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State of South Africa

Report Compiled by the Solidarity Research Institute

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Introduction

Jan Smuts, prominent South African politician once stated that "The worst, just like the best, never happens in South Africa."

Thus far South Africa has held to this quote by its former leader, yet the current situation is dire – and although not at the worst yet, teetering on the edge.

The system of government in South Africa has slowly imploded over the past two decades under ANC rule. Through policies that further representivity, the South African government has systematically eroded the capabilities of the state, to such an extent that every function traditionally fulfilled by the state is either fully or partially dysfunctional.

The implosion of the state has created the perfect opportunity for corruption to take root – and it has now become endemic to the South African state. Under the guise of Affirmative Action and Black Economic Empowerment, a small but wealthy elite has been created through looting state coffers.

It is in this weakened state that South Africa entered the covid-pandemic. The already weakened South African state has experienced a dramatic decline during the pandemic with several capabilities coming under extreme pressure and in some cases just completely imploding.

Post-Covid – South Africa has gone out of the frying pan but into the fire, with an energy crisis that has lead to severe rolling blackouts for all of 2023. The energy crisis is the culmination of decades of mismanagement and corruption.

This document will take a cursory and brief look at the true state of South Africa, of the capabilities of the state and the space that the normal citizenry functions in.

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Demographics

Demographics are ultimate decider on the fate of nations. In South Africa, demographics played a critical role in the formation of the country.

Since 1965, the demographic pressure on the white-minority government was evident, and it would inevitably lead to a transfer of power. Thus, in a sense, the 1994 election was pre-ordained by the demographic realities of South Africa.

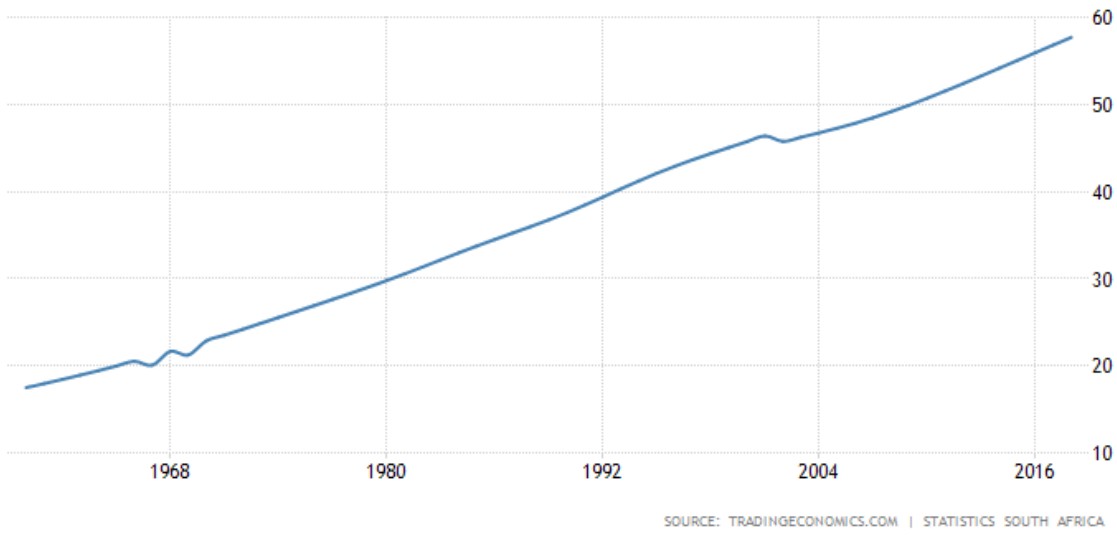
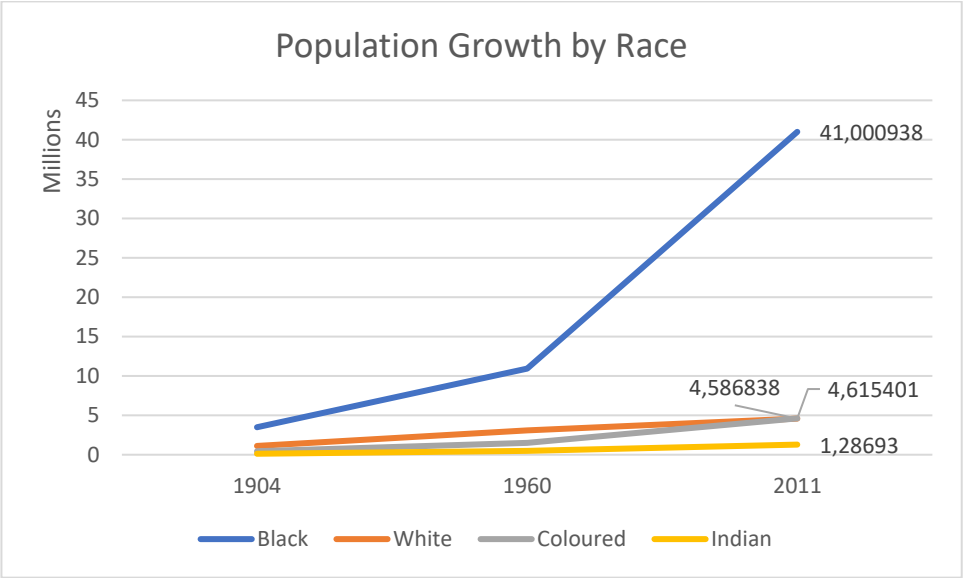


Figure 1 – South Africa's total population growth

South Africa has seen strong population growth from 1960, with the population more than doubling from 17 million in 1960 to 60 million according to the latest estimates. This population increase was not uniform across all racial groups.



Source: Statistics South Africa

This has resulted in a current racial split of 80% black, 9% coloured, 9% white and 2% Indian.

The Solidarity Movement is primary concerned with the Afrikaner-cultural group. Unfortunately, South Africa does not keep data according to ethnicity, only language and race. If we use the White-Afrikaans population as an indicator for the larger Afrikaner cultural group – the percentage of the population that represents Afrikaners falls to 4,8% in 2011.

These demographic realities create the context for understanding the space the Solidarity Movement functions in.

Government

Structure of Government

South Africa is a constitutional democracy since 1994. One of the fundamental provisions in the constitution is that South Africa is a multi-party democracy. Although elections are held every five years, the ANC has never dipped below 50% as ruling party. In the 25-years that South Africa has been a multi-party democracy open to all citizens, the ANC has won every single election with more than 50% of the vote. The biggest opposition party has 22% of the vote. This creates several perversions of the normal *trias politica* which should serve as checks and balances.

Although the country is beset by rolling blackouts, has record unemployment that increases every year, has entered a recession several times under Cyril Ramaphosa's presidency and has massive amounts of visible corruption, particularly from elected leadership of the ANC – the ANC won 57%

of the vote in the most recent national election (2019), with the biggest opposition party instead losing support and falling from 22% to 20%.

Size of Cabinet

In the 29 years since 1990 South Africa has had six presidents of the Republic. FW de Klerk was the last president of the pre-Apartheid regime. He was in office from 1989-1994. He had a cabinet of 34 members.

Nelson Mandela, as the first president of the new democratic South Africa, was in office from 1994-1999. He also had a modest cabinet consisting of 30 members.

In the years 1999-2008 Thabo Mbeki was the state president. His was the first cabinet to undergo considerable growth. He had 50 members in his oversized cabinet.

For the short period of 2008-2009 Kgalema Mothlante was president with a large cabinet of 47 members.

With the presidential term of Jacob Zuma, stretching from 2009-2018, the South African cabinet exploded to an immense 73 members. This is the largest South African cabinet in the Republic's history.

The current president in office, president Cyril Ramaphosa, has indicated that he wants to reduce the size of cabinet drastically since that of his predecessor. This ultimately resulted in a cabinet with a size of 56 ministers and deputy ministers, which is still the third largest cabinet in South African history.

State Capture

A recent phenomenon in South Africa is referenced as State Capture. This is the almost complete corruption of the state, through cadre-deployment. In reaction, President Ramaphosa set up the Zondo-commission which did a thorough investigation of the alleged corruption. The Zondo-commission has completed its work and delivered a 5000 page report to President Ramaphosa. Although several criminal charges were recommended, very few of the recommendations have been implemented and very few of the corrupt officials have been arrested or charged. The revelations have been damning. Every facet of public life had been infiltrated by corrupt officials, who then proceeded to enrich themselves through vastly inflated procurement tenders and other means.

The Zondo-commission has made public several instances of gross corruption with ANC officials brazenly looting taxpayer funds through tender corruption.

One of the facilitating policies is Black Economic Empowerment. This policy enforces certain racial quotas on government's procurement, e.g. 51% of your procurement must be from firms that are

51% black-woman owned. Black Economic Empowerment has created opportunities for inflating prices if you are one of the connected elite, since every government department has to meet its racial procurement targets.

