in the three priority areas;
- 39 education officials employed by the Western Cape Education Department (WCED residents), living in the three priority areas;
- 8 non-governmental employees (NGO employees) providing services to the three areas; and
- The 3 SAPS station commanders of Khayelitsha, Delft and Philippi police stations.

The breakdown of the participant groups per police station area is presented in Table 2 below.⁷

⁷ Some of the LEAP officials were deployed to more than one area which is reflected in Table 2. In addition, some LEAP officials were deployed to other areas too (for example, Mitchells Plain, Mfuleni), but for the purposes of this report the focus is on the three priority areas: Delft, Khayelitsha and Philippi.

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Table 2: Sample by participant group and police station area

Participant group	Police station area	Sample
LEAP	Khayelitsha	10
	Delft	9
	Philippi	1
	Khayelitsha and Delft	8
	Khayelitsha and Philippi	1
	Delft and Philippi	1
	All 3 police station areas	1
TOTAL LEAP		31
WCED	Khayelitsha	12
	Delft	7
	Philippi	20
TOTAL WCED		39
NGO	Khayelitsha	3
	Delft	1
	Philippi	4
TOTAL NGO		8
SAPS Station Commander	Khayelitsha	1
	Delft	1
	Philippi	1
TOTAL SAPS		3
GRAND TOTAL		81

These participants were selected through purposive sampling, a non-probability sampling method whereby participants are selected on the basis of pre-determined criteria that are in line with the purpose of the study. A key way in which changes in violent crime can be understood is by interviewing stakeholders “on the ground” in order to gauge their perceptions of violent crime. This can include stakeholders who are policing the three areas (LEAP officials and SAPS station commanders), rendering services (NGO employees), and who live in the areas (WCED residents).

During the lockdown period the LEAP officials reported that they had, for the most part, been responsible for supporting SAPS in enforcing the lockdown regulations. Their activities include patrolling, conducting stop and searches, administering road blocks and vehicle checkpoints, issuing fines and attending to COVID-19 related complaints. Initially during lockdown (until 24 May 2020) the operational deployment of the LEAP officials followed a cluster approach according to different SAPS clusters (for example, Delft Cluster, Khayelitsha cluster). On 25 May 2020 this changed and LEAP officials were deployed to COVID-19 hotspots.

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Because of the closure of schools during Alert Levels 5 and 4 of the lockdown the WCED residents interviewed were at home, but some noted they had been involved in feeding schemes and trying to teach and communicate their learners remotely (e.g. via WhatsApp). The NGO employees came from several different NGOs offering services such as mentoring pregnant women and new mothers, providing education support programmes for children, providing support and services to victims of domestic violence, and food distribution.

Each participant group was recruited by sending a formal request to the relevant authority. Thereafter, a list of names and contact details was provided to the research team. A bulk text message briefly explaining the research project was sent to all participants before they were contacted.

Data was collected from the participants via telephonic interviews which were conducted between 30 April and 12 May 2020. Telephonic interviews (as opposed to face-to-face interviews) were chosen in light of the lockdown regulations and health concerns related to the COVID-19 epidemic. The interviews were based on a semi-structured interview guide which consisted of a set of open-ended and closed-ended questions that focused on the participants' experiences and observations of violent crime during the lockdown, as well as the lockdown regulations (including the ban on alcohol sales, restriction of people's movement, and law enforcement and policing to ensure the regulations are being adhered to).

The interview guide was shared with J-PAL Africa for their input on the questions clarity, answerability, simplicity and relevance in relation to the objective of the research project. The interview guide was also piloted between two members of the research team before it was finalised. The interviews were conducted by 9 members of the research team who were all briefed on the interview guides before interviews commenced. At the start of each interview the participant was asked for their verbal consent to participate in the research project. Each interview was approximately 15-20 minutes long. The interviews were not audio-recorded and interviewers thus captured the participants' verbal responses in a template.

The captured responses from the templates were collated and analysed together by 7 members of the research team. The closed-ended questions were analysed descriptively determining the frequency of each response. The open-ended questions were analysed using thematic analysis, a method of analysis that is used with qualitative data to identify common patterns (themes) within the data. A coding frame was developed by the research team and used to guide the thematic analysis. Codes were assigned to each open-ended response. Thereafter, the research team went through the codes to identify common themes.

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3. Findings

In this section the findings of the research project are presented, focusing on the following violent crime categories: Homicide, assault, domestic violence and robbery. Particular attention is also paid to the role the ban on alcohol sales may have played in changes in violent crime, as this was a question directly asked of the study participants. The qualitative and quantitative data are presented together, and focused predominantly on the 11 priority areas, with specific emphasis on Khayelitsha, Delft and Philippi (where the qualitative data was collected). The quantitative data focuses on the FPS-recorded homicides and EMS pick-ups for assault, and the qualitative data focuses on the perceptions of the study participants with respect to violent crime and their understanding of how and why it might have changed.

3.1 Homicide

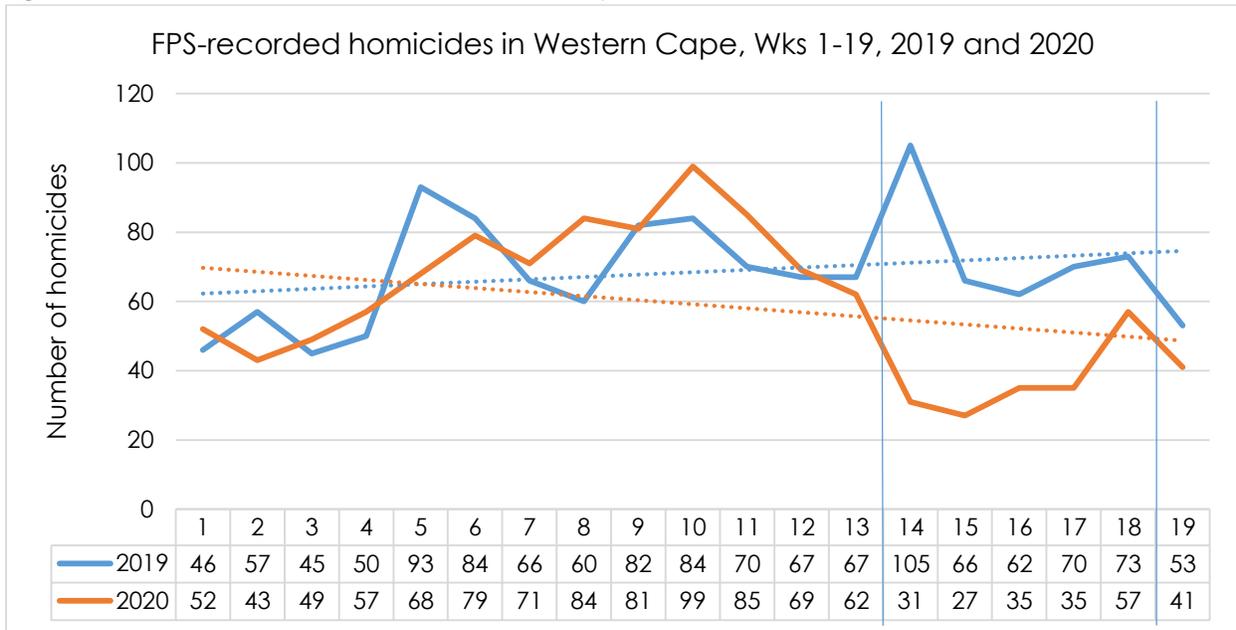
As shown in Figure 1 below, there was a sharp decline in the number of FPS-recorded homicides in the first two weeks of the lockdown (Weeks 14 and 15) in the Western Cape, followed by a gradual increase in Weeks 16-19. Although we cannot know if there was a link between the two, it is noteworthy that there was spike in homicides in Week 18 which occurred after the President announced that there would be a phased re-opening of the economy and that the country would move from Alert Level 5 to Level 4 of lockdown. Homicides then decreased again in Week 19. It is also important to note that Weeks 14-19 of 2019 followed a similar trend to 2020 – a reduction in homicides, followed by an increase and then another reduction. We therefore need to be cautious in attributing the homicide trend solely to the lockdown, and in particular movement between the different alert levels.

However, the overall lower numbers of homicides is likely related to the lockdown: Overall, there were 47.3% fewer homicides in the Western Cape during the first six weeks of lockdown compared to the same period in 2019. On 20 May 2020 the Minister of Police Bheki Cele reported that nationally there had been a 63.9% reduction in murder during the lockdown (27 March – 19 May 2020) when compared to the same period last year.⁸

⁸ South African Government (22 May 2020). *Media briefing: Minister of police, General Bheki Cele gives an update on the levels of compliance and adherence to the COVID-19 lockdown regulations in the country.* Available at <https://www.gov.za/speeches/minister-bheki-cele-coronavirus-covid-19-regulations-levels-compliance-and-adherence-22-may>

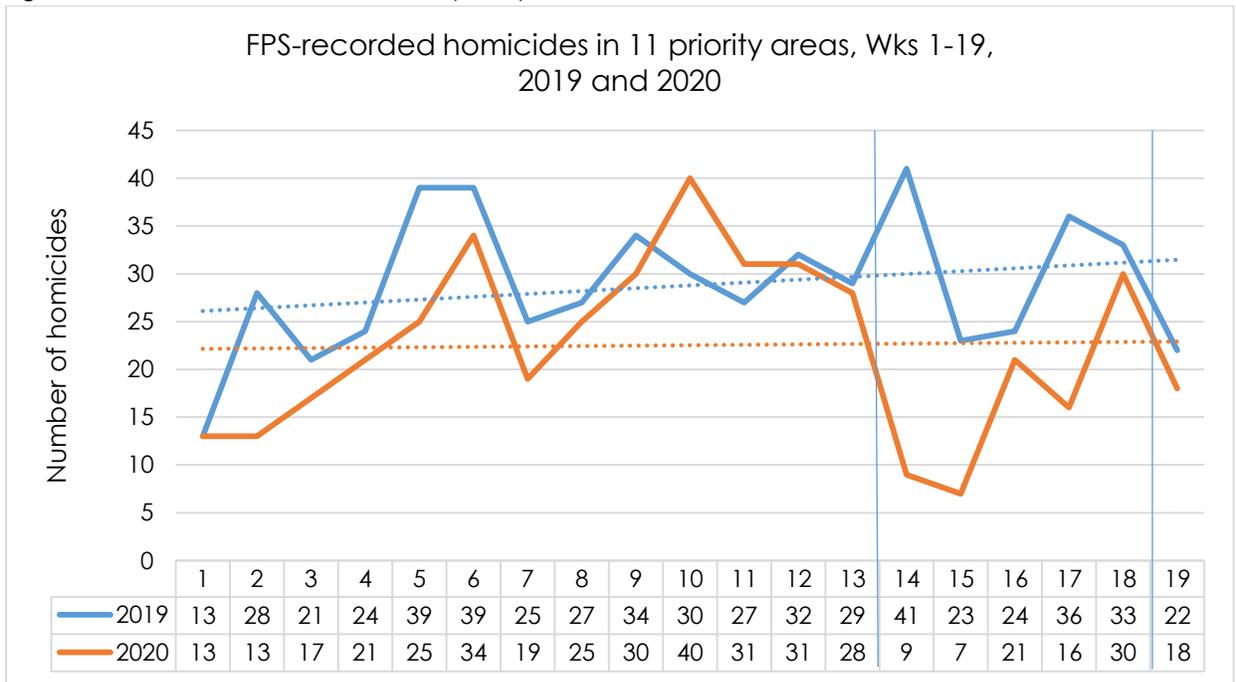
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Figure 1: FPS-recorded homicides in the Western Cape, Wks. 1-19, 2019 and 2020



In line with the trend across the province, in the 11 priority areas the number of homicides sharply declined in the first two weeks of lockdown, and then increased somewhat over the next four weeks (see Figure 2 below).

