



**GLOBAL
INITIATIVE**
AGAINST TRANSNATIONAL
ORGANIZED CRIME

BALLOTS AND BULLETS

TARGETED KILLINGS AND
SOUTH AFRICA'S 2026
LOCAL GOVERNMENT
ELECTIONS

Julian Rademeyer

OCTOBER 2026

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The author would like to thank Mark Shaw, Vanja Petrovic and Michael McLaggan for their support and contributions to the report.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Julian Rademeyer is a senior adviser to the Global Initiative Against Transnational Organized Crime. He previously served as the organization's Director for East and Southern Africa. He is a former investigative journalist and author of the book *Killing for Profit: Exposing the Illegal Rhino Horn Trade* (2012).

© 2026 Global Initiative Against Transnational Organized Crime.
All rights reserved.

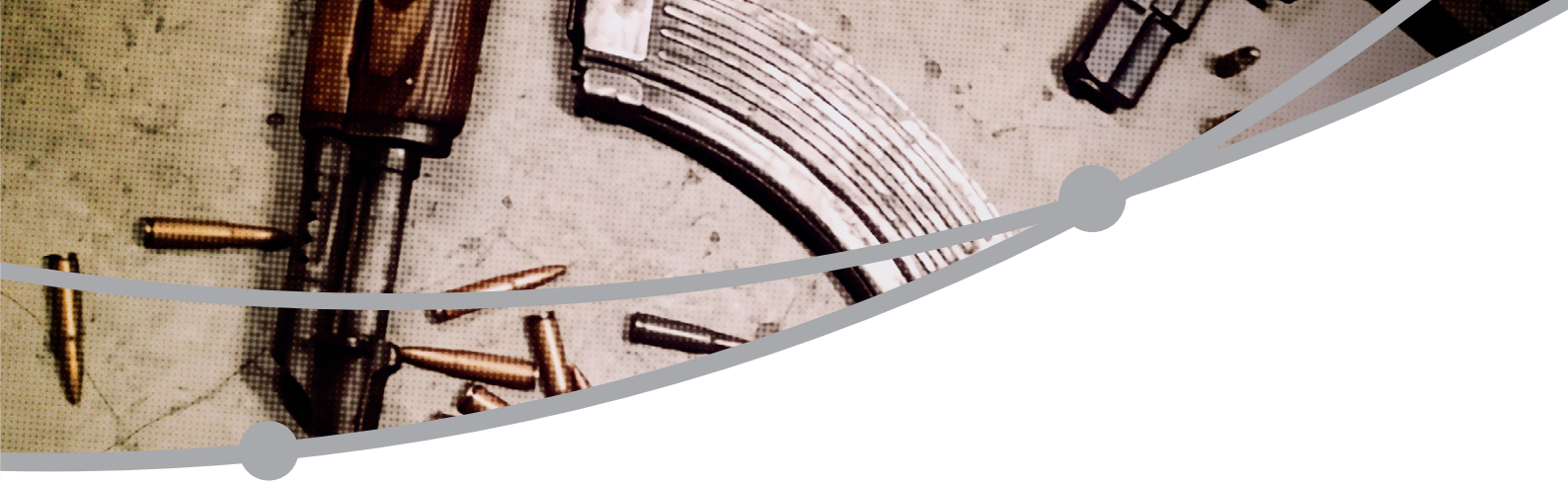
No part of this publication may be reproduced or transmitted in any form or by any means without permission in writing from the Global Initiative.

Cover: An AK-47 assault rifle and a 9mm pistol recovered by police during the arrest of a suspected hitman in KwaZulu-Natal.
Photo: South African Police Service

Please direct inquiries to:
The Global Initiative Against Transnational Organized Crime
Avenue de France 23
Geneva, CH-1202
Switzerland
www.globalinitiative.net

CONTENTS

- Executive summary 1
- The 2026 elections and the market for murder 3
 - Methodology: how the database was refined in 2026 7
 - Established, probable and possible: grading the evidence 8
- A quarter-century of contract murder 10
 - The Moerane Commission: findings without follow-through 11
- Political killings: the 2026 picture 12
- Organized crime-related hits in 2026 14
- New targets 17
- Minibus taxi-related killings in 2026 19
- Personal hits in 2026 21
- Mass killings linked to criminal markets 23
- Conclusion 26
- Notes 27



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

At least 43 people have been murdered in suspected political assassinations in South Africa since the beginning of the year, as the country prepares for local government elections in November.¹ By comparison, the Global Initiative Against Transnational Organized Crime (GI-TOC) recorded 23 political killings during the same period in 2025. The bloodiest period so far was the first voter registration weekend of 20–21 June, when six political campaigners were shot dead in targeted attacks across four provinces.

This report assesses the main patterns in targeted killings in the first nine months of 2026. Political killings and mass killings are counted to 30 September. While it focuses primarily on suspected political assassinations, it also places them within the wider context of organized crime hits, minibus taxi-related murders, personal/domestic murder-for-hire cases and mass murders linked to criminal markets.

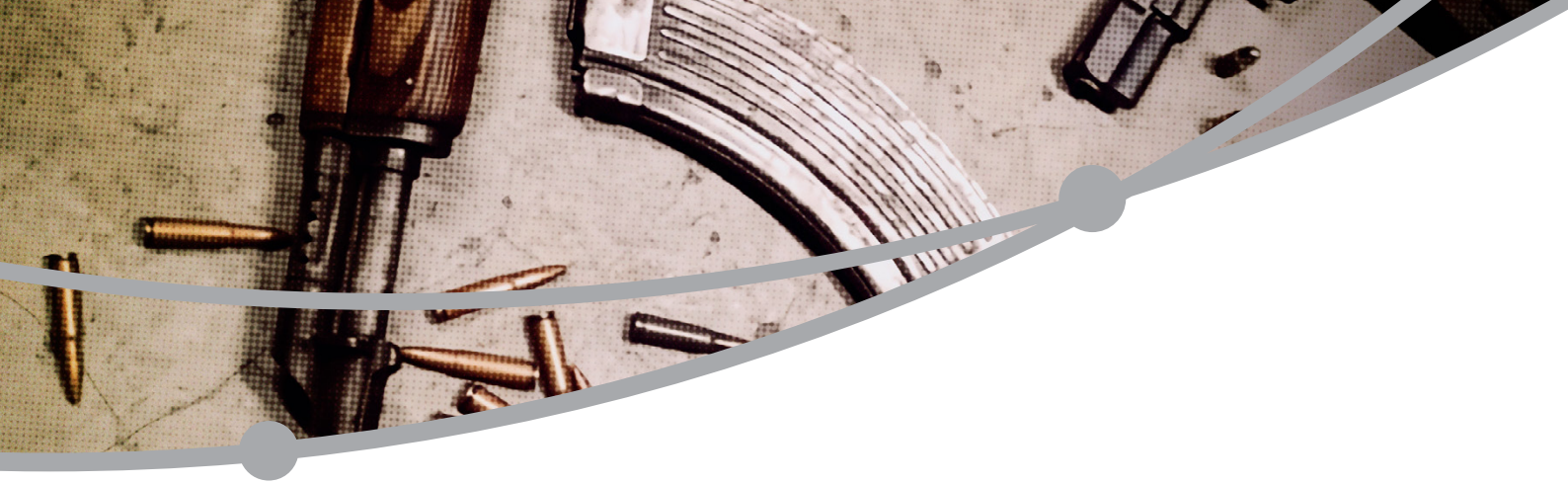
By 30 September, the GI-TOC assassinations database had recorded 205 targeted-killing incidents for 2026 (see the next section for how the data is compiled).² The figures point to a significantly higher-risk period before the polls. A number of developments warrant closer attention:

- Political assassinations increased ahead of the 2026 local government elections. The database records a total of 45 political attacks between 1 January and 30 September 2026, in which at least 43 people were killed. This is already higher than the full-year political totals for the 2021 municipal election year (30), the 2024 national election year (33) and 2025 (31), and already exceeds the previous highest annual figures in the monitoring series since 2015 – 2019 (42) and 2022 (40) – with the highest-risk months still ahead as contests for political power gather pace.
- Of the total number of political attacks recorded in the database, 41 people were killed in 36 attacks directed at political party officials, ward councillors, members of civic organizations and movements, and traditional leadership (including Sinovuyo Dyokwe, a Democratic Alliance [DA] candidate, whose killing the database records as organized crime).
- The June 2026 voter registration weekend was the year's deadliest for political hits. June recorded 40 incidents across all assassination categories, including 12 political cases. The 20–21 June registration weekend was the bloodiest point, with five political deaths in four provinces.
- Organized crime hits remain the largest category. The database records 78 organized crime incidents in the first nine months of 2026, exceeding the 44 recorded in the whole of 2025. Thirty-three were in the Western Cape province, many linked to gang violence.

- Justice-sector targets are a significant concern. Fourteen incidents involved people linked to the justice system, including police officers, witnesses, whistle-blowers and an attorney. These attacks undermine the criminal justice system and weaken investigations, prosecutions and public confidence in the state.
- Educators are emerging as targets. Five attacks on school staff in the first nine months of 2026, three of them fatal, bear the marks of a hit. They followed three fatal attacks, on principals and a deputy principal, in the last two months of 2025. No motive has been recorded for most of the killings, although some of them may be linked to disputes and contestation over posts inside the schools.
- Minibus taxi-related assassinations are lower than past peaks but remain a key vector for violence. The database records 45 taxi incidents in the first nine months of 2026, but because it relies on press reporting, media statements and other open sources, this is probably an undercount. The count is below the 2018 peak, but taxi-sector violence still matters because parts of the industry have supplied firearms and experienced shooters for political and organized crime hits.
- Personal hits are the smallest category. Seven personal-hit incidents have been recorded so far, but that figure may change as unresolved cases, or cases that appear at face value to have other motives, move into specific categories when more evidence becomes available.
- Mass killings linked to criminal markets are being tracked separately and pose a significant and growing state security concern. The GI-TOC recorded 45 such incidents between 1 January and 30 September 2026, in which at least 210 people were killed and at least 79 wounded. Twenty-six were in the Western Cape, 24 in the Cape Town metropolitan municipality. Where a market could be identified, most are linked to gangs, taxi conflict, illegal mining or extortion.



Dora's Tavern in Wedela, near Carletonville, the scene of a mass shooting on 26 September 2026 that left 18 people dead and 14 injured, making it the deadliest attack recorded during the reporting period. The incident was reportedly linked to illegal mining. © Emmanuel Croset/AFP via Getty Images



THE 2026 ELECTIONS AND THE MARKET FOR MURDER

Between the evening of Saturday 20 June 2026 and the early hours of Sunday 21 June, gunmen hunted down and killed five political party candidates and campaigners in the provinces of the Eastern Cape, Western Cape, Gauteng and KwaZulu-Natal.

Sicelo Mleve, an African National Congress (ANC) ward councillor (local government representative), was shot dead in his ward office in Zwide, Gqeberha, in the Eastern Cape. Leon Ngcikwe, a ward candidate for the Build One South Africa party, was murdered after dropping off activists in Gugulethu, Cape Town. Mozwakhile Zungu and Siyabonga Mabaso, both uMkhonto weSizwe (MK) Party members, were killed after leaving a voter registration site in Bekkersdal on the West Rand in Gauteng. Vukani Majosi, an ANC branch executive member, was killed outside his home in Welbedacht, near Chatsworth, south of Durban.³

That same evening, Sinovuyo Dyokwe, a DA ward candidate, was shot dead on Mnandi Street in Dunoon, Cape Town, after a day of registration work. Before her murder, Dyokwe had reported receiving threats from extortionists. The alleged mastermind behind the killing has been charged with murder and extortion. Two assailants remain at large. (The murder is classified in the database as organized crime-related, rather than political, due to the possible extortion motive.⁴)

In total, seven people were killed in six recorded incidents that weekend, among them a police sergeant, Mohlomla Tusani, shot dead in Khayelitsha in Cape Town on 21 June. Five of those deaths are recorded as political.

Three days later, four MK Party members were shot dead in two attacks in KwaZulu-Natal. Three of them, Slindile Ntshangase, Thandeka Ntshangase and Ncamsile Luthuli, were killed together at a home in Ndwedwe, in the iLembe district, after a party meeting; the fourth, Mthokozisi Cele, was shot dead in Ward 84, Umlazi. A third attack the same day wounded the party's iLembe district secretary, Zanele Mbhamali, and her husband; the South African Police Service Political Killings Task Team later arrested a suspect.⁵

Fatal attacks on party, civic/movement and traditional leaders, 2026

Killings of people affiliated to political parties, civic movements and traditional leadership recorded in the GI-TOC assassinations database between 1 January and 30 September 2026.

36

ATTACKS

42

PEOPLE KILLED

7

PROVINCES

PARTY/MOVEMENT	KILLED
● African National Congress (ANC)	13
● uMkhonto weSizwe (MK) Party	8
● Civic/movement	7
● Economic Freedom Fighters (EFF)	2
● Democratic Alliance (DA)	2
● Inkatha Freedom Party (IFP)	3
● Build One South Africa (BOSA)	1
● Traditional leadership	6

- 1 **3 Feb • Lazola Gungxe** • *Nyanga (Old Crossroads), Cape Town, Western Cape*
ANC • Proportional representative councillor, City of Cape Town
Shot outside a community hall at Old Crossroads after a public meeting. A 26-year-old suspect was arrested in March.
- 2 **12 Feb • Two unnamed community activists** • *Khuma, North West*
Civic/movement • Community activists
Shot during a protest hours after telling the North West legislature speaker that an official had allegedly sent hitmen after them. Two outlets place the deaths on 12 February; neither names the men.
- 3 **12 Feb • Zweli 'Khabazela' Mkhize** • *eNkanini, Allandale, Midrand, Gauteng*
Civic/movement • Abahlali baseMjondolo treasurer
Shot in broad daylight by two gunmen at the eNkanini land occupation. He had reported death threats over his opposition to the illegal sale of plots. UN experts condemned the killing.
- 4 **13 Feb • Molefi Sello** • *Voortrekker Street, Klerksdorp, North West*
ANC • Ward 20 councillor, Matlosana
Stabbed in the neck outside a tavern (drinking establishment) at about 5 am; a suspect handed himself in. The state's case alleges he was killed over a tender he had not awarded; the defence claims self-defence.
- 5 **21 Feb • Sipho Simiso Dlamini** • *Umgababa, eThekweni, KwaZulu-Natal*
ANC • Ward 67 branch convener
Night ambush on his vehicle; two fellow occupants were wounded. A traditional leader disputes a political motive.
- 6 **2 Mar • Khosi Erick Ntikedzeni Makhuvha** • *Ha-Makhuvha, Limpopo*
Traditional leadership • Senior traditional leader, Ndarieni
Two masked gunmen stormed his home at midnight; his daughter was wounded. The Tshivhase kingdom blames a chieftainship dispute; police recorded robbery elements.
- 7 **8 Mar • Induna Aaron Dlungwane** • *eNdulwini, Bulwer, KwaZulu-Natal*
Traditional leadership • Headman, eMakhuzeni traditional community
Shot at his homestead at night after going out to investigate footsteps. His inkosi (chief) links it to his speaking out on stock theft.
- 8 **4 May • Thumeka Bikwana** • *Tshatshu, Cacadu, Eastern Cape*
ANC • MMC, Chris Hani District Municipality
Shot in the head at her Tshatshu home overnight; her body was found the next morning while her driver waited outside. Motive unknown.
- 9 **20 May • Thato 'Senganga' Molosankwe** • *Lomanyaneng, North West*
Civic/movement • Anti-crime activist
Shot before dawn. Two suspects were arrested in July, linked to a syndicate; police motive remains open.
- 10 **27 May • Daniel Letsie Makhabe** • *Ikageng, Potchefstroom, North West*
Civic/movement • Shack-dwellers' organizer
Activists say 16 shots were fired at him outside his Ikageng home.



- 11 **28 May • Mbuso Mzwandile Mthimkhulu** • *Rand West City, Bekkersdal, Gauteng*
IFP • Proportional representative councillor
Shot during a community meeting. Three others were wounded.
- 12 **13 Jun • Monicca Dube** • *Wallmannsthal, Tshwane, Gauteng*
EFF • Region 2 secretary and election coordinator
Shot in the head at her home in front of her children; her attackers came in through a window. She had survived being shot 11 times in February. A suspect was arrested by the Political Killings Task Team in July after her daughter recognized him at a taxi rank.
- 13 **13 Jun • Wonele Gontshi** • *Qumbu, Eastern Cape*
ANC • Branch elections coordinator
Shot a day after a branch meeting endorsed the man wounded beside him.
- 14 **14 Jun • Mzwakhe Dlamini** • *Dunoon, Cape Town, Western Cape*
MK Party • Party activist
Reported shot in Dunoon six days before a by-election candidate was killed in the same area. Passing mentions only; the date is derived, not stated.
- 15 **June (date not reported) • Thembaletu Zondo** • *Njengabantu, near Greytown, KwaZulu-Natal*
DA • Ward 3 councillor candidate, Okhahlamba
Found stabbed and dumped outside his homestead gate. The DA says it does not know whether the murder was political.
- 16 **20 Jun • Leon Ngcikwe** • *Gugulethu, Cape Town, Western Cape*
BOSA • Ward candidate
Shot after dropping off party activists. Declared dead at hospital.
- 17 **20 Jun • Sinovuyo Dyokwe** • *Dunoon, Cape Town, Western Cape*
DA • Ward 104 by-election candidate
Shot dead by two gunmen on her way home from a voter-registration station; reports differ on whether she was on foot or had just dropped off fellow DA volunteers from her vehicle. A 37-year-old man described by police as the mastermind was arrested on 25 July and charged with murder and extortion; two gunmen remain at large. In February she had sworn an affidavit saying she was in hiding after threats, which reports link to extortion demands.