Particularly egregious is the fact that the previous secretary general of the ANC, Ace Magashule, has been heavily implied in several instances of serious fraud.[1] [2]Although charges of corruption have been officially levied against him, he was temporarily suspended from the ANC in May 2021, more than a year after the first evidence of the extent of his corruption came to light in a book by journalist Pieter-Louis Myburgh. He remained secretary-general of the ANC, until December 2022 when a new Secretary General was elected.. Despite his "suspension" Ace Magashule has continued attending ANC-functions and acting as an ANC official with no official reprimand ever coming from the party.

Former president Jacob Zuma has also been identified as benefitting heavily from corruption during his tenure in office. Although formally subpoenaed to appear before the Zondo-commission, Ex-president Zuma simply chose not to heed the subpoena. The Zondo-commission therefore approached the courts who gave a court order for president Zuma to appear before the Zondo-commission, once again president Zuma simply chose to not heed the court order. Rather mobilising the ANC's military wing, the uMkhonto Wesizwe, who sent "veterans" to guard his mansion in rural Natal. [3]

Although it might seem that there is a good ANC and a bad ANC, this has proven to not be the case. During the covid-pandemic, ANC officials looted emergency funds meant for procurement of PPE and for food relief for the most affected households. [4] [5]

This looting was done by ANC officials close to the current president of the ANC, Cyril Ramaphosa, including his own spokesperson, Khusela Diko. [6]

Most recently South Africa's previous minister of health, Dr. Zweli Mkhize, has been embroiled in a scandal regarding irregular expenditure by his department in a contract awarded to a close friend

[1] https://www.news24.com/news24/southafrica/investigations/the-case-against-ace-magashule-in-the-r280m-gupta-estina-dairy-farm-scandal-20201001
[2] https://www.nytimes.com/2020/11/13/world/africa/anc-corruption-south-africa.html
[3] https://www.iol.co.za/news/politics/mk-vets-ret-secure-jacob-zumas-home-to-prevent-possible-arrest-d8f31649-0b3a-490c-aba0-eedf0c2e68e5
[4] https://www.iol.co.za/news/politics/anc-outraged-embarrassed-at-looting-of-covid-19-funds-says-magashule-a6decd77-42b5-4087-8048-0c9976dde97c
[5] https://www.iol.co.za/the-star/opinion-analysis/covid-19-presented-chance-for-anc-to-loot-shamelessly-441c3994-1494-48ba-be5d-96f0aa3e24fb
[6] https://www.enca.com/news/covid-19-ramaphosa-vows-tackle-corruption

upwards of R150 million. [7] These included consultant fees upwards of R3 million for accompanying minister Mkhize to a scheduled interview on the news to give the public an update on the covid-pandemic. [8]

Transformation

At its 1997 policy conference, the ANC adopted the policy of transformation. At its essence, it is a social engineering policy, which states that every single institution in South Africa, should reflect the racial demographics of the country.

Every single large business in South Africa must compile a report that it submits to the Department of Labour, in which it stipulates what the racial make-up of its employees are, and what its targets are to correct the racial make-up if necessary. The policy of transformation led to mass retrenchments of primarily white government employees by the ANC-government. This loss of institutional knowledge and skills has never fully been absorbed. One example would be Eskom, the only electricity supplier in South Africa, which got rid off more than 10 000 white employees in the early 2000's, in order to meet Affirmative Action targets. Less than a decade later, South Africa started experiencing planned power outages, referred to as Load Shedding.

Although discrimination on racial grounds conflicts with Article 9 of the South African Constitution, which explicitly states
3. The state may not unfairly discriminate directly or indirectly against anyone on one or more grounds, including race, gender, sex, pregnancy, marital status, ethnic or social origin, colour, sexual orientation, age, disability, religion, conscience, belief, culture, language and birth..

This provision is however followed by subsection 5 of article 9, which states

5. Discrimination on one or more of the grounds listed in subsection (3) is unfair unless it is established that the discrimination is fair.

Subsection 5 is used to justify Affirmative Action and Black Economic Empowerment using racial discrimination against the white, Indian and coloured communities.

The concept of transformation as ensorcelled in the ANC's policy documents is important to understand the context the Solidarity Movement functions in.

[7] https://www.dailymaverick.co.za/article/2021-05-26-department-of-healths-irregular-r150m-digital-vibes-deal-daily-mavericks-investigative-work-so-far-in-one-bundle/
[8] https://www.dailymaverick.co.za/article/2021-05-23-exposed-dohs-r150m-digital-vibes-scandal-zweli-mkhize-associates-charged-millions-for-covid-19-media-briefings/

During the covid-pandemic the ANC expanded the scope of this policy to include relief funds, with the departments of tourism and small business stating explicitly that only majority black-owned companies will be receiving relief funds. [9] [10]

Ultimately this was struck down by court action facilitated by the Solidarity Movement, but only after government vehemently opposed any effort to remove race as criteria for relief.

Size of Government

Even though the South African size of government has grown enormous in the past 29 years, the efficiency thereof has not.

In the year 2008 there were about 570 000 government employees and 27 major service delivery protests. From 2008-2011 government almost doubled in size to just over 1 million employees. In that period the service delivery protests increased by an astounding 400% to 111 in 2011. This 100% growth of government was accompanied by a population growth of merely 4%.

In the period of 2011-2015 government shrank with about 90 000 or 8%. Though this may seem positive, the service delivery protests increased by another 72% to 194 in 2015.

The period of 2015-2018 was one in which the size of government grew with a reckless 22% to 1.2 million. Furthermore, service delivery protests increased by another 24% to 237 in 2018.

The size of government grew with 110% from 2008-2018.

Safety and Security

Rampant Crime Levels

Crime has increasingly become one of the biggest problems South Africa faces, violent crime in particular. Since 2000 South Africa's murder rate has been way above the global average. In 2012 the global rate was 6.2 per 100 000 population. In the period of 2000-2015 the South African average ranged between 29.9 at the lowest and 48.5 at the highest. This means that the South African average was between five and eight times the global average. A homicide rate of more than 20 per 100 000 population is considered high by the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime. Furthermore, South Africa has been in the global top 10 for its homicide rate for all but two years since 2000.

The total number of crimes reported in a year in South Africa is about 2.2 million. This has been the case for about the past 10 years. A 2014 report by the Department of Justice researched the

[9] https://www.news24.com/fin24/economy/south-africa/govts-r12bn-tourism-equity-fund-not-only-for-businesses-that-are-100-black-owned-minister-20210317
[10] https://www.news24.com/fin24/economy/nef-launches-an-economic-distress-fund-for-black-owned-businesses-20210220

prosecution rate of eight major police stations. This showed that 75% of cases concerning violent crimes did not go to court and 10% percent of cases were withdrawn from court. Only 5.7% of crimes resulted in successful conviction and 5.4% resulted in acquittal. This means that a staggering 94% of violent crimes resulted in no action against the criminal. With violent crimes on the rise, this is an unacceptable problem.

The most recent release of crime statistics (March 2021) showed that despite lockdowns and a pandemic, crime still increased, with murder and rape increasing on a year-on-year basis. At the same time the South African government has announced budget cuts for the police force, additionally the minister of police proposed legislation that aims to make it unlawful to possess a firearm for self-defence. [11] [12]

Police Commissioners

South Africa has had six different police commissioners in the last decade alone. This was facilitated by Jackie Selebi, former police commissioner being found guilty of corruption and bribery. The court case revealed a corrupt relationship between Selebi and Glenn Agliotti that started in the 1990's.

In judgement, Judge Meyer Joffe referred to Selebi as a person of "low moral fibre" and that he "cannot be relied upon".

After being sentenced to 15 years in prison, Selebi ultimately only served 219 days of his sentence before being released on medical parole due to a terminal kidney illness. Almost three years later, on the 23rd of January 2015, Selebi died of a stroke at his home in Waterkloof.

Each of his successors were removed from office under a cloud.

Bheki Cele was removed due to charges of corruption, Riah Phiyega was suspended because she committed perjury and ignored internal processes during appointments of staff, Khomotso Phahlane was removed after charges of fraud and corruption were levelled against him.

President Ramaphosa appointed former police commissioner Bheki Cele as minister of police in his cabinet in 2019.

Riots and looting in 2021

On the 7th of July 2021 former president of South Africa, Jacob Zuma, handed himself over to authorities to be imprisoned for contempt of court at Estcourt prison in Kwazulu-Natal.[13] After months of legal wrangling and a steadfast refusal to appear before the Zondo-commission, a

[11] https://www.timeslive.co.za/news/south-africa/2021-02-19-crime-stats-murder-and-rape-increased-in-past-three-months/
[12] https://www.biznews.com/undictated/2021/05/25/firearm-licence
[13] https://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-57758540

commission set up to investigate state capture, Jacob Zuma was ultimately found to be in contempt of court for disobeying court orders to testify by the constitutional court of South Africa.

Due to his previous station and prominence, the Constitutional Court ordered that Jacob Zuma be imprisoned for contempt of court to send a clear message to any other officials that might think of refusing to testify before the Zondo-commission.

