

**Budget Vote: Independent Complaints Directorate
Address by The Minister for Safety and Security
Mr S V Tshwete
National Assembly, 18 May 2000**

**Madame Speaker;
Honourable Members:**

The Independent Complaints Directorate (ICD) has completed its third year of operation with an ever-increasing number of cases being brought to its attention by members of the public.

The increase in the number of cases reported to the ICD during the 1999/2000 financial year compared to the same period the previous year, bears testimony to the fact the ICD is being recognized more widely than before. During the 1999/2000 financial year, 4 380 cases were reported to the ICD as against a figure of 2 874 cases in the 1998/99 financial year. This represents an increase of 52%.

The increase in the number of reported cases does not necessarily signal an increase in lawlessness on the part of some members of the SAPS, but may be attributed to the increase in the general awareness of the existence of the ICD and the services which it is able to provide throughout the country.

At the same time the number of deaths in police custody or as a result of police action decreased from 756 in 1998/99 to 681 in 1999/2000, representing a decrease of 75 deaths or about 10% per annum.

I must point out that deaths in police custody are not necessarily just due to negligence on the part of the police but have been occasioned by such factors as natural causes, suicide, injuries in custody and injuries prior to custody inflicted by vigilante action.

Deaths as a result of police action may be the result of shootings during the course of arrest, during a crime, during the course of an investigation or other causes. The number of police-related deaths is still unacceptably high. In order to assist the SAPS, the ICD has embarked on pro-active initiatives to seek intervention strategies. Recently the ICD together with the Center for the Study of Violence and Reconciliation hosted a workshop to debate the development of a strategy to reduce the risk of police-related deaths. Key role-players such as the SAPS and non-governmental organizations were present at this workshop. A task team has been nominated to develop a final strategy which will be presented to the Ministry in September 2000.

It is crucial that the SAPS should not see the role of the ICD in an adversarial light, but should see it in a complementary capacity to their own, so that together they can co-operate in ridding the service of corrupt elements. The ICD therefore must be regarded as a partner of the SAPS in Government's effort to fight crime within the police service, so that the public are presented with a police service which deserves and receives their respect.

Madame Speaker, if I may highlight some of the successes of the ICD, relative to the acceptance of their recommendations by the Directors of Public Prosecutions.

In the so-called BBC case, two police members were convicted of common assault and assault with intent to do grievous bodily harm, respectively. The sentencing hearing has been postponed till 31 May 2000.

Another incident occurred in Garsfontein in which two police officers shot and killed the complainant who had called them out to a housebreaking in progress. Both officers have been charged with murder and the trial is due to commence in the Pretoria High Court on 4 September 2000.

In the Ferreira case, three police officers were implicated in the unlawful shooting of an armed robbery suspect in Cape Town. These officers have been charged with murder alternatively defeating the ends of justice and the trial is due to commence in the Cape High Court on 14 August 2000.

In another incident in which a Cape Argus reporter, Thabo Mabaso, was assaulted so brutally that he lost the sight of his left eye, the nine police officers implicated in the incident have been charged with assault with intent to do grievous bodily harm and defeating the ends of justice. The trial has not been finalized as yet.

Madam Speaker, the ICD has committed itself to the pursuit of pro-active strategies and interventions which will assist the SAPS in its transformation task, as well as identifying and remedying the underlying causes of certain problems.

To this end, the ICD is currently involved in various research projects, amongst others:

Development of a profiling strategy in order to identify police members who are prone to violence;
Femicide committed by police members with their service fire-arms;
Police complicity in taxi violence.

In conclusion, Madame Speaker, I would like to emphasize that the ICD is not out on a witch-hunt to try to discredit members of the SAPS, but is assisting in the Government's efforts to achieve the noble objective of transforming the SAPS into a service which the nation will be proud of. The fact that only about 30% of all the cases that were either investigated, supervised or monitored by the ICD were found to be substantiated, is an indication that the ICD is committed only to the promotion of proper police conduct.

The ICD therefore needs the support of the House and, indeed, the whole nation.

I thank you.