

MEC dismisses DA call for more police reservists in EC

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THE Eastern Cape may have seen an increase in the number of police reservists recruited, but the opposition DA says it is still not enough.

Safety and security MEC Weziwe Tikana said the number of reservists had increased by more than 16%

during the 2014-15 financial year and 2 031 in 2015-16.

However, DA shadow MEC for safety and security Bobby Stevenson said the number was too few for the crime levels in the province.

"High visibility police patrols are said to cut crime by up to 40%. According to the latest Stats SA victims-of-

crime survey for 2014-15, more than four in 10 households in EC reported that they had never seen a police officer on duty in their residential area.

"At 43%, this was the highest provincial figure in South Africa," said Stevenson.

Tikana yesterday said the government fiscus did not allow a reservist recruitment drive equalling crime statis-

tics. "We are not going to recruit for the sake of recruiting because reservists are paid for the work they do.

"It is the responsibility of each and every citizen to fight crime because crime is happening in our communities."

Tikana said police should act as a supplement to communities' tackling crime head-on. She said to limit people's

expectation, the government had introduced a policy to only bring in employed people to work as reservists.

"In this way reservists will only report for duty when there is work to be done," Tikana said, reiterating that people were not going to be recruited based on crime statistics.

Stevenson stressed commu-

nities were living in fear of the criminal element and by putting more boots on the ground "we will help build safer and secure communities". A new strategy was needed to make the province a better place to live in so that the Eastern Cape could retain its people, attract investors and create jobs, he said. — zwangam@dispatch.co.za