Following his imprisonment widescale rioting and looting erupted in Kwazulu-Natal on the 9th of July 2021. Initially the looting seemed contained, however it rapidly escalated in the absence of any meaningful police intervention. By the evening of Sunday the 11th of July 2021 widescale looting was being reported at several malls and residential areas. [14]

By Monday the 12th of July 2021 the violence had escalated out of control with several malls and stores being forced to close. Looters predominantly targeted department and liquor stores. On the evening of the 12th of July 2021 President Ramaphosa addressed the South African public and made a plea for looters to stop. As he was delivering his address, looting continued unabated with the South African Police Service being completely absent.

Eventually communities banded together with neighbourhood watches and able-bodied men manning impromptu access control points and defending their property from looting. [15] [16]

The security forces of the South African state were caught completely unprepared and after mounting public pressure, president Ramaphosa had to deploy the South African Defence Force to try and subdue the widespread looting.

Although the looting spread somewhat to Gauteng, it was contained, and much smaller destruction took place than in Kwazulu Natal.

Government has indicated that they believe the looting and plundering was a failed insurrection with President Ramaphosa himself stating that the South African government had quelled an attempted insurrection. [17]

Several individuals linked to the state's security apparatus were arrested in the wake of the rioting, for allegedly "inciting an insurrection".[18] To date no prosecutions have followed the arrests.

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[14] https://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-57797007
[15] https://www.sowetanlive.co.za/news/south-africa/2021-07-15-community-checkpoints-set-up-to-prevent-looting-are-illegal-and-recipe-for-disaster/
[16] https://www.news24.com/news24/southafrica/news/unrestsa-communities-rally-to-protect-businesses-and-livelihoods-20210714
[17] https://www.sanews.gov.za/south-africa/president-ramaphosa-attempted-insurrection-failed-gain-popular-support
[18] https://mg.co.za/news/2021-07-20-six-instigators-arrested-as-insurrection-investigation-in-kwazulu-natal-and-gauteng-gains-momentum/

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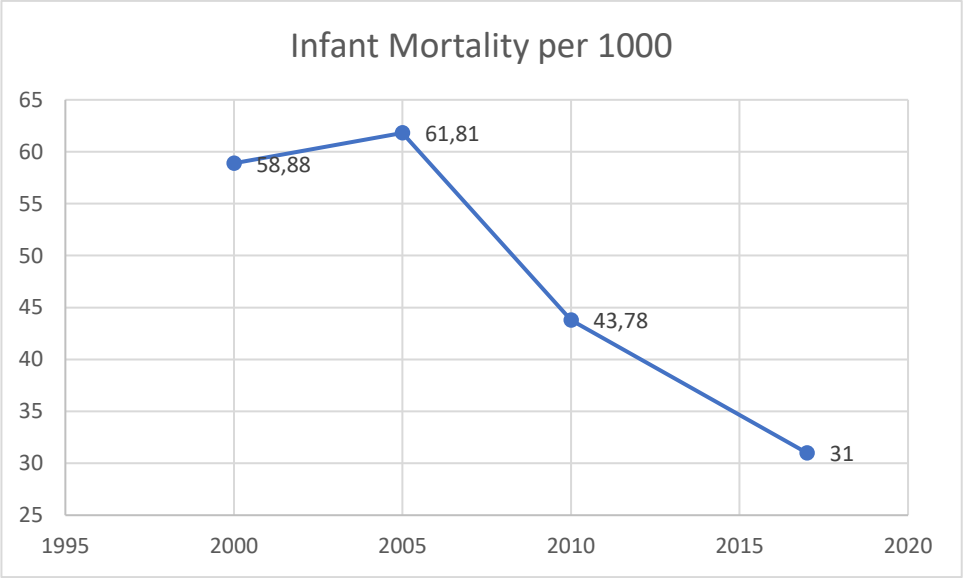
Health

Indicators

South Africa's healthcare system has teetered on the edge of collapse for the past two decades. The AIDS-pandemic hit South African healthcare particularly hard, with the government seemingly unable to respond timeously or properly.

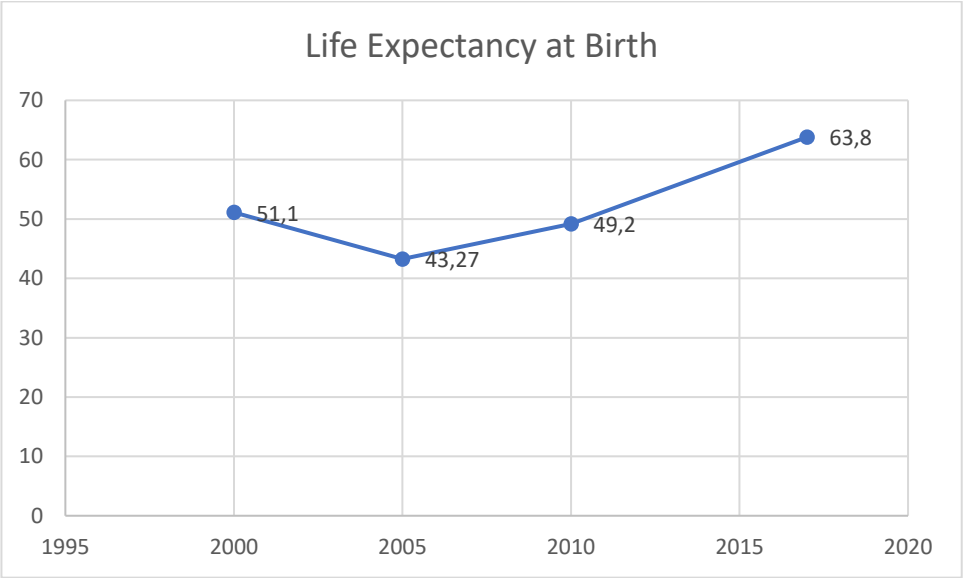
Infant mortality has recovered in recent years, but is still unacceptably high, with South Africa ranking 62 out of 223 countries in the world.



Source: CIA Factbook

Life expectancy has increased, after being ravaged due to the AIDS-crisis. Yet – it is still lagging behind several other African countries. When compared to the traditional western world, South African life expectancy is lagging severely behind.

According to the CIA Factbook South Africa is ranked 190 out of 223 in regards to Life Expectancy – with the general population having a life expectancy of 64,1 according to the latest version.



Source: CIA Factbook

Politics

Over the past decade political turmoil and general incompetence has had a devastating impact on the healthcare system. In 2016 the Life Esidimeni Tragedy shook the country. In this scandal the Gauteng department of Health caused the death of more than 144 mentally ill patients. The department placed these patients in the care of several NGO's that were operating without licences and thus illegally. These NGO's had neither the facilities nor the expertise to properly take care of the patients and neglected them to the point of death. This was undoubtedly one of the biggest human rights violations in the democratic South Africa.

HIV/AIDS continues to be one of the biggest challenges we face in South Africa. Despite this disturbing reality, the matter has been handled recklessly by presidents in the past at the cost of the citizens. Former president Thabo Mbeki was the first to make controversial statements about Aids. Throughout his presidency Mbeki proclaimed that a healthy diet is a better course of treatment than antiretroviral medication. Also called a regular Aids-denier, Mbeki indirectly caused the death of hundreds of thousands of HIV+ South Africans by delaying the process of making antiretroviral medication available in the public sector. This delay of two years resulted in about 300 000 deaths and 35 000 babies being born HIV+. This is something that could have been avoided if the former president together with his minister of Health had not denied this reality. In 2005 South Africa's general life expectancy dropped to an astounding low of 52 from 62 in 1990. This while the life expectancy of South Africans in 2005 without Aids was 66. This 14-year difference shows the practical repercussions of political influence.

After Mbeki, another president had very controversial opinions about HIV/AIDS. Former president Jacob Zuma also suggested that taking a shower after having unprotected sex with a HIV+ person serves as sufficient prevention of infection.

Considering that HIV/AIDS continues to be one of the biggest challenges we face, irresponsible and uninformed comments like these clearly have a very tangible and devastating effect on South Africa.

COVID-19

South Africa's healthcare system was wholly unprepared for the covid-pandemic. Already struggling under the burden with only 0,9 physicians per 1000 people[19] far below the global average for upper middle income countries of 1,9 physicians per 1000 people.

In March 2020 president Ramaphosa announced a national lockdown to give healthcare time to prepare for the inevitable surge of covid-cases it would face. Unfortunately, the time was not well spent. Almost no capacity was created, with the South African government managing to only create one field hospital in six months with about 800 beds. Hospital capacity was not increased at all and only 2700 ventilators were procured against an estimate of 12 000 that would be required. Of these 2700 ventilators the United States of America donated 2000.

Ultimately the South African healthcare system faced extreme pressure with covid taking a massive toll on healthcare workers as well as the South African population. Although official death counts for the pandemic is at 100 000 covid-deaths, the more telling statistic is excess deaths during the pandemic.