Figure 2: FPS-recorded homicides in 11 priority areas, Wks. 1-19, 2019 and 2020



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Overall, there were 43.6% fewer FPS-recorded homicides in the 11 priority areas during the first six weeks of lockdown compared to the same period in 2019 (see Table 3 below). The total number of reported homicides during the 6 week review period in the 11 priority areas (101) represents 44.7% of all the homicides in the Province.

As can be seen in Table 3 below, across the 11 priority areas the biggest reduction in homicide happened in Philippi where there were no homicides during the first six weeks of lockdown (compared to 9 in the same period in 2019), followed by Kraaifontein which had 92.3% fewer homicides (1 homicide during the first six weeks of lockdown compared to 13 in the same period in 2019), and then Delft which had 69.6% fewer homicides (7 homicides during the first six weeks of lockdown compared to 23 in the same period in 2019).

Contrastingly, Philippi East had 420% more homicides - 26 homicides during the first six weeks of lockdown compared to 5 in the same period in 2019. Indeed, Philippi East reported the highest number of homicides during the lockdown review period across the 11 priority areas (26), representing 25.7% of all homicides recorded in the priority areas, and 11.5% of all homicides recorded in the Province.⁹ This is followed by Khayelitsha which had 19 reported homicides during the first six weeks of lockdown, representing 18.8% of homicides in the 11 priority areas and 8.3% of all homicides in the Province. In addition, Mitchells Plain had a lower than average reduction in homicide (28.5%).

Table 3: Changes in FPS-recorded homicides in 11 priority areas, Wks. 14-19, 2019 and 2020

Priority areas	Weeks 14-19 of 2019	Weeks 14-19 of 2020	Diff week 14-19 of 2020 and week 14-19 2019	Percentage change
All 11 priority areas	179	101	-78	-43.6%
Bishop Lavis	16	6	-10	-62.5%
Delft	23	7	-16	-69.6%
Gugulethu	16	6	-10	-62.5%
Harare	19	9	-10	-52.6%
Khayelitsha	33	19	-14	-42.4%
Kraaifontein	13	1	-12	-92.3%
Mfuleni	15	7	-8	-53.3%
Mitchells Plain	14	10	-4	-28.5%
Nyanga	16	10	-6	-37.5%
Philippi	9	0	-9	-100%
Philippi East	5	26	21	+420%

⁹ The Philippi East SAPS police station had to close on three occasions during the review period which may have affected service delivery.

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With respect to the age breakdown of homicides, there is not much variation between 2020 and 2019: In the first 6 weeks of lockdown the majority of homicide victims fell within the 20-34 year age bracket (64.4%), which was the same in the 2019 period (63.7% were between the ages of 20-34 years). In terms of gender, the proportion of female homicide victims was slightly lower (4%) during the first six weeks of lockdown when compared to the same time period in 2019 (7.8%).

Figure 3 below shows that a larger proportion of homicides in the 11 priority areas during the first 6 weeks of lockdown were firearm-related (75.2%) when compared to the same period in 2019 (52%). Further, there were only 18.2% fewer homicides that were firearm-related (93 homicides in weeks 14-19 of 2019 compared to 76 during the first six weeks of lockdown), but 85% fewer homicides where a sharp object was used (64 homicides in 2019 compared to 9 in 2020 – see Figure 4 below). Indeed, only 8.9% of homicides involved a sharp object during the first six weeks of lockdown compared to 35.8% in 2019, and 15.8% of homicides were by other means compared to 12.3% in 2019 (see Figure 3 below). This illustrates that homicides involving firearms was much more prevalent during lockdown than homicides involving sharp objects.

Figure 3: Proportion of circumstances of FPS-recorded homicides across all the 11 priority areas, Wks. 14-19, 2019 and 2020

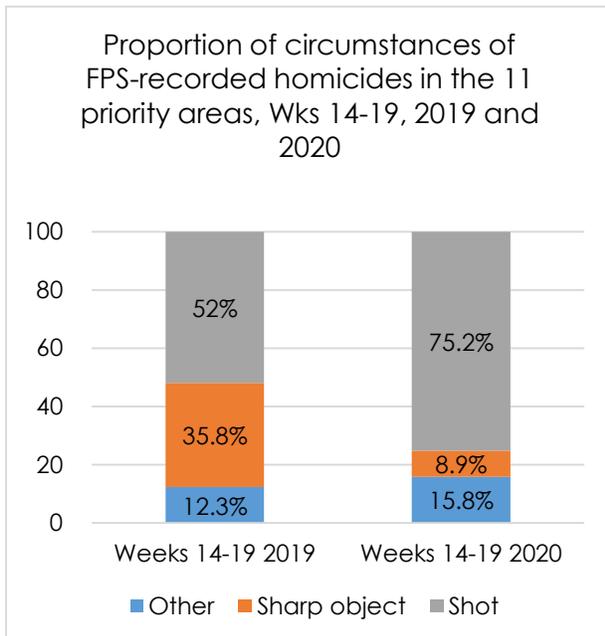
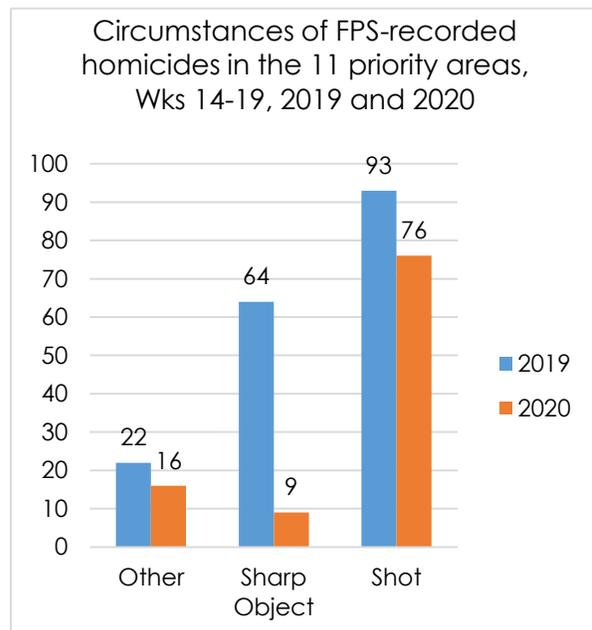


Figure 4: Circumstances of FPS-recorded homicides in the 11 priority areas, Wks. 14-19, 2019 and 2020



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3.1.1 Homicide in Delft, Khayelitsha and Philippi

In Delft during the first six weeks of lockdown there were 7 FPS-reported homicides compared to 23 in the same period of 2019 (69.6% fewer homicides). In Khayelitsha there were 19 homicides, compared to 33 in the same period in 2019 (42.4% fewer homicides), and in Philippi there were no homicides, compared to 9 in the same period in 2019 (see Table 4 below).

Table 4: FPS-recorded homicides in Delft, Khayelitsha and Philippi, Wks. 14-19, 2019 and 2020

Priority area	Weeks 14-19 of 2019	Weeks 14-19 of 2020	Diff week 14-19 of 2020 and week 14-19 2019	Percentage change
Delft	23	7	-16	-69.6%
Khayelitsha	33	19	-14	-42.4%
Philippi	9	0	-9	-100%

The lower number in homicides in Delft, Khayelitsha and Philippi (when compared to the same time in 2019) is reflected in the qualitative data. As an example, the vast majority of LEAP officials and the three SAPS station commanders were of the view that there had been fewer homicides during the lockdown period: *“There is a huge change. Each and every day at Delft you would hear there is a scene where someone has been shot. That’s not happening now, I’ve not heard about shootings”* (LEAP official)¹⁰. However, the SAPS station commander in Khayelitsha also felt that while there had been fewer homicides in the area, there had also been a shift in where homicides were taking place: *“There is a turn with murders. [Site C] used to contribute to most murders but for this period it has changed, it is now another area in Site B that is contributing to the murders”*.

Some WCED residents in Delft and Philippi felt that there were fewer murders because there was less violent gang activity: *“There are a lot of gangsters in Hanover Park. There is usually a lot of shooting that we hear on a daily basis and all that gang activity. Since the lockdown this has really decreased so I can agree that the murder has gone down in my area”*. This may be a reflection of the alleged truce that opposing gangs called for in the Cape Flats to focus on helping community members during the COVID-19 pandemic.¹¹

¹⁰ When interpreting the views of the LEAP officials it is important to bear in mind that those who were interviewed were all fairly new to law enforcement.

¹¹ Daily Maverick (19 May 2020). *South Africa’s 24-hour trend report – 18 May 2020*. Available at <https://www.dailymaverick.co.za/article/2020-05-19-south-africas-24-hour-trend-report-18-may-2020/>

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Across the LEAP officials, WCED residents and NGO employees the most common perceived reason cited for the decrease in homicides was the ban on the legal sale of alcohol. In fact, the vast majority of all participants felt that the ban on alcohol sales had contributed to a reduction in all violent crime: *"It is helping with the number of crimes. Before lockdown people would drink and commit crime or fight against each other. During lockdown, there was nothing of that sorts"* (LEAP official). However, the SAPS station commander in Philippi had a different view, arguing that in Hanover Park most of the community is Muslim and thus alcohol does not play a big role in murder or violence in general; rather, most murders are gang-related.

