

GRIM REALITY: Women's safety in Gauteng under threat

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FOR a woman in Gauteng, the working day often begins before she reaches her workplace. It begins with the walk to a bus stop, waiting beside a road, or travelling home after dark. These everyday routines should be ordinary, yet years of failed crime prevention have turned them into moments of vulnerability, where women face threats of robbery, sexual violence, hijacking, and kidnapping.

On 26 March 2026, a woman was attacked in Mayfair, Johannesburg, while driving home from her coffee shop. Media reports indicated that she was abducted in an express kidnapping and later released. These cases are different, and not every kidnapping is classified as gender-based violence.

Yet, they expose the same reality: women are being targeted while simply moving through our streets, neighbourhoods, and public spaces. The South African Police Service (SAPS) crime statistics for January to March 2026

recorded 2 369 sexual offences in Gauteng, including 1 840 rapes. Over the 90 days, this averaged more than 26 sexual offences and 20 rapes every day. Kidnapping presents another serious threat.

Gauteng recorded 2 452 kidnappings during the quarter, an increase of 1.6%. The province accounted for 54.8% of all kidnappings recorded nationally. Kempton Park, Protea, Ivory Park, Eldorado Park, Evaton and Jeppe were six of the seven highest-ranking stations nationally.

The Gauteng City-Region Observatory's Quality of Life Survey 7 also found that only 69% of women felt safe walking in their neighbourhoods during the day. After dark, the figure fell to just 11%. It also found that one in ten Gauteng respondents had experienced violence by a current or former intimate partner.

The tragic murder of Taymin Platt from Eersterust in Pretoria, a young traffic warden who was stabbed to death by her partner, serves as a reminder that intimate partner violence continues to

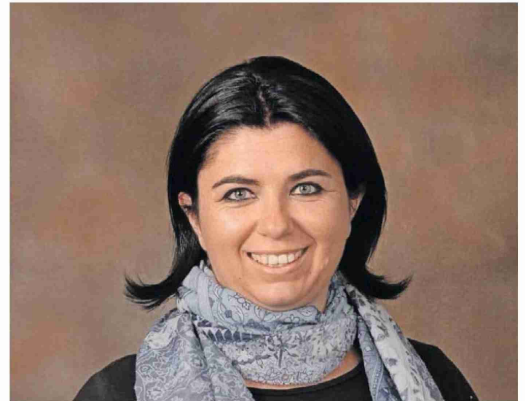
plague women throughout Gauteng.

There is a solution, but it requires political will. Gauteng must proactively prevent crime against women before they become victims. Properly trained and lawfully mandated crime-prevention officers should be deployed to high-risk locations such as taxi ranks, bus stops, and railway stations where women are most vulnerable.

These deployments must be carried out in coordinated operations with the SAPS and municipal police. Gauteng must also enhance resources for Family Violence, Child Protection, and Sexual Offences units, enforce protection orders, and ensure victim-friendly reporting services, with proficient detectives to secure convictions.

A government that cannot ensure women's safety in public spaces or their own homes has failed in its basic duty to protect citizens and does not deserve the public's trust.

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