



The nexus between political violence, patronage networks and criminality in the administration of Glebelands hostels, Durban

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Background: Political violence continues to be a key feature of political life in South Africa. This violence seems to occur predominantly in the controversial KwaZulu-Natal province. Political violence that was seen during the early 1990s between the African National Congress (ANC) and the Inkatha Freedom Party (IFP) is seen today between members of the ANC and their opposition, such as Congress of the People (COPE), and apolitical organisations such as Ubunye bamaHoistela (UbH).

Aim: To analyse the nexus of political violence, patronage networks and criminality in the administration of Glebelands hostels and their effects on human security. The article relies on human security perspective to tease out the human security effects stemming from political violence, patronage networks and criminality.

Methods: The article adopted a qualitative literature assessment.

Results: Political violence, patronage networks and criminality in the administration of Glebelands hostels have resulted into human security crisis in Glebelands such as murders, physical attacks unemployment, poverty and post-traumatic disorder.

Conclusion: The prevalence of political violence, patronage networks and crime has posed a threat to human (in) security for residents of Glebelands hostels.

Contribution: The current government, which is responsible for administering the hostels, should create a safer living space for the residents of Glebelands. These could be attained if the ruling party eradicates corrupt practices from its administration of the hostel, which often impede the provision of decent services to its constituents. The allocation of hostel rooms and jobs opportunities should be done in a holistic manner.

Keywords: political violence; patronage networks; criminality; Glebelands hostels; human security perspective; Durban.

Introduction

Political violence has become a challenging issue, which continues to be a common occurrence in the controversial KwaZulu-Natal province. Historically, the province of KwaZulu-Natal was characterised by a culture of political violence, including protest action and political assassinations (Mongale & Venter 2024:3). This politically motivated violence was often instigated by factors such as ethnic and tribal differences, political intolerance and competition for the dominance of the KwaZulu-Natal's political landscape (Mongale 2021:163). These acts of violence and killings were seen between members of the African National Congress (ANC) and the Inkatha Freedom Party (IFP). Although political violence was seen between these two parties in conflict, there are allegations that this inter-party conflict was incited by the 'third force' – the apartheid state's security forces (South African History Online 2019).

In the late 1980s, before the transition to democracy in South Africa, thousands of people lost their lives because of acts of political violence in KwaZulu-Natal and other parts of the Gauteng province such as in Sebokeng, Katlehong and Boipatong (Simpson 2016). Sadly, political violence did not end with the demise of apartheid in South Africa; this form of violence continued in post-apartheid South Africa, predominantly in the eThekweni Metropolitan Municipality of the KwaZulu-Natal province (KZN), thus posing a risk to human security. Although studies have been conducted on politically related violence in different municipal administrations. For instance,

studies by the South African Local Government Association (SALGA 2019), Phungula (2023) and Deetlefs & Serwar (2023) have focused on political violence directed towards politicians in local municipalities. However, these studies have succinctly delved into the link between political violence, patronage networks and criminal activities in the administration of the hostels. In this regard, the study fills the gap in the literature as it expands its focus from political violence directed towards government officials in KZN to focusing on political violence directed towards ordinary citizens residing in Glebelands hostels. While doing so, the article further explores the relationship between political violence, patronage, patronage networks and criminality in the administration of Glebelands hostels and their impacts on human security. For example, studies by SALGA (2019) Phungula (2023) and Deetlefs & Serwar (2023) did not delve deeper into the effects of political violence on human security especially in the governance of Glebelands hostels in Durban.

