

## Perceptions and Fear of Crime: The Alexandra Community Crime Survey.

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### Introduction

The problem of crime and crime control has reached endemic proportions in South Africa. The dramatic increase in violent crime since 1990<sup>1</sup> has generated a wide range of explanations about the causes of, and protagonists in, the ongoing "crime wave". Little is known about the public's perceptions of and reactions to crime. Very few explanations are drawn from the attitudes and experiences of people living in some of the most crime-ridden communities in the country – the townships and squatter camps in the PWV.

This paper, which contains excerpts from interviews held in October and November 1991, with 34 residents of Alexandra and 18 key informants associated with defence, policing, health and welfare, education and the administration of the township, attempts to profile how violent crime has impacted upon the lives of people living in an area of Alex. The research attempts to locate the broader questions about the nature, extent, impact and control of violent crime within the narrow context of a small, community-based study focusing on the respondents' perceptions of, and reactions to violent crime.

The Alex Community Crime Survey (ACCS) is a pilot study aimed at providing baseline data from which to inform social policy. Whilst the small sample of interviews prevents any generalisations about the impact of violent crime on township communities, the data stands on its own within the parameters of a case study of a "neighbourhood", as well as providing the starting point for further research.

The ACCS appears to be the only study of its scope in South Africa to focus solely on a small, geographically defined community within a township – the area or neighbourhood (The words area/neighbourhood will be used interchangeably in this paper). The

neighbourhood as a geographic and social entity was chosen as the locus of this study to provide detailed information about the nature and extent of violent crime within a particular area. Whilst acknowledging the wider origins of the deviant act and the perception of the act (i.e. the influences of social structure and of power relationships), it is believed that crime is at the same time geographically and socially focused. It was felt that it is only against the background provided by the respondents' assessment of the relationship between their immediate social environment and their beliefs about crime, that the impact of crime on this particular community could be adequately studied.

The advantage of a local, community-based crime survey is that it has the potential of providing the nuanced detail required to inform the development of humane policies which reflect people's needs and which can be monitored effectively. The very different home and community lives experienced by different sections of the South African population makes it all the more important for anti-crime policies and strategies to be locally accountable whilst guided by a coordinated and legitimate national policy.

The ACCS draws from three victimization surveys: two nationally-based South African crime surveys (Glanz, 1989; Naud, 1989) and the community-based Islington Crime Survey (Jones, MacLean & Young, 1986). Following the tradition of victimization surveys, the ACCS investigates the respondents' beliefs about violent crime; the fear of crime; crime prevention awareness and behaviour, and victimization experiences. However as a second generation victimization survey (a term used by Jones, MacLean & Young, 1986), it moves away from a predominant focus on victimization to include the respondents' assessment of the role, function and ability of the police, as well as attitudes towards the justice system.

This paper is a preliminary report, dealing with the impact of violent crime upon a neighbourhood in Alex and constitutes the first part of a larger report. The main themes emerging from the main body of research are:

- The impact of a milieu of crime and violence on the neighbourhood, including the respondents' reactions to crime, protection and defence strategies, as well as victimization experiences.
- The role of community protection strategies in crime control and prevention, namely, civic organisations; civic structures (yard, street and area committees and defence units) (DUs), and alternative justice structures (community courts and community-based dispute resolution centres).
- Attitudes towards the police, such as an assessment of police-community relations; perceptions of the policing priorities of the police and public; assessment of the

police's ability to deal with crime, and attitudes towards the legitimacy of the South African Police (SAP).

The main methodological concern was the measurement of perceptions and the accuracy of crime-related beliefs. Literature surrounding this issue is filled with conflicting research findings, echoing the multitude of opinions about violent crime made by the respondents. Despite the wide range of opinions, this is not to say that some versions are not more accurate than others, or that one cannot ascribe culpability to particular parties. Indeed, there seemed to be a remarkable accuracy in the perception of the nature and extent of violent crime in the area studied, with the respondents' perceptions matching official statistics and the crime register at the local police stations. Research indicates that people's belief about crime tends to bear a close relation to the material reality of the areas in which they live (Jones, MacLean & Young, 1986; Young, 1988).

The definitions of crime, criminals and of crime control are inextricably linked to the politics of power – whether they be the politics of gender, race, age, wealth or class. The criminal process is played out within the social arrangements of our society, thus the profoundly political context of crime in general, the politicization of criminal acts and the criminalization of political acts, is a reality in South Africa and its impact on the respondents' belief systems and experiences cannot be invalidated.

