

# **Praxis-sourced commoning:**

## **Some reflections from South African struggles**

**Patrick Bond**

**(School of Government, University of the Western Cape, South Africa)**

**Presentation to  
South-South Forum 7  
12 July 2020**

**[pbond@mail.ngo.za](mailto:pbond@mail.ngo.za)**

# Civilian anti-government protests by region, 2009-19

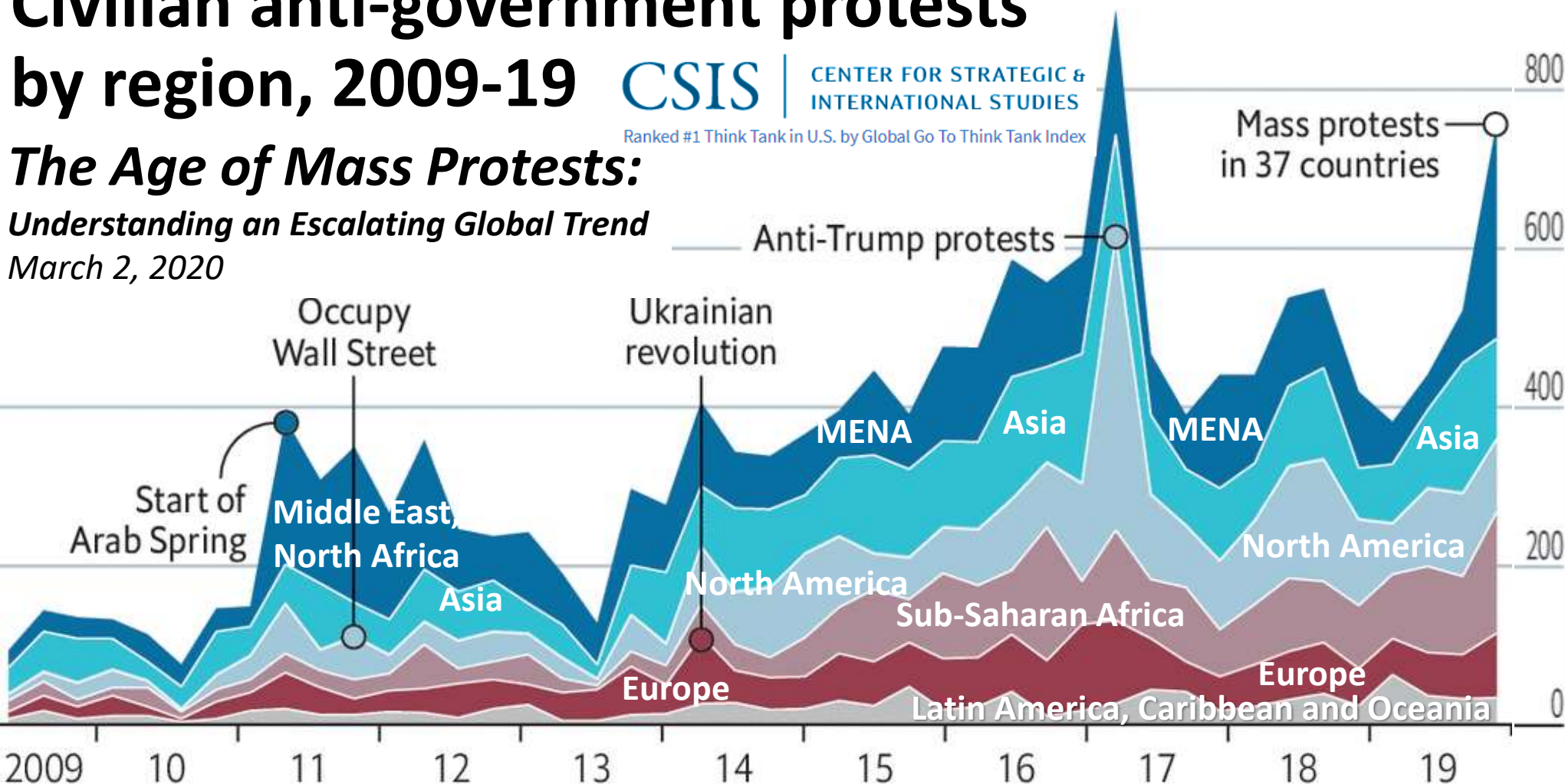
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## *The Age of Mass Protests:*