In reflection to the political dynamics of the hostels, Glebelands is historically known to be the ANC stronghold in Durban. Hence, in the early 1990s, intense conflict erupted between the ANC and the IFP because of contestation for the governance of Glebelands (McKinley & Reid 2020:40–42). Among the first recorded official political killing was the assassination of Dome Wellington Ngobese, the chairperson of the IFP branch at Glebelands in July 1992 (South African History Online [SAHO] 2016). Nevertheless, there was a shift in the nature of political violence in the late 1990s, as it took a form of intra-ANC conflict. Because of political violence between ANC members, scores of residents were fatally killed. Whereas in 2008, attacks were directed towards ANC members who joined the newly formed Congress of the People (COPE) the ANC-splinter party (De Haas 2016). These members were evicted from their hostel rooms, as they were perceived as defectors of the ANC.

Provided the above context, it is key to define concepts of political violence, patronage networks and crime. According to Kalyvas (2006), the concept of violence can be defined as the deliberate infliction of harm directed towards people. This harm can come through various forms such as social or economic oppression or political violence (Galtung 1969). Political violence is associated with physical violence or the utilisation of physical force to exert power; some of the examples of this form of violence may include the use of weapons by criminal groups to mark a defined territory as theirs, kidnappings, mass shootings and torture (Kalyvas 2006). In essence, political violence occurs when the use of physical harm is motivated by intentions to attain political gains. On the other hand, patrimonial networks can be defined as a system or network that is based on informal or personal relationships whereby the participants do not distinguish between the interests of the state and their personal interests (Masenya 2017). Usually, those who practice this system tend to capture the levers of the state for their personal benefits (Ardé 2020), whereas the concept of crime refers to a deliberate act that causes physical or psychological harm, damage to or loss of property, which is against the law (The Scottish Centre for Crime and Justice

Research 2019). Given the foregoing definitions, it can be argued that political violence, patronage networks and crime are acts that pose a threat to human security; thus, this article looks into the relationship between these concepts within the context of the administration of Glebelands hostels in Durban.

This article seeks to address two related objectives. Firstly, to analyse the nature of the nexus between political violence, patronage networks and criminality in the eThekweni Metropolitan Municipality with specific focus on the administration of Glebelands hostels, and secondly, to analyse the human security effects stemming from the links between political violence, patronage networks and criminality in Glebelands hostels. In the following section, the article will delve into the research methodology adopted to address the objectives of the study.

Research methods and design

This article adopted a qualitative research methodology, as it will primarily deal with sources, which are secondary in nature. In other words, literature compiled on the topic by various authors. More to the point, the study provides an analysis of the nexus of political violence, patronage networks and criminality in the administration of Glebelands hostels. Qualitative research methodology refers to the analysis of data such as exploring social characteristics as phenomenon, which can be interpreted from various viewpoints, thus providing a different analysis of a given phenomenon (Nieuwenhuis 2016:50).

Furthermore, this article analyses motives behind acts of political violence, patronage networks and criminal activities, which continue to be prevalent in the Glebelands hostels. Qualitative research methodology is concerned with human behaviours, and it focuses on analysing different phenomena, which are present in the study (Nieuwenhuis 2016:50). As such, the article examines the reasons behind the political violence, patronage networks and criminal activities in Glebelands hostels. This is done in order to highlight the human security impacts resulting from the relationship of political violence, patronage networks and criminal activities in Glebelands hostels.

According to Hesse-Biber and Leavy (2011), qualitative research is exciting and interdisciplinary in its form, and it comprises diverse perspectives and practices, which contribute to the generation of knowledge. Hence, qualitative research does not deal with statistical data but rather explanatory data, which require extensive reading to understand (Elo & Kyngäs 2012:108). This method of research was used to analyse the motives behind the political violence and criminal activities in Glebelands hostels. The qualitative research method as adopted in this article has assisted in analysing and examining the collected data through secondary means (Bhattacharjee 2012:113).

Data collection and analysis

The article makes use of secondary data collection. In the literature from Manerikar & Manerikar (2014:96), secondary

data collection refers to the navigation of already existing data in order to interpret it, examine it and analyse it. This method of data collection involves the usage of other authors' material to strengthen the author's arguments. Data for this article were collected from academic journals, journal articles, the internet, news articles, books, the Institute for Security Studies (ISS) reports, Enhancing Africa's Response to Transnational Organised Crime (Enact) reports and Global Initiative against Transnational Organized Crime (GITOC) publications.

