

More protests on the cards

Last year's Fees Must Fall riots took the cake with a destruction bill of R600m, R200bn more than other protests

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THE government has warned against more protests this year after social unrest left a trail of destruction to property amounting to well over a billion rand last year.

Several service delivery protests occurred in varying degrees, with the biggest one being the #FeesMustFall protest which dragged on for almost a month.

Students from numerous universities across the country went on a rampage after the Minister of Higher Education and Training, Blade Nzimande, announced that universities can propose a fee increment of not more than 8% for 2017.

In the course of the protest, law enforcement cars, buses, private cars and buildings that included clinics, schools and libraries were destroyed.

In September, Universities South Africa (USAf) revealed the students' riots resulted in universities suffering damage costs of more than R600m.

Another service delivery protest which resulted in destruction was in the Vuwani township in Limpopo early last year.

Fuming residents torched over 40 schools, protesting against the government's plans to demarcate their area into a new municipality.

The Minister of Basic Education, Angie Motshekga said the estimated amount needed to rebuild the schools would exceed R400m.

Sasria spokesperson, Thokozile Mahlangu said the special risk insurance company spent R650m to pay for costs to damages caused by service delivery protest countrywide.

"The total number of claims received due to service delivery protests was 2 874

for the period of April 2015 to September 2016," Mahlangu said. Mahlangu could not reveal which protests resulted in the highest claim cost, citing client confidentiality concerns as a reason.

But from April 2016 to September 2016, the insurance company received claims amounting to R50m as a result of the #FeesMustFall protests.

SAPS incurred additional costs by deploying officers to protests to diffuse tensions. SAPS spokesperson Brig Sally

de Beer said the police could not at the moment reveal the cost of police deployment at service delivery protests.

"Lt Gen Phahlane advised that we will be able to provide information on the costs of our deployments at a later stage," de Beer said.

Research by Municipal IQ showed that 107 service delivery protests occurred countrywide as of the end of August.

But the number is marginally lower than at the end of August in 2015, in

which 164 protests occurred.

Both figures did not include protests against councillor candidates which featured significantly this year.

The study further showed that Gauteng and the Eastern Cape province accounted for the greatest portion of protest activity in 2016, with 30% of protests occurring in Gauteng while 22% happened in the Eastern Cape. Economist Dawie Roodt said he is concerned the chaos during protests is sending the

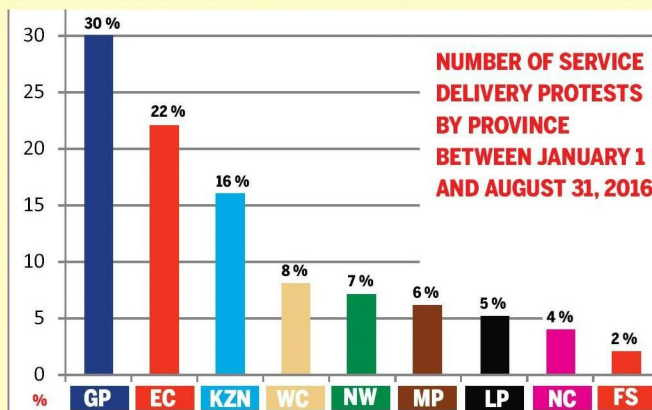
wrong message to foreign investors.

"What I am much more concerned about is the message that we are sending from South Africa to the rest of the world. We are sending a message that this is a very dangerous place, that people can potentially break your stuff. The point of it is that it is very much negative," Roodt said.

He said the protests also played a part in the position of the country's rand.

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PROTESTS AND HOW THEY ARE POLICED



POLICE DEPLOYMENTS AND ARRESTS DURING SERVICE DELIVERY PROTESTS

- Vuwani protest – 59 police deployed and 28 protestors arrested
- Grabouw – 127 police deployed and 16 protestors arrested
- Mthatha – 52 police deployed and 46 protestors arrested
- 154 deployments made to address protest action in Ennerdale (44%), Hammanskraal (22%) and Kagiso (34%)