- 18 20 Jun • Mozwakhile Zungu & Siyabonga Mabaso • X Section, Bekkersdal, Gauteng**
MK Party • Members
 Two men, 38 and 48, found shot near a voter-registration site. Police confirmed the bodies; only the party named them.
- 19 20 Jun • Vukani Majosi • Welbedacht, near Chatsworth, KwaZulu-Natal**
ANC • Branch executive member, Ward 77
 Shot outside his home after a family outing. The ANC's eThekweni regional coordinator confirmed the killing.
- 20 20 Jun • Siculo Mleve • Zwide, Gqeberha, Eastern Cape**
ANC • Ward 27 councillor, Nelson Mandela Bay
 Gunmen stormed his Zwide ward office. Two men have been charged.
- 21 23 Jun • Slindile 'Pretty Girl' Ntshangase, Thandeka Adelaide Ntshangase & Ncamsile Luthuli • Gandhi Zone, Ndwedwe, KwaZulu-Natal**
MK Party • Three women
 Shot at a home in the Gandhi Zone shortly after returning from a party meeting. No corroborating outlet.
- 22 23 Jun • Mthokozisi 'Redondo' Cele • Umlazi, KwaZulu-Natal**
MK Party • Member, Ward 84
 Reported killed in the same wave of attacks on MK Party members. Single outlet.
- 23 2 Jul • Mthobisi Gasa • Isipingo, eThekweni, KwaZulu-Natal**
Civic/movement • March and March; municipal worker
 Shot on duty by three gunmen at the corner of Kajee and Hillview roads. Police have established no motive.
- 24 4 Jul • Andile Mvuyelwa Somgxada • Greenfields, Ekurhuleni, Gauteng**
Civic/movement • March and March Gauteng leader
 Shot outside his home at Greenfields; died in hospital five days later.

MONTH	ATTACKS	KILLED
February	5	6
March	2	2
May	4	4
June	11	14
July	6	6
August	6	7
September	2	3

- 25 9 Jul • Shaun Shakatsa Matyeke • Mantangaleni, Calcutta precinct, Mpumalanga**
ANC • Ward 3 secretary, Mkhuhlu
 Found shot inside a car at Mantangaleni. Three days later four people were killed in the same policing precinct.
- 26 10 Jul • Aaron Makola • Delmas, Mpumalanga**
EFF • Member
 Reported missing from Bronkhorstspuit on 10 July; the Political Killings Task Team found his body dumped in bushes near Delmas on 30 July. Three men were arrested and charged with murder, kidnapping and robbery.
- 27 30 Jul • Induna Patrick Mxolisi Mwelase • Inadi, Sweetwaters, Pietermaritzburg, KwaZulu-Natal**
Traditional leadership • Induna, Inadi
 Shot in Inadi, Sweetwaters, on 30 July and died of his injuries on 15 August. His wife was shot dead at the family home three days after the attack on him. A 30-year-old suspect, arrested in Imbali after an intelligence-driven investigation into both shootings, has appeared in the Pietermaritzburg Magistrate's Court.
- 28 31 Jul • Douglas 'Mfene' Thusini • K Section, KwaMashu, KwaZulu-Natal**
MK Party • Ward 41 leader, KwaMashu
 Shot at his gate after an anti-spaza-shop campaign in Ntuzuma. The Political Killings Task Team is investigating; police see no established link to the campaign.
- 29 2 Aug • Thandekile Mwelase • Inadi, Sweetwaters, Pietermaritzburg, KwaZulu-Natal**
Traditional leadership • Wife of Induna Mwelase
 Shot dead by unknown men at the family home three days after the attack on her husband. Police are investigating whether the two shootings are linked; a man has been arrested in connection with both.
- 30 6 Aug • Sibusiso 'Khekhe' Khwela • Klaarwater, KwaZulu-Natal**
ANC • Ward 17 councillor, eThekweni
 A gunman posing as someone needing help shot him outside his office. The Political Killings Task Team is investigating.
- 31 7 Aug • Nelisile Xolo • Alfred Nzo district, Eastern Cape**
ANC • Branch chair; South African Communist Party district treasurer
 Ambushed at night and shot by an unknown gunman; police are investigating the motive.
- 32 19 Aug • Aubrey Ndoda Tsengwa • Joodse Kamp, Knysna**
ANC • Ward councillor; former Knysna mayor
 Shot in the head and upper body while driving in Ngxalo Street; a passenger was wounded. Four suspects have appeared in court.
- 33 20 Aug • Mandla Matiwane & Mandla Tyololo • Bongani, Knysna**
ANC • Former ward councillor; taxi association leader
 Shot in a vehicle the night after Tsengwa was killed. Both were ANC members; police are probing links between the two attacks and have established no motive.
- 34 27 Aug • Khethelo Mdluli • oPhindweni, Gingindlovu, KwaZulu-Natal**
IFP • Proportional representative councillor; Ward 17 candidate, uMlalazi
 Shot in front of his children at his home on the evening of 27 August; died of his injuries at Ngwelezane Hospital on 31 August. The IFP has called for the Political Killings Task Team to investigate his killing together with that of a second IFP ward candidate, Lucky Sokhela, shot dead on 1 September.
- 35 1 Sep • Lucky Sokhela • Swayimane, uMshwathi, KwaZulu-Natal**
IFP • Ward 8 councillor candidate, uMshwathi
 Shot dead at his home on the afternoon of 1 September after gunmen followed him there; he had survived an earlier attack. The IFP says the motive is unknown and has asked the Political Killings Task Team to investigate.
- 36 4 Sep • Nkosi Mzonke Gudulwandle Mazamisa & Nkosikazi Nojongile Eleonor Mazamisa • Nqabarha, Willowvale, Eastern Cape**
Traditional leadership • Nkosi, Nqabarha, and his mother
 Gunmen opened fire at the Great Place and fled; a woman of 50 was wounded. The AmaXhosa king called it 'the most despicable tragedy to befall the Xhosa Kingdom'. No arrests have been made so far.

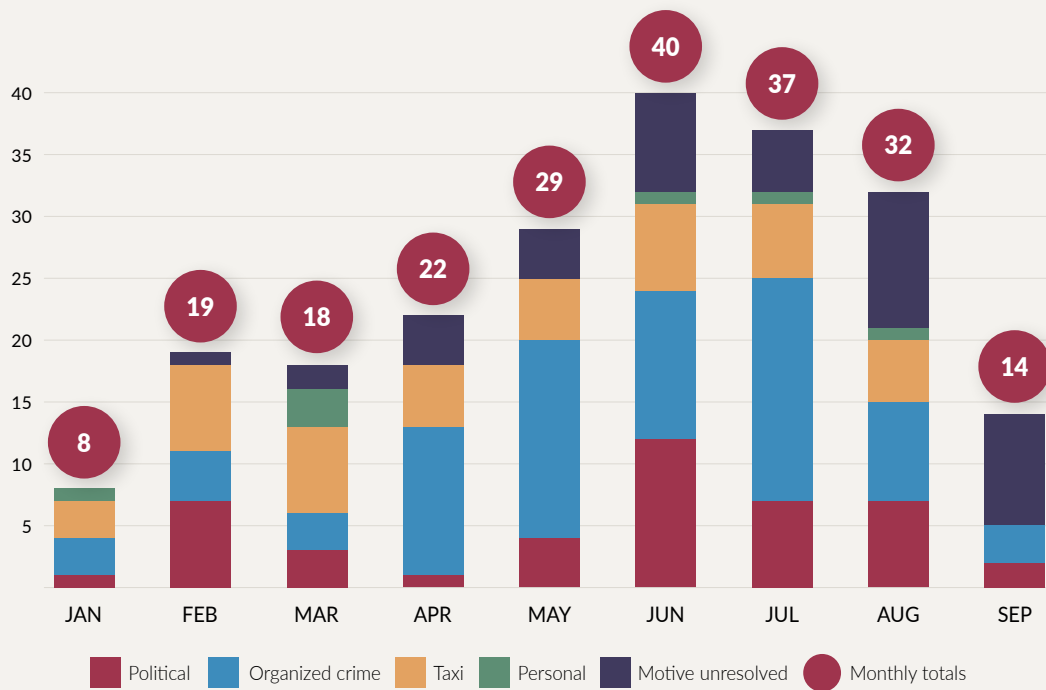


FIGURE 1 Incidents recorded in the GI-TOC assassinations database, 1 January–30 September 2026, by month and category.

SOURCE: GI-TOC assassinations database

June was the deadliest month for political killings, accounting for 12 of the 45 political incidents recorded to 30 September, and the worst month overall, with 40 incidents across all categories against July's 37 (see Figure 1). Killings in 2026 have followed key election mobilization points: branch meetings, candidate selection and voter registration drives. Wonele Gontshi, an ANC branch elections coordinator in Qumbu in the Eastern Cape, was shot a day after a branch meeting. Monicca Dube, an Economic Freedom Fighters (EFF) regional secretary in Tshwane in Gauteng, was shot dead in her home months after surviving an earlier attack in which she was shot several times. In an interview, her daughter, who witnessed the murder, described her mother's 'calculated execution' by gunmen who shot her in the face and abdomen after taunting her about her failure to take their 'threats' seriously.⁶

By 30 September, the database had recorded 205 incidents for 2026. In 184 cases, at least one person was killed. Fourteen were attempted hits in which the target survived, and seven were plots stopped before an attack took place. The database records 81 incidents over the same period of 2025. Some of the difference is due to more robust monitoring implemented in 2026, which is explained in the methodology section. However, the political category is probably more detailed and accurate than other categories because the victims' profiles are more likely to garner media attention.

Methodology: how the database was refined in 2026

The GI-TOC has tracked hits and assassinations in South Africa since 2000.⁷ The database uses a clear working definition: there must be a specific target, and some form of arrangement between the person who ordered the attack and the person who carried it out. That arrangement may involve money or another benefit.⁸ An incident is added when the available evidence appears to support this definition. This can include police or court statements, statements by the victim's family in a small number of cases, media reporting, or facts that strongly show the attack was targeted and arranged.⁹ Each incident is categorized according to its probable motive: political, taxi-related, organized crime or personal. Attempted and thwarted hits are also recorded. Most cases are found through regular media monitoring, supported by court records and official media statements. It is not a perfect science, and the database almost certainly undercounts the true number of incidents.

Definitions used in this report

Assassination (hit, contract killing, targeted killing). The GI-TOC uses these terms interchangeably. A hit is 'an interaction between one or more persons, in which one person solicits another person to have a third person or persons killed for some form of gain, monetary or otherwise'. Two things must be present: a specific target and an arrangement between the person who wanted the killing and the person who carried it out. The gain need not be money. Attempted hits, where the target survived, and thwarted hits, where the plot was stopped before an attack, are counted in the same series as killings.¹⁰

Political. The targeted killing of 'politicians, councillors, public servants and administrators, political activists, whistleblowers and other members of civil society for ideological or strategic reasons'. The category turns on the victim's office or public role and the purpose of the attack, not on party membership. It includes municipal officials and whistleblowers killed over governance or procurement, and, since 2026, traditional leaders such as *izinduna* (headmen) and *amakhosi* (chiefs), whose office is treated as political.

Organized crime. Killings that use 'targeted violence to influence a certain economic outcome', usually inside the criminal economy. Typical victims are drug dealers, gang leaders, extortion targets, rival operators and the police officers, witnesses and lawyers who threaten a criminal enterprise or a prosecution.

Taxi industry-related. South Africa's minibus taxi industry is a dominant form of public transport and has a long history of violent disputes. Hits target taxi bosses, taxi drivers and members of taxi association committees, usually over lucrative routes, ranks and power struggles inside associations. The GI-TOC records these separately from organized crime because of their number and their distinct dynamics.

Personal. Killings arranged 'for personal reasons, usually as a result of relationship dynamics', or for an insurance payout. Typical cases involve spouses, partners, relatives and love triangles.

Mass killings linked to criminal markets. A mass killing is the intentional killing of three or more people, not counting any attacker, in a single incident or over a short time-frame, where the attack is linked, or suspected to be linked, to a criminal market such as gangs, extortion, illegal mining or the taxi industry. Most are not assassinations, because no single person was the designated target. Where a specific person was targeted and others were killed alongside them, the incident appears in both series.¹¹

Motive. Each incident carries one primary category, assigned by the dominant motive rather than by who the victim was. A councillor killed in a domestic dispute is recorded as personal. Where no source states a motive, the incident is left unresolved rather than assigned by assumption. ■

Some cases are missed because they happen in areas with little media coverage, are made to look like robberies or other crimes, or are identified as contract killings only after police investigations or later in court.¹² In other instances, motives can be obscured: for example, a political figure with business interests in the taxi industry is assassinated or, as illustrated above, has been threatened by extortionists.

Importantly, the data from 2026 only covers a partial year up to the end of September. It is likely that incident records will increase before the end of the year. Due to the fact that new details and new cases emerge, sometimes days or weeks after the event, the September tally will change and will be updated in our final year totals.

The 2026 dataset also shows the limits of open-source monitoring. Of the 205 incidents recorded so far, 105 (51%) rest on a single source. Attempted and thwarted hits account for 21 (10%) of the 205 cases, compared with 11 (8%) of 137 cases in the whole of 2025. These are probably the most undercounted outcomes because a failed or disrupted attack usually becomes known only when the police, a political party or another source names it publicly. Motive also remains uncertain in 44 incidents (20%) because no available article states one.

Personal hits are the category most likely to be missed, especially when killings are disguised as robberies or vehicle hijackings. Motives often surface years later. Political hits are the least likely to be missed because the victims' public profiles tend to attract more reporting.

In 2026, the database was updated, refined and redesigned more substantially than in any previous year. Four changes are important when reading this report:

- First, with the application of large language models and the construction of a tracking system and analytical dashboard, monitoring became continuous. Instead of compiling and vetting cases annually, the database now checks South African media and government and political party websites daily against an extensive list of sources, links each incident to its source information, and records later changes in an audit trail for manual verification.
- Second, in August 2026 the team manually checked all 2026 cases once more for inconsistencies against the written methodology. The review went back to the original articles rather than relying on summaries. It merged duplicate records, attached court reports to the original cases instead of counting them as new incidents, and removed cases that did not meet the definition.¹³
- Third, an automated fact-check audit reviewed every 2026 incident against open web sources. We also conducted manual, line-by-line database visual checks.
- Fourth, we added new fields to capture the information the methodology required. These include the outcome of an attack, whether a victim worked in the justice system or not, and a separate class for mass killings linked to organized crime, discussed later in this report.¹⁴

Established, probable and possible: grading the evidence

For this report, every incident requires three independent assessments. The first is certainty that the incident was a hit. An established hit meets the working definition on strong evidence: official or court confirmation, charges linked to conspiracy or premeditated murder, evidence of payment, or the clear hallmarks of a commissioned attack, reported by at least two independent sources. A probable hit shows some hallmarks of a targeted, arranged attack – a designated victim, shooters who arrive and leave quickly, nothing stolen, earlier threats – but rests on thinner evidence, typically a single checked

source. A possible hit is retained because the circumstances warrant tracking, but the true nature of the event, or its details, cannot yet be corroborated. In most cases, the killing itself is beyond doubt; what is uncertain is whether it was commissioned. A case can therefore be a certain homicide and only a possible assassination.

The second requirement is corroboration, a structural property of the record rather than a judgment: corroborated (two or more independent sources, or official or court confirmation); single origin (one checked outlet, or a police, family or party statement); and incident reports awaiting sources. The two axes are related but deliberately distinct. Some incidents this year are corroborated as events by multiple sources yet remain only probable hits because the commissioned character of the attack is still in question; conversely, a single-origin record can describe an unmistakable contract killing.

The third is motive. Motive is assessed separately and is recorded only where the evidence supports it. An incident can be an established hit with an unknown motive, and a probable hit with a well-evidenced one.

Two caveats are important when comparing 2026 with earlier years. First, the 2026 data was collected more intensively than in previous years. Raw year-on-year totals may therefore make the increase look larger than it is. For this reason, this report uses the political category for the clearest comparisons because monitoring has been most consistent there. Second, earlier years placed every assassination case into one of four motive categories. In 2026, 35 cases are listed as unresolved because the evidence does not yet support a motive.

A QUARTER-CENTURY OF CONTRACT MURDER

The database now contains more than 2 500 incidents recorded since 2000.¹⁵ The long-term pattern that emerges is clear. Taxi-industry violence drove the first peak in the mid-2000s. The numbers then fell in 2010–2012, before rising again from about 2015. The highest point was in 2018, with 211 incidents (see Figure 2). Reporting in May 2024, the GI-TOC recorded a 108% rise in targeted killings over the preceding decade.¹⁶ The 141 incidents recorded in 2022 were more than triple the 46 recorded in 2012. The totals for 2024 (130) and 2025 (137) were lower, but still far above the pre-2015 level.¹⁷

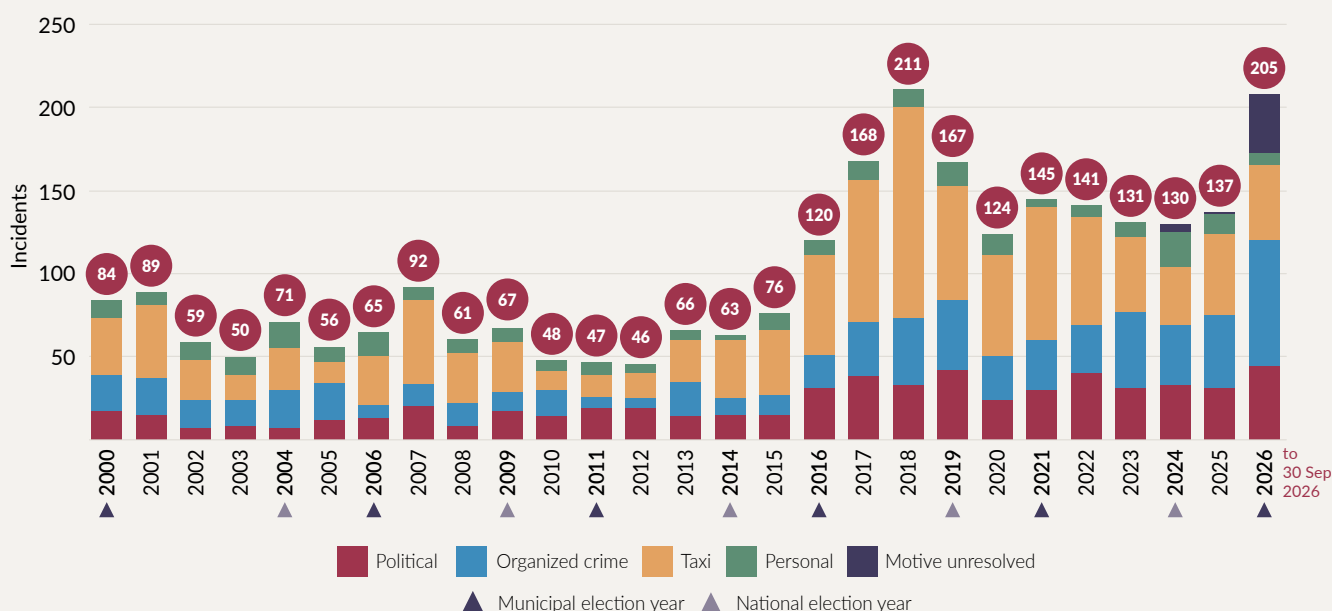


FIGURE 2 Targeted killings in South Africa, 2000–2026, by category.