Data analysis is the process of research that involves the engagement of data that were collected previously in areas that are aligned to the researcher's interest (Bhattacharjee 2012:38). Its importance is to familiarise the researcher with existing written materials that revolve around his or her interests. The availability of secondary data makes it convenient for researchers to use it, as most of it is easily accessible while saving costs and resources of consulting primary sources directly in the quest to source information (Johnston 2014:620). For this article, content analysis is adopted in order to analyse data relating to the objectives of the study.

Content analysis is known as a flexible method for analysing written data, as well as verbal and visual information. In most cases, content analysis can be used by scholars for either quantitative or qualitative data (Elo & Kyngäs 2012:108). Based on the flexibility of this method, it was adopted in this article because the data collected were interpreted and analysed in an attempt to provide new knowledge and perspectives on the human security impacts emanating from the nexus of political violence, patronage networks and criminality in the administration of Gledlands hostels.

Theoretical framework

Theoretically, this article draws from the human security perspective. In its nature, the concept of human security places its focus on the individual as the main referent object of security (Acharya 2007:492). In addition, because human security is about security of people, rather than of states or governments, these assertions have generated much debate. Some critics wondered whether such an approach would sharply widen the boundaries of security studies, and whether 'securitizing the individual' is deemed the most suitable way to address the challenges that the international community face from the forces of globalisation (Alkire 2003).

The post-Cold War era challenges the state-centric notion of security, as it places its emphasis on human security (Acharya 2007:492). In reference to the monograph written by Mahbub ul Haq (UNDP 1994), the idea of human security is closely associated to the key role that he played in the construction of the Human Development Index (Bajpai 2003:200). The traditional conception of security, which focused on territorial integrity, the achievement of national

interest and nuclear deterrence, extensively ignored the current dangers faced by ordinary men and women (Alkire 2003). 'For many, security symbolized protection from the threat of disease, hunger, unemployment, crime, social conflict, political repression, and environmental hazards' (Alkire 2003):

Human security is a child who did not die, a disease that did not spread, a job that was not cut, an ethnic tension that did not explode in violence, a dissident who was not silenced. Human security is not a concern with weapons – it is a concern with human life and dignity... It is concerned with how people live and breathe in a society, how freely they exercise their many choices, how much access they have to market and social opportunities – and whether they live in conflict or in peace. (Bajpai 2003:203)

Advocates of human security consider it a vital step forward in indicating the threats and dangers to human safety and survival caused by poverty, disease, environmental stress, human rights violations and armed conflict (Acharya 2007:492). According to Singh (2008:175), the concept of human security comprises two main aspects. Firstly, it refers to safety from such chronic threats as hunger, disease and repression. Secondly, it means protection from unforeseen and harmful disruptions that tamper with the pattern of daily life, whether in homes, in jobs or in communities (UNDP 1994). It is in this sense that Alkire (2003:3) related to the assertion by Acharya (2007:8), who stated that human security derived from the protection of human life; hence, the protection of a human being served as a vital aspect of human security.

Table 1 highlights different types of human security and the examples of main threats to human security. As indicated earlier, the notion of human security puts human being as the main referents of security, therefore unlike traditional security, which placed its emphasis on the protection of state borders against external threats (Bajpai 2003:203). The human security perspective is more concerned with threats that emanate within individual states such as persisting poverty, unemployment, hunger, famine, deadly infectious diseases, lack of access to health care, physical violence, identity-based tensions including political repression and human rights abuses (UNTFHS 2016:27).

The human security perspective emphasises the existing interconnectedness of both threats and responses when

TABLE 1: Possible types of human security threats.

