OPINION

EDITORIAL

CRIME INTELLIGENCE IS FAILING

LAWLESSNESS in our country has reached an unprecedented level.

At Enyobeni tavern in the Eastern Cape 19 children and teenagers died under mysterious circumstances. The youngest victim was 13 years old, raising questions about how children are allowed to purchase and consume alcohol at legal establishments.

At least 14 people were killed in a mass shooting yesterday in a tavern in Soweto. On Saturday four people were killed at Sweetwaters Tavern, outside Pietermaritzburg.

President Cyril Ramaphosa has called for action after the killings, but questions will be raised about the police's lack of awareness of the planning and preparation involved in the crimes.

"As government, citizens and structures of civil society we must all work together even more closely to improve social and economic conditions in communities, reduce violent crime and stamp out the illicit circulation of firearms.

"Every single violent death is unacceptable and worrying, and killings on the scale we have seen in Soweto, Pietermaritzburg and previously Khayelitsha must spur us into a collective effort to build communities and make South Africa an unsafe place for criminals," Ramaphosa said.

Gauteng Premier David Makhura also weighed in.

"We cannot allow incidents like this where innocent people are killed like animals. This kind of behaviour has no place in this province," he said.

Citizens need more than just talk from politicians. Action is needed, and if the Crime Intelligence Unit has been hamstrung by incompetent management and leadership, or because their resources have been shredded, then this needs to be addressed immediately.

The police must do more to prevent these massacres from taking place at taverns. Crime intelligence failed during the July unrest, and continues to fail.

The national minister of police and national police commissioner must provide reasons as to why violent crime goes undetected.

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Gender, age demographics continue to undermine ANC

Patriarchy and ageism now rear their heads in governing party

COMMENT

VUSI GUMBI

THE ANC Youth League of Antony Lembede and Nelson Mandela and pivotal characters in the Struggle for independence like Lillian Ngoyi, Albertina Sisulu and Winnie Mandela provide examples of how young people and women have historically been at the centre of revolutions.

Over the years, however, the ANC has not created a political environment where women and young cadres are given the responsibility to lead the organisation, despite it having some of the most prominent and generally accepted women and young leaders in society within its ranks.

The party is gearing up for its 55th National Conference where it will reflect on the five years since Nasrec; the reality that its hegemony in the political landscape of the country has declined – with the party garnering less than 50% of the national vote in last year's Local Government Elections – with some sections of the country predicting a coalition government in the future; adoption of resolutions and most importantly, the election of national officials (also known as the Top 6) and the National Executive Committee members.

In 1997, Winnie Mandela was asked by the NEC to decline nomination from the conference floor to allow Jacob Zuma to be elected party deputy president unopposed; Dr Nkosazana Dlamini Zuma, with one of the most impressive political CVs – a seasoned Member of Parliament who has held a number of portfolios and has done remarkably well, in addition to being the first female leader of the AU Commission – was reduced to being the ex-wife of the outgoing party leader when she contested for the position of party president five years ago; Dr Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka, despite being a former deputy president of the Republic and serving as UN Under Secretary-General for Women, has never been elected into the Top 6 of the party.

Since the dawn of democracy, the party has held six elective conferences; the conferences of 1994, 1997 and 2002 saw only one woman elected into the Top 6 – Cheryl Carolus, Thenjiwe Mtintso and Sankie Mthembu-Mahanyele (all three occupied the position of deputy secretary-general (DSG).

The 2007 elective conference saw two women in the Top 6 for the first time, with Baleka Mbete elected national chairperson, the most senior position to be held by a woman in the ANC to date; and Thandi Modise elected DSG.

Baleka Mbete was re-elected five years later, and Jessie Duarte replaced Thandi Modise as DSG. Five years ago, Jessie Duarte was re-elected into her position and is currently the only woman in the leadership of the ANC.

