

FEMALE GANG STILL OPERATING IN WARWICK AVENUE
DAILY NEWS, AUGUST 23, 1999 By Farook Khan

The A-Team, a gang made up predominantly of women, is still holding the Durban central business district to ransom, according to the chairman of the Organisation of Civic Rights, Mr. Sayed-Iqbal Mohamed.

He is also chairman of the Inner City Community Policing Forum and, with Metro Mayor Mr. Obed Mlaba, is to address this major crime problem on Thursday at a meeting in Jubilee Hall, Durban.

The A-Team is a gang of about 20 women which, it appears, carefully picks out a shop which it intends to plunder.

Gang members flood into the shop, snatch money from tills and walk out. Shopkeepers are generally too scared to give chase or alert the police.

Mohamed said for the last eight months the forum has been surveying the crime scene in the city and had come up with a survey which would be made public on Thursday.

"The A-Team is still very active, even though most of its members were arrested in March. They have been released on bail and now they are back on the streets again," he said.

He said the activities of the A-Team had changed over the months - previously they would pick a shop, seal all the entrances with their members while others ransacked the store. But now, while they still "take over a shop, they just go for the money".

"The focus has shifted from them being mere shoplifters to armed robbers because they are now coming in with guns," Mohamed said. "Urgent steps will have to be taken after Thursday's meeting."

He pointed out that the incidence of serious crime in the inner city, where three satellite police stations operate in Broad Street, Pine Parkade and Nicol Square areas, had dropped.

"But crime in Warwick Avenue has increased on last year's figures. Armed robbery is up from six percent 16%, housebreaking from 24% to 33%, A-Team activity from 13% to 22%."

Kangaroo courts were also operational in the Warwick Avenue area, dispensing "immediate justice" and this has led to a reported drop in certain crime figures, Mohamed said.

