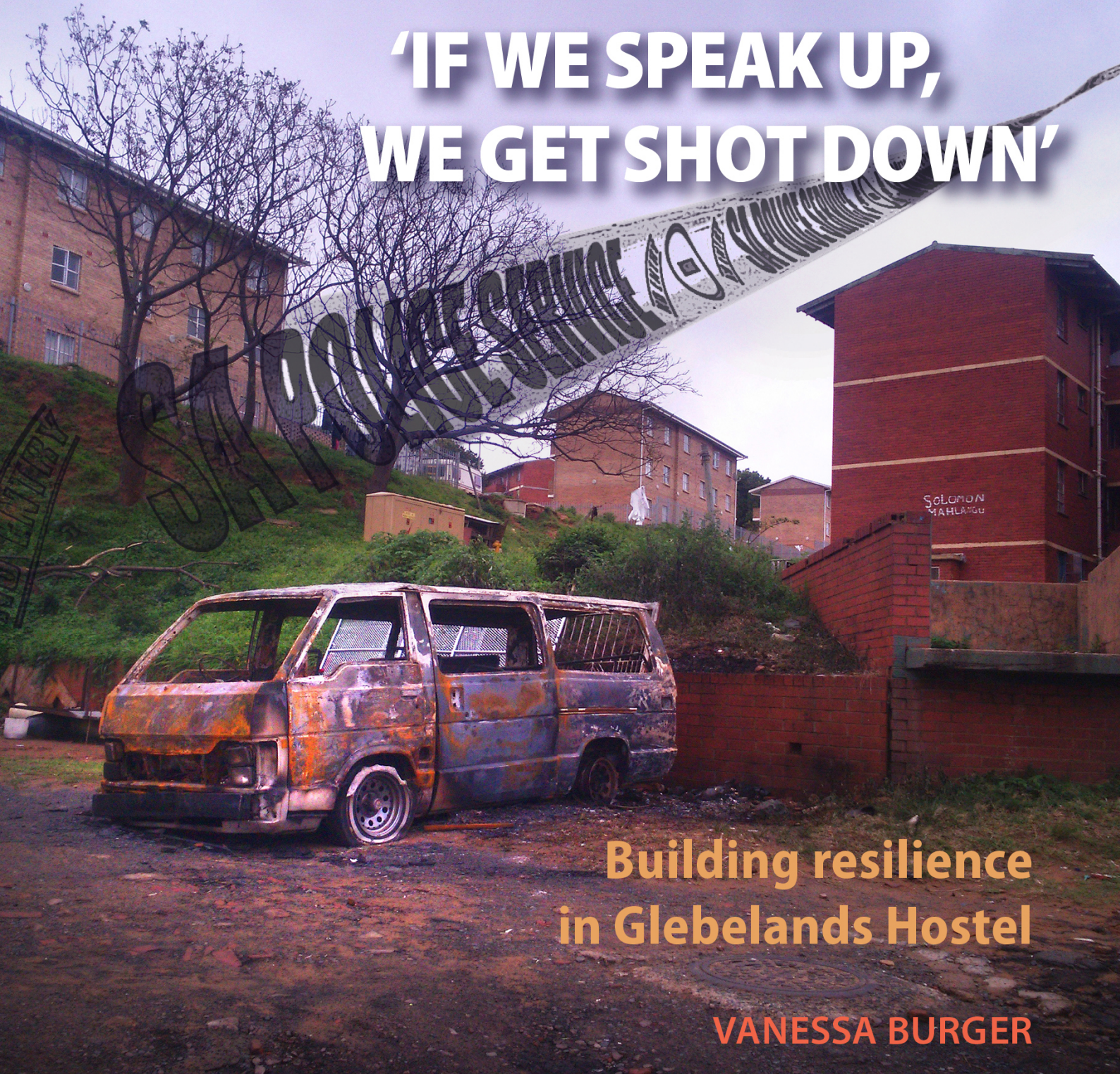




**GLOBAL
INITIATIVE**
AGAINST TRANSNATIONAL
ORGANIZED CRIME

**'IF WE SPEAK UP,
WE GET SHOT DOWN'**



**Building resilience
in Glebelands Hostel**

VANESSA BURGER



August 2019





'IF WE SPEAK UP, WE GET SHOT DOWN'

Building resilience in Glebelands Hostel

Vanessa Burger

August 2019



Acknowledgements

The author would like to thank the Global Initiative, members of the media, organizations and individuals for their concern, help, support, advice and encouragement provided over the years – either wittingly or unwittingly.

This report was funded by the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) through the Sector Programme Peace and Security, Disaster Risk Management of the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ). The views and opinions expressed in the report do not necessarily reflect those of the BMZ or the GIZ.



All photos: Vanessa Burger, except where specified.

© 2019 Global Initiative Against Transnational Organized Crime. All rights reserved.

No part of this publication may be reproduced or transmitted in any form or by any means without permission in writing from the Global Initiative. Please direct inquiries to:

The Global Initiative Against Transnational Organized Crime

WMO Building, 2nd Floor

7bis, Avenue de la Paix

CH-1211 Geneva 1

Switzerland

www.GloballInitiative.net



Contents

| | |
|---|-----------|
| Abbreviations and acronyms | iv |
| Glebelands Hostel: Ground zero for political killings | 1 |
| Methodology | 3 |
| Countdown to chaos | 3 |
| Hostel proxy wars (1980s–1997) | 8 |
| The rise of patronage politics (1998–2014) | 8 |
| The role of the police | 11 |
| Death by commission or omission | 12 |
| Community resilience under brutal conditions | 13 |
| Multiple impacts of a climate of violence | 13 |
| Denial of constitutional rights and democratic freedoms | 16 |
| Why is community resilience so important at Glebelands? | 17 |
| Challenges to resilience encountered while working within the Glebelands community | 18 |
| Overcoming social barriers | 18 |
| Combating ignorance | 19 |
| Security concerns | 19 |
| Disinformation, divisions and distrust | 19 |
| Logistical and victim support | 20 |
| Resilience mechanisms developed by the Glebelands community | 21 |
| Coping skills | 21 |
| Moving forward together | 21 |
| Security measures | 21 |
| Tips and lessons learned while working as a community activist | 22 |
| Networking | 22 |
| Persistence | 22 |
| Community first | 23 |



| | |
|---|-----------|
| Attitude | 23 |
| Going it alone | 24 |
| Security tips for resilience activists | 25 |
| Working in a high-risk environment | 25 |
| Data collection and record keeping | 25 |
| Travelling | 25 |
| Dealing with surveillance | 26 |
| Dealing with criminalized police | 26 |
| Positive results through resilience | 27 |
| Breaking barriers and raising awareness | 28 |
| Holding government to account | 28 |
| Progress made in quality of policing | 29 |
| A luta continua | 30 |
| Useful contacts (rights, legal assistance, counselling, information) | 32 |
| Notes | 33 |

Abbreviations and acronyms

| | |
|------|---|
| ANC | African National Congress |
| COPE | Congress of the People |
| IFP | Inkatha Freedom Party |
| IPID | Independent Police Investigative Directorate |
| KZN | KwaZulu-Natal province |
| NGO | non-governmental organization |
| RDP | Reconstruction and Development Programme |
| SAPS | South African Police Service |
| TRC | Truth and Reconciliation Commission |
| UbH | Ubunye bamaHostela (Hostel Dwellers' Association) |



'Our biggest problem is we are fighting a war against government: the ANC is killing us, that is why no one wants to stand with us ...'

– Glebelands former block committee chairperson, 2015.

Glebelands Hostel: Ground zero for political killings

Between March 2014 and January 2019, more than 120 people died as a result of violence perpetrated by hitmen based at Glebelands Hostel, an ANC stronghold in Umlazi, a former 'township' in south Durban, falling within the eThekweni Municipality of KwaZulu-Natal (KZN).¹ The killings have bled beyond the hostel, throughout KZN and even into neighbouring provinces.

This is a staggering statistic for a community of around 22 000 people living in a housing complex that covers less than two square kilometres.² In 2018, South Africa's murder rate³ was close to 36 per 100 000 people, the fifth highest in the world and comparable to conflict zones such as Somalia (38.4)⁴, Iraq (40.3), Afghanistan (40.4)⁵ and Yemen (61.6).⁶ By contrast, since 2014, the average murder rate in Glebelands has been almost 120 per 100 000⁷ – nearly four times the national average and virtually double the kill rate for Yemen.⁸

When presenting the 2018 crime statistics, Police Minister Bheki Cele announced that South Africa 'borders on a war zone.' This situation has not been lost on Glebelands residents, who, with characteristic dark humour, regularly refer to their home as 'Baghdad' or 'Syria'.

One of Durban's largest hostel complexes, Glebelands consists of 71 blocks spread across a hill overlooking Umlazi. Accommodation varies from large, very old, dilapidated blocks, to the much smaller, newer family units. The older four-storey buildings each accommodate 200 to 300 people. Ablution and kitchen facilities are shared, as are the rooms. Conditions are overcrowded, filthy and unhealthy. Maintenance is non-existent, as, over the years, hostel budgets have been lost to corruption. Newer units, while providing better living conditions, and which are more secure and house far fewer people, are subject to 'slum lords' who subdivide their units and rent them out to many families.⁹

The unemployment rate at Glebelands is estimated to be between 60% and 70%,¹⁰ although this rose to almost 90%¹¹ among the segment of the community targeted during the 2014–2018 violence. Most residents support on average six other people, but some have as many as 13 dependants, including family members in the rural areas.

The government's broken promises, administrative neglect and persistent failure to provide reasonable levels of service delivery and decent accommodation continue to breed violence, hopelessness and social decay in Glebelands. In the words of a resident religious leader:

A child that is forced to grow up in these conditions feels that no one respects him or sees value in his life. Later he cannot get a job and loses hope of improving his life as well as his self-respect. How easy then will it be for him to respect or see the value in the lives of others? He could be offered a little money that could make a big difference to his life even though it might end someone else's. Now you see why it is so easy to hire a young hostel boy to become a killer.¹²

I have been involved in human rights, social justice and anti-corruption advocacy work since 2009, during which time I developed a strong relationship with some of Durban's hostel leaders. I am not a member of any organization, but liaise and network with many entities and individuals. In March 2014, the eThekweni hostel dwellers' association asked me to help the family of a Glebelands Hostel man who had allegedly been tortured and died during police



interrogation.¹³ As a result of my involvement with this case, I visited the community regularly and a number of residents approached me for assistance with various matters – reports of police criminality, corruption and collusion with hostel-based hitmen, complaints about service delivery and healthcare, political repression and various other rights abuses.

It quickly became clear to me that at Glebelands, residents' constitutional rights had been all but suspended while a specific sector of the hostel community was being systematically eliminated. The reason they were being killed, the majority of victims of violence claimed, was that they wanted political representation of their own choice – and not a factional deployee forced upon them by their party, the ruling African National Congress (ANC). Their ward councillor, Robert Mshiyeni Mzobe, they alleged, was 'a dictator', who 'had personal vendettas against them'.¹⁴

Hostel leaders also complained they were being persecuted for speaking out against local-government corruption involving hostel contracts allegedly controlled by Mzobe and his allies in government, whom they accused of nepotism, dividing the community and using patronage to buy political support. During community protests in 2013, Glebelands residents claimed Mzobe 'did not consult them on developments in the area', and 'took RDP [Reconstruction and Development Programme] houses and gave them to people that are not from the area'.¹⁵ Testifying under oath before the Moerane Commission of Inquiry established in 2016 to establish and address the underlying causes of KZN political killings, a Glebelands ANC member stated:

The ANC leadership, including the Councillor, had the power to decide who would work where and when in terms of developments, in the sense of infrastructure and construction ... when two new blocks were built, the residents were not consulted. Those buildings were meant to benefit residents in terms of job opportunities, but the only people who benefited were those in leadership and the Councillor. ... Opportunities were not afforded to those who were perceived as being opposed to the Councillor.¹⁶

There also appeared to be pockets of deep-rooted ethnic intolerance of non-Zulu residents, as well as persistent marginalization of former ANC members who had defected to the Congress of the People (COPE) during the ANC's factional battles of 2007 to 2009, which saw Jacob Zuma oust the then incumbent president, Thabo Mbeki.

Another Glebelands witness, a former ANC executive branch member and South African Communist Party secretary, who gave evidence to the Moerane Commission on condition of anonymity, described unresolved difficulties encountered by former COPE defectors who returned to the ANC fold: '... comrades ... who returned were marginalised in the ANC and referred to as criminals. That led to the existence of two groups, the so-called criminals and non-criminals'.¹⁷

The ANC's dangerous narrative of equating intra-party contestation with 'criminality' that had to be 'dealt with'¹⁸ was to reach its deadly apogee at Glebelands from 2014, leaving over 120 people dead,¹⁹ hundreds more displaced and over a dozen allegedly tortured by police.²⁰ Although community members did not always see it that way, the Glebelands conflict formed part of the broader battle for control of the ANC, which, particularly in KZN, has led to a spate in recent years of so-called political killings becoming the 'new normal' as the post-ideological default position increasingly employed to resolve the party's inner dystopia.

Owing to the political sensitivity and volatility of the situation, where community members could not speak openly and no longer trusted government institutions or their political representatives, I was often asked to lodge complaints, expose corruption or liaise with the police and government departments on their behalf, advocate for residents' rights and raise awareness of the developing humanitarian disaster.

From the outset of my work at Glebelands, I became very conscious that prevailing conditions precluded the normal way civil-society organizations operate. In most cases, my work was crisis-driven in response to the next unfolding emergency. Interventions were often therefore reduced to the most basic common denominator – keeping people alive.





Crumbling relics of the apartheid past: Glebelands' old blocks overlook south Durban's heavily polluted industrial zone. Each block houses several hundred people in tiny, overcrowded rooms, and with shared ablutions and kitchens.

As a result of my experiences at Glebelands, I noted many challenges to community and personal resilience. One objective of this report is therefore to describe how a historically marginalized and highly vulnerable community can come to withstand arguably some of the highest levels of violence and political oppression witnessed in South Africa in recent times. As part of the Global Initiative Resilience Project, this report also hopes to provide useful tools and strategies for building community and activist resilience under the most abnormal political circumstances, where state entities, members of the ruling party and organized crime have coalesced into a broader threat to South Africa's constitutional democracy and political stability.

