

South Africa's Murder Spree

Violent crime is a reality that affects everyone. According to a recent Interpol survey of its 96 member countries, South Africa had the worst rape statistics and was the 3rd worst in murder statistics. In the last 20 years murder has increased 350%. More people are killed each year in criminal violence in South Africa than were killed in 13 years of political and military violence! (SA Institute of Race Relations).

Since the South African government suspended the death penalty on 4 February 1990, over 200 000 people have been murdered.

The SA Institute of Race Relations has reported that since 1983, over 2 600 policemen have been murdered. More policemen are killed in South Africa in a week than in an entire year in Britain.

The Failure of Justice and Correctional Services

In one year (1995), when there were 26 832 reported murders in South Africa, there were only 4 372 prosecutions for murder and only 2 357 convictions. Therefore, less than one murderer in ten was in any way punished.

According to a Nedcor report on Crime, Violence and Investment, 94% of all prisoners would immediately become involved in crime again once they were released!

There are many horrific examples of criminals released on bail, or through an amnesty, committing violent crimes:

- On January 28, 1993 a convicted killer was sentenced in Pietermaritzburg Supreme Court for rape
- Dan Mabote raped a seven-year-old girl in November 1996, was arrested and was refused bail four
- Frans du Toit and Theuns Krugers were out on bail, while charged with four counts of rape between
- All sentenced criminals were given a 6-months remission of sentence on the occasion of President
- Samuel Sidymo (37), was out on parole nine months before completing his sentence for rape, assa

- In a counter attack in Richmond, KwaZulu/Natal, (23/1/99), gunmen attacked the home of a local of

There is no doubt that soft judges make hardened criminals.

The Constitution

The SA Constitution Bill of Rights guarantees everyone the *"right to life"* Incredibly though, this has been interpreted as not applying to innocent babies – who may be killed through abortion. However, it is applied to protect convicted murderers – who can no longer be sentenced to death in a court of law. This seems to favour the rights of the criminal because suspending the death penalty has not prevented 200 000 people losing their right to life at the hands of criminals. Or the 142 812 babies who have been – legally – killed through abortion.

The Need for Capital Punishment

Many nations around the world still enforce the death penalty for capital crimes such as murder. Over 71% of South Africans want the death penalty reinstated (Human Sciences Research Council).

Those who commit murder forfeit their own right to life by showing contempt for the right to life of their victims. The death penalty is primarily a deterrent. That which is feared the most, deters the most. It also ensures that a murderer does not murder again.

For those who hold the Word of God as authoritative, capital punishment is God's clear command:

"Whoever sheds the blood of man, by man shall his blood be shed; for in the image of God has God made man . . . for all generations to come." Genesis 9:6, 12

"Anyone who strikes a man and kills him shall surely be put to death . . . if a man schemes and kills another man deliberately, take him away from My altar and put him to death . . . Anyone who kidnaps . . . must be put to death." Exodus 21:12-16

"If anyone takes the life of a human being, he must be put to death . . . whoever kills a man must be put to death . . . I am the Lord your God." Leviticus 24:17-22

"Bloodshed pollutes the land, and atonement cannot be made for the land on which blood has been shed except by the blood of the one who shed it." Numbers 35:33

And God's Law remains in force after Calvary (Acts 25:11). As our Lord Jesus taught:

"Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I have not come to abolish them but to fulfil them. I tell you the truth, until heaven and earth disappear not the smallest letter, not the least stroke of a pen, will by any means disappear from the law." Matthew 5:17-18

The government *"does not bear the sword for nothing. He is God's servant, an agent of wrath to bring punishment on the wrongdoer."* Romans 13:4. *Governors "are sent by Him to punish those who do wrong."* 1 Peter 2:14. *"Anyone who kills with the sword, must himself be killed by the sword"* Revelation 13:10

The Bible teaches that those nations that fail to enforce capital punishment will be harshly judged (Jeremiah 2:34-37; Hosea 1:4; 4:1-6). By obeying God's Law and punishing murderers with the death penalty a nation can cleanse itself of the guilt of innocent blood. On the other hand a nation that refuses to avenge the taking of innocent human life must share the guilt of the murderer (Deuteronomy 21:1-9).

The opposition of certain *"human rights"* groups to the death penalty is selective. As capital punishment is only inflicted upon murderers, one is given to wonder whether these groups are only concerned for the *"rights"* of murderers? Should we not provide compassion and justice for the many thousands of victims of violent crimes? Surely any civilised society has the moral right and the duty to protect itself from those who have no respect for human life?

In the USA, law enforcers have documented that as executions declined – murders increased. And when the death penalty was suspended the number of murders doubled to 20 000 murders a year.

Those who claim that capital punishment (even if imposed consistently and without undue delay) would not be a deterrent to violent crime are saying in essence that people are not afraid of dying. If so, then warning signs "*Slow down*", "*Bridge down*", or "*Danger 40 000 volts*" are futile relics of a bygone age when men feared death. But this is nonsense. Capital punishment is a deterrent. In Utah when the death penalty was re-imposed, with a single execution, in 1977, there was a dramatic decrease of murders committed.

The taking of a murderer's life is akin to the amputation of a diseased limb in order to save the rest of the body. All murder is serious and demands capital punishment. Capital punishment is necessary for justice, for the rule of law and for the protection of the innocent.

In the book *Make a Difference* the following quote sums up the subject succinctly:

"Opposition to capital punishment . . . sides with evil; shows more regard for the criminal than the victim of the crime; weakens justice and encourages murder; is not based on Scripture but on a vague philosophical system that makes a fetish of the idea that the taking of life is wrong under every circumstance, and fails to distinguish adequately between killing and murder, between punishment and crime ."

"Why do people commit crimes so readily? Because crime is not punished quickly enough." Ecclesiastes 8:11

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[Make a Difference!](#) A Christian Handbook for South Africa" by Myriam Barlow and Peter Har