



*Empowering survivors of*

*Gender-Based Violence*

## UNDERSTANDING GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE (GBV) STATISTICS IN SOUTH AFRICA

**January to March 2026 (Q4 of the 2025/26 Financial Year)**

### Introduction

Gender-Based Violence (GBV) remains one of South Africa's most significant social and human rights challenges. While crime statistics represent reported incidents, each number reflects a real person, family, or community impacted by violence, trauma, and loss.

The South African Police Service (SAPS) released its latest crime statistics on 22 May 2026, covering the period from **1 January to 31 March 2026**. The statistics highlight ongoing concerns regarding violence against women and children, sexual offences, domestic violence, and other forms of interpersonal violence.

### Key Statistics at a Glance

#### Reported Cases (January to March 2026)

- **9,782 reported rape cases**
- **12,590 sexual offences**
- **5,181 murders**
- **6,916 attempted murders**
- **43,576 assault GBH cases** (Assault with Intent to Cause Grievous Bodily Harm)

These crimes are often used as key indicators when measuring the extent of violence affecting women, children, and vulnerable individuals in South Africa.

### What Do These Statistics Tell Us?

#### 1. Sexual Violence Remains Alarming High

The reporting of **9,782 rapes** over a three-month period means that, on average, South Africa recorded approximately **109 rapes every day**. Additionally, over **140 sexual offences were reported daily**.

Sexual violence causes profound physical, emotional, psychological, and social harm. Many victims experience long-term trauma, anxiety, depression, and other significant challenges that can affect every aspect of their lives.

It is important to recognise that rape statistics often represent only a portion of the actual problem, as many incidents remain unreported due to fear, stigma, intimidation, or lack of access to support services.

## **2. The Home Is Often Not a Safe Space**

One of the most concerning findings from the SAPS report is that:

**47.2% of all reported rapes occurred in residential settings.**

This means:

**4,620 rapes took place at the home of either the victim or the perpetrator.**

These findings challenge the belief that violence mainly occurs in public spaces. Instead, they demonstrate that many victims are harmed in environments where they should feel safest.

The data suggests that perpetrators are often people known to the victim, including:

- Intimate partners
- Family members
- Relatives
- Neighbours
- Friends
- Acquaintances

This highlights the importance of addressing domestic violence, family violence, coercive control, and harmful gender norms.

## **3. Violence Is Often Linked to Relationships and Conflict**

The Minister of Police noted that many acts of violence are not random events. Rather, they are linked to interpersonal conflict and relationship dynamics.

The statistics showed:

- 898 murders linked to arguments and misunderstandings
- 251 murders linked to retaliation, punishment, or revenge
- 299 murders linked to vigilantism

These findings indicate that violence frequently occurs between people who know one another and often arises from unresolved conflict, poor emotional regulation, toxic social norms, and the acceptance of violence as a means of resolving disputes.

## **4. Alcohol Remains a Major Contributing Factor**

The SAPS statistics revealed that:

**7,267 incidents of murder, attempted murder, rape, and assault GBH were linked to alcohol use.**

Alcohol consumption does not cause violence on its own, but it can increase aggression, reduce self-control, impair judgement, and escalate conflict.

Research consistently shows that reducing harmful alcohol use can contribute significantly to preventing interpersonal and gender-based violence.

## **5. Violence Against Women and Children Is Still a National Concern**

Although South Africa recorded reductions in several major crime categories during this reporting period, violence against women and children remains widespread and deeply concerning.

GBV impacts:

- Physical health
- Mental health
- Family stability
- Community safety
- Economic productivity
- Social development

Women, children, persons with disabilities, LGBTQIA+ individuals, and other vulnerable groups often face an increased risk of abuse and exploitation.

### **Why Many Cases Go Unreported**

GBV experts acknowledge that official crime statistics may not reflect the full extent of the problem.

Victims may choose not to report violence because of:

- Fear of retaliation
- Financial dependence on perpetrators
- Shame or stigma
- Lack of family support
- Distrust in the justice system
- Limited access to support services
- Fear of not being believed

As a result, actual levels of GBV may be significantly higher than reported figures suggest.

### **The Importance of Prevention**

Addressing GBV requires more than law enforcement alone.

Long-term prevention includes:

- ✓ Promoting healthy relationships
- ✓ Challenging harmful gender stereotypes
- ✓ Supporting survivors
- ✓ Strengthening community-based interventions

- ✓ Reducing substance abuse
- ✓ Increasing access to counselling and mental health services
- ✓ Improving economic empowerment opportunities
- ✓ Educating communities about rights and responsibilities

The Integrated Crime and Violence Prevention Strategy emphasises addressing the social and economic factors that contribute to violence. [\[sanews.gov.za\]](https://sanews.gov.za), [\[gov.za\]](https://gov.za)

### Key Message

Gender-Based Violence is not just a crime issue. It is a societal issue that affects families, communities, workplaces, and future generations.

Every reported statistic represents a person whose safety, dignity, and wellbeing have been compromised. Preventing GBV requires collective action from government, communities, organisations, families, and individuals.

Together, we can create safer homes, healthier relationships, and a South Africa where everyone can live free from violence and fear.

**Source:** South African Police Service (SAPS) Crime Statistics Quarter 4, 2025/26 Financial Year (1 January to 31 March 2026), released 22 May 2026.