The aim of the Global Initiative Resilience Project is to create a global network of resilient communities to counter and help diminish the effects of criminal networks. This involves highlighting courageous and inspiring work done under the most challenging circumstances, and incubating and developing resilience-based initiatives that can protect, enable and empower citizens who have taken a stand against organized crime. By tapping into their communities' own sources of resilience, we can build sustainable responses to organized crime and develop their capacity to thrive.²¹

Methodology

The author conducted hundreds of interviews with Glebelands community members between 2014 and 2019. These took place at various locations, and telephonically and by WhatsApp; detailed notes were taken and other records retained. As information is often provided, repeated and corroborated by multiple sources who must remain anonymous for their own safety, it is not practical to include specific dates and locations for these interviews. They are therefore referenced in the endnotes as 'author's interviews with community sources'. Interviewees' words cited in this report are taken from these interviews and telephonic conversations.

Countdown to chaos

South Africa has a bloody history of political assassinations. The apartheid state eliminated political opposition to its divisive policies, and many activists who were engaged in the struggle against racial domination lost their lives to officially sanctioned murder or in the waves of violence that swamped the country's townships and hostels. During the latter years of apartheid, the country was at war with its own people, and the province that was to become KZN after democracy was at the centre of a bitter conflict between the liberation movements, the ANC, United Democratic Front and Inkatha, the Zulu nationalist cultural movement that later became the Inkatha Freedom Party (IFP).



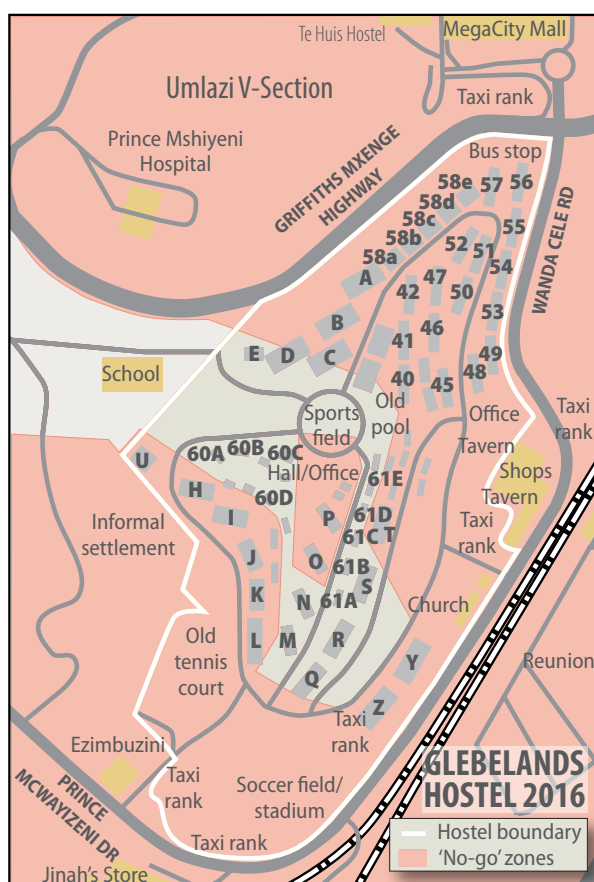
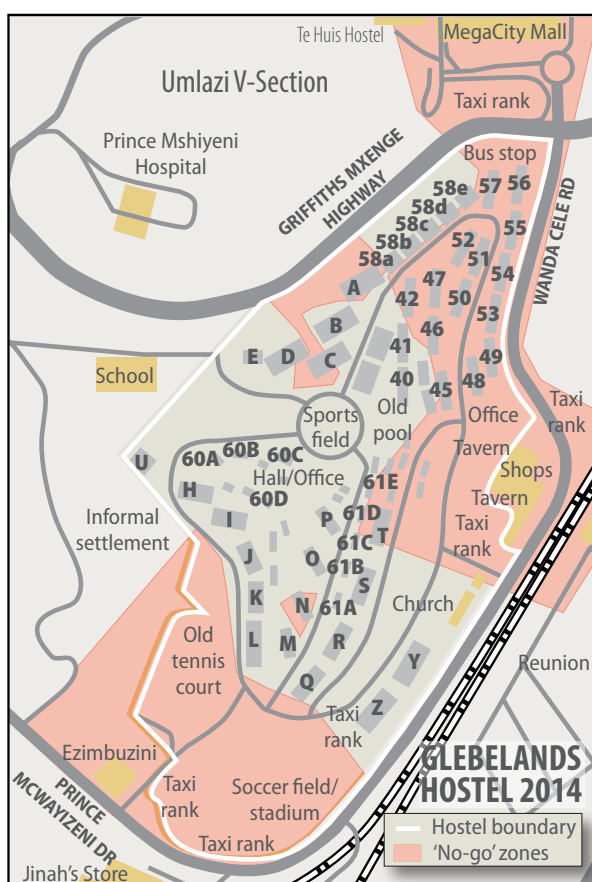


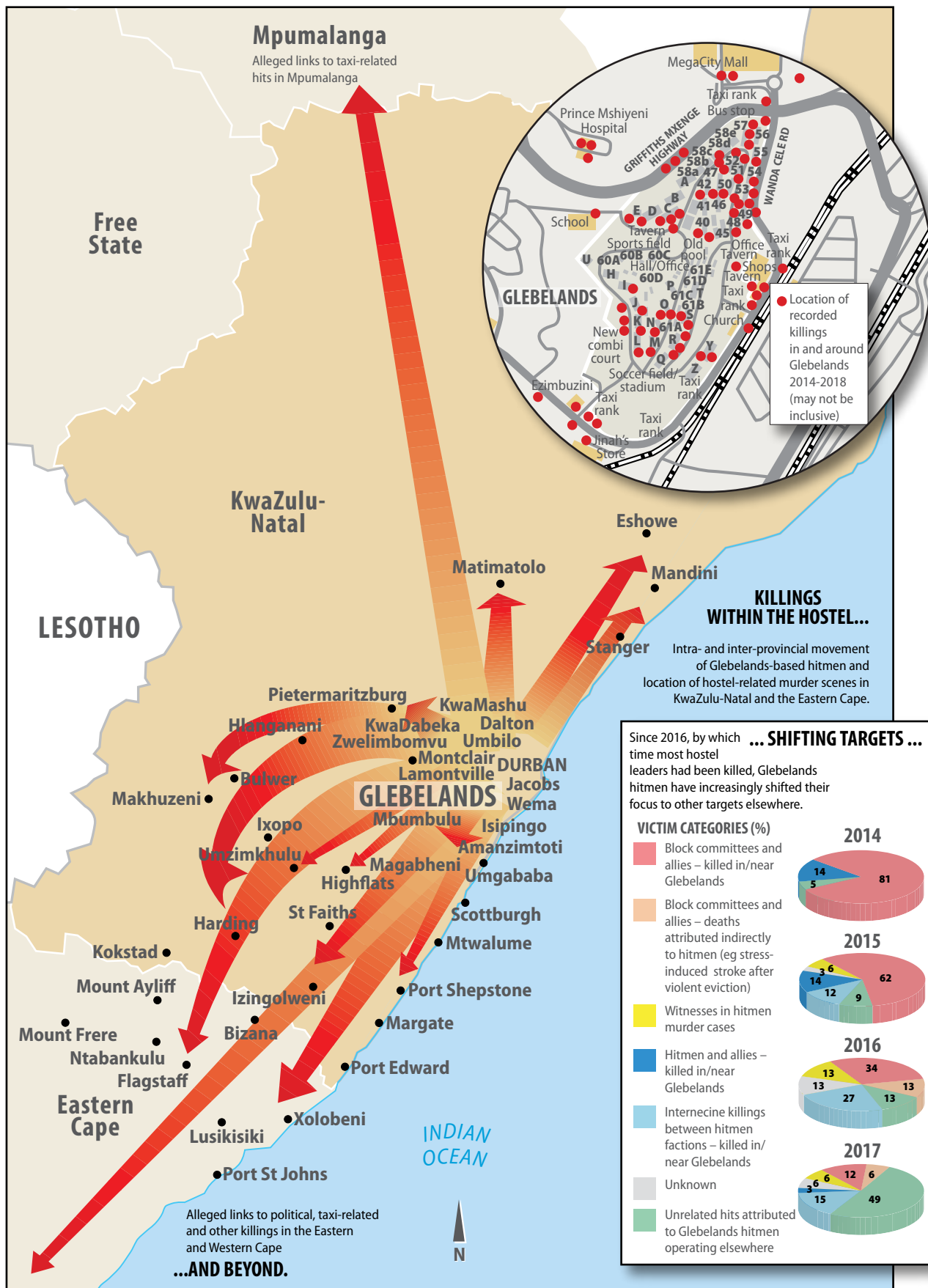
In addition to waging its 'border wars', and managing its paramilitary units and state security forces,²² during South Africa's post-1994 Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) hearings it emerged²³ that the Nationalist government had also provided covert support to the IFP in the form of military training and vast quantities of weapons.²⁴ These arms caches, as well as the weapons brought into the country by the liberation movements,²⁵ were never properly recovered by the democratically elected government and are believed to remain scattered across KZN.²⁶ Political activists and affected communities have speculated²⁷ that some of these weapons are being used today in political killings and other violent crimes, such as cash-in-transit heists.²⁸

There were also ethnic undertones to South Africa's pre-democracy conflict. The IFP was seen as an organization with strong rural roots, whereas the ANC had support mainly in the urban areas. These latent tensions have in some areas persisted and – like South Africa's cyclical outbreaks of xenophobic violence – are at times manipulated by unethical politicians to sow divisions within formerly united communities and thus weaken opposition to unpopular leadership or conceal corruption.

South Africa's much acclaimed 'peaceful' democratic elections of 1994 and processes that followed, such as the TRC, did little to demobilize, heal or provide redress to grassroots communities that had been at the coalface of the struggle and that had suffered more than a century of often violent marginalization, racial persecution and dispossession. Violence, particularly in South Africa's hostels, persisted for years after the 1994 elections. So, too, did the use of assassination to permanently remove political or economic foes.

Since 2011 KZN has experienced a sharp increase in targeted murders.²⁹ This phenomenon has been facilitated by the simultaneous serious deterioration in what has become a politically tainted criminal-justice system, escalating poverty and unemployment, staggering levels of corruption (in both the public and private sectors), dysfunctional mechanisms of accountability, and the rise of former president Zuma's shadow state, which ensured impunity





for politically connected individuals and saw the state's security apparatus repurposed as a political instrument. Against this background, escalating crime, factional politics within the ANC and the fight to gain access to lucrative government budgets, contracts and other resources all contributed to an environment conducive for assassinations to become the new normal in settling any form of differences. In this context of violence and political manipulation, poor communities have been the most affected.

Given that South Africa's hostels have a history of such extreme violence, it is a significant indictment of the post-1994 administration that it has not abolished this unnatural accommodation system and provided redress to the apartheid and colonial eras' most marginalized sector of society – migrant workers.

“Given that South Africa's hostels have a history of such extreme violence, it is a significant indictment of the post-1994 administration that it has not abolished this unnatural accommodation system.”

Since before the turn of the last century, various colonial policies (e.g. the 1890s Hut Tax³⁰) led to communities being dispossessed of their productive land, resulting in job-seekers flooding to urban areas. However, in an attempt to control this, from 1913 onwards, various land and racially discriminatory policies were enacted, culminating in the apartheid regime's Group Areas Act of the 1940s. This imposed progressively oppressive, race-based restrictions on movement, where black people could live, land ownership and use, and resulted in large tracts of rural land – usually considered marginal or unproductive – designated as black reserves (known as homelands, Native Trust areas or Bantustans). Pass laws and other apartheid-era legislation ensured black urbanization was confined to the peripheries of developing towns and cities, often near industrial zones and in areas unsuitable for habitation. At the same time, cheap labour was needed for the cities' rapidly expanding industrial nodes, so migrant workers were relegated to prison-like, single-sex compounds – the hostel system – near their places of work. It is therefore no coincidence that hostels falling under the authority of today's eThekweni Municipality are located within or adjacent to Durban's highly polluted industrial areas. If hostel dwellers lost their jobs or became too old or sick to continue working, they had to return to their homelands, for black people were permitted within urban areas solely to work.

The administration used authoritarian means of control over the increasingly vast number of young male job-seekers.³¹ In the cities, access was strictly controlled using the pass system, migrant communities were segregated along ethnic lines and residents were isolated from surrounding communities to prevent workers being mobilized by political organizations and trade unions that had begun to agitate against South Africa's growing racial injustices.³²

Hostels were constructed as vast, ugly, utilitarian edifices. If women were discovered in them during the many police raids, they would be arrested. The destructive impact of this social engineering, particularly the forced separation imposed on migrant labourers' families, has been generational. The effect of these unnatural living conditions continues to cause emotional stress and financial competition between the hostel inhabitants' 'country' and 'city' families, while children raised under these circumstances often experience insecurity, rootlessness and a sense of worthlessness. One Glebelands community leader described the distress he felt when visiting his family in the Eastern Cape caused by the alienating effect of the hostel system on the family:

When I go home, my boy doesn't recognize me. He doesn't know I am his father. His mother gives him to me and he screams. He thinks my father is his father and goes to him when he is scared. He never comes to me. Each time I go home, I am like a stranger. ... But men must be strong. I must work to put food on the table for my family, there is no other way. I must earn enough to give him a good education so he doesn't have to live like his father. But it is very painful. Boys need their fathers.



Hostel proxy wars (1980s–1997)

Hostel living conditions in the pre-democratic era were brutal, inhumane and unhealthy – and these persist today. Overcrowding in the shared rooms meant privacy was non-existent, and contagious diseases, such as tuberculosis, spread rapidly. The only recreational facility provided by the state was the ubiquitous local beer hall. Violence was inevitable. Hostels were usually segregated according to political loyalty and became fertile grounds from which to recruit disaffected young men into the struggle for or against the Nationalist government. Hostel dwellers were indoctrinated, armed, sometimes trained, and used by agents of the apartheid regime, or their political opponents among the liberation movements, to wage proxy wars on surrounding township or hostel communities of opposing political ideology. This further entrenched hostel communities' sense of isolation and stigma. Mining hostels in Gauteng, as well as hostels in KZN whose inhabitants supported the IFP or the ANC were sucked into the general vortex of violence before and after the 1994 elections, that almost scuppered South Africa's none-too-peaceful transition to a constitutional democracy, a period during which more than 26 000 people are believed to have died.³³

The collective trauma of historical dispossession, social engineering, post-94 failure to demobilize, integrate and provide recompense and healing for communities that had been for decades on a war footing, as well as subsequent administrations' apparent reluctance to recover KZN's arms caches and proliferation of modern firearms, have contributed significantly to Glebelands' cycles of political violence and high levels of crime, and have weakened the community's ability to withstand political manipulation.

The rise of patronage politics (1998–2014)

Although post-94 democratic governments have made much of their efforts to reform hostel living conditions, in reality, other than the provision of a few family units, little has actually changed. In fact, many residents claim service delivery has even deteriorated since the days of apartheid.