However accurate subjective beliefs about crime are, it is subjective world views that we are ultimately dealing with. For example, the glaring "gap" in almost all of the responses dealing with the nature and incidence of violent crime, was the low ranking, if at all mentioned, of the most common violent crimes – sexual crimes. An omission which unfortunately, very neatly illustrates that subjective explanations of social reality always reflect the often contradictory values, interests and experiences which influence individual perceptions and public accounts.

The limited number of respondents, the geographical specificity of the research, the fact that all the residents of the area were African, in some way involved in their local ANC-aligned Alexandra Civic Organisation (ACO) structures and that most were shack dwellers (13) and men (26), impacts greatly on the results. It is the world view of this group of people that is represented in this research. The study does not purport to deliver the *truth*, nor does it contend that the interviews necessarily reflect the broader social process. A study of the perceptions of the policemen and women working in Alex, of hostel dwellers and members of the Alexandra Civic Association (ACA) and the Alexandra Town Council, would undoubtedly result in different understandings of the context and impact of violent crime in Alexandra.

## Definition of Terms

Perception of crime refers to individuals' personal estimation of the nature and incidence of crime in their environment and perceived risk of becoming a victim of crime.

Fear of crime refers to an individual's subjective view of their personal risk of victimization, and their differential levels of vulnerability, depending on factors such as age, health, wealth and personality (Hough & Mayhew, 1985).

Violent crime refers to events which the respondent deemed had criminal intent which resulted in the respondent being physically attacked, threatened with physical attack or with violence of any kind. The definition thus allows for a broad interpretation of violent crime, including psychological, physical and structural forms of violence and not differentiating between political and other forms of violent crime. The wording of the questions however, did not allow for acts of omission (e.g. criminal neglect) to be included.

## Setting the Scene: A profile of the respondents, their households and their neighbourhood

Alexandra was established as an African residential area with land tenure rights in 1905. It covers approximately 2,5 square kilometres, and will double in size with the eventual inclusion of the East and the Far East Banks. With a population of between 250 000 and 300 000, its population density is the highest of the townships in the PWV region.

Twenty per cent of the residents live in clearly defined squatter areas, 63% live in the "old Alex" (one-third of them in shacks) and 13% in the new or re-developed areas of the East Bank. The sample was drawn from an area in "old Alex" adjoining the "M1" Madala hostel. Thirty-eight percent (13) of the respondents live in shacks, with most of the others living in flats (8) and semi-detached houses (7). It is estimated that the households have an average 6,5 shacks in their backyard (Markinor, 1990). Half of the women and 30% of the men who were interviewed were neither formally nor informally employed. Markinor (1990) estimates that 53% of Alex residents are working and ACO puts unemployment at 55%.

Despite the much publicised upgrading of Alex, the township remains largely a slum, with grossly inadequate water, sanitation and refuse removal. Educational, health and welfare and leisure facilities do not match the population density. The upgrading that has occurred has concentrated on developing middle-class housing for those from Alex or elsewhere, who can afford it. Politicians and civil servants have moved painfully slowly to accept the inevitability of urbanisation and to make available vacant "white" land for affordable housing for long-term residents and serviced sites for the so-called squatters in Alex. I write so-called, because the squatters live in established shack settlements, paying rent to landlords and in recent years, only occasionally, to the council. The average length of residence of the respondents in Alex was 16 years.

## Belief about Crime

Despite the dreadful living conditions, respondents perceived crime to be the main problem in their area; followed by a fear of the hostels and hostel dwellers. On 2 November 1991, the day the interviews took place, two men were killed after gunmen, said to have emerged from Madala hostel, indiscriminately opened fire on residents. In the time period January 1991 to May 1992, 49 people were killed and 230 injured in 26 incidents of violence related to this hostel (*Weekly Mail*, 26 June 1992). Political violence and the conduct of the SAP were cited as third, followed by concern about the poor living conditions, services and the environment.

The increase in crime rates was viewed by most of the respondents (70.5% (24)) as the main factor to have changed the character of their neighbourhood in the past year. This does not stand on its own: the influx of new people in the area, namely squatters, and poor and inadequate policing were seen as significant local factors in the escalation of crime and political conflict, as well as the more macro-political factors – the worsening political situation, the deteriorating economic situation and the increase in levels and tolerance of corruption.

