

Report # 135

## BUSINESS AND POLITICS IN THE MUSLIM WORLD

### *Region: Southern Africa*

Weekly Report: 29 August – 04 September, 2010

Presentation: 08 September, 2010

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## **Summary of Report**

### **Elections & Governance**

#### **South African Strike Could Affect Next Presidential Race**

In South Africa, the public service workers strike continues following union rejection earlier this week of the latest government wage offer. However, there's much going on behind the scenes, not only about a pay hike, but also about political maneuvering within the ruling party and trade unions. The outcome could play a major role in whether Jacob Zuma has another term as South African president.

### **Economy & Energy**

#### **S. Africa's Zuma's push leads to strike talks**

The South African government and unions representing 1.3 million striking state workers plan talks Monday night following President Jacob Zuma's order to ministers to negotiate immediately to end the walkout.

#### **S. Africa state workers reject new pay offer**

South Africa's public sector unions rejected a new pay offer from the government on Wednesday to end a three-week strike but asked for more time to consult their 1.3 million members in Africa's biggest economy.

#### **At least 6 reported killed in Mozambique price riots**

Police opened fire on demonstrators protesting against rising prices in Mozambique's capital on Wednesday, killing at least six people including two children, police and hospital sources said.

#### **S. Africa state workers reject offer, take to streets**

Striking South African state workers staged a protest march on Thursday after rejecting a revised wage offer aimed at ending their three-week strike that has the government and the labor movement at loggerheads.

## **S. Africa gov't and strikers brace for new wage talks**

Striking South African state workers held small-scale protests on Friday as union and government negotiators prepared for bargaining next week aimed at ending the three-week walkout by about 1.3 million.

## **MOZAMBIQUE: Price increases 'irreversible'**

A volley of price increases in basic commodities and services has sparked two days of rioting and looting in the Mozambican capital, Maputo, but the government is refusing to rescind them.

## **ZAMBIA: Land and mineral rights in conflict**

Mining prospectors in Luapula Province, northern Zambia, have forced small-scale farmers from their land at gun point, according to villagers in the region.

## **Mozambique Calm Following Three Days of Protests**

Police in Mozambique say calm has been restored to the southeast African nation after three days of riots and demonstrations.

## **Fuel Industry Strike Threatens to Plunge South Africa into Chaos**

Thousands of fuel and motor industry employees in South Africa have joined a national public service strike in the country, but many others continue to resist union calls for them to stay away from work.

## **South African Strikers to Consider New Government Offer**

Striking South African public service workers are considering a new wage offer from the government aimed at ending a 14-day-old strike.

## **Deadly Mozambique price riots enter second day**

Demonstrators blocked roads with burning tyres and looted shops in Mozambique's capital Maputo on Thursday as deadly riots sparked by soaring bread prices entered a second day.

## **Price Hikes Trigger Mozambique Protests**

September in Mozambique's capital has begun with violent protests. Thousands have been striking over an increase in the prices of basic goods, including bread. Police responded with force - firing on crowds gathered on the streets in several suburbs and townships in and around Maputo.

## **Human Rights, Social Issues & Developments**

### **Troops clear barricades, Mozambique riots persist**

Mozambique's government deployed troops to clear barricades in the capital as angry protesters blocked roads and looted shops on Thursday, the second day of riots caused by soaring bread prices.

## **Environmental Issues**

### **Researchers develop tea bag filter that cleans water**

A group of researchers in South Africa has developed a filter that can purify water straight from the bottle.

## **Food Security & Health Issues**

### **MALAWI: Food surplus creates political storm\***

A surplus production of maize, Malawi's staple food, will not prevent at least one million people from being food insecure, a forecast that has not pleased President Bingu wa Mutharika. Mutharika has threatened "to close down [local] newspapers those lie and tarnish his government's image", which has led to the rapid politicization of the food production sphere.

### **HIV-positive Mothers Not Convinced to Exclusively Breastfeed**

HIV-positive mothers are not convinced to breastfeed their children because, regardless of what the doctors or researchers say, they think that if a woman is HIV-positive then breastfeeding is very dangerous for the baby.

## **Refugees/IDPs & Migration**

### **SOUTH AFRICA: Deportation of Zimbabweans to begin again**

South Africa will resume the deportation of undocumented Zimbabweans on 1 January 2011, ending its 17-month moratorium, the Cabinet announced on 1 September.

## **Detailed Report**

### **Elections & Governance**

#### **South African Strike Could Affect Next Presidential Race**

(Voice of America)

03 September 2010

In South Africa, the public service workers strike continues following union rejection earlier this week of the latest government wage offer. However, there's much going on behind the scenes, not only about a pay hike, but also about political maneuvering within the ruling party and trade unions. The outcome could play a major role in whether Jacob Zuma has another term as South African president.

#### **What next?**

VOA reporter Delia Robertson, in Johannesburg, says on the surface, attention is focused on the next round of negotiations.

“At the moment, no further meetings between the government and the public servants unions are expected until Monday. One of the largest unions, which represents health workers, has said it is busy explaining the finer points of the government offer to its members, suggesting perhaps that it's looking for ways to reconsider its rejection of the government offer,” she says.

#### **Pay and politics**

While the government and union workers differ on the size of a pay hike, others are weighing how the walkout can be used for political gain.

Robertson says there are “political elements to the strike, “adding, “These relate specifically to power struggles within the ruling party, the African National Congress (ANC), and issues around who will lead the party in the future and difficulties among the various factions within the party and the party's alliance partners.” Those partners include the powerful trade unions.

This time of year is typically considered South Africa's “strike season.” But this time it's particularly stormy, with between 500,000 and one million workers on strike.

Robertson says the difficulty in finding a resolution “comes back, I think, in a measure at least, to these factional disputes within the ruling alliance. There are people...who are working towards removing Jacob Zuma as president of the ANC and of the government come 2012, 2013.”

Later this month, the ANC holds its mid-term meeting in Durban.

“There [are] a lot of...factions putting themselves in kind of positions as to where they’re going to vote and who they’re going to support at this meeting,” she says.

Its politics at the highest level, she says, “and pressure for power.”

## **Economy & Energy**

### **S. Africa's Zuma's push leads to strike talks**

(Reuters)

30 August 2010

(Reuters) - The South African government and unions representing 1.3 million striking state workers plan talks Monday night following President Jacob Zuma's order to ministers to negotiate immediately to end the walkout.

Union officials hoped Zuma's call and the negotiations will lead to an improved offer to end the labor dispute that has closed schools, prevented treatment at hospitals and harmed investors sentiment toward Africa's largest economy.

"I have reason to be optimistic because the employer called us to a meeting," said Manie De Clerq, a spokesman for the Public Servants Association.

