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05 October 2015

UCT criminology centre gives meaning to SAPS crime statistics

The South African Police Services (SAPS) annual statistics have many shortcomings, but the report remains a valuable tool for figuring out the state of crime in the country, a report by the Centre of Criminology at the University of Cape Town titled: "A citizen's guide to SAPS crime statistics: 1994-2015" has noted.

The centre has produced a guide to the crime statistics that is intended to be accessible to everyone interested in crime and safety in South Africa. It explains what the crime statistics are and what some of the key problems are in making sense of them. It then places the latest statistics in the context of the longest period for which reliable, comparable data are available. In most cases, this is as of 2003/2004, but some rough trends are shown back to 1994. The report has been produced by Professor Mark Shaw, Dr Chris De Kock and Ms Anine Kriegler of the Centre of Criminology.

The SAPS releases its national crime statistics every September for the preceding reporting year that runs from 1 April to 31 March. One difficulty is that SAPS and media analyses tend to focus on changes between this year and the previous year, or perhaps this year and five or 10 years ago. The study notes that this approach makes for fairly arbitrary results, and can mask broader and more important fluctuations.

For the full report, please visit:

http://www.saferspaces.org.za/uploads/files/Citizens_guide_to_the_SAPS_stats.pdf

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Issued by: UCT Communication and Marketing Department

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