During the late 1980s, hostel communities had begun organizing themselves into grassroots representative structures. At Glebelands (and some of Durban's other hostels), these structures took the form of block committees. The committees were elected by the residents of each block for the purpose of liaising with hostel administration, for conflict resolution, for enforcing daily law and order (in the same way that municipal bylaws are policed by body corporates in the private housing sector) and for political mobilization. Block committees also worked with hostel administration over the allocation of rooms, with priority being given to existing residents who shared overcrowded rooms or were sleeping in kitchens or corridors, or to vulnerable individuals, such as widows.

After 1994, it was necessary for the newly elected democratic government to reinstate administrative order over hostel communities that had retreated into lawless chaos during the violence of the transitional period. However, this at times put the new administration in the uncomfortable position of trying to control warlords and criminal elements, some of whom had been instrumental in bringing the new dispensation to power.

When, in 1998, the eThekweni Hostels Policy officially recognized the role of ward councillors in the allocation of hostel rooms,³⁴ this often brought them into direct conflict with long-serving block committees and opened up new avenues of political opportunism, patronage and nepotism. Block committee leaders justifiably argued that to reduce conflict and lawlessness, they were best placed to advise – in consultation with applicants, residents and hostel superintendents – who should share rooms, and not ward councillors, who often did not live among their constituents. But, unfortunately, eThekweni Municipality failed to consult hostel communities about the policy, which was adopted without their knowledge.

According to Glebelands old-timers, as part of the new dispensation's efforts to right apartheid's wrongs, in the late 1990s, the then Member of the Executive Council for the KZN Department of Housing, Dumisani Makhaye, offered residents the choice of taking ownership of their hostel rooms or applying for an RDP house (low-cost social housing).



However, a few years later, after the municipality applied to national government to take full control of hostel administration (and hostel budgets) from its provincial counterpart, the promise of ownership morphed into a rental system. Few people received RDP houses and no hostel dweller ever received a title deed for his or her room.

By 2006, rising unemployment,³⁵ the advent of the labour-broking system, administrative dysfunction and, later, rampant corruption and the establishment of the ANC's patronage network – in which access to employment and service delivery was used as a means of securing political support – meant hostel communities were facing an increasing struggle for economic survival.

The block committees became increasingly vocal about deteriorating service delivery, unaffordable rent increases and local-government corruption. This led to the formation of the hostel dwellers' association – Ubunye bamaHostela (UbH) – an apolitical organization established to advocate for the rights and better living conditions of Durban's ten hostel communities. The ANC-led eThekweni Municipality seemed to view UbH as a significant threat (the combined hostel population numbers several hundred thousand) and sought to undermine the organization before it could become properly established.³⁶ When the municipality persisted with several steep rent hikes without consultation, UbH was mandated to negotiate on behalf of Durban's hostel communities.

In the years that followed, a climate of fear and a culture of violence and intolerance increasingly defined the ruling party's administrative style and its stance towards opponents. In 2009, by the time Zuma's faction of the ANC – with which Mzobe, who was alleged to be of Zuma's clan,³⁷ was aligned – had firmly entrenched itself throughout all tiers of government, members of the breakaway party, Congress of the People (COPE), whom the ANC termed 'criminals', were persecuted. Party members were either killed or chased away from Glebelands and other areas where COPE was gaining a foothold. Many block committee members were among residents who happened to defect to COPE – a move, it seems, for which they were never forgiven despite the fact most subsequently rejoined the ANC. It is noteworthy that many of the individuals who played a role in the 2009 attacks on COPE members (and against whom no action was taken) were subsequently found to be behind the bloodbath that later ensued from 2014 onwards, and many of the victims of these attacks were former COPE members.

To address the deepening administrative crisis at Durban's hostels, in 2010 the municipality convened a conference (the Hostel Indaba). Among the issues discussed were the formal recognition of the block committees' leadership role and an amnesty period, during which the chaotic billing system would be rectified and residents would be properly registered. Thereafter the rent boycott would be lifted and residents would begin paying phased-in higher rentals.



Service delivery failure, state neglect, poverty and appalling living conditions contribute to the ease with which desperate youth are recruited into lives of crime.



However, according to community members who were part of this initiative, the municipality failed to follow up on the issues discussed and rentals shot up further. At Glebelands,³⁸ Mzobe reportedly refused to work with the block committees, calling them ‘criminals’. The rent boycott was therefore reinstated, and thousands of hostel dwellers marched³⁹ on Durban’s City Hall and threatened to disrupt the 2010 Soccer World Cup in protest against rising costs and deteriorating services.⁴⁰ At Glebelands, battle lines had formed between Mzobe and the majority of his constituency.

“Glebelands was gripped by widespread terror as block committee members and community leaders learned their names were on a hit list.”

Unsurprisingly, in 2011 Glebelands was among the more than 419 disputed ANC branches that were flagged nationwide as irregularly constituted.⁴¹ When no action was taken, community dissent grew. In KZN many of these disputed branches later became flash points for political killings.

In 2013 the block committees took an active role in widespread service-delivery protests after the Zuma-faction-aligned ward councillor refused to stand down following two votes of no confidence. Instead of addressing valid community concerns, however, provincial ANC leaders allegedly warned hostel representatives they would be ‘dealt with’ for ‘bringing the ANC into disrepute’.⁴²

Divide-and-rule tactics followed and the ‘troublesome’ block committees were isolated and accused⁴³ of ‘selling beds’. This corrupt practice – involving the sale of room space to potential residents – is commonplace in South Africa’s hostels and symptomatic of post-94 administrative and policing failure. However, it has rarely led to murder. Soon after the 2013 protests, the killing began. Glebelands was gripped by widespread terror as block committee members and community leaders learned their names were on a hit list, scores of women and children were violently evicted from their rooms, which, in some instances, were also petrol-bombed, and community unity was destroyed.

By mid-2014, Glebelands was divided between a group of residents who supported Mzobe⁴⁴ and accused the block committees of selling beds, and the block committees, who accused the ward councillor of nepotism and corruption involving hostel contracts and the allocation of the new units. No-go zones within the hostel grounds and nearby taxi ranks and shopping centres, where block committee members were at risk of being shot, restricted freedom of movement and association. Many residents were forced to give up their jobs because it became too dangerous to use public transport, as hitmen recruited to carry out Glebelands killings were often hired as security on local taxi routes as well. Residents living in blocks controlled by hitmen were regularly forced to pay ‘protection money’ – funds that, according to Glebelands witnesses who testified at the Moerane Commission, were used to buy guns, ammunition, hire hitmen, and bribe police officers and court officials.

The ANC has strongly denied Glebelands killings are politically motivated, claiming the carnage is ‘criminal’, the consequence of a struggle between ‘warring factions’ to control the sale of beds. However, data collected since 2014, as well as important arrests that were made immediately before and after the ANC’s 54th elective conference in December 2017, refute this narrative:

- From March 2014 until December 2017, 80% of Glebelands’ victims were associated in one way or another with the block committees.⁴⁵ These structures had repeatedly called for the replacement of the ward councillor and were perceived to be in opposition to the then dominant pro-Zuma faction of the ANC, a faction with which the ward councillor was at the time allegedly aligned.
- By mid-2016, the majority of block committee and other community leaders who had been outspoken against the ward councillor had been eliminated. Thereafter, a marked shift was noted in the recruitment of Glebelands-based hitmen for political and taxi-related hits elsewhere in – and even outside – the province. This also coincided with a government-led ‘peace initiative’ at Glebelands



- However, it was only immediately before and after the ANC's elective conference in December 2017, which led to Cyril Ramaphosa replacing Zuma as ANC president and a significant power shift within the ANC, that significant progress was made in the successful prosecution of many of the hostel's hitmen. Prior to this, only one hitman had been successfully prosecuted, and there were widespread allegations of political interference and corruption in the criminal-justice system.
- Only days before the conference, a police officer and five of his accomplices were charged with 'forming and leading a criminal syndicate with the common purpose to kill or eliminate persons who resided at Glebelands Hostel...'.⁴⁶ As the alleged 'ringleader', the police officer was also charged with racketeering. These six accused were later joined by two more suspected hitmen, a case that was later dubbed 'The Glebelands Eight' (more on which later in the report).
- All of the accused had been Glebelands residents, were said to be supporters of the ward councillor and politically connected, and had, up until the time of the ANC's conference, which heralded 'regime change' within the ruling party, seemingly acted with impunity or political protection during the preceding years.
- Following the December 2017 high-profile arrests and the subsequent, widely publicized court proceedings, many other hostel hitmen have since been rounded up, successfully prosecuted and some sentenced to life imprisonment.
- Since the incarceration of 'The Glebelands Eight' and the simultaneous shift in political power within the ANC, Glebelands' murder rate has fallen by almost 60%.⁴⁷

The role of the police

Disturbingly, the role of the police has been central to the violence at Glebelands – as well as in a number of KZN's political assassinations. State-issue firearms, such as R4s and R5s, police radios, uniforms and other South African Police Service (SAPS) equipment have been recovered during hostel operations.⁴⁸ According to the findings of the Moerane Commission, Glebelands community members and political office bearers have been shot by hitmen using state-issue automatic rifles.⁴⁹

A number of residents reported they had been tortured by police⁵⁰ or subjected to malicious arrests on fabricated charges.⁵¹ Most alleged that certain police members were colluding with hitmen, with the tacit approval of high-ranking SAPS officers and ANC leaders.⁵²

The community's contentions regarding police collusion were corroborated in a sworn statement provided by the investigating officer who opposed the bail applications of Durban Central SAPS detective, Bhekukwazi Mdweshu and his seven accomplices – all Glebelands residents – who were charged under common purpose on nine counts of murder, six counts of attempted murder, conspiracy to commit murder, extortion and possession of a prohibited firearm, and ammunition. The investigating officer stated his team had intervened in Glebelands investigations because events there were not being satisfactorily investigated by officers at the Umlazi police station.⁵³

The investigating officer noted: '... [W]e had to overcome a lack of trust on the part of witnesses on account of the conduct of those officers previously [mandated] with the investigation of



these matters'. He added: 'No attempt was made to arrest the applicants before December 2017, because until my team became involved in the investigation, ... no evidence had been gathered in respect of these matters ...'.⁵⁴

During their submission to the Moerane Commission, SAPS management admitted that firearm-related murders at Glebelands had risen from 37.5% in the years preceding 2014, to 91.3% from March 2014 until April 2017.⁵⁵ These statistics revealed a sharp spike in firearm-related murders at the hostel from 2014 onwards, before which most murders had been carried out by perpetrators armed with knives.⁵⁶ SAPS management testified that the timing of this upsurge in firearm-related killings correlated with the emergence at Glebelands of many of the hitmen who have since been arrested or convicted for murder. Despite this worrying development, the police did little to investigate the sharp influx and use of firearms in Glebelands murders at the time, or halt the trend.

Death by commission or omission

At best, the conclusion that can be drawn from these observations is that the ruling party and government turned a blind eye to the elimination of a group of 'troublesome' hostel residents who had become a source of embarrassment for local ANC leaders. If Glebelands block committees really were selling beds on the scale alleged, it merely provides further evidence of administrative failure and poor policing, it does not justify their murder. At worst, Glebelands community leaders became collateral damage in the ANC's deadly factional war, which has been propped up by certain politically compliant police members.

“The cumulative impact of these events has been catastrophic for hundreds of families, and contributed to the proliferation of crime and social dysfunction.”

Either way, the cumulative impact of these events has been catastrophic for hundreds of families, and contributed to the proliferation of – particularly firearm-related – crime and social dysfunction. It has fed into South Africa's growing economy of killing – the only career path available for an increasing number of young unemployed men, and one that offers some degree of status and power. With a few exceptions, many civil-society and other entities, such as religious organizations that, under normal circumstances, would have rendered assistance, support and solidarity to a besieged and suffering community, took a step back from the unfolding crisis at Glebelands, not willing to risk their own relationships with government or perhaps jeopardize their funding, or simply disbelieving that a small-scale war was being waged in their own back yards. Unfortunately, this has led to the further isolation of an already marginalized community.

The ensuing chaos has led to the widespread violation of residents' constitutional rights, eroded trust in the government, political leaders and institutions of accountability, and weakened democracy. At Glebelands the rule of the gun has effectively replaced the rule of law. As one hostel leader remarked in response to a public statement expressing the provincial ANC's shock and horror at the arrest of the mayor of Newcastle, who was charged in connection with several political killings: 'Who recruited these hitmen in KZN? The answer is government. Because they wanted to achieve their evil acts. [But if] you change a human being into a zombie, it is impossible to return that person to a normal life. It was good for them when they ordered these hitmen to kill [us]. Now things are not looking so good for them.'⁵⁷



Community resilience under brutal conditions

The community's resilience under such extremely difficult conditions has been nothing short of miraculous. As can be seen from the analysis of the background to the violence, normal advocacy strategies and coping mechanisms employed by most civil-society organizations simply cannot be used at Glebelands. In fact some, like organizing a march or speaking openly to the media, for example, endangers lives. Or, as one leader put it: 'If we speak up, we get shot down.'

A 'normal' way of life, which includes a relatively safe environment and reasonable access to services (at least, by South African standards), and the freedom to move around at will had been all but suspended at Glebelands until the arrest in December 2017 of Durban Central SAPS Detective Bhekukwazi Mdweshu and his seven co-accused.⁵⁸ Constitutional rights and freedoms no longer applied. Although many of the hitmen involved in the assassination of the block committees are currently facing trial, some still live at the hostel and the conditions that gave rise to the crisis remain unaddressed.

State intervention is critical, but not in the manner deployed up until now. Community consultation is imperative and, this time, government officials and political leaders must listen, discuss and find ways to implement the community's priorities and ensure their constructive participation in all Glebelands developments. It is also vital that the community is allowed to heal, is properly demobilized, depoliticized, reunited and offered alternative coping mechanisms. In order to minimize the generational impact of the violence, victims must be compensated for their losses. Unfortunately, however, given the ANC's preoccupation with its ongoing intra-party war, most of this is unlikely in the immediate future. Therefore, the community has to deal with the day-to-day consequences of living in a state-sanctioned war zone, albeit a war zone that is currently experiencing something of a ceasefire.



Glebelands' silent victims: women shelter in an open garage with the few belongings they could salvage after hostel hitmen forcibly evicted them from their rooms, accusing them of 'spying' for block committee leaders. (Photo courtesy of Glebelands' resident)

Multiple impacts of a climate of violence

The following are some of the most common impacts of the violence described by residents.