The respondents perceived violent crimes as the most common crimes occurring in their area. The three most common crimes in their neighbourhood were listed as: (1) housebreaking and entry; (2) fights and disturbances in the streets, and (3) political violence. These perceptions were to a large extent matched by the crime register at Wynberg police station.

The crimes the respondents felt most threatened by were crimes of violence directed against the individual as well as crimes involving theft of property, as follows: (1) fights and disturbances in the streets, including political as well as criminal violence; (2) housebreaking and entry; (3) assault; (4) sexual crimes, and (5) theft of motor vehicles.

Respondents were asked to state who they believed was most responsible for committing crimes in their neighbourhood. People residing within Alex were seen as being the main offenders, namely the youth, the unemployed, squatters, "com-tsotsis" and gangs. However, very significant groups of outsiders were identified: the new wave of hostel dwellers and squatters and the police.

Respondents cited the following groups of people as those most likely to commit the violent crimes most feared by the respondents: (1) fights and disturbances in the streets – local youth; (2) housebreaking and entry – local gangs and local adults; (3) assault – local gangs; (4) sexual crimes – local youth, and (5) theft of motor vehicles – local youth.

The convergence of political and criminal agendas are an ever present factor underlying any analysis of crime in South Africa. Allegations were made that the criminal element in Alex had taken advantage of the "political unrest" in various ways. It was reported by the

respondents that criminals have exploited the gap left open by the SAP's involvement in the political conflict; they commit crimes under the guise of political violence (like members of DUs and hostel dwellers for example), as well as being used by state counter-insurgency forces to commit crimes against those opposing the present government.

A police officer gave an interesting picture of the changing trends in victimization and criminal behaviour. His analysis powerfully illustrates changing historical trends and the nature of the fundamental social dislocation that urbanisation (squatters ) and political conflict (role of Inkatha) have had on the nature of crime and criminal behaviour at street level:

**The typical victim was originally the man from the rural area. Now it can be anyone. Now its changed because of the impact of Inkatha – [criminals] don't attack a rural man, rural people will attack back and they are far more populous. The urban man has now developed skills in hijacking, housebreaking and entry and other areas. It is the youth who mug people in the streets.**

#### The Youth

The respondents' assessment of the role of the local youth in crime was one coloured by bitterness, despondency and guilt. The "youth" that are so often referred to as the "lost generation" are their children. There was no outright condemnation of young people and they were not singled out for blame. They are viewed as the perpetrators of crime in that they are the "front men", the "pitbull chews" servicing the organised (as in gangs) adults orchestrating the show. It was felt that it is the behaviour of adult role models that the young people emulate and often exaggerate.

#### The Unemployed

The motivation of the unemployed in getting involved in criminal activity was not only related to acquisitive reasons, but also to reasons of personal empowerment and identity:

**Unemployment is the main cause. The unemployed need to have an identity to help them feel strong so they identify with the different ethnic groups – the Inkatha and the ANC ... this causes tension and violence. Some of these people also use the identity of these organisations to further their political intentions.**

The responses point to the fact that we need to further examine the conventional wisdom that unemployment leads to increased crime rates. It is necessary to examine the *way* in which unemployment is related to crime, and to *which* crimes. From the data it would seem as if in South Africa, unemployment coupled with marginalisation is related to violent crime as the unemployed and increasingly marginalised attempt to redefine their identity and attain empowerment through acts of violence. In doing so, challenging the very legitimacy of the systems of formal as well as informal social control, institutions which no longer seem to be able to deal with the issues of marginalisation which may accompany forms of development, except through violent coercion (Du Toit, 1990).

Violence appears to have taken on a life of its own, becoming an independent source of power. This process can be seen to mirror the current political process, where political power in these times of transition is often defined by coercive means.

#### The Squatters

The influx of new people into Alex since the lifting of influx control in 1990, and in particular those who live in the squatter camps, were seen by most of the respondents as instrumental in the escalation of crime and political violence, and in the deterioration of the standards of living in Alex. It was felt that the community spirit of the old Alex has been invaded and has deteriorated, partially because of the overcrowding and constantly shifting populace:

**Since the board took over this area it has exposed it to squatters. Now the area is untidy. There are a lot of people we don't know now and a lot of delinquency**

## **amongst their children. There is no longer the communal life we used to lead in Alex.**

This perception seems to be shared by members of the SAP stationed at Wynberg police station, who reported levels of crime increased in Alex with the lifting of influx control and the subsequent dramatic influx of people into the urban areas.