Types of security	Examples of main threats
Economic Security	Persistent poverty, unemployment
Food Security	Hunger, famine
Health Security	Deadly infectious diseases, unsafe food, malnutrition, lack of access to basic health care
Personal Security	Physical violence, crime, terrorism, domestic violence, and child labour
Community Security	Inter-ethnic, religious, and other identity-based tensions
Political Security	Political repression, human rights abuses

Source: United Nations Trust Fund for Human Security, 2016, *Human security handbook. An integrated approach for the realization of the development sustainable goals and the priority areas of the International Community and the United Nations System*, United Nations, New York.

addressing these insecurities (Alkire 2003:27) because human security threats are mutually reinforcing and interconnected in two ways (UNTFHS 2016:7). For one, they are interlinked in a domino effect; this is to say, each threat feeds on the other (UNTFHS 2016). Firstly, Alkire (2003:27) posits that the prevalence of violent conflicts could lead to deprivation and poverty, which in turn could result in the depletion of resources, infectious diseases and education deficits. Secondly, because of the spillover effects, these threats within the given country or territory could spread widely across the region, thus leading to negative externalities for regional and international security (UNTFHS 2016:6).

The perspective on human security is adopted in this article because it assists in depicting different types of security, including examples of main threats to human security. In this sense, acts of political violence and criminality were analysed through security lenses. In the following section, the article delves into a review of literature on political violence, patronage networks and criminality.

Before we continue to the findings of the article, the phenomena of crime, political violence and patronage networks need to be conceptualised. According to the Legal Information Institute of Cornell Law School (2022):

Crime is behaviour, either by act or omission, defined by law as deserving of punishment or penalty. Although most crimes require the element of intent, certain minor crimes may be committed based on strict liability even if the defendant had no specific mindset with regard to the criminal action. (n.p.)

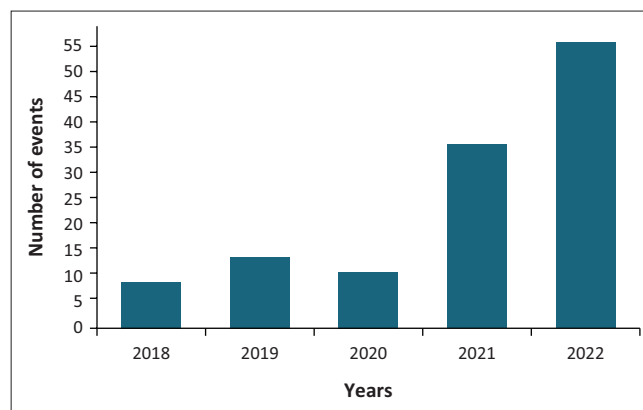
According to the World Population Review (2023), South Africa has the fourth highest crime rate in the world, just below Haiti. Crimes that are prevalent in South Africa are notably high rates of assaults, rape, homicides and other violent crimes. 'This has been attributed to several factors, including high levels of poverty, inequality, unemployment, and social exclusion, and the normalization of violence'. Part of this violence is political violence as defined by Sousa (2013) as the deliberate use of power and force to achieve personal goals, gain or maintain power.

The best description of political violence was provided by Lindeni Lombo (as quoted by Kean, 2023) whose son, an ANC counsellor was murdered in KwaZulu-Natal:

My son told me that within the ANC there was some rivalry - those who were anti- and those who were pro-him ... They're fighting for positions ... People want higher positions in the municipality, in the councils, and they are fighting all the time, competing for turf. They want money. (n.p.)

The increasing level of political violence is illustrated by Figure 1.

Figure 1 shows that political violence targeting officials in South Africa more than tripled in 2021 compared to the previous year and increased an additional 70% in 2022. Furthermore, since 2018, KwaZulu-Natal has been the



Source: Deetlefs, S. & Serwat, L., 2023, *Local government as a battleground for violence*, Special Issue: Violence targeting local officials, ACLED, viewed 22 June 2024, from <https://acleddata.com/2023/06/22/special-issue-on-the-targeting-of-local-officials-south-africa/>.