The meeting is planned for 6 p.m. local time (1600 GMT).

Fikile Majola, secretary-general of the NEHAWU union, said he expects the government to bring a new offer to the table.

So far, the government has said it cannot afford the demand for increases of more than double inflation to end the strike, which threatens to spread across the economy.

Zuma's spokesman said the president was particularly concerned about the impact on health and education.

"The president's view is that the strike must end as soon as possible, in the next couple of days," Zizi Kodwa said, adding that Zuma had spoken to government ministers at the weekend to tell them to resume talks.

South Africa's biggest strike since 2007 in terms of lost man days has left bonds, stocks and the rand largely unaffected, but market players said the strike would cap gains by the rand and could have a bigger impact if it drags on.

The workers are demanding an 8.6 percent wage rise and 1,000 rand (\$136) a month as a housing allowance. The government has offered 7 percent and 700 rand.

## **S. Africa state workers reject new pay offer**

(Reuters)

01 September 2010

(Reuters) - South Africa's public sector unions rejected a new pay offer from the government on Wednesday to end a three-week strike but asked for more time to consult their 1.3 million members in Africa's biggest economy.

The majority of unions under a coalition, which included South Africa's largest labor federation COSATU, voted against the new offer, although some smaller unions in the grouping were split in their vote.

"The unions met this afternoon and COSATU rejected the offer. The strikes will continue and we will continue to consult our members," COSATU Secretary General Zwelinzima Vavi told Reuters.

Members of the smaller Independent Labor Caucus (ILC) union umbrella group said there was a split in their vote, although the group would go with the coalition majority.

"Irrespective of what we say, the majority rejected it. But we must still go to our members and get their mandate," said Manie de Clercq, a spokesman for the Public Servants Association, the biggest union affiliated to the ILC.

The strike has ended the national euphoria over hosting the June-July football World Cup. It has shut schools, led to bodies piling up at state morgues and dampened investor sentiment.

COSATU said earlier on Wednesday it was suspending a one-day sympathy strike this week by all its member unions, including private sector workers, to give the state workers more time to consult.

Suspending the sympathy strike, which could have shut the vital mining sector, removes some of the pressure on President Jacob Zuma's ruling African National Congress to reach a deal fast.

The government may be hard-pressed to improve its offer significantly, as it has said its latest offer is well above inflation -- 3.7 percent in July -- and it cannot afford what it has already put on the table.

This could leave union leaders with a dilemma -- whether to try to persuade members to accept the offer or to press ahead with a long strike that leaves strikers without pay in pursuit of a deal that further strains state finances.

COSATU has more than 20 affiliated unions and claims nearly 2 million members.

The government offered state workers, including teachers, nurses, customs officials and office clerks, a pay rise of 7.5 percent and 800 rand (\$108.5) a month for housing. The unions are demanding an 8.6 percent rise and 1,000 rand a month.

The COSATU leadership, which said its alliance with the ANC was on the verge of rupture, appears to have taken a more conciliatory line since Zuma heeded its call for high-level intervention and ordered ministers to negotiate a rapid end to the strike, analysts said.

"They are turning the taps off a little, but are doing it slowly," said Sakhela Buhlungu, an expert on organized labor at the University of Johannesburg.

COSATU has threatened a prolonged strike by all its members, including miners and factory workers, which would cripple the economy, if there is no resolution of the state workers' strike.

South Africa is the world's fourth largest gold producer and largest platinum producer. The country's biggest firms, such as Anglo Platinum, Impala Platinum and Harmony Gold Mining, have stockpiles of ore and would not be seriously affected by a one-day work stoppage.

In yet another dispute in the mid-year strike season, the National Union of Mineworkers said more than 8,000 workers at Northam Platinum would strike on Monday in a pay dispute.

Officials have said the government will probably be forced to make cuts elsewhere and borrow funds to pay for the state workers' eventual pay rise, making it more difficult to meet its goal of cutting a deficit of 6.7 percent of GDP.

## **At least 6 reported killed in Mozambique price riots**

(Reuters)

01 September 2010

(Reuters) - Police opened fire on demonstrators protesting against rising prices in Mozambique's capital on Wednesday, killing at least six people including two children, police and hospital sources said.

The violence was the worst in the poor southern African country, home to 23 million people, since 2008.

The government said it had the situation under control.

"We call on everyone to be calm and serene. We ask for everyone's collaboration," Interior Minister Jose Pacheco said on Radio Mozambique.

Some police officials said police had shot live ammunition after running out of rubber bullets, although a national police spokesman told a news conference live ammunition was not used, according to Portugal's Lusa news agency.

Police officially said three people were killed, including two who were shot dead. Hospital and police sources said the death toll was at least six.

The president is expected to address the country on the protests soon, Lusa quoted a presidential spokesman as saying.

The protests appeared to have been touched off when the government increased prices on bread by 30 percent on Wednesday as wheat prices have soared around the world.

Residents of one of the world's poorest countries say they have been hit hard by rising costs for basic necessities including bread, with rising costs for fuel and other essentials adding to their troubles.

"The government underestimated the situation and can't understand or doesn't want to understand that this is a protest against the higher cost of living," Alice Mabota, head of the Mozambican League of Human Rights, told Lusa.

"The rise in bread prices and other essential goods is not the reason for the protest, but only the drop of water that spilled the cup."

An estimated 70 percent of Mozambique's population live below the poverty line, according to the CIA World Factbook. The country is heavily dependent on imports from South Africa, which have become more expensive in recent months as the South African rand currency has strengthened.

"I can hardly feed myself. I will join the protest because I'm outraged by this high cost of living," Nelfa Temoteo, who lives in the densely populated Malhazine suburb, said.

Maputo police also called for calm as the riots spread throughout the city.

"There is looting and vandalization. Shops including banks in the Central Business District are closed," Chefo said.

In 2008, at least six people were killed in Mozambique in protests in over high fuel prices and living costs. The government agreed to cut the price of diesel fuel for minibus taxis.

Despite its poverty, Mozambique is one of the fastest growing economies on the world's poorest continent. Its tourism sector is set to increase five-fold to \$2 billion in the next several years as more people flock to its beachfront resorts.

## **S. Africa state workers reject offer, take to streets**

(Reuters)

02 September 2010

(Reuters) - Striking South African state workers staged a protest march on Thursday after rejecting a revised wage offer aimed at ending their three-week strike that has the government and the labor movement at loggerheads.

The majority of unions, most of which are in the largest labor federation COSATU, voted against the offer on Wednesday, prolonging a strike by 1.3 million state workers that a prominent economist said was costing about \$150 million a day.

The strike has shut schools, led to bodies piling up in state morgues and thrown cold water on the national euphoria over hosting the June-July football World Cup. It also has dampened investor sentiment for Africa's biggest economy.