- **Psychological trauma:** Most residents exhibited varying degrees of untreated post-traumatic stress disorder caused by exposure to extended and cyclical periods of violence. Few were able to obtain support from state social workers (most of whom, in any case, lacked the skills and experience needed to deal effectively with police torture victims or the casualties of such sustained and high levels violence). Cultural differences, the prohibitive cost, language barriers and the sheer number of victims also impeded their access to privately operated trauma-counselling facilities.



- **Impact on children:** Exposure to high levels of violence has caused learning disabilities, fear and aggression. A mother of four, who was eight months' pregnant when evicted during a petrol-bomb attack on her partner's room in 2014 and who for several months sheltered in the derelict changing rooms of Glebelands defunct swimming pool area, described the impact of the violence on her seven-year-old son, who she found one day beating a lizard to a pulp with a stick: 'Something has gone wrong here,' she said, tapping her head, 'He is always angry – it's getting worse.' Several residents also reported that their children had failed at school because they were fearful for their own and their parents' safety.

Another resident described how, when a wooden plank had been dropped from the second floor of a block to men loading a bakkie below, a nearby group of young children, on hearing the loud bang, had instinctively flattened themselves on the ground. 'They thought it was shooting,' he said. 'They responded instantly, like soldiers, yet they are so small.'

- **Impact on women:** There were unconfirmed (but numerous) reports that incidents of sexual abuse perpetrated by hitmen were not being reported to the police because the women were threatened with eviction or death. Hostels remain a very patriarchal society, so women struggle to make their voices heard. All expressed concern about raising their children in such unhealthy living conditions and violent surroundings.

The widow of one of Glebelands' most charismatic leaders, who was assassinated in 2015, described hostel living conditions: 'This is not a good environment for children. There is sewage and leaking pipes; it affects their health. They get rashes and running stomachs, and at night they cough because of the damp. They are often getting flu, so I am always at the doctor. Each time I must find taxi fare – transport is so expensive. That was what my husband was fighting for. The conditions in here are terrible. They must make all the blocks into family units.'

- **Health problems:** Many residents among the group targeted for assassination appeared to be suffering from stress-related illnesses, such as stroke, high blood pressure, an increase in substance abuse, plus more general health problems caused by unhygienic living conditions, insufficient food and poor access to health facilities. At least three men died from what appeared to be stress-induced strokes sometime after they were violently evicted in 2014. Some residents whose rooms were petrol-bombed or who, during their violent eviction, were forced to abandon their personal effects – which were subsequently destroyed, commandeered or sold by the perpetrators – lost essential documents, such as identity books, bank cards, birth certificates and hospital cards. This limited and delayed often urgently needed access to health facilities, social support and entrance to schools, etc.
- **Poverty:** Existing high levels of poverty were considerably worsened by illegal evictions, dispossession and the resulting job losses when it became too dangerous to use public transport. Loss of breadwinners among rural families, who had previously received remittances from their relatives working in Durban, has also been devastating and has stunted the future of many children. The cost of numerous funerals (in 2015 there were on average two funerals a month) meant a further drain on the community in general, whose members usually contribute towards the funeral expenses of relatives killed at Glebelands. Funeral costs were particularly high because many of the deceased needed to be buried in the Eastern Cape. Consequently, bodies often lay for weeks in the morgue before sufficient funds could be raised. The families of several of the hitmen who were killed, however, reportedly received assistance from the municipality and the ANC.
- **Trust deficit:** Residents' trust in government institutions and agencies, especially the police, was destroyed, as police members were actively involved in the violence, and because of the state's apparent reluctance to intervene to end the killing and address community concerns.



- **Isolation:** As a result of historical circumstances, hostel communities have remained marginalized, isolated and poorly understood. The failure by many civil-society organizations to intervene when they were called upon for help has deepened the community's sense of isolation and persecution. This has allowed the political narrative to dominate, undermined the reality of the community's circumstances and permitted misperceptions and false information to flourish.
- **Economy of killing:** In KZN, and at Glebelands in particular, becoming a hitman is often the only viable job opportunity for many young men. The power and status that come with owning a gun, earning relatively large amounts of money and having control over the life or death of others can be seen as an attractive means of defeating poverty. The rapid increase in the number of hitmen resident at Glebelands demonstrates that the market for their skills is growing, as is the demand for unlicensed firearms.
- **Stigma:** Many residents complained they experienced discrimination and prejudice associated with living at the 'notorious' Glebelands Hostel. This had a singularly negative impact on job-seekers' prospects and on inhabitants' interactions with others. Because of its reputation for violence, health workers were afraid to visit the hostel. Residents who needed to obtain or renew firearm licences (for example, those who worked in the security industry) reported that licences were routinely refused, they suspected, on the grounds that they lived at Glebelands and were therefore automatically suspected of criminal activity. This has improved somewhat since early 2018, when the violence began to subside.
- **Moving targets:** Community members whose names were believed to be on hit lists or who were receiving death threats described having to change their whole way of life and develop complicated survival strategies. Aside from sometimes losing their jobs, others were cut off from loved ones living in blocks controlled by hitmen.

An elderly Glebelands man compared the actions of ANC-aligned hitmen with the apartheid government's forced removals after he was compelled to flee from the room he had previously shared with his wife – she was allowed to stay, but he was a block committee member and was therefore warned that hitmen would kill him if he did not leave: 'My government is always divorcing me! The Boers first divorced me from my wife; now my own party has divorced us!'

Other community leaders said the impact on family relationships had been catastrophic. Some were fearful that hitmen would follow them to their rural homes and kill family members. Consequently, they stopped visiting their families. To minimize relatives' fear for the safety of loved ones living at Glebelands, husbands often did not inform their spouses about what was going on. Hence they did not receive the emotional support and understanding so critically needed at the time, putting added strain on relationships already buckling from the stress of forced separations. Likewise, rural spouses sometimes only learned of their partner's killing weeks after the incident. They were often not informed of their death by the police, and struggled to obtain information about investigations and access to state support mechanisms.



No place to raise a child: like all hostels administered by the eThekweni Municipality, Glebelands is a hostile environment for children – violent, dirty and dangerous.



Denial of constitutional rights and democratic freedoms

Conditions at Glebelands led to the reversal of many hard-won constitutional rights and democratic freedoms. Ironically, many who had been lifelong ANC supporters and at the forefront of the struggle against racial discrimination, found themselves at odds with an oppressive administration and brutal police. The following are some of the rights enjoyed by South Africans under its progressive Constitution, but which Glebelands residents were denied:

- **Freedom of movement:** ‘No-go zones’, where those under threat risked being shot, prevented residents from visiting hospital, friends and family; going to work; shopping, etc., while high transport costs hampered residents’ ability to attend meetings with civil-society organizations. People’s movements were limited to what was essential in order to reduce the risk of being attacked.
- **Freedom of association:** Politically orchestrated divisions destroyed unity at Glebelands. They also prevented the community from working together to solve their own problems, divided families and prevented some residents from openly associating with people who were trying to assist them. For example, during a 2016 government-led peace initiative, the facilitator, who had been appointed by the Member of the Executive Council for Community Safety, allegedly informed peace committee members that veteran human-rights defender, academic, violence monitor, anthropologist and social worker Mary de Haas (with whom I often work) and I had become involved with the community to ‘overthrow the government’. Although no one believed this, it hindered our ability to work openly at Glebelands, and could have damaged our credibility and endangered our safety. Several times over the past five years, the police and senior government officials have also banned community meetings.
- **Freedom of speech:** The majority of residents were reluctant to speak openly to the media for fear they would be identified and later evicted or lose their jobs if working for government, or even killed. During meetings, residents were often reluctant to speak in front of others and preferred to have one-on-one conversations or in small groups where all present were known to be trustworthy.
- **Community consultation and participation:** Block committee members, former COPE members, community leaders – and everyone perceived to be in opposition to the ward councillor and the dominant faction of the KZN ANC – reported they were isolated and excluded from hostel developments, decision-making structures, job opportunities and local-government forums.
- **Political freedom:** Community leaders complained that their ward councillor had been imposed on them and that the ANC was unresponsive to their considerable efforts to remedy matters. It was alleged that the killing of ‘troublesome’ residents was justified because they were supposedly harming the reputation of the ANC by protesting for improved service delivery, better living conditions and political representation of their choice. Post-94 political intolerance at Glebelands was especially prominent during the 2009 persecution of COPE members (as discussed above). This resulted in opposition parties being unable to campaign freely at the hostel and residents being too fearful to openly support rival political parties.
- **Right to privacy:** Part of the eThekweni Municipality’s roll-out of security measures at Glebelands has been excessive installation of surveillance technology. More than 60 CCTV cameras have been placed around the grounds, some with vehicle number plate recognition capabilities. As government officials have been implicated in the violence, this is a constant source of concern for residents, who believe their movements are being monitored. During the 2016 peace initiative, it would appear that many residents’ cellphones were monitored. In fact the facilitator warned peace-committee members that the police were using sophisticated surveillance equipment to track and monitor them continuously. No one could establish the veracity of these claims; nevertheless, it had a chilling effect on normal communications and the free flow of information.





NGO Gift of the Givers stepped in where government failed and distributed food aid to starving violence victims and evictees in October 2015. Provincial ANC leaders later berated the organization for ‘taking sides’.

- **Authoritarianism:** The community are regularly subjected to police raids, day and night. At times, officers have allegedly broken doors and security gates, and stolen belongings and money. During some operations, residents have reported that police members had removed their name-tags, worn balaclavas and forcibly taken residents’ photographs even when they were not believed to be suspects. Search warrants were never produced and residents were allegedly abused if they asked questions. Residents also reported arbitrary, malicious and fabricated arrests, and the widespread use of torture.
- **Right to protest:** According to testimonies provided by former peace-committee members during the Moerane Commission hearings, one of the conditions the peace committee had to agree to was not to embark on protest action. It is also significant that many leaders who were involved in the 2013 protests subsequently became targets for assassination, death threats and violent eviction.

Why is community resilience so important at Glebelands?

Although no one should be subjected to these living conditions or be summarily denied their most basic rights – especially the right to life – the crisis that has been allowed to unfold at Glebelands presents a potentially disturbing trajectory for South Africa. Like Glebelands, other poor communities in South Africa are increasingly experiencing similar onslaughts upon their basic rights and freedoms. This must be resisted on all levels to prevent the wider erosion or even total reversal of post-94 democratic gains. It is also critical to prevent the increase in crime more generally, and the expansion of organized-crime networks specifically, and to prevent the collapse of the rule of law. Community resilience at Glebelands can be strengthened in some of the following ways:

- **By reversing historical marginalization:** To encourage political diversity, a more open society and to combat historic marginalization, isolation and stigma, hostel communities must be depoliticized, removed from their permanent ‘war’ footing and reintegrated into society. By raising awareness about hostel dwellers’ unique circumstances and challenges, it will promote greater support, solidarity, empathy and understanding, and thereby reduce the destructive power of patronage networks and political strongmen.



- **By cultivating positive terms of engagement:** By promoting community participation and constructive consultation platforms where all parties are afforded equal respect and dignity, political leaders and government officials can become more responsive to residents' needs and be actively involved in the communities they are supposed to serve. By supporting alternative, peaceful problem-solving mechanisms, so that violence is not the first resort, the existing culture of violence and chaos – which also provides opportunity for corruption to flourish – will be countered.
- **By addressing structural inequality, poverty and social decay:** By alleviating overcrowding and poor living conditions; improving services and amenities; providing employment, training and recreational opportunities; supporting victims of violence and those who wish to reform their lives; and cultivating personal self-respect and respect for others in order to combat the devaluation of life, it will reduce the number of young people who become involved in crime and have an overall positive impact on hostel residents' health and emotional well-being.
- **By opposing systemic institutional challenges:** Opposition to the abuse of power, political interference, criminality, corruption and brutality within government generally, and the criminal-justice system specifically, is critical to help rebuild community trust and respect for the law, and ensure the success of criminal investigations and credibility of legal processes. It is also essential that the number of illicit firearms in circulation is reduced and that sources of police weapons used in political, taxi and hostel-related murders are properly investigated and prosecuted.

Challenges to resilience encountered while working within the Glebelands community

During my work at Glebelands, I experienced or noted several challenges to community and personal resilience, discussed in the following subsections.

Overcoming social barriers

Considerable prejudice persists against hostel dwellers as a result of their involvement in the political violence of the 1980s and 1990s, and because hostels are generally perceived to be hotbeds of crime, social decay and violence.

Initially, some members of the community were suspicious of the media, reflecting some elements of the ruling party's ambivalence towards transparent communication. This presented a hurdle in communicating the reality of the crisis to as wide an audience as possible in order to build empathy, genuine understanding and solidarity.



A Glebelands community protest



It was essential that community voices were heard – and not mine – to avoid misrepresenting the situation or the community's specific concerns. But their concerns were allayed, as long as residents' anonymity was protected to ensure their personal safety.

In the beginning, I had to work hard to overcome racial, cultural and language barriers, as well as perceived class distinctions because I was not a hostel dweller. I therefore tried at all times to keep an open mind, obtain other perspectives and learn the value of spending many hours with residents, talking and listening before offering any advice. As hostels are intensely patriarchal societies, women's rights are often disregarded and they are mostly excluded from leadership roles. Despite considerable effort, often, it was not possible to assist women – who were among the majority of evictees, and some were also assassination targets – while taking into consideration gendered and cultural sensitivities.

Combating ignorance

Due to historic isolation and a general public lack of understanding of hostel communities and their unique social dynamics, it was necessary to raise awareness about socio-economic conditions in addition to highlighting the incidents of violence, its causes and impact on residents, and why the government was failing to address it.

Residents were not always aware of their rights, and in most cases were not sufficiently empowered to access them, or the legal processes and other means of holding government accountable. The depth of the unfolding crisis, its complexity and potential to damage democracy and the rule of law were not easily grasped or simply disbelieved by many civil-society organizations. For example, few could comprehend that no-go zones still existed more than 20 years after the establishment of democracy, and even fewer believed the degree of dysfunction and rot within state institutions. This failure to see 'the bigger picture' often undermined interventions, support and solidarity.

Security concerns

Major security concerns meant the community (and I) had to be constantly alert, able to adapt to continually changing levels of threat and respond to life-threatening crises. Surveillance (perceived or otherwise) was a constant threat to confidential communication and had a chilling effect on community meetings. The trauma of attending crime scenes and coping with the loss of community members with whom I had built up good relationships while having to 'be strong' to support others placed untold stress on the health, and the professional and personal lives of all concerned.



Crime scene: forensic investigators at the scene of the double murder of a community leader and his friend, who were killed on 12 September 2015.