FIGURE 1: Violence targeting local officials by year (2018–2022).

centre of political violence events (Deetlefs & Serwat 2013). Political violence is organised and cannot function on this scale expressed without networks of supporters. Patrimonial networks (formed through patronage of some sort) are almost universal in politics. It is an attractive strategy for politicians to use to stay in power (Baland & Robinson 2010). When combined with criminal intent, it becomes more insidious. According to Human (2003), this is one of the single biggest problems facing African and other developing societies. According to Masenya (2017), a patrimonial or patronage system or network is based on informal or personal relationships where the participants do not distinguish between the interest of the state and personal interest. In South Africa, 'the reliance upon personal loyalties, and the ultimate resort to personally loyal armed forces constitute the prime stratagems by which rulers gain, hold and exercise political power' (Masenya 2017).

The following section is intended to address the paper's two related objectives. As such, the first section will deal with the following: An analysis of the nature of political violence, patronage networks and criminality in the administration of Glebelands hostels. The second section of the findings will provide an analysis of the human security effects stemming from the nexus of political violence, patronage networks and criminality in Glebelands hostels, KwaZulu-Natal province.

Ethical considerations

This article followed all ethical standards for research without direct contact with human or animal subjects.

Results and analysis

The following section of the article will delve into the findings and analysis of the study. This section is divided into two parts. As such, this section seeks to address the study's two related objectives. Firstly, to analyse the nature of political violence, patronage networks and criminality in Glebelands

hostels, Durban. Secondly, to analyse the human security effects stemming from the nexus of political violence, patronage networks and criminality in Glebelands hostels. Next, the article deals with Part I of the findings and analysis.

Part I

The relationship between political violence, patronage networks and criminality in Glebelands hostels

Located just outside the entrance to southern Durban's Umlazi township is Glebelands hostels De Haas (2016:46). Since the late 1990s, Glebelands hostels has been under the administration of the eThekweni Municipality (De Haas 2016:48). Traditionally, the hostels are known to be an ANC stronghold in the Umlazi township, which falls within the Municipality (Cape Argus 2017). Between March 2014 and January 2019, an estimated 120 people died because of violence perpetrated by hitmen based in Glebelands hostels (Mongale 2022b:83). In 2018, Police Minister Bheki Cele while presenting the crime statistics, said that South Africa 'borders on a war zone'. In Glebelands, residents often refer to their home as 'Baghdad' or 'Syria' (Burger 2019:1).

The conditions of the Glebelands hostels reveal that people live in an overcrowded, filthy and unhealthy environment (Clark 2018). These conditions are exacerbated by non-existent maintenance because over the years the hostel's budget has been lost to corruption by those administering the hostels (De Haas 2016:48). Because of criminal activities such as corruption, this has increased the rate of unemployment for the people living in the hostels. In 2019, the unemployment rate at Glebelands was estimated to be between 60% and 70% (Burger 2019:1) although the rate was almost 90% during the period from 2014 to 2018. The residents of Glebelands supported six people on average, but some had as many as 13 dependents, which included family members living in rural areas (South African Human Rights Commission 2017).

At the crux of all this was the government's broken promises, administrative neglect and the continuing failure to render reasonable services, including providing decent accommodation in Glebelands (Mongale 2023b:83). This perpetuated the violence in Glebelands (Burger 2019). One of the residents' leaders from Glebelands said the following:

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. (p. 2)

The situation in Glebelands turned the hostel into a violent place of abode because, as a means of making a living, some residents resorted to anything to make ends means, even if it meant taking another person's life for a pay cheque (Erasmus 2017). Between the late 1990s and 2013, Glebelands was

largely free of political violence apart from a brief period in 2008 when there were attacks on and evictions of people who had left the ANC and joined COPE (De Haas 2016:47).