[19] https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SH.MED.PHYS.ZS?contextual=aggregate&locations=ZA

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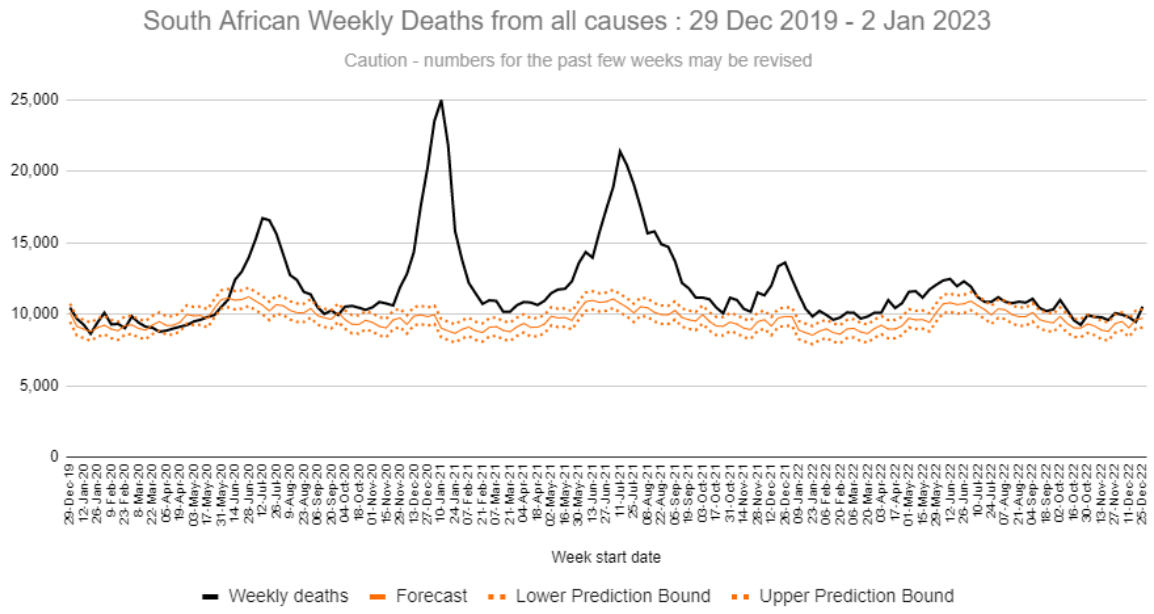
Excess Deaths for COVID-pandemic



Using excess deaths as metric, the estimates are that South Africa has had more than 340 000 deaths due to covid-19. Most provinces simply could not keep proper records and were overwhelmed, the Eastern Cape ran out of coffins during the height of the pandemic as an example.

Economy

GDP Growth

Although South Africa has shown modest GDP Growth in ZAR-based terms the past two decades, the reality is that the South African economy has stagnated, and in real terms even declined. In the past ten years South Africa has lagged behind its neighbours in Sub-Saharan Africa, Emerging Markets and even the World with regards to GDP growth.

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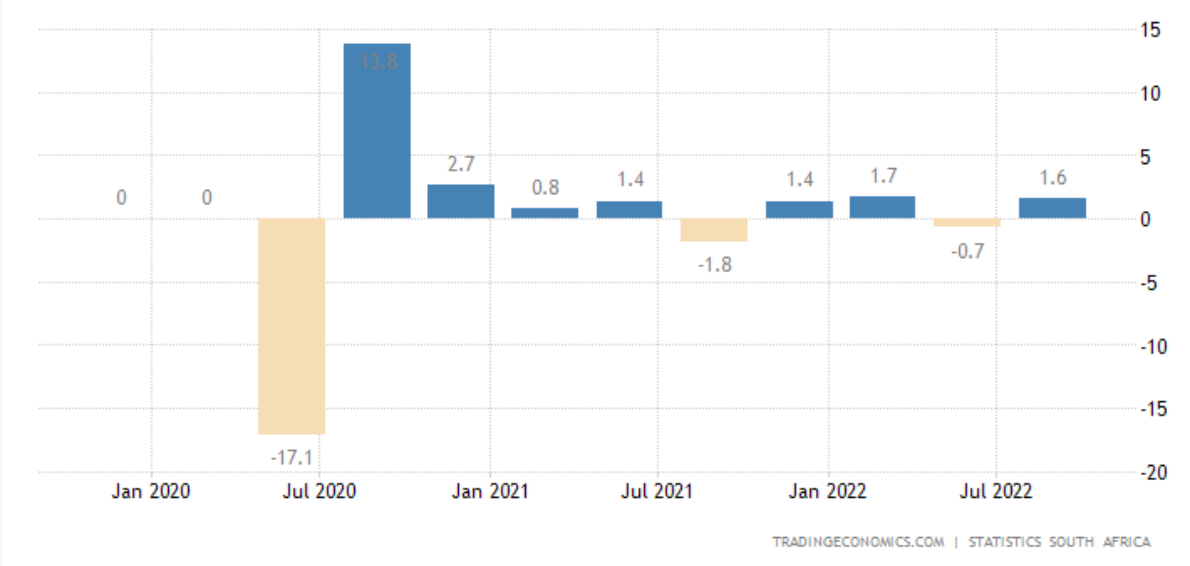
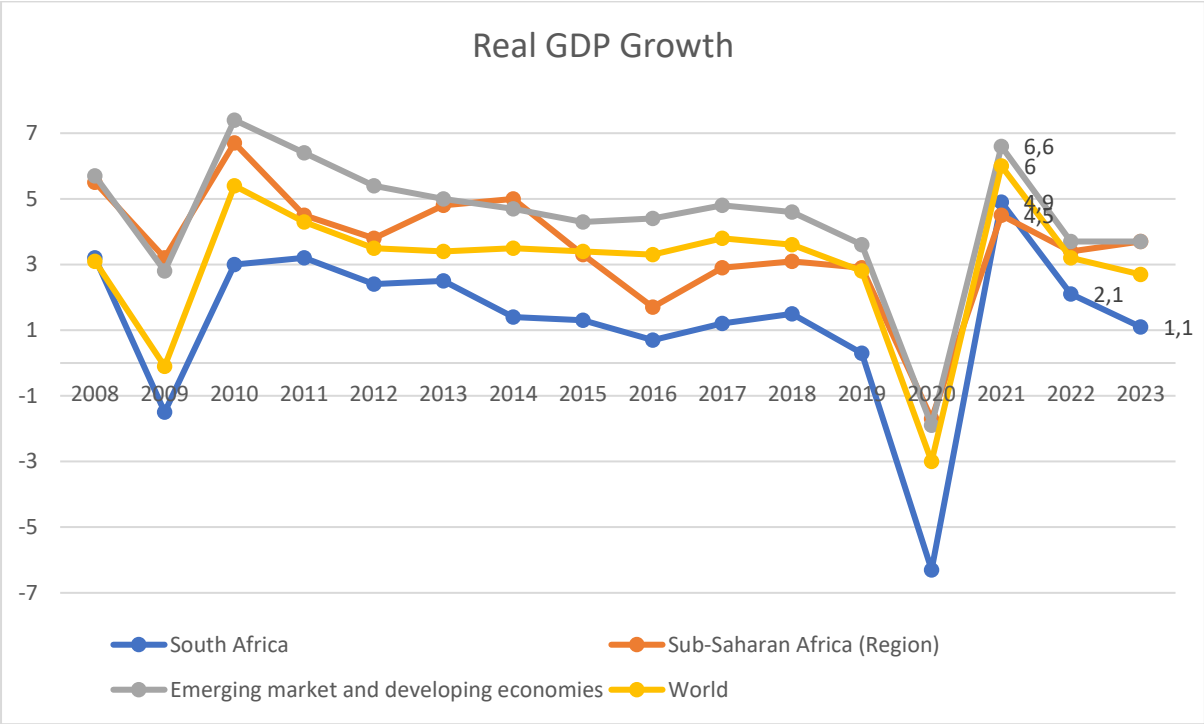
GDP Growth Rate annualised



GDP Growth Rate vs peers



[20]

These two figures show an economy that was already on decline, that went into recession and is on the verge of veering into depression. Important to note is that South Africa went into a technical recession in 2018 and 2019 before the covid-pandemic. The South African economy was already in dire straits due to bad policy and mismanagement, the covid-pandemic simply exacerbated already present tendencies.

Combined with the energy crisis – the economic recovery post-covid has been much slower than expected.

When measuring GDP and GPD per capita in United States Dollar, the picture changes dramatically.