*Understanding an Escalating Global Trend*

March 2, 2020



MARCH 2020

# The Age of Mass Protests

*Understanding an Escalating Global Trend*

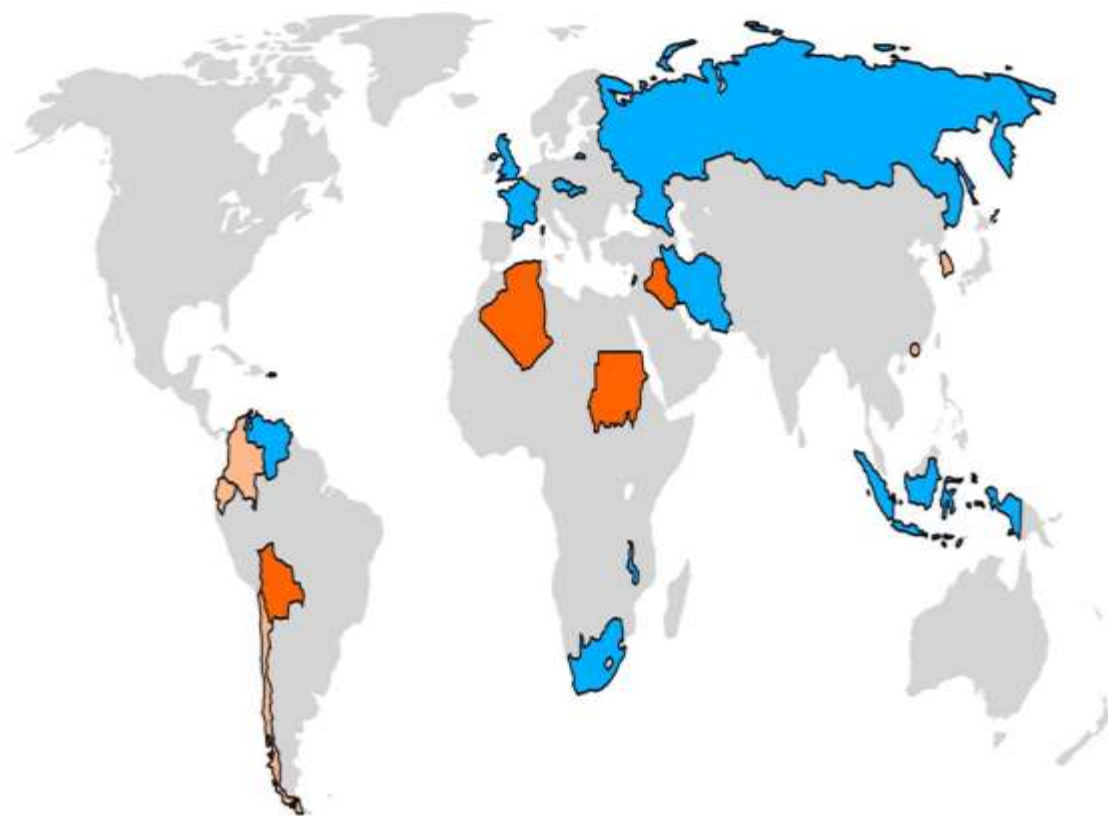
AUTHORS  
Samuel J. Brannen  
Christian S. Haig  
Katherine Schmidt

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## A year of discontent: Protests of 2019

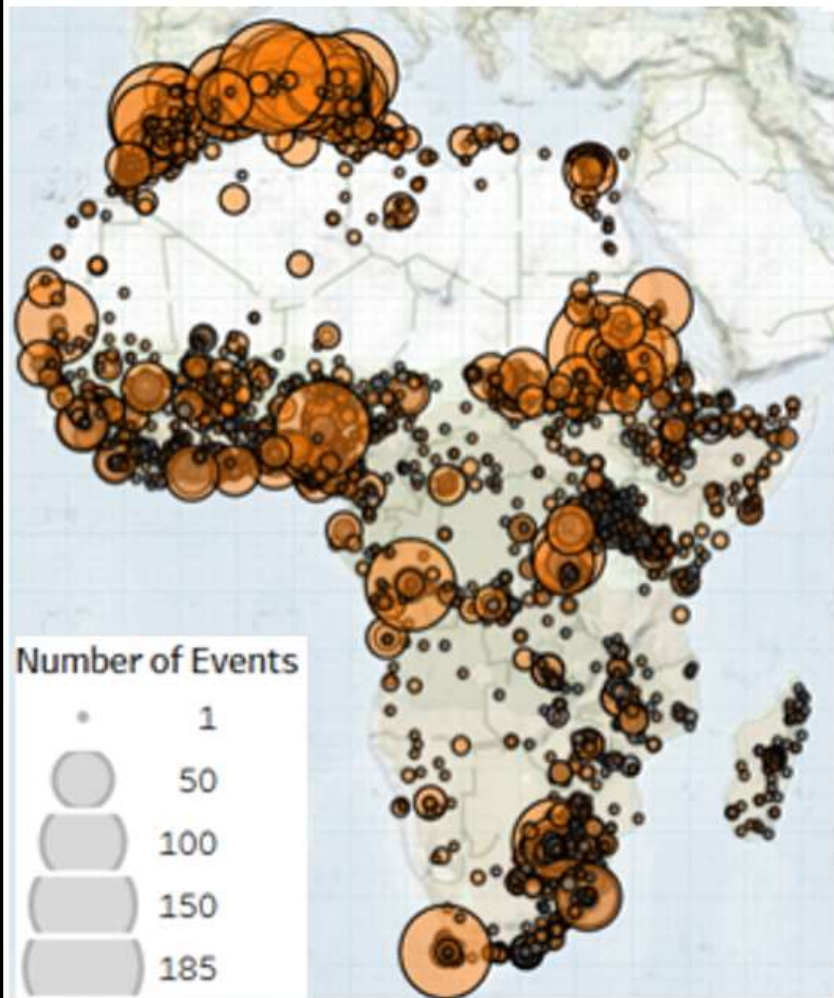
■ Leader ousted ■ Policy changed ■ Other