According to Burger (2019:9), following the 2008 breakaway, a climate of fear mixed with a culture of violence and intolerance grew, thus defining the ANC's administrative style and its position towards its opponents (Ardé 2021:69). After Jacob Zuma became the president, his faction of the ANC in KZN was seen entrenching itself throughout all levels of government (Mongale 2022a:12), hence depicting the prevalence and importance of patronage networks in the politics of KwaZulu-Natal province (Burger 2019:10). Members of COPE, which was a breakaway party from the ANC, were termed criminals, leading to their persecution (eNCA 2017). This was seen as members of COPE in Glebelands were chased away or killed (Mongale 2022b:85), including in other areas where COPE was becoming politically influential.

As far as leadership in the hostels was concerned, local leadership was vested in elected block committees with executive structures (Asmal 2014). Similar structures have long been a feature of hostel life, whereby they also played the role of allocating rooms to residents (Burger 2019:10). The trouble in Glebelands started in June 2013, when a group of hostel dwellers blockaded the streets around Glebelands to protest against Robert Mzobe, who served as a councillor. Mzobe had replaced the councillor, Vusi Zweni, who joined COPE in 2009 (Mthethwa 2018). According to the protesters, they alleged that Mzobe failed to consult them on the developments in the Umlazi area; because of these acts, Mzobe was labelled a dictator (Mongale 2022b:12). Meanwhile, hostel leaders also raised concerns that they were persecuted for being outspoken about local government corruption, which involved hostel contracts that were allegedly controlled by Mzobe and his partners in government (Asmal 2014).

In addition, Mzobe was accused of practicing nepotism, the tactic of divide and rule and using patronage to buy political support (Asmal 2014). Furthermore, Mzobe was accused by the protesters of having divided the community. They alleged that he showed no respect for the community (Burger 2019:10), and that he had unfairly allocated RDP houses. The leader of the protest, Themba Pina, also made accusations that Mzobe refused to help residents that he had 'personal vendettas' against. However, Mzobe denied these allegations (Nyanda 2013). One of the ANC members in Glebelands who testified under oath before the Moerane Commission of Inquiry stated the following:

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. (Moerane Commission 2018:155–156)

Furthermore, following the evictions of hostel residents, the rooms of those who were evicted were re-allocated by those who evicted them; also, it was alleged that money was extorted from these new residents (Public Protector South Africa 2017:18). Although residents who were affected by criminality in the form of unlawful evictions, theft and assault had opened cases against the perpetrators, after the lack of arrests by the police, the victims of crime stopped laying criminal charges as their cases were ignored (Ndou 2018). Tension in Glebelands increased after the rumours of a hit list emerged, which threatened the lives of many individuals (Cape Argus 2017). On the other hand, the police were also accused of being complicit with the ANC faction that supported the councillor (De Haas 2016:47). According to Burger (2019:13), the first casualty at the hands of the police was Zinakile Fica, who died after being tortured by the Umlazi police on 13 March 2014 (Moerane Commission 2018:178).

Considering the foregoing, it can be stated that there is an interconnectedness between political violence, patronage networks and criminality in the Glebelands hostels. This was seen in members of the ruling party who were responsible for administering hostels and used violence and murder against those who opposed them (Mongale 2022b:89). This included those who spoke out about corrupt practices, especially in the administration of Glebelands hostels. Because of a patron-client network, hostel units and job opportunities were allocated to those who had proven their loyalty to the ruling ANC, which predominantly was the faction that supported the former president, Jacob Zuma. Meanwhile, those who were perceived to be against the faction and the ruling party were often evicted from their hostel rooms, persecuted and tortured (Moerane Commission 2018:172).

