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Border Security: Factors that influence cross-border criminal activities: A South African reality and feasible alternatives

Introduction



- The presentation will focus on factors that influence cross border criminal activities from a South African perspective.
- A more closer and specific focus of the presentation centred around cross-border criminal activities around Beitbridge border post and adjacent border posts in Limpopo province
- It is my view that cross-border criminal activities in South Africa are more synonymous and the challenges are mostly common

Background



- The Limpopo Province is situated in the Northern part of South Africa bordering Zimbabwe on the north, Botswana on the west and Mozambique on the east.
- The Province is often referred to as the gateway to Africa and boasts one of the busiest land borders in Africa, Beitbridge port of entry
- The province has eight (8) land borders and one (1) International Airport
 - Beitbridge Border Post
 - Groblersbridge Border post
 - Stockpoort
 - Giriondo
 - Phafhuri
 - Pontdrift
 - Zanzibar
 - Plaatjaan

The Criminal Picture



- The criminal element that is consistent with border security is varying
- The following criminal elements will be dealt with in the presentation to give an overview of the criminal element around the Limpopo border entries

SMUGGLING

CORRUPTION

POACHING

Vehicle Smuggling



- Smuggling of vehicles across Limpopo River in Limpopo has escalated in the recent years.
- The Provincial Crime Intelligence Office have identified about Three (3) National Vehicle Crime Syndicates operating within the South African and Zimbabwe border line in Limpopo.
- Vehicles are stolen in as far as Cape Town and KZN and Smuggled through the Limpopo river into Zimbabwe
- The market has been identified in Zambia, Malawi and Zimbabwe

Vehicle Smuggling



- Intelligence information indicates that on a daily basis between three (3) and (6) vehicles cross the Limpopo river and smuggled into Zimbabwe
- The syndicate make use of smugglers along the river.
- The smugglers do not belong to the syndicate but however drive the vehicles across the river and once the vehicles have crossed the other person will receive the vehicle in Zimbabwe for further processing
- The Smugglers charge between R5000.00 and R15 000 per vehicle to assist to smuggle
- The smugglers stay around the villages along the Limpopo river

Vehicle Smuggling



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The Police recovered a vehicle in the Limpopo River on the 24th December 2016. The vehicle was stolen in South Africa and destined for Zimbabwe.

Smuggling of Explosives



- Smuggling of commercial explosives between South Africa and Zimbabwe has escalated in the recent years
- Commercial explosives used in the dwindling mining sector in Zimbabwe finds its way into South Africa and are normally used in violent crime such as Cash-In-Transit robberies and ATB blasts
- The explosives are also used in the illegal mining operations in South Africa

Cigarettes Smuggling



- One of the most smuggled commodity along Limpopo river bank and the Limpopo / Zimbabwe border line is Cigarettes
- Illegal cigarettes are smuggled from Zimbabwe into South Africa and sold in the black market
- A variety of syndicates have been identified to be operating in this illegal cigarettes business
- The other challenge posed by illegal cigarettes smugglers is the often violent nature of the gangs as they often use high calibre firearms to rob each other of cash and contraband
- These gangs are often referred to Goma Gomas along the Limpopo river

Human Smuggling



- Human smuggling has become one of the most profitable illegal business around the Limpopo and Zimbabwean bordeline
- In recent past a truck was intercepted in Rustenberg, North West, carrying over 70 illegal immigrants from Malawi. The youngest was about 7 years old.
- Shortly after that a truck was intercepted in Marble Hall carrying over 80 Malawian illegal immigrants, and again the youngest was 12 years old
- Another truck was soon intercepted in Thaba'tshipi carrying Malawian immigrants
- Members of the Provincial crime intelligence unit intercepted not less than 5 mini buses in the last year carrying Ethiopian illegal immigrants in the Province

Drug Smuggling



- Boasting one of the busiest land borders in Africa and a gate way into Africa, the Limpopo border line is exposed to a number of drug syndicates operating in and outside South Africa
- In 2016 a consignment of Heroin to the value of R92 million was intercepted at Groblerbridge Port of Entry
- Drug syndicates moving large consignment of drugs prefers using our land borders. This is mainly due to the corruption and lax border control mechanisms in our land borders
- It was also recently found that cocaine smuggling syndicates fly to our neighbouring countries and use land borders to enter South Africa

Smuggling of Counterfeit Goods



- In 2016 members of the Limpopo Tracking team and detectives raided warehouse in Musina and confiscated counterfeit goods worth millions of rands
- The other problem associated with counterfeit goods is their sub standard and that they are mainly not SABS approved
- Millions of rands in tax revenue and the eroding of competitiveness of legal goods by the illegal goods has a wide impact on the economy of the country
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Contributing Factors



- Corruption
- Rapid migration
- Weak cross border management systems -
- Porous borderline

Contributing Factors



- **Rapid migration** – the International Organization for Migration estimates that the number of international migrants increased from 150 million in the year 2000 to about 214 million migrants in 2012. It is evident that international migration trends will remain at high alert as seen in the Asia and Mid-east. Most of the trends are driven by internal **WAR** within countries, while the majority are driven by **ECONOMIC** prospects in the receiving countries.
- In South Africa migration trends have mostly been characterised by increased inward migration of persons from other parts of the world migrating into South Africa. Although no official figures were available, it is generally agreed that migrants from fellow African countries make the majority of migrants into South Africa.
- It is also generally agreed that migrants from Zimbabwe make the majority of immigrants in south Africa. This can be explained by a number of factors inc the geographical proximity between the two countries, economic, political and social hardships faced by Zimbabwe after sanctioned were imposed on Zimbabwe. This wave of Zimbabwe migrants into South Africa is further exacerbated by the other factors such as porous border and corruption at border posts. Depending on which literature one decide to quote, it is generally agreed that there are between 1 – 3 million Zimbabweans in South Africa.
- **Weak border management systems** – With Africa attaining its autonomy and independence coupled with the feelings of African brotherhood amongst African states as well as pressing challenges that the new governments and democracies imposed on those elected to provide basic services to the populace, funds had to be sacrificed somewhere to fund these growing social and public needs. Investments in areas of border control and border management were mainly compromised. In South Africa a decision was taken to remove the SANDF from manning the national border lines, a decision rescinded around 2010. There has also been reduced investment in the maintenance of infrastructure around the border lines with fencing in total collapse.
- It is also evident that border management systems in most African countries are inadequate to deal with the changing internationalisation of the world. Countries are found wanting in the areas of technology and innovation.

Contributing Factors



- **Corruption** – corruption is by far the most common contributing factor towards the increase of crime along the border line. The scourge of corruption cuts across the different disciplines and departments operating within and along the borderline
- **Porous borderline** – it is a well known fact that the border line between South Africa and Zimbabwe is at a state of complete collapse. The current SANDF deployment along the border is ineffective in combatting both smuggling of persons and contrabands along the borderline

Intervention Strategies



- **Multi-agency collaboration** – improved multi agency collaboration between the different departments and agencies operating within and along the borders
- **Regional Collaboration** – improved regional collaboration between South Africa and its neighbouring countries and within the SADC region
- **Improved Intelligence sharing** – improve the quality of intelligence generated to combat illegal activities at the border
- **Deal decisively with corruption** – corruption remain the main obstacle towards an effective and efficient border management in the country
- **Stability in the Region** – promote peace and stability in the region



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Thank you