GDP in USD-billion

[20] https://www.imf.org/external/datamapper/NGDP_RPCH@WEO/OEMDC/ADVEC/WEOWORLD

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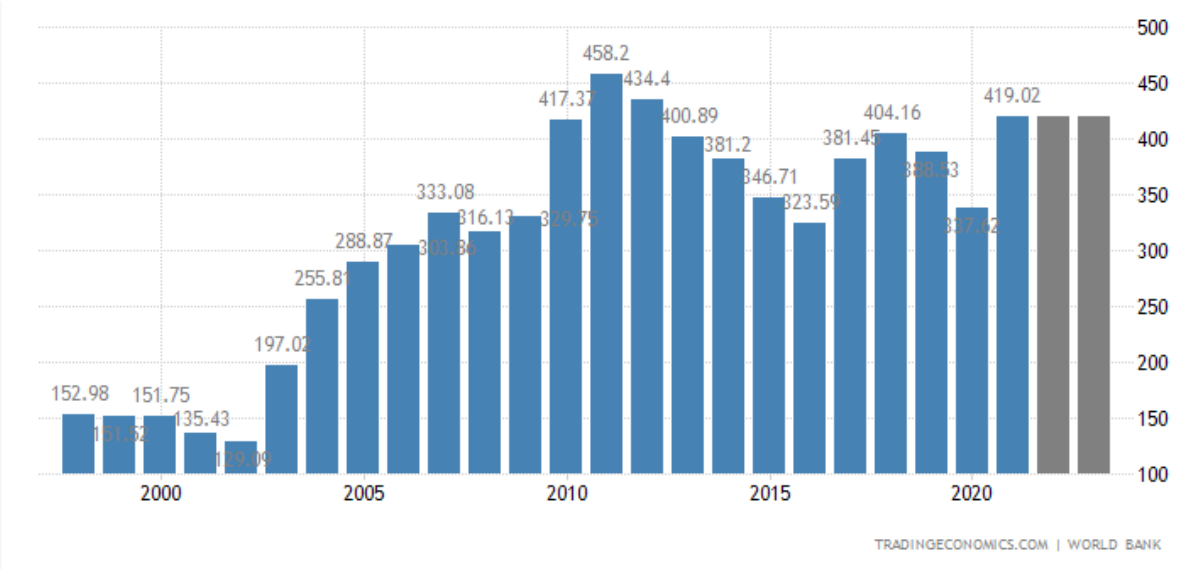
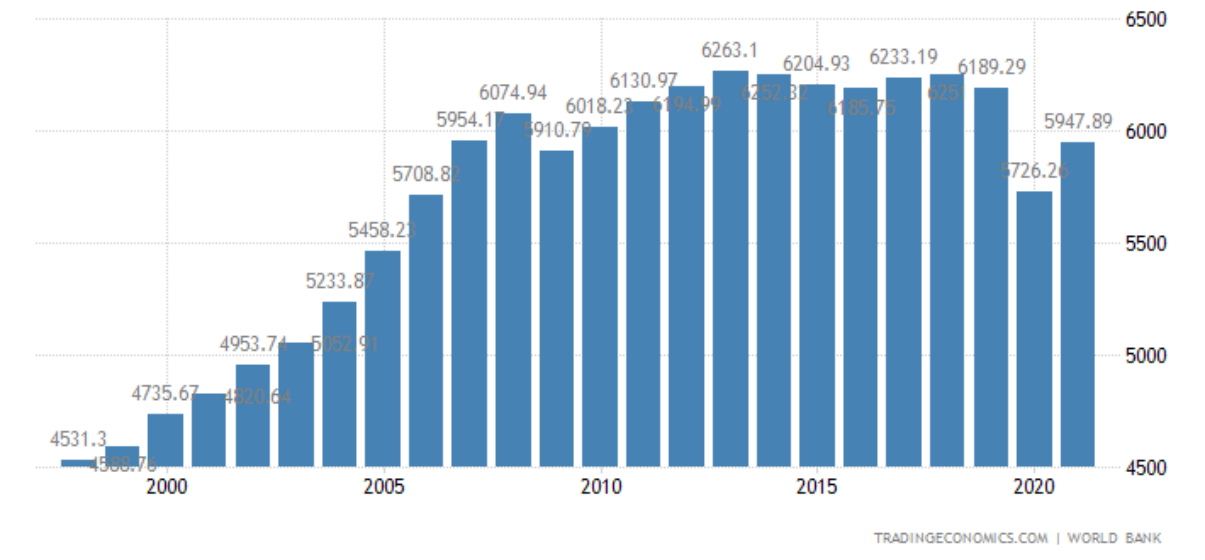


GDP per capita in USD



These two figures clearly show a deteriorating economy in real terms. Frankly put – the average South Africans buying power in the world has diminished the past decade.

This can be seen by South Africa entering a recession in the first two quarters of 2018 and the last two quarters of 2019, in contrast to the rest of the world that showed signs of growth.

The trend towards South Africans getting poorer in real terms has continued unabated during the covid-pandemic, with existing trends simply accelerating. This would suggest that the reason for sluggish economic growth was present before the pandemic in the form of energy shortages, excessive regulation, and mismanagement.

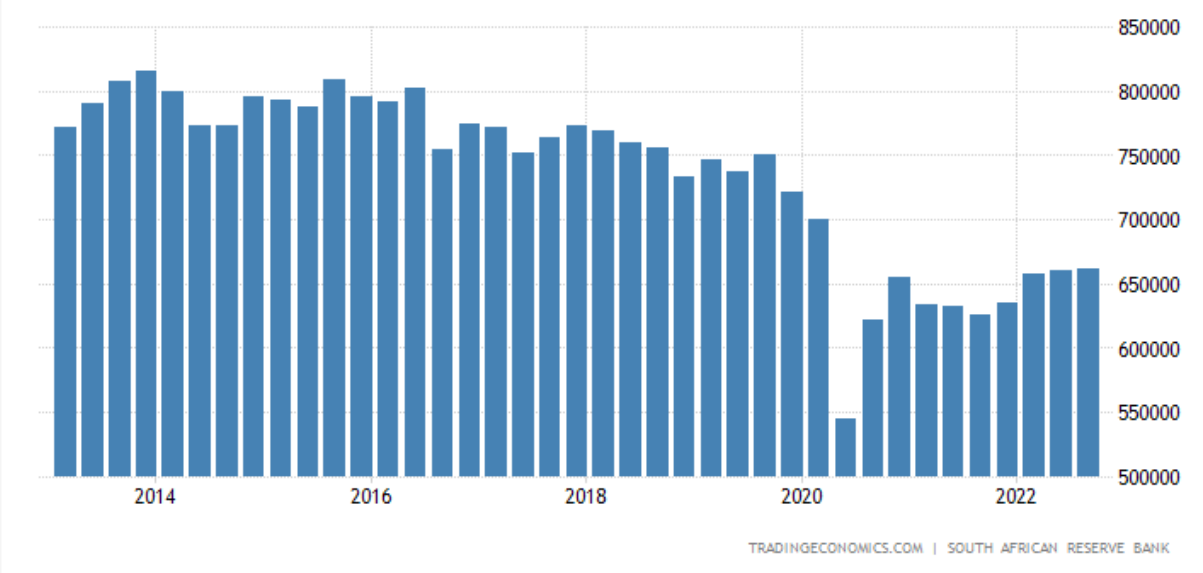
Expropriation Without Compensation

The South African Government has recently (Middle 2017) started aggressively pursuing a policy of expropriation of land without compensation.

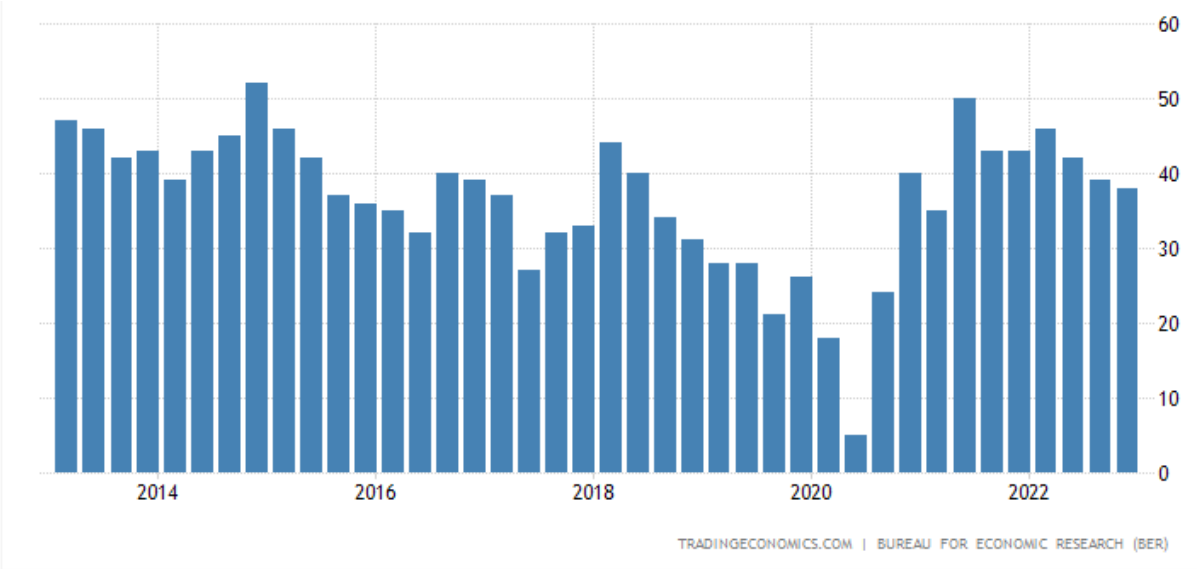
This has had a devastating effect on business confidence, foreign direct investment and fixed capital formation.