Source: Bloomberg News



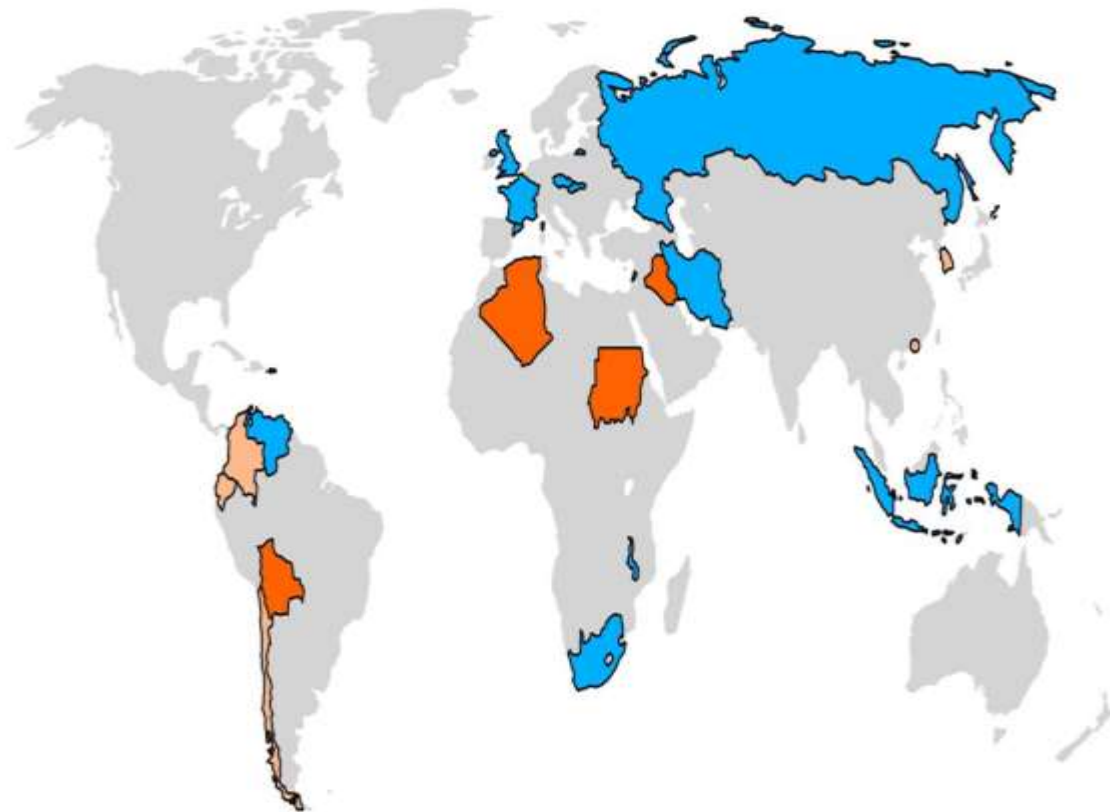
## Riots and protests in Africa, 2019



Source: Armed Conflict Location and Event Data

## A year of discontent: Protests of 2019

■ Leader ousted ■ Policy changed ■ Other



Source: Bloomberg News

# 47 countries witness surge in civil unrest –



Verisk  
Maplecroft™





# Civil Unrest Index 2020

■ Extreme Risk ■ High Risk ■ Medium Risk ■ Low Risk



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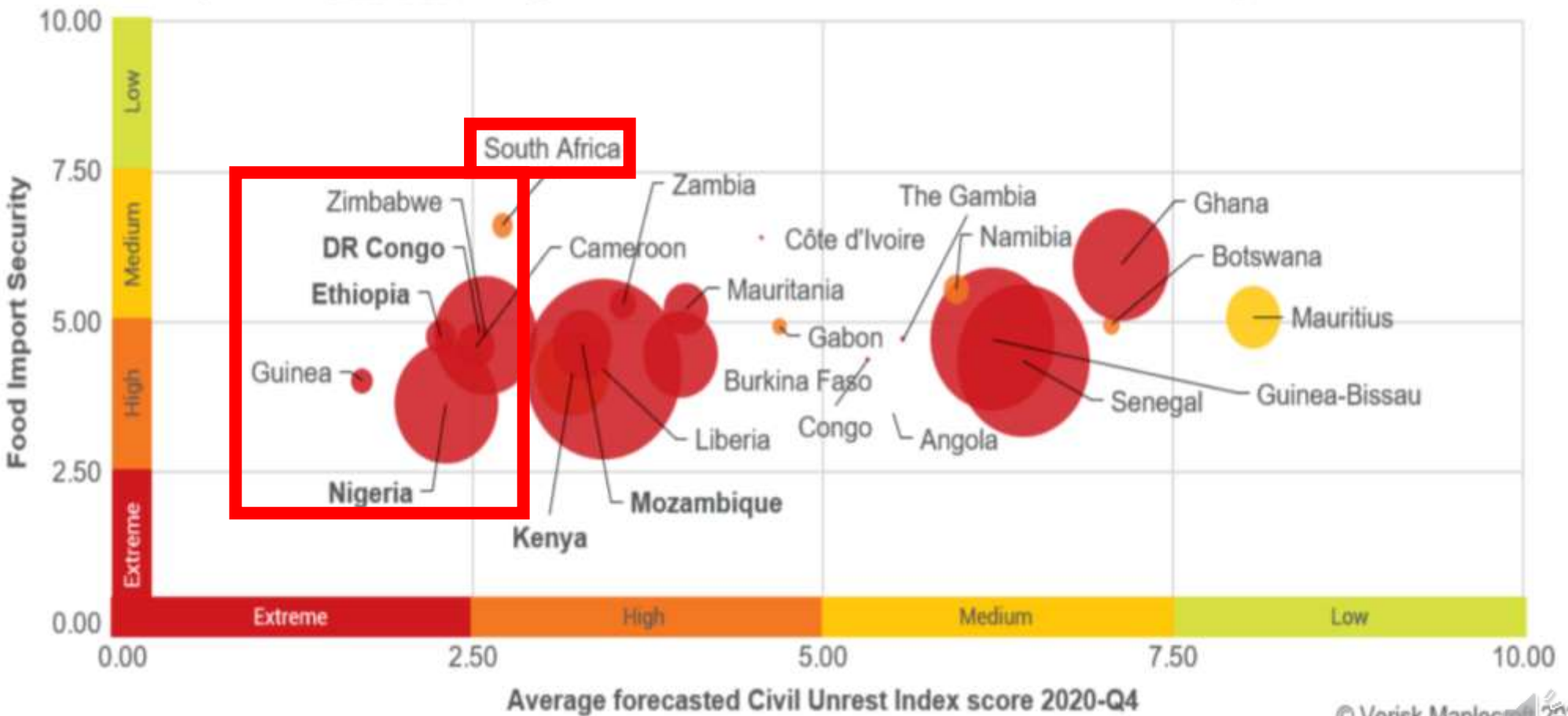