Disinformation, divisions and distrust

Overcoming and rebuilding trust has been extremely difficult within this very damaged community after years of political betrayal, administrative neglect, social stigma, civic disregard, police brutality and collusion, and political manipulation. The greatest challenge to resilience has been the ANC's divide-and-rule tactics, and the party's perpetuation of the false narrative that the hostel violence was simply ascribable to warring factions fighting for control over the sale of beds, instead of what I concluded was actually the state-sanctioned, selective elimination



of a sector of the community that had long been deemed politically ‘troublesome’ – irrespective of whether or not they were engaged in petty corruption.

The state’s refusal to acknowledge, address – or even attempt to conceal – the degree of suffering to which the community was subjected was seen by many residents as the ultimate betrayal of all they had fought for while living under apartheid. The ensuing disunity, confusion and despair, combined with desperate levels of poverty weakened the community’s resistance to co-option, corruption and criminal activity, and constantly undermined constructive intervention. Government functionaries and political leaders often attempted to discourage, discredit or politicize civil-society initiatives. This also deepened the community’s sense of isolation from ‘normal’ society, which they felt often did not understand their problems, did not listen and did not care anyway. These issues had to be addressed repeatedly and disinformation constantly dispelled. Because my immediate priorities were for the victims of the violence (e.g. single mothers with children who were forcibly evicted from rooms they had shared with partners who were simultaneously being targeted by police and hitmen) and it was unsafe for me to publicly engage (although I did so confidentially) with residents of blocks controlled by hitmen, I was often accused of bias.

For valid safety concerns, no one could be trusted – especially not the police – and background checks were often necessary to verify if, for example, reporters who said they wished to interview violence victims really were who they claimed to be, and not hitmen or state security agents.

Logistical and victim support

From the outset, the state failed to provide support for the victims of violence. Alternative safe accommodation and emergency social support for evictees – especially women and children – were urgently needed, as were trauma counselling and medical facilities, access to legal assistance, and help with repatriation and funeral costs. While the state and various non-governmental organizations may like to appear to offer a range of social support institutions and mechanisms for the protection of constitutional rights, in reality these are very limited, often inaccessible to the very poor, woefully under-resourced, sometimes politically tainted or simply impractical.

“From the outset, the state failed to provide support for victims of violence at Glebelands.”

Communications were hampered because few residents had access to email or internet, and telephone calls were prohibitively expensive. Transport costs also limited the community’s ability to attend meetings, as did security risks when travelling in and out of the hostel where both entrances had become hotspots for attacks, but which the SAPS appeared reluctant to police. On a personal level, because my community advocacy work was self-funded and I therefore had to earn a living to sustain my work at Glebelands, I faced severe time and resource constraints, and limited capacity. Due in part to the ANC’s ongoing interference campaign, and possibly long-standing prejudice and ignorance regarding hostel communities, as well as misperceptions regarding personal safety, civil society, which usually rallies support, was almost entirely missing in action at Glebelands. When rare support was offered, prevailing circumstances usually rendered it impractical or it led to a further drain on scarce time and resources. Victims of the most horrific acts of violence were hence left to fend for themselves.



Resilience mechanisms developed by the Glebelands community

Despite the appalling circumstances, I was constantly surprised by the manner in which the community dealt with issues and repeatedly bounced back – however severe the trauma or dire the circumstances. I have learned a great deal from my interactions and developed the deepest respect for the people with whom I have worked. It therefore pains me greatly when hostel dwellers and other poor communities are disparaged, disrespected, disregarded, patronized and abused by politicians, government officials and even some members of civil society.

Coping skills

Phenomenal levels of mutual consideration and support were evident among members of the group most under threat. Irrespective of their own poverty, money was collected towards burial costs of fallen comrades and to assist rural families who had lost breadwinners. Rooms, food and transport were shared with those who had been evicted and left with nothing. Community members who faced a daily threat of death, stood together against external threats, often putting aside petty differences or rivalry for the sake of unity, peace and safety. Irrespective of their personal experiences, most residents displayed a remarkable ability to forgive, reintegrate and work with perpetrators if they showed genuine remorse, as well as an enormous capacity for hope of a better future and a vision for the community's needs. Humour – albeit dark or self-deprecating – played an important role in keeping people sane.

Moving forward together

Residents conducted extensive consultation processes and embarked on collective decision-making strategies as problem-solving mechanisms and always exhibited a willingness to find peaceful solutions, even going so far as to negotiate with individuals they knew were actively plotting to kill them, or had already killed friends and family members during the 2016 government-led 'peace initiative'. They also proved amenable to seeking new methods of holding government officials to account and remained prepared to cooperate with law enforcement and work with government or any other entity that was genuinely committed to developing peaceful solutions.

Security measures

Glebelands had essentially become a mini war zone, so extreme measures were needed to combat the extreme conditions. Peace-committee members reported that the 'peace' facilitator, Sibusiso Xulu, who was appointed by the former KZN premier, Willies Mchunu, to lead the 2016 peace process, warned them that all leaders were being closely monitored. As Xulu was believed to be a security expert, allegedly had business interests in the private security industry and at one time reputedly shared office space with the former National Intelligence Agency,⁵⁹ these threats were not taken lightly. Counter-surveillance tactics were employed and sensitive matters were discussed only face-to-face and on a need-to-know basis.

Extensive security precautions were taken by residents when travelling in and out of the hostel, to the local police station or other known hotspots, such as the nearby hospital. For interviews with the media at the hostel, care was taken that reporters were briefed not to reveal community members' identities – and voice distortion was used. Although public speaking was a risk to their lives, residents made themselves available to the press to try to ensure developments were accurately reported as a counterbalance to the state's alternative 'truth'.



Rapid-response mechanisms were put in place. For example, if a resident was arrested, a delegated community member would notify me immediately, so I could try to trace the ‘suspect’s’ whereabouts to prevent him or her from being tortured. This worked similarly with the movement of firearms and other criminal activity.

Tips and lessons learned while working as a community activist

While working with the Glebelands community, I identified and implemented the following strategies as a means of coping and to minimize danger (both to myself and others). Due to the political nature of the violence, extreme caution and circumspection were necessary at all times. The following tips may be useful to others working under similarly abnormal and testing situations.

Networking

- Identify individuals with whom to build relationships within the police service, government, political parties and civil society who are reliable, genuinely concerned about the community, can provide advice (especially legal) and support, and are willing and able to act. Always publicly thank people who have gone beyond the call of duty. Encouragement and recognition are vital, especially for individuals working under very difficult, hostile conditions.
- Establish an extensive media network. Ensure you are available for interviews and to provide comment, and always ensure your information is reliable and your statements are credible. It helps to develop an electronic database of contacts – both media and civil society – to ensure as wide an audience as possible is kept informed of developments.
- Facilitate direct community interaction with other organizations and institutions of accountability, such as the police watchdog (the Independent Police Investigative Directorate – IPID) and Public Protector, and undertake rights and procedure education where needed to empower the community.
- While networking is crucial, it can be expensive, so take transport, airtime and other logistical costs into consideration when community representatives are required to attend meetings or mobilize. Always put the needs of the community first before demands made by other entities. Sometimes you may also need to protect the community from unscrupulous, unethical, self-seeking organizations, academics, reporters, or other individuals who seek to further their careers and organizational profile, or to raise funds by capitalizing on the community’s suffering and your own hard work and limited capacity. You may be accused here of gatekeeping, but this is infinitely preferable to betraying the trust of the people with whom you are working (and breaching your own ethical duties), or, worst of all, endangering lives.

Persistence

- Persistence with dysfunctional government departments is critical. There are some effective, committed, professional civil servants who may be able to help – it just takes time to find them. Ensure your complaints are evidence-based, reasonable and to the point, and suggest what responses are required and by whom.
- Eating the elephant. Do not waste time struggling against insurmountable odds, inconsequential issues, petty squabbles or time-consuming and usually unproductive government initiatives generally designed



to ensure the community loses direction and undermines your own limited capacity. Identify which small, immediate issues or crises can or must be addressed, and focus on those. In time, you may find the bigger issues have either disappeared or are no longer so intimidating.

- Be tactical. It may be necessary to lose a few battles before winning the war. Never give in to despair – get busy instead.

Community first

- Help the community to develop a long-term vision of what they want and help them work towards that without losing focus. Do not impose your own ideas, opinions or values on the community: offer and suggest, but remember you are a facilitator, not an instructor.
- Listen and learn from the community. They understand best their needs and priorities, and what solutions are required. Gather additional information, as required, and share it with the community to facilitate informed discussion before reaching a collective decision on how best to achieve whatever may be their desired objective. Analyze the results, provide and obtain feedback, and seek the community's opinions in terms of effectiveness.
- Prioritize community voices and take a back seat. There may be times when you need to make a public stand but ensure the community takes the lead in all initiatives. Never hog the debate and only raise issues that have not been covered.
- When dealing with the media, always make sure you are speaking with one voice and that you are well informed. It is better to remain silent than contribute to existing confusion. You may end up contradicting predetermined community positions of which you may not be aware, or undermining the authority of community leaders, or dividing the community. And a unified community is far more difficult for criminal syndicates to infiltrate or greedy politicians to manipulate.

Attitude

- Analyze your personal motives. For example, are you doing what you are doing because you genuinely want to fight injustice or corruption, or advocate for human rights, or make a safer society, improve living conditions, or protect democracy? Or are you there to deliver on funders' priorities, promote your organization, further your academic qualifications, obtain fame and fortune, or are you trying to fulfil some personal need?
- Do not be afraid of becoming emotionally involved with the people with whom you work. It will be draining but also immensely rewarding. Humane, caring responses are desperately needed, especially within dehumanized, neglected and marginalized communities. Emotions that may be seen as negative can be used to positive effect. Anger can be a gift that provides energy and strength to stand up against injustice and propel you through traumatic events. Criticism can be a learning tool to prevent mistakes from being repeated. Enemies and detractors will try to prove you are not making an impact and while you may sometimes need to work with them, ensure this never compromises the trust others have in you.
- Ensure all your engagements with the community are honest and open. Never make promises (including to yourself) that you know you may not be able to keep or give false hope or downplay difficulties. Do not be afraid to admit your own limitations and capacity constraints. Apologize for mistakes – you are only human and you will gain respect that way.



- Respect is critical, especially when dealing with damaged communities and individuals. This includes respecting decisions you may not agree with. Explain why you do not agree or cannot support whatever the decision may be, but accept that there may be issues of which you are unaware that the community may not feel comfortable discussing, and leave it at that. If you are working in a community, you must be willing to become part of that community and your greatest reward will be community acceptance, trust, mutual respect and a shared sense of *ubuntu*.

Going it alone

There have been advantages and disadvantages to working alone – one sometimes does not have a choice in terms of what pans out, so make the best of what you have and never feel you have to conform to ‘normal’ operational methods usually required by NGOs or funders – if it works for you and the community, do it. The following are some of the pros and cons of working alone:

Disadvantages

Working alone is often termed ‘working in a silo’, and you will need to make more effort to stay abreast of developments and to establish networks with which to discuss ideas and issues. You will experience reduced capacity, limited resources and lack of support, and you need to take full responsibility for mistakes and failures. You will need to plan for the potential impact of your absence on the community and must ensure others are mentored to take over.

“The government and larger NGOs tend to disregard individuals as opposed to established groups, so you will need to work harder to get issues heard and understood, and obtain a response.”

The government and larger NGOs tend to disregard individuals as opposed to established groups, so you will need to work harder to get issues heard and understood, and obtain a response. Without the support and solidarity of other individuals working under similar circumstances, you may also experience difficulty integrating into ‘normal’ society when operating for extended periods in highly volatile, politically charged, dangerous environments, such as Glebelands, and you will have to learn to cope with the personal disconnection this brings.

Advantages

Although networking is vital, it can take up a great deal of time and consume scarce resources that would sometimes be better spent working on urgent community issues. If you are not representing an organization, you have far greater flexibility, can adapt easily to fluid situations and are free to best manage your time, resources and contacts. You are not limited by NGO politics or organizational requirements and can work with whoever is best suited to provide the assistance, advice or support that is needed. This can improve productivity and efficiency, and allow you the ability to respond to crises immediately.

It is also easier to build trust when the community interacts with the same person, and you will be able to develop a more comprehensive understanding of issues and community dynamics, and keep track of developments. It is easier to maintain your own communication consistency, especially with the media, and working alone reduces the chance of sensitive information leakages and limits the extent to which more people may be exposed to danger.



If you are using your own funds, budgeting is far simpler, as you have sole discretion over the most practical and economic use of available resources and you do not have to comply with onerous accounting requirements. Self-funding may also be useful in exposing state dissemblers in some cases. This was the case with KZN police spokesperson Colonel Jay Naicker in an official statement he made in 2015 in defence of SAPS's failure to apprehend Glebelands' many killers. Naicker made defamatory claims that police investigations were being hindered and the hostel violence fuelled by '... organisations desperate for funding', who, he claimed, were 'peddling ... information to get media coverage for ... funding'.⁶⁰ As it was well known that I was not a registered entity and that my work at Glebelands was self-funded, by making these false accusations, Naicker revealed himself to be a proponent of the ruling party's disinformation campaign and therefore not to be trusted.

Security tips for resilience activists

Because conditions at Glebelands are highly politicized and extremely dangerous, alternative methods must be developed to deal with 'criminal' state officials as well as non-state criminals. Not everyone will understand this. Many people believe South Africa is a fully functional democracy where all citizens are generally protected by the Constitution, have equal access to justice, and their basic rights are protected. This is far from the case, however. The following are some of the ways I have had to adapt personally during the course of my work at Glebelands to minimize danger. In short, plan for the worst, hope for the best, be vigilant and always expect the unexpected.

Working in a high-risk environment

To ensure you do not panic or become distracted when dealing with multiple crises, you may need to prioritize your activities according to what is most critical at any given moment, namely protecting lives, obtaining medical treatment, safeguarding human rights (which include the rights of criminals not to be tortured by police), and obtaining access to safe shelter and basic needs, such as food and water for victims.

Information is power and can also save lives. Particularly when working in highly volatile, politically fraught environments, it is essential to stay informed, cultivate reliable sources, monitor and analyze new developments, undertake research, connect the dots and keep detailed records. Ensure sensitive information is stored and handled responsibly and that identities are protected when needed.

Data collection and record keeping

Keep detailed records. Always carry a notebook and pen – do not rely on your memory or your cellphone (which might be confiscated by the police). Back up your computer regularly and store data on a portable hard drive that can be unplugged and hidden. Keep a copy of your records on a flash drive and give it to someone you trust to store. Ensure you have good security systems on your computer and phone but be aware that information can always be accessed. If you have highly sensitive documents, it is best to keep hard copies in a safe place. Be careful using social media – it can be used to obtain personal details about you, just as you can use social platforms to keep track of others – and verify information using other sources.

