

SA winning crime fight

SIR — So now the South African Institute of Race Relations accuses the South African Police Service (SAPS) of being “out of touch with reality” (Institute says police “out of touch with reality”, November 17) because they expressed shock at the murder of a British tourist. What would they have thought more appropriate — indifference? What accusation would they have then levelled at the SAPS — “Police don’t care as British tourist murdered”? Does the institute infer that the SAPS only expresses shock when the victim is a tourist?

We all know crime is a big issue in SA, particularly in our townships. But why use this tragic event to have a go at the SAPS?

As recently as October, Business Against Crime wrote: “For the first time in many years, the country is seeing a stabilisation, and in some cases a reduction, in many of the serious crimes (as reported by the minister of police at the release of crime statistics on September 9, for the period April 2009 to March 2010). This overall improvement suggests that the enhancement of the government’s approach to crime reduction is taking effect and that partnerships between the government, civil society and business are working.

“Whilst we remain concerned over the persistent high levels of crime and violence, we are cautiously optimistic that the gains achieved over the past 18 months will be sustained”

The job of the SAIRR is to focus on those issues that affect race relations in our country and spend their generously donated grants on researching what can be done to improve race relations. The Human Sciences Research Council tells us that 80% of the victims of violent crime know their attackers by name.

Instead of prophesying gloom and doom, demeaning the achievements of the police, vilifying legitimate government achievement and scoring cheap political points, the SAIRR should pay attention to this statistic and do something constructive.

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