NOTES: 2000–2023 as published; 2024–2025 from the annual monitoring datasets; 2026 covers 1 January–30 September 2026. Category values for individual years may differ slightly from earlier GI-TOC publications, as the dataset is updated retrospectively.

SOURCE: GI-TOC assassinations database

Election years concentrate political killings. From 2000 to 2023, the database recorded 191 political assassination cases in election years. Municipal election years accounted for 110 of them (58%), while national election years accounted for 81 (42%).¹⁸ The pattern has become clearer over time. Political murders in municipal election years stayed below 20 until 2011 (17 in 2000, 13 in 2006 and 19 in 2011). Thereafter they rose sharply, to 31 in 2016, 30 in 2021 and 45 so far in 2026, the highest political count to date.

In the four national election years up to 2019, killings rose after the vote, as people fought over the positions the election had opened up.¹⁹ In municipal politics, the prize is often power and wealth rather than ideology. A ward councillor's post brings a salary, power, influence over housing lists and jobs, access to contracts, and proximity to municipal procurement. The Moerane Commission of Inquiry mapped these dynamics in 2018. Its findings, and their fate, are discussed below.²⁰

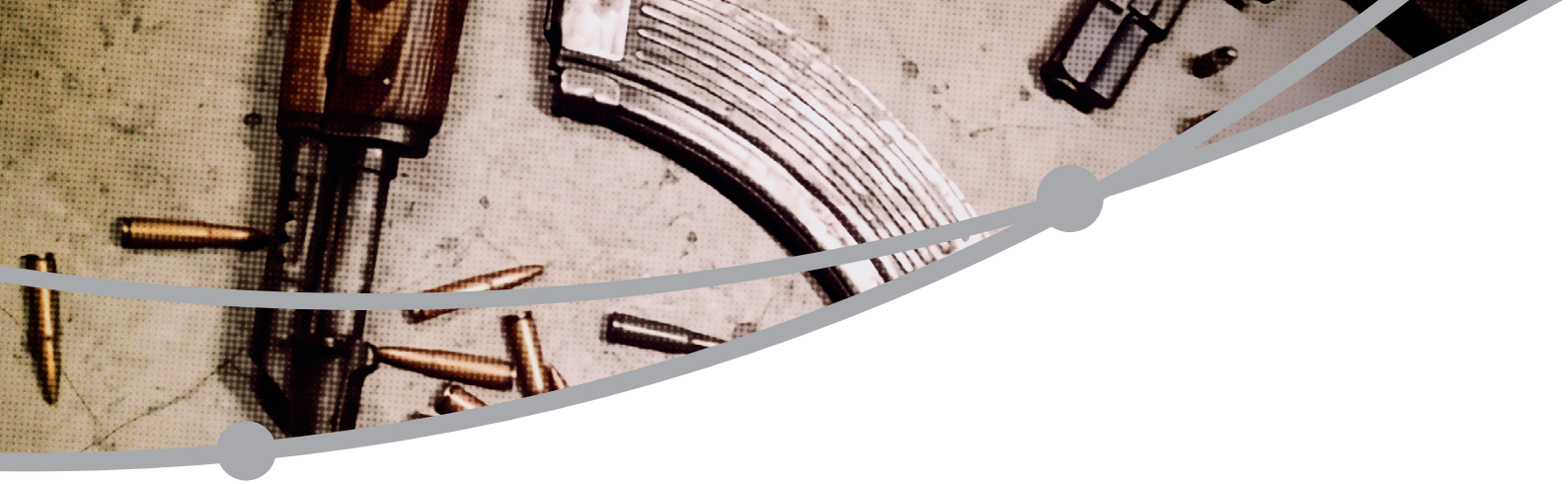
The Moerane Commission: findings without follow-through

The Moerane Commission, appointed by the KwaZulu-Natal premier in October 2016 and chaired by advocate Marumo Moerane, spent almost two years examining the murder of political figures in the province. Its report, released in September 2018, found overwhelming evidence that access to resources through the tender system was a primary cause of political killings, describing a procurement system manipulated and exploited 'by politicians and public officials in collusion with businesspeople'. It also found that criminal elements were being recruited by politicians to achieve political ends, that state security institutions were being manipulated for political purposes, and that weaknesses in Crime Intelligence, the South African Police Service's domestic intelligence division, had undermined both the prevention and the resolution of these murders.²¹

In hindsight, the commission's recommendations – largely ignored – were remarkably prescient of the situation confronting South Africa today. In order to stop the slaughter, the commission said, political parties 'must take responsibility for the violent competition between their members for political positions and power', must discipline members whose conduct encourages violence, and must report members implicated in killings to the law enforcement authorities. The state was told to depoliticize and professionalize the public service, end the deployment of unqualified political appointees, vigorously investigate and prosecute tender corruption, depoliticize the criminal justice system, and improve police recruitment and training. Because the underlying causes were 'potentially present in all provinces', the commission asked that its report go to the cabinet so the recommendations could be implemented nationally.²²

Little of that has happened. The primary institutional response, the Political Killings Task Team, is discussed later in this report. The peace-making and dispute-resolution panel proposed for political conflicts was never established. In July 2025, seven years after the report was handed over, the media reported that its recommendations were 'gathering dust without being implemented', and the former premier who appointed the commission, Willies Mchunu, confirmed that the independent peace panel it proposed had never been set up.²³ The corruption and tender-driven local political economy the commission identified as fuelling killings remains intact.²⁴

KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa's second-most populous province, has experienced decades of political violence dating back to the transition from apartheid and subsequent competition within and between political parties. Of the 280 political assassination cases recorded between 2015 and April 2024, 158 were in KwaZulu-Natal.²⁵ Between 1 January and 30 September 2026, the province again recorded the most political attacks, 16 of the 45 in the database, with Gauteng close behind on 10. Several factors help explain this: a long history of political violence, a violent and heavily armed taxi industry that can supply hitmen, and unstable municipal politics where control of councils has often shifted between parties.



POLITICAL KILLINGS: THE 2026 PICTURE

The 45 political attacks recorded between 1 January and 30 September 2026 comprise 37 incidents in which at least 43 people were killed, six hits were attempted, and two plots were thwarted. Provincially, KwaZulu-Natal had the most incidents, with 16, followed by Gauteng with 10. The Eastern Cape, North West and the Western Cape had five each, Mpumalanga two and Limpopo one; a disrupted plot against a senior justice official was not attributed to a province.

Figure 3 sets the political cases alongside the other categories, province by province. The Western Cape, North West and Limpopo cases stand out because political killings have usually been rare there. The North West cluster includes two community activists shot dead at Khuma, near Klerksdorp, hours after complaining to the provincial legislature that a senior official had allegedly sent hitmen after them.²⁶

The range of targets has also widened. Victims this year include people linked to at least seven parties and civic groups: the ANC, including councillors Lazola Gungxe, Sicelo Mleve, Molefi Sello and Sibusiso Khwela; the MK Party, with at least eight members killed, including the Ndwedwe victims and KwaMashu activist Douglas Thusini; the EFF, including Monicca Dube and Aaron Makola; the Inkatha Freedom Party, including councillor Mbuso Mthimkhulu; the DA, including ward candidate Thembaletu Zondo; Build One South Africa; and civic movements such as Abahlali baseMjondolo and March and March.

Two traditional leaders were also killed early in the year: Khosi Ntikedzeni Makhuvha in Vhembe, whose royal house attributed the attack to a chieftainship dispute, and Induna Aaron Dlungwane near Bulwer, reportedly killed for speaking out against wrongdoing. A third, Induna Patrick Mwelase of Inadi near Pietermaritzburg, was shot on 30 July and died of his injuries on 15 August; his wife, Thandekile, was shot dead at their home three days after the attack on him. A fourth, Nkosi Mzonke Mazamisa, was shot dead with his mother, Nkosikazi Nojongile Mazamisa, at the Great Place in Nqabarha, outside Willowvale in the Eastern Cape, on 4 September. Abahlali baseMjondolo branch treasurer Zweli Mkhize was killed after refusing a R40 000 extortion demand, and March and March Gauteng leader Andile Somgxada was also killed.²⁷ For much of the past 26 years, political assassination was primarily an intra-ANC problem. Other parties averaged about two cases a year. That began to change around 2022, and the phenomenon has continued to widen to other parties, notably the MK Party, founded by former president Jacob Zuma in 2023.²⁸

Some victims were in roles that could expose wrongdoing or block corrupt deals. Mthimkhulu served on Rand West City's municipal public accounts committee and was known for opposing corruption.²⁹ Martha

Rantsofu, an Emfuleni municipal finance official, described as a whistle-blower in a bribery case, was shot dead in Vanderbijlpark, Gauteng in March.³⁰ In Kwaggafontein, Mpumalanga, prosecutor Mkhusele Ntamba turned back while driving to a court hearing in a prominent extortion case after receiving death threats, and the matter was struck from the roll. It was re-enrolled in the same court later that month.³¹ This fits a wider pattern of criminal governance: networks of politicians, officials and criminal actors using violence to control councils, contracts and appointments. In that system, assassination is used to remove rivals, whistle-blowers and people who can block access to money or power.³²

Contract killings can be arranged for shockingly low amounts. GI-TOC research published in 2021 put the cost at between US\$145 and US\$8 700 (about R2 350 to R141 000), with politically motivated and organized crime hits costing more.³³ In the December 2023 killing of uMngeni DA chief whip Nhlalayenza Ndlovu, court evidence put the price of the hit at R75 000.³⁴

The main state response is the Political Killings Task Team. In December 2024, then police minister Senzo Mchunu tried to disband it. That move led to public disclosures in July 2025 by KwaZulu-Natal police commissioner Nhlanhla Mkhwanazi and, later, to the Madlanga Commission's current inquiry into political interference in the police.³⁵ The task team remained in place, was confirmed as fully funded for the 2025/26 financial year, and its national and provincial deployments are now leading several of this year's highest-profile cases. These include the killings of Khwela, Thusini, Dube and Makola, as well as the voter registration weekend killings.³⁶

Arrests or charges have been reported in at least 12 of the 45 political incidents, among them the killings of Gungxe, Dube, Mleve, Makola, Sello and North West anti-crime activist Thato Molosankwe, and the attempted killing of Zanele Mbhamali. In most cases, no arrest has been reported. Even when gunmen are arrested, the people who ordered the killings are rarely identified. Only about 15% of murders in South Africa are solved, according to the Institute for Security Studies.³⁷

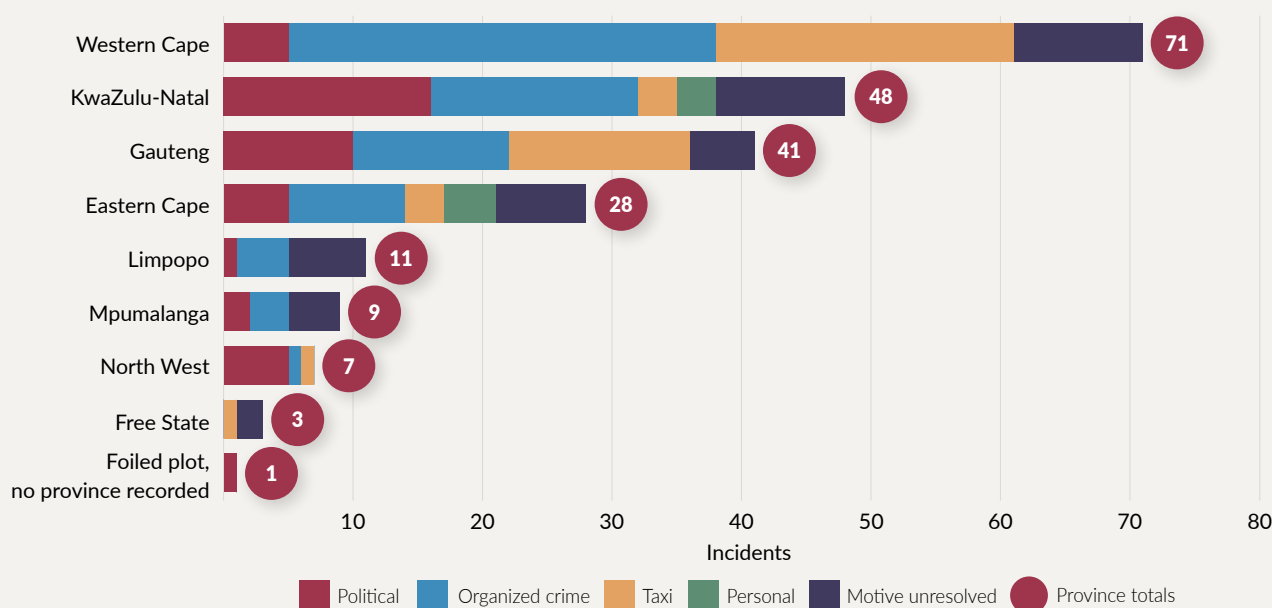
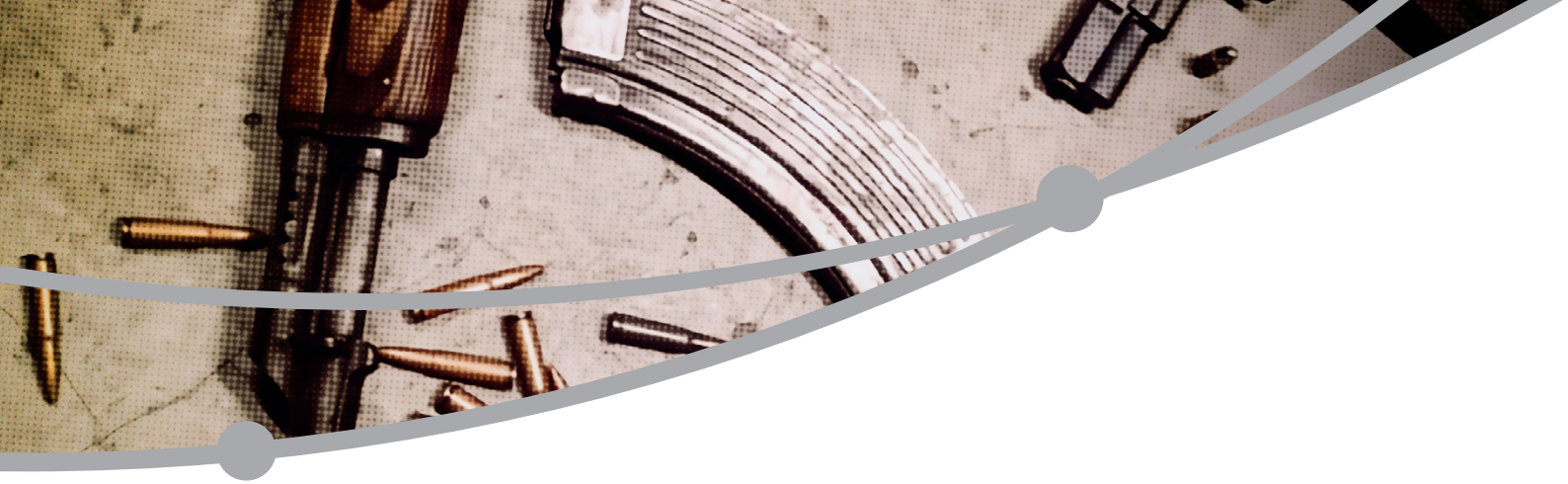


FIGURE 3 The 2026 assassination series by province and category, 1 January–30 September.

NOTE: 205 incidents across eight provinces were recorded; one incident has no province recorded and the Northern Cape had no incidents reported.

SOURCE: GI-TOC assassinations database, extract of 30 September 2026



ORGANIZED CRIME-RELATED HITS IN 2026

Organized crime hits are the largest category in 2026. The assassinations database records 78 incidents in the first nine months of the year, more than the 44 recorded in all of 2025. Thirty-three of the 78 were in the Western Cape (see Figure 4), many of them linked to the province's severe levels of gang violence. Victims this year include alleged leaders and members of gangs such as the Americans, Fancy Boys, Rude Boys, Terrible School Boys and Only the Firm. A newer cluster of execution-style killings around Musina and the Tshilwavhusiku policing area accounts for Limpopo's four cases.

The category is broader than gang conflict. It includes killings intended to protect or capture an illicit market, such as drug territory, extortion turf, or poaching networks, or to prevent a witness from testifying in a prosecution. Of the 78 recorded incidents, 72 were fatal, three were attempted hits in which the intended victim survived, and three were plots that were stopped before an attack could be carried out.

