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Governance, Public Safety and Justice Survey 2021/22, Victims of Crime Report

Statistics South Africa today released the Victims of Crime report, extracted from the Governance, Public Safety and Justice Survey (GPSJS). According to the report, household crimes experienced in the 2021/22 period increased compared to the 2020/21 period. Housebreaking is the most common crime experienced by households in South Africa. A total of 983 000 households experienced housebreaking in the 2021/22 period. The second most common type of crime experienced by households is home robbery, affecting 155 000 households. Assault is the third most common type of crime, affecting 99 000 households. The experience of theft of motor vehicles by households declined from 81 000 in 2020/21 to 42 000 in 2021/22.

The GPSJS 2021/22 report estimated that 1,4 million incidences of housebreaking occurred in the country. About 59% of households that experienced housebreaking reported some or all incidences to the police. The percentage of households that reported the incidences to the police increased from 56,1% in 2020/21 to 59,2% in 2021/22. KwaZulu-Natal province had the highest proportion (7,9%) of households that experienced housebreaking.

A total of 99 000 households experienced assault in 2021/22. Assault was most likely to be experienced by female-headed households and households in non-metro areas. The percentage of households that reported at least some of the incidences to the police increased by almost 23 percentage points from 50,6% in 2020/21 to 73,7% in 2021/22.

Theft of personal property is the most common crime experienced by individuals aged 16 years and older in South Africa in 2021/22. The results indicate that in 2021/22, a total of 1,1 million individuals experienced theft of personal property, followed by those who experienced consumer fraud (376 000) and robbery (246 000).

According to the GPSJS 2021/22, an estimated 1 331 000 incidences of theft of personal property occurred in 2021/22, affecting 1 105 000 individuals aged 16 years and older. The number of affected individuals represents 2,6% of the population. 30,8% of individuals who experienced theft of personal property reported some or all incidences to the police. Females, persons aged 16–34 years and those living in urban areas were most likely to experience theft of personal property and, generally, most victims (69,2%) of theft of personal property did not report the incidences to the police.

The number of incidences of consumer fraud increased from 493 000 in 2020/21 to 844 000 in 2021/22. Females and persons living in urban areas were most likely to experience consumer fraud. The percentage of individuals who reported some or all incidences to the police increased from 41,3% in 2020/21 to 44,2% in 2021/22, a 2,9 percentage point increase compared to the previous year.

The number of individuals that experienced hijacking increased from 64 000 in 2020/21 to 134 000 in 2021/22. An estimated 137 000 hijackings occurred in 2021/22, affecting 134 000 (0,3%) persons aged 16 years and older. About 63% of the victims reported some or all incidences to the police.

The report shows that a total of 246 000 (0,6% of adults aged 16 and older) individuals experienced street robbery in a total of 295 000 incidences. About 34% of the victims reported some or all incidences to the police, which is a 21,2 percentage point decrease compared to the previous year.

The report further shows that the general feeling of safety has declined. The percentage of adults aged 16 years and older who felt safe walking alone in their neighbourhoods during the day decreased from 84,8% in 2020/21 to 81,3% in 2021/22. Those who felt safe walking alone in their neighbourhood during the night decreased from 39,6% in 2020/21 to 36,0% in 2021/22.

Females, in general, felt safer walking alone in their neighbourhood during the day than males. Similarly, a higher percentage of rural residents had a greater feeling of safety walking alone in their areas when it is dark than residents in urban areas. About 48% of individuals aged 16 and above indicated that they have done something to protect themselves against crime. About 30,4% of the population indicated that they only walk during safer hours and 28,8% indicated they have taken physical protection measures for their home as the main thing they have done to protect themselves against crime. Only 3,8% indicated they carry a weapon (gun, knife, screwdriver, or blade) as the main thing they have done to protect themselves against crime.

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