There seems to be a line of divide between the squatters and other residents, with most of the crime allegedly occurring within and stemming from the squatter camps. The overcrowded camps, with their complex physical structure and constantly shifting anonymous population making escape easy and detection difficult, are seen as providing a haven for criminals and for criminal activity.

It was also reported that squatters and hostel dwellers have less to lose from involvement in criminal and violent activity, because they are generally more marginalised from resources and employment, and tend to have a smaller investment in Alex in terms of property, possessions and family.

### **The Police**

One of the most striking findings of the study, is that allegations were made by 94.1% (32) of the respondents that the police were involved in political and other criminal violence.

There was a perception that large numbers of the SAP in Alex behave like a criminal gang – acting in a pact with extensive underground networks and a strong identity and culture. It is this perceived abuse of their station and the tales of widespread corruption that the respondents' fear and resent. Respondents stated that they are particularly fearful of the SAP because they never know where they stand with a member of the police. They feel betrayed by the police who renege their fundamental duty – to protect the ordinary citizens against crime. They also feel doublecrossed by police members' involvement in crime:

**In the '86 riots the first thing that happened in Alex was that the cops were driven out. Crime dropped because criminals were not protected. People were fed up with the police abusing their power in Alex.**

Strong criticism was directed towards black members of the SAP.

Numerous allegations were made of police complicity in political violence, both in terms of partisan support of all parties that are against the ANC/SACP/COSATU alliance, and by exploiting and deliberately fomenting political violence as a cover for other criminal activity. It was mentioned that whilst political settlement will go some way to reducing political violence, it is unlikely that this will impact significantly on corruption within the SAP because, as stated by an area committee member: "they have bought all the criminals that count, and some of us [the politicians] too."

It is alleged that many police informers are "turned" activists and criminals who buy the right to continue their criminal patterns of survival (if it was for this reason that the police were able to turn them) with information about others.

#### "Com-tsotsis"

Serious accusations were made by some of the respondents that some members of the defence units were abusing their position for criminal ends. It was alleged that some "rogue" DU marshalls (who go out on patrol and guard duty) use their opportunity to patrol to "case out the joint" and plan criminal "hits"; that they steal from houses, yards and cars whilst the area is deserted because of an impending or current attack; and that they, like the hostel dwellers have been accused of doing, deliberately warn of an imminent attack so that the residents will flee and they will be left to "pick the area clean at their leisure".

#### Gangs

According to a member of the area committee, organised gangs, particularly youth gangs, are not as prominent in Alex as they are in Soweto. The gangs that are based in Alex tend to use Alex as a base from which to plan operations, mainly into the suburbs and industrial areas, as well as a return base from which to transform and transport stolen vehicles and fence stolen goods. It was reported by members of the area committee that gang members tend to direct "operations" towards Sandton, unlike Soweto gangs who also operate within Soweto. It was alleged that the involvement of whites and Indians in the larger gangs involved in extensive networks of motor vehicle theft and theft of "electronic and technical goods", was rife.

Elements of the SAP were also accused of involvement in gangs: "The government must stop police corruption, especially their involvement with gangs in organised crime."

#### Ex-offenders

Levels of criminal activity within Alex and the number of criminals resident there is very high. It is estimated by a social worker based in Alex that one in every three families has a member who has committed a crime.

#### "Other" Ethnic Groups

Despite the fact that the residents were fairly categorical about identifying "typical" offenders, there was also a strong sense of bewilderment in the face of so much random brutality: "We don't know who is victimising the community, there are so many people involved."

## The Impact of Crime

The levels of violence and crime in Alex have always been high, but generally it has been a "hot tempered violence, fuelled by love, jealousy, frustration, greed and alcohol" (Alexandra Health Centre Annual Report, 1991). Even the gang warfare of the 1950s is reported to have fitted this pattern.

There appears to have emerged a new wave of crime and violence which is very difficult from the picture painted above. The respondents identify two discernible periods – post 1986 and post 1990 – which seem to have heralded new crime trends characterised by increasing levels of violence. Both these time periods are linked by forces bringing about the deregulation of formal (state justice system and the police) and informal social controls.

The township revolt of 1984-1986 saw civic organisations and affiliated local structures proliferate and gain power, before falling victim to repression under the national states of emergency. The strengthening of the civics in the mid-80s were linked to the ANC's call to make the "townships ungovernable" and to create "people's power" and "liberated zones". Different groups of people were brought together to organise against the life threatening issues of violence and crime, rather than by an explicit desire to develop their community.

