



THE FW DE KLERK FOUNDATION

Our Constitution a Reality for all South Africans!

To: Portfolio Committee on Police
For attention: Ms Babalwa Mbengo
Per email:
And to:
From: Mr Christo van der Rhee
Executive Director, FW de Klerk Foundation
Re: Parliament's Inquiry into Gang-related Violence – FW de Klerk Foundation Submission
Date: Wednesday, 19 August 2026 (**Deadline: Wednesday, 19 August 2026**)

INTRODUCTION

Dear Babalwa Mbengo

1. We refer to the National Assembly's Portfolio Committee on Police's [invitation](#) to make written submissions as part of Parliament's Inquiry into Gang-related Violence ("the Gang Violence Inquiry").
2. The FW de Klerk Foundation ("the Foundation") is a non-profit organisation dedicated to upholding the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996 ("the Constitution"). Its vision is to make our constitutional democracy a reality for all South Africans.
3. To this end, the Foundation seeks to, *inter alia*, promote and protect the Constitution. The Foundation does so in the interest of everyone in South Africa.

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4. The Foundation views gang violence as generational problem in the Cape Flats and [welcomes](#) that the Committee has been mandated by the National Assembly, in terms of Rule 227(1)(e), to conduct this inquiry and report back to the House.
5. The Foundation notes that the Committee itself is [on record](#) as regarding gang violence as an entrenched challenge that is widespread across multiple provinces, specifically, the Western Cape, Eastern Cape, KwaZulu-Natal and Gauteng.
6. The Foundation welcomes the opportunity to make this brief written submission with recommendations on how to tackle gang violence **in the Cape Flats** to the Committee and expresses its willingness to engage with the Committee to discuss its contents.

STATE STRATEGY AND RESPONSE

SAPS 2026/27 APP

7. The South African Police Service's [Annual Performance Plan](#) for the 2026/27 financial year ("SAPS 2026/27 APP") identifies "*illicit criminal governance*" both as a:
 - 7.1. [Root cause and/or contributing factor](#) to the risk of threats and/or damage to South Africa's strategic economic infrastructure;¹ and
 - 7.2. Risk itself, because criminal gangs control the general public in some areas. The plan uses the example of violent gangs controlling access to services.²

¹ At page 92.

² At page 94.



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8. The Foundation agrees with the SAPS 2026/27 APP's framing of gang violence as part of broader organised criminal activity (that requires coordinated intervention by multiple agencies), as opposed to a stand-alone problem.³
9. The Foundation also agrees with the Minister that multi-agency anti-gang and organised crime operations, including disrupting illegal firearm flows and organised crime structures, are needed.⁴
10. The Foundation notes that the SAPS 2026/27 APP's strategy appears to consist of:
 - 10.1. Visible policing surges and Operation Shanela under Programme 2: Visible Policing;⁵
 - 10.2. Strengthening and rejuvenating Crime Intelligence under Programme 4⁶.

Operation PROSPER

11. [Operation PROSPER](#) is a 13-month intervention that utilises over 2 000 South Africa National Defence Force members (i.e. the army) to stabilise identified hotspots across various provinces that was [announced](#) in President Ramaphosa's State of the Nation Address on 12 February 2026.

³ The Minister's forward at page viii states the core strategy as being to "*focus implementing effective multi-agency anti-gang and organised crime violence related plans, to reduce localised gang and organised crime violence in affected communities.*"

⁴ At pages vii and viii.

⁵ At pages 53 through 56.

⁶ At pages 72 through 78.

12. In Cape Town, the army was deployed in [17 identified hotspots](#). Despite this, not a single gang has been [dismantled](#) on the Cape Flats and there have been [at least](#) eight mass shootings by July 2026, in which 29 people were killed.
13. The Foundation [notes](#) that as of May 2026, Operation PROSPER had cost South African taxpayers R823 million.

SUBSTANTIVE SUBMISSIONS:

14. The Foundation view Operation PROSPER as fundamentally being a short-term measure for what is a generational problem. To prevent the return of gang violence to the Cape Flats once Operation PROSPER ends, the Foundation believes that both the physical and social environment of the Cape Flats must be fundamentally altered.
15. To this end the Foundation makes the following three (3) recommendations:
 - 15.1. Declare Gang Violence a national disaster;
 - 15.2. Create a single, real-time crime data platform that links the police, prosecutors, and forensic services; and
 - 15.3. Institute what the Foundation calls a **Total State Presence Model** (“TSP model”).
16. Gang violence as a national disaster:
 - 16.1. The [Foundation](#) has consistently called for gang violence to be declared a national disaster, because such a declaration would enable a coordinated national response, unlock emergency resources and prioritise intervention to improve the protection of the right to life.
 - 16.2. This coordinated, well-resourced response will be able to disrupt organised crime networks and to protect lives and restore public trust.



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17. A single-real time crime data platform linking State actors:

17.1. Whilst the SAPS 2026/27 APP explicitly prioritises crime intelligence,⁷ the Foundation believes this needs to utilise modern technology to a far greater extent.

17.2. The Foundation has [consistently](#) urged for the creation of a single, real-time crime data platform linking the police, the national prosecuting authority, forensics and intelligence with weekly, leadership-led reviews to steer intelligence-driven operations. This will **shift success from the volume of arrests to the quality of prosecutions**.

17.3. Both Mexico and Brazil have demonstrated this approach makes it very possible for developing countries with high levels of crime to see massive improvements:

17.3.1. Brazil demonstrated the benefits of a **single, integrated crime-information platform feeding operational decisions**, with the [Ministry of Justice's 2025 Public Security Map](#) recording a 6,33% fall in homicides in 2024.

