

12/10/33

COMMISSION OF INQUIRY INTO ALLEGATIONS OF POLICE INEFFICIENCY IN
KHAYELITSHA AND A BREAKDOWN IN RELATIONS BETWEEN THE
COMMUNITY AND THE POLICE IN KHAYELITSHA

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I, the undersigned, [redacted] an adult male, **42 years old**, residential
address: [redacted] Khayelitsha, cell no: [redacted]

do hereby state under oath in English that:

1. I am a [redacted] Bishop in the [redacted] of South Africa which is headquartered in Khayelitsha. I am also [redacted] of the Western Cape Christian Ministers Forum based in Lingeletu, Khayelitsha.
2. As clergyman I am intimately involved with the church and the congregation at large. As such I provide religious teaching and counsel to our congregants and the general community of the Christian faith. Ordinarily, I deal with a myriad of social, emotional, spiritual, mental and physical issues and matters which affect the lives of our congregants, their families, loved ones and beyond. Often, these issues arise from and are connected to incidents of crime in Khayelitsha. Thus, in the course of my

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work I also fulfil the duties of community worker, counsellor and social activist.

3. My parents moved to Site C in 1985 when Khayelitsha was first established. At that stage, as a youngster, I attended school in a place called [redacted], King Williams Town, and used to visit my parents in Khayelitsha frequently during school holidays. I moved to live in Site C permanently in 1990 when I finished schooling. In 1995 I moved to Ilitha Park where I have since lived with my family.
4. As someone who has lived and worked in Khayelitsha over a long time I know the place and its people well. My statement to the commission is thus based on my own first hand experiences and observations. I talk about things that I have seen happen or heard being said to me either in the course of my work as clergyman or working in the community or in general conversation.
5. I should first like to state that I have a good working relationship with the police of Khayelitsha. I often deal with Lingeletu West Police Station, under whose jurisdiction I reside, and sometimes also deal with police at Harare and Site B Police Stations. From time to time I am called upon by the police authorities in Khayelitsha to perform chaplain services

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including pastoral, bereavement and trauma counselling to police members and their families.

6. The experiences and observations which I share with the Commission in this statement are not meant to vilify the police, rather to shed light into what we as the general community of Khayelitsha think and feel about the service we receive from the police. I view it as my civic duty to cooperate with the Commission and thereby assist the police to improve its service to the community. I do so voluntarily and without any undue influence.

Prevalence of crime in Khayelitsha

7. I am of a strong view that crime is rife in Khayelitsha. I am convinced that Khayelitsha crime levels have been increasing tremendously over the years. The incidents of crime have become more frequent and severe and the general sense is that the police are battling to deal with the situation.
8. As a community worker I often deal community members and congregants who are affected by crime in various ways. I receive increasing complaints of violent robberies, murders, rapes, housebreakings, car break-ins, drug smuggling and gang related violence.

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9. I have counselled many mothers who have lost their children, wives who have lost their husbands and children who have lost their parents through crime. There are too many murders in our community. There are too many people who suffer physical attacks day and night in Khayelitsha and many more who live in fear of being attacked. My sense is that this is an indication of an abnormal community and something drastic needs to be done about it.
10. I have observed that many robberies involve the taking of cellular phones as well as robberies on shops and business premises.
11. It is clear to me that women and children are especially vulnerable to crime.
12. I have also noticed that most crimes are perpetrated by young men and school boys.

Drugs

13. It is clear to me and a lot of us in the community that our youth are addicted to illegal drugs. I have witnessed many youngsters being under the influence of drugs and have received many similar reports from community members. One can also see it in strange and bizarre behaviour

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of our youngsters sometimes and the manner in which they commit violent crime that they are driven by some strange force.

14. Parents, teachers and community members are concerned that drugs are widely available to the youth in Khayelitsha and the police seem incapable of dealing with drug smuggling and drug dealing in the area. It is clear that there are drug smugglers who prowl on our community.

Gangs

15. Often young men and school boys form themselves into rival gangs and their rivalry plays out at schools and in community spaces. I have noticed that they carry all sorts of dangerous weapons and sharp instruments like clasp knives.
16. Many school teachers have told me that they fear for their lives as school children often carry these dangerous weapons in class. Schools are battling to maintain discipline and often require police intervention to protect teachers and other learners as well as school property.
17. So far the police have not been able to assist the schools to deal with crime at schools effectively.

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Neighbourhood watch

18. The prevalence of crime in Khayelitsha became so severe, outrageous and unbearable that I, during 2011, felt the need to establish a Neighbourhood Watch group.