After the Western Cape, the largest clusters are in KwaZulu-Natal (16), Gauteng (12) and the Eastern Cape (9). The database records 26 organized crime incidents for the same eight-month period in 2025, 15 of which were in the Western Cape. However, the caution set out in the methodology section applies with particular force to this category. It rests on thinner evidence than the series as a whole: 48 of the 78 incidents (62%) rely on a single source, compared to 52% across the series, and arrests or charges are recorded in fewer than 10 cases. Some of the increase reflects the more intensive monitoring introduced in 2026, and the monthly counts, which rise from three in January to 17 in July, should not be interpreted as indicating a trend on their own.

In the Western Cape, most of the 33 cases are linked to gang succession disputes and retaliation cycles; 19 of them carry a named gang or an explicit gang link in reporting. The shooting of Igshaan 'Sanie American' Davids, a long-standing leader of the Americans, in Kensington on 11 April (he died about three weeks later) was followed within weeks by retaliatory shootings against rival gang the Nice Time Kids.³⁸ An alleged Fancy Boys leader known as 'Pang' was shot dead in a vehicle-to-vehicle drive-by on the Jakkalsvlei Avenue bridge in Kalksteentfontein on 23 April. In late June, Ralph 'Frog' Philander, described in reporting as the Mongrels gang boss, was killed in Wesbank, near Malmesbury; a mass shooting in the same area on 12 July that killed two people and wounded eight, including a

one-year-old child, was reported to be retaliation for his death, and one of the accused is related to him.³⁹ The province's count rose steeply in June (8) and July (10).

Outside the gang-affected areas of the Cape Flats, the targets are more often businesspeople and operators in contested transport markets. In KwaZulu-Natal, the 16 cases include Anthony 'Tatu' Gounden, described in police and media reporting as the head of a drug gang in Verulam, north of Durban – a description his family disputes – who was shot in his minibus at a petrol station on 12 April.⁴⁰

Businesspeople shot in their vehicles account for several other KwaZulu-Natal cases, among them civil engineer Sbonelo Mkhwanazi in Westville on 17 February and Philani Nkwanyana in KwaMashu on 4 June, as well as a tow-truck driver in Phoenix, the owner of a towing business and an e-hailing driver shot 12 times in Sobantu, near Pietermaritzburg, in July.

In Limpopo, four execution-style killings between March and July in and around Musina, Makuleke and Tshilwavhusiku, three involving victims shot in their beds or while seated in parked vehicles, have prompted local reporting of organized crime activity in the border town; no arrests have been reported. In Mpumalanga, Joseph 'Big Joe' Nyalungu, the alleged rhino-poaching kingpin and former police officer, survived a shooting at his Mkhuhlu business premises on 8 May but was killed there eight days later.⁴¹

The second thread is extortion, and it has a disproportionately heavy impact on foreign nationals. At least seven of the 78 cases involved shopkeepers and other entrepreneurs from elsewhere in Africa and Asia, most reportedly linked to demands for 'protection' money. On 6 January, Mike Oduro, a Ghanaian barber, was shot inside his container salon in Khayelitsha. On 26 April, Mohammed Shifa was gunned down outside his clothing store in the Johannesburg CBD, while three Ethiopian businessmen were killed inside a McDonald's restaurant the following day. Reports linked the attacks to an extortion network operating within the Ethiopian community. On 29 June, Bashira Issaka, a Ghanaian salon owner, was shot in Nyanga, Cape Town, after suspects allegedly demanded money from him. His death prompted a diplomatic exchange between Ghana and South Africa. On 25 July, four Pakistani nationals, including two brothers who owned a spaza shop (an informal convenience store) in Tembisa, on the East Rand of Gauteng, were ambushed while stopped at traffic lights and shot dead.⁴²

There are also South African victims who fit this pattern. Sandile Chili, who ran a private transport service in Umlazi, was shot outside his home on 28 August after, according to a source close to his family, refusing to pay an extortion fee to men who wanted his vehicle to carry a marker indicating that payments had been made. Dyokwe's killing in Dunoon, discussed above under the political category, belongs here too. In these cases the killing is not only a punishment; it is a blunt message to every other trader on the street to pay up or die.⁴³

The third thread is violence directed at the criminal justice process itself. Ten of the 14 justice-sector incidents recorded this year fall within the organized crime category, and nine were fatal. Five people recorded as state witnesses were killed between May and July. Mandisa Jolingana was shot in her Kariega home on 26 May, about three months before she was due to testify in the Eastern Cape's 'Murder for money' insurance-killing trial. On 30 May, Eugene Jacobs, a former murder trial witness who had been in witness protection, was killed in Elsies River, Cape Town. Police officers were targeted in KwaZulu-Natal, the Eastern Cape and Gauteng, particularly in Reiger Park. On 30 April in Durban, gunmen opened fire on an unmarked state vehicle carrying Captain Louis Nel and Sergeant Mandla Khuzwayo of Crime Intelligence, resulting in the deaths of both officers. In July, a video circulated on social media that appeared to show an alleged drug dealer arranging the killing of a KwaZulu-Natal

Crime Intelligence officer together with two associates. This plot is recorded in the database as having been thwarted.⁴⁴

Seven of the 78 organized crime cases are also recorded in the mass-killing series because the designated target was killed alongside others. These include the McDonald's shooting in the Johannesburg CBD, an attack in a pharmacy at KwaNyuswa near Hillcrest on 19 May, the killing of five teenagers in a Motherwell home on 27 May, the shooting of four men in Toekomsrus on 19 June, the killing of three men in Site B, Khayelitsha, on 24 July, the ambush in Chloorkop, and an attack in Reiger Park that killed two Anti-Gang Unit officers and two civilians. This overlap serves as a reminder that in gang and extortion-linked markets the line between a hit and a massacre is all too often crossed.

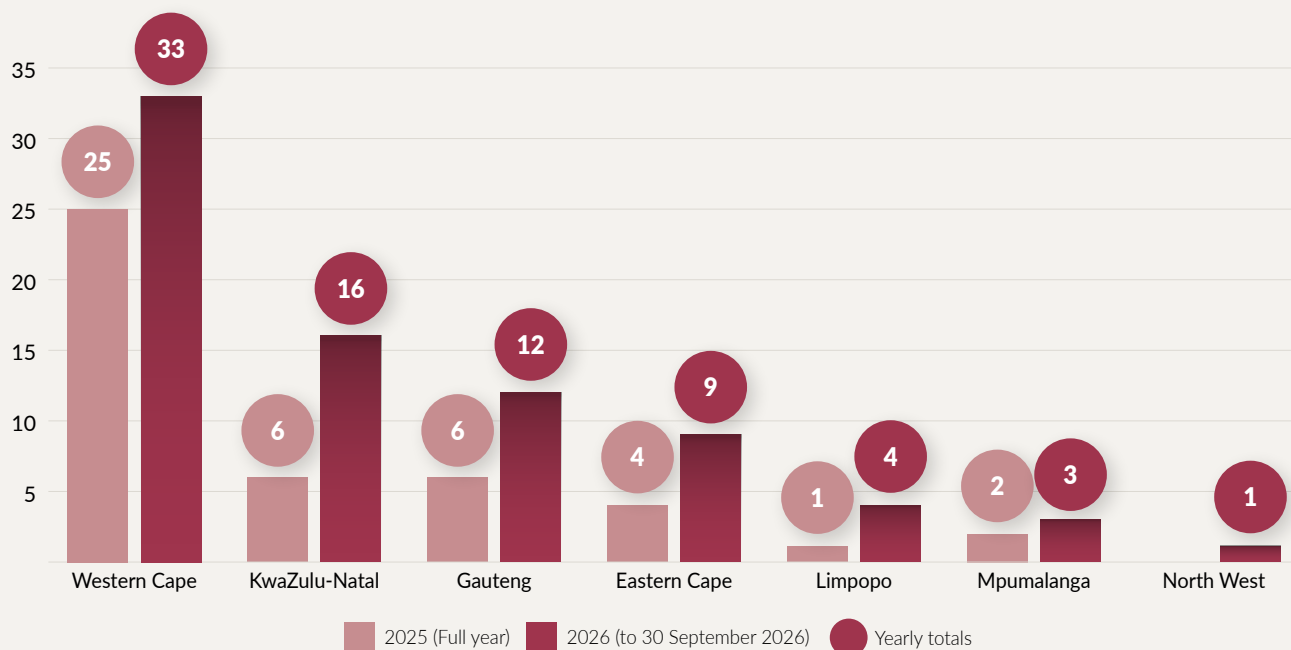
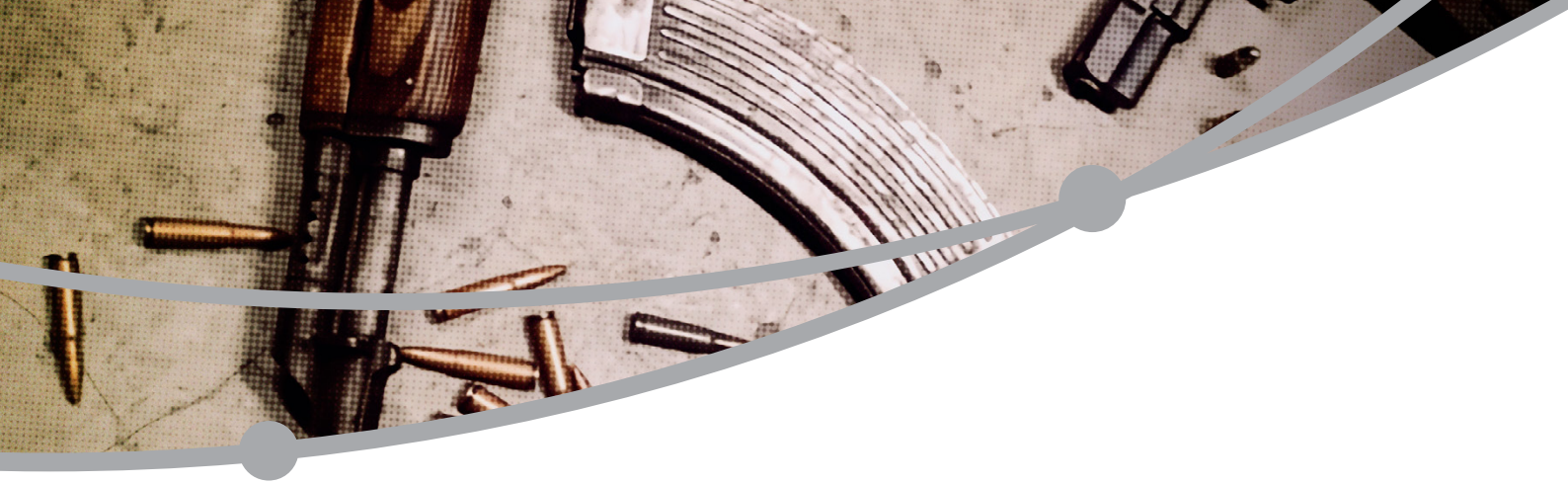


FIGURE 4 Organized crime assassination incidents by province.

SOURCE: GI-TOC assassinations database, extract of 30 September 2026



NEW TARGETS

A major concern is the targeting of people connected to the criminal justice and education systems, and attacks linked to extortion.

The database records at least 14 incidents in which people linked to the criminal justice system were targeted.⁴⁵ Thirteen were fatal: attacks on eight witnesses, three on police officers, one on a whistle-blower and one on an attorney left 17 people dead across four provinces (see Figure 5). Four other incidents were either survived or stopped before they could be carried out: an attempted hit on a crime intelligence officer and three foiled plots, two of them against whistle-blowers. A 15th case – the threat that forced prosecutor Mkhuseleli Ntuba off a case in Kwaggafontein – is recorded separately because no attack took place.⁴⁶

In April, Lieutenant Colonel Thamsanqa Mzimvubu, a detective commander in Mthatha in the Eastern Cape, was shot dead and another detective was critically wounded. In August, Anti-Gang Unit constables Thapelo Tlomeane and Siphiwe Sibeko were ambushed and killed in Reiger Park, on the East Rand of Gauteng, alongside two civilians whose shooting they were responding to. The four murders are being prosecuted as one case. According to a police source quoted in the media, the accused are allegedly linked to the Vatos Locos gang.⁴⁷ Chinette Gallichan, a lawyer for the Sibanye-Stillwater mining multinational, whose work included illegal mining-related matters, was shot dead in the Johannesburg CBD in March while working on a labour dispute for the company.⁴⁸

Five people recorded in the database as witnesses were killed between May and July. Two cases are well corroborated: Christopher Carelse, an accused turned state witness in an R18 million drug case, was shot dead in Cape Town in June;⁴⁹ Shane Arends, whose family says he had turned state witness in an Eastern Cape murder trial, was abducted in Gqeberha in July and found dead 17 days later.⁵⁰

In the first nine months of 2026, the database recorded five attacks on school staff that carry all the hallmarks of hits. Three educators were killed, an acting principal was shot and critically wounded, and a planned attack was exposed before it could be carried out.

Three of the five cases were in Ekurhuleni, a metropolitan municipality east of Johannesburg. In April, a teacher was shot dead while walking to school in Daveyton on the same morning that an acting principal was shot and critically wounded in Vosloorus.⁵¹ In August, a primary school teacher was killed on his way to work in Tsakane.⁵² The pattern follows three fatal attacks in the last two months

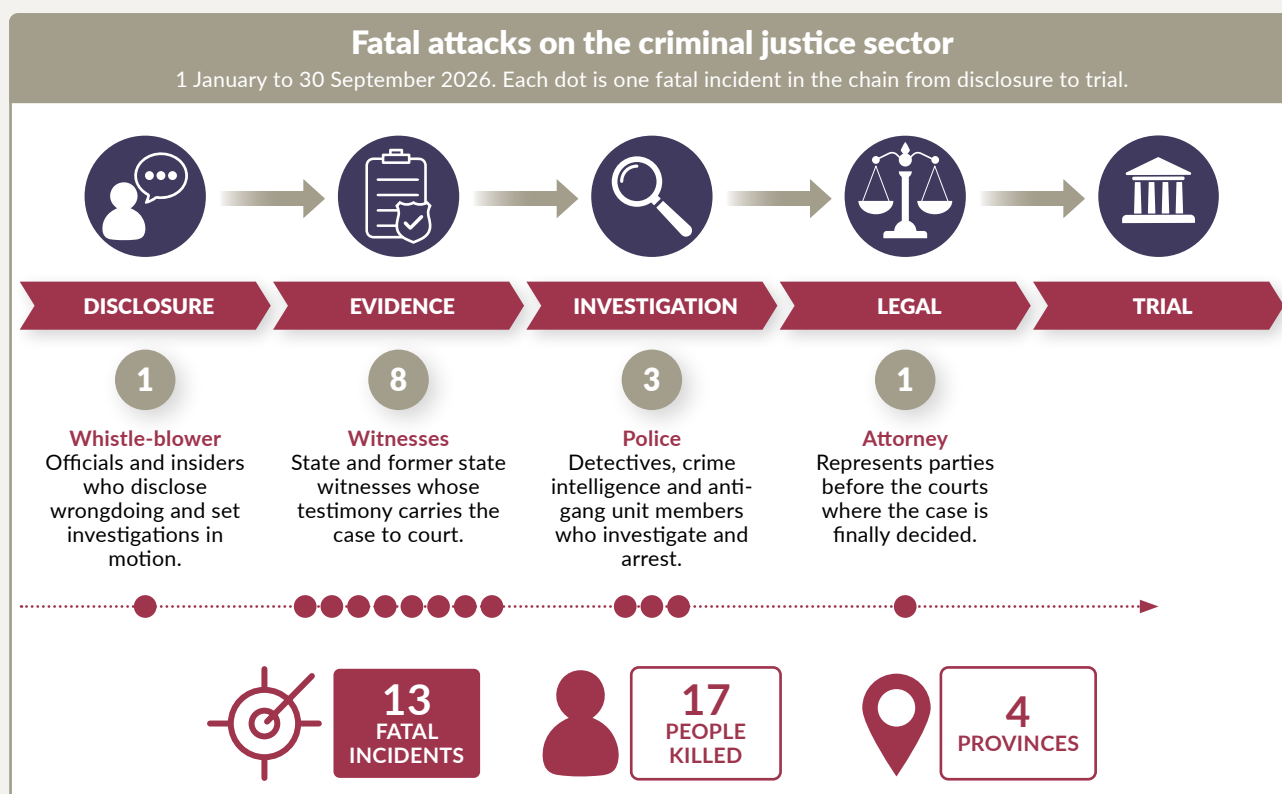


FIGURE 5 Fatal attacks on the criminal justice sector, 1 January–30 September 2026.

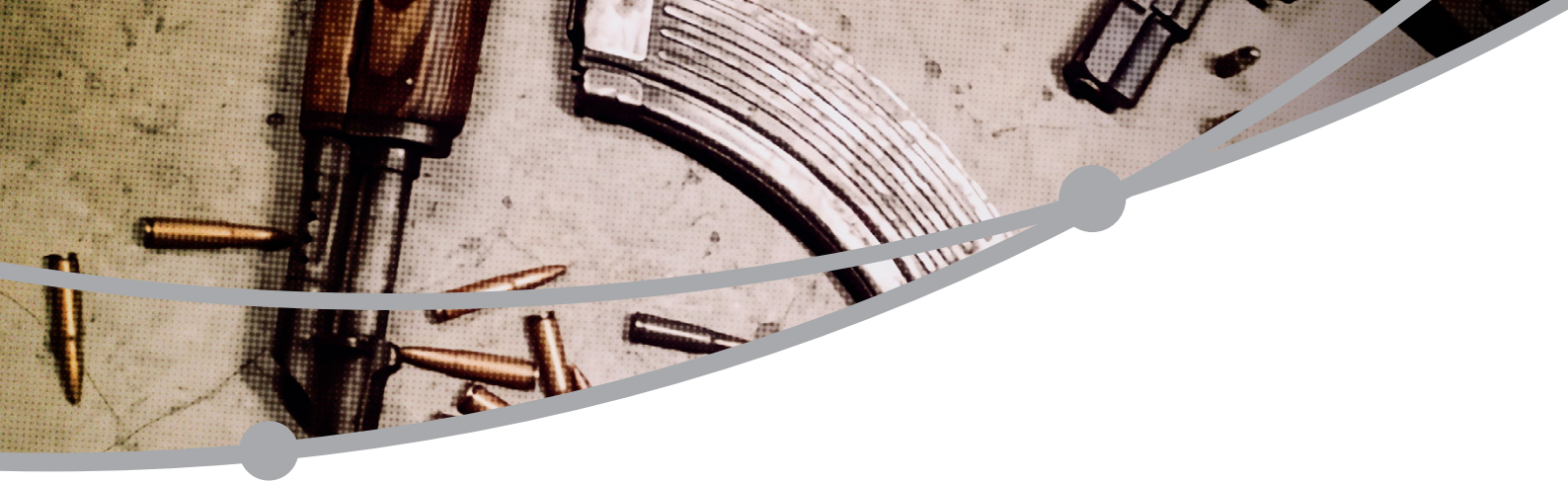
NOTES: The 13 incidents carry the assassinations database's justice-sector flag; attempted and thwarted attacks, and the Kwaggafontein threat, are excluded. Counts are incidents, not victims: the 7 August Reiger Park ambush killed two officers and two civilians.

