

Cape Town's ShotSpotter Gunshot-Detection Network — A Cautionary Case in Unaudited Policing AI

AI in the Public Sector · Good practice · South Africa

Quality score: 27/100

Evidence strength: Cautionary / limited

Summary

Cape Town ran a ShotSpotter/SoundThinking gunshot-detection network from 2016 in poor, apartheid-era neighbourhoods, citing thousands of alerts and dozens of arrests — but ended it in 2026 after no independent audit ever verified its accuracy or effect on gun violence.

Key dimensions

Dimension	Score
Evidence of impact / measured public value	1/3
Transparency, fairness & accountability	0/3
Transferability / demonstrated replication	2/3
Scalability beyond pilot	1/3
Governance, capability & sustainability	0/3

Evaluated by C-NAPSE

Data sources

[C-NAPSE web research](#) — accessed 2026-09-05

[City of Cape Town \(with SoundThinking/ShotSpotter\)](#) — accessed 2026-09-05

[The Conversation: Did Cape Town's gunshot detection system work? Why jury is still out on what ShotSpotter achieved](#) — accessed 2026-09-05

[IOL: Cape Town's gunshot detection system under review as city expands safety tech reset](#) — accessed 2026-09-05

Cite this — Evidoria. *Cape Town's ShotSpotter Gunshot-Detection Network — A Cautionary Case in Unaudited Policing AI*. Persistent ID: 0c5840ce-e599-4d05-b4c8-05610f7fe105.