

# Case withdrawals worry police

## Many victims opt to talk to their assailants for compensation

ELFAS TORERAI

VICTIMS of serious crime in the province are leaving law enforcement in disarray due to the huge number of case withdrawals, police said.

Spokesperson Brig Sabata Mokgwabone said victims or survivors of serious crime were withdrawing cases at a worrying rate.

"It has become apparent that victims and survivors of crime withdraw their cases after registering them.

"While some of these cases are withdrawn before the suspects are arrested or cases are presented before the courts, others are withdrawn while they are already on court rolls," he said.

"The trend is happening in serious cases such as assault, rape, attempted murder and domestic violence crimes.

"In some instances, the victims or survivors of crime are influenced by

their relatives to withdraw cases.

"Although reasons for withdrawal differ from one case to another, it is clear that sometimes, there is exchange of cash wherein the victims or survivors of crime accept payments from the defendants," Mokgwabone said.

Police said there was a legal route victims of crime could follow to get compensation without necessarily having to withdraw their cases.

"The service charter for victims of crime in SA stipulates that the prosecutor can ensure that special measures are taken to apply to court for a compensation order in terms of Section 297 and 300 of the Criminal Procedure Act, 1977 (Act No 51 of 1977) for victims or survivors of crime including in cases of sexual offences and domestic violence."

Mokgwabone said this court method was safer for members of the community rather than settling the matter

between or among themselves.

Delays in finalisation of cases have been cited as one reason victims or survivors of crime opt to deal directly with those who wronged them.

However, police said they were doing their best to ensure cases were processed speedily.

"The police are putting efforts which include the utilisation of various resources that are limited at times, to ensure that all reported cases are promptly investigated. It is therefore significant that where possible, withdrawal of cases must be avoided as the practice has no element of deterrence."

Mokgwabone said should people continue to withdraw cases before prosecution, it is likely that those who commit crime may continue with criminal acts knowing they could negotiate with the victims and escape justice.

[elfust@afrotone.co.za](mailto:elfust@afrotone.co.za)



**WORRY:** The police say victims withdrawing cases are a concern. PICTURE: GETTY IMAGES

## Stock theft accused remanded in custody

PETRUS Nzimane Miga, 29, and Thabang Mollane, 24, made their first appearance in the Atamelang Magistrate's Court on Friday and were remanded in custody. North West police spokesperson Capt Aafje Botma said the two were arrested by the provincial stock theft task team members who responded to a tip-off from the community. The accused allegedly failed to account for 16 cattle with which the police found them travelling – Elfas Torera

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