



Blackshark

A Trading Division of Renolia Investments (Pvt) Ltd

CRIMEWATCH

January 2025 Edition

*Keeping You Safe,
One Alert at a Time!*

Welcome to the first **Blackshark Crimewatch edition of 2025!** The start of a new year often brings fresh opportunities, but unfortunately, it also brings new security challenges. Criminals are evolving, becoming bolder and more strategic in their operations. As your trusted security partner, we are committed to keeping you informed and prepared.

In this issue, we take a deep dive into the latest crime trends across Zimbabwe, unpack the most shocking incidents of January, and share expert safety tips to help you stay one step ahead. We also pose some important questions—how safe do you feel today? Is your business or home prepared for emerging threats? Let's explore the answers together.



Crime in Focus: What's Happening on the Ground?

Zimbabwe remains one of the most crime-affected countries in Africa, currently ranked 7th in the continent and 25th globally in terms of crime rates. The numbers tell a concerning story—a 45% rise in crime in early 2023 was followed by an 11% increase from January to August 2024. Armed robberies, cross-border smuggling, and home invasions are among the most reported crimes, showing that criminals are not slowing down.

With these rising statistics, it is important to ask yourself: Have I done enough to protect my home and business? Is my security system up to date? Do I have a reliable rapid response partner? If you hesitate to answer "yes" to any of these, now is the time to take action.



Crimes That Shocked Us in January

The Masvingo Heist – A 345-Year Sentence!

Imagine a group of criminals so ruthless and organized that they carried out **14 armed robberies** before they were finally caught. This is exactly what happened in Masvingo this month, where a gang of three robbers terrorized businesses and homeowners, often attacking in the early hours of the morning. Their reign of terror came to an end when authorities arrested them and handed down a combined **345-year prison sentence**.

This case highlights a crucial point—criminals are becoming more structured in their approach, operating in networks, and scouting their targets carefully. Many victims reported that they felt watched in the days leading up to the attack. Could it be that criminals are studying their victims before striking?

Tip: Always be aware of unfamiliar faces near your home or business. If someone seems to be loitering or taking too much interest in your routine, report it immediately.



Smuggling Gone Wrong – R14 Million Seized!

Zimbabwe's borders have always been hotspots for criminal activity, and this month was no different. On January 18, 2025, authorities intercepted a smuggler attempting to move R14 million worth of illicit cigarettes into South Africa via the Beitbridge Border Post. This is one of the largest cigarettes smuggling cases recorded in recent months, exposing the growing black-market trade that thrives in Zimbabwe.

What's worrying is that this is not an isolated incident. Smuggling is not just limited to cigarettes—it includes gold, fuel, and even stolen vehicles. Criminal networks often have local contacts who help them evade detection, meaning that some of these criminals are hiding in plain sight within our communities.

Question: Have you noticed an increase in suspicious activities near your workplace? Criminals often use legitimate businesses as fronts for illegal operations. Stay alert!

Cross-Border Crime – When Criminals Use Zimbabwe as a Hideout

This month, authorities uncovered a shocking case where a **South African fugitive fled to Zimbabwe after committing a violent crime**. It turns out that many criminals are taking advantage of lax border security to hide out in the country, often integrating themselves into local communities. This trend raises serious security concerns, especially for businesses that employ temporary or casual workers without thorough vetting.

As crime becomes more globalized, it is important for all of us to **be cautious when hiring new employees or renting out property to unknown individuals**. Criminals are no longer just strangers breaking in at night—they could be working alongside you, gathering intelligence, and waiting for the perfect moment to strike.

Tip: Always conduct background checks before hiring new staff. Blackshark offers vetting services to help you ensure that your employees are trustworthy and reliable.

Criminals Are Getting Smarter: How They Operate

Modern criminals don't just rely on brute force anymore. They are strategic, patient, and highly adaptive. Here are some of the latest tactics we've observed:

- 1. Home Invasions at Dawn:** The most common time for break-ins is between 2 AM – 5 AM, when most people are asleep, and neighbourhoods are quiet. Criminals often cut power, disable alarms, and use inside information to gain access.
- 2. Fake Deliveries & Posing as Workers:** More criminals are disguising themselves as maintenance workers, food couriers, or even potential customers to scope out premises before launching an attack.
- 3. Collusion & Inside Jobs:** Some businesses have fallen victim to crimes orchestrated by employees working in partnership with criminals. This is especially common in warehouses, retail shops, and logistics companies.

Did You Know? A professionally monitored alarm system can alert authorities the moment criminals attempt to disable security measures. Is your system up to the task?



Patterns to Watch: What's Next?

- **Organized Crime is Expanding:** Gangs are operating in larger networks, making it harder for law enforcement to track them.
- **Technology in Crime:** Criminals are using stolen access codes, bypassing security cameras, and hacking alarm systems.
- **More Smuggling Across Borders:** Gold, fuel, and illegal drugs are the top commodities being trafficked.
- **Businesses Being Targeted:** Criminals are focusing on locations that store large sums of cash or high-value goods.

What This Means for You: If you own a business or manage a property, it is critical to upgrade your security measures to keep up with these evolving threats. A simple alarm may not be enough anymore—consider CCTV, panic buttons, and rapid response services.

YOUR BLACKSHARK SECURITY PLAN

To ensure that you, your family, and your business remain safe, here are some immediate steps you can take:

- **Strengthen Physical Security:** Install CCTV cameras, alarm systems, and motion-sensor lights. Criminals hate being watched!
- **Enhance Business Security:** If you run a business, limit cash kept on-site, train employees to spot unusual behaviour, and ensure that access control is tight.
- **Be Vigilant:** Report suspicious activity immediately. Criminals often scout their targets in advance, and an early report could prevent an attack.
- **Partner with Professionals:** Blackshark offers integrated security solutions, from 24/7 monitoring to rapid response teams. If you don't have a security partner yet, now is the time to consider one.

Final Thought: Are You Prepared?

Crime is changing, and staying ahead means being proactive. Ask yourself—if an emergency happened right now, do you have a plan? The time to prepare is now, not when it's too late. Blackshark is here to help.

We want to hear from you! What security topics would you like us to cover next? Let us know!

Stay Safe, Stay Protected!
Blackshark Security Team

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