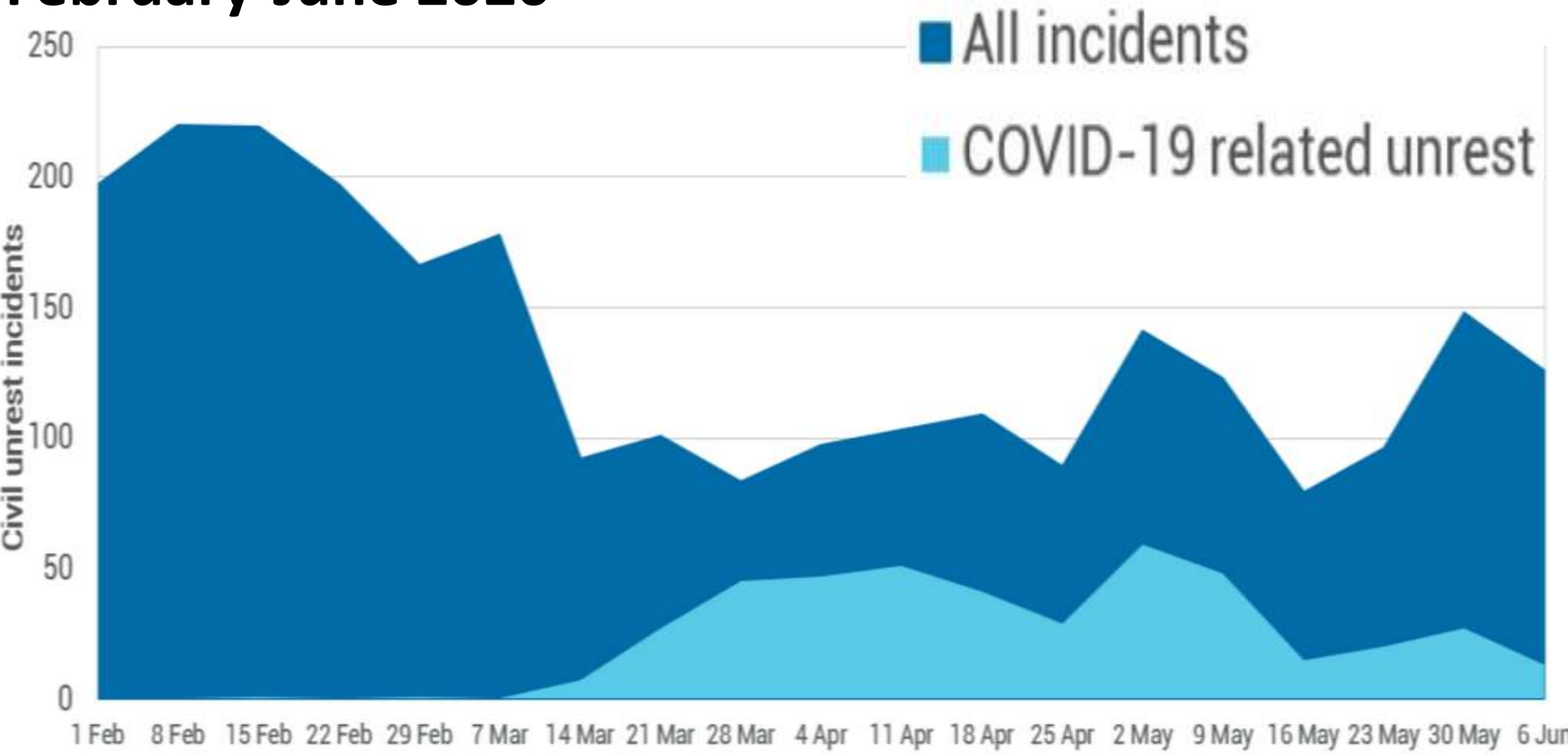
Verisk  
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Poverty Index: ● Extreme risk ● High risk ● Medium risk ● Low risk

Bubble size: personal remittances as % of GDP



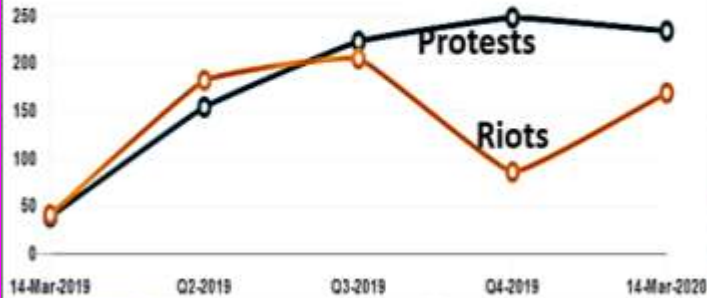
# Number of incidents of civil unrest in sub-Saharan Africa, February-June 2020



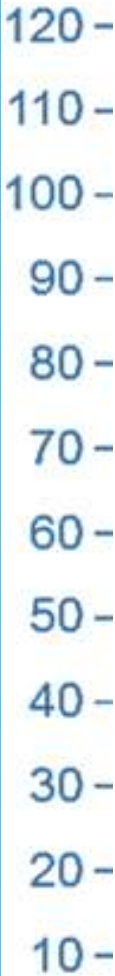
Source: <https://www.maplecroft.com/siteassets/images/insight-images/analysis/2020/extreme-poverty-falling-remittances-and-food-import-dependency-will-drive-civil-unrest-in-sub-saharan-africa.png>



