

Fumiso Muyambo, Andries Jordaan, Agoston Restas

A POLGÁRI ZAVARGÁSOK HATÁSAI VÁLSÁGHELYZETEKRE A FEJLŐDŐ ORSZÁGOKBAN

Absztrakt

Bevezetés: Annak ellenére, hogy a Dél-afrikai Köztársaság az egyik legfejlettebb afrikai ország, számos kockázattal néz szembe, amelyek a társadalom szerkezetéből levezethetőek visszafelé. Az országot az 1994-es demokratikus átalakulása óta polgári zavargások sújtják: idegengyűlölet, sztrájkok, tüntetések a marikana-i bányában, választásokkal kapcsolatos incidensek és diáktüntetések országszerte. Módszerek: A cikk megírását újságcikkek, még meg nem jelent kéziratok, online blogokra épülő irodalomkutatások, valamint a szerző saját dél-afrikai tapasztalatai segítette. Eredmények: A dél-afrikai válsághelyzetek kialakulásában a polgári zavargásoknak nyilvánvaló szerepe van. Ezeknek a zavargásoknak a társadalmi, gazdasági, infrastrukturális és politikai hatásai bizonyítják, hogy a helyzet beavatkozást igényel mind az érintettek és a lakosság, mind a kormányzati szereplők részéről egyaránt.

Kulcsszavak: polgári zavargások, idegengyűlölet, válsághelyzet, Dél-afrikai Köztársaság, helyzetfelismerés

THE IMPORTANCE OF CIVIL UNREST IN EMERGENCIES IN DEVELOPING COUNTRIES

Abstract

Introduction: In spite of being one of the most developed countries in Africa, South Africa faces risks related with a violent society. Since the new democratic nation was ushered in 1994, the country has experienced civil unrest; from xenophobia, service delivery-protests, Marikana mine protests, election-related incidents and country-wide student protests. **Methods:** This work is a result of a literature search of newspaper articles, published and unpublished articles and online blogs as well as own experiences in South Africa. **Results:** The prevalence of civil unrest in South Africa has shown its importance in emergencies. Furthermore, the socio-economic, infrastructural and political impact caused makes it a critical emergency issue that requires intervention to protect the public as well as protestors themselves.

Key words: civil unrest, xenophobia, emergency, South Africa, situation awareness

INTRODUCTION

In spite of being one of the most developed countries in Africa, South Africa faces risks related with a violent society. Since the new democratic nation was ushered in 1994, the country has experienced civil unrest; ranging from xenophobic violence, service delivery-protests, Marikana platinum mine protests, election-related incidents and country-wide student protests.

Civil unrest embodies a range of numerous expressions of general dissent which ranges from peaceful protests to armed insurgence. It is a very broad term that legally describes activities by a group of people who intentionally cause disturbances, prevent the normal operation of legitimate business, or cause damage (Coburn et al, 2013; Sternheimer, 2012). The Free

Dictionary (2016) defines unrest as “*a condition of social disturbance, often involving demonstrations or rioting*”. It usually involves a group of people attempting to gain attention for some perceived injustice (Sternheimer, 2012) or challenging conventional public law and order. It is a kind of remonstrance against socio-economic or political problems (Coburn et al, 2013; Colletta, 2004); and at times even taking the matter into their hands in dealing with the ‘problem’ as in the case of xenophobic violence in South Africa. This can be through either peaceful or violent means; and at times the initially peaceful protests end up being violent. According to Coburn et al (2013) civil unrest, civil disorder and civil strife share the same meaning; and is an escalation of social unrest.

According to this definition, civil unrest has progressively become commonplace in South Africa (Lancaster, 2016). The year 2015 stands out as one among many that has undergone significant discontent and evident civil unrest. The country witnessed numerous service-delivery protests and a surge of xenophobic violence that reached a climax in April but continued throughout the year. The largest student demonstrations swept across the country and almost paralyzed tertiary education (Freedom in the World, 2016) which, like the service-delivery protests, became violent. By civil unrest, in this paper, it refers to the use of violence by a group of people to affect, challenge or change the civil or social process or status.