Travelling

Ensure someone you trust is always aware of your movements. Vary your routes and habits, and avoid driving alone and at night. Be observant of suspicious vehicles and of being followed. If you think you may be being followed, go



straight to the nearest police station or public place. Take care using public transport – hitmen are often employed by taxi and private security companies. If travelling on foot, remain observant of your surroundings and passers-by. Avoid open spaces and note escape routes or places that can provide cover if you are shot at.

Dealing with surveillance

Remember that whatever strategies police use to track criminals can also be used to trace you – collusion between police and criminal syndicates is an increasingly major problem. The RICA (Regulation of Interception of Communications Act) system is regularly abused by intelligence agencies to spy on activists, so consider using SIM cards that are RICAed in someone else's name, and change SIM cards and devices regularly. Never say or write anything in an electronic communication that you would not be happy sharing with the rest of the world. The Right2Know Campaign provides useful information on how to deal with surveillance (see contact details in the table at the end of the report).

“Never say or write anything in an electronic communication that you would not be happy sharing with the rest of the world.”

Dealing with criminalized police

To combat regular police abuses, it is useful to train community members to become detectives. Always ensure there are reliable individuals to whom the rest of the community can report police abuses (e.g. torture, assault, harassment, unlawful or malicious arrests, damage to property or corruption), who will be able to report to you immediately and ensure these leaders are capacitated to do so (you may need to send them emergency airtime every so often).

Encourage community members to note the following information, which can be used when lodging complaints against police and to identify officers after an incident:

- Record as much detail as possible: what happened, when, where, to whom and by whom, with date, time of incident, and victim and witnesses' contact details.
- Note police vehicle registration numbers, and make and colour of vehicle, and station or unit of origin.
- What police units are operational in the area at the time of the incident?
- Look out for officers' names and ranks on name tags (if they are wearing any), or try to hear if they call each other by name.
- Look for individuals' identifying features – facial scars, complexion, what language they are speaking, etc.
- Take photographs, videos or voice recordings if safe to do so, as these may be useful for investigators later.

Handling evidence:

- If a plastic bag has been used to tube a victim ('tubing' refers to repeated suffocation, usually using a plastic bag), try to find it and keep it in a safe place until it can be handed to an IPID investigator (avoid handling it – use gloves; do not allow others to touch it; keep it in a sealed bag and in a safe place).
- Photograph spent cartridges in the location in which they were found before collecting them and keep them in a safe place to be handed over to police/IPID investigators if they are unable to attend the crime scene immediately and there is a risk evidence will be lost.



- Take photographs of injuries as soon as possible after the incident; if there has been damage to property, take photos of that too.

Coping with torture:

- Should a community member be subjected to torture, it is essential to get them to undergo a medical check-up with a district surgeon *as soon as possible* after the incident. The doctor must fill out a J88 form and give a copy of it to the victim, while an IPID investigator should collect the original.
- Physical evidence of tubing is often minimal but there are tell-tale signs that remain present for a few hours after the incident. For example, the most obvious evidence is broken blood vessels in the eyes (eyes will appear abnormally red) and membranes inside the nose, ears and mouth. Victims often bite their tongue and may urinate or soil themselves. There will also always be signs of restraint – handcuff abrasions, bruising around wrists, arms, ankles etc. Point this evidence out to the district surgeon, as not all doctors have experience of torture.
- Never underestimate the trauma caused by tubing, which can cause lifelong, irreparable psychological damage. The victim will need your full support, as well as professional counselling as soon as possible after the incident.
- Never try to force a victim to report an incident – it is their choice not to if they fear reprisals against them or their families, and chances of holding the police accountable are slim in any case. Merely advise them of their rights, the procedures they will need to follow and what to expect. The choice is theirs thereafter.
- If a victim of torture does decide he or she wants to take the matter further, accompany the victim to report the incident at the police station. Note: they do *not* have to report the incident at the station in the precinct where the incident happened – anyone can report any crime at any police station in South Africa.
- If you are experienced in taking statements, take a statement from the victim immediately after the incident. You can type it up later and get it commissioned at a police station of your choice for inclusion in the docket. Statements taken by police officers in cases of crimes committed by the police are often unreliable or they deliberately omit critical information.
- Anticipate police resistance when the victim opens a case. This may include omitting evidence from the docket or statement, or even verbal abuse or intimidation. Be alert to this and warn the victim in advance.
- Keep copies of the victim's statement, medical report etc because, often, dockets 'go missing'. If the police do not allow you to make copies, take photos of the statement and other documents with your cellphone – it is the victim's legal right to have a copy of his or her statement.

Positive results through resilience

'These police are not our friends, neither are they our enemies.'

– Comment by a hostel leader after Glebelands cases were taken over by a task team from the Provincial Organised Crime Unit, whose detectives went to considerable lengths to rebuild community trust (early 2018).

Although many may view working under conditions that prevail at Glebelands to be a thankless, dangerous, depressing and insurmountable struggle, the rewards – although incremental and often infrequent – are enormous. In the following sections, I outline some successes and progress made to date.



Breaking barriers and raising awareness

- As a white female born in the apartheid regime, the most personally rewarding experience has been overcoming entrenched racial, cultural and gender stereotypes and prejudices, learning from and winning the acceptance and trust of the community, and being able to contribute towards a more just, equal and safer society.
- Trusted, supportive relationships have been built up with individuals and various organizations, who may at times provide advice, support, assistance and solidarity when needed.
- Ubunye bamaHostela is now mentored and supported by the South Durban Community Environmental Alliance – a widely respected, world-renowned, award-winning and impactful non-profit organization with strong international networks. This has allowed some hostel leaders to interact with other civil-society organizations, attend workshops and participate in other initiatives. This relationship will hopefully elevate hostel issues and contribute towards greater support and solidarity, and help achieve long-term improvement in hostel dwellers' lives.
- Community leaders have a better understanding of their rights and legal processes needed to build strong cases and lodge complaints. This has helped with investigations and led to convictions.
- We have an excellent relationship with numerous media professionals, locally, nationally and even internationally. Extensive press coverage has ensured that hostel issues generally and Glebelands concerns specifically are now widely reported, including by news outlets that have tended to cater for middle-to-upper-class, white audiences. The community has learned the value of a free press, and hostel representatives have honed their interview skills and become more confident. The presence of the media, for example at a court appearance during which a hit was allegedly planned, has also helped save lives.

Holding government to account

- Political pressure generated by the community's appeal to the United Nations Human Rights Council⁶¹ and an investigation by the former Public Protector, Thulisile Madonsela,⁶² contributed towards the initiation of a government-led peace initiative in 2016. This led to the establishment of the Glebelands Peace Committee, which was instrumental in uniting previously divided community leaders. Unfortunately, the initiative has not received sustained government support and peace committee leaders were later attacked; one member was even killed.⁶³
- Ongoing interventions by the Public Protector, as well as by members of the Police Parliamentary Portfolio Committee, ensure that Glebelands issues continue to receive some degree of high-level attention.
- Six community leaders, Ubunye bamaHostela representatives and other civil-society organizations testified before the Moerane Commission of Inquiry established in October 2016 to investigate and address the underlying causes of the murder of politicians in KZN. The commission received intense media coverage and this exposure ensured that Glebelands was placed centre stage. The evidence⁶⁴ revealed during witnesses' testimonies also subsequently assisted police in arresting a Glebelands rogue police officer and seven other alleged hitmen in December 2017 (see the case study below, 'The Glebelands eight').
- The Commission also exposed systemic problems⁶⁵ within the IPID's KZN branch, and the institution more generally. In 2019 all Glebelands IPID dockets were reopened for investigation by experienced and more politically independent national IPID investigators. Other high-level investigations into the criminal justice system have followed.



Progress made in quality of policing

- After sustained pressure was placed on the SAPS concerning allegations of local police collusion with alleged hitmen, we eventually managed to ensure that all murder cases associated with Glebelands, as well as attempted murder and other serious offences, are investigated by a team of experienced, professional and trusted detectives from the Provincial Organised Crime Unit. This team has worked hard to regain community trust, with the result that more witnesses are now prepared to come forward and they are automatically offered witness protection. Reporting of crimes has consequently improved, levels of collusion have dropped, there is a better working relationship between the police and community, as well as a better understanding of the challenges on both sides.
- We also lobbied for and obtained a satellite police station, which was opened in December 2017 near the Glebelands administrative office.⁶⁶ This has made it easier for residents to report day-to-day crimes, especially incidents of domestic violence. Policing of dangerous hotspots has improved as well as intervention response time when high threat levels are reported. But, although incidents of torture and unlawful police conduct have decreased and police operations are generally conducted more professionally, constant vigilance is still necessary.
- Although the assassinations started occurring in early 2014, it was not until late 2017 that the first Glebelands hitman was successfully prosecuted. On Friday 15 September that year, the Durban Magistrate Court sentenced Mxolileni Hopeson Bhani⁶⁷ to life imprisonment for the murder of Siphon Ndovela, a former block chairman and father of eight, who was assassinated on 18 May 2015 at the entrance to the Umlazi Magistrate Court.⁶⁸ Bhani also received 12 years for the attempted murder of another Glebelands resident on 11 June 2015. In May 2018, Bhani and accomplice Bheko Duma, in the June 2015 hit on Lamontville Taxi Association boss Vela Ndebele,⁶⁹ both received life sentences plus a further 20 years for being in possession of firearms. Press articles from the trial reported the court was 'amazed by Bhani's precision'⁷⁰ in picking out his targets, Ndovela and Ndebele, who had both been among groups of people at the time of the incidents, without injuring anyone else.
- Together with evidence that emerged during the Moerane Commission, this saw the tide begin to turn against the killers. In December 2017, a Glebelands rogue detective and five other suspects were rounded up⁷¹ and later joined by two colleagues in the months that followed. This high-profile case, dubbed 'The Glebelands eight' (see below) is expected to go to trial in September 2019.
- Since then, almost 30 more hitmen have been arrested, or are awaiting trial or sentencing. Five have already received life sentences. Other Glebelands suspects have been arrested at various locations across KZN and charged with various crimes, such as hijacking, vehicle theft, armed robbery, possession of unlicensed firearms and many other murders, including political and taxi-related hits.
- Since 2014 a range of state-issue, prohibited and unlicensed firearms and ammunition (including R4⁷² and AK-47 rifles, and an 9-millimetre automatic pistol⁷³), as well as police equipment,⁷⁴ a laptop,⁷⁵ handset radios,⁷⁶ internal correspondence⁷⁷ and SAPS⁷⁸ and South African National Defence Force uniforms,⁷⁹ have been recovered during operations at Glebelands and during arrests of Glebelands suspects elsewhere.⁸⁰ This provides incontrovertible evidence of the community's long-standing claims of police collusion with hostel-based hitmen operating not only at Glebelands, but across KZN.
- Since these high-profile arrests and prosecutions, there has been a 60% reduction⁸¹ in violence at Glebelands. In the preceding years (March 2014–December 2017), the hostel-related murder rate had averaged 26 per year, this dropped to 11 in 2018; during the first half of 2019, there have been only four hits.



The Glebelands eight

Between 5 and 8 December 2017 – days before the ANC's 54th elective conference – Durban Central SAPS Detective Sergeant Bhekukwazi Louis Mdweshu and Glebelands residents Khayelihle 'Mroza' Mbuthuma, Vukani Manenze Mcobothi, Eugene Wonderboy Hlophe, Mbuyiselwa Mkhize and Ncomekile Matlale Ntshangase were arrested during combined unit operations in various parts of KZN. During the weeks that followed, two more suspects, Mondli Talente Mthethwa and Bongani Mbhele, were also arrested and their cases joined to the existing accused. Mdweshu has since been charged with racketeering ('...forming and leading a criminal syndicate with the purpose to kill or eliminate persons who resided at Glebelands Hostel ...')⁸² and, together with his seven co-accused, also charged under common purpose on nine counts of murder, six counts of attempted murder, conspiracy to commit murder, extortion, and possession of a prohibited firearm and ammunition.

More than 107 witnesses⁸³ are expected to testify, including Glebelands leaders, some of whom have been in witness protection since 2016. In April 2018, an elaborate plot was exposed to assassinate the state prosecutor.⁸⁴ He has since been assigned round-the-clock personal protection. Mbuthuma, Mthethwa and Mbhele were also charged separately for other unrelated Glebelands murders and attempted murders. While Mthethwa and Mbhele's cases are ongoing, Mbuthuma, 28 years old at the time of his arrest, was in 2018 also sentenced to life imprisonment for the murder of Glebelands grandmother Sibongile 'Ma' Mtshali⁸⁵. Mtshali was gunned down in the presence of her granddaughter and a neighbour on 26 July 2017 by hitmen posing as customers in the tuckshop she ran from her room in Block 46. Sources claim she did not die immediately and an accomplice had to return to finish her off. During proceedings, Mbuthuma told the court he was aware of around 200 Glebelands killings⁸⁶ – almost double the total number of murders recorded. It was reported that when his sentence was handed down, Mbuthuma 'showed no remorse ... and stood emotionless, expressionless.'⁸⁷

Source: Pietermaritzburg High Court Case: CC /18 DPP Ref: D 8 /18.

A luta continua ...

Although important progress has been made in the apprehension of Glebelands-based hitmen, political killings – and their political, structural and socio-economic drivers – persist. The criminal-justice system has shown little appetite for apprehending high-profile politicians believed to be behind many of the killings. Concerns, especially relating to alleged corruption within the courts, remain a persistent problem. KZN, and specifically the eThekweni Municipality, has become synonymous with the culture of deadly, state-linked corruption that increasingly threatens South Africa's future as a viable, stable, constitutional democracy. This was brought into sharp focus during the arrest⁸⁸ in May 2019 of Durban's 'mafia'⁸⁹ mayor and chairperson of the ANC's largest region, Zandile Gumede, and her co-accused, ANC regional deputy secretary and eThekweni Municipality executive council chairperson for the infrastructure and human settlements committee, Mondli Mthembu, on money laundering, fraud and corruption charges.