Although there were signs of recovery when a new president was elected in January of 2018, the continuation of these policies eroded all gains made within a year.

Fixed Capital Formation



Business Confidence

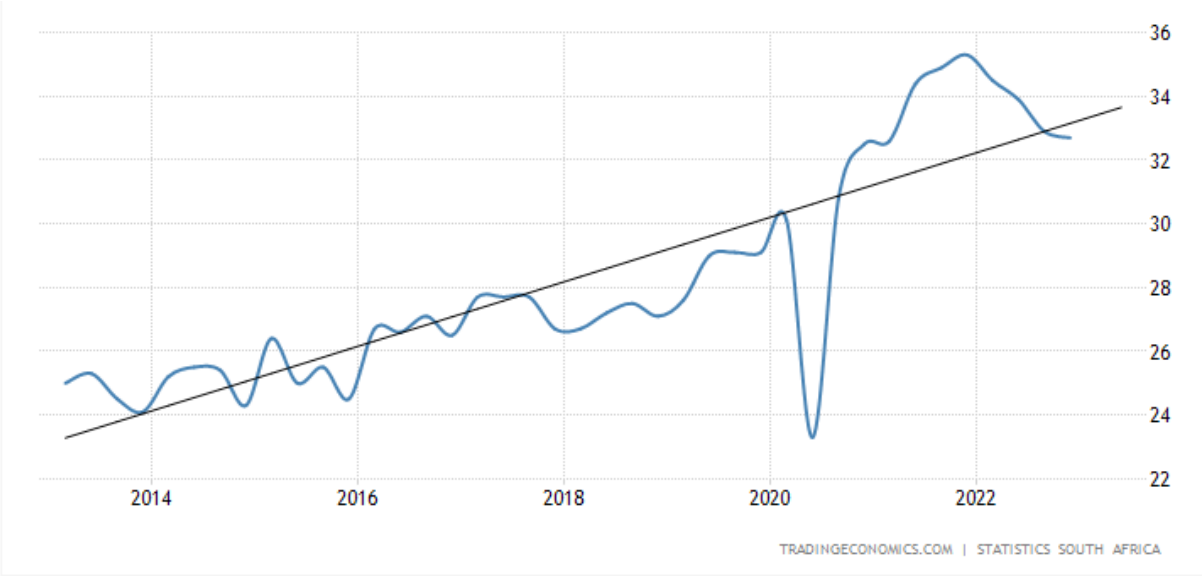


As can be seen from the previous graphs – business confidence has not been above 50 for more than 5 years, with record lows being reached during the lockdown – but just before lockdown as well. These indicators show that the South African economy was on a downwards trajectory for a long time, which was verified by the downgrade of South Africa's economy to sub-investment grade in 2017.

Unemployment

South Africa has had consistently high unemployment, with the most recent figures putting it at 32,7%. South Africa is one of the few countries that did not experience a serious decline in unemployment after the 2008 global recession with unemployment rather staying at unsustainable levels of more than 25%. More than 75% of the unemployed in South Africa has been unemployed for more than 12 months, signalling long-term structural unemployment as a key problem of the South African economy.

Unemployment in South Africa



The covid-pandemic has wreaked absolute havoc on employment. Although recent figures put unemployment at 32,7%, when discouraged work seekers are considered as well, unemployment jumps to 46,9%. This implies that almost half of all capable adults do not have a job.

Although unemployment is unacceptably high, South Africa has the highest youth unemployment in the world. The most recent release of unemployment statistics put youth unemployment at 74%. [21] [22]

Despite the massive crisis in employment, the ANC-government has pursued stringent regulations regarding Affirmative Action and Black Economic Empowerment – making it harder to start a business in South Africa. Additionally, the ANC reacted to unemployment breaching 30% by increasing the minimum wage. [23]

According to the Ease of Doing Business report by the World Bank – South Africa ranked 82 out of 190 countries. However, on the Ease of Starting a New Business – the ranking fell to 134.

By imposing a stringent lockdown on a country with severe unemployment and a large amount of people informally employed – the government has realistically put 2 million adults out of work. The effects of this can be seen in hunger increasing markedly after the lockdown period, with almost half of South African households now not having enough money to buy food in a month. [24]

[21] https://www.biznews.com/thought-leaders/2021/04/24/unemployment-south-africa
[22] https://www.statssa.gov.za/publications/P0211/P02114thQuarter2022.pdf
[23] http://www.labour.gov.za/employment-and-labour-minister-tw-nxesi-announces-minimum-wage-increases
[24] https://cramsurvey.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/02/10.-Van-der-Berg-S.-Patel-L.-Bridgman-G.-2021-Hunger-in-South-Africa-during-2020-Results-from-Wave-3-of-NIDS-CRAM-1.pdf

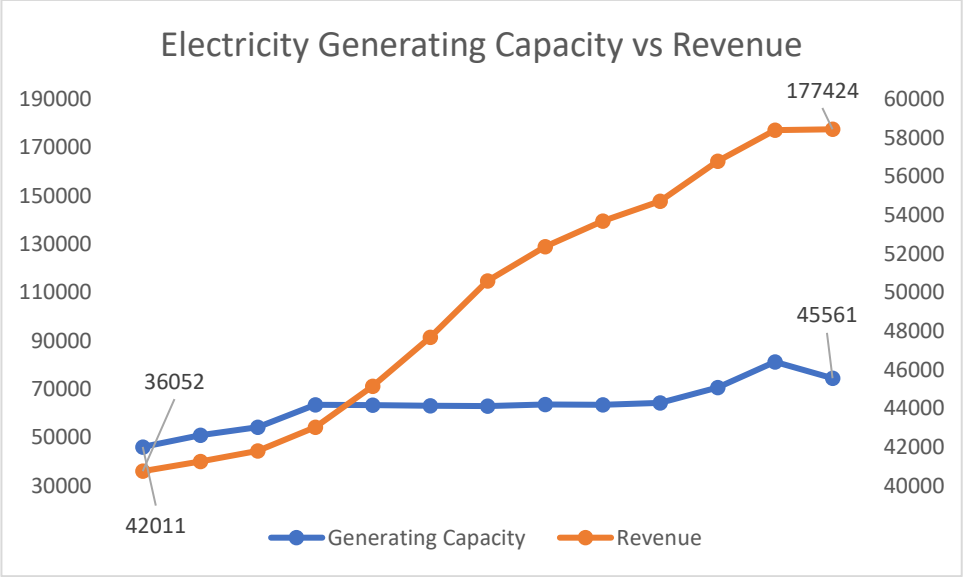
The unemployment crisis is quite simply put unfathomable, especially given the fact that government's actions only exacerbate the crisis. In the midst of the economic fallout from the pandemic, government insisted on using race as criteria for relief funds for businesses, on implementing even more stringent affirmative action and black economic empowerment. The most recent example of this is in the competition commission blocking the acquisition of Burger King South Africa by an international company, because it would dilute black shareholding. [25] This threatens almost 100 restaurants and thousands of employees, whilst also deterring foreign investment in the midst of the highest unemployment rate on record.

Infrastructure

Eskom

Eskom is South Africa's power utility company. Eskom has a monopoly on generating electricity in South Africa.

South Africans have become used to "loadshedding" which is planned power outages, because Eskom can't meet the electricity demand of South Africa. The reasons for Eskom failing is complex, one of the main reasons however has been Eskom's aggressive push to meet racial targets set to them by the Government as part of Affirmative Action and Black Economic Empowerment. These policies have led to an outflow of skills, experience and institutional knowledge that has not been replaced. The nett effect is that Eskom has scarcely improved on its ability to generate electricity the past decade.



[25] https://www.news24.com/fin24/companies/sale-of-burger-king-south-africa-blocked-over-lack-of-black-ownership-20210601

Eskom has incurred massive debts, with the government guaranteed debt now totalling R390 billion. In the most recent budget speech, Finance Minister Enoch Godongwana has indicated that government will be taking over a large part of Eskom's debt. In effect this is just switching funds around, since most of the debt being moved from Eskom's balance sheet to the Sovereign's balance sheet was government guaranteed.. This whilst the South African government's debt to GDP ratio has reached 70%.

South Africa is an electricity-based economy – Eskom's failure to provide electricity has had dire financial implications, especially for small and medium businesses.

Deterioration

Although "Loadshedding" has been part of South African daily life for more than 16 years, it has increased significantly in recent times. South Africa has not had a single day without crippling rolling blackouts in 2023, following record amounts of loadshedding in 2022.