GLOBAL TRENDS OF CIVIL UNREST

The challenge of civil unrest is not unique to South Africa or developing nations for that matter. Other regions of the world have experienced civil unrest which spans across time and space. Figure 1 shows Verisk Maplecroft (2016) Civil Unrest Index (CUI) of 198 countries. In this ranking nations in the Middle East, Africa and Latin America pose the biggest risk. These nations have less developed economies and more unstable political systems than their more developed counterparts in Europe and North America. While France is the last one on the list at number 16, Syria tops the list with such countries as Yemen, Libya, India, Burundi, Mexico, Central Africa Republic, Nigeria, Venezuela, Argentina and Iraq, among others, falling in between. South Africa ranks thirteenth on that list (Verisk Maplecroft, 2016; Martin, 2016).

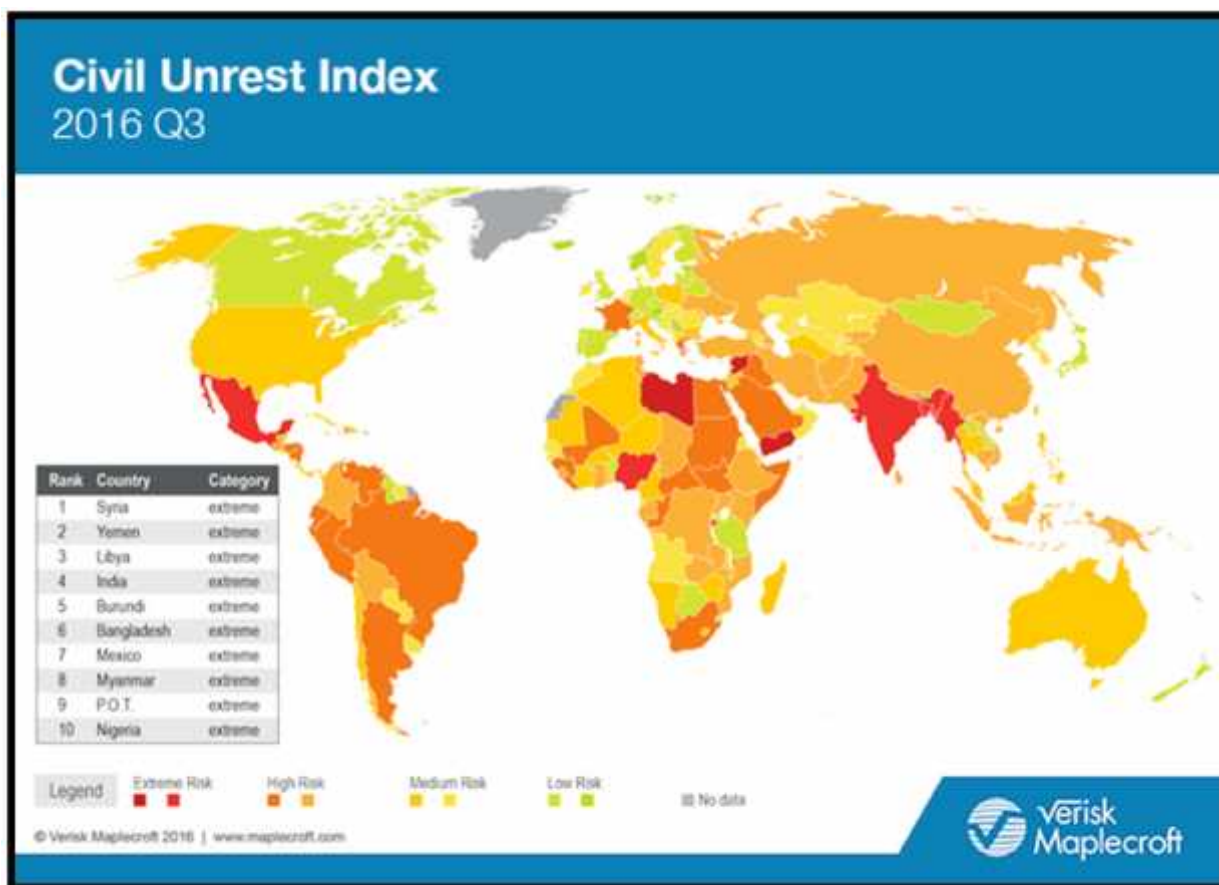


Figure 1: Civil Unrest Index 2016 (Source: Verisk Maplecroft, 2016)

Furthermore, the Global Peace Index (GPI) (2016) reports the slight deterioration of the GPI overall score in comparison with 2015. The rate at which the deterioration has occurred is also faster than the previous year. Once again the Middle East and North Africa had the highest deterioration score compared to other regions. Iceland ranked as the most peaceful, while Syria scored the lowest peace index. South Africa took position 126; as a result of its improvement in the scale of political terror and reduced expenditure in military and arms trade (GPI, 2016; Timeslive, 2016) while its neighbor, Zimbabwe ranked at the 127th position. The GPI, however, does not exclusively focus on civil unrest, but includes other forms of strife such as civil wars.