Another common view of the LEAP and WCED residents (but not of the NGO employees) was that law enforcement and police visibility had played a role in the decrease in homicides. This WCED resident said: *"It makes sense that murder has decreased because there is so much police visibility, it prevents people from doing criminal activities. Certain security officers are operating 24/7 in certain areas, especially in the townships"*. Some also specifically noted the visibility of the South African National Defence Force (SANDF) along with the police and law enforcement: *"The police, law enforcement and SANDF patrol the streets, and are very visible"* (LEAP official). Indeed the SAPS station commanders reported that law enforcement, SAPS and the SANDF had been working well together during the lockdown: *"It is much easier to enforce the regulations with SANDF, law enforcement and metro. Even with the other forces, it's much easier for them to engage with communities now than before"*. However, this finding needs to be interpreted with some caution as it may reflect confirmation bias on the part of the LEAP officials and SAPS station commanders: It is in their best interests to report that increased police and law enforcement visibility played a reduction in violent crime. This is not to say that it does not; rather that it needs to be borne in mind that this finding (like all the qualitative findings) reflects the perspectives of the study participants, perspectives that are shaped by dominant ideas and beliefs in the community, amongst their peers, and portrayed on the media.

There were some WCED residents and NGO employees who raised concerns over a lack of visibility from law enforcement agencies: *"here's almost been zero law enforcement and policing in the areas. It's actually quite rare to see them there. Very little visibility"* (NGO employee), with some feeling that law enforcement agencies had had no or very little impact on crime: *"There has been very little visible policing, it has disturbed me. Police has had no impact on crime. It hasn't increased it and it hasn't decreased it"* (WCED resident).

In addition, there were also some WCED residents and NGO employees who reported cases of mistreatment at the hands of law enforcement agencies: *"Some people have been treated badly by the police... I understand that sometimes people do not abide*

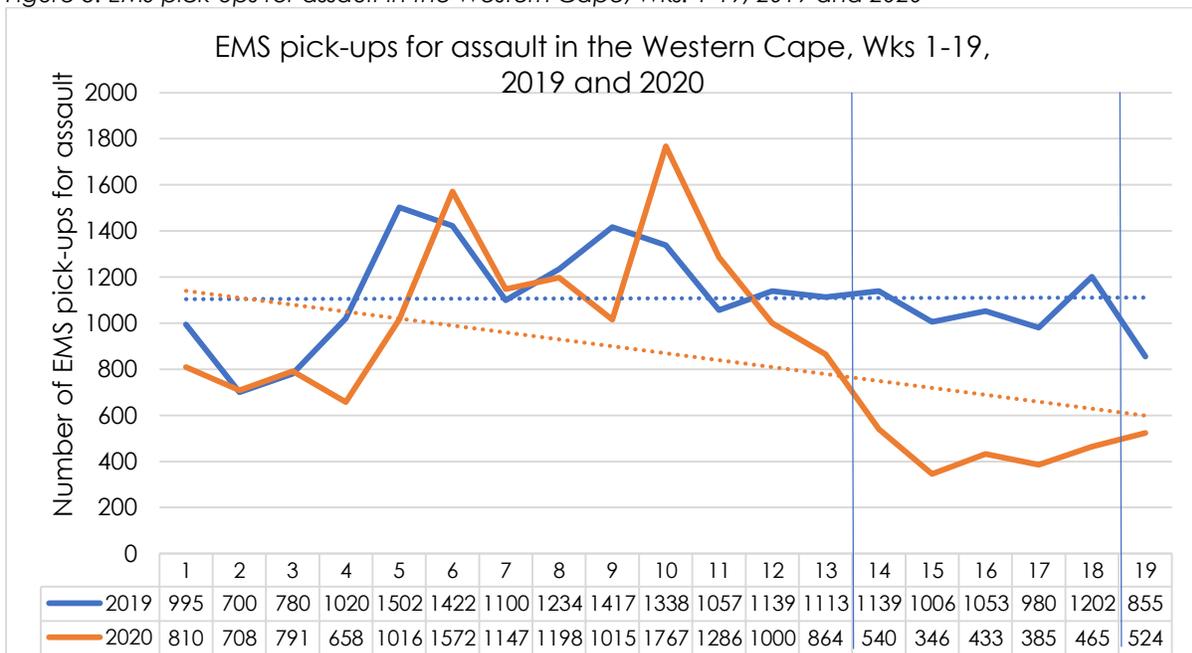
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by rules but excessive force does not have to be used and it is sad that they sometime resort to such measures” (WCED resident). For the most part, however, WCED residents and NGO employees were of the view that residents had been treated with respect by law enforcement agencies. Along similar lines, the majority of LEAP officials and SAPS station commanders felt that most residents were respectful in how they treated law enforcement agencies: “Most listen to us. Most give us respect” (LEAP official).

3.2 Assault

Like the FPS-recorded homicides, there was a sharp decline in the number of EMS pick-ups for assault in the first two weeks of lockdown (Weeks 14 and 15), followed by a gradual increase in Weeks 16 -19. Again the trend is similar in Weeks 16-19 of 2019 (see Figure 5 below). Overall, there were 57% fewer EMS pick-ups for assault in the Province during the first six weeks of lockdown compared to the same period in 2019.

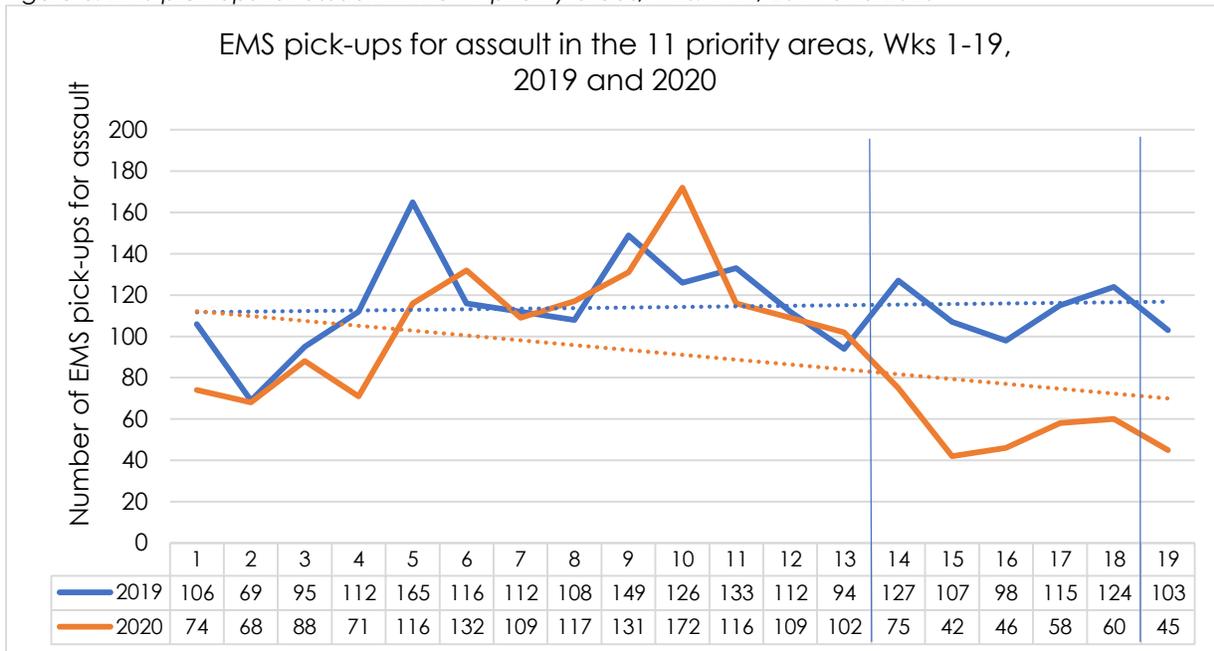
Figure 5: EMS pick-ups for assault in the Western Cape, Wks. 1-19, 2019 and 2020



In line with the trend in the Province, there was a sharp decline in the number of EMS pick-ups for assault in the 11 priority areas in the first two weeks of lockdown, followed by a gradual increase and a slight decrease in Week 19 (see Figure 6 below).

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Figure 6: EMS pick-ups for assault in the 11 priority areas, Wks. 1-19, 2019 and 2020



As can be seen in Table 5 below, overall there were 51.6% fewer EMS pick-ups for assault in the 11 priority areas during the first six weeks of lockdown compared to the same period in 2019. Across the priority areas the biggest decline was in Harare (71.4%), followed by Kraaifontein (64.8%), and Mfuleni (62.9%). On the other hand, Bishop Lavis, Philippi East and Mitchells Plain recorded a lower than average decrease in EMS pick-ups for assault (14.3%, 26.2% and 29.7% respectively).