19. I was aware of the presence of the Khayelitsha Community Policing Forums and Street Committees, however, it was clear to me that they were completely ineffective and incapable of fulfilling their mandate to achieve effective crime control, reduce fears of crime and improved police service. It was for this reason that I took the initiative to establish a Neighbourhood Watch for Ilitha Park.

20. The community was keen on the idea but they did not respond to my invitation to contribute a sum of R50.00 per household per month towards the upkeep of volunteers who were employed to patrol our streets. I escalated this idea as high as the MEC for Community Safety in the Provincial Government who initially showed interest in the initiative but was not forthcoming with resources to make it work and viable.

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21. The result was that the initiative stalled as it did not get support from the authorities. I am convinced that such community initiatives for combating crime would work if they are properly supported by the authorities.

Police shortcomings identified

22. From my observations I am convinced that Khayelitsha police sorely lack capacity and resources to deal with crime in the area.
23. My impression is that police need to recruit more members and reservists. There is a serious lack of visible policing and street patrolling. We need constant visible policing in order to feel safe as citizens of Khayelitsha.
24. I am aware that the police often come under attack from criminals. Working together with reservists and neighbourhood would assist them to conduct patrols in sizeable and effective groups. My view is that visible policing would be better achieved through foot patrols or the use of bicycles. Vehicular patrol seems ineffective as many areas of Khayelitsha are inaccessible by road as well as that there is limited vision from a vehicle, especially at night.

25. The general view is that there aren't enough police vehicles to match the demand and crime rate in the area. It was in this light that I was so surprised and disappointed when I once noticed a police van at Site B Police Station which was out of service because of a punctured tyre. What was particularly disheartening was that the tyre was not fixed for about four days and when I realised the delay I complained to police management. There was no plausible excuse for not fixing the tyre and getting the vehicle back to service. It is such incidents that diminish our confidence in the police.
26. There is a generally held view that Khayelitsha police are often ill equipped and ill prepared to deal with crime in the area. I have in the past been called to conduct chaplaincy services where police were killed in the line of duty in circumstances where they did not wear bullet proof vests. At times police have been targeted by criminals in their own homes but lacked the ability to deal with such attacks.
27. I have not personally experienced poor police response when called to crime scenes. However, I am often told by people that Khayelitsha police take an inordinate time to respond when called. Often, police attribute this to lack of resources.

28. Another regular complaint is that police take too long to respond when called on the 10111 emergency telephone number. I have personally experienced my telephone calls to the police station going unanswered and when that happened I called senior police personnel who would then ensure that I receive attention from the police station. This is preferential treatment which I am afforded as an eminent person in the area. This should not be the case as quality service should be readily available to all citizens of Khayelitsha and at all times.
29. There is also a general complaint that the period which Khayelitsha police take to investigate crimes is excessive. They are accused of failure to solve cases and that they seldom give feedback to complainants. Connected to this is the perception held by many in our community that because of poor police service and investigation many criminals get away with impunity. This leads to the community taking the law into their hands.

Other contributing factors to crime

30. Although most areas in Khayelitsha have street lights, it is often distressing to find these lights not being regularly maintained. This defeats the purpose especially where such places have been identified as crime hot spots.

31. We also often find that some informal settlements are inaccessible due to lack of roads and lighting.

Conclusion

32. It is my belief that policing in Khayelitsha can improve if the police raise their performance and be better resourced. However, there is also a need for an improved relationship between the police and the community of Khayelitsha.

33. The community needs to be educated about crime prevention tips and that is one area where the police could start to cultivate a good relationship with the community. It is my strong view that there is a need for an improved working relationship between the police and the community in Khayelitsha.

“I swear/truly affirm that the contents of this statement are true so help me God.”

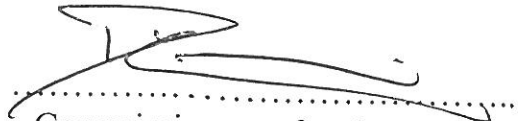
I know and understand the contents of this statement.

I have no objection to taking the prescribed oath.

I consider the prescribed oath as binding on my conscience.

.....
Signature of deponent

I certify that the abovementioned was taken by me in English/..... and immediately translated into English, and that the deponent has acknowledged that he/she knows and understands the contents of this statement. I certify that regulations contained in GN R1258 have been complied with. This statement was sworn/affirmed before me and the deponent's signature was placed thereon in my presence on 18/10/2012 (date) at LANGELETHU OI.....(place)


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Commissioner of oath