## social protests and 'riots' in year prior to Covid-19

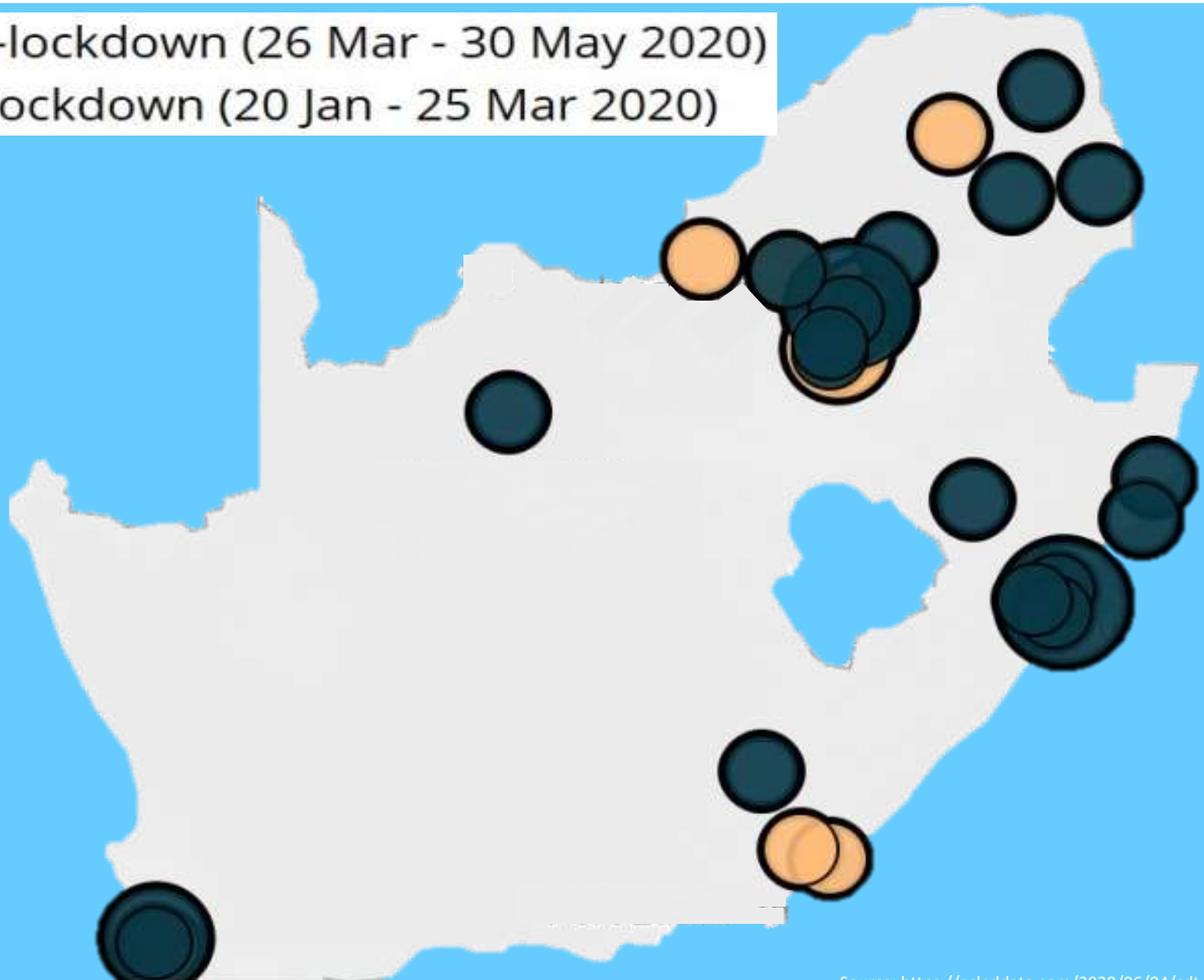


## Ramaphosa era



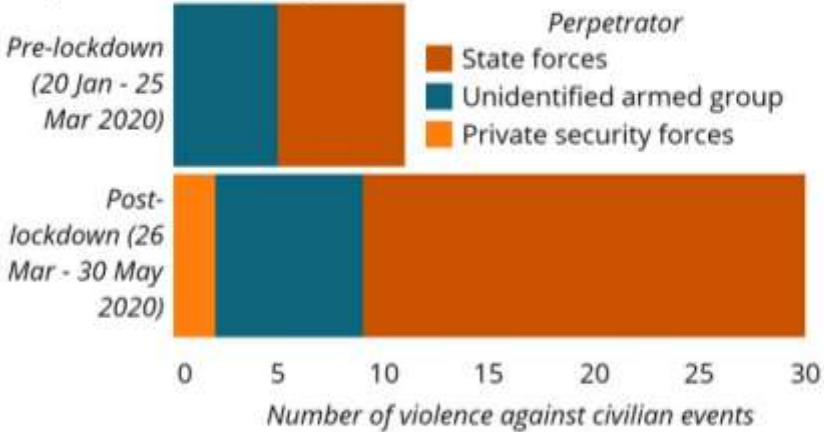
■ Post-lockdown (26 Mar - 30 May 2020)

■ Pre-lockdown (20 Jan - 25 Mar 2020)



South Africa instituted a nationwide lockdown on 26 March in an effort to contain the coronavirus. This included a complete prohibition on alcohol sales, as alcohol-related issues were thought to place a disproportionate burden on the state's enforcement and health infrastructure.

Police Minister Bheki Cele encouraged security forces to both destroy liquor stores and to use force to enforce the ban. As a result, the increase in violence against civilians is almost entirely due to a surge in state targeting of civilians as part of these heavy-handed enforcement measures.

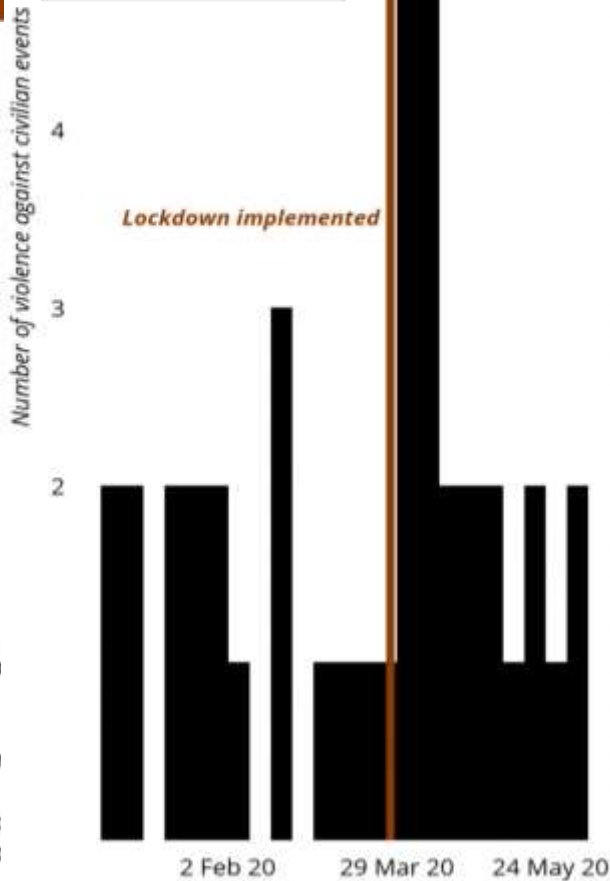


As South Africa loosens these restrictions, including the alcohol ban, such incidents are expected to decrease. However, prohibition measures provided opportunities to criminal networks seeking to profit from black-market sales of alcohol, and many small businesses were permanently destroyed, resulting in increased unemployment. Such consequences could catalyze an increase in new types violence in the coming months.