The anomaly here is that unlike their male counterparts, women in the ANC have risen both through government and party structures – whereas male leaders have risen to their Cabinet posts through party ranks, and not both. This means that women in the ANC generally have more experience than men in the party.

Lindiwe Sisulu is likely to challenge Cyril Ramaphosa for the position of party leader, and the chances are that bid will be unsuccessful. Earlier this year, Mlambo-Ngcuka was reported to have entered the race to be the party's second-in-command, while Minister of Defence, Thandi Modise, was said to be considered by the Ramaphosa camp as the deputy president of the party. All three, while seasoned politicians, are over the age of 60.

This brings me to the second point – the absence of young people in leadership positions within the party.

The late Peter Mokaba, arguably the most prominent ANC Youth League leader, was never elected into the Top 6 of the ANC.

Malusi Gigaba, once touted as a future party leader, was never elevated within party structures, and Fikile Mbalula led an unsuccessful bid to become secretary-general in 2012 – all three are former leaders of the ANCYL.

Others such as Febe Potgieter-Qubule and Rapu Molekane have also been overlooked. Today, all six national officials of the ANC are in their 60s and their average age is 64, with party leader Cyril Ramaphosa – who is likely to be re-elected in December – turning 70 later this year.

"Peter Mobaka waited to be the one of the officials of the ANC … comrade Fikile Mbalula waited, comrade Malusi Gigaba waited … we are also told that we must wait in this queue. It means that we are going to wait forever because all those who came before us are still waiting in that queue, and there is no hope that they will one day make it to the other line," lamented Ronald Lamola, 38, at an ANC rally in Mpumalanga. He has been touted for a potential position in the Top 6.

When compared with the second and third biggest political parties in the country, the DA and the EFF, the ANC is nowhere close to gender equality and intergenerational mix: Helen Zille, now the federal chairperson of the DA, had two terms as party leader and was first elected when she was 56 years old. The youngest member among the national officials of the DA is 34-year-old Ashor Sarupen.

The EFF has a three-a-side with three men and three women in its Top 6, with party leader Julius Malema 41 years old.

The ANC – once hailed for its role in the Struggle for liberation and best representing the dreams and aspirations of society, now has patriarchy and ageism rearing their heads, making it difficult for the party to evolve, arrest the declining electoral support and adapt to the changing dynamics of the country.

If the ANC is to reclaim its place in South Africa as a vehicle for social transformation, it cannot ignore the gender and age demographics at its forthcoming electoral conference.

Gumbi is a Research Assistant at the Institute for Pan African Thought and Conversation, and a Master's Candidate in Politics – University of Johannesburg.

LETTERS

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Minister Bheki Cele was way out of line

MINISTER of Police Bheki Cele, as the minister responsible for public safety, should have tempered his rising temper.

Unleashing his anger at Action Society's Ian Cameron by shouting "shut up" does not bode well for such an honourable position. Cele's outburst also goes against the "White Paper on Safety and Security" that encourages community engagement through active citizenry and co-ordinated civic partnerships and structures to aid South Africa's complex safety and security demands.

Likewise, Cele's ranting is also contrary to the directions given by the "panel of experts report on policing and crowd management" established by the minister of police in terms of "the recommendations of the Marikina commission of inquiry".

Cameron presented the lived reality on the ground about lack of policing and an increase in crimes such as murder, rape, etc. in the area, a burning issue affecting most South Africans. Cele's racial bawling mixed with his Struggle credentials wailing goes much deeper. It was a display of the abuse of power and authority. It reminds me of the adage "absolute power corrupts absolutely".

While I acknowledge, respect and admire the Struggle credentials of all apartheid-era Struggle heroes, the context of the meeting was not one for recalling liberation Struggle facts.

It was a community engagement between the minister and residents of Nyanga and Gugulethu to discuss the rampant crime and policing in the area.

MOHAMED SAEED | Pietermaritzburg

No reason to not name tavern victims

MR JM Chipkin's letter published on July 8 refers.