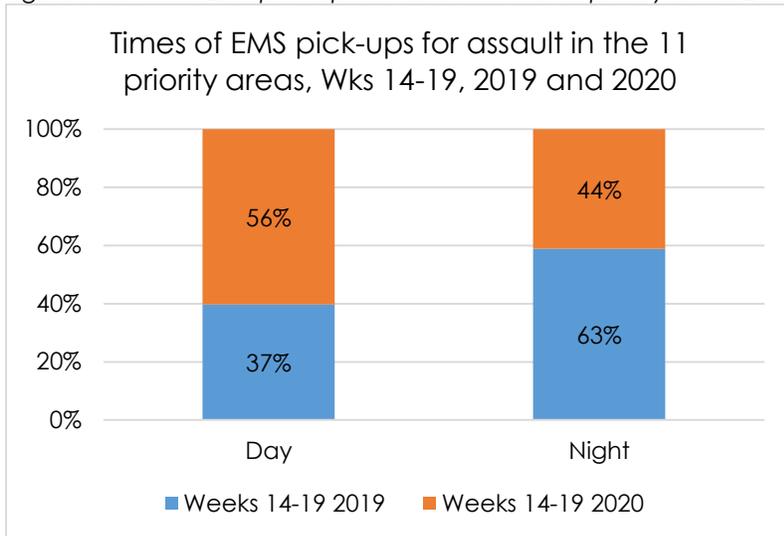
Table 5: Changes in EMS pick-ups for assault in priority areas, Wks. 14-19, 2019 and 2020

Priority area	Weeks 14-19 of 2019	Weeks 14-19 of 2020	Diff week 14-19 of 2020 and week 14-19 of 2019	Percentage difference
All 11 priority areas	674	326	-348	-51,6%
Bishop Lavis	35	30	-5	-14,3%
Delft	58	39	-19	-32,8%
Gugulethu	48	20	-28	-58,3%
Harare	105	30	-75	-71,4%
Khayelitsha	48	19	-29	-60,4%
Kraaifontein	71	25	-46	-64,8%
Mfuleni	132	49	-83	-62,9%
Mitchells Plain	74	52	-22	-29,7%
Nyanga	46	22	-24	-52,2%
Philippi	15	9	-6	-40,0%
Philippi East	42	31	-11	-26,2%

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The times of EMS pick-ups for assault during lockdown in the 11 priority areas shows an increase in the proportion of calls during the day (from 07:00 until 19:00). During the first six weeks of lockdown, a total of 56% of EMS pick-ups for assault were during the day, while 37% of EMS pick-ups for assault were during the day in the same period in 2019 (see Figure 7 below). This may be a reflection of lockdown regulations restricting people's movement, as well as Alert Level 4 (from week 19) imposing a curfew at night. In addition, people were meant to be at home during lockdown and there is thus a higher likelihood of daytime incidents.

Figure 7: Times of EMS pick-ups for assault in the 11 priority areas 2019 and 2020



With respect to the age breakdown of the EMS pick-ups for assault there is little variation between 2019 and 2020: During the first six weeks of lockdown the majority of EMS pick-ups for assault were for victims between the ages of 20-39 years (61%), which is very similar to 2019 where 64.7% of victims fell within the 20-39 year age group. There is some variation in terms of gender: Similar to the homicide data, a lower proportion of EMS pick-ups for assault were for female victims during the first six weeks of lockdown (14.7%) when compared to the same time period in 2019 (17.1%).

Similar to the circumstances of the FPS-recorded homicides, a larger proportion of EMS pick-ups for assault in the 11 priority areas during the first 6 weeks of lockdown were firearm-related (24.2%) compared to the same period in 2019 (14.1%) (See Figure 8 below). Further, there were 16.8% fewer assaults by firearm (95 EMS pick-ups for assault in weeks 14-19 of 2019 compared to 79 during lockdown), while there were 59.3% fewer assaults by other weapons (including sharp objects) (386 EMS pick-ups for assault in 2019 compared to 157 in 2020 – see Figure 9 below). In addition, there was a lower proportion of EMS pick-ups for assault related to other weapons during the lockdown period of review (48.2%) compared to the same period in 2019 (57.3%). The proportion

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of physical assault and assault by other means stayed largely the same (see Figure 8 below).

Figure 8: Proportion of circumstances of EMS pick-ups for assault in the 11 priority areas, Wks. 14-19, 2019 and 2020

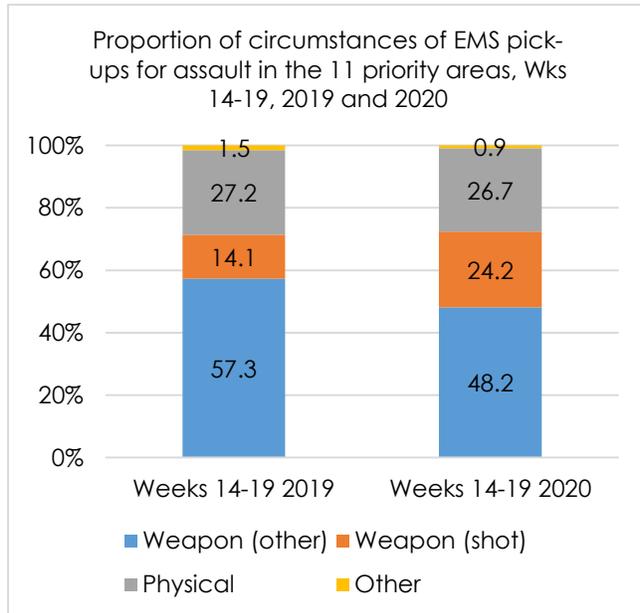
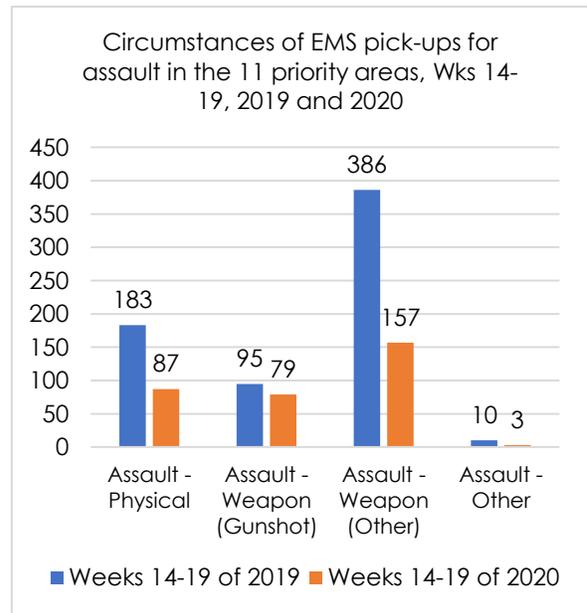


Figure 9: Circumstances of EMS pick-ups for assault in the 11 priority areas, Wks. 14-19, 2019 and 2020



The ban on the sale of alcohol as well as the restriction on people's movement may have played a role in the lower levels of EMS pick-ups for assault and FPS-recorded homicides that involve other weapons, including sharp objects. Violent crimes (including assault and homicides) where weapons other than firearms are used usually involve social interactions and often involves problematic alcohol consumption patterns. Because during Alert Levels 4 and 5 of Lockdown people were not allowed to buy alcohol, leave their homes (unless to buy essential goods or provide an essential service) and visit shebeens, bars and taverns, parks and other spaces for social interaction, there were fewer opportunities for social interactions combined with problematic alcohol use and, thus, violent crime in this context. FPS-recorded homicides data from the first week of Alert Level 3 (Week 23, the first week where alcohol was on sale again) support this argument: 31.3% of homicides in the 11 priority areas in Week 23 of 2020 were by means of sharp object, compared to 8.9% during the first six weeks of lockdown. This illustrates an increase in the proportion of homicides where sharp objects were used.

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3.2.1 Assault in Delft, Khayelitsha and Philippi

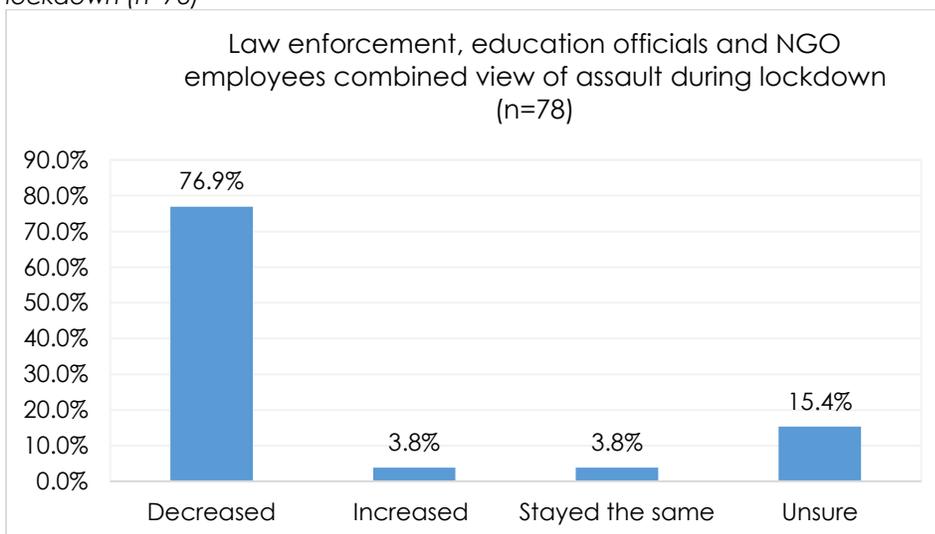
During the lockdown period of review in Delft there were 39 EMS pick-ups for assault compared to 58 in the same period in 2019 (32.8% fewer assault cases). In Khayelitsha there were 19 EMS pick-ups for assault compared to 48 in 2019 (60.4% reduction), and in Philippi there were 9 EMS pick-ups for assault compared to 15 in 2019 (40% fewer assault cases) (see Table 6 below).

Table 6: EMS pick-ups for assault in Delft, Khayelitsha and Philippi, Wks. 14-19, 2019 and 2020

Priority area	Weeks 14-19 of 2019	Weeks 14-19 of 2020	Diff week 14-19 of 2020 and week 14-19 of 2019	Percentage change
Delft	58	39	-19	-32,8%
Khayelitsha	48	19	-29	-60,4%
Philippi	15	9	-6	-40,0%

The qualitative data is largely in line with the lower numbers of EMS pick-ups for assaults (when compared to the same time in 2019): Across the LEAP officials, WCED residents and NGO employees in Delft, Khayelitsha and Philippi the majority (76.9%) were of the view that assault had decreased. However, 15.4% reported being unsure, 3.8% reported it had increased, and another 3.8% reported that it had stayed the same (see Figure 10 below).

Figure 10: Law enforcement, education officials and NGO employees combined view of assault during lockdown (n=78)¹²



¹² We acknowledge the limitation of presenting statistical data such as this that is based on small sample sizes.

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There was some variation across the participant groups in the reasons given by those who reported a decrease in assault. The most common perceived reason amongst the LEAP officials was increased law enforcement and police visibility: *"It has decreased because we are on the street a lot now, so they can't be violent. Not easy for people to have a chance to fight"*. A few LEAP officials speculated that the fear of arrest might have contributed to the decrease: *"Maybe they are scared the police are going to catch them"*.

Amongst the WCED residents the most common perceived reason was the reduction in people's movement as a result of the lockdown regulations: *"It went down because no one is outside. It used to happen in the mornings, on the way to work"*. Some related this specifically to a fear of the COVID-19 virus: *"Everyone is scared for the virus so people are staying inside"*.