While most types of violence decreased in the weeks following the coronavirus outbreak, violence against civilians surged across South Africa. In the weeks following South Africa's lockdown measures implemented on 26 March, ACLED records more than double the number of violence against civilian events than during previous weeks.



The increase in violence against civilians is due in large part to a spike in the weeks directly following the implementation of South Africa's lockdown order.



















# Mutual aid provision of food

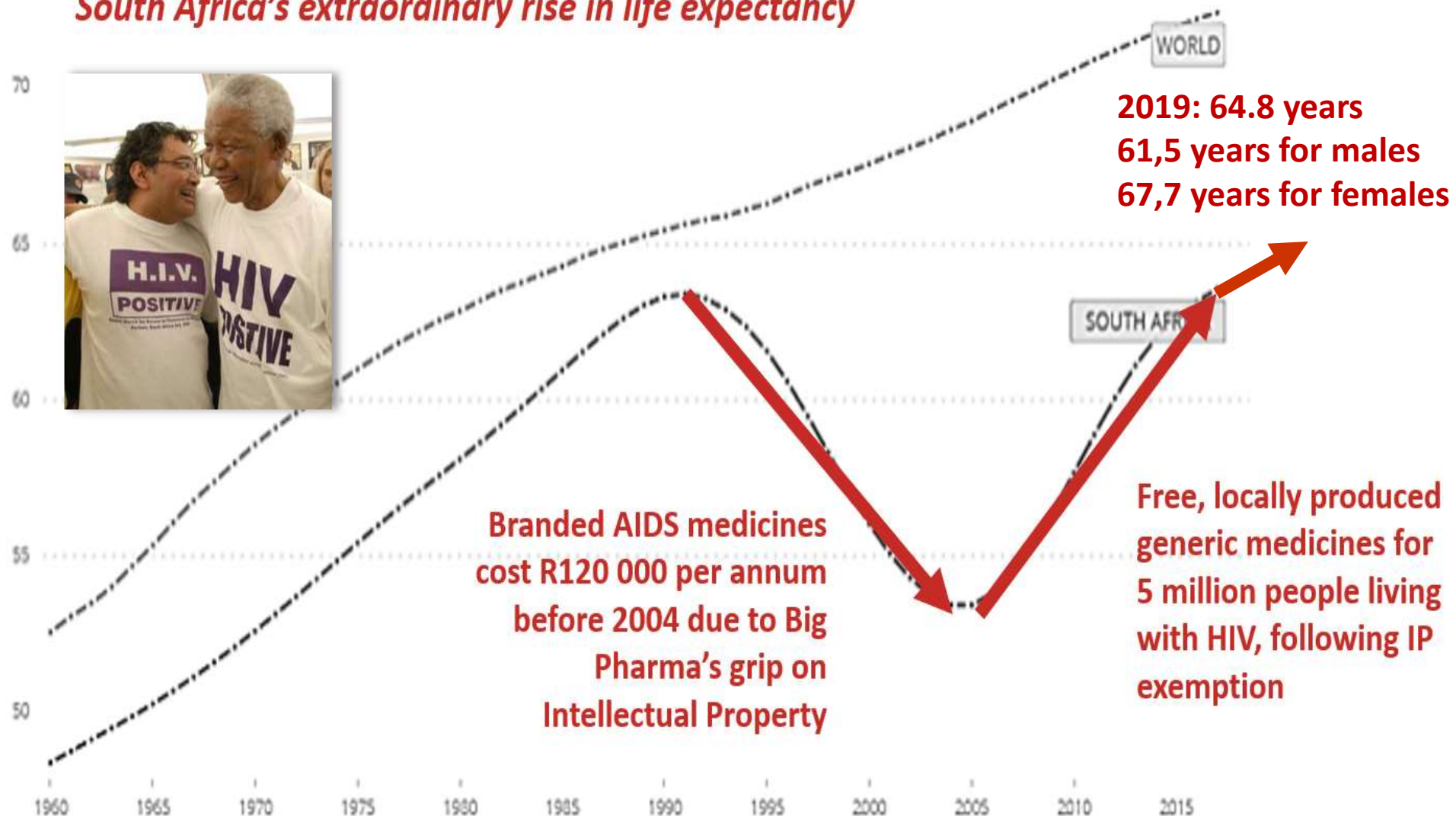
## Food Relief Mapping (July 2020)