In her 2017 report⁹⁰ on Glebelands, the Public Protector had found the eThekweni Municipality had contravened residents' constitutional rights to a safe, healthy and clean environment, and failed to provide equitable access to the municipal services, which constituted maladministration and improper conduct. After subsequent intervention by the Public Protector's Office, when it was pointed out⁹¹ that the oversight institution's recommendations were



persistently disregarded, Mthembu and his co-accused, Gumede, undertook to ‘... personally spearhead the project to rehabilitate Glebelands Hostel’.⁹² The community understandably has little confidence that Gumede and her sidekick will make good on promises they have heard many times before⁹³ and fear funds allocated for hostel rehabilitation are likely to be misappropriated, as they allege has happened before.⁹⁴

Research contained in the Global Initiative’s 2018 Assassination Witness Report, ‘The rule of the gun’,⁹⁵ highlighted a clear correlation between municipalities with high levels of corruption, areas where political power had remained unchanged for long periods, and a high incidence of contract killings. KZN’s eThekweni Municipality provides a deadly nexus for all these three factors. The ANC’s eThekweni region enjoys the largest party membership in the country and played a critical role in bringing Jacob Zuma to power in 2007. The former president’s friends and relations have infested⁹⁶ almost all levels of local and provincial government, as well as the private sector and the lucrative taxi industry for more than a decade. The ruling party has administered Durban – which receives the country’s largest municipal budget – since 2005 amid repeated corruption scandals.⁹⁷ For the period January 2000 to December 2017, the Global Initiative recorded the eThekweni Municipality as having the highest recorded hit rate in South Africa⁹⁸ – more than double the next highest hit rate,⁹⁹ for the Umsunduze Municipality, also in KZN.

The community also fears that those who were previously violently evicted and survived many attempts on their lives may soon come under fire again. A storm is gathering over Glebelands as the municipality and its deeply distrusted provincial government have set about redrafting the flawed 1998 Hostel Policy,¹⁰⁰ a move that, without broad community consultation and rigorous independent legal oversight, could be used to remove politically ‘non-compliant’ residents from all Durban’s 10 hostels, leaving many thousands homeless.

Gumede, together with Umlazi ward councillor Mthokozisi Nojiyeza, has also allegedly been implicated¹⁰¹ in the assassination of Sibusiso Maphumulo¹⁰² – councillor for the ward adjoining Glebelands. Maphumulo was killed not far from the hostel in October 2018. Newcastle¹⁰³ and Umzimkhulu¹⁰⁴ ANC mayors are also facing murder charges. All maintain their innocence. In some cases so far, charges have been provisionally withdrawn¹⁰⁵ and witnesses killed.¹⁰⁶ Gumede has claimed that the charges against her are a politically motivated plot¹⁰⁷ because of her support for Zuma’s so-called ‘radical economic transformation’ project. On 13 August, the ANC’s provincial executive committee confirmed that Gumede would be asked to step down as mayor, and ‘redeployed’ to another office. Glebelands unpopular ward councillor and longstanding Gumede supporter, Robert Mzobe, has proved equally difficult to dislodge¹⁰⁸ despite the cloud that remains over his office. Developments at national and provincial level also remain fluid and worrying.

Clearly, the struggle is far from over. While recent arrests may have bought hostel residents a temporary reprieve, the situation at KZN’s ground zero remains unstable. Glebelands guns are unlikely to fall silent any time soon. It is therefore essential that ordinary citizens become more involved, more outspoken against state malfeasance, and show solidarity and support for communities such as Glebelands who are at the coalface of a criminalized administration.



Useful contacts (rights, legal assistance, counselling, information)

| Organization/contact person | Contact details | Reason to contact |
|---|--|---|
| Global Initiative Against Transnational Organized Crime (Kim Thomas) | www.globalinitiative.net kim.thomas@globalinitiative.net | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Research reports on organized crime · Networking assistance |
| Right2Know Campaign | www.r2k.org.za kzn@r2k.org.za 031 3011 856 / 081 575 3832 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Access to information · Securitization/surveillance issues · Right to privacy |
| Right2Protest toll free hotline | 0800 212 111 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Right to protest pro bono legal advice |
| Centre for Applied Legal Studies | www.wits.ac.za/cals 011 717 1000 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Pro bono legal assistance / advice · Right to protest |
| Socio-Economic Rights Institute | www.seri-sa.org sanele@seri-sa.org 011 356 5860 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Pro bono legal assistance |
| KZN Violence Monitor (Mary de Haas) | mary@violencemonitor.com | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Police brutality · Political killings monitoring · Human-rights advice |
| Dennis Hurley Centre | www.denishurleycentre.org admin@dennishurleycentre.org 031 301 2240 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Support for homeless people · Spiritual support |
| Wentworth Victim Friendly Centre | wentworthvfc.weebly.com 031 461 5789 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Trauma counselling |
| Childline | www.childlinesa.org.za info@childlinewc.org National crisis line: 08 000 55&555 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Crisis line · Counselling |
| Mahatma Gandhi Thuthuzela Crisis Centre | 031 502 2338 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Medical examinations/reports · Trauma counselling |
| South Durban Community Environmental Alliance (SDCEA) | https://sdcea.org shanusha@sdceango.co.za 031 461 1991 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Environmental/health issues |
| Ubunye bamaHostela (Vusi Zweni) | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Hostel dwellers' advocacy |
| Corruption Watch | www.corruptionwatch.org.za info@corruptionwatch.org.za | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Corruption reporting |
| Corruption hotline | 0800 023 456 (toll-free) 072 013 5569 (WhatsApp) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Corruption reporting |
| Call-back service | SMS 'CALLME' to 44 666 | |
| Amnesty International (Durban branch) | https://amnesty.org.za | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Human-rights advocacy |
| Independent Police Investigative Directorate (IPID) | www.icd.gov.za Complaints.KwaZuluNatal@ipid.gov.za complaints@ipid.gov.za 031 310 1300 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · To report police crimes/brutality/ corruption |
| Public Protector | www.pprotect.org registration2@pprotect.org | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · To report corruption, maladministration |
| Toll-free | 0800 11 20 40 031 307 5300 / 5250 / 5251 | |

Notes

- 1 Author's database of deceased, and SAPS crime statistics, 2013–2018, <https://www.saps.gov.za/newsroom/ms.php&hl=en-ZA>.
- 2 Population estimate provided by the eThekweni Municipality in the Public Protector's 2017 *Final Report on Glebelands*, No. 7/2017 ISBN No: 978-1-928366-28-7, South Africa, 19 June 2017; the community, however, estimates there could be more than 30 000 residents because of overcrowding and lack of official tenants' documentation.
- 3 Author's database of deceased, and SAPS crime statistics, 2013–2018, <https://www.saps.gov.za/newsroom/ms.php&hl=en-ZA>.
- 4 Population estimate provided by the eThekweni Municipality in the Public Protector's *Final Report on Glebelands*, No. 7/2017 ISBN No: 978-1-928366-28-7, South Africa, 19 June 2017; the community, however, estimates there could be more than 30 000 residents because of overcrowding and lack of official tenants' documentation.
- 5 Here's how South Africa's crime rates compares to actual warzones, BusinessTech, August 2019, <https://www.google.co.za/amp/s/businesstech.co.za/news/lifestyle/271997/heres-how-south-africas-crime-rate-compares-to-actual-warzones/amp/>.
- 6 Ibid.
- 7 Ibid.
- 8 Ibid.
- 9 In the South African context, a hostel refers to a housing compound developed for migrant workers.
- 10 Author's database of deceased, and SAPS crime statistics 2013–2018, <https://www.saps.gov.za/newsroom/ms.php&hl=en-ZA>.
- 11 Here's how South Africa's crime rates compares to actual warzones, BusinessTech, August 2019, <https://www.google.co.za/amp/s/businesstech.co.za/news/lifestyle/271997/heres-how-south-africas-crime-rate-compares-to-actual-warzones/amp/>.
- 12 Author's conversation with a religious leader.
- 13 Isipingo CAS 129/03/2014 – IPID Ref No: CCN 2014030235.
- 14 Silusapho Nyanda, Streets blockaded near Glebelands, *Daily News*, 21 June 2013, <http://www.iol.co.za/news/crime-courts/streetsblockaded-near-glebelands-1.1535777>.
- 15 Ibid.
- 16 *Report of the Moerane Commission of Enquiry into the Underlying Causes of the Murder of Politicians in KwaZulu-Natal 2011–2017*, Durban, June 2018, 155–156.
- 17 Ibid., Transcripts Volume 2, Mayville, 23 May 2017, 157–183.
- 18 Author's interviews with multiple community sources, 2014–2019.
- 19 Author's database of deceased and unlawfully displaced people; Umlazi Cluster crime statistics, 2013–2016, <https://www.saps.gov.za/newsroom/ms.php&hl=en-ZA>.
- 20 Author's interviews with victims, some of whom refused to report their alleged torture to the IPID for fear of reprisals from police 2014–2019.
- 21 For more on the Global initiative's Resilience Project, see Resilience in Sinaloa: Community responses to organized crime, <http://globalinitiative.net/resilience-in-sinaloa/>.
- 22 Rupert Taylor, Justice Denied: Political Violence in KwaZulu-Natal after 1994, University of the Witwatersrand and The Centre for the Study of Violence and Reconciliation, Violence and Transition Series, Vol. 6, 2002.
- 23 Truth and Reconciliation Commission of South Africa Reports, Volume 2 and Volume 6, Section 3, 1998, 605–610.
- 24 *Goldstone Report into Criminal Acts Committed by Members of the SAP, the KZP and the IFP*, 1994; Eugene de Kock's TRC amnesty application: 'I knew that this assistance was in line with the general feeling about the IFP amongst police members ... one Captain Frederick Botha, for instance, told me that a massive amount of money was earmarked by the police for the IFP'.
- 25 Truth and Reconciliation Commission of South Africa Reports, excerpt from Jeff Radebe's amnesty application to the TRC recounted his role in arming self-defence units while he was an Umkhonto we Sizwe underground commander in southern Natal: '... the Self Defence Units were a creation of all those communities who were undergoing severe attacks from the forces and powers that be ... There were instances where Self Defence Units were involved in combat clashes with the Security Police, places like Umlazi, KwaMashu, etc.', 1998.
- 26 Mary de Haas, Where are the weapons of war? *KZN Monitor*, Volume 28, 12 July 2018, mary@violencemonitor.com.
- 27 Christopher Clark, Inside the ANC's KZN war (Part 2), Groundup, 23 March 2018, https://www.dailymaverick.co.za/article/2018-03-23-groundup-inside-the-ancs-kzn-war-part-2/#.WrQ0O9_RaSw.
- 28 Ibid.
- 29 Global Initiative Against Transnational Organized Crime, Assassination Witness Report: The rule of the gun: Hits and assassinations in South Africa, January 2000–December 2017, University of the Cape Town and Global Initiative Against Transnational Organized Crime, March 2018, www.assassinationwitness.org.za.
- 30 A tax introduced during British colonialism in South Africa on a per household basis.
- 31 Mary de Haas, How state-imposed barriers to social cohesion fuel violence in KZN, unpublished abstract, 2016.
- 32 Centre for the Study of Violence, Conflict and Resolution report, *The Human Face of Violence: Hostel Dwellers Speak*, 1990.
- 33 Truth and Reconciliation Commission of South Africa Reports, 1998; Mary de Haas, Where are the weapons of war? *KZN Monitor*, Volume 28, 12 July 2018, mary@violencemonitor.com.
- 34 eThekweni Municipality Hostels Policy, Durban, 26 March 1998.
- 35 Author's interviews with multiple community sources, 2014–2019.
- 36 Author's interviews with UbH leaders; author's interviews with multiple community sources, 2014–2019; personal correspondence with former ward councillors, a member of the KZN Provincial Legislature and a member of the Police Parliamentary Portfolio Committee, 2014–2019.
- 37 Author's interviews with multiple community sources, 2014–2019 and other sources formerly within ANC leadership and the Alliance structures, 2014–2019.
- 38 Author's interviews with UbH leaders, Glebelands residents, block committees and SACP leaders, 2014–2019.