The most common perceived reason amongst the NGO employees was the ban on the sale of alcohol, which includes the closure of shebeens, taverns and bars: *"Because alcohol sales are prohibited, the illegal alcohol is expensive and shebeens are closed, there are no drunk fights taking place at the shebeens, on the roads and at home"*. Notably, the ban on the sale of alcohol was the second most common perceived reason cited amongst the LEAP officials and WCED residents for the reduction in assault. Some participants cited the reduction in people's movement as well as the ban on the sale of alcohol together as contributing to the decrease in assault: *"With there being a restriction in movement due to the lockdown as well as no more access to shebeens, shisa nyamas¹³ and taverns, people are not assaulting each other"* (NGO employee).

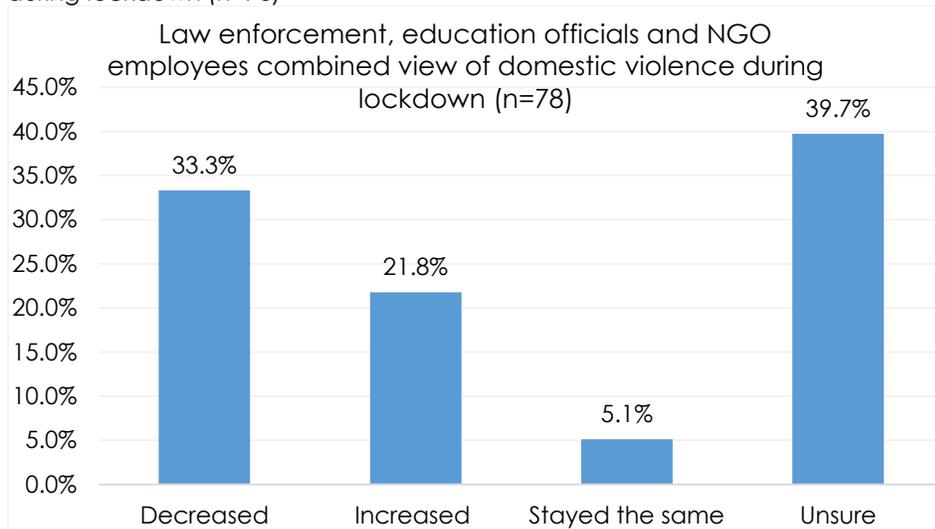
3.3 Domestic violence

While most participants felt that homicide, robbery and assault had decreased during lockdown, this was not the case with domestic violence: Across the LEAP and WCED residents and NGO employees, almost 40% felt unsure as to whether it had increased or decreased, just over 33% felt it had decreased, 21.8% felt it had increased, and 5.1% felt it had stayed the same (see Figure 11 below). The three SAPS station commanders felt that domestic violence (unlike other crimes) had not decreased or increased but rather stayed the same.

¹³ Shisa nyamas is a Zulu slang expression for "buy and braai" and is used to refer to a place where people gather to braai, listen to music and drink.

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Figure 11: Law enforcement, education officials and NGO employees combined view of domestic violence during lockdown (n=78)



The uncertainty amongst a number of participants as to whether or not domestic violence had increased or decreased may be a reflection of the nature of domestic violence – it is often a hidden form of violence as it happens in the home away from the public, and is not always reported on. Some NGO employees felt that victims of domestic violence may fear reporting violence during the lockdown because of uncertainty around what will happen if it is reported: *“Women are worried about what happens after they report. If a protection order is delivered, then what happens to the woman – where must she go? If the partner must leave, where do they go?”* Informal discussions with NGOs working in the field of domestic violence highlight that many women thought they were not allowed to report domestic violence cases to the police during lockdown as they did not think it was considered an essential service.¹⁴

Amongst those LEAP officials, WCED residents and NGO employees who felt that domestic violence had decreased, two common perceived reasons cited were the ban on the sale of alcohol as well as more empathy and understanding amongst families. As an example this WCED resident said: *“It has decreased as people have started to understand each other and their roles in the homes. Where husbands have previously been absent from home and frequenting shebeens they are now at home and engaging with family members”*.

Contrastingly, those who felt domestic violence had increased noted that this was because of increased levels of relationship strain within households: *“In some areas it has increased and I think it's because of constantly being together. Before lockdown:*

¹⁴ Department of the Premier (2020). *GBV Report on Call with NGOs: Key Themes and Insights around Gender based Violence during Lockdown*.

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people were away from the house, more space. Because of lockdown people are inside, so it is a great opportunity for true colours to come out" (LEAP official).

Other countries, particularly in the northern hemisphere, have reported an increase in reporting of domestic violence cases. However, in South Africa several data sources suggest the opposite. For example, the SAPS data indicates a decrease of 68.4% in reported domestic violence cases in the country when comparing the lockdown period from 27 March to 19 May to the same time period in 2019 (21,033 cases in 2019 compared to 6,651 cases in 2020).¹⁵ Further, Rape Crisis Trust reported a 50 percent drop in rape and sexual assault cases against women during the lockdown.¹⁶ It is also important to note that the FPS-recorded homicides and EMS-pick-ups for assault illustrate a slight reduction in the proportion of female victims: 4% of homicide victims during the first six weeks of lockdown were female compared to 7.8% during the same time in 2019, and 14% of assault victims were female during the first six weeks of lockdown compared to 17.1% in 2019.

While we cannot know for certain why there has been this reduction in reported domestic violence cases, there are a few possibilities, as noted by Dr Chandre Gould: Firstly, the ban on the sale of alcohol may have reduced the severity of domestic violence; partners who are sober may still be abusive and controlling, but less likely to use extreme physical violence. Secondly, victims of violence may be unable to report cases of domestic violence because they do not have a valid reason to give their abuser for leaving home, or they fear being confronted by the police, or they fear contracting the COVID-19 virus. In the United Kingdom, where lockdown regulations have not included a ban on the sale of alcohol nor an equivalent enforcement of the lockdown by police, there has been a dramatic increase in reported domestic violence: British domestic abuse NGO Refuge reported a 700% increase in calls from victims. This suggests that the alcohol sales ban and enforced lockdown regulations may have played a role in the decrease in reported domestic violence cases in South Africa, but we cannot know for sure.¹⁷

¹⁵ South African Government (22 May 2020). *Media briefing: Minister of police, General Bheki Cele gives an update on the levels of compliance and adherence to the COVID-19 lockdown regulations in the country.* Available at <https://www.gov.za/speeches/minister-bheki-cele-coronavirus-covid-19-regulations-levels-compliance-and-adherence-22-may>

¹⁶ C. Gould (11 May 2020). *Gender-based violence during lockdown: Looking for answers.* Available at: https://issafrica.org/iss-today/gender-based-violence-during-lockdown-looking-for-answers?utm_source=BenchmarkEmail&utm_campaign=ISS_Weekly&utm_medium=email

¹⁷ C. Gould (11 May 2020). *Gender-based violence during lockdown: Looking for answers.* Available at: https://issafrica.org/iss-today/gender-based-violence-during-lockdown-looking-for-answers?utm_source=BenchmarkEmail&utm_campaign=ISS_Weekly&utm_medium=email

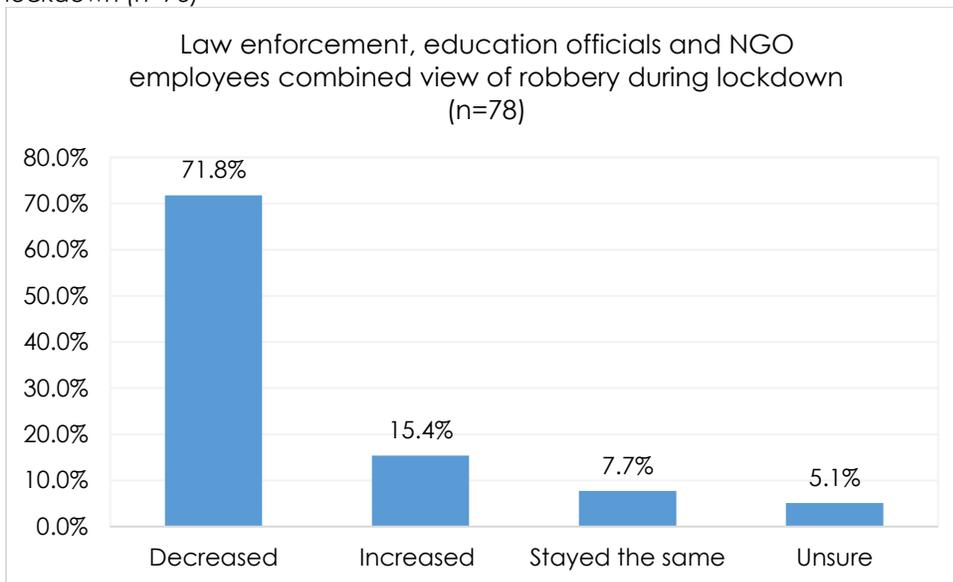
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3.4 Robbery

Across the LEAP officials, WCED residents and the NGO employees in Delft, Khayelitsha and Philippi the majority (71.8%) felt that robbery had decreased (see Figure 12 below). This view is in line with the SAPS crime statistics which shows that, across the country, robbery with aggravating circumstances decreased by 63.7% during lockdown when compared to the same time period in 2019, robbery at residential premises decreased by 49.1%, and robbery at non-residential premises decreased by 60.2%.¹⁸

However, there was also variation between the participant groups on their views with respect to changes in robbery: Half the NGO employees felt that robbery had stayed the same, while only 2.6% of education officials and 3.2% of LEAP officials felt it had stayed the same. In addition, 37.5% of NGO employees and 17.9% of WCED residents felt robbery had increased, while only 6.5% of LEAP officials felt it had increased¹⁹ (see Figure 13 below).