<https://www.safsc.org.za/food-relief-mapping/>





## South Africa's extraordinary rise in life expectancy





# Death rate (per 1000 people), 2002-19

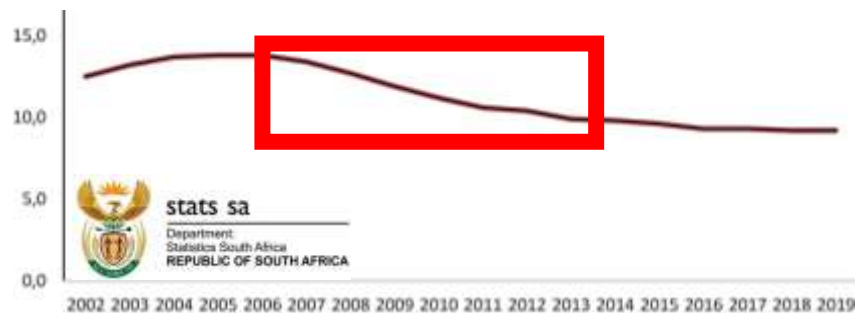
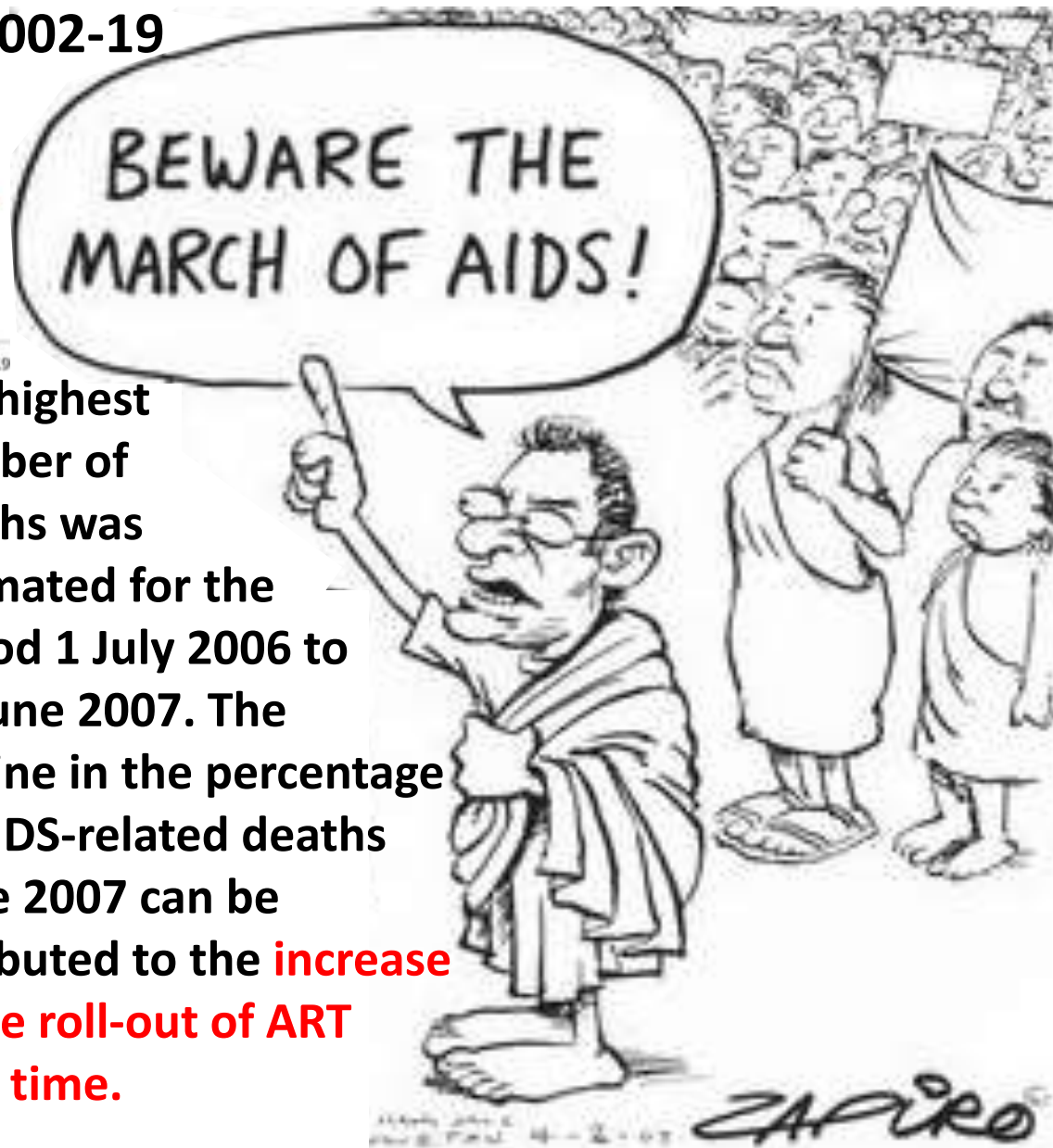


Table 4 below shows estimates for selected indicators. The highest number of deaths was estimated for the period 1 July 2006 to 30 June 2007. The decline in the percentage of AIDS-related deaths since 2007 can be attributed to the increase in the roll-out of ART over time. The national roll-out of ART began in 2005 with a target of one (1) service point in each of the 53 districts of South Africa at the time (later reduced to 52 districts). The estimated number of AIDS-related deaths declined consistently since 2007 from 267 417 to 126 805 AIDS related deaths in 2019. Access to antiretroviral treatment has changed significantly over time, altering the pattern of mortality over time. Access to ART has extended the lifespan of many in South Africa, who would have otherwise died at an earlier age, as evidenced in the decline of AIDS deaths post-2006.

| Year | Number of births* | Number of deaths* | Number of AIDS related deaths* | Percentage of AIDS related deaths |
|------|-------------------|-------------------|--------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| 2002 | 985 592           | 581 147           | 204 164                        | 35.1                              |
| 2003 | 992 466           | 619 789           | 241 519                        | 39.0                              |
| 2004 | 1 058 035         | 648 774           | 273 113                        | 42.1                              |
| 2005 | 1 101 649         | 661 940           | 283 905                        | 42.9                              |
| 2006 | 1 136 560         | 671 812           | 286 588                        | 42.7                              |
| 2007 | 1 170 768         | 660 794           | 267 417                        | 40.5                              |
| 2008 | 1 196 587         | 634 042           | 236 476                        | 37.6                              |
| 2009 | 1 203 938         | 602 288           | 204 120                        | 33.9                              |
| 2010 | 1 204 340         | 574 718           | 176 946                        | 30.8                              |
| 2011 | 1 192 472         | 551 597           | 153 284                        | 27.8                              |
| 2012 | 1 184 855         | 550 702           | 148 374                        | 26.9                              |
| 2013 | 1 180 634         | 535 958           | 137 542                        | 25.7                              |
| 2014 | 1 178 657         | 538 866           | 131 908                        | 24.5                              |
| 2015 | 1 177 000         | 532 761           | 133 951                        | 25.1                              |
| 2016 | 1 179 465         | 526 226           | 130 434                        | 24.8                              |
| 2017 | 1 178 754         | 530 210           | 132 544                        | 25.0                              |
| 2018 | 1 175 282         | 535 401           | 129 677                        | 24.2                              |
| 2019 | 1 171 219         | 541 493           | 126 805                        | 23.4                              |