SOURCE: GI-TOC assassinations database, extract of 30 september 2026

of 2025, which left four people dead: a Tembisa primary school principal and an administrator shot inside the school's administration block,⁵³ a Stellenbosch deputy principal shot at his school,⁵⁴ and a Tembisa principal killed at his home.⁵⁵ The South African Democratic Teachers Union says five Ekurhuleni educators have been murdered in suspected hits in three years, two of them principals and one a deputy principal.⁵⁶

In most of the killings no motive has been established. Where reporting offers a possible explanation, it points to internal disputes or contestation over posts. In one case, the deputy principal of a Tembisa school was arrested for allegedly conspiring to murder its principal.⁵⁷ In another, a KwaZulu-Natal principal learned from the hired gunman that a colleague who wanted his post had allegedly commissioned the hit.⁵⁸ In a third, an Eastern Cape principal known for confronting local criminals was shot in his office hours before hosting an anti-crime event.⁵⁹ In the remaining cases, police have described the attacks as targeted because nothing was taken, but have not identified a motive.

Extortion also appears as a possible motive in several cases this year. These include Dyokwe's killing in Dunoon, the R40 000 demand reportedly made before Mkhize was killed in Midrand, and the killing of Ethiopian traders in the Johannesburg CBD, which reporting linked to an intra-community extortion network.⁶⁰



MINIBUS TAXI-RELATED KILLINGS IN 2026

Taxi-related killings remain lower than past peaks. The database records 45 minibus taxi incidents for 2026 up to 30 September, compared with 49 in all of 2025 and 127 in 2018, the highest annual figure the GI-TOC has published (see Figure 6). Historically, taxi violence has been the largest category in the database: the GI-TOC recorded 979 taxi-related killings between 2000 and 2022, 46% of all cases in that period.⁶¹ Twenty-three of this year's 45 taxi incidents were in the Western Cape, where violence linked to route conflicts between the Cape Amalgamated Taxi Association (CATA) and the Cape Organisation for the Democratic Taxi Association (CODETA) continues, despite efforts to broker a truce. Taxi owner and CODETA local board member Eugene 'Spoed' Titus survived an ambush on 20 February and was shot dead five days later in his taxi outside a school in Atlantis. A 14-year-old learner was also killed and two people were wounded.⁶² Other victims this year include association office bearers, rank managers and ordinary operators.

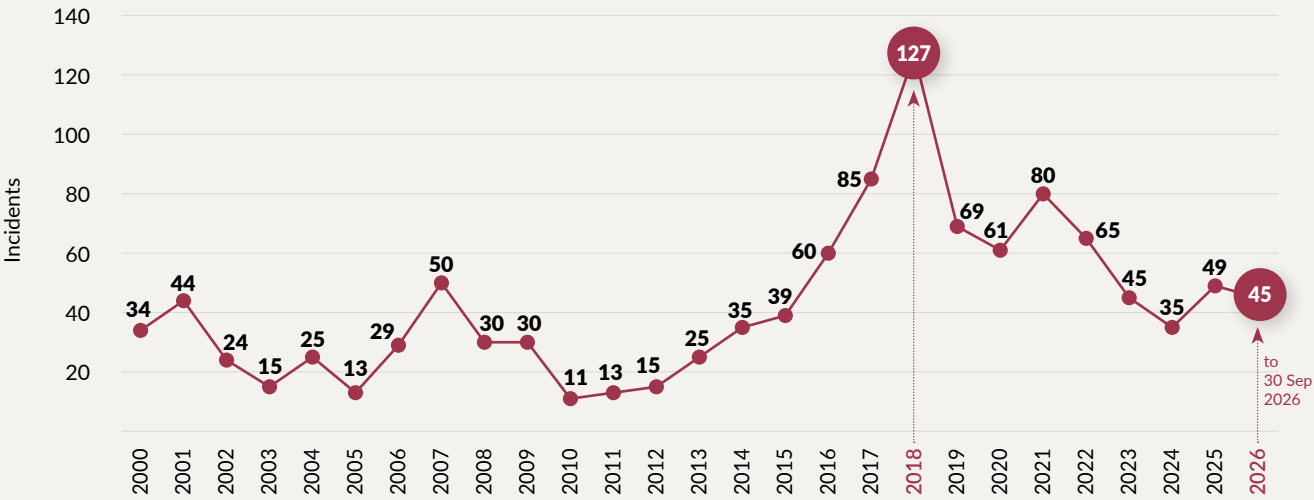


FIGURE 6 Taxi-related targeted killings, 2000–2026.

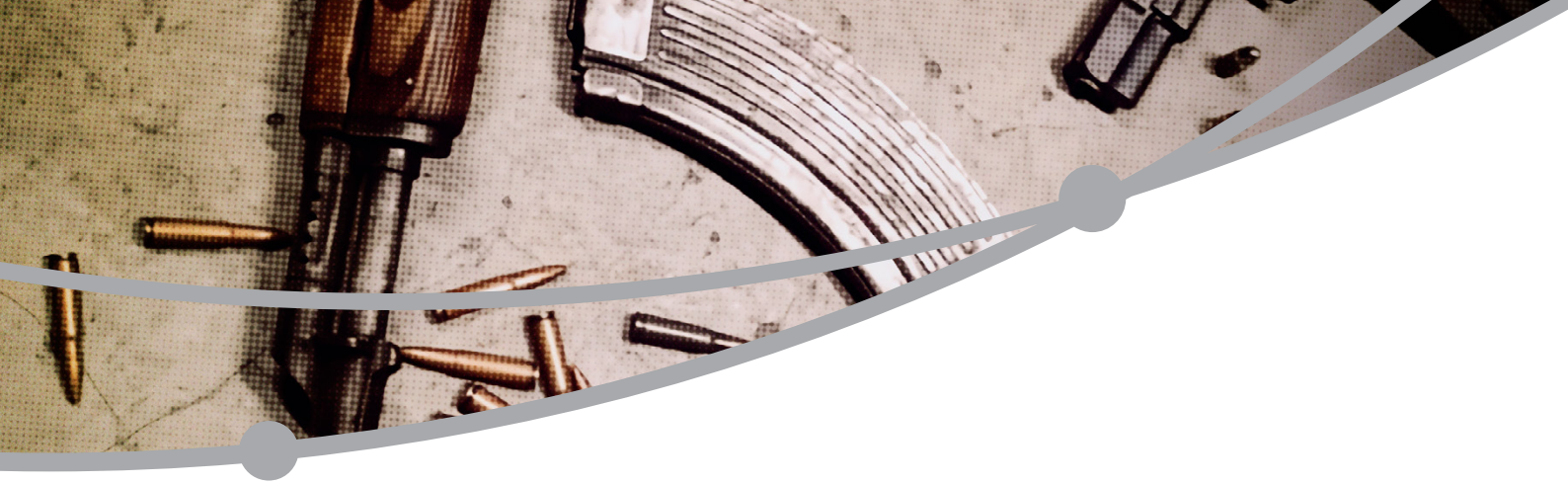
NOTE: The 2026 figure covers 1 January–30 September.

SOURCE: GI-TOC assassinations database

The lower count should be treated with caution. Organized crime and gang hits in the Western Cape were probably under-reported and undercounted. That risk remains, especially in places where frequent violence receives less media attention over time.⁶³ The taxi industry, aside from its own disputes, is also a documented recruitment and feeder pool for hitmen. GI-TOC research has repeatedly shown that parts of the industry supply firearms and experienced shooters used in political and organized crime hits.⁶⁴



The Political Killings Task Team arrests a suspect in an assassination case in Cape Town. Despite attempts to shut it down, the specialized unit remains fully operational, and is leading several of the year's most high-profile investigations. *Brenton Geach/Gallo Images via Getty Images*



PERSONAL HITS IN 2026

Personal hits make up the smallest category this year. These are killings that occur within families, relationships or due to private disputes. The database records seven such incidents so far, compared with 12 in 2025 and 21 in 2024 (see Figures 2 and 7). The clearest case is the March killing of Fundiswa Mngwengwe in Mkhambathini, KwaZulu-Natal. The state alleges that her sister hired a hitman; both accused face charges of conspiracy and premeditated murder, and were denied bail in June.⁶⁵

A contract killing arranged by a spouse or relative is frequently made to look like another crime – a robbery or vehicle hijacking, an accident or an assault gone wrong, a random street shooting or a disappearance. Cases where such murders are clearly identifiable as a targeted hit are rare. Often the real motive becomes apparent only when police make arrests or the case is prosecuted. It can take years, if ever, for the real facts to emerge.

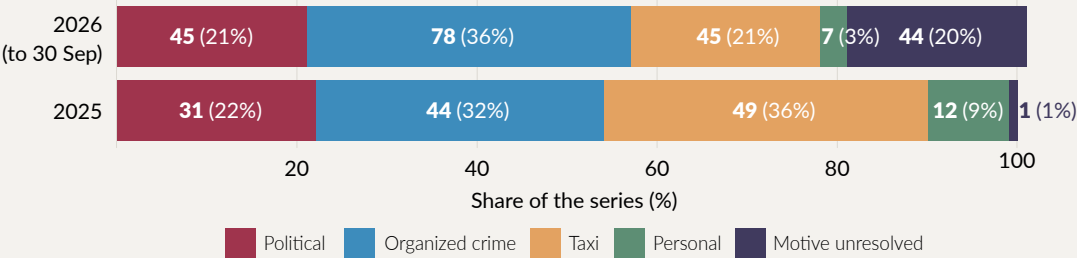


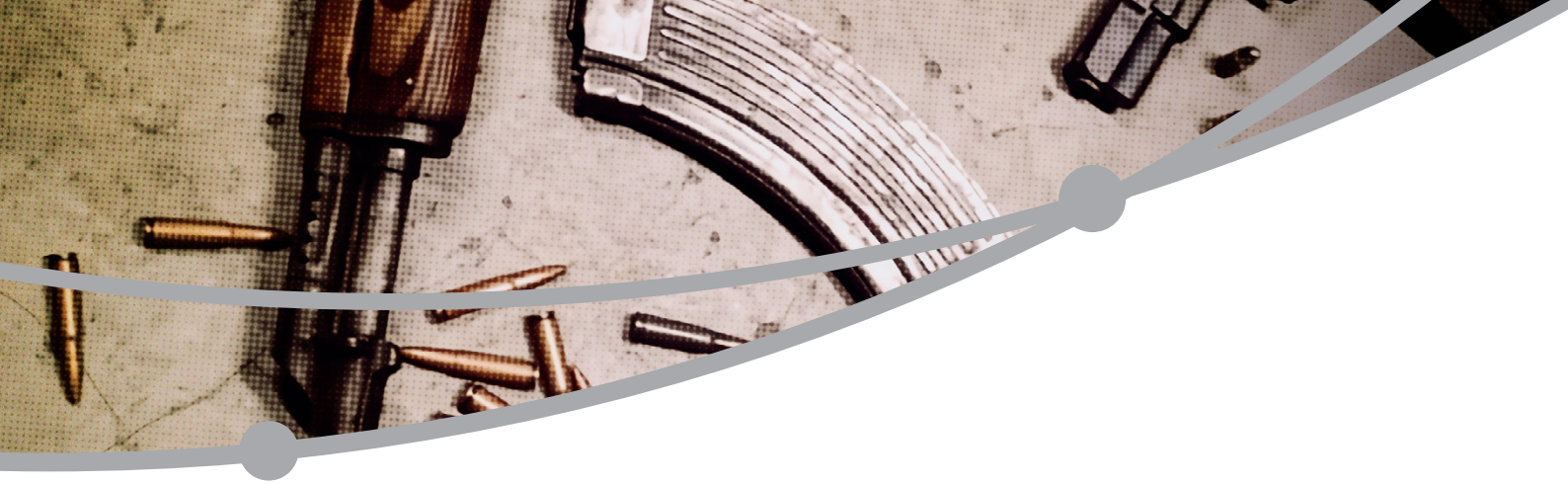
FIGURE 7 Category composition of the series, 2025 and 2026.

SOURCE: GI-TOC assassinations database

Wanter Dlamini (62), for example, was killed in 2020 and her body placed on railway tracks in a bid to stage a train accident. At the trial of three accused in the Mbombela High Court in August 2026, six years later, the court heard that the killing had been arranged over a R40 000 life policy that would pay out R80 000 for an accidental death. (A fourth accused, one of her daughters, had already pleaded guilty and is serving 20 years.⁶⁶) Stellenbosch wine farmer Stefan Smit was shot in 2019 in what was made to look like a robbery, with his wife on trial as the alleged mastermind from 2025 into 2026.⁶⁷ Eastern Cape traffic officer Sindezama Nxilolo was murdered in 2017 by two hired men, and the case surfaced only because one of the hitmen reported it. His wife and her former lover were convicted and sentenced nine years later, in 2026.⁶⁸ And the Kutumela family in Limpopo allegedly killed relatives and others for insurance payouts from 2012 onwards, a scheme that took more than a decade to unravel.⁶⁹

The more thoroughly a killing is disguised, and the more it depends on a financial trail or a witness who breaks ranks, the longer it stays hidden – and some are never uncovered at all. That is why any recent year's tally of these killings is provisional.

The apparent drop in personal hits may also partly reflect the stricter motive rule described in the methodology. Cases that might once have been placed in a category by assumption are now left unresolved until there is additional evidence. As investigations and court cases develop, the 44 unresolved incidents may move into specific categories and the 2026 category shares may change.



MASS KILLINGS LINKED TO CRIMINAL MARKETS

Alongside the assassination cases, 2026 has seen a surge in mass shootings linked to criminal markets. These attacks are different from hits. They usually aim to terrorize, punish, or enforce control over a place or group, rather than kill a specific target. Most do not meet the definition of an assassination but fall under the same criminal economy. For that reason, the database records them separately and defines them as the intentional killing of three or more people, excluding the perpetrator, in a single incident or over a short timeframe. Each case records the linked market, where one can be identified, and the type of targeting. The two series overlap: 11 of this year's mass killings are also recorded as assassinations, most of them where a specific person was targeted and others were killed alongside them.⁷⁰

Between 1 January and 30 September, the GI-TOC recorded 45 mass-killing incidents, in which at least 210 people were killed and 79 wounded (see infographic below). In comparison, the 2025 dataset records 19 mass killings for the year.

Twenty-six of the 45 were in the Western Cape, 24 of them in the Cape Town metropolitan municipality. The locations match gang-violence areas, including Delft, Philippi, Nyanga, Gugulethu, Khayelitsha, Mitchells Plain, Bishop Lavis and Langa. Seven incidents are linked to gangs, four to illegal mining, four to extortion, three to the taxi industry and one to another market. Twenty-six could not be linked to a specific market on current reporting.⁷¹

Four incidents show the main patterns in this category. On 17 January, attackers robbed people at a shebeen in the Marikana informal settlement in Philippi East, then shot the owner and customers, killing nine. Police and prosecutors describe the case as extortion-related.⁷² On 9 June, about 10 armed men entered the Jumpers informal settlement in Cleveland, Johannesburg, through two access points and opened fire, killing 13 people and wounding 14. Gauteng police linked the attack to an illegal-mining turf war, and three Basotho were later arrested.⁷³ The worst incident on record, an attack at a tavern (drinking establishment) in Wedela near Carletonville, Gauteng, in which gunmen opened fire on a crowd with AK-47s leaving 18 dead, has also been linked to illegal mining. The 2026 cases include mass killings linked to extortion, illegal mining, gang retaliation and taxi conflict. Many also involve contested criminal markets and illegal firearms.⁷⁴ They show the scale of the problem and why these incidents need to be tracked separately rather than left outside the data.

Mass killings

Incidents recorded in the GI-TOC assassinations database in which three or more people were killed intentionally in a single attack, 1 January to 30 September 2026.

45

ATTACKS

210

PEOPLE KILLED

6

PROVINCES

- 1 **17 Jan • 9 killed, 3 wounded** • *Marikana informal settlement, Philippi East*
Extortion • collective intimidation
Alleged extortion hit on a shebeen: attackers robbed patrons, then shot the owner and customers. Nine people were murdered; a 19-year-old accused faces nine counts of murder, attempted murder and robbery.

- 2 **21 Feb • 3 killed** • *Joe Slovo, Milnerton*
Not established • targeting unknown
Two women were found shot dead in a bullet-riddled silver Toyota Avanza on Freedom Way in Joe Slovo, Milnerton, at about 10.30 pm on 21 February 2026, and a 36-year-old man who had once worked in the taxi industry was found dead a few metres away; police are investigating a triple murder.

