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An Overview of Specialised Victim Support

A. What is SVS?

Specialised Victim Support (SVS) is the technical support of victims of a violent crime through the investigation, arrest, trial and conviction phases of the criminal justice process, to ensure that justice is effectively executed. SVS then extends to parole and re-integration of the perpetrators. In other words SVS supports the victim through the police and investigation process, funds data analysis, liaises with the investigating officer and assists in managing the incident from the victim's side. SVS is based on 18 years of experience, and the codifying of 10 years of evidenced based analytics and SVS learnings.

The SVS Time looks as follows:



Essentially, SVS follows a systemic process through the crime timelines of what needs to be done, and when to ensure a successful outcome to the case. The SVS platform uses pioneering timeclock case management with a specific focus on micromanagement of the processes that needs to be followed.

SVS is executed through Together SACAN (NPO) which has a demonstrable history in this space, is well respected and as an independent NPO focussed on safety and security, is seen as a neutral party by authorities. Hence, we are able to bridge the gap between the authorities and private role-players. We use our own internal resources, but also draw on co-operative relationships with other partners in the criminal justice, data and investigatory space.

SVS is designed to support the law enforcement authorities as well as victims and this collaborative relationship culminates in the success of the approach.

B. The outcomes

SVS has demonstrated considerable success, and based on 109 cases activated (10 years' experience) of which 66 were farm related, we have achieved a 71% success rate (This includes the low 11% success rate in 2021 due to the changing crime landscape resulting from the Covid-19 Pandemic and the unique effects of extended lockdown on the country). The first case coming up for parole (partnering with family to oppose) should take place in 2021 but we hope this will be averted due to

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SVS collaboration with correctional services, due to unique circumstances and judge's instructions this case should not be put forward to the parole board.

Critically, SVS is not just the ability to manage a single incident, but the real power lies in the analytics that sit behind SVS from a big picture perspective. In other words, we are able to develop intelligence around incidents and patterns, which become invaluable. For example, in the farm space in KZN, we now know that 83% of perpetrators knew the victim (or had a relationship to the victim in some form or another), 80% had dockets at local police station against them for various low to mid-level matters, and 80% lived within a 4 km radius of the place where the crime occurred. This sort of analysis allows us to immediately build preventative programmes, and narrow the field when supporting the investigation. Naturally different areas and different crimes will have different drivers / characteristics.

C. Our Goal

SVS is primarily funded in two ways, via SACVIA (South African Crime Victims Industry Association) membership, or via a community or membership driven organisation that wish to provide SVS into their constituency. We also fund a significant portion of SVS on a pro bona basis although this does limit the effectivity of the offering due to resource constraints.

SACVIA members pay a monthly subscription and, if a subscriber becomes the victim of a contact crime, SACVIA funds various bundles (dependent on the benefits selected) of SVS services to support the victim in the aftermath of the incident. This may also include putting out a reward for information, and prosecutorial support of the NPA.

Ultimately, we aim to roll out SVS on a national basis, but initially within targeted regions or client bases. As SVS is expanded, and its efficacy become more widely known, it will play a preventative role in terms of crime as perpetrators know they will be more likely to be caught and prosecuted successfully. Preventative signalling also plays a key role.

D. How does SVS work

1. Clearing house for information

The current landscape w.r.t. crime prevention / deterrence and incident response uses multiple technologies, multiple security solutions, many different kinds of users, multiple responders, many different role-players often competing with each other. However, we believe there is no single one role player that has all the answers, all the capabilities and all the solutions

Critically, SVS does not aim to replace any role players but aims to support and compliment them. Hence SVS aims to connect the multiple technologies and alert / response mechanisms, share information quickly, collaborate across all role-players and responders, build and maintain a high quality database backed by powerful analytics and critically and create a funding mechanism to fund Specialist Victim Support.

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This is implemented through a single Nerve Centre that acts as a 'information' clearing house that compliments all existing role players and service providers. Our Incident Management & Information Capturing System (IMICs), an IT platform provides the software to manage the initial response and alerting of responders, as well as case & intelligence management.

2. First 72-Hour Collaboration Response Plan - Stage 1: Incident 1.1 (Hot)

The 72-Hour Collaboration Response Plan follows a micro-management process of IMICS (Incident Management & Information Capturing System) directives to ensure a precision response to high level priority crimes or where it is believed that SVS (Specialised Victim Support) will be needed.

It is the goal of the 72-Hour response plan that all tasks listed below will have been completed within the first 72 Hours, which is the time period in which the case is still hot, and at its most critical phase. Processes are monitored throughout the period.