It is noteworthy to point out that some of the so-called developed democracies, although they may be experiencing less civil unrest at present, they have not been exempt in the past few decades. According to Abhinav (2011) the United States of America is featured four times as having experienced some of the worst recorded riots in the world. In 1921 the nation

witnessed the worst incident of racial rioting in recorded history where hundreds of people died 35 city blocks were destroyed and 10 000 people were made homeless. Some of the riots were the Los Angeles riots of 29 April 1992, Detroit riot of 1967 and the Chicago riots of 5 April 1968 which followed the assassination of Martin Luther King Jr. Europe recorded two riots on that list; the Brixton riots of 10 April 1981 and the recent England riots of 4 August 2011. However, India tops the list with the Bombay riots of 1992 where 900 people perished and people resorted to arson and theft.

CIVIL UNREST IN SOUTH AFRICA

Lancaster (2016) points out that the incidence of civil protests and strikes has significantly increased in South Africa. It has been claimed that South Africans have, over the past decades, developed a culture of protest action as way of politically expressing themselves. The Constitution of South Africa (1996) Section 17, states that, *'Everyone has the right, peacefully and unarmed, to assemble, to demonstrate, to picket and to present petitions.'* The South African Regulation for Gatherings Act 205 of 1993 (RGA) gives effect to this right. It explains that a gathering or assembly of at least fifteen persons on a public road or space is a lawful civil action. Therefore, it is not unlawful for a group of people to gather together and publicly express their views, it is every citizen's right, and that right should be protected.

However, initially peaceful protests have at times ended up being violent resulting in damage to property and sometimes, loss of life. Although it has been challenged as being unreliable, the South African Police Service (SAPS) (2015) annual report showed that out of the 14 740 'crowd-related events' from April 2014 to March 2015 15.5% were classified as unrest-related'. In view of this eruption of violence it becomes imperative for government to ensure that the public is also protected; and finding a balance in this regard can be challenging.

The 2012 Marikana platinum mine six-week strike for salary increase, which started off as a threat eventually became violent. Reports state that violent protests by 3000 rock-drill operators resulted in the death of 34 miners and injury of 78 were (Aljazeera, 2012; IOL, 2012). This incident had significant impact on the political environment in the country. The

aftermath of the Marikana massacre saw some criticism from different sectors. Moreover, there were accusations and counter accusations among the police, politicians and business owners, with concerns over the police's version of the incident (South Africa History Online (SAHO), 2012; Aljazeera, 2012).

71% of election-related incidents prior, during and after the 2014 national elections were violent. A 19% increase in events that turned out violent was recorded in 2015 and 2016. The recent Tshwane election violence threatened South Africa. Rioters resorted to arson; there was looting, burning of buses in some of the townships as well as reports of gunshots. One person was reported dead due to these violent events. Houses were set ablaze and shops that belonged to foreigners were looted (Bateman & Manyathela, 2016; Wicks & Ngoepe, 2016).

Allan & Heese (2016) argue that statistics show that service delivery protests have significantly increased over the past year. Since 2004 the country has experienced such protests, however, they have escalated in both frequency and intensity; usually turning violent after peaceful protests have failed to attract 'positive' attention from authorities (ACLED, 2015). Figure 2 shows the 48 major service delivery protests that were staged against local government from the 1st of January (SABCNEWS, 2014)