There has been a catastrophic collapse in generation capacity, which has increased the very real risk of total grid collapse.

At the heart of this crisis lies the complete infiltration of Eskom by several criminal cartels with close ties to government. [26]

In a public interview, Outgoing Eskom CEO André De Ruyter alleged that two sitting cabinet ministers were involved in the criminal cartels plundering Eskom.

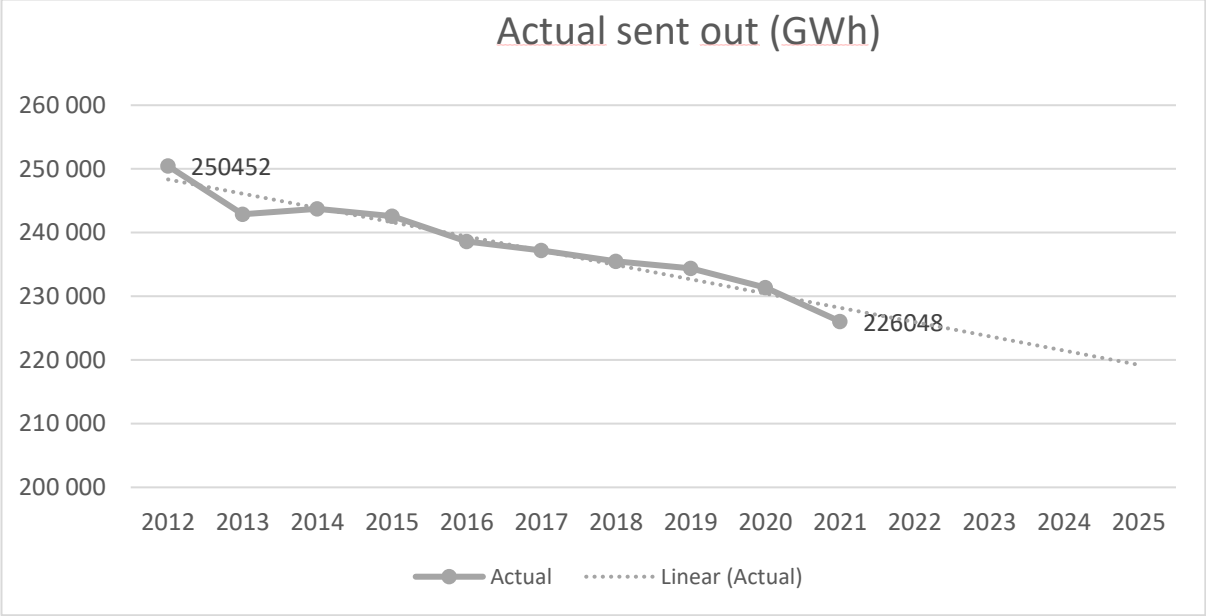
In December 2022 an attempt was made on De Ruyter's life through cyanide poisoning.[27] Shortly before the poisoning, De Ruyter was accused of trying to subvert the state through loadshedding by the current Minister of Minerals and Energy – Gwede Mantashe. [28]

Following these two incidents, De Ruyter resigned.

Energy Outlook

[26] https://www.dailymaverick.co.za/article/2023-02-27-introducing-the-four-crime-cartels-that-have-brought-eskom-and-south-africa-to-their-knees/
[27] https://www.dailymaverick.co.za/article/2023-02-26-cops-defend-detectives-who-confused-de-ruyters-cyanide-poisoning-with-sinus-problems/
[28] https://www.enca.com/news/watch-mantashe-accuses-eskom-agitating-overthrowing-state

South Africa is facing an escalating energy crisis – with very limited effectiveness in governments response. Currently, South Africa dispatches less energy than a decade ago.



The average age of Eskom's power stations are 37 years. Most of the stations were commissioned with an effective life of 40 years. Thus – several of the stations need to be decommissioned in the coming decade. In total, Eskom needs to decommission 22 GW of generating capacity by 2035.

With virtually no new capacity being added to the grid via Eskom, the onus will fall on the private sector to add sufficient generation capacity to provide in the country's energy needs.

De Ruyter estimates that 68 000 MW of new renewable generating capacity will have to be added to replace the 22 000 MW of coal generation capacity that will be decommissioned.[29]

The South African government has allocated R9 billion rand in total (0,4% of the budget expenditure) to incentivise private generation.

Water and Sanitation

In 2017 the civil rights organisation AfriForum launched a blue and green drop project in which they test and rate the drink water and sewage water systems in municipalities across the country. In 2017 they tested the sewage water systems of 88 municipalities. Of these municipalities 67%, or

[29] https://www.engineeringnews.co.za/article/south-africas-electricity-plan-underestimating-new-generation-needs-former-eskom-ceo-warns-2022-03-25

55 municipalities, had sewage systems that were not operating within the regulatory framework and were sub-standard. Furthermore, in 2014 the department of Water and Sanitation reported that on the 1036 drinking water systems they evaluated only 44 were given a blue drop status. This means that the drinking water of 96% systems were not on standard and possible health hazards for citizens. As properly operating water systems is a basic necessity for a hygienic and healthy society, these findings are extremely troubling.

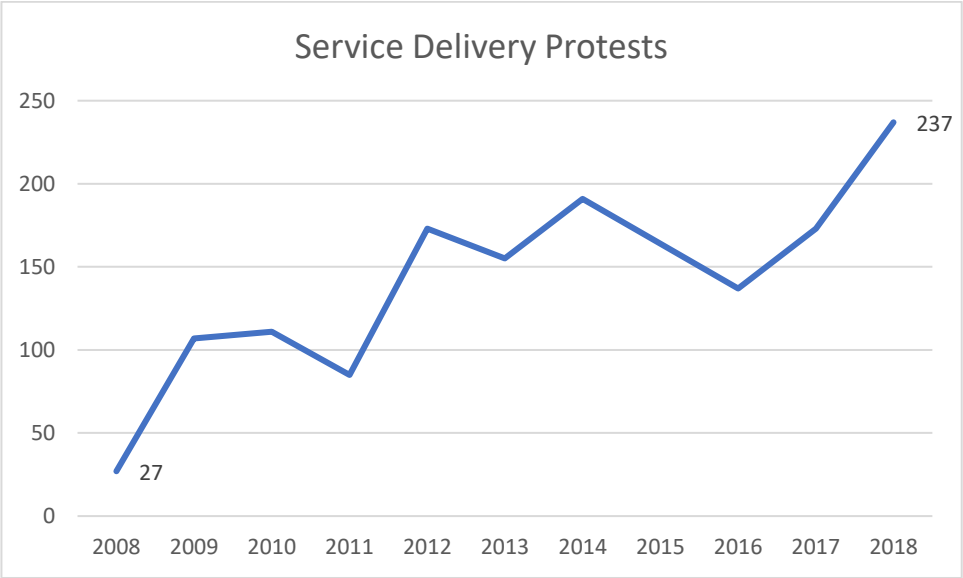
This water crisis is also clearly visible in the current Vaal water crisis. This started in 2018 when the Vaal river, a major water source in the country, was polluted by raw sewage flowing into the river for weeks on end. This naturally caused illness among people and death among animals dependent on the water. The crisis grew so big that the South African National Defence Force (SANDF) were impelled to join the team tasked with cleaning the river. This however ended in early 2019 when funds for the SANDF ran dry and they had to withdraw their help due to financial troubles. The pollution in currently still a hazardous crisis.

Municipalities

Almost all municipalities in South Africa are dysfunctional. The most recent report by the Auditor-General of South Africa showed that more than 90% of Local South African municipalities received qualified audits – meaning material irregular expenditure was incurred. Out of 257 municipalities audited, only 33 received clean audits (12,4%).

The report by the Auditor General shows what ordinary South Africans have seen in action – that most municipalities are completely dysfunctional.

This is also mirrored by the rise in service delivery protests.



Source MunicipalIQ

Education

The South African education system is not up to standard. Year after year the Department of Education lowers their own standards in order to keep upholding a positive narrative regarding education. The realities however show the opposite.

In 2016 the matric pass rate was said to be 76.2%. This doesn't seem to be too bleak a picture. In the same year however the South African education system was ranked 137th out of 139 countries by the World Economic Forum. This clearly shows that any positive narrative that the government tries to uphold is a mere façade. In the bigger scheme of things, we are far below standard and only going downwards. To illustrate this, one must look at these two factors over the past few decades. In 2010 the said pass rate was 67.8%. The education system was ranked 129th out of 138 countries. In 2000 the matric pass rate was merely 61.7%. In that year however the global ranking for public schools in South Africa was 52nd out of 148 countries. This shows that the internal statistics are looking better each year, but the global standard is looking worse. The government is working extremely hard to lower the standards of education in order to raise the statistics. The most recent matric pass rate for 2023 was declared at 82,9%[30]. In the same year a study done by the University of Pretoria showed that 4 out of 5 grade 4 learners in South Africa can't read for comprehension[31]

The true picture of the South African education system is one that is desperately failing in equipping learners for the future – yet government is trying extremely hard to administer quick-fix and feel-good solutions by simply lowering standards and improving statistics whilst doing very little to improve outcomes or build schools. The harsh reality is that South Africa has 2000 fewer schools in 2023 than in 2009 whilst having almost 1 million more schoolchildren. Resources are simply being overwhelmed and ultimately learners are the ones bearing the brunt.

