

Cops 'crippled' by detective shortage

In the past financial year 1,200 detectives resigned from the police, leaving a hole, that is going to have a big impact on the fight against crime, say experts.



Head of Detectives in the SAPS, Vineshkumar Moonoo say misconceptions over government pension payouts were behind the resignation of 1,060 detectives in the past year. Image: [Royal Times](#)

Last week Lieutenant-General Vineshkumar Moonoo, the Head of Detectives in the SAPS, told parliament's portfolio committee on policing that many detectives had left because of misconceptions about changes to their pension benefits.

These were based on rumours that public servants would no longer receive gratuities after retirement. There were reports of other public servants, including teachers and nurses, resigning because of this misconception.

In July the Treasury issued a statement refuting the rumours.

Moonoo said 1,060 detectives left the police and 140 were transferred to other branches.

"If any organisation lost 5% of its specialised workforce it would be in deep trouble," said criminologist Professor Anthony Minnaar.

Too many dockets, too few detectives

"This is a huge problem. Detectives are already working on between 70 and 140 dockets each a month; compare this to the international norm of about 25 dockets," Minnaar said.

In 2012, the portfolio committee on policing outlined a plan for bolstering the detective arm of the police. It highlighted that there was a shortage of detectives and that the police lacked a retention strategy. The findings of the committee were to

have been implemented and overseen by the minister of police.

The committee raised concerns about poor crime solving rates. According to the police's recent annual report, only 17% of the cases for of house robbery, business robbery and hijacking had been solved.

Dr Johan Burger, of the Institute for Security Studies, said there was more behind the exodus of detectives than worries about pensions. The reasons included heavy workloads and few opportunities for promotion.

Source: The Times via I-Net Bridge

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