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Insurers pay out R35-m in year of riots

By Jose Santa Rita *lit*

South African insurers have agreed to pay out R35 million in less than a year in claims for damages caused by the political unrest, the managing director of the South African Special Risks Insurance Association, Mr R Schneeberger, disclosed today.

As buildings and cars continue to be the targets of riotous mobs throughout the country, Mr Schneeberger said the R35 million covered the amounts settled since the end of August 1984.

It is understood claims for damages caused by the political unrest jumped dramatically after the outbreak of violence in the Vaal region in October. It is now estimated to be three times the amount that would have been normally paid out.

"The great bulk of the R35 million concerns damages in respect of material damages other than motor vehicles," said Mr Schneeberger. There had been nearly 2 500 claims concerning vehicles, the majority of which were buses. Claims concerning damages to other property numbered about 750, he said.

Mr Schneeberger said the fact the association had recently turned down a claim by the Argus publishing group after one of its vehicles had been stoned did not mean that riot-cover policies were meaningless.

Mr Schneeberger said only two insurance claims had been rejected on the same grounds as the Argus group's claim, namely that the association considered that no reasonable precautions had been taken to safeguard the car.

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