He suggests that you should be ashamed to have published the names of the 21 young tavern victims, and provide an acceptable reason for so doing. So he joins his fellow South African, our esteemed president, whom I quote as saying: "losing our future to underage drinkers". That statement displays complete insensitivity to the position in which the children find themselves.

They were intended to be our future. But they came from dwellings that have never become homes by reason of the devastation wrought upon society by the ANC government.

Don't belittle them, Mr President, they are the true victims of circumstances over which you have had control. There is no greater shame on you, Mr President. And there is no harm in being enabled to name them individually, Mr Chipkin. Their names are engraved on the hearts of their families, and naming them directs our sympathy.

R TOTOS | Cape Town

RIGHT ON THE MONEY

MUSHTAK PARKER

Dollar outstrips Chinese RMB as global payment currency of choice

IT IS a perennial pastime of financial experts to speculate on the imminent demise of the US dollar as the predominant international currency and the global financial system's currency of choice for both payment and reserve asset.

This in contrast to the hope of the Chinese renminbi (RMB) emerging as an alternative international currency of first resort to many emerging markets to challenge and eventually replace the Washington Consensus and the post-World War II Bretton Woods arrangements that have governed the world's financial architecture for the past 75 years, through the domineering role and use of the greenback.

The dollar has no inalienable right to financial hegemony. Its dominance is a quirk of history tempered by the twin evils of imperialism and colonialism. But this hegemony has been diluting since the latter part of the 20th century when the IMF introduced in 1969 the SDR (Special Drawing Rights), a new international reserve asset to supplement the official reserves of the major member countries.

The SDR is a unit of accounts and a potential claim on the freely usable currencies of IMF members. SDRs can provide a country with liquidity. It is pegged not only to the dollar but to a basket of global currencies – dollar, euro, RMB, yen and pound.

The latest research published by Swift, the Brussels-based global provider of secure financial messaging services reveals that the dollar remains the most active currency for global payments by value in the world.

Swift's RMB Tracker reports monthly on the Chinese currency's progress towards becoming an international alternative to the other major currencies. In May this year, the RMB's share as a global payments currency was a paltry 2.15% in fifth position after the dollar's 41.13% share, the euro's 36.11% share, Pound sterling's 6.26% share, and the Japanese yen's 2.71% share.

Overall, the RMB payments value increased by 4.04% compared to April this year, while in general all payments currencies increased by 3.88%.

In terms of international payments minus those within the eurozone, the RMB ranked 6th with a share of 1.43% in May compared with 43.40% for the dollar.

These figures show the frustratingly slow progress of the renminbi as a global payments currency. This will probably be exacerbated given the state of China's political and economic relations with the West.

On Thursday, FBI director Christopher Wray and his UK counterpart MI5 head Ken McCallum met in London warning that China was the "biggest long-term threat to our economic and national security" and had interfered in politics.

Similarly, the largest clearing centre for RMB transactions is Hong Kong with a 73.63% share, followed by the UK with 6.68% and Singapore at 3.89%.

Given the deterioration in Sino-Western relations and the anti-democracy political clampdown in Hong Kong, the movement in customer initiated and institutional payments in RMB, excluding China, has remained static.

The Swift data shows that the share of the RMB as a global payments currency has declined from 3.2% in January this year to 2.15% in May – the same figure as in January 2019.

In trade finance the greenback has an unassailable lead with a whopping 87.49% share in May compared with the RMB's 2.37% share.

The dollar similarly dominated FX Spot confirmations.

How long the dollar's dominance will prevail is beholden to a cornucopia of factors. The multiple reserve currency system comprising the euro, sterling, yen and RMB could have advantages over the existing dollar-based system, albeit conditions, their acceptance and pace of adaptation is slow.

Ironically the biggest threat to the dollar's dominance could come from Central Bank Digital Currencies, probably a decade away.

Parker is an economist and writer based in London

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