The respondents argued that the role the civics played in community defence and protection had a strong developmental function in that they were an attempt, however harsh and misguided at times, by the disenfranchised to build a type of social order which reflected their particular vision of justice. The absence of an accessible, legitimate and fair justice system was perceived as being an important factor in creating a criminogenic environment.

The key informants and respondents believed that attempts by the community of Alex to build and sustain elements that contributed to a dynamic and just community (e.g. civic structures and community courts) so threatened the dominant social order, that every attempt was made to break these structures and to divide and disempower the community. A member of ACO outlines the situation:

**The anti-crime and violence campaign embarked upon by the Alexandra Action Committee and allied structures lasted for two to three years up until the**

**'86 state of emergency which clamped down on all the activists and the structures to wipe out the "people's order". Up until then the disciplined structures made Alex safe, you could walk from 1st to 22nd without any harm. In '87 crime began to gradually increase and reached its peak in '91. The civic structures educated people about how to deal with power and the problems of a community. The people's courts played a major role, it was harsh justice but it helped to decrease crime. Each block could establish their own court. Disputes were resolved through yard, street and area committees and people tended to stay away from violent punishment, using peer pressure and education.**

It is believed that one of the results of this destabilisation has been a dramatic increase in the levels of crime and violence and in the breakdown of the social order.

Crime, both as a response to and a symptom of incivility, was perceived by the respondents as being one of the threats to the moral order of society:

**There is no order, people behave as they like. I might lose my life if I just tell them to be quiet – you just have to keep quiet. The violence is so random. You come home from work minding your own business, someone looks at you funny and you just lose your life. Especially at night after the 9 p.m. curfew.**

The smashing and subversion of the embryonic informal social controls of the mid-80s is paralleled by the current collapse and undermining of the state's formal social controls – the apartheid-based criminal justice system and apartheid legislation (such as influx control), the undermining of the repressive might of the security forces and the police, the massive levels of corruption engendered by a collapsing social order, as well as the deregulatory effects of the opening up of political contest and ethnic divisions. The relationship of these factors, coupled with the economic recession, to the post-1990 crime wave, do not need to be further elaborated upon. Suffice to say that the impact of these factors on the individual and community life of the people of Alexandra has been enormous.

Respondents reported a range of responses in the face of overwhelming high levels of crime and violence:

- There seems to be a general increase in the militancy of some of the respondents in response to the increased levels of crime and violence and their increased risks of victimization. There appears to be a blurring of the boundaries between "normal" and political crimes – criminals are politically categorised regardless of the crime, solutions tend towards more local-level militaristic options with people losing faith in the ability of politicians to deliver more macro-political solutions, and in the ability of the police and the civic dilute resolution structures to control crime and violence.
- The research indicates that resentment towards the SAP's alleged corruption and political impartiality and the formal justice system is increasing. It can be hypothesised that the indirect effect of such a group being involved in crime is enormous, providing a subliminal sanction to taking the law into one's own hands, thus serving to stimulate the spiral of increased levels of criminality.
- It seems that despite the anger and desperate desire to take matters into their own hands, the major psycho-social effect of the violence on the respondents has been feelings of overwhelming sadness, depression, generalised anxiety and bitterness. Something of the spark and vitality of the "old Alex" has vanished. Respondents have severely restricted their movements, becoming virtual prisoners in their homes, places which in themselves are hardly safe from attack. Taxis are reported to be quiet – people are afraid to engage in conversation which might lead to conflict and possibly violence. Certain colours (mainly red and green) and styles of clothing are not worn in case they mistakenly identify someone from a particular political or

criminal faction. Residents catch taxis to visit friends living in the next street in an attempt to avoid the risk of victimization. Children are often not allowed to play in the streets or to visit their friends.

- Many people have been displaced from their homes. The lucky ones have squashed in with relatives or friends, but others are sleeping in offices or in church halls. The Sandton Town Council had to apparently find accommodation for 600 employees who fled from the hostels because they were not Inkatha members.

Many people who have come recently to the city to join their family members have packed their possessions and are returning to the rural areas. For the first time in Alex's history, it is said that even long-term residents are increasingly looking for other places to stay.