Stage 1: Incident 1.1 (Hot)

- SVS Activated
 - IMICS (Incident Management & Information Capturing System)
 - Code Red (if needed)
 - Initiation of the 72 Hour Response Plan & Customisation
 - Victim Support
 - Truth Database
 - 14 Day Crime Scene Preservation Plan
- SAPS
 - CAS (Crime Administration System)
 - Investigating Officer
 - Death Notification/s
 - Crime Scene Photographer
 - Forensic Services
 - Specialised Components
 - Body Removal
 - MY SAPS Platform
 - AAA-Response App
 - MDDR (Mobile Device Data Recorder)
 - Scene closed and handed to 14 Day Crime Scene Preservation Plan
- Community Specialised Services
 - VCAT (Violent Crimes & Technology) NPO support
 - SNIPR™ ANPR (Automatic Number Plate Recognition)
 - Private Security
 - Agri Organisations: AgiSA, TLU SA, SAAI (The Southern African Agri Initiative), AFAS (African Farmers' Association of South Africa), BFASA (Black Farmers Association of South Africa)
 - Local, Provincial & National Associations
 - Crisis Centres
 - Investigators
- Air Support
- Traffic
- Medical & Rescue

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- Hawks
 - Technology Support
 - Specialised Services
- Crime Intelligence
 - Technology Support
 - Specialised Services
- SVS Echo Rewards (alongside investigation team)
 - Reward for information
- Outcomes
 - Arrest/s made, OR
 - SVS medium to long term processes begin.
 - All 72-hour support and collaboration process completed ensuring best possible outcomes for the case.

Initial Code Red Response

- Code Red is only activated for the highest priority emergency incidents that require a multi-agency approach. It involves the creation an alert that is sent to multiple agencies, response companies or their nominated members, who then press the dial button to call into the ERPC and join the management of the incident seamlessly. The PBX system is integrated into Code Red for up to 10 members to have full coordinated conference call support to ensure holistic case management. This cuts out the necessity for the Dispatcher to phone each agency individually and become the messenger between them manually.
- Essentially, it is the reverse activation of a “local” closed end group, and we would bring in appropriate Provincial Hawks, Crime Intelligence, tactical responders, Advance Life Support etc.

3. SVS Criminal Case Timeline Overview

Incident to Arrest

During this time the Specialised Victim Support (SVS) platform and all processes are activated. These include SAPS, the Hawks, Crime Intelligence, National Prosecuting Authority (NPA), Violent Crimes and Technology Support (VCAT NPO), Together SA CAN NPO and the National SVS Community.

There are five potential phases between the incident and the case going ‘cold’, with SVS processes aiming to avoid stage 5, or Cold cases.



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Arrest to Trial/Conviction

The process of the bail application, trial and conviction of the accused. Generally, if there is a guilty plea this takes an average of 90 days for all processes. If it goes to trial, then this may take 12 to 36 months depending on the number of times the trial is adjourned.

Trial/Conviction to Parole

Life imprisonment terms in South Africa can be of varying length and may last for the remainder of the offender's life. It is a mandatory punishment for premeditated murder, gang rape, serial rape and rape where the rapist knew they were HIV positive or if the victim was under 18 and/or mentally disabled. In certain circumstances, robberies and hijackings also carry a mandatory life sentence. The law also prescribes the minimum sentences for other types of murders, rapes and robberies to 25, 15 and 10 years respectively, so parole is almost always granted to prisoners serving life sentences after the minimum sentence for the lesser crime has been served. However, a prisoner must be given a parole hearing after having served 25 years.

Parole to Reintegration

Victim families and interested/affected parties must be informed and allowed to participate.

4. Data Analytics

The goal is to build a comprehensive picture of the eco-system, incidents and the ability to engage the authorities and other role players to respond and manage the risks down.

- Data analytics to bear on:
 - Case management (investigation, arrest and prosecution)
 - Behavioural analytics and building a database of criminal behaviour and patterns by analysing incidents, alongside intelligence prior to and post the incident.
 - Incident mapping, patterns and hot spots
 - Identifying persons, vehicles and devices of interest
 - Reporting tools and other management intelligence

- Some of SVS tools applied in analytics
 - Analytics and Laboratory
 - Research Crime Reduction
 - New Algorithms and Statistics Analysis
 - Case Timeline, Dimensions and Micromanagement Processes
 - Niche analytics - Truth data analytics
 - Cause and Effect, Trajectories
 - AI, IR4 and IR5
 - Seven Dimension Crime Scene Processing
 - Victim Impacts Statements and Analysis

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- Over and above incident specific generated information can be gathered from various sources:
 - Member of the community
 - Suspicious behaviour and vehicles
 - Movement data
 - Automatic Number plate recognition cameras and other automated data point entries
 - General community and other ground based intelligence
 - Law enforcement relationships
 - Rewards for information related to incidents
 - AAA-Response App inputs
 - AAA-Response – Tips
 - Other sources

5. Data from the community

- The strategy is not dependent on members having our Apps, but we have developed some useful technology that may be relevant for intelligence gathering, for example:
- GPS Voice Note Reporting
- Easily report suspicious activity with a GPS alerts.
- Alerts & Mapping
- Reporting of suspicious vehicles (registration numbers).
- MDDR (Mobile Device Data Recorder) App
 - When MDDR is activated, the phone silently sends a distress signal, position signal and turns on the microphone and cameras, records and transmits what the phone hears and sees to the ERPC, to make an assessment of whether there is duress and then take appropriate action.
 - We are able to, if we believe the driver is under threat, activate MDDR remotely (only after the 6-step authorization protocol has been successfully completed).
 - Initiate track and trace: We then use that data to track the user, the device or assailants.
 - To protect the privacy of users, no data is stored anywhere other than as it normally would be on the phone, but MDDR allows us access to the phone in the event of an emergency.
- Integration into Automatic Number Plate Recognition (“ANPR”) cameras or gate readers. Our Vehicle Check Centre in partnership with a firm called SNIPR, performs 4 million license plate reads a day and provides a managed response in the event of a suspicious vehicle being identified.

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