



Communiqué of the International Council of Police Representative Associations

Cape Town, South Africa 21st June 2014

Preamble

The 10th biennial meeting of the International Council of Police Representative Associations took place on the 19th & 20th June 2014 at the Table Bay Hotel, Cape Town, South Africa. The meeting was hosted by the South African Police Union and the the following police representative groups were in attendance;

Affiliates

British Transport Police Federation
Canadian Police Association
European Confederation of Police (EuroCOP)
Federal Law Enforcement Officers Association, USA
Fraternal Order of Police, USA
New Zealand Police Association
Police & Prisons Civil Rights Union
Police Federation of Australia
Police Federation of Northern Ireland
Police Union in Denmark
Scottish Police Federation
South African Policing Union

Associates

Kenyan Police Union

Observers

Civil Nuclear Constabulary Police Federation
Organização Internacional de Policiais - Community of Portuguese Language Countries (OIP/CPLP)

Council re-elected its principal officers as follows;

Chuck Canterbury	(Fraternal Order of Police - USA)	Treasurer
Greg O'Connor	(New Zealand Police Association)	President
Calum Steele	(Scottish Police Federation)	Secretary



And elected the following members to the Executive Committee;

Mark Burgess	(Police Federation of Australia)
George Lewis	(British Transport Police Federation)
Anna Nellberg-Dennis	(EuroCOP)
John Ramsey	(Federal Law Enforcement Officers Association - USA)
Thandi Shimange	(Police & Prisons Civil Rights Union - South Africa)

Contributions and Speakers

Council was delighted to have been addressed by Nkosinathi Nhleko, the newly appointed police minister in the South African government and by J.P. (John Piere) Smith, mayoral committee member for safety and security from the office of the Mayor of Cape Town.

Council also heard contributions from Dr Elizabeth Grobler, consulting criminologist on the subject of police corruption and politicisation; from Dr Johan Burger, senior researcher, Crime & Justice Division, Institute for Security Studies, Department for Police Practice on crime and statistics in South Africa; Inspector Michael Brown, West Midlands Police (United Kingdom) and guest lecturer at the University of Worcester on policing and mental health and from Professor Monique Marks, Faculty of Engineering and Built Environment, Durban University of Technology, Steve Biko Campus on the subject of police unions in developing nations.

Council was also delighted to welcome Sr. Nazario Muauambane, President of the Police Association of Mozambique and Vice President of Organização Internacional de Policiais representing the community of Portuguese language countries (Angola, Brazil, Guinea-Bissau, Macau, Cape Verde, São Tomé and Príncipe, Timor-Leste, Portugal & Mozambique) to the meeting. Taken together, delegates and observers at the meeting represent the interest of over two million police and law enforcement officers from every continent.

Discussions and Debates

Council unanimously agreed for the Kenyan Police Union to continue its associate status and noted with disappointment the slow progress by the government in Kenya to formally recognise the Kenyan Police Union. Council calls on the Kenyan Government to expedite the process for the formal registration of the Kenyan Police Union and to allow Kenyan police and law enforcement officers to enjoy the human rights of freedom of association and collective bargaining.

Delegates were pleased to note the enthusiasm from Vic Van Vuuren, Director International Labour Organisation (ILO), Pretoria of the opportunities to work with ICPRA to further opportunities for the establishment of police unions in developing nations. Council unanimously agreed this should be one of the ICPRA priorities in the coming years.



Delegates spoke of the drive by governments to significantly reduce their investment into public services including in the police and law enforcement services. Many jurisdictions have faced reductions to police numbers whilst witnessing an expansion of private security contractors either directly delivering policing services or holding responsibility for large swathes of police support functions.

Police and law enforcement officers are essential in a democratic society. Public confidence in the police is delivered by the exceptional levels of scrutiny and accountability applied to them. The expansion of the private security industry delivering policing or policing functions has taken place with little if any public demand. No public consultations have taken place and scant regard appears to have been given to the impact on public confidence and trust when largely unaccountable, profit driven employees are responsible for the delivery of police and law enforcement activities.

It is clear that in almost every police and law enforcement jurisdiction pay and pensions were being eroded. In some areas of Europe police pay is so poor, some police officers are homeless and face the ignominy of sleeping under bridges between tours of duty. Police retirement ages are increasing with little regard to the physical nature of policing.

Citizens are rightly concerned with any suggestion of corruption within police and law enforcement agencies. Whilst poor pay is not an excuse for dishonesty, delegates agreed one of the most effective methods of undermining the potential for corruption is through fair and adequate pay for the role, expectations and restrictions placed on police officers.

Delegates also discussed the critical role police and law enforcement unions could play in tackling any corruption within their jurisdictions. It was important to ensure anti corruption measures were applied across all levels of the service and equally applied to private security and any external contractors responsible for the delivery of any policing function. Given the apparent enthusiasm with which some senior officers promote the use of the private sector and proliferation of retired senior officers as employees of these industries this is an area that needs further examination.

Council was advised;

Half of fatal police shootings are thought to involve vulnerable people in distress.

Half of deaths in police custody, often whilst under restraint, involve vulnerable people in distress.

More than half of deaths following police contact, often by suicide, involve vulnerable people in distress.

A third to a half of people arrested have mental health problems, learning difficulties or disabilities.



Citizens across the world view and regard the police and law enforcement community as a one stop shop for all issues that are unable to be resolved by any other public body or individual.