- Fear of crime and violence is widespread and people panic easily. Responses indicated that all of the respondents have high levels of anxiety about the prospect of personal victimisation. All the respondents believed that their chances of being attacked had gone up in the past year. The majority of the respondents (88.2% (30) believed that it is unsafe to be out on the streets of their neighbourhood at night.

The respondents reported loss of faith in the SAP appears to be contributing to their feelings of increased vulnerability and fear of anarchy. Glanz's (1989) South African study, indicates that satisfaction with the service rendered by the police is positively associated with feelings of safety in one's neighbourhood. This perception was most prominent amongst Glanz's white sample, followed by coloured people, Indians and lastly by African people.

- The pervasive milieu of crime and violence seems to have fundamentally influenced the respondents' definition of violent crime. The respondents' perceptions of what constitutes a violent crime appear to be relative to their collective experience of township life in the context of prevailing crime and violence.

Violence like all forms of crime is a social relationship. It is rarely random: it inevitably involves particular social meanings and occurs in particular hierarchies of power. Its impact is thus dependent on the relationship within which it occurs. The relationship between the *victim*, the *offender*, the *state (policing)* and *informal social controls* thus determines the very impact of the offence and the explanations

accorded to it by the victim.

In an attempt to cope with the spiralling social violence, a tacit understanding seems to have emerged which deems that unless the violence is such that it results in physical incapacitation, such as serious assault, particularly rape or murder, the "incident" is not perceived as a violent crime and is relegated to the dustbin of life's nastier experiences.

Part of this increasing tolerance of violence seems to stem from the incessant victimisation that the respondents have experienced because of their social status. Victimisation which extends beyond the experience of the actual criminal event, to the lack of justice and support offered by a generally hostile environment with no safety nets for those in need:

**Who ever you report it to, you don't come back with a satisfactory answer. Your family will tell you to get on with life, a lot worse could happen. There is no time and money to go to court all the time. We don't have local centres of justice, rehabilitation and psychological help. These facilities are expensive, alienating, white, far away and often incomprehensible.**

Victimisation experiences, not only related to crime, have built up to such an extent that the respondents appear to no longer waste their energy dealing with attitudes and events which for whatever reason, may result in retaliation rather than any form of retribution.

Another element of the respondents' definitions of crime, revolves around the acceptance and justification of various forms of crimes and types of people who are victimised. It was often mentioned that theft by residents in Alex, especially from

whites and the rich, was permissible – especially if the criminal act was motivated by poverty and hunger. This tolerance of crime is reinforced by some of the sloganeering around redistribution of wealth, provided that the victim of course, is one of the "haves".

Opposition to crime can thus be seen to take on various forms, and it can allow for that opposition to be contradicted depending on the form of crime and on who the victim is.

Another effect of this "culture of violence" is that the climate of sanctioning crime and violence has resulted in the deliberate adoption of corrupt and criminal behaviour.

The use of violence was seen by some of the respondents as representing a "status symbol". A potent symbol of power and prestige, used by certain people for psychological as well as financial self gain.

**Most criminals feel superior to the working class because they make money easily. They say:**

**"People [criminals] are not working, horses [the working class] are", as they boast in the shebeens, wearing their expensive necklaces and clothing that others cannot buy. People have now a certain spirit, a certain mind which says that now we are just going to fight and do what we want to get where we want. People want strength and freedom. They kill to show how strong they are. If you don't have a stab wound you are not mature. Not seen as a "get" [gent] or**

**an "outjie". People do this to get a name, so that others will be afraid of them, so that they can become notorious.**

- Whilst no estimates are available, the economic impact of violent crime has been enormous, both in terms of the loss of property, possessions and family members, as well as the loss of employment and economic productivity.

The respondents did not appear to be optimistic about the future. Faith in political solutions that are not achieved at the cost of irreparable damage to individual and community life was slim. Some of the respondents seemed to be unable to look beyond the fear, hatred, violence, spiritual and structural destabilisation which has wreaked such havoc in their lives. Many felt that the people of Alex would survive, the only real question is what can be done to improve the quality of that survival.

#### Note:

<sup>1</sup> Criminal murder which is not associated with political violence has escalated sharply since 1990, with 15 109 murders reported in 1990 – an increase of 29% compared to the 1989 figure. This is roughly 42 murders per day, six times more than 100 000 of the population than the rate for the United States, which is allegedly the most violent country in the western world. Thus there are approximately 49 murders per 100 000 of the South African population and 8-9 per 100 000 Americans (*The Star*, 28 January 1991.)

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