- 3 **10 Mar • 3 killed, 1 wounded** • *Viscount Street, Rocklands*
Gang conflict • indiscriminate retaliation
Three people were shot dead and a 15-year-old girl wounded when gunmen in balaclavas got out of a grey vehicle and stormed a house in Viscount Street, Rocklands, Mitchells Plain at about 4.50 pm on 10 March 2026. The dead were Sadia Madatt (39), daughter of alleged former Americans gang boss Kaldimola 'Dimes' Madatt, who was himself shot dead in 2022; her partner Abubaker Alexander (29), known as 'Bakka' and alleged to be a Hard Livings member; and Ferjaaz Miller (36). The wounded teenager is believed to be Sadia Madatt's daughter. Police suspect a gang motive; residents described the attack as retaliation. It was the second fatal mass shooting in the same street in four months.

- 4 **12 Mar • 3 killed** • *Voorbrug taxi rank, Delft*
Taxi conflict • collective intimidation
Three taxi operators were shot dead at the Voorbrug taxi rank in Delft around 6.15 am on 12 March 2026 when occupants of a white Toyota Quantum opened fire on victims seated in a parked taxi; two died at the scene and one in hospital. The deceased included CODETA and CATA members; police linked the attack to taxi conflict.

- 5 **12 Mar • 3 killed, 4 wounded** • *Bishop Lavis residence*
Gang conflict • indiscriminate retaliation
Three armed men arrived by vehicle and opened fire on a group of seven men drinking outside a Bishop Lavis residence, killing three and wounding four.

- 6 **28 Mar • 3 killed, 1 wounded** • *Bekkersdal, Westonaria*
Illegal mining • indiscriminate retaliation
Mass shooting at about 5 pm killed three and wounded one; believed linked to illegal-mining activity.

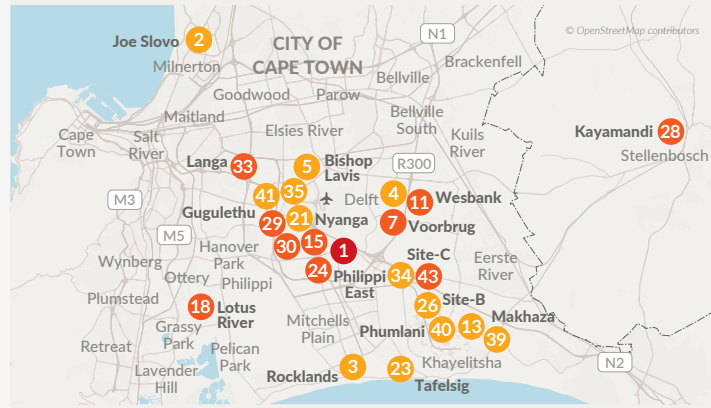
- 7 **15 Apr • 4 killed** • *Zandkloof Street, Voorbrug, Delft*
Gang conflict • targeted, with bystanders
Four occupants of a granny flat (aged 13, 28, 40, 41) each shot in the head – household execution; police say gang-related. Distinct from the 12 Mar Voorbrug taxi-rank shooting.

- 8 **21 Apr • 3 killed, 8 wounded** • *Daveyton, Ekurhuleni*
Not established • targeting unknown
Three people were killed and eight others injured when a minibus taxi crashed on the N12 bridge at Laris Street, Daveyton, after reportedly being shot at, with taxi violence suspected.

- 9 **27 Apr • 3 killed** • *McDonald's, Rahima Moosa Street, Johannesburg CBD*
Extortion • collective intimidation
Three Ethiopian businessmen – including Aytenew Addis Abta and Shiferaw Abdisa – were shot dead inside a McDonald's in Rahima Moosa Street on 27 April, the day after Mohammed Shifa's killing; sources tie the four killings to an extortion campaign by the alleged ISIS-linked 'Sharia court' network, 'designed to terrorize Ethiopian traders' who resisted paying.

- 10 **14 May • 4 killed, 1 wounded** • *R26 between Tweeling & Reitz*
Not established • targeting unknown
Four people were shot dead at about 5.15 pm on 14 May 2026 when about six gunmen in a green Mercedes-Benz and a second Honda Fit, both with Lesotho plates, boxed in a white Honda Fit with Lesotho plates on the R26 between Tweeling and Reitz in the Free State; a fifth occupant was hospitalized in critical condition.

- 11 **16 May • 4 killed, 1 wounded** • *Strandveld Street, Wesbank*
Gang conflict • targeted, with bystanders
Willemse family home stormed at around 8 pm: three women and one man killed, boy wounded. Police call it gang-related.



- 12 **19 May • 3 killed** • *Pharmacy, KwaNyuswa, near Hillcrest (Inchanga precinct)*
Not established • targeting unknown
Pharmacist Nomzila Bayabonga Madinane, 27, her cashier Melissa Sibanda and a security guard were shot dead on 19 May 2026 when three armed men stormed her newly opened pharmacy in KwaNyuswa near Hillcrest and opened fire; the guard was shot while trying to intervene. Nothing was reported stolen.

- 13 **24 May • 3 killed** • *Khonkxa Street, Makhaza, Khayelitsha*
Not established • targeting unknown
Three men aged 20 to 24 were shot dead inside an informal dwelling at about 7.30 pm on 24 May; family members heard gunshots and found the victims. Motive unknown; no arrests. One of two fatal trios in Khayelitsha within hours.

- 14 **27 May • 5 killed** • *Mnenga Street, NU10, Motherwell, Gqeberha*
Other • targeted, with bystanders
Five teenagers aged 17 to 18 were killed in an execution-style shooting at a family home in Mnenga Street, Motherwell; four died at the scene and a fifth in hospital. A 28-year-old Zimbabwean national has been charged with five counts of murder.

- 15 **2 Jun • 4 killed, 2 wounded** • *Corner Moonwood Drive & Sheffield Road, Nyanga*
Taxi conflict • collective intimidation
Four men were shot dead and two critically wounded when gunmen opened fire on a group at an informal taxi rank at Moonwood/Sheffield in Nyanga on the morning of 2 June 2026. Police treat it as suspected taxi-related.

- 16 **9 Jun • 13 killed, 14 wounded** • *Jumpers informal settlement, Cleveland, Johannesburg*
Illegal mining • indiscriminate retaliation
Ten armed men opened fire indiscriminately inside the gated settlement at about 11.10 pm; final toll 13 dead and 14 wounded. The Gauteng police linked it to an illegal-mining turf war; three Lesotho nationals were arrested on 23 June.

- 17 **17 Jun • 6 killed, 1 wounded** • *N12 Etwatwa off-ramp, Benoni*
Not established • targeting unknown
At least six people were killed in a shooting at the N12 Etwatwa off-ramp on 17 June involving vehicles branded to the Benoni Taxi Association's Taxi Patrol Unit, in a suspected taxi-related attack.

- 18 **18 Jun • 4 killed, 1 wounded** • *Corner Nita & Olga Streets, Lotus River*
Gang conflict • indiscriminate retaliation
Gang of gunmen ambushed a group outside flats at around 10.30 pm: 4 men dead, 1 seriously wounded; police suspect gang-related.

- 19 **19 Jun • 4 killed** • *Toekomsrus, West Rand*
Not established • targeting unknown
Four men were shot dead at a house in Toekomsrus after five armed men arrived in a Kia Picanto, entered the property, opened fire and fled without taking anything.

- 20 **23 Jun • 3 killed** • *Gandhi Zone, Ward 53, Ndwedwe*
Not established • targeted, with bystanders
Three MK Party women – Slindile 'Pretty Girl' Ntshangase, Thandeka Adelaide Ntshangase and Ncamsile Luthuli – were shot dead at their home shortly after returning from a party meeting.

- 21 **27 Jun • 3 killed** • *Kanana informal settlement, Gugulethu*
Not established • targeting unknown
Three people were fatally shot inside a shack in the Kanana informal settlement in Gugulethu after three armed suspects allegedly waited for the female homeowner to return before opening fire on her and other occupants.

- 22 **29 Jun • 4 killed** • *Solomon Mahlangu informal settlement, Walmer, Gqeberha*
Not established • targeting unknown
Four people were found shot execution-style in a shack at about 12.20 am on 29 June; police described them as two adult men and two adult women, and *The Herald* later reported a 15-year-old Walmer High School pupil among the dead. No arrests; motive unknown.

- 23 **8 Jul • 3 killed, 2 wounded** • *Laura Street and 8th Avenue, Lost City, Tafelsig*
Gang conflict • indiscriminate retaliation
Armed suspects opened fire on five men outside a tuck shop at about 8.10 pm: three dead (aged 18, 19 and 51) and two wounded.



24 8 Jul • 4 killed, 3 wounded • Marcus Garvey, Philippi East
Not established • targeting unknown
Seven people were shot at a house at about 8.30 pm, twenty minutes after the Tafelsig tuck-shop attack; four died, all aged 17 to 20, and three were hospitalized. Police did not say whether the two shootings were connected.

25 14 Jul • 4 killed • Langrug, Franschhoek
Extortion • collective intimidation
Four people were fatally shot at a spaza shop in Langrug, Franschhoek, in an incident linked to extortion; police arrested four suspects and confiscated a firearm.

26 24 Jul • 3 killed • Mofala Street, Site B, Khayelitsha
Not established • targeting unknown
Two unidentified armed suspects entered a property in Site B, Khayelitsha, and shot dead three men aged 30, 31 and 32 before fleeing in a white Hyundai vehicle; no arrests have been made.

27 25 Jul • 4 killed • Chloorkop, Kempton Park
Extortion (suspected) • targeted, with bystanders
Four Pakistani nationals – brothers Ali Hasan, 24, and Tehreem Hasan, 20, who owned a spaza shop in Tembisa, and their workers Imran Sajid, 37, and Zafar Iqbal, 37 – were shot dead when two men in a white sedan pulled up alongside their Honda Ballade at a traffic light at Zuurfontein and Orangerivier roads as they drove home after closing the shop. The driver tried to flee but crashed into a traffic island; all four died at the scene. Police recovered multiple 9mm casings and describe a targeted attack; police have not confirmed a motive, no arrests.

28 26 Jul • 4 killed, 4 wounded • Seventh Avenue, Kayamandi, Stellenbosch
Not established • targeting unknown
Four men were shot dead and four people wounded, two of them police officers. The gunmen exchanged fire with responding officers before fleeing.

29 27 Jul • 5 killed, 1 wounded • NY 50, Gugulethu
Not established • targeting unknown
Five people – four men and a woman aged 19 to 23 – were shot dead and a woman wounded in the early hours after two armed men kicked in the door demanding a firearm; police suspect the victims knew the attackers.

30 1 Aug • 4 killed • Old Klipfontein Road, Nyanga
Taxi conflict • indiscriminate retaliation
Four adult men were fatally shot by unknown gunmen while changing a flat tyre in Nyanga on 1 August 2026; police believe the attack was taxi-related.

31 3 Aug • 3 killed • Peace Village, KwaNobuhle
Not established • targeting unknown
Three young men – aged 17, 20 and 22 – were found shot dead in bushes in Peace Village, prompting a triple-murder investigation by the South African Police Service Serious and Violent Crime Investigation Unit; no arrests, no motive established.

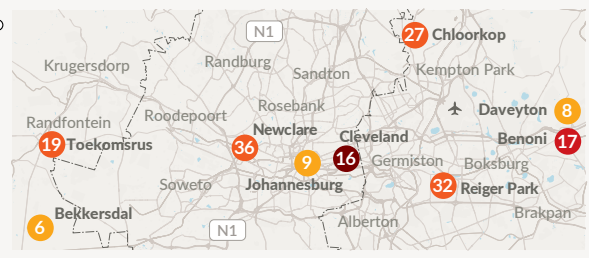
32 7 Aug • 4 killed • Reiger Park, Boksburg
Gang conflict • targeted, with bystanders
Four people were shot dead in Reiger Park on the night of 7 August. Jaydin Magerman (27) and Rolene Lessing, two friends, were killed while going to a local shop; South African Police Service Anti-Gang Unit constables Thapelo Tlometane and Sipiwe Sibeko were then gunned down responding to the gunshots, and their R5 rifles were stolen and later recovered at a squatter camp in Germiston.

33 8 Aug • 5 killed • Winnie Mandela Street, Phase 3, Langa
Not established • targeting unknown
Five people, including a woman, were shot dead at a house; police have not established a motive.

34 8 Aug • 3 killed • TR Section, Lingeletu West (Site C), Khayelitsha
Not established • targeting unknown
Three men, aged 25, 31 and 35, were shot dead in TR Section at about 10.50 pm on 8 August – the first of three mass shootings that night in which 11 people were killed (Langa, five; Barcelona informal settlement, Gugulethu, three). South African Police Service Western Cape said the motives form part of the investigation; a R100 000 reward per case was offered on 21 August.

LINKED MARKET	ATTACKS	KILLED
Not established	27	127
Gang conflict	7	25
Illegal mining	3	22
Extortion	4	20
Taxi conflict	3	11
Other	1	5

MARKER KEY • PEOPLE KILLED			
● 3	● 4–5	● 6–9	● 10+



35 9 Aug • 3 killed, 2 wounded • Barcelona informal settlement, Gugulethu
Not established • indiscriminate retaliation
Two men and a woman were shot dead, and two others wounded, in the Barcelona informal settlement in Gugulethu.

36 15 Aug • 4 killed, 1 wounded • Newclare (flat), Johannesburg
Not established • targeting unknown
Five young men aged 18 to 23 were shot inside a flat in Newclare at about 9.30 pm on 15 August; three died at the scene and a fourth in hospital. Motive not established; no arrests.

37 29 Aug • 6 killed • Ngodwana
Illegal mining • indiscriminate retaliation
At least six illegal miners were shot dead at an informal mining site in Ngodwana, Mpumalanga, allegedly by a rival group of illegal miners, prompting police to rush to the scene.

38 12 Sep • 4 killed • G-West, Walmer, Gqeberha
Not established • targeting unknown
Four men aged 20 to 30 were shot dead at about 8.30 pm on 12 September. Police have no motive or suspects.

39 16 Sep • 3 killed • Joe Gqabi Street, Makhaza, Khayelitsha
Not established • targeting unknown
Police say a passenger in a Toyota opened fire on fellow passengers at about 12.30 pm; three men in their early twenties died, found in and near the car. The gunman fled.

40 20 Sep • 3 killed, 1 wounded • Phumlani, Lingeletu West
Not established • targeting unknown
Four men were shot inside an informal dwelling at about 10.20 pm on 20 September; three aged 27 to 36 died and a man of 38 was taken to hospital. No arrests.

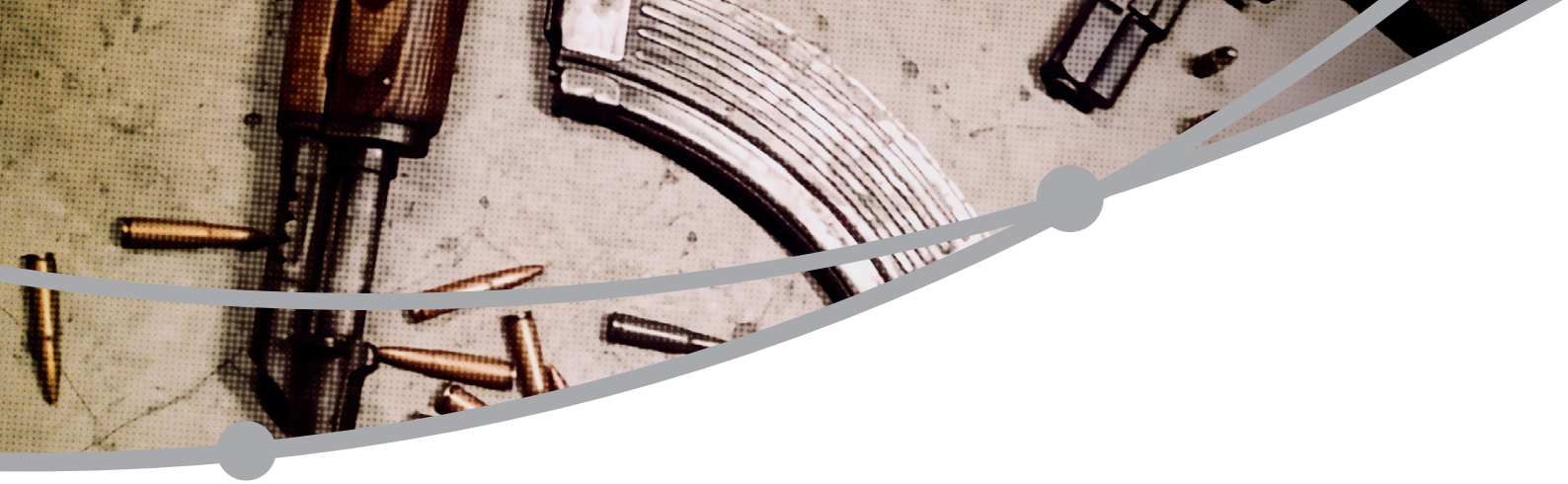
41 22 Sep • 3 killed • KTC informal settlement, Gugulethu
Not established • targeting unknown
Police found three men with multiple gunshot wounds at about 10.00 am on 22 September. Unconfirmed preliminary information links the shooting to an altercation after an alleged robbery.

42 22 Sep • 12 killed, 3 wounded • eZiko, KwaMakhutha
Not established • indiscriminate retaliation
Gunmen opened fire on a house party shortly before 11 pm on 22 September; 10 died at the scene, among them a pregnant woman, and two later in hospital. Police say a feud between rival groups cannot be ruled out.

43 26 Sep • 4 killed • Mthuma Street, Site C, Khayelitsha
Not established • targeting unknown
Gunmen fired on men in a stationary car at about 7.15 pm on 26 September; three died at the scene and a fourth on arrival at hospital. No motive, no arrests.

44 26 Sep • 18 killed, 14 wounded • Tavern, Wedela, near Carletonville
Illegal mining • indiscriminate retaliation
At least eight gunmen with AK-47s and pistols opened fire on patrons outside and inside a tavern at about 9.30 pm on 26 September, took cellphones and set two vehicles alight. Seventeen died at the scene and one in hospital. Police are investigating an illegal-mining turf war as one line of inquiry.