The government has said it cannot afford the offer it has on the table, let alone anything higher, and will have to make cuts elsewhere to meet it.

"There are behind-the-scenes political discussions going on. I cannot give more details but leaders will continue to work for a solution," COSATU Secretary General Zwelinzima Vavi told Reuters.

A formal bargaining session between labor and government officials planned for Thursday will now likely to take place on Monday as unions seek more time to persuade their rank-and-file members to reconsider the offer, officials said.

"We expect to hear from unions after they consult members. It's unlikely that they will be done today," Dumisani Nkwamba, spokesman for the public service ministry, told Reuters.

Hundreds of striking state workers dressed in red T-shirts, sang and shouted in a protest march through the streets of Johannesburg, calling on government to meet their demands.

The government, which offered workers a 7.5 percent pay raise and 800 rand (\$110) a month for housing, has said it will be forced to make budget cuts and seek funds to pay for it.

The housing allowance total is twice as much as the government spends on environmental protection and nearly double the cost of a new plan to expand antiretroviral therapy in the country with one of the world's highest infection rates of

HIV/AIDS.

The unions, whose state sector members include prison guards, teachers, nurses and immigration officers, have been demanding a rise of 8.6 percent, well above the 3.7 percent inflation rate, and 1,000 rand for housing.

"Simply put, there is no money available. The resources to cover the draft agreement proposal will have to come from reducing expenditure in other areas in the budget," government spokesman Themba Maseko said.

Union leaders said they would continue to consult their members, and labor sources said they felt the offer had not been properly explained to the rank and file, indicating they were trying to reverse the vote and seek approval for the deal.

"People have rejected purely on the figures. They don't fully understand that the agreement has some positive aspects. We will try to explain this during the consultations," a union official who did not want to be named told Reuters.

A threatened sympathy strike by all the nearly 2 million members of COSATU-affiliated unions temporarily was put on hold on Wednesday, easing concerns about a walkout that could hurt mining and manufacturing in Africa's largest economy.

Suspending the sympathy strike, which could have shut the mining sector that is responsible for about 5 to 6 percent of GDP, removes some of the pressure on President Jacob Zuma's ruling African National Congress to reach a deal fast.

A separate labor dispute by 70,000 workers seeking 20 percent wage increases in petrol stations, garages and auto dealerships entered its second day with a protest march planned for Saturday in Durban, the NUMSA union said.

## **S. Africa gov't and strikers brace for new wage talks**

(Reuters)

03 September 2010

(Reuters) - Striking South African state workers held small-scale protests on Friday as union and government negotiators prepared for bargaining next week aimed at ending the three-week walkout by about 1.3 million.

The unions rejected a government offer of 7.5 percent pay raises, nearly double inflation, and 800 rand a month for housing, with workers demanding a better offer.

The parties have a bargaining session planned for Monday where they will try to find a way to end the strike that has been the biggest in terms of lost man days in three years.

The strike has hit hardest the legions of poor who depend on state services to live and has quashed the euphoria the country felt after hosting the June-to-July soccer World Cup.

"It can go either way on Monday. But whatever the outcome it will be a united position from COSATU and the independent unions," said a union spokesman who did not want to be named.

The unions, who represent court clerks, prison guards, customs officials and nurses, are seeking pay rises of 8.6 percent and 1,000 rand a month for housing. Most are affiliated with COSATU, the country's largest labor federation.

"Both parties have dug themselves into supposed final positions, which to some extent will become an obstacle to bringing the strike to an end," said labor lawyer Tony Healy.

Government officials said the state cannot afford the offer it has already put on the table and there is no more room in the budget to increase its offer, which would swell state spending by about one percent.

"The one certainty is that the strike will not be resolved on the basis of labor's current demands," Healy said.

Union leaders have said they understand the government's financial constraints and will try to convince rank and file to accept the deal.

COSATU planned a Friday strategy meeting to discuss the deal with its members, the more militant of which, analysts said, may not want to budge and could drag the strike out even longer, defying the wishes of union leaders, analysts said.

"We are going as quickly as we can and will make an announcement when members give us their mandate. I am not sure when that will be," COSATU's President Sidumo Dlamini told Reuters.

Pay and benefits are the biggest expenditure category in the state budget. In 2006/07, about 35 percent of tax revenue went toward it. That rose to about 47 percent in 2009/10.

"A greater volume of taxpayer money will have to be spent on state employees, thereby detracting from much needed expenditure on improving education, health, transport and infrastructure," said NKC Independent Economists economist Christie Viljoen.

COSATU put on hold a plan to have all its near two million members in vital industries including mining, go on a sympathy strike to allow the state workers to consider the new offer.

A prolonged strike by all COSATU members would put enormous pressure on the government to reach a deal to prevent any major blow to Africa's largest economy.

The strike has seen South Africans volunteering at hospitals and the private sector filling gaps left by striking workers.

Emergency service provider Netcare said it treated about 730 patients stranded by the strike, costing about 15 million rand.

## **MOZAMBIQUE: Price increases 'irreversible'**

(IRIN)

02 September 2010

MAPUTO , 2 September 2010 (IRIN) - A volley of price increases in basic commodities and services has sparked two days of rioting and looting in the Mozambican capital, Maputo, but the government is refusing to rescind them.

"The price increase is irreversible. Prices will only fall if all of us work hard," government spokesperson Alberto Nkutumula told a press conference after a cabinet meeting on 2 September. He also announced that a five-year programme to eradicate poverty would be implemented.

"This proves that we've got a blind and deaf government," protester António Muchanga told IRIN.

Media reports claim that 7 people, including two children, have been killed and hundreds injured in the past two days of disturbances, and that security forces used live ammunition in their attempts to suppress the protests, an accusation denied by government.

The price of a loaf of bread will rise by 25 percent on 6 September, although many shops are said to have already factored in the increase. In recent days water tariffs have risen by 11 percent and electricity by 13.5 percent.

About half of Mozambique's 20 million people live below the poverty line, despite an average economic growth rate of 8 percent for the past 15 years, but in 2009 this slowed to five percent in the wake of the global recession. Official unemployment is around 21 percent, but in Maputo, a city of about 1.5 million, the poverty level is estimated as high as 60 percent.

### **Good and bad harvest**

The prices of staple foods, such as maize and rice, have come under increasing pressure, despite "satisfactory" cereal production of maize, sorghum, millet and paddy rice - projected at 2.49 million tons, five percent lower than the record 2008/09 harvest – said a report on a crop and food security assessment mission by the UN Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) and World Food Programme (WFP), published on 12 August.

However, the national harvest disguises a skewed rainfall pattern across the country that favoured the north and left the south dry, creating internal price pressures.