The highest number of deaths was estimated for the period 1 July 2006 to 30 June 2007. The decline in the percentage of AIDS-related deaths since 2007 can be attributed to the **increase in the roll-out of ART over time.**





NEWS

## South Africa's New Enemy

Jon Cohen\*

\* See all authors and affiliations

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Science

Vol. 288, Issue 5474  
23 June 2000

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**B B C NEWS**

Friday, 27 October, 2000, 14:25 GMT 15:25 UK

## Questions over death of Mbeki aide



Parks Mankahlana: High profile spokesman for Mandela and Mbeki

**By Carolyn Dempster in Johannesburg**

Phakamile "Parks" Mankahlana, presidential spokesman for both Nelson Mandela and President Thabo Mbeki, died suddenly on Thursday after what the presidency described as a "long illness".

He was only 36 years old and there is intense speculation that the illness was Aids-related,

**“The premature passing of Parks Mankahlana has**

Parks Mankahlana, President Thabo Mbeki's spokesperson, confirms a widespread rumor that **providing treatment to infected pregnant women worries the government because of the number of surviving orphans this policy would create.**

“A country like ours has to deal with that,” insists Mankahlana. **“That mother is going to die, and that HIV-negative child will be an orphan. That child must be brought up. Who's going to bring the child up? It's the state, the state. That's resources, you see?”**



Corporate strategists assessed the vast **size of the unemployed population**, which allowed firms to **replace workers living with HIV who become ill, with desperate compatriots**, instead of providing treatment.

As an illustration, consider a year-long study at Africa's largest company, Anglo American Corporation. **Anglo then had 160,000 employees, of whom 21% were estimated to be living with HIV.**

In June 2001, the *Financial Times* reported on Anglo's "plans to make special **payments to miners suffering from HIV/AIDS, on condition they take voluntary retirement.**"

However, in addition to bribing workers to go home and die, Anglo told the FT, **"treatment of employees with anti-retrovirals can be cheaper** than the costs incurred by leaving them untreated."

In August 2001, Anglo's vice president for medicine, Brian Brink, bragged in *Business Day* about a "strategy [which] involved offering **wellness programmes, including access to anti-retroviral treatment.**"



“The company believed **that the cost of its programmes would eventually be outweighed by the benefits it received in gradual gains in productivity**, [Brink] concluded. Although it was indeed a risky strategy, it was the only one Anglo could pursue in the face of such human suffering.”

But in October 2001, Anglo retracted its promise, as new analysis suggested **88% of its workers – 146,000 people – were not worth saving**.

According to the *Financial Times*, Brink “said the company’s **14,000 senior staff would receive anti-retroviral treatment** as part of their medical insurance, but that the provision of drug treatment for lower income employees was **too expensive**.”

Brink explained the criteria: ARVs “could save on absenteeism and improved productivity. The saving you achieve can be substantial, but we really don’t know how it will stack up. **We feel that the cost will be greater than the saving**.”

After an **intense struggle with the mineworkers’ union**, the company was forced to reverse position again in mid-2002.



There was also the **residual power of pharmaceutical manufacturers** to defend their rights to their Intellectual Property through monopoly patents on life-saving medicines (whose R&D was massively state-subsidised).

This pressure did not end in April 2001 when the **Pharmaceutical Manufacturers Association withdrew their notorious lawsuit** against the South African Medicines Act of 1997.

That Act allows for **parallel import or local production, via 'compulsory licenses', of generic substitutes** for brand-name anti-retroviral medicines. Big Pharma's power was felt in the debate over essential drugs for public health emergencies at the November 2001 Doha World Trade Organisation summit, and ever since.







**Gugu Dlamini**

# *Campaigning for AIDS medicines access:*

## Treatment Action Campaign and global allies

- 1990s – **U.S. promotes Intellectual Property** above all, so monopoly-patented ARVs cost \$10-15,000/person/year
- 1997 – **SA's Medicines Act allows 'compulsory licensing'** (breaking patent for generic producers);
- 1998 – **U.S. State Dept counters Medicines Act** with 'full court press', **Treatment Action Campaign** formed after murder of AIDS activist Gugu Dlamini in Durban township due to stigmatisation
- 1999 – **ACTUP! protests at Al Gore presidential rallies**, Seattle WTO summit, Bill Clinton concedes, '**AIDS dissidents**' emerge
- 2000 – **AIDS conference in Durban**, rise of **Mbeki's denialism** the '**PMA-SA v Mandela**' lawsuit, trials by **Medicines sans Frontiers**, TAC imports generics (Thailand, Brazil, India), **WTO exemption for IP** confirmed at Doha summit





## ***Campaigning for AIDS medicines access***

**“Due to government denialism and pharmaceutical greed, the poor were sent home to die while those who could afford to buy antiretrovirals in the private sector were able to live. The size of your pocket determined whether you lived or died.”**



**Vuyiseka Dubula**

# *Campaigning for AIDS medicines access*

- 2002 – tough **critiques of Mbeki, Manto Tshabalala-Msimang and Alec Erwin**, Constitutional **Court backs ruling promoting nevirapine**
- 2003 – after insider lobbying, ANC compels change in state policy
- 2004 – **generics produced in SA, global AIDS funds grow**
- 2019 – **five million public sector recipients of ARVs**
- threats – **Covid-19, fiscal squeeze, Pepfar cutbacks, stockouts**

## **strategic successes (and lessons for Covid-19):**



- soaring **life expectancy**
- **policy advocacy** success
  - **commoning** of IP
  - **decommodification**
  - **destratification**
- **deglobalisation** of capital
- **globalisation** of solidarity