

Taxi violence on the increase

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TENSION was high in Vosloorus, east of Joburg this morning following taxi violence that left two people dead and eight others wounded.

Police spokesman Captain Mega Ndowe told The Star that an argument over salaries between taxi drivers and taxi bosses allegedly led to the shooting at the Gold Spot taxi rank late yesterday.

“One person died on the scene and a second died on arrival in hospital. The eight others wounded on the scene are in serious to critical condition. Within 30 minutes police were able to apprehend the four suspects responsible for the violence – three licensed firearms were also confiscated,” Ndowe said. A case of murder and attempted murder has been opened.

Taxi violence has gripped Gauteng in recent months with several shootouts across the region.

In August one person was killed and two others were injured when gunshots were fired at the Noord taxi rank in the Joburg CBD. In another incident one person was killed and five others wounded in taxi violence that broke out at the Tembisa taxi rank.

Earlier this year taxi violence between two rival associations broke out as they threw rocks at each other. No one was seriously injured but 32 taxis were impounded.

Fee hike ‘on par’ with other South African institutions

Cancelled classes likely to affect exams

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WITS University cancelled classes for a third day in a row today as students once again blocked its entrances and exits in protest of the increases in fees.

Andrew Crouch, who is acting head of the university while Adam Habib is at a conference, was turned away in his Mercedes-Benz.

Traffic trying to come in was lighter than yesterday.

“Not many people are trying,” said Mitchel Hunter, who was a bit of a celebrity on Twitter last night after reportedly being knocked over by a car while trying to enter campus yesterday evening.

Some graduate students have still come to campus to work on independent research, but most other students who arrived, joined their peers at the gates.

“This personally affects me,” said Odwa Abraham before joining in.

“I’m a bursary student, but my bursary can’t pay



ON A PAR: The university says its fee increases are on par with other South African institutions, and it has been consulting with student leaders about the hike for several months. PICTURE: BHEKIHAYA MABASO

this much money.

“Already I’m facing a crisis where I have to pay R30 000 myself.

“I don’t know where I’m going to get it.”

He said his total fees were R103 000, but his bursary only covered R70 000.

“Most of us, especially black children, are the first

to come to university, and having to go back home and face your family is a very sad story,” he added.

He also acknowledged complaints that the protest would affect exams.

He said he had his books with him and would be studying throughout the day while he took part

in the blockade.

Wits announced yesterday that it would call the police if the students did not allow traffic through the gate today.

Police arrived at the Empire Road gate shortly before 9am, but at the time of going to press, they had not done anything.

According to the student leadership, Habib was to meet with them on campus this morning.

The university is increasing fees by 10.5 percent, which SRC president Shaeera Kalla said systematically excluded lower-income students from higher education.



KICKER: Students holds a placard at the student protest on 14 October 2015 after Wits University proposed an increase of 10.5 percent in tuition fees PICTURE:

IN NUMBERS
THE PROPORTION of African students in universities has increased from 49 percent in 1995 to roughly 72 percent currently. However, only 15 percent of all African youths in SA are participating in higher education.

And according to the 2013 Council on Higher Education report which argued for an extra year of study for all undergraduate degree and diploma programmes, less than 5 percent of black African and coloured youth in SA succeed at university.

Move to regulate fees

LEANNE JANSEN

THE GOVERNMENT intends exploring the regulating of university fees, Higher Education Minister Blade Nzimande said yesterday.

“The ANC NGC (national general council) said there must be regulation of fees. We will have to look into that obviously as a mandate now,” Nzimande told journalists at the national Higher Education Summit being held in Durban.

Earlier yesterday, during his keynote address, Deputy President Cyril Ramaphosa made the call to regulate fees, saying access to university ought to be a right, not a privilege.

There was a concern that the hikes in fees were putting higher education study out of reach of too many potential students.

Nzimande said there was a need to ensure a “transparent” and “rational” manner in which to increase fees.