"In the north of the country [rain] was timely and well-distributed. However, in the southern and some western parts of the central region, and in the entire southern region, the first rains arrived late and were followed by a period of up to two months of poor or negligible rainfall, which necessitated extensive replanting," the crop assessment noted.

As a result, maize production in the north increased by 12 percent from the previous year, but fell by 38 percent in the south, and 4 percent in the central regions.

In rural areas cassava and maize are generally favoured; in Maputo and other urban areas in the south, bread, rice and maize-flour are preferred. In June 2010, "The price of maize in Maputo, at 13.45 meticaïs (US\$0.37) per kg, was twice as high as prices in northern Nampula (\$0.16)," the report said.

Rice production in the south was 30 percent lower than the previous year, because "Large areas of rain-fed rice were lost ... as a result of the prolonged dry spell at the beginning of the season," the authors commented.

"Prices of rice, the most consumed cereal in Maputo and in southern urban areas, have remained at high levels and increased, reflecting this year's poor harvest. This is affecting the food access of the low-income population."

### **Suppressed prices**

"In Maputo and urban areas of the south ... consumers tend to shift consumption patterns in accordance with relative prices of the main staples. Thus, when rice prices are higher than maize flour prices in urban areas, many households shift from rice to maize consumption."

The abundant harvest in the north, with improved road and bridge infrastructure to take the maize south, should have kept prices stable, but the bounty has been tempered by transportation costs that have seen diesel prices rise by 24 percent since March 2010, making it cheaper to source maize from South Africa, despite value added tax (VAT) of 17 percent.

Currency fluctuations between the metical and the South African rand, which rose by approximately 30 percent between May 2009 and May 2010, could make South African maize less competitive.

The crop report estimates that "250,000 people from low-income households in the semi-arid and arid areas of Tete, Gaza, Inhambane and Sofala provinces will require some 40,000 tons of emergency food assistance to meet their basic dietary requirements from August until the next harvest in March 2011."

In 2008 at least four people were killed in protests against increased fuel prices, but government backed down and put on a hold on the increases.

João Mosca, a Maputo-based economist, told IRIN that in 2009, an election year, FRELIMO - which has held power since independence from Portugal in 1975 and weathered a 16-year civil war - suppressed price rises to woo voters.

Manipulating the economy during the electoral period has now led to generalized price increases, Mosca said, but "government has to be conciliatory, otherwise the riots might continue."

The FAO noted on 1 September 2010 that the world food price index had risen by 5 percent from July to August, the highest level since 2008.

## **ZAMBIA: Land and mineral rights in conflict**

(IRIN)

30 August 2010

MANSA, 30 August 2010 (IRIN) - Mining prospectors in Luapula Province, northern Zambia, have forced small-scale farmers from their land at gun point, according to villagers in the region.

"We have a lot of battles going on over land; people's right to land is being violated by manganese miners, time and again," said Ignatius Musenge of the Zambia Land Alliance, a land rights NGO based in Mansa, the provincial capital.

Luapula Province borders the mineral-rich Katanga region of the Democratic Republic of Congo, and has deposits of manganese, cobalt, citrine and copper; some reports claim there are also deposits of diamonds, uranium, gold and tin.

"We are handling about 20 complaints per week on average, and so far we have had more than 500 people evicted [since 2009] in various parts of Mansa as a result of manganese mining," Musenge told IRIN. People forced from their land have been given no compensation or alternative land.

"They [prospectors] are chasing us from our own land," Peter Mwila told IRIN. "Is this country just for the rich? The chief [traditional ruler] gave me a 10-hectare piece of land many years ago, where I have been farming. But early this year someone came and chased me with a gun, saying I was farming on his mining area, and I am now living with my uncle in the next village."

President Rupiah Banda's government has permitted exploration to gauge the extent of the province's mineral deposits, and has allowed small-scale mining activities, but residents claim that once mineral deposits are discovered they are evicted from their land.

Lister Zimba, who was "chased from her land" in Mansa district in May 2010, told IRIN: "The only thing I have is this land, where I do my farming. So, what happens to me now? The chief gave us land; people with money got the land from us."

Nowhere to go

"Where can we go? This is the only land we [I, my husband and three children] have lived on. We have no jobs, why should they take even the little that we have?" she said.

Mining - particularly in Copper Belt Province, northern Zambia - contributes 80 percent of the country's foreign earnings, and since 2003 has been the main driver of its annual five percent growth rate. But the commodities boom, tempered by the 2008 global slowdown, has failed to improve the livelihoods of most of Zambia's 12.4 million citizens.

About two-thirds of Zambians survive on less than US\$1 per day, and only about 500,000 people have formal employment, but these statistics become more extreme in Luapula.

The province is one of poorest of Zambia's nine provinces, poverty levels are an estimated 78 percent - compared to the national average of 64 percent - and only three percent of Luapula's 775,353 people have access to formal jobs, according to the 2008 Labour Force Survey Report released in June 2010 by the Central Statistical Office.

One of the few large industries, a battery factory, closed in the 1990s and there is an expectation that large-scale mining operations could transform the province's economic fortunes.

Chief Nduka, a member of the House of Chiefs, a body of traditional rulers, warned that pro-market policies could push poor people living on customary land into deeper poverty if they were evicted.

In Zambian law, land is held by customary tenure, and although the government has encouraged citizens to take title to their land, many are unaware of the need to do so, and the state has the authority to revoke any untitled land awarded by traditional rulers.

"The powers that we have [as traditional rulers] to give land to the people are not actually honoured; in fact, the villagers living in rural areas are termed as squatters. The millions and millions of Zambians who have lived on this land for more than two, three centuries up to now, they are squatting," Chief Ndake told IRIN.

"It is only those who have settled on statutory land, where there are all those title deeds, that are settled permanently, and this law becomes very effective when there is an investor coming, when there is timber to be produced, when there are mineral deposits," he said.

Kennedy Sakeni, a former parliamentarian living in Mansa, is one of the small-scale miners accused of evicting people from their customary land.

#### Wild allegations

"Those are just wild allegations - they want to create problems where there are no problems. Others want to eat with both hands; you compensate them today, tomorrow they come back and ask for more money," he said.

"The truth is, I have seven mining licenses for [digging] pits in different places, and wherever there are fields of cassava [a staple food] in any of my mines, I have compensated them [local people]. In certain areas, where I am not mining just now, the people still have their cassava fields intact," he said.

Boniface Nkata, Zambia's deputy minister of mines, said government was concerned at the rising number of evictions. "There's very serious tension in terms of mining activities in the district [Mansa]," he acknowledged.