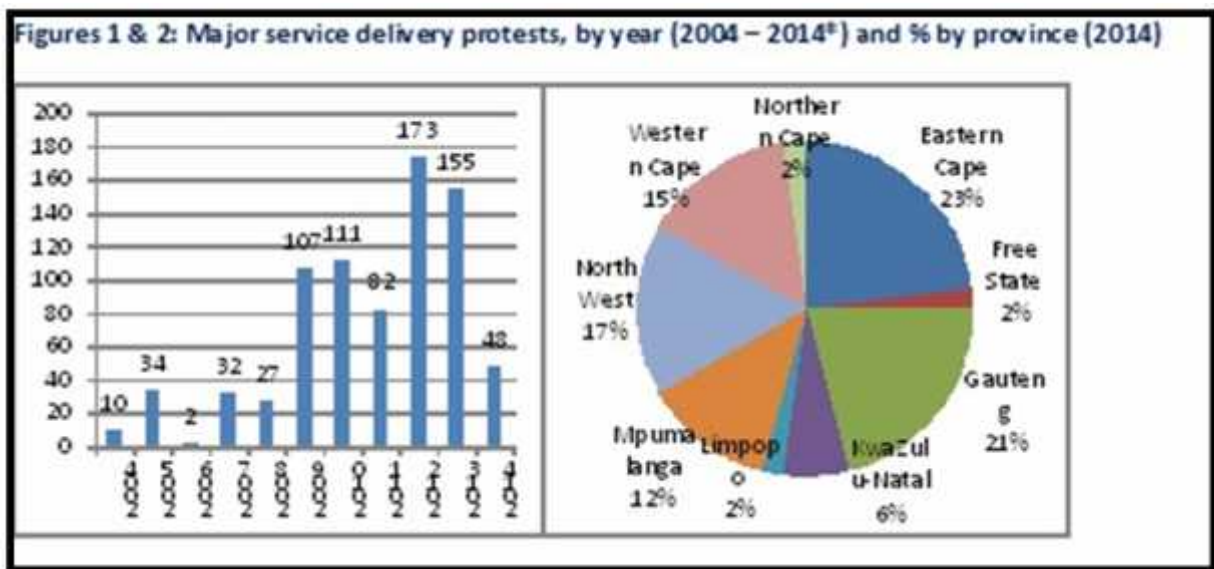


Figure 2: Major service delivery protests 2004-2014 by province (Source: SABC, 2014)

Fuller (2014) states that 430 service delivery protests were recorded between January 2013 and February 2014; which is an average of 33 per month or one every day. In those protests Gauteng was leading in the number of violent protests, KwaZulu-Natal and Limpopo follows

behind. Between January and April 2016 70 recorded service-delivery protests were experienced across the country (Mapumulo, 2016). While experts have blamed political dissatisfaction for the escalation of the violent protests many of them occurred in working class communities with high poverty levels and underdeveloped infrastructure. Water service delivery has been one of the major issues in these protests (Mapumulo, 2016; Tapela, 2016) of which 86% are reported to be characterized by violence (Isaacs, 2016)

The years 2015 and 2016 have witnessed South African universities being turned into centers of civil unrest; the biggest student protests since the end of apartheid in 1994. The “Rhodes Must Fall” protests began on 9 March 2015 against a statue at the University of Cape Town which honors the late Cecil John Rhodes, a former British colonizer in Southern Africa. Then in October 2015 a new wave of protests erupted under the banner “#FeesMustFall” demanding that tertiary education be free, beginning with the poor and ‘missing middle’- those who cannot afford to pay for such education. They engulfed the whole country with more violence than the March protests against cultural icons (BBC, 2016; Aljazeera 2016; ACLED, 2015) with 26 universities actively participating (Wild, 2016). The Figure below shows the prevalence of civil unrest between February and October 2015.