Figure 12: Law enforcement, education officials and NGO employees combined view of robbery during lockdown (n=78)

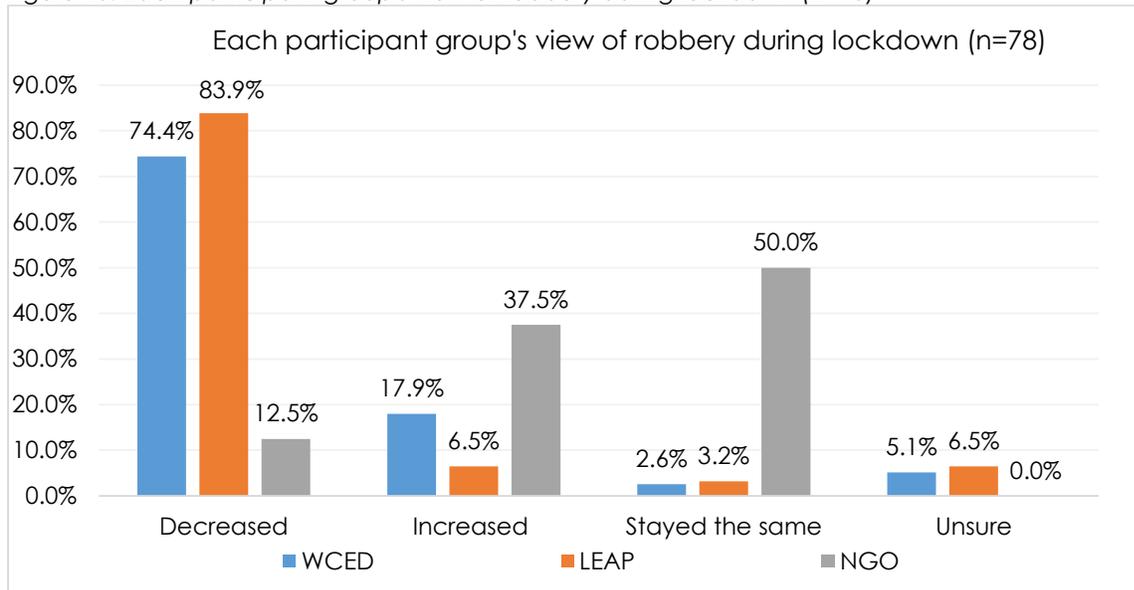


¹⁸ South African Government (22 May 2020). *Media briefing: Minister of police, General Bheki Cele gives an update on the levels of compliance and adherence to the COVID-19 lockdown regulations in the country.* Available at <https://www.gov.za/speeches/minister-bheki-cele-coronavirus-covid-19-regulations-levels-compliance-and-adherence-22-may>

¹⁹ It is important to note, however, that the sample size of the NGO employees is smaller (8) when compared to the WCED residents (39) and LEAP officials (31), and thus comparisons across the groups need to be interpreted with this in mind.

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Figure 13: Each participant group's view of robbery during lockdown (n=78)



LEAP officials and WCED residents who felt that robbery had decreased gave similar reasons for the reduction. Many felt that the decrease was because of the restriction on people's movement which resulted in more people being at home, fewer people on the streets and thus fewer opportunities for robbery: *"The reason for this is because all of us are at home. Even in the early hours of the morning there would be gangsters waiting to rob people when they go to work, but we don't see this happening anymore"* (WCED resident). Both LEAP officials and WCED residents also felt that along with a restriction on people's movement, increased visibility from law enforcement agencies contributed to a decrease in robbery, although this was more commonly discussed amongst the LEAP officials: *"People are not going around. We haven't come across anyone who says they have been robbed. The crime rate is very low. Because people cannot just go around and do nothing. They know SAPS, SANDF and LE are patrolling"* (LEAP official). One of the SAPS station commanders also discussed the decrease in robbery, but clarified this by saying: *"the tendency is that they have moved to the farm for business robberies, not street robberies. Because of the queues, people lining up, there are too many witnesses for street robbery now. Also with public transport being limited, people don't have the same opportunity for street robbery"*.

Although it was not specifically asked in the interviews, a few participants (across the LEAP officials, WCED residents and NGO employees) felt that robbery started picking up again when the country moved from Alert Level 5 to Level 4 lockdown, and some activities started to resume: *"Burglaries are taking place again because people are back at work"* (WCED resident). A couple of NGO employees also noted that healthcare professionals delivering essential services are a target for robbery: *"There was a couple of recent incidents in Site C, and it happens when doctors come and do*

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outreach. I mean outreach in terms of COVID-19 home screening. The doctors are robbed when they come and do home screening”.

Amongst the WCED residents and NGO employees who said that robbery had increased, a common perceived reason cited across both groups was a lack of law enforcement visibility. Some education officials also felt that robbery had increased because of economic strain: *“I think it has increased because people have no income and now they are desperate for food. Most people in my area work in factories and are now struggling to get income and some of them stopped and robbed a food truck and took the food items from the truck”.*

Indeed when participants were asked to identify any other crimes happening in their areas, looting of shops, liquor stores and trucks was reported by some. For example, one LEAP official said: *“They were robbing trucks on the N2. I think that kind of robbery is increasing”.*

Other crimes reported included vandalism of schools and private properties, selling drugs, cigarettes and alcohol, illegal protests, and stoning vehicles.

3.5 The role of the ban on alcohol sales in violent crime

When asked what impact they felt the ban on the sale of alcohol had had on violent crime during lockdown, the majority of participants reported that it had contributed to a reduction in violent crime: *“It has made a big change because there is nobody drunk outside, everyone is staying indoors and it is beautiful. No one is drunk and fighting each other and no one is going to hospital because no one is getting stabbed”* (WCED resident).

Many participants were of the view that the unavailability of alcohol meant that there was less of a reason for people to arrange social gatherings and to wander the streets which meant there were fewer opportunities for violent crime: *“Because there's less alcohol, there are less people gallivanting in the streets late at night, no one can just visit their friends* (NGO employee). In addition, they noted the closure of taverns, shebeens and bars as contributing to the reduction in violent crime: *“No chance to go to the shebeens - that is where it usually starts. But now people are inside their houses”* (LEAP official).

Other participants felt that there was a clear link between alcohol use and a change in behaviour. This LEAP official said: *“It has made a lot of impact. Because people are always sober. And when you are sober people think before you do something. Most of crimes happen when people are drunk”.* Referring specifically to homicide, this WCED

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resident noted: *"The prohibition on alcohol sales plays a major role because where there is alcohol it is easy to get into arguments which could lead to murder"*.

Some participants also noted that the ban on the sale of alcohol had contributed to people spending more time with their families: *"The lack of alcohol and restriction made people to be very close to their children. They spend time with their children"* (WCED resident), as well as using their money to buy things for their families: *"Now, people are spending money on important things, not on alcohol ... People are also sending money to the Eastern Cape instead of buying alcohol the whole weekend"*. Some of those who felt that domestic violence had decreased attributed the decrease to the ban on the sale of alcohol: *"Main factor in domestic violence cases is alcohol use. The ban on alcohol has thus assisted in this regard"* (LEAP official).

The association between alcohol consumption and aggressive and violent behaviour is well-established.²⁰ The findings of this research study appear to be in line with this, and suggest that a lack of access to alcohol contributed to a reduction in violent crime. However, there are also other factors at play including the restriction on people's movement and the perceived increase in law enforcement visibility, which – according to the qualitative findings of this study – may have also contributed to a decrease in violent crime. It is also important to note that across the world countries that have not had a ban on the sale of alcohol have also reported reductions in violent crime; however, most countries where there has been a lockdown have closed bars and clubs, thereby limiting people's ability to interact socially and access alcohol.

While many participants in the study felt that the ban on the sale of alcohol contributed to a reduction in violent crime, some also noted that the ban allowed for a black market of alcohol sales to emerge: *"The illegal selling of alcohol in itself is a crime so the ban has opened up a door for this which is a negative spin off. It would have been good for them to relax the regulations a bit when it comes to this because the black market is thriving"* (WCED resident). This view is reflected in the LEAP officials' discussion of confiscations: Just over a third reported that they had confiscated alcohol (mainly on the streets during stop and searches), although it was generally on a small scale.

4. Summary of key findings and recommendations

In this section a summary of the key findings as well as potential recommendations and caveats arising from these findings is presented. While the lockdown is unique in the sense that many of the regulations implemented are not sustainable in the long-term, it

²⁰ M. Krisch, M Eisner, C. Mikton, & A. Butchart (2015). *Global Strategies to Reduce Violence by 50% in 30 years. Findings from the WHO and University Of Cambridge Global Violence Reduction Conference 2014*. Available at <https://www.vrc.crim.cam.ac.uk/system/files/documents/violencereductionreport.pdf>,

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is nevertheless important to highlight what we can learn from the lockdown and what key lessons we can take forward in long-term policing and violence prevention work.

4.1 Summary of key findings

FPS-recorded homicides in the 11 priority areas during the first six weeks of lockdown represent 44.7% of all homicides in the Western Cape, highlighting that these areas are still some of the most violent in the province. However, there were also **43.6% fewer homicides** in these areas as well as a **51.6% fewer EMS pick-ups for assault** compared with the previous year. Philippi and Kraaifontein in particular recorded low levels of violence, especially fatal violence: There were no homicides in Philippi during this period of lockdown and 40% fewer EMS pick-ups for assault, and there were 92.3% fewer homicides in Kraaifontein and 64.8% fewer EMS pick-ups for assault. On the other hand, **Philippi East, Khayelitsha and Mitchells Plain** were **areas of concern** due to the high number of recorded incidents of violence during lockdown: Philippi East far more homicides in the first six weeks of lockdown when compared to 2019, and the highest number of homicides across the 11 priority areas (26). It also recorded a lower than average decrease in EMS pick-ups for assault (26.2%). Khayelitsha had the second highest number of homicides during the first six weeks of lockdown (19), and Mitchells Plain recorded a lower than average reduction in homicides (28.5%) and EMS pick-ups for assault (29.7%). Input from SAPS – in particular in relation to analysis of case dockets – is needed in order to better understand these patterns of violent crime.

During the first six weeks of lockdown in the 11 priority areas, **75.2% of FPS-reported homicides were firearm-related** (compared to 52% in the same period in 2019), **and only 8.9% involved a sharp object** (compared to 35.8% in 2019). In addition, **24.2% of EMS pick-ups for assault were firearm-related** (compared to 14.1% in 2019). Without knowing the exact circumstances surrounding the homicides and assaults it is difficult to determine why firearm-related homicide and assault was more prominent during lockdown, and why homicides and assaults involving sharp objects and other weapons was much less prominent. However, the ban on the sale of alcohol is likely to have played some role in this, particularly in the reduction in violent crime where sharp objects and other weapons are used. What we also know is that over the last three years firearm-related murders have increased in the province: In 2016/2017, firearms accounted for 36% of murders, in 2017/2018, 42.3%, and in 2018/2019 they accounted for 46% of murders (1841). In addition, firearms were used in 94.7% (888) of gang-related murders in 2018/2019.²¹ The findings from this study highlight that firearm-related homicide continue to be a concern, even with the lockdown and its strict regulations, especially during Alert Levels 4 and 5.