"But ... government cannot be blamed where someone is evicted from the land they have been occupying illegally, without valid documentation - they are squatters. Those who are driving them out are permitted to do so, because they should not come and find their minerals tampered with," Nkata told IRIN.

"The law is very clear - even when your chief gives you land, you should obtain title deeds for it from the ministry of lands. Then, any investor will have to partner with you, or just mine outside your farm area," he said.

"We can't have a situation where anyone does what they think is right. As government, we can only call on all our investors to offer some form of compensation to the affected people, to ease their relocation or resettlement."

The government intended to open the mineral wealth of the province to international investors after a two-year exploration period, "so that they can develop the province, invest in corporate social responsibility, pay tax," Nkata said.

"These mining activities have the potential to improve the economy of Zambia significantly, and I think we should look at the bigger picture."

## **Mozambique Calm Following Three Days of Protests**

(Voice of America)

04 September 2010

Police in Mozambique say calm has been restored to the southeast African nation after three days of riots and demonstrations.

There were reports of scattered violence around the country late Friday but officials said there was no unrest Saturday.

Riots and demonstrations began in the capital, Maputo, Wednesday after the government introduced price increases on food, fuel and other goods.

Mozambique Health Minister Ivo Garrido says 10 people died and 443 people were injured in the three days of demonstrations.

The unrest spread Friday to the central town of Chimoio where protesters used stones, clubs, and tires to prevent shops from opening.

Mozambican officials estimate damage from three days of rioting at about \$3.3 million.

Local journalists have told VOA that text messages are calling for more demonstrations on Monday.

A U.S. State Department official on Friday deplored the violence. But Deputy Assistant Secretary of African Affairs William Fitzgerald said the Mozambique government must reflect on why people are taking to the streets.

Mozambique government agencies increased prices on a range of basic goods earlier this week. Officials said Thursday that the price hikes are "irreversible."

Any increase makes life harder for the average Mozambican. The United Nations development agency ranks the African country as one of the poorest in the world.

Witnesses and reporters say police used live ammunition against stone-throwing demonstrators. Amnesty International has called on police to use only non-lethal methods to control protests in the future.

## **Fuel Industry Strike Threatens to Plunge South Africa into Chaos**

(Voice of America)

03 September 2010

Thousands of fuel and motor industry employees in South Africa have joined a national public service strike in the country, but many others continue to resist union calls for them to stay away from work.

The National Union of Metalworkers of South Africa, or Numsa, is demanding a 20 percent wage increase for its members. But fuel and motor sector employers are offering workers a mere six percent salary hike.

Economists say a prolonged deadlock will lead to widespread petrol and diesel shortages. This, they assert, will result in severe inconveniences to private citizens and great damage to South Africa's economy.

### **Fuel workers paid 'peanuts'**

All over the country, fuel stations, motor manufacturers and car dealerships are closing. Many of those that remain open are severely short-staffed and are operating at minimal capacity.

Negotiations between Numsa and employers' associations are ongoing, but there's little sign of an agreement being reached soon.

"The Numsa demand is just too huge; we can't meet it; not even close," says Reggie Sibiyi, chief of South Africa's Fuel Retailers' Association.

But Numsa's convinced it's justified in demanding such a significant increase as it asserts its members – especially fuel pump attendants – are paid "peanuts."

"I take home about 2,000 rand (\$ 280) a month," says Johannesburg attendant Dumisa Biyela. "How can we be expected to survive on wages like that? I have three kids. It's inhuman."

At protest gatherings all over South Africa, fuel sector workers have urged Numsa to "fight" employers for a better deal for laborers. Unionists are urging all South African fuel industry employees to join the strike.

### **Some workers defy strike orders**

Some fuel pump attendants, however, continue to report for work.... but in civilian clothes.

"If we wear our uniforms, the strikers will victimize us. We may even lose our lives," A Johannesburg attendant, who asked to remain anonymous, told VOA.

Police have arrested a number of striking petrol pump attendants after they allegedly assaulted their colleagues who had reported for duty in defiance of the union call to support the industrial action.

Another worker at a Johannesburg filling station, Moses Nhlaka, told VOA he and his colleagues would not join the strike, as they were not Numsa members. But another attendant, Bryan Phaahla, says a “full blown” strike in the fuel sector could happen at anytime, although there’s “confusion” amongst workers about this.

“Yesterday we were on strike. We just came (to work) today. We don’t know what’s happening, whether this strike is still on or it’s still off,” says Phaahla.

### **Fuel supply in jeopardy**

Some workers at fuel supply depots are now also on strike, boosting concerns that pumps across South Africa could run dry in the near future.

“This would cause chaos in all sectors of our economy. Basically, the country would come to a standstill. But we are hoping at all costs to avoid such a situation,” says Numsa spokesman Castro Ngobese.

Yet chaos there is in some parts of South Africa. In Johannesburg, petrol station owner Dave Hutchings, assisted by two relatives, was hard at work filling customers’ cars. He said some of his staff had reported for work on Thursday morning, only to be “intimidated” into leaving their posts by striking colleagues.

Hutchings is convinced he’ll suffer “incredible losses” because of the strike.

“We have to close all our (fuel pumps).... for the night shift. There’s no way we can stand here and man the forecourt, just two or three of us, for 24 hours,” he said.

### **Transport disrupted**

Private South African citizens are also suffering. Nanny and domestic worker, Maria Mnguni, works in Johannesburg, but returns by means of minibus taxi every weekend to her home village 200 miles away, in Mpumalanga province.

Clutching the crying baby she’s paid to take care of, she says, “I can’t go home because the taxis they don’t have the petrol. It’s very bad for me because I am staying far from Joburg; I can’t see my kids; I can’t see my children so it’s bad for me. It’s very bad!” she exclaims.

Economist Paul Roodt says the fuel and motor industry strike has the potential to “cripple” South Africa’s economy.

“We’re still dealing with the effects of the global economic recession in these industries, especially the motor industry. We’ve just seen an upturn in the motor sector, but this strike will probably undo all this good work and see us going back to square one, which is not a good place to be at all,” he maintains.

“It is up to the employers to end this strike; our position is clear but we are willing to negotiate in good faith,” says Ngobese.

He adds, “We are going to spend the next few days to go back to leaders of the union, to go back to members, and have a proper discussion, about the current offer that’s on the table. We’re hoping that by the end of the coming weekend, we (will) find a clearer way forward about what to do with the offer and what to do with the strike.”

## **South African Strikers to Consider New Government Offer**

(Voice of America)

31 August 2010

Striking South African public service workers are considering a new wage offer from the government aimed at ending a 14-day-old strike.

Officials from the main labor federation, COSATU, and other unions say their members will discuss the proposal over the next couple of days. They say a decision on the offer could come Wednesday.