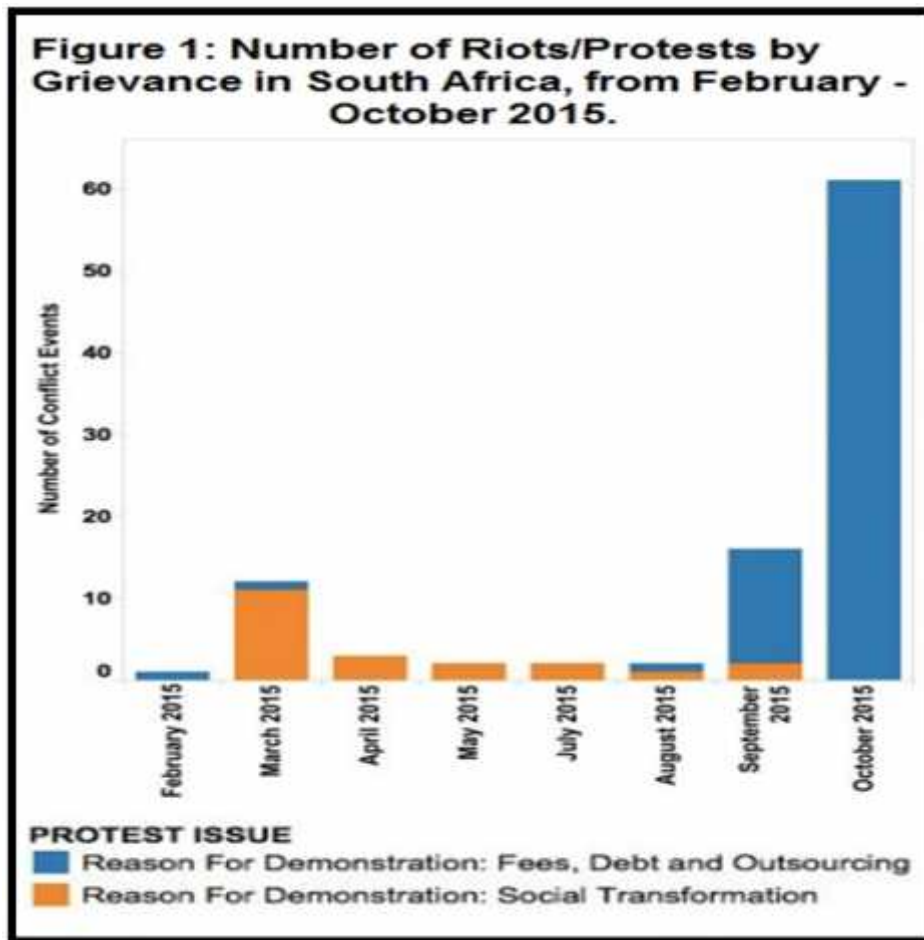


Figure 3: Prevalence of riots/protests between February and October 2015 (Source: ACLED, 2015)

Since 1994 South Africa has been laden with xenophobic violence against foreign nationals with 2008 xenophobic situation being formally declared a “disaster” Amnesty International (2008) which will be discussed in more detail in the following section.

XENOPHOBIC VIOLENCE IN SOUTH AFRICA: A CASE STUDY

The end of apartheid in the early 1990s opened South Africa’s borders to many migrants from across the world. Many African nationals from outside the country sought refuge from political strife and poverty in their countries of birth (Haffejee, 2015). Enduring xenophobic violence occurrences, however, indicate that attacks on African foreign nationals have

become a feature in South Africa and can erupt at any time (Vahed& Desai, 2013). The following Table shows the xenophobic violence activity since 1998; (SAHO, 2016; Wikipedia, 2016; Patel & Essa, 2015; Hickel, 2014)

Table 1: Xenophobic violence activity from 1998

Year	Xenophobic activity
1998	3 Senegalese thrown out of a moving train
2000	7 foreigners killed in Cape Flats
2001	Attacks – no mortality records
2005	4 people killed in Olievenhoutbosch
2006	47 Somalis killed
2007	Attacks – no mortality records
2008	At least 62 recorded deaths (*declared a disaster)
2009	Attacks – no recorded deaths
2012	Attacks in Cape Town and Botsabelo, Free State
2013-2014	5 reported were killed
2015	8 deaths were recorded
2016	Attacks following political riots in City of Tshwane

In South Africa xenophobia is one of the chief drivers of urban violence since the new democratic nation was born. Urban dictionary (2016) defines xenophobia as a term that denotes “a phobic attitude towards foreigners or strangers or even of the unknown”. Two Greek words were combined to form ‘xenophobia’, which are ‘xenos’ which means ‘stranger’ and ‘phobos’ meaning ‘fear’ (Mudaliar, 2015). Xenophobia in South Africa, however, is not just been attitudinally oriented but also manifests itself in a violently destructive manner to the point of burning people alive. The given definition, therefore, is misleading in the South African context where xenophobia is laden with violence (Naidu, Dippenaar&Kariuki, 2016; Harris, 2001; Tshitereke, 1999; Kollapan, 1999). The term ‘xenophobia’ in this study embraces a negative attitude and a practice of violence.