45 27 Sep • 10 killed, 11 wounded • Shisanyama, Lwandle, Strand
Not established • indiscriminate retaliation
Gunmen entered a shisanyama at about 2 am on 27 September and fired on patrons; five died at the scene and five in hospital. Police are probing a possible business rivalry.



CONCLUSION

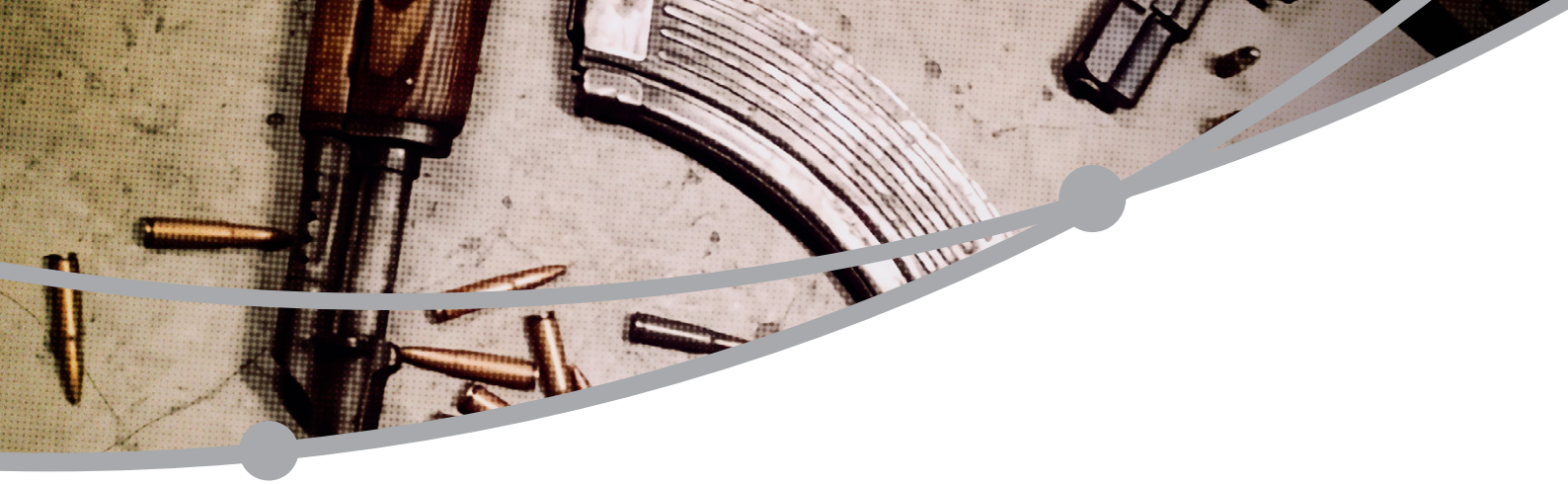
Political killings are rising in a year when South Africa's overall murder rate has fallen.⁷⁵ The highest-risk period is not necessarily polling day but the months before it, when branch infighting, candidate selection, ward contests and local patronage battles harden into direct competition for power. Historically, KwaZulu-Natal, Gauteng and the Eastern Cape have been the main centres of political murder. In 2026, however, the data points to a wider spread of political killings in provinces where they have been less common, including the Western Cape, North West and Limpopo.

Organized crime hits remain the largest category in the 2026 dataset. Taxi-related killings are below past peaks but continue to supply violence and capability to other markets. Personal hits are probably undercounted because they are often disguised as ordinary crimes and may surface only years later. Justice-sector targets are a significant concern. Fourteen incidents involved people linked to the justice system, including police officers, witnesses, whistle-blowers and an attorney. Attacks on educators suggest that coercive violence is also entering public institutions that are not usually viewed through the lens of organized crime. The mass-killing series adds a further warning: in gang, extortion, illegal-mining and taxi markets, violence is increasingly being used not only to eliminate individuals but to intimidate whole communities and control territory.

The state response therefore needs to move upstream. Arrests after the fact matter, but they are not enough. The Political Killings Task Team should retain its authority, funding and political backing through the election period and beyond, and it should be protected from interference. Prosecutors should prioritize the people who order, finance and benefit from killings, not only the gunmen who carry them out. Witness protection needs urgent attention: eight people recorded in the database as witnesses have been killed this year, and threats have disrupted at least one prosecution. Political parties should treat violent candidate-selection battles as a public governance failure, not as an internal disciplinary matter. South Africa also needs an official dataset that separates targeted killings from general murder statistics, so that contract killing is monitored as a distinct threat to democracy, public administration and the criminal justice system.⁷⁶

The critical test is whether the state and political parties can raise the cost of ordering a killing before the election cycle deepens. If hit organizers remain insulated by weak investigations, frightened witnesses, compromised procurement systems and slow prosecutions, the market for murder will remain attractive. The victims will continue to include councillors, candidates, activists, officials, school staff, police officers, witnesses and ordinary residents caught in the line of fire.

The 2026 data shows that assassination is already shaping the election environment. Left unchecked, it will do more than claim lives: it will narrow democratic choice, corrode local government and allow criminal governance to decide who can safely hold power.



NOTES

- 1 Electoral Commission of South Africa, Electoral Commission welcomes announcement of 4 November 2026 as local government elections date, <https://www.elections.org.za/content/About-Us/News/Electoral-Commission-welcomes-announcement-of-4-November-2026-as-Local-Government-Elections-date>.
- 2 GI-TOC South Africa Organized Crime Observatory, assassinations database, extract of 30 September 2026. Political and mass-killing figures run to 30 September 2026.
- 3 Nkosikhona Malinga-Mnisi, PKTT to probe murders of 4 politicians during voter registration weekend, EWN, 23 June 2026, <https://www.ewn.co.za/2026/06/23/pktt-to-probe-murders-of-4-politicians-during-voter-registration-weekend>; Two councillors killed in Cape Town and Gqeberha, eNCA, 21 June 2026, <https://www.enca.com/top-stories/two-councillors-killed-cape-town-and-gqeberha>; Ntsikelelo Qoyo, Political violence claims the life of BOSA candidate Leon Ngcikwe, *Cape Times*, 24 June 2026, <https://iol.co.za/capetimes/news/2026-06-24-political-violence-claims-the-life-of-bosa-candidate-leon-ngcikwe/>; Nkosikhona Malinga-Mnisi, Gauteng police searching for killers of 2 MK Party members shot in Bekkersdal, EWN, 22 June 2026, <https://www.ewn.co.za/2026/06/22/gauteng-police-searching-for-killers-of-2-mk-party-members-shot-in-bekkersdal>.
- 4 Ntwaagae Seleka, DA ward candidate gunned down during voter registration in Dunoon, News24, 20 June 2026, <https://www.news24.com/southafrica/crime-and-courts/da-ward-candidate-gunned-down-during-voter-registration-in-dunoon-20260620-1064>. The extortion attribution and the arrest of the alleged mastermind were reported in July 2026. See: Man linked to murder of DA's Sinovuyo Dyokwe to appear in court, eNCA, 27 July 2026, <https://www.enca.com/news-top-stories/man-linked-murder-das-sinovuyo-dyokwe-appear-court>; Reitumetse Pilane, Police arrest alleged mastermind behind murder of DA candidate Sinovuyo Dyokwe, *Daily Maverick*, 26 July 2026, <https://www.dailymaverick.co.za/article/2026-07-26-police-arrest-alleged-mastermind-behind-murder-of-da-candidate-sinovuyo-dyokwe>.
- 5 Celani Sikhakhane, Five MKP members shot dead in KZN as political killings spread across South Africa, 24 June 2026, Scrolla.Africa, <https://scrolla.africa/five-mkp-members-shot-dead-in-kzn-as-political-killings-spread-across-south-africa>; Sandile Mdadane, MK Party urges PKTT to probe rising member killings, *Sunday Tribune*, 2 August 2026, <https://iol.co.za/sunday-tribune/news/2026-08-02-mk-party-urges-pktt-to-probe-rising-member-killings>; Modiegi Mashamaite, Suspect in court over attempted murder of MK Party district secretary and husband, TimesLIVE, 27 July 2026, <https://www.timeslive.co.za/politics/2026-07-27-suspect-in-court-over-attempted-murder-of-mk-party-district-secretary-and-husband>.
- 6 Ntwaagae Seleka, 'They dragged her into my bedroom and shot her': daughter recounts EFF leader's murder, News24, 16 July 2026, <https://www.news24.com/southafrica/crime-and-courts/they-dragged-her-into-my-bedroom-and-shot-her-daughter-recounts-eff-leaders-murder-20260716-1117>.
- 7 Mark Shaw and Kim Thomas, The commercialization of assassination: 'Hits' and contract killing in South Africa, 2000–2015, *African Affairs*, 116, 465, 597–620, 2017, <https://academic.oup.com/afraf/article-abstract/116/465/597/2605670>; Mark Shaw, *Hitmen for Hire: Exposing South Africa's Underworld*, 2017, Jonathan Ball Publishers.
- 8 Kim Thomas, The rule of the gun: Hits and assassinations in South Africa, 2000–2017, GI-TOC, March 2018, <https://globalinitiative.net/analysis/the-rule-of-the-gun-hits-and-assassinations-in-south-africa-2000-2017>.
- 9 Rumbidzai Matamba, The business of killing: Assassinations in South Africa, GI-TOC, April 2023, <https://globalinitiative.net/analysis/assassinations-targeted-killings-south-africa>.
- 10 Kim Thomas, The rule of the gun: Hits and assassinations in South Africa, 2000–2017, GI-TOC, March 2018, <https://globalinitiative.net/analysis/the-rule-of-the-gun-hits-and>

- assassinations-in-south-africa-2000-2017/; Rumbidzai Matamba, The business of killing: Assassinations in South Africa, GI-TOC, April 2023, <https://globalinitiative.net/analysis/assassinations-targeted-killings-south-africa/>; Rumbidzai Matamba and Chwayita Thobela, The politics of murder: Criminal governance and targeted killings in South Africa, GI-TOC, May 2024, <https://globalinitiative.net/analysis/the-politics-of-murder-criminal-governance-and-targeted-killings-in-south-africa>. The quoted category definitions are taken from these three reports.
- 11 The mass-killing class, the treatment of traditional leadership as a political office, and the rule that motive rather than victim identity decides the category are set out in the GI-TOC assassination-recording methodology note of August 2026, which codifies the framework published in 'The rule of the gun' (2018), 'The business of killing' (2023) and 'The politics of murder' (2024).
 - 12 Ibid.
 - 13 The audit and its full corrections trail are documented in the database's revision log.
 - 14 GI-TOC South Africa Organized Crime Observatory, assassinations database, extract of 30 September 2026.
 - 15 Ibid.
 - 16 Rumbidzai Matamba and Chwayita Thobela, The politics of murder: Criminal governance and targeted killings in South Africa, GI-TOC, May 2024, <https://globalinitiative.net/analysis/the-politics-of-murder-criminal-governance-and-targeted-killings-in-south-africa>.
 - 17 Ibid. The 2024 and 2025 totals are from the assassinations database, revised by the August–September 2026 retrospective enrichment and audit; the previously published figures were 113 and 111.
 - 18 Rumbidzai Matamba and Chwayita Thobela, The politics of murder: Criminal governance and targeted killings in South Africa, GI-TOC, May 2024, <https://globalinitiative.net/analysis/the-politics-of-murder-criminal-governance-and-targeted-killings-in-south-africa>.
 - 19 Ibid.
 - 20 KZN Online, Report of the Moerane Commission of Inquiry into the Underlying Causes of the Murder of Politicians in KwaZulu-Natal, June 2018, paragraphs 1 176–1 200, <https://www.kznonline.gov.za/images/Downloads/Publications/MOERANE%20COMMISSION%20OF%20INQUIRY%20REPORT.pdf>; Kaveel Singh, Government failures and greed – Moerane Commission report's damning findings, News24, 21 September 2018, <https://www.news24.com/government-failures-and-greed-moerane-commission-reports-damning-findings-20180921>; Bongani Hans, Political violence in KwaZulu-Natal: Why Moerane Commission recommendations remain unimplemented, IOL, 2 July 2025, <https://iol.co.za/news/politics/2025-07-02-political-violence-in-kwazulu-natal-why-moerane-commission-recommendations-remain-unimplemented>; Paddy Harper, Moerane Commission report a dud, *Mail & Guardian*, 21 September 2018, <https://mg.co.za/article/2018-09-21-00-moerane-commission-report-a-dud/>; Corruption Watch, Report: Politically-motivated killings increase in SA in election years, 23 May 2024, <https://www.corruptionwatch.org.za/report-politically-motivated-killings-increase-in-sa-in-election-years>.
 - 21 Ibid.
 - 22 Ibid.
 - 23 Bongani Hans, Political violence in KwaZulu-Natal: Why Moerane Commission recommendations remain unimplemented, IOL, 2 July 2025, <https://iol.co.za/news/politics/2025-07-02-political-violence-in-kwazulu-natal-why-moerane-commission-recommendations-remain-unimplemented>.
 - 24 KZN Online, Report of the Moerane Commission of Inquiry into the Underlying Causes of the Murder of Politicians in KwaZulu-Natal, June 2018, paragraphs 1 176–1 200, <https://www.kznonline.gov.za/images/Downloads/Publications/MOERANE%20COMMISSION%20OF%20INQUIRY%20REPORT.pdf>; Kaveel Singh, Government failures and greed – Moerane Commission report's damning findings, News24, 21 September 2018, <https://www.news24.com/government-failures-and-greed-moerane-commission-reports-damning-findings-20180921>; Bongani Hans, Political violence in KwaZulu-Natal: Why Moerane Commission recommendations remain unimplemented, IOL, 2 July 2025, <https://iol.co.za/news/politics/2025-07-02-political-violence-in-kwazulu-natal-why-moerane-commission-recommendations-remain-unimplemented>; Paddy Harper, Moerane Commission report a dud, *Mail & Guardian*, 21 September 2018, <https://mg.co.za/article/2018-09-21-00-moerane-commission-report-a-dud/>; Corruption Watch, Report: Politically-motivated killings increase in SA in election years, 23 May 2024, <https://www.corruptionwatch.org.za/report-politically-motivated-killings-increase-in-sa-in-election-years>.
 - 25 Rumbidzai Matamba and Chwayita Thobela, The politics of murder: Criminal governance and targeted killings in South Africa, GI-TOC, May 2024, <https://globalinitiative.net/analysis/the-politics-of-murder-criminal-governance-and-targeted-killings-in-south-africa>.
 - 26 Suné Payne, Soyiso Maliti and Norman Masungwini, A time to kill: The season for political assassinations has opened, News24, 28 June 2026, <https://www.news24.com/politics/a-time-to-kill-the-season-for-political-assassinations-has-opened-20260627-1009>.
 - 27 Individual case sources are held against each incident in the database, among them: Suné Payne, Cape Town ANC councillor Lazola Gungxe gunned down after community meeting, *Daily Maverick*, 3 February 2026, <https://www.dailymaverick.co.za/article/2026-02-03-cape-town-anc-councillor-lazola-gungxe-gunned-down-after-community>