The strike by some 1.3 million civil servants has shut down schools and led to army medics taking over public hospitals.

The government's latest offer calls for a 7.5 percent pay increase, up from the earlier offer of 7 percent. The government also raised its monthly housing allowance offer from \$96 to \$109.

The public service unions have demanded an pay increase of 8.6 percent and a higher housing allowance.

The newest government offer comes after South African President Jacob Zuma ordered government ministers to resolve the strike in the interest of the country.

A government spokesman says the president is particularly concerned about the strike's impact on the health and education sectors.

## **Deadly Mozambique price riots enter second day**

(Alert Net)

02 September 2010

MAPUTO, Sept 2 (Reuters) - Demonstrators blocked roads with burning tyres and looted shops in Mozambique's capital Maputo on Thursday as deadly riots sparked by soaring bread prices entered a second day.

On Wednesday police and hospital sources said at least six people were killed, including two children, as police opened fire on protesters in the worst riots to hit the southern Africa country of 23 million people since 2008.

Officially, police said four people were killed, including two children.

The rioting was prompted by a 30 percent rise in bread prices in one of the world's poorest countries, which has never fully recovered from one of Africa's bloodiest civil wars.

Home Affairs Minister Jose Pacheco said the government was trying to identify the source of text messages and emails which have been circulating since Tuesday, urging residents to join the protests.

"We registered deaths, injuries, loss of property through use of stones and shooting by police using rubber bullets. There is no order to use live bullets," Pacheco told private television STv.

Other top police officials said live ammunition was used in some places after police ran out of rubber bullets and citizens also reported that real bullets were fired.

"We are working on identifying the people who organised the protests and to put the blame for the deaths and injuries as well as destruction of property."

While officials put the death toll at four, sources within the police and at hospitals said at least six were killed and STv reported 10 deaths, about 140 arrested, 27 seriously injured and 32 shops, including banks, looted.

"I cannot risk going to work, police are heavily armed and indiscriminately firing live bullets because they think everyone is involved. It is too dangerous and I'm stranded here," said Gerson Marcos, a resident in Magoanine, a densely populated suburb on the outskirts of Maputo.

Residents of Mozambique say they have been hit hard by rising costs for basic necessities including bread, as wheat prices have soared around the world. Mozambique also has suffered from the rising costs of goods imported from South Africa, whose rand currency has strongly appreciated in value.

Pacheco said the riots must stop and urged citizens to air their grievances through dialogue with the government.

"The protests are illegal and they will not contribute to efforts by Mozambicans to fight poverty," he said, referring to routine meetings between President Armando Guebuza and residents countrywide.

Guebuza on Wednesday condemned the killings and destruction of public and private property and called on Mozambicans to restore order, adding the government had made progress in implementing its strategic plan to improve food production, infrastructure and provide running water and better schools.

The violence was the worst since 2008 when at least six people were killed in protests over high fuel prices and living costs. The government agreed at that time to cut the price of diesel fuel for minibus taxis.

The former Portuguese colony was torn by a 16-year civil war from the late 1970s until a peace treaty was signed in 1992, ending fighting between the then-Marxist ruling part and South African-backed rebels.

## **Price Hikes Trigger Mozambique Protests**

(IPS)

03 September 2010

MAPUTO, Sep 3 (IPS) - September in Mozambique's capital has begun with violent protests. Thousands have been striking over an increase in the prices of basic goods, including bread. Police responded with force - firing on crowds gathered on the streets in several suburbs and townships in and around Maputo.

September in Mozambique's capital has begun with violent protests. Thousands have been striking over an increase in the prices of basic goods, including bread. Police responded with force - firing on crowds gathered on the streets in several suburbs and townships in and around Maputo.

By Sep. 2, seven people had been killed, including two children, and a man shot dead in his own home. Fresh tyres are still being rolled into the streets to form barricades, and a smoke haze hovers over the city as rioting transformed into a general strike.

Shops and schools remain closed, and public transport is barely functional. Locals say the strike will continue until the weekend, heeding text messages that ask people to continue protesting, because the government has not yet responded to their demands.

"We are going on strike because of the price of goods - the rice, oil, water and energy. All those things... We can't stand it anymore," said Cesaltina Sebastiao-Dimas on Sep. 2. "Our parents don't earn a lot. It's the right thing to strike today. And today we want to demonstrate. We stopped burning tyres and doing these bad things because they are not that good for us either. There were too many accidents."

The cost of food in this impoverished country has skyrocketed this year, a result of a rapidly devaluation of the metical, the local currency, and the unravelling of government policies that had attempted to maintain the prices of various staples at below-market rates. The increasing cost of food worldwide has aggravated the situation for a country that imports much of what it needs.

Government spokesperson Alberto Nkutumula told media on Sep. 2 that the price hikes were "irreversible".

But maintenance worker Xavier Alfredo Cherinoza, said, "In general, it [the strike] is a good thing because the minimum wage in Mozambique is around 3000 meticals. If we do simple maths, you realise that with 3000 Mt you can't even buy one bag of rice. And then your money is gone. And then you would have no money left for transport."

The strike is not just about food, or the cost of electricity, or water. It is about a sense of injustice. Many Mozambicans feel that their government has let them down, squandering money on expensive cars and other luxuries, while many remain in poverty. Corruption remains rife in the former war-torn country, and residents want to see the change they expected, in the peacetime they longed for.

## **Human Rights, Social Issues & Developments**

### **Troops clear barricades, Mozambique riots persist**

(Alert Net)

02 September 2010

MAPUTO, Sept 2 (Reuters) - Mozambique's government deployed troops to clear barricades in the capital as angry protesters blocked roads and looted shops on Thursday, the second day of riots caused by soaring bread prices.

The cabinet held an emergency session and appealed for calm, and cabinet spokesman Alberto Nkutumula said seven people had been killed and 280 injured in the protests.

"We condemn acts of violence and we appeal to all citizens to remain calm," Nkutumula said. Police said the army had been sent into the capital Maputo to help clear barricades erected by thousands of protesters.

"The army was called to clean the city (of barricades) and not to restore order and public security," Pedro Cossa, spokesman of the general police command, told state-controlled Mozambique Television TVM.

The sight of soldiers on the streets could scare off protesters and prevent further riots. On Wednesday seven people, including two children, were killed when police opened fire on protesters in the worst riots to hit the southern African country of 23 million since 2008.

The rioting was prompted by a 30 percent rise in bread prices in one of the world's poorest countries, which has never fully recovered from one of Africa's bloodiest civil wars and has a 54 percent unemployment rate.

The government-imposed price rise took the cost of a bread roll -- the bread staple of Mozambicans -- to 20 U.S. cents in a country where the average worker earns around \$37 a month.