IMPACT OF CIVIL UNREST

Civil unrest in all its kind, especially if it is violent, results in devastating losses where property is destroyed and life can be lost. The Marikana mine protest resulted in 34 miners dead and 78 injured (Aljazeera, 2012); that means families left without fathers and husbands and sons who were bread winners. The more the fatherless and widows the greater the chances of poverty. Figure 4 shows the civil unrest in South Africa, particularly student unrest and service delivery protests.

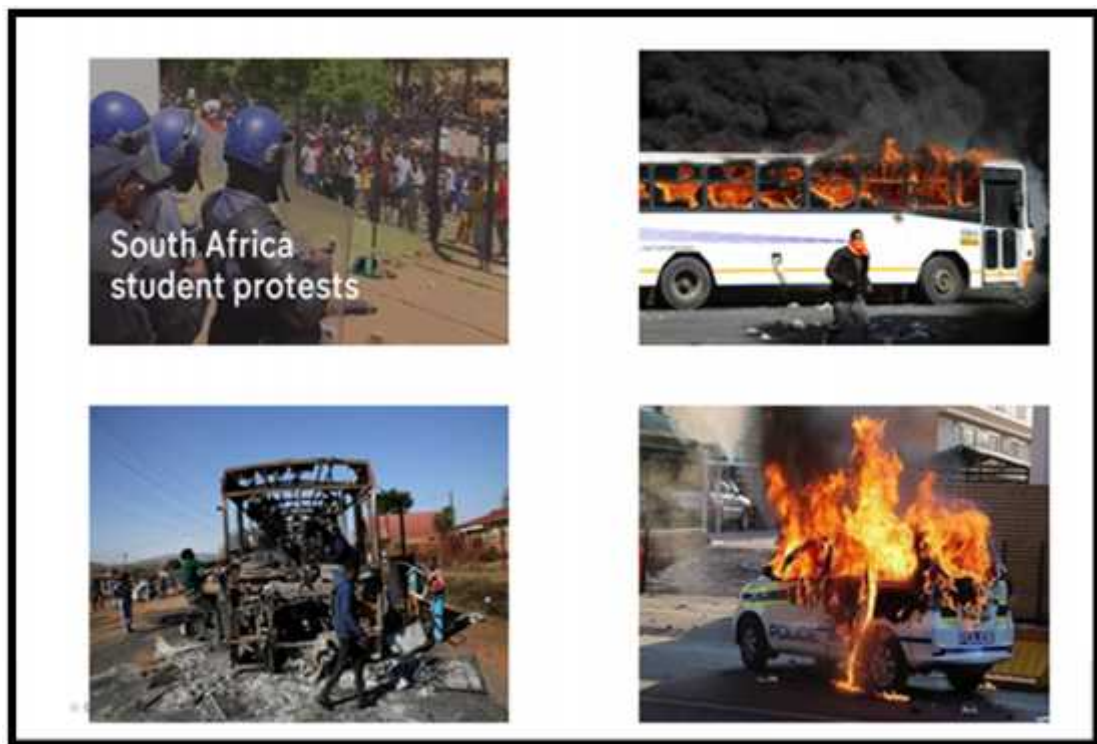


Figure 4: Impact of civil unrest (*Authors' compilation, from internet*)

As shown in Figure 5, xenophobia has caused tremendous damage to lives and livelihoods as well as damage to property.



Figure 5: Xenophobia (*Author's compilation, from internet*)

One of the most extreme and deadliest of these events was the 2008 xenophobic violence disaster where at least 62 lives were recorded killed and more than 100 000 were displaced (SAHO, 2016; Vahed & Desai, 2013). A critical question would be: How many lives should be lost for an incident to be a 'disaster'? When should the government and other stakeholders take decisive action to intervene and endeavor to stop or prevent loss due to civil violence? One life lost is a tragedy and is irreplaceable.

Xenophobic violence has also cost the South African government its treasured reputation (IRIN, 2008; IRIN, 2009; The Guardian, 2011) as a true "rainbow nation" that is inclusive and tolerant and respecting human rights as embodied in its constitution of 1996 (Patel & Essa, 2015; Adjai & Lazaridis, 2013). For example, The Guardian (2011) reports that South Africa was extremely lowly rated by evaluators from the African Peer Review Mechanism (APRM) Monitoring Project stating that the officials had failed to put xenophobia as top priority. BBC NEWS (2015) also reports that a Zambian radio station, One Africa FM, protested against xenophobia. It stated that violence against African migrants refutes African unity which the African fathers fought for. Xenophobia undermines the gains the country has achieved in integrating in the African continent as a champion of human rights, tolerance and prosperity (Clotney, 2015; Landau, Ramjathan-Keogh, & Sigh, 2005).