“What makes one university increase fees by 7 percent and another by 12 percent?” he asked

Inflation-linked fee increases were inevitable, Nzimande said. However, in certain instances, the fee hikes were double the inflation rate, and urgent discussions were needed with vice-chancellors to determine cost drivers.

As for free higher education, it all depended on whether the government had the money, Nzimande said. The task team recently appointed by President Jacob Zuma would have to look at ways to increase the pot for student funding.

Deputy Higher Education Minister Mduzuzi Manana added that for most students at technical and vocational education and training colleges, the cost of studying was already free.

As for university students, those who performed well in their final year had their government loans converted to bursaries, Manana said.

Hunger remains serious problem

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THE LEVEL of hunger in developing countries may have dropped by 27 percent, but the state of the world’s hunger remains serious.

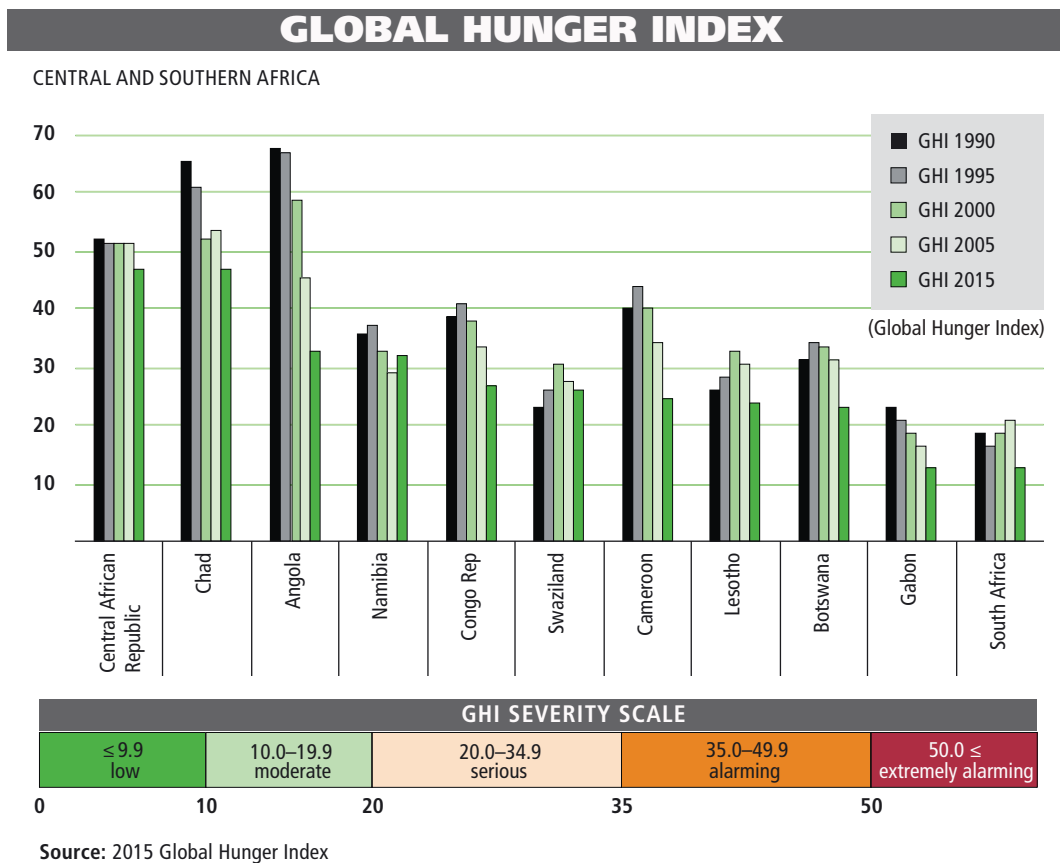
This is according to the “2015 Global Hunger Index (GHI): Armed Conflict And The Challenge of Hunger” report, which was released this week. The report shows that levels of hunger are alarming or serious in 52 out of 117 countries. This year marks the 10th year that the International Food Policy Research Institute has assessed global hunger.