- meeting/; Nomathamsanqa Masiko-Mpaka, Housing activist killed in South Africa, Human Rights Watch, 2 March 2026, <https://www.hrw.org/news/2026/03/02/housing-activist-killed-in-south-africa>; Faizel Patel, Manhunt launched after alleged assassination of March and March activist Andile Somgaxa, *The Citizen*, July 2026, <https://www.citizen.co.za/news/elite-manhunt-deployed-alleged-assassination-gauteng-march-and-march-activist-andile-somgaxa/>; Noxolo Sibiya, Missing EFF member found murdered, dumped in bushes near Delmas, News24, 30 July 2026, <https://www.news24.com/southafrica/crime-and-courts/missing-eff-member-found-murdered-dumped-in-bushes-near-delmas-20260730-1166>; Lulamile Feni, Calls for security to be stepped up after murder of traditional leader and his mother, *Daily Dispatch*, 8 September 2026, <https://www.dailydispatch.co.za/news/2026-09-08-calls-for-security-to-be-stepped-up-after-murder-of-traditional-leader-and-his-mother>.
- 28 Rumbidzai Matamba and Chwayita Thobela, The politics of murder: Criminal governance and targeted killings in South Africa, GI-TOC, May 2024, <https://globalinitiative.net/analysis/the-politics-of-murder-criminal-governance-and-targeted-killings-in-south-africa>.
 - 29 Anelisa Kubheka, IFP councillor assassinated at community meeting, 3 others shot as gunmen fled, News24, 31 May 2026, <https://www.news24.com/southafrica/crime-and-courts/ifp-councillor-assassinated-at-community-meeting-3-others-shot-as-gunmen-fled-20260531-0951>.
 - 30 Reitumetse Pilane, Murdered Emfuleni official Martha Rantsofu's brother reveals family's grief — investigations continue, *Daily Maverick*, 4 May 2026, <https://www.dailymaverick.co.za/article/2026-05-04-murdered-emfuleni-official-martha-rantsofus-brother-reveals-familys-grief-investigations-continue/>.
 - 31 Prosecutor in Joe Ferrari case got death threat on his way to court, says NPA boss, Scrolla.Africa, 27 May 2026, <https://scrolla.africa/prosecutor-in-joe-ferrari-case-got-death-threat-on-his-way-to-court-says-npa-boss>.
 - 32 Rumbidzai Matamba and Chwayita Thobela, The politics of murder: Criminal governance and targeted killings in South Africa, GI-TOC, May 2024, <https://globalinitiative.net/analysis/the-politics-of-murder-criminal-governance-and-targeted-killings-in-south-africa>.
 - 33 Kim Thomas, Murder by contract: Targeted killings in eastern and southern Africa, GI-TOC, September 2021, <https://globalinitiative.net/analysis/targeted-killings-eastern-southern-africa>.
 - 34 Claire Doyen, Contract killings come cheap in South Africa, *Mail & Guardian*/AFP, 27 February 2023, <https://mg.co.za/news/south-africa/2023-02-27-contract-killings-come-cheap-in-south-africa>; Court hears how KZN chief paid hitman R75 000 to kill DA councillor, TimesLIVE, 1 September 2025, <https://www.timeslive.co.za/news/south-africa/2025-09-01-court-hears-how-kzn-chief-paid-hitman-r75000-to-kill-da-councillor>.
 - 35 David Bruce, Why did SA's police minister order the Political Killings Task Team shutdown?, ISS Today, 8 September 2025, <https://issafrica.org/iss-today/why-did-sa-s-police-minister-order-the-political-killings-task-team-shutdown>.
 - 36 Nkosikhona Malinga-Mnisi, PKTT to probe murders of 4 politicians during voter registration weekend, EWN, 23 June 2026, <https://www.ewn.co.za/2026/06/23/pktt-to-probe-murders-of-4-politicians-during-voter-registration-weekend>; Two councillors killed in Cape Town and Gqeberha, eNCA, 21 June 2026, <https://www.enca.com/top-stories/two-councillors-killed-cape-town-and-gqeberha>; on funding, Mkhwanazi confirms political killings task team fully funded amid explosive allegations of interference, IOL, 17 September 2025, <https://iol.co.za/news/politics/2025-09-17-mkhwanazi-confirms-political-killings-task-team-fully-funded-amid-explosive-allegations-of-interference>.
 - 37 Andrew Faull and David Bruce, Reducing murder must be a top SA government priority, ISS Today, 21 March 2023, <https://issafrica.org/iss-today/reducing-murder-must-be-a-top-sa-government-priority>.
 - 38 Western Cape Gang Monitor, Issue 9, GI-TOC, 30 June 2026, <https://globalinitiative.net/analysis/western-cape-gang-monitor-issue-9/>; Genevieve Serra, Underworld murders laid bare in organised crimes report, Cape Argus, 3 July 2026, <https://iol.co.za/capeargus/news/2026-07-03-underworld-murders-laid-bare-in-organised-crimes-report>.
 - 39 Western Cape Gang Monitor, Issue 9, GI-TOC, 30 June 2026, <https://globalinitiative.net/analysis/western-cape-gang-monitor-issue-9/>; Marsha Dean, Malmesbury trio in court for mass shooting, *Daily Voice*, 15 July 2026, <https://dailyvoice.co.za/daily-voice/news/2026-07-15-malmesbury-trio-in-court-for-mass-shooting/>; Robin-Lee Francke, Malmesbury mass shooting suspects to apply for bail, *Cape Times*, 16 July 2026, <https://iol.co.za/capetimes/news/2026-07-16-malmesbury-mass-shooting-suspects-to-apply-for-bail>.
 - 40 Nadia Khan, Gang warfare intensifies in Verulam after Anthony Gounden's assassination, *The Post*, 31 May 2026, <https://iol.co.za/thepost/news/2026-05-31-gang-warfare-intensifies-in-verulam-after-anthony-goundens-assassination/>; Yoshini Perumal, Family deny 'Tatu' was a gang boss, and plea to let them mourn in peace, without judgement, *The Post*, 14 April 2026, <https://thepost.co.za/news/2026-04-14-family-deny-tatu-was-a-gang-boss-and-plea-to-let-them-mourn-in-peace-without-judgement>.
 - 41 Shorné Bennie, Sobantu e-hailing driver shot 12 times, *The Witness*, 24 July 2026, <https://witness.co.za/news/pietermaritzburg/2026/07/24/sobantu-e-hailing-driver-shot-12-times/>; Elmon Tshikhudo, Another execution-style killing fuels organised crime fears, *Limpopo Mirror*, 4 June 2026, <https://www.limpopomirror.co.za/article/another-execution-style-killing-fuels-organised-crime-fears>; Riot

- Hlatshwayo, Suspected poaching boss 'Big Joe' Nyalungu killed in Mkhuhlu, *Mpumalanga News*, 16 May 2026, <https://www.citizen.co.za/mpumalanga-news/news-headlines/local-news/2026/05/16/suspected-poaching-boss-big-joe-nyalungu-killed-in-mkhuhlu>.
- 42 Velani Ludidi, Khayelitsha barbershop owner gunned down in suspected extortion killing, *News24*, 7 January 2026, <https://www.news24.com/southafrica/crime-and-courts/khayelitsha-barbershop-owner-gunned-down-in-suspected-extortion-killing-20260107-0773>; Noxolo Sibiya, Nyanga murder of Ghanaian businessman: Cops offer R50k reward, *News24*, 16 July 2026, <https://www.news24.com/southafrica/crime-and-courts/nyanga-murder-of-ghanaian-businessman-cops-offer-r50k-reward-20260716-0891>; Tankiso Makhetha, They kill so others pay: Joburg 'Sharia court' terror mounts as 4 Ethiopian businessmen hit, *News24*, 3 May 2026, <https://www.news24.com/southafrica/crime-and-courts/they-kill-so-others-pay-joburg-sharia-court-terror-mounts-as-4-ethiopian-businessmen-hit-20260503-0684>; Sithandiwe Velaphi, Four foreigners gunned down in ambush at traffic lights in Kempton Park, *News24*, 26 July 2026, <https://www.news24.com/southafrica/crime-and-courts/four-foreign-nationals-gunned-down-in-ambush-at-traffic-lights-in-kempton-park-20260726-0676>.
- 43 Nkosikhona Cele, 'Ubefunwa abe-Protection Fee' owe-Uber obulawe ngentululwane yezinhlamvu, *Isolezwe*, 2 September 2026, <https://isolezwe.co.za/isolezwe/izindaba/2026-09-02-ubefunwa-abe-protection-fee-owe-uber-obulawe-ngentululwane-yezinhlamvu>.
- 44 Riaan Marais, Murder for Money trial: testimony recounts loss, lies and a witness killing, *Daily Maverick*, 3 September 2026, <https://www.dailymaverick.co.za/article/2026-09-03-murder-for-money-trial-testimony-recounts-loss-lies-and-a-witness-killing/>; Marsha Dean, 'He felt unsafe': Former murder witness Eugene Jacobs shot dead in Elsies River, *Daily Voice*, 1 June 2026, <https://dailyvoice.co.za/daily-voice/news/western-cape/2026-06-01-he-felt-unsafe-former-murder-witness-eugene-jacobs-shot-dead-in-elsies-river/>; Faizel Patel, Durban ambush claims two Crime Intelligence officers as Saps vows justice, *The Citizen*, 26 May 2026, <https://www.citizen.co.za/news/durban-ambush-claims-two-crime-intelligence-officers-saps-vows-justice>.
- 45 GI-TOC South Africa Organized Crime Observatory, assassinations database, extract of 30 September 2026.
- 46 Ibid.
- 47 Lisalee Solomons, Two Anti-Gang Unit officers shot dead in suspected ambush on Gauteng patrol, *News24*, 7 August 2026, <https://www.news24.com/southafrica/crime-and-courts/two-anti-gang-unit-officers-shot-dead-in-suspected-ambush-on-gauteng-patrol-20260807-1160>; Ntwaagae Seleka, Suspected Vatos Locos member charged with killing AGU cops 'wanted to climb gang ranks', *News24*, 12 August 2026, <https://www.news24.com/southafrica/crime-and-courts/suspected-vatos-locos-member-charged-with-killing-agu-cops-wanted-to-climb-gang-ranks-20260812-0784>.
- 48 Ed Stoddard, 'Lawyers must be safeguarded,' says justice minister after Chinette Gallichan's murder, *Daily Maverick*, 23 March 2026, <https://www.dailymaverick.co.za/article/2026-03-23-sibanye-lawyer-shot-dead-in-joburg-cbd-while-working-on-labour-dispute-case>; Ed Stoddard, Illegal mining emerges as possible link to murder of Sibanye lawyer Chinette Gallichan, *Daily Maverick*, 25 March 2026, <https://www.dailymaverick.co.za/article/2026-03-25-illegal-mining-emerges-as-possible-link-to-murder-of-sibanye-lawyer-chinette-gallichan>.
- 49 Genevieve Serra, State witness in Cape Town drug case shot dead in Kensington, *Cape Argus*, 18 June 2026, <https://iol.co.za/capeargus/news/2026-06-18-state-witness-in-cape-town-drug-case-shot-dead-in-kensington>.
- 50 Geoff Hookins, Body of Shane Arends found, three weeks after abduction from home, *The Herald*, 29 July 2026, <https://www.theherald.co.za/news/2026-07-29-body-of-shane-arends-found-three-weeks-after-abduction-from-home>.
- 51 Takudzwa Pongweni, Rise in targeted attacks on Gauteng's school leadership sparks safety fears, *Daily Maverick*, 23 April 2026, <https://www.dailymaverick.co.za/article/2026-04-23-rise-in-targeted-attacks-on-gautengs-school-leadership-sparks-safety-fears>.
- 52 Prega Govender, Gauteng teacher gunned down on way to school, *News24*, 3 August 2026, <https://www.news24.com/southafrica/education/gauteng-teacher-gunned-down-on-way-to-school-20260803-0830>.
- 53 Jonisayi Maromo, Two women – the principal and a staff member – shot dead inside Inxiweni Primary School in Tembisa, *IOL*, 19 November 2025, <https://iol.co.za/news/crime-and-courts/2025-11-19-two-women--the-principal-and-a-staff-member--shot-dead-inside-inxiweni-primary-school-in-tembisa>.
- 54 Brandon Nel, Son cleans bloodstained ground after deputy principal shot at Stellenbosch school, *Cape Argus*, 25 November 2025, <https://iol.co.za/capeargus/news/2025-11-25-son-cleans-blood-stained-ground-after-deputy-principal-shot-at-stellenbosch-school>.
- 55 Jonisayi Maromo, Tembisa deputy principal in court over brutal murder of school principal, *The Star*, 17 December 2025, <https://thestar.co.za/news/crime-and-courts/2025-12-17-tembisa-deputy-principal-in-court-over-brutal-murder-of-school-principal>.
- 56 Michelle Banda, Murders of Ekurhuleni teachers and principals worrying – Sadtu, *Sowetan*, 21 April 2026, <https://www.sowetan.co.za/news/2026-04-21-murders-of-ekurhuleni-teachers-and-principals-worrying-sadtu>.
- 57 Ibid.
- 58 Nkosikhona Cele, Indida ngenkabi eqoshwe igonyuluka ngetulo lokusocongca uthishanhloko, *Isolezwe*, 18 June 2026,

- <https://isolezwe.co.za/isolezwe/izindaba/2026-06-18-indida-ngenkabi-eqoshwe-igonyuluka-ngetulo-lokusoconga-uthishanhloko>.
- 59 Sithandiwe Velaphi, 'Anti-thuggery' principal dies after being shot hours before anti-crime event, *News24*, 1 June 2026, <https://www.news24.com/southafrica/crime-and-courts/anti-thuggery-principal-dies-after-being-shot-hours-before-anti-crime-event-20260601-0870>.
 - 60 Tankiso Makhetha, They kill so others pay: Joburg 'Sharia court' terror mounts as 4 Ethiopian businessmen hit, *News24*, 3 May 2026, <https://www.news24.com/southafrica/crime-and-courts/they-kill-so-others-pay-joburg-sharia-court-terror-mounts-as-4-ethiopian-businessmen-hit-20260503-0684>.
 - 61 GI-TOC South Africa Organized Crime Observatory, assassinations database, extract of 30 September 2026.
 - 62 Robin-Lee Francke, Businessman and teen killed as taxi violence spills over into Atlantis, *IOL*, 26 February 2026, <https://iol.co.za/news/crime-and-courts/2026-02-26-businessman-and-teen-killed-as-taxi-violence-spills-over-into-atlantis>.
 - 63 Kim Thomas, The rule of the gun: Hits and assassinations in South Africa, 2000–2017, GI-TOC, March 2018, <https://globalinitiative.net/analysis/the-rule-of-the-gun-hits-and-assassinations-in-south-africa-2000-2017>.
 - 64 Rumbidzai Matamba and Chwayita Thobela, The politics of murder: Criminal governance and targeted killings in South Africa, GI-TOC, May 2024, <https://globalinitiative.net/analysis/the-politics-of-murder-criminal-governance-and-targeted-killings-in-south-africa>.
 - 65 Londiwe Xulu, Family torn apart as woman appears in court over sister's killing, *The Witness*, 26 May 2026, <https://witness.co.za/news/2026/05/26/family-torn-apart-as-woman-appears-in-court-over-sisters-killing>; Londiwe Xulu, Tears of relief after court denies bail in alleged sister-ordered killing, *The Witness*, 22 June 2026, <https://witness.co.za/news/2026/06/22/tears-of-relief-after-court-denies-bail-in-alleged-sister-ordered-killing>.
 - 66 Mandla Khoza, Court hears sisters plotted to kill mom for R80k policy, *Sowetan*, 5 August 2026, <https://www.timeslive.co.za/news/south-africa/2026-08-05-court-hears-sisters-plotted-to-kill-mom-for-r80k-policy>.
 - 67 Vincent Cruywagen, Murder of wine farmer was staged by his wife, state alleges, *Daily Maverick*, 18 November 2021, <https://www.dailymaverick.co.za/article/2021-11-18-murder-of-wine-farmer-was-staged-by-his-wife-state-alleges>; Chevon Booyesen, Zurenah Smit's bid for judge's recusal in Stellenbosch wine farmer murder trial, *IOL*, 12 November 2025, <https://iol.co.za/news/crime-and-courts/2025-11-12-zurenah-smits-bid-for-judges-recusal-in-stellenbosch-wine-farmer-murder-trial>.
 - 68 Wife, her ex-lover jailed for hiring hitmen to murder Eastern Cape traffic officer, *Daily Dispatch*, 12 March 2026, <https://www.dailydispatch.co.za/news/2026-03-12-wife-her-ex-lover-jailed-for-hiring-hitmen-to-murder-eastern-cape-traffic-officer>.
 - 69 Botho Molosankwe, Six members of insurance murders syndicate to apply for bail, *Sowetan*, 25 March 2026, <https://www.sowetan.co.za/news/2026-03-25-six-members-of-insurance-murder-syndicate-to-apply-for-bail>; Ntwaagae Seleka, Three husbands among 10 victims in alleged R10m family insurance murder plot, *News24*, 11 March 2026, <https://www.news24.com/southafrica/crime-and-courts/three-husbands-among-10-victims-in-alleged-r10m-family-insurance-murder-plot-20260311-0813>.
 - 70 The class definition, inclusion tests and precedence rules are set out in the GI-TOC assassination-recording methodology note of August 2026, which codifies the framework published in *Hitmen for Hire* (2017), *The rule of the gun* (2018) and *The politics of murder* (2024) and its 2026 extensions.
 - 71 GI-TOC South Africa Organized Crime Observatory, assassinations database, extract of 30 September 2026. Between 16 August and 30 September the series was audited three times against the written methodology – every 2025–2026 record read twice by an independent model against the standard, with every 'not an assassination' finding ruled on by the author – merging duplicates, attaching court reports to the cases they concern, removing records that failed the definition, and admitting six mass killings from the gang-violence and illegal-mining series into the separate mass-killing class.
 - 72 GI-TOC, Extortion and access to illicit firearms are key to understanding the rise in mass shootings in South Africa, *Risk Bulletin #26*, September–October 2022, <https://riskbulletins.globalinitiative.net/esa-obs-026/01-extortion-and-illicit-firearms.html>; Mary-Anne Gontsana, Attempted murder charges added to Philippi massacre case, *GroundUp*, 23 June 2026, <https://groundup.org.za/article/state-adds-more-charges-to-philippi-mass-murder-case>.
 - 73 Masoka Dube, Cleveland settlement's mass shooting 'linked to illegal mining war', *The Citizen*, 11 June 2026, <https://www.citizen.co.za/news/cleveland-settlements-mass-shooting-linked-to-illegal-mining-war>; Faizel Patel, Jumpers massacre: Three foreigners arrested after 13 killed, 14 injured, *The Citizen*, 24 June 2026, <https://www.citizen.co.za/news/south-africa/crime/jumpers-massacre-foreigners-arrested-mass-shooting>.
 - 74 GI-TOC, Extortion and access to illicit firearms are key to understanding the rise in mass shootings in South Africa, *Risk Bulletin #26*, September–October 2022, <https://riskbulletins.globalinitiative.net/esa-obs-026/01-extortion-and-illicit-firearms.html>; Mary-Anne Gontsana, Attempted murder charges added to Philippi massacre case, *GroundUp*, 23 June 2026, <https://groundup.org.za/article/state-adds-more-charges-to-philippi-mass-murder-case>.

- 75 Murder rate drops, South African Government News Agency, SAnews, 22 May 2026, reporting the fourth-quarter 2025/2026 statistics released by acting Minister of Police Firoz Cachalia, <https://www.sanews.gov.za/south-africa/murder-rate-drops>; the following quarter (April to June 2026, released 28 August 2026) also showed murder down, by 5.9%: Naledi Mashishi, Crime stats: Murder drops 5.9%, but political killings spike ahead of local government elections, *Daily Maverick*, 28 August 2026, <https://www.dailymaverick.co.za/article/2026-08-28-murder-drops-5-9-but-political-killings-spike-ahead-of-local-government-elections>.
- 76 Rumbidzai Matamba, The business of killing: Assassinations in South Africa, GI-TOC, April 2023, <https://globalinitiative.net/analysis/assassinations-targeted-killings-south-africa>.



**GLOBAL
INITIATIVE**
AGAINST TRANSNATIONAL
ORGANIZED CRIME

ABOUT THE GLOBAL INITIATIVE

The Global Initiative Against Transnational Organized Crime is a global network with 800 Network Experts around the world. The Global Initiative provides a platform to promote greater debate and innovative approaches as the building blocks to an inclusive global strategy against organized crime.

www.globalinitiative.net