

South Africa crime stats 2020

The stats cover 21 crime categories – 17 of which are reported by the public, and four of which are as a result of police activity.

Understanding the changes in the numbers, the 17 reported crimes should show a **decrease** to indicate improvement in that category, while the four police-reported crimes should **increase**, to show more effective policing.

Changes to crime stats in those latter four categories do not necessarily indicate an increase in those types of crimes, but could be attributed to more intensive police activity.

In the 2019/20 period, overall crime levels were down when compared to the prior year.

SA crime stats for 2020 (1 April 2019 to 31 March 2020)

Category	2019	2020	Change
Contact Crimes	617 210	621 282	+0.7%
Contact-related Crimes	117 172	112 244	-4.2%
Property-related Crimes	495 161	469 224	-5.2%
Other Serious Crimes	444 447	426 589	-4.0%
Total public reported	1 673 990	1 629 319	-2.7%
<i>Crime detected as a result of police action</i>	<i>339 281</i>	<i>290 176</i>	<i>-14.5%</i>
Total	2 013 271	1 919 495	-4.7%

- **Contact crimes** include murder, attempted murder and sexual offences, as well as common assault and robbery.
- **Contact-related crimes** include arson and malicious injury to property.
- **Other serious crimes** include commercial crime, shop-lifting and all other types of theft – while aggravated robbery includes hijackings, robbery at residences and cash-in-transit heists and bank robberies.
- **Crimes detected as a result of police action** cover crimes discovered by active policing, such as road-blocks and raids. Categories covered by this are the illegal possession of firearms, DUI or driving under the influence (of drugs or alcohol); and the use, possession or trade of illegal drugs.

Crime categories

In the 17 categories of community reported crimes, cases of carjacking have seen the biggest increase year-on-year, with the SAPS reporting 18,162 cases over the period. This equates to 50 cars being stolen in South Africa every day.

This was the only crime category to see double-digit growth, with the next largest increase seen in robberies at non-residential premises – up 3.3%.

The biggest reduction in crimes were seen in bank robberies (where no such crimes were recorded), cash-in-transit heists (down 10.4%), and instances of arson (down 7.3%).

Murders in South Africa remain high, with a 1.4% increase in 2019/20, to 21,325 reported cases. This works out to 58 people murdered in the country every day, at a rate of 35.8 people per 100,000 population.

In the categories of crime detected as a result of police activity, there was a large reduction in these crimes recorded, mainly in the drug-related crime category.

This was a similar trend to the 2018/19 stats, where the Constitutional Court ruling on the use of cannabis in the country led to a large reduction in people being arrested for marijuana-related crimes.

The state of cannabis use remains a legal grey area, with government running out of time to make the necessary changes to the country’s laws to bring it in line with the Constitution. The courts gave government until September 2020 to make the changes.

However, other detection in these categories were up – with the police finding more cases of sexual offences, driving under the influence, and possession of illegal firearms.

Biggest increase to biggest decrease in crimes 2020

Category	2019	2020	Change
<i>Sexual offences discovered as result of police action</i>	7 976	9 614	+20.5%
<i>Driving under the influence of alcohol or drugs</i>	82 912	94 275	+13.7%
Carjacking	16 026	18 162	+13.3%
Robbery at non-residential premises	19 991	20 651	+3.3%
Robbery with aggravating circumstances	140 032	143 990	+2.8%
Common assault	162 012	165 494	+2.1%
Truck hijacking	1 182	1 202	+1.7%
Sexual Offences	52 420	53 295	+1.7%
Murder	21 022	21 325	+1.4%
<i>Illegal possession of firearms and ammunition</i>	15 736	15 779	+0.3%
Common robbery	51 765	51 825	+0.1%
Commercial crime	83 823	83 869	+0.1%
Shoplifting	60 167	59 883	-0.5%
Attempted murder	18 980	18 635	-1.8%

Burglary at non-residential premises	71 224	69 713	-2.1%
Assault with the intent to inflict grievous bodily harm	170 979	166 720	-2.5%
Theft of motor vehicle and motorcycle	48 324	46 921	-2.9%
Malicious injury to property	113 089	108 461	-4.1%
Stock-theft	29 672	28 418	-4.2%
Theft out of or from motor vehicle	125 076	118 213	-5.5%
Robbery at residential premises	22 431	21 130	-5.8%
All theft not mentioned elsewhere	300 457	282 817	-5.9%
Burglary at residential premises	220 865	205 959	-6.7%
Arson	4 083	3 783	-7.3%
Robbery of cash in transit	183	164	-10.4%
<i>Drug-related crime</i>	<i>232 657</i>	<i>170 510</i>	<i>-26.7%</i>
Bank robbery	4	0	-100.0%