Also this year, the GHI scores have been calculated using a revised formula, replacing child underweight – previously the sole indicator of child undernutrition – with two indicators of child undernutrition, child wasting and child stunting.

The index, which also focuses on the impact conflict has on levels of hunger, gathers data from governments and international agencies.

“From the 2000 GHI to the 2015 GHI, 17 countries reduced their scores by 50 percent or more. The 10 countries that achieved the biggest percentage reductions are Azerbaijan, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Brazil, Croatia, Kyrgyzstan, Latvia, Mongolia, Peru, Ukraine and Venezuela,” the index states.

“In terms of absolute progress, a comparison of the 2000 GHI and 2015 scores reveal that Rwanda, Angola and Ethiopia saw the biggest improvements in scores. However, despite considerable



declines in GHI scores, their hunger levels remain high.”

In terms of GHI scores, the higher the score, the higher the level of hunger. Scores between 20.0 and 34.9 points are considered serious.

According to the index, hunger is understood to refer to the distress associated with lack of food, whereas undernutrition signifies deficiencies in energy, protein or essential vitamins and minerals.

Malnutrition refers more broadly to both undernutrition and overnutrition.

According to projections

from the Food and Agriculture Organisation of the UN, about 795 million people worldwide – roughly one in nine – are estimated to be chronically undernourished in 2014 and 2016.

“As of 2013, 161 million children – about one in four – were stunted, and 51 million children suffered from wasting. Nearly half of all child deaths under the age of five are due to malnutrition, which claims the lives of 3.1 million children per year,” the index added.

Alex de Waal, executive director of the World Peace Foundation, revealed that cala-

mitous famines (those causing more than a million deaths) have been eliminated.

“War and conquest have long been the drivers of mass starvation. Although responses are far faster and more proficient than in the past, we still need to attend to the perils of armed conflict and inhumane policies generating severe hunger,” De Waal said.

“The world has enough food, enough logistics, enough knowledge, to end severe hunger: achieving that is a matter of political will only.”

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Health Dept too broke to pay claims

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THE GAUTENG Health Department has admitted it does not have the budget to pay out millions of rand in medical negligence claims.

This emerged yesterday when yet another raid by the sheriff of the high court took place at the department’s head office in Pixley Ka Isaka Seme Street (formerly Sauer) in the Joburg CBD.

The court ordered that Health MEC Qedani Mahlangu pay just under R23 million in damages by September 25, which she failed to do.

Four-year-old Ntsako Mathebula was brain damaged when medical staff at Tembisa Hospital failed to perform an emergency caesarean on his mother in November 2010. He was left with cerebral palsy, mental retardation, epilepsy and other severe medical and developmental problems.

Spokesman Steve Mabona told The Star that the department didn’t have enough money to pay out such large amounts. “The department operates on a shoestring budget to the extent that at some point, we cannot afford to settle a huge amount of money worth millions,” he said.

Mabona claimed that the department had made a payment arrangement with Wim Krynauw Attorneys, which represented Ntsako.

“We had no intention not to settle the claim or contest the claim. We agreed on a payment plan... I struggle to understand how the sheriff is sent to attach our furniture.”

A curious crowd gathered around the two 8-ton trucks and a smaller flat-bed truck with a trailer as removal services carried office chairs out the building.

The drama didn’t stop there though. At one point, staff from the department’s asset

management division were sent outside to unpack chairs from the truck and then put them in again, this time recording how many items were being seized.

All the lifts in the department were locked to halt the raid, leaving some removals workers trapped on the 21st floor for a few hours.

On Monday, the department narrowly avoided having its assets attached by the sheriff for not paying out another R23m medical negligence claim to the mother of a 10-year-old girl, when Mahlangu agreed to negotiate a payment plan.

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