Delegates discussed the decline in investment in health provision for citizens with mental health needs and that police and law enforcement officers, as the service of last resort often find themselves dealing with what should be health priorities. A recent enquiry by the House of Lords in the UK estimated 40% of police demand was driven by mental health related issues.

Collective Bargaining & Freedom of Association

Council recognises the right to freedom of association and collective bargaining is a fundamental human right and that police and law enforcement officers cannot be denied access to these rights. Further recognises that where they exist, police and law enforcement unions have played a critical role in the stabilisation and development of policing services across the world and have ultimately helped build safe and stable communities for citizens.

Council notes too many police and law enforcement officers in too many countries across the world are denied the right to freedom of association and collective bargaining. Further notes that many governments fear allowing police officers these rights and that this fear is a barrier to progressive change in policing in many countries.

Council calls for all governments in all countries to support their obligations for human rights and permit and encourage the establishment of police and law enforcement unions in their nations; further calls for governments to enter into dialogue with organisations such as the ILO and ICPRA help allay any fears they may have over the creation of such unions and to do so without delay.

Corruption and Politicisation

Council recognises any suggestion of corruption within the police and law enforcement community is corrosive and destroys public confidence and that the public demand the very highest standards from police officers; that any suggestion of corruption fundamentally damages police and law enforcement agencies and that it is in the interests of such agencies to eradicate corruption in all forms.

Council further recognises that poor pay should not be accepted as a justification for corruption but does little to undermine the environment in which corruption can take place.

Council notes that where corruption exists, it can exist at all levels of the police and law enforcement community; that at a time where governments are driving down the costs of policing, this drive has cut access to training, has cut pay and pensions and that such actions undermine the efforts of police and law enforcement agencies to eradicate corruption.



Council further notes that corruption is not limited to police and law enforcement agencies. It can exist in all governments and organisations and that open and transparent government is critical in fighting corruption. Further notes that few organisations have been as proactive or successful as police and law enforcement unions in creating environments in which it is difficult for corruption to take place or to go undetected.

Council calls for governments to ensure police and law enforcement officers are fairly and adequately paid for the role, expectations and restrictions placed upon them. Further calls for governments to make available adequate funding to enable senior police and law enforcement officers to increase training in anti-corruption awareness and to create working environments where whistle-blowers are fully protected.

Council further calls for greater transparency in any enquiries into police corruption with consideration of scrutiny by lay members of the public.

Public Safety & Austerity

Council recognises that police and law enforcement officers are highly trained, highly skilled, professional public servants and that keeping their citizens safe should be the top priority for any Government. Commitment to that priority cannot be demonstrated by replacing these highly skilled, accountable police and law enforcement officers with cheaper, unaccountable pseudo police officers working for organisations whose sole priority is profit.

Council notes governments across the world continue to use the excuse of austerity to drive down their investment in policing and law enforcement and whilst driving down investment, governments actively promote the outsourcing of police and law enforcement activities to the private security industry and wider private sector organisations.

Council further notes the promotion of the private security industry in the delivery of policing functions has taken place without any public consultation and without delivering any improvement in the service delivered to the communities; further that this promotion has taken place without any public call for such action and little if any consideration to how such outsourcing impacts on public confidence given the very real expectations of accountability placed on police and law enforcement officers across the world.

Council condemns the lack of long term strategic risk management associated with the fragmentation of police and law enforcement services and activities; further condemns the disregard for the essential synergies that exist between different aspects of policing and service delivery and believes dissection of policing services will irreparably damage the ability of police and law enforcement agencies to protect citizens.

Council believes that outsourcing of policing functions is driven by vested interests motivated solely by profit and not the long term delivery of public safety.



Council calls on governments to immediately cease the expansion of the private security industry within police and law enforcement and to consult with their citizens on the subject with specific consideration to the questions of accountability and sustainability.

Council further calls for greater transparency in the relationships that exist between senior police and law enforcement officers and the private security industry given the proliferation of senior police officers who secure lucrative employment with such bodies upon retirement.

Policing and Mental Health

Council recognises that mental health issues are amongst the most sensitive and demanding issues affecting police services and police officers today; that police and law enforcement officers are the service of last resort and will always be called to deal with mental health related issues.

Council notes the criminalisation and incarceration of citizens with mental health issues is increasing at the same time as investment in mental health services are decreasing; that attending to and dealing with calls involving those with mental health issues takes up an ever increasing and disproportionate amount of police time. Further notes that education and training for police officers dealing with mental health issues is inadequate and that lack of training hinders the ability to deal with mental health patients appropriately.

Council calls upon governments to reverse the clear trend of the last fifty years whereby prison systems have become an ineffective proxy for adequate mental health care; for greater recognition of the demands faced by police services in responding to mental health related incidents and for more research into this misunderstood area of policing.

Council further calls upon senior police and law enforcement officers to ensure their officers have sufficient training in mental health issues and mental health law to respond to incidents and manage partnerships effectively; for all police officers and staff to assist in safeguarding the mental wellbeing of police officers by creating a culture of understanding where experience of mental distress is not stigmatised by prejudice, ignorance or fear.

Council further calls upon mental health providers to ensure that police officers have sufficient access to health, social care and addiction services to divert vulnerable people in crisis away from the criminal justice system.

Greg O'Connor, Chairman
on behalf of the International Council of Police Representative Associations