

DURBAN DECLARATION OF CRIME-FREE CONSTRUCTION SITES BETWEEN

The Department of Public Works and Infrastructure

AND

South African Police Services

AND

National Treasury

1. Preamble

The construction industry is a critical sector for the reconstruction and recovery of the South African economy and has significant multiplier effect on labour creation. However, the industry has been seized with the problem of extortion on construction sites with business forums demanding a financial share of the projects.

The problem has been experienced since about 2017 and emanated from the well-intentioned provision for subcontracting of 30% of projects through the Preferential Procurement Policy Framework Regulations of 2017. While the Act is being repealed through the Public Procurement Act, 2024, the problem persists as it has become a practice for extortionists to demand 30% of the project, often without providing the requisite 30% of the work.

The impacts of site disruption are physical harm, including murder; delays in infrastructure delivery; increased costs to complete projects; loss of confidence in the South African Construction Industry, with a negative impact on investments.

The Department of Public Works and Infrastructure (DPWI) and the Construction Industry Development Board (cidb) convened a National Construction Summit on Crime-Free Sites on 19 November 2024. This was a significant milestone for the construction industry and was a deliberate and determined response to eradicating extortion on construction sites.

The Summit was attended by a broad representation of public sector representatives, private sector industry stakeholders, emerging contractors, and civil society with the goal of creating a safe environment for infrastructure projects to be executed without fear of intimidation, violence, blackmail and payment of protection fees.

2: Purpose

The purpose of this Declaration of Intent is to outline a collective commitment to eradicate extortion and violence on construction sites and to initiate mechanisms to urgently and immediately give effect to this commitment.

3. Shared Commitment

The participants of the National Construction Summit on Crime-Free Sites commit to adopting a multifaceted approach involving policy reform, enhanced security measures, community engagement, development of the emerging sector and sustained collaboration between stakeholders.

The participants pledge their commitment across the following key areas:

3.1 Legislation and Policy:

Strengthen the legislation governing the construction industry and implementation of appropriate policies for the development of the construction industry.

3.2 Law and Order

Improved data and reporting systems, rapid response leading to arrests for extortion on construction sites and prosecutions.

3.3 Social Facilitation

Develop standard frameworks and guidelines for embedding social facilitation in project planning and implementation.

3.4 Construction Industry Pathway to Success for the Emerging Sector


Provide for the systematic and structured development of emerging enterprises and skills development.

3.5 Stakeholder Collaboration


Establish collaborative platforms for industry stakeholders to share best practices and collaborate on solutions to the problems faced by the construction industry.


4. Signatories:


IN WITNESS WHEREOF, the Parties have executed this Declaration of crime-free construction sites on the dates indicated below.


Mr Dean Macpherson
Minister of DPWI
Date: 19/11/24


Mr Cassel Mathale
Deputy Minister of Police
Date: 19/11/2024


Mr Ashor Sarupen
Deputy Minister of Finance
Date: 19/11/2024

Witnesses:

Mr Sifiso Mdakane
Director General of DPWI
Date: 19/11/2024


Lt General Shadrack Sjoiya
Deputy National Commissioner:
Crime Detection
Date: 2024-11-19


Dr Rendani Randela
Deputy Director General:
Public Finance
Date:

Annexure A: Interventions Tracking Schedule

| No | Intervention Category | Responsibility | Timeline |
|----------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------|------------|
| 1 | Legislation and Policy | | |
| a) | Tightening regulations on who can operate in the construction sector. Vetting mechanisms should ensure contractors have the requisite qualifications and adhere to ethical business practices, reducing exploitation opportunities. | CIDB | 30/11/2025 |
| b) | Stricter selection criteria to ensure only qualified and reputable contractors are awarded projects. This reduces disputes over subpar work and strengthens industry credibility. | DPWI | 30/11/2025 |
| c) | Regulation of the private security industry (some extortionists pose as private security companies) | PSIRA | 30/11/2025 |
| 2 | Law and Order | | |
| a) | Improved Data collection systems | SAPS | 30/06/2025 |
| b) | Reporting and Early warning systems, including establishment of anonymous whistle blower hotlines / reporting tools | SAPS | 30/06/2025 |
| c) | Rapid response leading to arrests for extortion on construction sites. | SAPS | 30/06/2025 |
| d) | Accelerated court proceedings to handle extortion and violence cases efficiently. Prolonged legal battles reduce the effectiveness of deterrence measures like court interdicts. | DoJ | 30/06/2025 |
| 3 | Social Facilitation | | |
| a) | Formalising social facilitation frameworks. These policies should mandate early stakeholder engagement, clarify roles for community forums, and standardise how job opportunities and contracts are allocated. Social facilitation to be embedded in project planning and implementation. | DPWI and Entities | 30/06/2025 |
| 4 | Construction Industry Pathway to Success | | |
| a) | Harness cidb B.U.I.LD Programme for the systematic development of emerging enterprises and for skills development | All Client Departments | 31/12/2025 |
| 5 | Stakeholder Collaboration | | |
| a) | Industry-wide forums where stakeholders could share best practices for industry development and collaborate on innovative solutions. | CIDB | 30/06/2025 |