²¹ SAPS (2019). *Western Cape 2018/19 Annual Report*. p 32 and p. 37.

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In line with the FPS and EMS data on homicides and assault, most of the study participants in Delft, Khayelitsha and Philippi felt that these violent crimes had decreased in their areas. In addition, the **majority felt that robbery had also decreased** during lockdown, which is in line with the SAPS crime data in the country. However, there was also speculation amongst some participants that robbery started to pick up again when the country moved from lockdown Alert Level 5 to Level 4, and there was recognition that looting of stores trucks and liquor stores was taking place. Indeed Minister of Police Bheki Cele announced on 22 May 2020 that there had been slight increases in some crime categories in the country, although he did not clarify which crime categories this applied to.²²

Almost 40% of WCED residents, LEAP officials and NGO employees reported being **unsure as to whether domestic violence had increased or decreased**, which may reflect the nature of domestic violence; that it is often hidden away from the public and not always reported on. Indeed some NGO participants were concerned that victims of domestic violence may not be reporting on incidents of violence during lockdown because of an uncertainty around what would happen if they did. While other countries have reported an increase in the number of reported domestic violence cases, the same cannot be said for South Africa: SAPS data indicates a **64.8% fewer reported domestic violence cases** during lockdown in the country compared to the same period in 2019. More research is needed to determine why this may be the case, including exploring whether victims of domestic violence were able to report on their experiences of violence (feedback from NGOs suggests that many women did not feel they were allowed to report on domestic violence²³), and what role the ban on the sale of alcohol may have played.

In this study the vast majority of all participants felt that the **ban on alcohol sales had contributed to a reduction in violent crime**. Many reasoned that alcohol use changes a person's behaviour and can result in them becoming violent, and therefore without alcohol, violent crime is less likely to occur. Some also specifically recognised the closure of taverns, shebeens and bars and the restriction on people's movement (as well as the curfew) as contributing to the reduction in violent crime as this meant that people were not wandering the streets late at night and there were thus fewer opportunities for crime. Some participants (in particular the LEAP officials) felt that the

²² South African Government (22 May 2020). *Media briefing: Minister of police, General Bheki Cele gives an update on the levels of compliance and adherence to the COVID-19 lockdown regulations in the country*. Available at <https://www.gov.za/speeches/minister-bheki-cele-coronavirus-covid-19-regulations-levels-compliance-and-adherence-22-may>

²³ Department of the Premier (2020). *GBV Report on Call with NGOs: Key Themes and Insights around Gender based Violence during Lockdown*.

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increased visibility of law enforcement agencies also played a role in the reduction in violent crime. While law enforcement have a pivotal role to play when it comes to violence prevention and reduction, this finding should be interpreted with some caution as it may represent confirmation bias on the part of the LEAP officials.

4.2 Recommendations

This section focuses on the possible recommendations arising from this research project according to the following themes:

- Addressing violence in the priority areas;
- Collaboration and coordination between law enforcement agencies;
- Addressing domestic violence;
- Firearm control and regulation;
- Addressing sharp point violence;
- Regulation of alcohol sales and consumption; and
- Data-led and evidence-based deployment.

4.2.1 Addressing violence in the priority areas

In light of the fact that the 11 priority areas remained some of the most violent in the Western Cape during the first six weeks of lockdown - with 44.7% of all homicides across the province taking place in these areas – **continued attention must be paid to addressing violence in these areas**, as recognised in the Western Cape Safety Plan. Philippi East, Khayelitsha and Mitchells Plain were of particular concern due to the high number of recorded incidents of violence during the first six weeks of lockdown.

4.2.2 Collaboration and coordination between law enforcement agencies

The findings of this study suggest that law enforcement and SAPS worked well together in enforcing the lockdown regulations. This kind of collaboration and coordination between different law enforcement agencies needs to be **continued into general policing activities**.

It is not clear from the findings of this research study the specific details of the collaboration that took place between law enforcement and SAPS (as this was not a specific aim of the research study), and it is therefore recommended to **continue doing research on enhanced collaboration between different law enforcement agencies** during the COVID-19 hard lockdown to understand:

- The levels of seniority at which collaboration took place (operational, management, etc);

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- The nature of the collaboration at the different levels;
- The extent to which collaborative decisions were taken for operational requirements;
- The manner and extent to which the nature of collaboration differed during the COVID-19 hard lockdown and before; and
- Whether and how it could be sustained.

This could be done by conducting further interviews with different law enforcement agencies at different levels of seniority, after approval from senior management.

4.2.3 Addressing domestic violence

The responses for domestic violence reveal some uncertainties around the nature and extent of the issue. The three SAPS station commanders reported that domestic violence had stayed the same during the first six weeks of lockdown. However, many of the other participants (LEAP officials and WCED residents) were unsure as to whether domestic violence had increased or not. This makes sense given that domestic violence is often hidden from the public, making it a shadow issue unless it is reported. On the other hand, a lack of reporting was expressed by some NGOs, where participants speculate that many victims do not report incidences of abuse. This is supported by previous informal discussions with NGOs, which showed that victims have encountered a range of barriers to reporting during the lockdown; including:

- Basic needs (such as food) come first, and seeking assistance following abuse is secondary. In addition, reporting abuse increases the likelihood of women being separated by their primary breadwinners, which limits access to basic needs;
- Fears relating to reporting is exacerbated by COVID-19, where women fear contracting the virus if they leave their house;
- No access to cell phones or airtime means that victims must physically leave their homes to report at a police station. This is compounded by a lack of transport funds;
- SAPS assistance is uneven, with some women being turned away or some SAPS staff being unaware of referral pathways.

While the results from this study are inconclusive, it does highlight two key objectives to focus on in the short term. Since the nature and extent of domestic violence remains unclear, **a detailed diagnostic must be undertaken** to detail the key risk factors, track the communities that are most at risk, to understand a victim's experience with the reporting and referral system and to start profiling already existing evidence-based interventions being implemented. The results of this diagnostic can feed into the work being proposed by the Departments of the Premier (DotP) and Social Development (DSD), namely to

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strengthen service delivery for victims, implement gender sensitivity training and to begin shifting social norms around violence.

The current study, along with the work being done by the DotP and DSD, has also shed light on the barriers to reporting. Even though the above insights were specific to the initial lockdown levels, the COVID-19 pandemic may continue to present risks to victims of domestic abuse in the short-medium term. For example, with many more people becoming unemployed, poverty-related risks may not only exacerbate abuse, but may also limit a victim's ability to report abuse (i.e. further reliance on an abuse breadwinner, no transport funds etc.). Thus, a second objective should **focus on ways to increase reporting and provide an efficient referral pathway for victims of domestic violence.**

4.2.4 Firearm control and regulation

The high proportion of homicides (and assaults) that were firearm-related during the first six weeks of lockdown illustrate the need for concerted attention to be paid to firearm control and regulation. Key recommendations include reducing access to firearms, strengthening oversight over the circulation of firearms, and establishing an integrated task team to reduce firearm related crime.

Reducing access to firearms and ammunition

- There needs to be a sustained focus from SAPS and law enforcement on firearm recovery and confiscation, through police stop, search and seizure or crime intelligence-led operations, and through campaigns such as voluntary surrender of guns (for example, through amnesties);²⁴
- Stockpiles need to be properly managed in order to prevent the leakage of legal firearms held by the police, military and civilians into the illegal pool;²⁵
- People with a history of violent behaviour and/or substance abuse are at risk for committing violence.²⁶ These at-risk individuals should be prevented from accessing firearms;
- The number of ammunition cartridges that a license holder can purchase need to be regulated and restricted. Section 91(1) of the Firearm Control Act,

²⁴ Taylor, C. (2019). Gun Control and Violence: South Africa's Story. Johannesburg: GFSa. Available at www.gfsa.org.za/component/jdownloads/send/13-research/114-gun-control-and-violence-south-africa-story

²⁵ GFSa (2019). How many guns are there in SA? The importance of stockpile management. Available at <https://www.gfsa.org.za/take-action/gun-policy-briefs>.

²⁶ American Psychological Association. 2013. Gun Violence: Prediction, Prevention, and Policy: APA Panel of Experts Report. Washington, DC. (Online). Available at www.apa.org/pubs/info/reports/gun-violence-prevention.aspx; Branas, Charles, SeungHoon Han, and Douglas Wiebe. 2016. Alcohol use and firearm violence. *Epidemiologic Reviews*, 38, 32-45; World Health Organization. 2010. Violence prevention: The evidence. Geneva: WHO Press.

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60 of 2000, which states “the holder of a license to possess a firearm referred to in Chapter 6 may not possess more than 200 cartridges for each firearm in respect of which he/she holds a license”.²⁷ Not only is no time limit given in terms of how often a license holder may purchase rounds of ammunition in order to maintain possession of 200, but 200 rounds is way in excess of what can be required for self-defence purposes.

With respect to amnesties: In November 2019 Police Minister Bheki Cele declared a firearm amnesty to run from 1 December 2019 to 31 May 2020 in which persons could surrender and apply for amnesty for their illegal or unwanted firearms. In their briefing to the Portfolio Committee on Police on 03 June 2020, SAPS reported that by the end of May 2020, 27,336 firearms had been surrendered across the country, with 6,140 firearms surrendered in the Western Cape. However, there were very few firearms surrendered in the country during April (only 385), likely as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic and lockdown. In addition, SAPS reported that the number of firearms surrendered over the 6 months as a whole was much lower than the number that were surrendered in the 2005 amnesty (which also ran for six months). SAPS has therefore requested that a second firearm amnesty be implemented from August 2020 to January 2021.²⁸ While SAPS is commended on the firearm amnesty, there is a fear that surrendered firearms could find their way back into criminal syndicates, as was the case during the 2010 firearm amnesty, if stricter measures are not taken to prevent the leakage of these firearms.²⁹ Thus, it is important that firearms are safeguarded from the point of hand-in through the chain of storage and transport until the moment of destruction.³⁰ Relatedly, it is also important that any illegal firearms that are confiscated are properly destroyed.