17.3.2. The Mexican president [credits](#) **daily coordination and intelligence-led deployments** for a sharp preliminary homicide decline in 2025, though analysts urge caution until death-certificate totals confirm the trend.

⁷ Programme 4.

17.4. South Africa can replicate the declines seen in countries that use this model. The Foundation believes that combining real-time data, hotspot-focused joint operations, and stronger investigations and prosecutions will turn arrests into lasting reductions in lethal violence.

18. TSP Model:

18.1. The Foundation submits that the Cape Flat gangs have become a generational problem that can only be defeated through a **multi-generational strategy**.

18.2. To this end, the Foundation proposes the TSP Model, which consists of the following six (6) pillars:

18.2.1. Break the intergenerational cycle by:

- (i) Offering youth a viable path into the formal economy by changing the Social Relief of Distress grant ("the SRD grant") for 18-year-olds through 34-year-olds ("youth") to a **Skills Participation Stipend**, which is linked to active training on the [SAYouth.mobi](#) platform⁸. To receive the monthly payment, the recipient must be registered on the platform **and** actively participate in accredited online, or in-person, training. Those who complete a **high demand trade certificate** (e.g., Solar Installation, Coding, or Plumbing) receive a "Completion Bonus" equivalent to three months of the grant, providing immediate capital to start a micro-enterprise. Recipients can "earn" a higher tier of support by joining local "Youth Employment" networks.

⁸ [A free platform](#) for unemployed young South Africans that connects them to local learning and job opportunities. The platform also offers work-readiness training and support services. The platform forms part of the Presidential Youth Employment Intervention and is supported by several public and private sector partners.



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- (ii) Create a network that hires local community youth for infrastructure renewal projects within that community. The Foundation notes that while the Expanded Public Works Programme addresses immediate unemployment through manual labour and basic services, what is needed is a youth professionalisation career programme that focusses on equipping Cape Flats youth with the "soft" skills, aesthetic standards, and behavioural norms required to thrive in corporate and high-end service environments.
- (iii) Establishing a **specialised social worker task force** that monitors high-risk households that have intergenerational gang ties and provide "Parenting Stipends" contingent on children's school attendance and zero-contact with gang-related activities.
- (iv) Establishing **high-security boarding schools** located **outside** the Cape Flats. This allows youth from gang-entrenched families to be physically removed from indoctrination while receiving top-tier education and psychological counselling. This intervention acknowledges that as long as children remain in gang-controlled territories, the hereditary cycle will remain unbroken.⁹

⁹ The [Chrysalis Academy](#) is an example of a leadership development organisation as well as a social crime prevention initiative, that works creatively with young people.

18.2.2. Restore the state's monopoly on the use of force by:

- (i) Establishing **permanent mini-SAPS stations** every few blocks to ensure that the state is visible and pervasive. This creates permanent, block-by-block state infrastructure that is integrated into the daily life of the community.
- (ii) **Intensifying the implementation of the [Prevention of Organised Crime Act, 1998](#)¹⁰ (“POCA”):**
 - a. POCA's existing **racketeering provisions**¹¹ allow the state to prosecute gang leaders who direct, manage, participate in, or benefit from the affairs of those enterprises through a pattern of racketeering activity, without requiring proof that they personally committed every underlying offence; and
 - b. POCA's **confiscation and forfeiture mechanisms**¹² allow the state to collapse the Cape Flats gang generals' financial status through the Asset Forfeiture Unit.¹³ This will deprive gang leaders and criminal enterprises of assets derived from, used in, or connected to racketeering activities, thereby disrupting organisational funding and reducing their operational capacity.
- (iii) Utilising high-tech cell signal jamming as well as isolation cells within prison to prevent imprisoned generals from governing their syndicates whilst behind bars.

¹⁰ Act 121 of 1998.

¹¹ Sections 2 and 3 of POCA.

¹² Chapters 5 and 6 of POCA.

¹³ POCA's confiscation and forfeiture mechanisms empower the state (through the National Prosecuting Authority and its Asset Forfeiture Unit) to target the economic foundations of organised crime. The Act authorises restraint orders, confiscation orders, preservation orders, and forfeiture orders against property that constitutes the proceeds of unlawful activities, is an instrumentality of Schedule 1 offences, or is otherwise connected to racketeering activities.



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- (iv) Establishing specialised courts on the Cape Flats that focus solely on gang violence and aim for a conviction in gang-related murder cases within six months.

18.2.3. Infrastructural changes: Widen the roads to allow SAPS vehicles to enter and increase visibility by installing high-intensity, vandal-proof street lighting.

18.2.4. Crowd out criminal extortion through:

- (i) Private sector investment by creating Special Economic Zones in the Cape Flats that offer 0% corporate tax for five (5) years to businesses that hire 70% of their staff from within the local community; and
- (ii) Replacing gang "protection" with state-guaranteed security for industrial hubs focusing on high-growth sectors like, for example, wind turbine manufacturing and AI coding farms.

18.2.5. Start what the Foundation calls a "First-Class Citizen" campaign to ensure that the working-class Brown community:

- (i) Is fairly represented by instituting audits on government hiring; and
- (ii) Become homeowners via turning tenants of municipal rental stock into title deed holders. This will replace the gang's power to "provide" space.

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19. The Foundation reiterates its willingness to engage further in with the Committee.

Sincerely,

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Executive Director

FW de Klerk Foundation

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END.