The government said it would not reverse the price increases.

"The price hikes are irreversible," government spokesman Nkutumula told reporters after the cabinet meeting.

Schools and most businesses in the capital were closed on Thursday and shoppers waited in long queues at the few bakeries that were open.

Despite its poverty, Mozambique has one of the fastest growing economies in the world's poorest continent, and the IMF expects 7 percent GDP growth this year. The main exports are aluminium, electric power, coal and farm products including sugar.

Mozambicans say they have been hit hard by the rising price of bread and other basic goods, as world wheat prices have soared. The U.N. Food and Agriculture Organisation said on Wednesday that international food prices were at their highest level in two years.

"I opted to join the protests because life is very difficult with these hikes, the government has turned a deaf ear to our long grievances, they only need us during election time," said Teofilo Pedro, from the industrial suburb of Matola on Maputo's outskirts.

Egypt has also had a number of protests over food prices in recent months, and analysts have been warning that protests could follow the jump in food prices in Africa and the Middle East [ID:nLDE67A0Y0]

## POVERTY

Some 70 percent of Mozambique's population live below the poverty line, according to the CIA World Factbook, and the country depends heavily on imports from South Africa which have become more expensive in recent months as the South African rand has strengthened.

Home Affairs Minister Jose Pacheco said the government was trying to identify the source of text messages and emails circulating since Tuesday, urging residents to join the protest.

He said no order to use live ammunition was given to police on Wednesday. Other top police officials said live ammunition was used in some places when police ran out of rubber bullets and citizens also reported that real bullets were fired.

The human rights group Amnesty International called on Mozambican police not to use live ammunition.

"While we recognise that the police are trying to contain a violent protest, live ammunition -- which amounts to lethal force -- should not be used except when strictly unavoidable in order to protect life," Muluka-Anne Miti, Amnesty's Mozambique researcher, said in a statement.

The opposition Renamo party also criticised police for using live ammunition.

Private television station STv reported 10 deaths, about 140 arrests, 27 people badly injured and 32 shops and banks looted.

"I cannot risk going to work, police are heavily armed and indiscriminately firing live bullets because they think everyone is involved," said Gerson Marcos, a resident of Magoanine, a densely populated suburb on the outskirts of Maputo.

killed in protests over high fuel prices and living costs.

The former Portuguese colony was torn by a 16-year civil war from the late 1970s until a peace treaty was signed in 1992, ending fighting between the then-Marxist ruling party and South African-backed rebels.

## **Environmental Issues**

### **Researchers develop tea bag filter that cleans water**

(BBC News)

01 September 2010

A group of researchers in South Africa has developed a filter that can purify water straight from the bottle.

It sits inside a tube that can be fitted on top of a bottle and purifies water as it is poured on a cup.

The designer behind the filter, Dr Eugene Cloete, from the Stellenbosch University in South Africa, says the filter is only as big as an ordinary tea bag.

He says the product is cost-effective and easy to use.

"We are coming in here at the fraction of the cost of anything else that is currently on the market," says Dr Cloete on BBC World Service.

According to him the filter will not only stop harmful bacteria from getting into the water, it will also kill them.

"We cover the tea bag material with nano-structured fibres, and instead of tea inside the tea bag, we incorporate activated carbon.

"The function of the activated carbon is to remove most of the dangerous chemicals that you would find in water."

He says that the function of the fibres is to create a filter where harmful bacteria is physically filtered out and killed.

#### **Better taste**

According to the World Health Organisation the number of people who can access clean drinking water has been improving steadily across the globe. But there are millions of people - many in Sub-Saharan Africa - who still do not have access to drinkable water.

The filter will also improve the taste of the water says Dr Cloete. "If you take ordinary tap water that you get in the city," he says, "that is chlorinated for instance."

But with the new filter, "the activated carbon will remove the chlorine so the water will actually taste better," he says.

Dr Cloete says his team wants to have an impact on 1.2 billion people around the world who do not have access to safe drinking water.

He says there have been extensive interest about the filter since the invention was announced.

"We have had many, many inquiries from aid organisations and from philanthropists who are quite prepared to sponsor these filters to people that need them most," he says.

But there are also commercial potentials, "for those people who go camping and those people who go hiking and so on," he adds.

## **Food Security & Health Issues**

### **MALAWI: Food surplus creates political storm\***

(IRIN)

02 September 2010

JOHANNESBURG, 2 September 2010 (IRIN) - A surplus production of maize, Malawi's staple food, will not prevent at least one million people from being food insecure, a forecast that has not pleased President Bingu wa Mutharika.

"I am disappointed that despite the ministry of agriculture and food security releasing crop estimates that Malawi has actually posted surpluses in the production of the staple crop, maize, some newspapers are reporting that over a million Malawians will require urgent food aid," he reportedly said.

Mutharika has threatened "to close down [local] newspapers that lie and tarnish my government's image", which has led to the rapid politicization of the food production sphere. Two crop assessments appear to have given rise to the situation.

Reports by the Famine Early Warning Systems Network (FEWSNET), and the Food Security Early Warning System of the regional body the Southern African Development Community, concur on the number of food insecure.

"The [multi-agency] Malawi Assessment Committee (MVAC) assessment projects that the food insecure population will increase to 1.1 million by October 2010," FEWSNET said in its August 2010 Food Security Outlook Update.

SADC noted in its July 2010 report that the "final crop forecast indicates a 2010 cereal production of 3.57 million tons, which is 7 percent below the 2009 harvest of 3.83 million tons, but still 23 percent higher than the last 5-year average harvest of 2.9 million tons."

"The overall surplus is made up of 1.16 million tons of surplus maize and 17,000 tons of surplus sorghum/millet, less deficits in wheat and rice of 38,000 tons and 19,000 tons respectively. This is the fifth year running that the country has had surplus maize," the regional body's report commented.

Malawi's spike in food insecurity from 147,492 people in 2009 to 1.1 million in 2010 is a consequence of "the severe dry spells which affected the highly populated Southern Region of the country," SADC said. Malawi's annual maize consumption is about 2.2 million tons by a population of roughly 15 million.

An aid worker who declined to be named told IRIN this was the second successive year that adverse weather conditions had caused a production deficit in the south, increasing the vulnerability of the region's inhabitants.

"Most households in Malawi are net buyers of food. Once food stocks run out, people rely on the market. The major issue [in the south] is a combination of factors: there is a production deficit [of maize], complicated by the failure of cash crops," the aid worker said.

"Despite large government food stocks, response plans remain unclear and the government reports that they lack funds to transport grain to the south," FEWSNET said.

