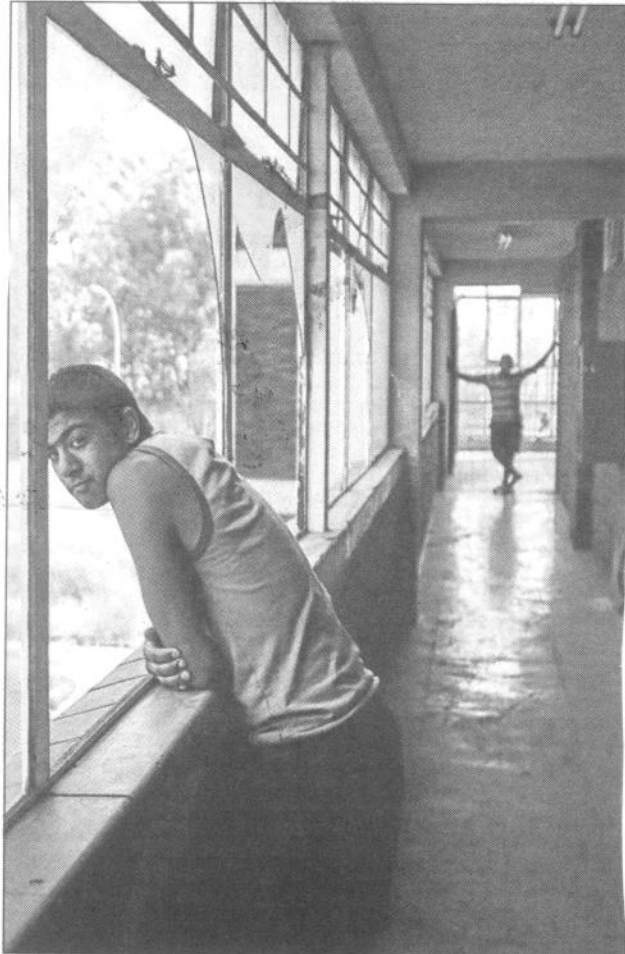


The Times, Pg 1, 18/4/17

Rich cop, poor cop

Suspended top cops are raking in millions, while those in lower ranks live in squalor. The Times looks at the glaring gap between the haves and the have-nots in the police force.



DISORDERLY: Quintin Beukes looks out of a broken window at the Springs police barracks
Picture: ALAISTER RUSSELL

JAN BORNMAN

AN INTERMITTENT water supply, smashed windows, broken lifts and a lack of security — these are the conditions police officers and their families living in Gauteng's SAPS barracks deal with daily.

Poor conditions at barracks could have a negative effect on officers' morale, affecting their performance, according to the Institute of Security Studies.

A constable's wife at the Herdeshof police flats in Sophiatown, Johannesburg, said: "We don't feel safe. People come here to steal. You often find that people break into cars here. Imagine that, people come and steal from the police."

The block is in a suburb battling drug addiction and rising crime. The latest statistics for Sophiatown show that robbery rose from 142 cases in 2014-2015 to 239 in 2015-2016. Cases of robbery with aggravating circumstances rose from 457 to 649 in the same period.

Most of the garage doors cannot be locked and the lifts at the 15-storey Herdeshof barracks haven't worked for more than a decade.

"They tried to fix it a few years ago, but overnight the

cables were stolen," said a sergeant.

The police barracks opposite the Springs police station on the East Rand has not had running water for the past two weeks.

"We have to take a bucket and walk to the police station to fill it if we want to cook or wash ourselves," said a warrant officer.

There had also been burglaries at the barracks, said a sergeant. The lifts were removed in October last year, he added.

Imagine that, people come and steal from the police

In 2015, officers at the Alexandra police barracks complained about an intermittent water supply and poor access control.

A constable living there said renovations had started, but were "moving slowly".

Police officers received letters two years ago warning them that if they didn't leave the barracks, they would be

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