[30] https://www.gov.za/blog/2023-matric-results
[31] https://www.up.ac.za/centre-for-evaluation-and-assessment/news/post_3151785-up-study-shows-81-of-grade-4-learners-in-sa-have-reading-difficulties-

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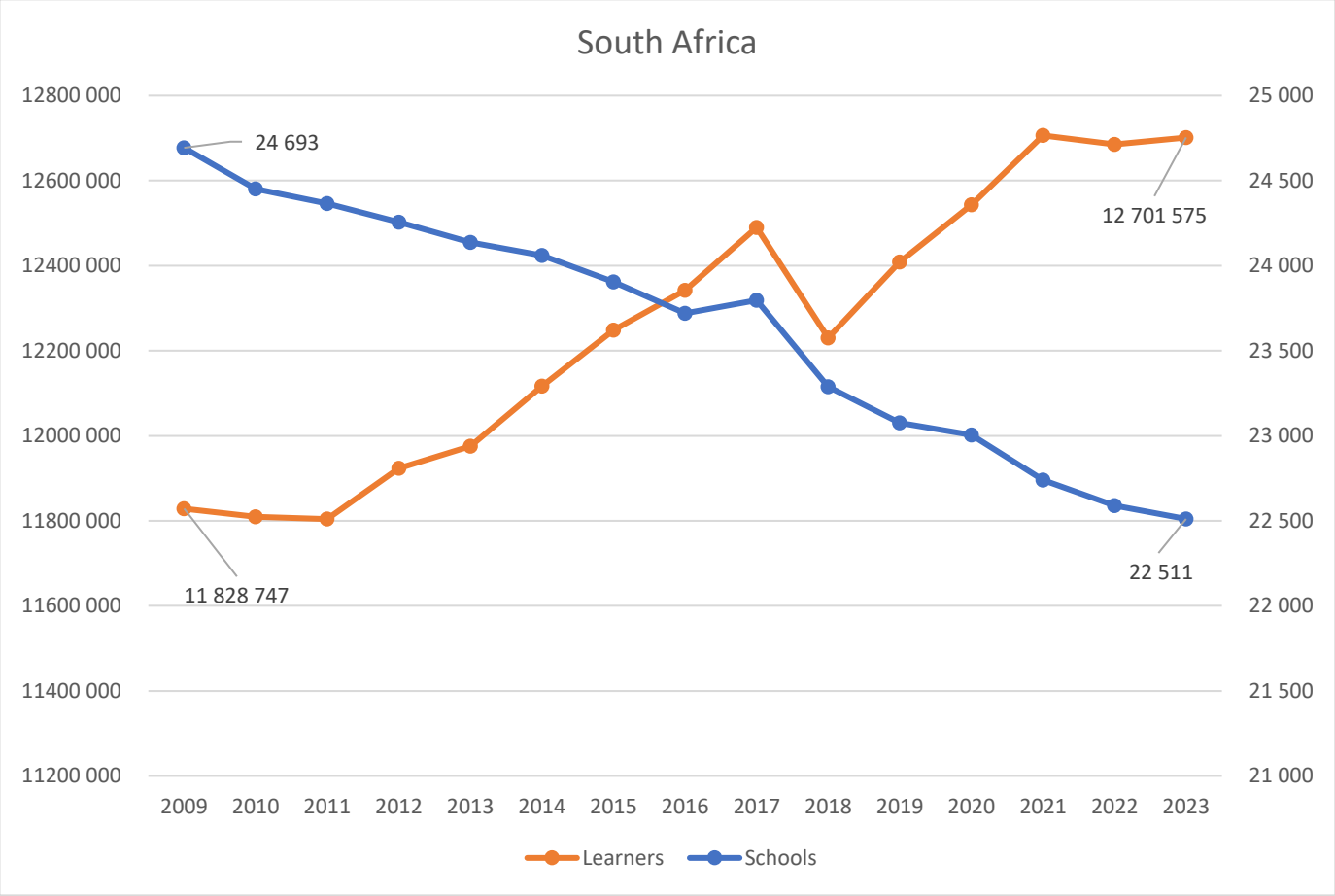

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Minority Rights

South Africa has some minority rights enshrined in the constitution; however these rights don't regularly find expression in reality.

South Africa has three minority racial groups, whites (9%), Indians (2%) and coloured (9%) people. Most of the South African population is black (80%).

In spite of being a small and theoretically protected minority, the white minority has been the main target of political rhetoric from the ruling party.

In September 2019, speaking to students at a political rally, Secretary General of the ANC Ace Magashule questioned why xenophobic violence was never directed towards white people. In the light of xenophobic attacks in September 2019, Magashule referred to white people as foreigners, insinuating that they should be targets for xenophobic violence.

Julius Malema, current leader of the third biggest political party the Economic Freedom Fighters, called for a future genocide against white people at a political rally in 2016. During his speech in front of an agitated crowd he proclaimed: "*We are not calling for the slaughtering of white people, at least for now*". [32] After being reported to the South African Human Rights commission for hate speech, the SAHRC found in 2019 that Malema's speech did not reach the threshold for hate speech because 'vulnerable groups must be able to express anger and pain through robust speech'. [33]

During a press conference in 2018 the minister of Justice stated that government would only expropriate land and not nationalise it, because if it nationalises land it might dispossess black people. The policy is thus aimed at dispossessing people with land of other racial groups. [34]

Despite political rhetoric turning increasingly volatile against minorities and the white minority in particular, the reality at grassroots level is that minorities are finding it increasingly difficult to realise rights in South Africa.

In a landmark judgement, the Constitutional Court of South Africa found that Afrikaans may not be used as language of instruction at the University of the Free State in South Africa, because it might cause racial segregation. [35]

[32] https://www.iol.co.za/news/politics/malema-not-calling-for-the-slaughter-of-whites-for-now-2087713
[33] https://businesstech.co.za/news/government/305318/malemas-not-slaughtering-white-people-for-now-comments-not-hate-speech/
[34] https://www.sowetanlive.co.za/news/south-africa/2018-08-01-anc-plans-to-give-ownership-of-land-directly-to-dispossessed-black-people/
[35] https://ewn.co.za/2017/12/29/concourt-upholds-ufs-decision-to-switch-language-policy-to-english

This has significant implications for the basic right to education for minorities in South Africa, Afrikaans is one of the official languages of the country of South Africa and one of only two languages developed to academic standards. In fact in a subsequent judgement regarding the use of Afrikaans at the University of Stellenbosch, the Constitutional Court argues that if citizens want to have instruction in Afrikaans they will have to build it privately. [36]

Section 29 of the South African constitution guarantees the right to education in the official language of your choice in public education facilities in South Africa. It is uncanny for the constitutional court to simply abdicate this responsibility of the state and appeal to 'corporate citizens' spirit of generosity' to realise this right. [37]

[36] https://www.concourt.org.za/index.php/judgement/338-gelyke-kanse-and-others-v-chairperson-of-the-senate-of-the-university-of-stellenbosch-and-others-cct311-17
[37] https://www.concourt.org.za/index.php/judgement/338-gelyke-kanse-and-others-v-chairperson-of-the-senate-of-the-university-of-stellenbosch-and-others-cct311-17

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Summary

South Africa has a country has declined in most aspects in the last two decades. The covid-pandemic has simply accelerated existing trends.

With regards to the functioning of a government, wherever the government should provide services – this service is almost non-existent. There are some exceptions – but in general the story has been one of failure.

Economically South Africans are poorer in world terms than they were a decade ago. A sluggish economy, with high structural unemployment – that is constantly encumbered more by a continuation of harmful policy from the government.

Rampant and persistent violent crime plagues South Africa, with no indication of the police force's capability to curb it. Corruption and maladministration reigns supreme in the police force, with ordinary citizens bearing the brunt of the crisis.

South Africa's education system creates masses of unemployable people due to the sharp drop in standards. Although the statistics mask the extent of the crisis – the highest youth unemployment in the world paints the real picture.

Aging infrastructure is starting to fall apart, with Eskom being the most obvious. The instability of South Africa's electricity supply has far reaching consequences in all facets of society. New infrastructure is plagued with corruption and massively inflated prices.

All this point to a government that is almost non-existent in the normal spheres it should be in, yet still want to centralise ever more power and exert ever more control.

One of the advantages of the government imploding, is that South Africa is federalising on a *de facto* basis. The process of natural federalisation is occurring in natural communities – with the citizens of small towns taking responsibility for functions the government should normally fulfil.

It is in this space – between what the South African government wants to do, and what it is capable of – that the Solidarity Movement exists.