Strengthening oversight over the circulation of firearms

- There is a need for stronger oversight over the Central Firearm Registry (CFR). In particular, the role of the Secretariat for Police and the provincial Secretariat for Safety and Security in terms of provincial oversight over the implementation of the CFR needs to be strengthened;

²⁷ South Africa, (2001). Firearms Control Act (No 60 of 2000). Section 91 (1). Available at https://www.saps.gov.za/resource_centre/acts/downloads/juta/act60of2000.pdf.

²⁸ SAPS (3 June 2020). *Briefing to the Portfolio Committee on Police. Presentation on Firearm Amnesty 2020*.

²⁹ Deal, J. (6 February 2020). *Arms and the Man: Bheki Cele's Disarming Rhetoric*. Available at <https://www.dailymaverick.co.za/opinionista/2020-02-06-arms-and-the-man-bheki-celes-disarming-rhetoric/>;

³⁰ Mabuza, E. (28 November 2019). *SA Gun Amnesty Welcomed but Surrendered Weapons Must be Safeguarded*. Available at <https://www.sowetanlive.co.za/news/south-africa/2019-11-28-sa-gun-amnesty-welcomed-but-surrendered-weapons-must-be-safeguarded/>

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- One way in which oversight could be strengthened is by establishing a provincial firearm registry which could be linked to the Central Firearm Registry.
- There is also a need for better oversight over the police stores at a station level. Currently, in the Western Cape Community Safety Act, SAPS are required to report to DoCS the number of firearms issued to police officials which have been lost or stolen and the circumstances under which they have been lost or stolen, but the Act does not include oversight over confiscated firearms in police stores.
- Regulations in terms of oversight over firearms issued to Private Security should be developed.

Establishing an integrated task team

- An integrated "firearm regulation" task team should be established. This task team would focus on developing a way forward with respect to better firearm regulation and control within the province.
- The team would comprise of stakeholders from SAPS, Metro Police, Law Enforcement, DoCS, and DoTP, and representatives from civil society.

4.2.5 Addressing sharp-point violence

The homicide analysis during lockdown revealed clear shifts in the types of violence between the different alert levels. As discussed above, during Alert Levels 5 and 4, firearms caused a disproportionate amount of homicides. This changed with the shift to Alert Level 3, which saw homicide caused by sharp-point trauma returning to close to its pre-lockdown proportions. While policing and violence prevention interventions should prioritise firearms, the availability and carrying of sharp-point objects should also receive attention in order to reduce homicide in the Western Cape's most violent policing areas.

The policing of dangerous implements is well-established in South Africa. Common strategies involve the regular stopping and searching of men walking in high-violence policing areas. Where implements are found, they are usually seized and the men are allowed to continue on. It is recommended to **explore the use of more rational and evidence-based methods by LEAP officers** and law enforcement officers and police. These could include:

- Engaging in formal processes of stop-and-search, including requesting permission for the search and issuing a receipt to the person being searched.

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- Commit to formal actions following the seizure of weapons, e.g.:
 - o Issue formal written warning to first offenders and log incident and identity of carrier;
 - o Issue warning and diversion of second time offenders to Cognitive Behaviour Therapy programmes;
 - o Arrest individuals and open a docket with SAPS.
- Sanctions could be complemented by pro-active offers of support to young men at risk of sharp-point violence in the target area.

4.2.6 Regulation of alcohol sales and consumption

Although it is difficult to determine the extent to which the ban on the sale of alcohol contributed to a reduction in violent crime, the findings of this study suggest a correlation between the two, highlighting that another lesson we can take from the lockdown that could assist with reducing and preventing violence is: better regulation of alcohol sales and consumption. The Western Cape Alcohol-related Harms Reduction White Paper notes that in order to reduce alcohol-related harms, **interventions related to the access and availability of alcohol need to be prioritised.**³¹

Professor Charles Parry, the Director of the South African Medical Research Council's (MRC) unit on alcohol, tobacco and other drugs, recently highlighted the following recommendations related to reducing the risks associated with alcohol, during lockdown Alert Level 3:³²

- Limit the availability of alcohol by, for example, placing a limit on the quantities of alcohol that can be purchased, limiting the hours for off-consumption sales, raising the drinking age to 19 years, and establishing alternative income generation options for home-based shebeens;
- Increase the price of alcohol by, for example, taxing AFBs at the same rate as spirits, implementing minimum unit pricing, and raising the benchmarks for excise taxing;
- Implement drink driving countermeasures and public policing by lowering the BAC level for drivers, testing blood alcohol levels after serious motor vehicle collisions, and enforcing local public drinking by-laws;
- Ban the sale of alcohol in containers linked to heavy drinking (e.g. 1 litre beer, 5 litre wines);

³¹ Department of the Premier (2017). *Western Cape Alcohol-related Harms Reduction Policy White Paper*. Available at https://www.westerncape.gov.za/text/2017/September/white_paper_alcohol-related_harms_reduction.pdf

³² C Parry, South African Medical Research Council (24 June 2020). *Reducing Covid19 individual and social risks related to alcohol during lockdown level 3*.

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- Ban advertising of alcohol, except at point of sale;
- Implement a tracking system for tracking alcohol products back to the source of supply; and
- Intensify the availability of counselling and medically assist treatment for persons struggling with alcohol dependence.

As reported in the Western Cape Alcohol-related Harms Reduction White Paper, another way in which alcohol sales and consumption could be better regulated is through provincially determining a set of maximum limits for trading hours, and properly regulating these hours.³³ Some evidence from other countries lends support to this argument.

As an example, in Diadema municipality in São Paulo, Brazil in the early 2000s, the sale of alcohol was regulated at night (restricting sales after 11pm), alcohol vendors were monitored, and public lighting and security cameras and changes in public safety management procedures were introduced.³⁴ A regression analysis of homicide data and data on violence against women found a significant reduction in homicides – almost 9 a month – during the time of the intervention. Assaults against women also decreased, but the effect was not statistically significant.³⁵ Similarly, in the city of Cali in Colombia during the early 2000s, crime was mapped in the city and time-specific and location-specific datasets showed that homicides spiked at certain times and in certain places; specifically, during payday weekends as well as the early hours of Saturday and Sunday mornings around night clubs. In response to this, the sale of alcohol was banned after 1am on weekdays and after 2am on Fridays and Saturdays, and the carrying of firearms was banned on payday weekends and National holidays. The homicide rate dropped by 35% in the neighbourhoods where these two measures were implemented.³⁶

³³ Department of the Premier (2017). *Western Cape Alcohol-related Harms Reduction Policy White Paper*. Available at https://www.westerncape.gov.za/text/2017/September/white_paper_alcohol-related_harms_reduction.pdf

³⁴ R Muggah and R Giannini (2019). *Brazil is Tackling High Murder Rates with a New Wave of Crime Programs*. Available at https://apolitical.co/en/solution_article/brazil-is-tackling-high-murder-rates-with-a-new-wave-of-crime-programs

³⁵ Duailibi S., Ponicki, W., Grube, J. Pinsky, I., Laranjeira, R., & Raw, M. (2007). 'The Effect of Restricting Opening Hours on Alcohol-Related Violence'. *American Journal of Public Health*, 97(12), 2276-80.

³⁶ It is important to note that Colombia as a whole experienced a reduction in murder during this time, and this is likely due to a range of factors (not only alcohol-related) including demobilisation of armed paramilitary groups, the fall of drug kingpins like Pablo Escobar and the Cali Cartel in the 1990s, constitutional reforms at a national level coupled with strong and consistent leadership by local governments, and adoption of a public health approach to violence prevention and reduction driven by data and research;

E Siddons (2018). *Treating Violence like a Disease Helped cut Colombia's Murder Rate by 82%*. Available at https://apolitical.co/en/solution_article/treating-violence-like-a-disease-helped-cut-colombias-murder-rate-by-82

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Thus, South Africa would do well to take note of these kind of interventions (both related to the regulation of alcohol sales and consumption, and control and regulation of firearms) and consider how they could be used in our context. Importantly, whatever interventions are chosen should be, as far as possible, evidence-based and data-driven, which will be explored in more detail in section 4.2.7 below.

A second key recommendation arising from this research project is for an **Alcohol Harms Reduction task team to be established** to address the wide range of alcohol harms issues that need to be addressed. The issues include:

- Zoning (ensuring that illegal shebeens can be legalised and therefore better regulated)
- Behaviour change (addressing binge drinking, etc)
- Enforcement (improving capacity and coordination of SAPS / WCLA / City / DOCS)
- Liquor Act amendments

The team would comprise the following four key stakeholders:

- SAPS
- WCLA
- DOCS / DotP Safety team
- City law enforcement
- City planning

The team may establish sub-committees to do a deep-dive into specific issues, and may wish to engage with additional stakeholders / experts on these issues.

4.2.7 Data-led and evidence-based deployment

It is recommended that the Safety Data Committee regularly:

- **Collect** recent and accurate violence and crime-related data from the Department of Health, the City of Cape Town and other relevant sources,
- **Collate** it in a Safety Dashboard; and
- **Analyse the data** with the purpose of identifying: hotspots of murder and other forms of violence, times and dates of murder and other forms of violence.

The analysis would then be shared with the City of Cape Town to **assist in operational planning** relating to the deployment of LEAP officers, who would provide feedback on the relevance and usefulness of the analysis for further adaptation by the Safety Data

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Committee. The analysis would also be shared with the South African Police Service for their consideration and input.

Furthermore, the City of Cape Town has proposed a broad range of activities with which its LEAP officers will reduce violence and promote public safety, either autonomously or in partnership with the South African Police Service. It is proposed that to succeed, these **policing activities be based on a careful intervention plan**. Based on detailed analysis and consultation, it is recommended that commanders and management structures should outline their understanding of the drivers of murder in a specific area, then propose a careful selection of interventions which they believe will disrupt these specific drivers.

Plans should employ logic, e.g. "Violence is a result of A. By doing B, LEAP officers will disrupt C, which will reduce violence". If this is tested and fails, the logic should be revised and the plan and strategy changed. Implementation must be monitored against predefined targets so that lessons can be learned and added to the evidence-base. As a result, it is anticipated that the work of LEAP officers will become increasingly efficient.

Finally, it is recommended to explore how the **Cardiff model for violence prevention**³⁷ could be implemented in the Western Cape, by strategically using health and policing data to inform policing operations and violence prevention interventions.

³⁷ More information on the Cardiff Model for Violence Prevention can be found at this link: <https://www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/publichealthissue/fundedprograms/cardiffmodel/index.html>

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