Fuller (2014) reports that 10 people had died by February 2014 during service delivery protests. Property has been damaged due to protesters setting fire to government buildings, private properties, homes that belong to government officials as well as vehicles that are set ablaze or overturned during protests. Fuller proceeds to note that the unfortunate thing is that insurers do not provide cover for asset damage during civil unrest. However, there is only one organization in South Africa that covers damage due to civil unrest and other kind of violence-induced damages; Sasria SOC Limited.

The effect of student protests has been felt by the students themselves, having their classes stopped. Students and uniformed forces have been injured, buildings burned and furniture burned and vehicles also destroyed in the violence. Moreover, there is expected effect on funding for research as well damage on international collaborations with other universities as well as discouraging prospective foreign students (Wild, 2016)

VULNERABILITY

The most vulnerable in civil unrest in South Africa, except election-related violence, are the black, African people or students. They are the poor and disenfranchised South Africans who live in the townships or informal settlements. They are either part of the working class or they are unemployed (Patel & Essa, 2015). It is noteworthy to point out that with xenophobia, a very particular demographic was attacked; the African foreigners. Moreover, most of those who are affected live in the townships or informal settlements. Other foreigners such as of European, Indian or Asian origin were not attacked. However, it is reported that about a third of the victims are South Africans (Patel & Essa, 2015).

WHAT CONSTITUTES AN EMERGENCY?

According to United Nations Office of Disaster Risk Reduction (2007) an “*emergency is a threatening condition that requires urgent action. Effective emergency action can avoid the escalation of an event into a disaster. The expression ‘disaster management’ is sometimes used instead of emergency management*”. Global Mountain Solutions (GMS) (2016) echoes the same definition and explains that it can pose “*an immediate risk to health, life, property, or environment*”. The characteristic of civil unrest in South Africa is that the prevalence has been high, with student protests, service delivery riots, and election-related protests as well as xenophobic violence that have lingered on for about two decades now. Violence, especially when perpetrated by a group of people always threatens the normal functioning of a community. The escalation of civil unrest in South Africa, the social, economic, I infrastructural and political damage that it causes shows the importance of intervention. Mangeri (2016) emphasizes that emergency management, law enforcement, fire service and others should work together to prepare for public gatherings in case civil unrest breaks out.

CONCLUSION

Civil unrest is a critical emergency issue that demands attention from such stakeholders as government, disaster management; in addition to the police who have always been at the center of response. This paper discussed the prevalence of civil unrest in South Africa, including its escalation during the past recent years. The various kinds of civil unrest have caused devastating impacts on the people’s social life. Lives have been lost, while some have been injured and still thousands others displaced. A lot of damage has been caused as well on the infrastructure, homes and business property. The economy definitely suffers negative impacts as a result of civil unrest. This paper also shows that the political position of South Africa as an inclusive nation has also undergone some damage in the face of xenophobic violence.

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Fumiso Muyambo

PhD student, Disaster Management Training and Education Centre for Africa (DiMTEC), Faculty of Natural and Agricultural Sciences; University of the Free State, Bloemfontein, South Africa

fummmie@gmail.com

ORCID: 0000-0003-3827-2434

Andries Jordaan

Director, Disaster Management Training and Education Centre for Africa (DiMTEC), Faculty of Natural and Agricultural Sciences, University of the Free State; Bloemfontein, South Africa

jordaana@ufs.ac.za

ORCID: 0000-0002-5169-7851

Agoston Restas

Head of Department, Department of Fire Protection and Rescue Control, Institute of Disaster Management, National University of Public Service, Budapest, Hungary

Restas.Agoston@uni-nke.hu

ORCID: 0000-0003-4886-0117

Lektorálta:

Dr. Pántya Péter, Nemzeti Közszolgálati Egyetem, Katasztrófavédelmi Intézet

Kuk Enik Eszter, Nemzeti Közszolgálati Egyetem, Katasztrófavédelmi Intézet (nyelvi)