- 39 Hostel protest brings Durban to a standstill, *Sunday Tribune*, 31 January 2010, <https://www.pressreader.com/south-africa/sunday-tribune-south-africa/20100131/281719790722607>.
- 40 Boniswa Mohale, Hostel dwellers fume at 100% rise in rentals, *Cape Argus*, 1 February 2010, <https://googleweblight.com/?u=https://www.iol.co.za/capeargus/sport/hostel-dwellers-fume-at-100-rise-in-rentals-472137&hl=en-ZA>.
- 41 Niren Tolsi, Dlamini-Zuma report: Report puts KZN councillors in firing line, *Mail & Guardian*, 8 February 2013, <https://googleweblight.com/?u=https://mg.co.za/article/2013-02-08-00-report-puts-councillors-in-firing-line&hl=en-ZA>.
- 42 Author's interviews with community sources involved in proceedings, some of whom were later assassinated, 2014–2015.
- 43 *Report of the Moerane Commission of Enquiry into the Underlying Causes of the Murder of Politicians in KwaZulu-Natal 2011–2017*, Durban, June 2018, Transcripts Volume 2, Mayville, 23 May 2017, 157–183.
- 44 Ibid.
- 45 Author's database of deceased, and SAPS crime statistics 2013–2018, <https://www.saps.gov.za/newsroom/ms.php&hl=en-ZA>.
- 46 Pietermaritzburg High Court Case: CC /18 DPP Ref: D 8 /18.
- 47 Author's database of deceased, and SAPS press statements 2018–2019, <https://www.saps.gov.za/newsroom/ms.php&hl=en-ZA>.
- 48 SAPS media statements on Glebelands operations 2016–2017, <https://www.saps.gov.za/newsroom/ms.php&hl=en-ZA>.
- 49 *Report of the Moerane Commission of Enquiry into the Underlying Causes of the Murder of Politicians in KwaZulu-Natal 2011–2017*, Durban, June 2018, 469–498; Umlazi SAPS 412/08/2014 (since part of Pietermaritzburg High Court Case: CC /18 DPP Ref: D 8 /18), in which a group of residents were shot and injured by hitmen using an R4 or R5 automatic rifle, among other firearms. Durban Central SAPS detective Bhokukwazi Louis Mdweshu and seven other alleged Glebelands hitmen were subsequently charged under common purpose on 22 counts of racketeering, including murder, attempted murder, conspiracy to commit murder, extortion and possession of a prohibited firearm and ammunition. Anti-mining activist Sikhosphi Bazooka Rhadebe was assassinated on 22 March 2016 by hitmen using state-issue automatic rifles, which Glebelands sources claimed were linked to hostel hitmen and officer Mdweshu, <https://www.saps.gov.za/newsroom/ms.php&hl=en-ZA>; assassination of Harding Ward 1 candidate councillor Bongani Sikhosana on 18 July 2016, for which two Glebelands suspects were charged. This case was later provisionally withdrawn due to age of witness; Umlazi CAS 227/11/2016 assassination of Glebelands Peace Committee member Nkosinathi Shezi on 7 November 2016 by hitmen using automatic state-issue rifles; attempted assassination of former Umzimkhulu ANCYL leader Sindiso Magaga (who later died of injuries) and ward councillors Nonsikelelo Mafa and Jabu Mzizi on 13 July 2017 according to SAPS media statement by hitmen using a state-issue 'automatic rifle such as an R1', see <https://www.saps.gov.za/newsroom/ms.php&hl=en-ZA>. Reliable sources subsequently linked this hit either directly or indirectly to Glebelands-based hitmen with origins in Umzimkhulu and links to criminal networks there.
- 50 Five cases were registered with the IPID. The author interviewed a further two residents, who exhibited substantial evidence of torture, with corroborating statements from witnesses, and there were reliable reports of a further 10 incidents of torture. The majority were too fearful of police reprisals to report the matters or stated they had no faith in the IPID. Many of the officers named by victims were also identified by unrelated community sources as allegedly colluding with hostel hitmen.
- 51 See, for example, the matter Isipingo CAS 129/03/2014 – IPID Ref No: CCN 2014030235 (torture and death in custody), in which two witnesses who were themselves both assaulted (they were not provided with case numbers despite reporting to both the police and the IPID) were harassed by police sometimes operating well beyond their stations of origin. One witness was subsequently arrested (Umlazi CAS 169/07/2014) and charged with corruption. According to the witness's attorney, there was 'nothing in the docket'. The court acquitted the witness seven months later due to lack of evidence. This was just one example of many such cases. In 2017, after the Provincial Task Team took over certain dockets previously carried by an officer who had been seconded to the team from 2015 to 2016, and whom residents had widely reported as allegedly taking bribes to 'kill dockets', detectives reported that evidence had been tampered with or fabricated, statements appeared to have been altered and in some cases, witnesses did not exist.
- 52 Complaint to National Police Commissioner, Gen K Sithole, KZN Provincial Commissioner (Acting), Lt Gen N Mkhwanazi, Police Parliamentary Portfolio Committee members, Police Minister, Mr B Cele, National Executive Director IPID: Mr R McBride: 'Re: Request for the Immediate Suspension and Investigation of: 1. KZN Deputy Provincial Commissioner: Investigations – Major General D Chiliza; 2. Umlazi SAPS Det Sgt Cebekhulu; 3. Prov OCU Det Sgt Myeza; and investigation of: 4. Former Deputy Provincial Commissioner: Investigations – General B Naidoo (retired) dated 20 September 2018; Affidavit provided by Organised Crime Unit Provincial Task Team investigating officer Lieutenant Colonel Bhukumuzi Sikhakhane when opposing bail in the matter before the Pietermaritzburg High Court Case: CC /18 DPP Ref: D 8 /18, deposed Durban Central SAPS, 27 March 2018; personal correspondence with the SAPS and IPID, 2014–2019; author's interviews with anonymous sources, 2014–2019.
- 53 Affidavit provided by Organised Crime Unit Provincial Task Team investigating officer Lieutenant Colonel Bhukumuzi Sikhakhane when opposing bail in the matter before the Pietermaritzburg High Court Case: CC /18 DPP Ref: D 8 /18, deposed Durban Central SAPS, 27 March 2018.
- 54 Ibid.
- 55 *Report of the Moerane Commission of Enquiry into the Underlying Causes of the Murder of Politicians in KwaZulu-Natal 2011–2017*, Durban, June 2018.
- 56 Ibid.
- 57 Comment from hostel leader to author meaning that the ANC was now reaping what it had sown. According to the source, although the ANC did not seem perturbed when ANC-linked hitmen killed ANC supporters at Glebelands but quickly distanced themselves when high-ranking ANC officials were publicly involved; hitmen were nevertheless contract killers and would murder whoever they were paid to kill – there could be no turning back for either.
- 58 Pietermaritzburg High Court Case: CC /18 DPP Ref: D 8 /18.
- 59 Author's communications with three reliable and unrelated sources.
- 60 amaBhungane reporters, Glebelands: Fingers pointed at untouchable 'serial killer', *Mail & Guardian*, 4 June 2015, excerpt from statement to media by KZN police spokesperson Colonel Jay Naicker: 'We are extremely concerned that organisations desperate for funding are peddling such information to the media in desperation to get media coverage for their funding, rather than having a genuine interest in solving the problems that exist in Glebelands. This is a serious hindrance to our investigations and only serves to fuel further violence, as such individuals are aligning themselves with a certain group in the hostel ...', <https://googleweblight.com/?u=https://mg.co.za/article/2015-06-04-glebelands-fingers-pointed-at-untouchable-serial-killer&hl=en-ZA>.
- 61 Glebelands hostel residents want UN intervention, eNCA, 18 April 2016, <https://www.enca.com/south-africa/glebelands-hostel-residents-want-un-help-end-violence>.
- 62 Kaveel Singh, Public protector visits notorious Glebelands, News24, 22 December 2015, <https://www.google.co.za/amp/s/www.timeslive.co.za/amp/news/south-africa/2015-12-22-public-protector-visits-notorious-glebelands/>.



- 63 Nkululeko Nene, Hostel shocked at death of 'man of peace', *Sunday Tribune*, 13 November 2016, <https://www.iol.co.za/news/hostel-shocked-at-death-of-man-of-peace-2089600>.
- 64 *Report of the Moerane Commission of Enquiry into the Underlying Causes of the Murder of Politicians in KwaZulu-Natal 2011–2017*, Durban, June 2018, Transcripts Volume 10, Mayville, 17 July 2017, 469–498.
- 65 Mxolisi Mngadi, IPID is a 'massive failure', Moerane Commission hears, *News24*, 16 August 2017, <https://m.news24.com/SouthAfrica/News/ipid-is-a-massive-failure-moerane-commission-hears-20170816>.
- 66 Glebelands satellite station means thugs have no place to hide: Mbalula, *SABC news*, 1 December 2017, <http://www.sabcnews.com/sabcnews/glebelands-satellite-station-means-thugs-have-no-place-to-hide-mbalula/>.
- 67 ANA reporter, Life sentence for Glebelands hitman, *IOL*, 15 September 2017, <https://www.iol.co.za/news/south-africa/kwazulu-natal/life-sentence-for-glebelands-hitman-11233056>.
- 68 Mary de Haas, Ndovela took the brave step to be a witness and police failed him, *The Witness*, 20 March 2015, <https://www.pressreader.com/south-africa/the-witness/20150520/282140699962818>.
- 69 Sphelele Ngubane, Two held after taxi boss shot dead, *The Mercury*, 12 June 2015, <https://www.iol.co.za/news/two-held-after-taxi-boss-shot-dead-1870865>.
- 70 Sandile Motha, Court amazed by KZN hitman Bhani's precision, *The Sowetan*, 21 May 2018, <https://www.google.co.za/amp/s/www.sowetanlive.co.za/amp/news/south-africa/2018-05-21-court-amazed-by-kzn-hitman-bhanis-precision/>.
- 71 Nathi Olifant, Jeff Wicks and Matthew Savides, Arrested cop was known to be dodgy, Glebelands Hostel residents claim, *TimesLIVE*, 7 December 2017, <https://www.google.co.za/amp/s/www.timeslive.co.za/amp/news/south-africa/2017-12-07-arrested-cop-was-known-to-be-dodgy-glebelands-hostel-residents-claim/>.
- 72 R4 rifle seized by Glebelands Hostel Task Team, *Chatsworth Rising Sun*, 31 August 2017, <https://www.google.co.za/amp/s/risingsunchatsworth.co.za/96693/r4-rifle-seized-glebelands-hostel-task-team/amp>.
- 73 Pietermaritzburg High Court Case: CC /18 DPP Ref: D 8 /18.
- 74 Nathi Olifant, Jeff Wicks and Matthew Savides, Arrested cop was known to be dodgy, Glebelands Hostel residents claim, *TimesLIVE*, 7 December 2017, <https://www.google.co.za/amp/s/www.timeslive.co.za/amp/news/south-africa/2017-12-07-arrested-cop-was-known-to-be-dodgy-glebelands-hostel-residents-claim/>.
- 75 Ibid.
- 76 Personal correspondence with intelligence agents, May to August 2016.
- 77 Nathi Olifant, Jeff Wicks and Matthew Savides, Arrested cop was known to be dodgy, Glebelands Hostel residents claim, *TimesLIVE*, 7 December 2017, <https://www.google.co.za/amp/s/www.timeslive.co.za/amp/news/south-africa/2017-12-07-arrested-cop-was-known-to-be-dodgy-glebelands-hostel-residents-claim/>.
- 78 Ibid.
- 79 Personal correspondence with intelligence agents, May to August 2016.
- 80 R4 rifle seized by Glebelands Hostel Task Team, *Chatsworth Rising Sun*, 31 August 2017, <https://www.google.co.za/amp/s/risingsunchatsworth.co.za/96693/r4-rifle-seized-glebelands-hostel-task-team/amp>.
- 81 Author's database of deceased and SAPS crime statistics 2013–2019.
- 82 Pietermaritzburg High Court Case: CC /18 DPP Ref: D 8 /18 – Indictment.
- 83 Ibid.
- 84 Personal correspondence with sources who were in contact with awaiting trial suspects, April 2018; and ANA reporter, Shock after State advocate tells of 'hit', *The Mercury*, 11 April 2018, <https://googleweblight.com/i?u=https://www.iol.co.za/mercury/shock-after-state-advocate-tells-of-hit-14372621&hl=en-ZA&tg=219&pt=>.
- 85 Matthew Savides, 50-year-old woman murdered in Glebelands Hostel bloodbath, *TimesLIVE*, 27 July 2017, <https://www.google.co.za/amp/s/www.timeslive.co.za/amp/news/south-africa/2017-07-27-50-year-old-woman-murdered-in-glebelands-hostel-bloodbath/>.
- 86 Personal correspondence with journalist who attended court proceedings, 3 April 2018.
- 87 ANA reporter, Glebelands Hostel 'hitman' emotionless after receiving life sentence, *African News Agency*, 3 April 2018, <https://googleweblight.com/i?u=https://www.iol.co.za/news/south-africa/kwazulu-natal/glebelands-hostel-hitman-emotionless-after-receiving-life-sentence-14221564&grqid=L6NWN6K&s=1&hl=en-ZA>.
- 88 ANA reporter, Shack dwellers welcome arrest of 'gangster mayor' Zandile Gumede, *African News Agency*, 15 May 2019, <https://www.iol.co.za/news/south-africa/kwazulu-natal/shack-dwellers-welcome-arrest-of-gangster-mayor-zandile-gumede-23292320>.
- 89 Greg Arde, At last, judicial focus on corruption in Durban, *New Frame*, 20 May 2019, <https://googleweblight.com/i?u=https://www.newframe.com/at-last-judicial-focus-on-corruption-in-durban/&hl=en-ZA>.
- 90 *Public Protector's Final Report on Glebelands*, Report No: 7/2017 ISBN No: 978-1-928366-28-7, 19 June 2017.
- 91 Author's complaint on behalf of the community to the Public Protector, Complaint regarding failure to implement, oversee and monitor remedial actions recommended in the Public Protector's 17 June 2017 report on Glebelands Hostel, 13 June 2018, and subsequent correspondence, site visits and interviews with residents.
- 92 eThekweni and Chapter Nine institutions agree on strategies to rehabilitate Glebelands Hostel, press release by the eThekweni Municipality's Communications Unit, 14 March 2019.
- 93 Author's complaint on behalf of the community to the Public Protector, Complaint regarding failure to implement, oversee and monitor remedial actions recommended in the Public Protector's 17 June 2017 report on Glebelands Hostel, 13 June 2018, and subsequent correspondence, site visits and interviews with residents.
- 94 Numerous requests were made for the Public Protector to undertake a forensic investigation into Glebelands contracts due to community complaints regarding alleged tender fraud and corruption. Glebelands Hostel contracts were among those flagged in the Manase Report in 2012. Hostel leaders repeatedly alleged that 'they are making money from our blood'.
- 95 Global Initiative Against Transnational Organized Crime, Assassination Witness Report: The rule of the gun – Hits and Assassinations in South Africa, January 2000 to December 2017, University of the Cape Town and Global Initiative Against Transnational Organized Crime, March 2018.
- 96 Nathi Olifant, Zuma dynasty: Now entering the province of KwaZuma-Natal, *Sunday Times*, 27 November 2016, <https://www.timeslive.co.za/sunday-times/news/2016-11-27-zuma-dynasty-now-entering-the-province-of-kwazuma-natal/>.



- 97 Durban's R2bn graft report handed over, Corruption Watch, 4 June 2012, <https://googleweblight.com/i?u=https://www.corruptionwatch.org.za/durbans-r2bn-graft-report-handed-over/&hl=en-ZA>.
- 98 Global Initiative Against Transnational Organized Crime, Assassination Witness Report: The rule of the gun – Hits and Assassinations in South Africa, January 2000 to December 2017, University of the Cape Town and Global Initiative Against Transnational Organized Crime, March 2018.
- 99 Ibid.
- 100 eThekweni Municipality Hostels Policy, Durban, 26 March 1998.
- 101 Niren Tolsi, Zandile Gumede: The Iron Lady of Inanda, *Mail & Guardian*, 20 May 2019, <https://mg.co.za/article/2019-05-20-zandile-gumede-the-iron-lady-of-inanda>.
- 102 Police Minister wants probe into political killings, eNCA, 29 October 2018, <https://www.enca.com/news/police-minister-wants-probe-political-killings>.
- 103 Tammy Petersen, Newcastle mayor arrested on murder charge, News24, 22 March 2019, <https://m.news24.com/SouthAfrica/News/just-in-newcastle-mayor-arrested-on-murder-charge-20190322>.
- 104 Ibid.
- 105 Paddy Harper, Charges provisionally withdrawn against Ndobe, *Mail & Guardian*, 25 March 2019, <https://googleweblight.com/i?u=https://mg.co.za/article/2019-03-25-charges-provisionally-withdrawn-against-ndobe&hl=en-ZA>.
- 106 Witness in Newcastle mayor murder trial killed, eNCA, 13 May 2019, <https://www.enca.com/news/former-anc-treasurer-shot-dead-kzn>.
- 107 Bongani Hans, eThekweni Mayor Zandile Gumede gets her guns out, *Sunday Tribune*, 2 June 2019, <https://www.iol.co.za/news/south-africa/kwazulu-natal/ethekweni-mayor-zandile-gumede-gets-her-guns-out-24778705>.
- 108 Sihle Manda, Loyal cadres repaid, *The Mercury*, 2 June 2016, <https://www.pressreader.com/south-africa/the-mercury-south-africa/20160602/281505045474991>.





**GLOBAL
INITIATIVE**
AGAINST TRANSNATIONAL
ORGANIZED CRIME

www.globalinitiative.net