"If assistance is provided before October, southern areas currently classified as highly food insecure would likely shift to moderate food insecurity for the October-to-December period ... [Assistance] will most likely take the form of either direct food distribution or cash transfers to facilitate purchasing from markets."

Mutharika was elected to office in 2004, when the country was suffering severe food insecurity. A multi-million dollar agriculture input subsidy programme was implemented in partnership with donors, which moved the world's 14th poorest country into the ranks of the food secure and greatly increased Mutharika's popularity among the 75 percent of the population who live in the rural areas.

## **HIV-positive Mothers Not Convinced to Exclusively Breastfeed**

(IPS)

01 September 2010

GABORONE, Sep 1 (IPS) - "An HIV-positive woman must never be encouraged to breastfeed because regardless of what the doctors or researchers say - it is too dangerous for the baby," says

Koziba Kelatlhe an HIV-positive mother who was advised by health workers not to breastfeed her child.

It has been over a year since the Harvard-Botswana Mma Bana Study (meaning "Mother baby" in Setswana) found that HIV-positive mothers who take combinations of antiretrovirals (ARVs) can safely breastfeed. The groundbreaking study, conducted in Botswana, was the first randomised study in Africa to compare highly active antiretroviral therapy (HAART) regimens used during pregnancy or breastfeeding. It produced the lowest rate of mother to child transmission in comparison with other studies done in Africa.

Project director, Dr. Joseph Makhema, from the Botswana-Harvard Partnership (BHP) which conducted the study, said it influenced the World Health Organisation (WHO) guidelines on the use of HAART to prevent mother-to-child transmission. At the 2010 HIV Conference in Vienna in July, the WHO passed new recommendations saying mothers may safely breastfeed provided they or their infants receive ARVs during the breastfeeding period of up to one year.

But Kelatlhe and other HIV-positive mothers and even doctors in Botswana are unconvinced that this will be truly effective or implementable.

Seated on a bench in the waiting area at the Infectious Diseases Care Clinic (IDCC), Kelatlhe smiled shyly. She was one of the many women waiting for her prescription of ARVs. She fiddled with her medical cards as she told IPS that her child, who is now two years old, is HIV-negative thanks to the PMTCT medication she took. "Maybe if I breastfed it would be a different story now," she said implying that if she had been on PMTCT and breastfed she would have passed the virus on to her child.

But according to the study, pregnant HIV-positive mothers were given HAART at 28 weeks of pregnancy. The primary goal of the study, explained Makhema, was to compare the suppression of the viral load at delivery and throughout breastfeeding among women allotted to receive different ARV regimens, and to determine the mother-to-child transmission rate after six months of breast-feeding among all women who received ARV therapy.

Women were instructed to exclusively breastfeed and to wean their infants from breast milk at six months. The study found that mother-to-child transmission was very low at one percent.

"The Botswana government is preparing to roll out a programme to provide HAART to all pregnant women with HIV," Makhema said.

## Refugees/IDPs & Migration

### **SOUTH AFRICA: Deportation of Zimbabweans to begin again**

(IRIN)

03 September 2010

JOHANNESBURG, 3 September 2010 (IRIN) - South Africa will resume the deportation of undocumented Zimbabweans on 1 January 2011, ending its 17-month moratorium, the Cabinet announced on 1 September.

"After the 31st of December [2010] all undocumented Zimbabweans will be treated like all others and their deportation will resume," said a statement issued after the Cabinet met.

In April 2009 the government placed a moratorium on deportations, introduced a 90-day visa on demand for passport holders, and was on the cusp of issuing Zimbabweans with a special permit allowing them to work and reside in South Africa for between 6 months and 3 years.

The Forced Migration Studies Programme (FMSP) at the University of the Witwatersrand in Johannesburg (FMSP) estimates that between 1 million and 1.5 million Zimbabweans are living in South Africa.

Loren Landau, director of FMSP, told IRIN that deportation "does not stop people wanting to come across [the border from neighbouring Zimbabwe]. Look at the US-Mexico border, where billions of dollars have been spent; it has not stopped people crossing."

NGOs advocating the reform of regional migration were scheduled to meet with government next week, but since the announcement they have raised concerns to IRIN that the policy was retrogressive, increased the risks of xenophobic attacks, and would not halt the flow of undocumented Zimbabwean migrants - about 200,000 Zimbabweans were deported in the year leading up to the April 2009 moratorium.

Duncan Breen, of the Consortium for Refugees and Migrants in South Africa (CORMSA), said ahead of the meeting with government that the authorities had "concerns with border migration and border management ... and border integrity".

Braam Hanekom, of People Against Suffering, Suppression, Oppression and Poverty (PASSOP), told IRIN that Cabinet's statement was "a big step backwards", the vulnerability of undocumented migrants would increase, and the "country has a history of [undocumented] migrants being raped and abused, but too afraid to report it to the police for fear of being deported."

PASSOP said in a statement: "We believe that the large number of deportations and the proceeding 'witch hunt' of foreign nationals by the National Immigration Branch and South

African Police were a major factor in creating the conditions that lead to the culture of xenophobia that haunts us today."

South Africa experienced wide-scale xenophobia in May 2008, when at least 60 people were killed and more than 100,000 displaced, and an undercurrent of xenophobic violence sometimes still surfaces as threats or attacks on foreigners.

### **Special permits**

The Cabinet announcement appears to have scuppered the initiative to issue Zimbabweans with special permits, which NGOs considered "in the best interests" of South Africa as well as the Zimbabwean migrants.

Tara Polzer, a senior FMSP researcher, noted in a migration policy brief in May 2009 that "the new set of policies [the special permit, the 90-day visa, a moratorium on deportations] regularizing movement between South Africa and Zimbabwe represented a positive shift towards a rational, coherent and regionally beneficial migration management approach."

Former President Thabo Mbeki's administration withdrew troops from the border in 2003 and their duties were taken over by the police, just as the effects of the Zimbabwe's political and economic crises began to gather momentum, spilling economic migrants in search of employment into the neighbouring states, with most seeking employment in South Africa.

In May 2010 South Africa re-deployed troops to the border.

### **Stability in Zimbabwe**

"Zimbabwean nationals who are working, conducting business, or studying in South Africa will be issued with a working permit, business permit, or study permit ... provided they have valid Zimbabwean documents," the Cabinet statement said.

Most Zimbabwean migrants were unskilled and "Fewer than five percent of Zimbabweans will qualify for the new regulations, and most of them that do, already have," Landau noted.

"People are coming back and forth and remitting money. If that option is not available [because of tighter restrictions] then they will just bring the whole family [to South Africa]," he said.

Government spokesperson Themba Maseko told local media that Cabinet's decision was based on the belief that "some form of stability has returned to Zimbabwe, and therefore all Zimbabweans will now be treated like any other foreign nationals."