

## 2 Why safety needs to be at the centre of development

Crime and violence are prominent issues in South Africa. The country is listed as the fourth most dangerous country in the world in terms of the levels of reported crimes.<sup>1</sup> High levels of violence and crime cause unacceptable levels of stress, suffering, harm and death. It also threatens the social fabric of South Africa, damages the economy and deters investment.

Some groups are more at risk of experiencing and/or perpetuating crime and violence than others. In South Africa, violence against women and children is widespread and gender-based violence has been referred to as the 'ignored pandemic'.<sup>2</sup> Also, in most countries young people, and particularly young men, make up the majority of victims and perpetrators of crime and violence.<sup>3</sup> Violence and crime are intersectional issues and the result of complex, interrelated factors in the broader social, economic and political context, including high levels of inequality in South Africa. As a result, unsafety and the impact of violence and crime are not felt evenly throughout the country, with underdeveloped and impoverished communities often being disproportionately affected.

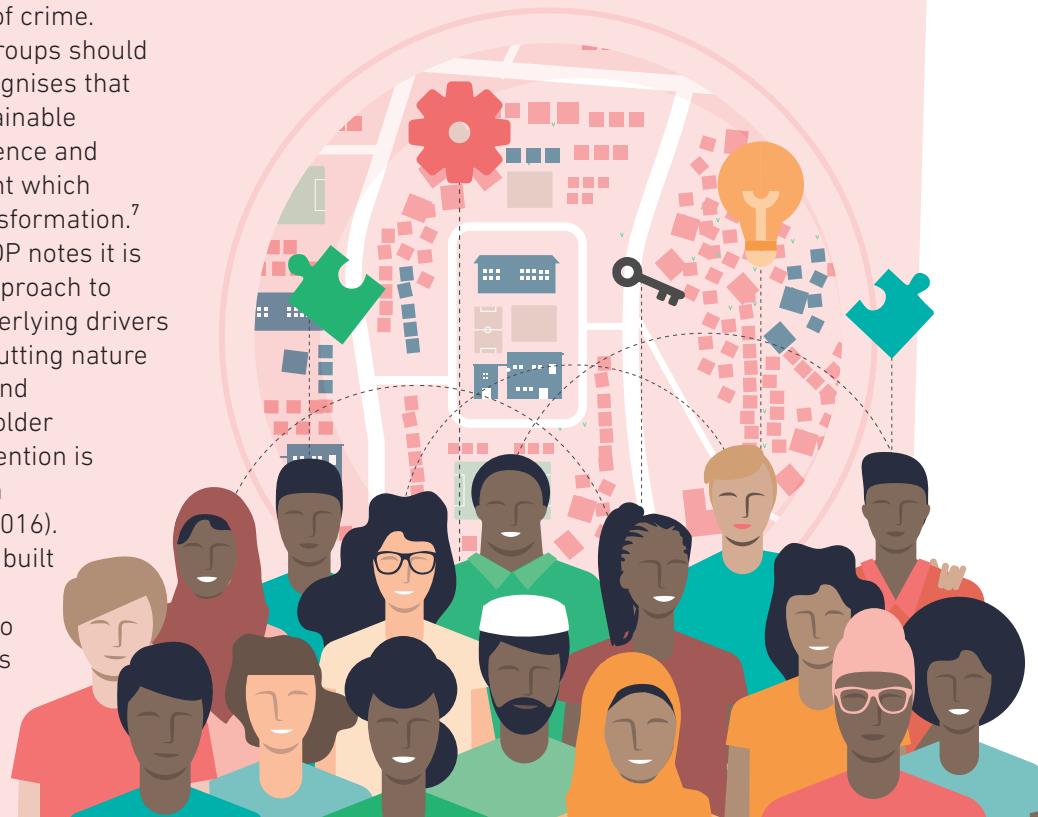
Safety is a core human right as outlined in the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa (the Constitution) which states: "Everyone has the right to freedom and security of the person, which includes the right...to be free from all

forms of violence from either public or private sources".<sup>4</sup> In addition, urban safety is a necessary ingredient of urban development and key towards achieving liveable, inclusive, productive and sustainable cities and as such, should be prioritised.<sup>5</sup> Not only does safety contribute to improved quality of life and the wellbeing of people but it is also important to solving South Africa's triple challenge of poverty, inequality and unemployment.

The National Development Plan (NDP) (2012), states that "by 2030 people living in South Africa should feel safe and have no fear of crime. Women, children and vulnerable groups should feel protected".<sup>6</sup> The NDP also recognises that safety has a direct impact on sustainable development as high levels of violence and crime deter and impede investment which inhibits economic growth and transformation.<sup>7</sup> To build safer communities, the NDP notes it is necessary to take an integrated approach to safety through addressing the underlying drivers of crime and violence. The cross-cutting nature of violence and crime prevention and subsequent need for multi-stakeholder engagement and integrated intervention is recognised in the Integrated Urban Development Framework (IUDF) (2016). The call for coordination is further built upon in the District Development Model, which argues for the need to move away from siloed approaches to addressing poverty, inequality and unemployment.<sup>8</sup>



Increasingly, there has been a shift from a traditional reactive **security** focus towards a preventative **safety** focus, which addresses underlying issues by addressing risk factors and leveraging protective factors. This paradigm shift is evident in South Africa's crime and violence prevention policies, such as the White Paper on Safety and Security (WPSS) (2016), which informs the Integrated Crime and Violence Prevention Strategy (ICVPS) (2022) and the National Strategic Plan on Gender-Based Violence and Femicide (NSP on GBVF) (2020).



## Notes:

1. Numbeo. 2022. "Crime Index by Country 2022".  
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3. Centre for Justice and Crime Prevention. n.d. Youth violence. Pretoria: Saferspaces.  
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This SPRINT resource note was produced as part of a series in the Safer Places: Resilient Institutions and Neighbourhoods Together (SPRINT) Project. Titles in the series include:

- 1 **About SPRINT**
- 2 **Why safety needs to be at the centre of development**
- 3 **The socio-ecological model: A framework for violence prevention**
- 4 **What is ABVPI?**



SAFER PLACES:  
RESILIENT INSTITUTIONS AND  
NEIGHBOURHOODS TOGETHER  
**SPRINT**

The SPRINT Project is a joint initiative of the South African-German Development Cooperation with the support of the Violence and Crime Prevention (VCP) Programme, implemented by the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) as the commissioning party and Global Affairs Canada (GAC) as co-financing partner. The SPRINT Project is implemented by Isandla Institute and Violence Prevention through Urban Upgrading (VPUU). The primary objective of the SPRINT Project is to institutionalise area-based violence prevention intervention (ABVPI) approaches in public policy, programmes and practices in order to upscale them and have a sustainable impact.

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