In order to understand the nexus of political violence, patronage networks and criminal activities and their effects on human security in Glebelands, it is important to indicate the historical background of the management and administration of hostels in Glebelands. Historically, during the 1980s, hostel communities embarked on the process of organising themselves into grassroots representative structures (Dlangamandla 2024). In Glebelands, including other hostels around Durban, these structures took the form of residents' block committees, and these block committees were elected by the residents of each block. These committees were formed to liaise with the hostel administration, especially for conflict resolution, law enforcement and the maintenance of order and, largely, for political mobilisation (Public Protector 2017:7). The established block committees in Glebelands hostels also worked with the hostel administration in terms of allocating rooms to residents. Often priority was given to existing residents who shared overcrowded spaces or rooms, as they would sometimes sleep in the kitchens or hostel corridors; rooms were also allocated to vulnerable individuals such as widows (Clark 2018:2).

In 1998, the eThekweni Hostels Policy officially considered the role of ward councillors in the allocation of hostel

rooms (Burger 2019:8). Consequently, the recognition of the ward councillors' role in the allocation of hostel rooms resulted in direct conflict with long-serving block committees; thus, leading to a new avenue of political opportunism, patronage and nepotism in the hostel life and administration (Burger 2019:9). According to Xolo (2019:2), leaders of block committees justifiably argued that as far as the reduction of conflict and lawlessness was concerned, provided their residential location, they were best placed to provide advice and to consult with applicants, residents and hostel superintendents in terms of who best qualified to be allocated a hostel room (Mongale 2022b:89).

The role of ward councillors in allocating hostel rooms was ridiculed by members of block committees who were of the view that ward councillors did not live among the constituents (in hostels), while they lived in hostels, making them suitable candidates to administer the affairs of hostels (Public Protector 2017:7). It is important to mention that the eThekweni Municipality failed to consult with hostel committees about the hostel's policy, which was adopted without their involvement (Mongale 2022b:100). On the other hand, one of Glebelands old-timers indicated that, in the 1990s, as part of the new dispensation's efforts to correct the wrongs of the apartheid government. Dumisani Makhaye, the then MEC for the KwaZulu-Natal Department of Housing, offered residents the choice of either claiming ownership of their hostel rooms or applying for an RDP house (government's low-cost social housing) (Burger 2019:9).

In the years to follow, after the eThekweni Municipality applied to the national government to assume total control of hostel administration, including hostel budgets from its provincial counterpart (Erasmus 2017), the promise of ownership translated into a rental system. Although a number of people received RDP houses, no hostel dwellers ever received a title deed for his or her room, thus contradicting the efforts made by Makhaye (Mongale 2022b:100). In 2006, hostel communities faced an increasing struggle for economic survival (Burger 2019:10). This was the result of rising unemployment, the emergence of a labour-broking system, administrative dysfunction and largely, rampant corruption and the establishment of the ANC's patronage network (Moerane Commission 2018:158–160). According to De Haas (2016:46), the patronage network was seen whereby access to service delivery and employment opportunities were used as a tool to secure political support; thus, those who were not in support of the ANC were marginalised and could not enjoy benefits from the post-apartheid government.

The economic distress among Glebelands hostel residents led block committees to become heavily vocal about the deteriorating service provision, unaffordable rent increases and the corruption taking place at local government level (Asmal 2014). In view of this, the hostel dwellers' association, Ubunye bamaHoistela (UbH), was formed.

The apolitical organisation advocated for the interests, rights and living conditions of Durban's ten hostel communities (Maduna 2017:2). Although UbH was set to advocate for hostel communities' interests and effective services, the ANC-led government in the eThekweni Municipality perceived UbH as a significant threat (Mongale 2022b:101). The combined hostel population with its large numbers, amounting to hundreds of thousands, posed a threat to the ANC's support in the province; thus, the ANC sought to undermine the organisation before it was fully established (Burger 2019:10).

Additionally, municipalities continued to increase rent without consulting residents. This led members of UbH to take it upon themselves to negotiate on behalf of Durban's hostel communities (Maduna 2017:2). However, UbH with its mandate of opposing the administrative system of hostels around Durban prompted the government to apply tactics and strategies that would work in its favour. As such, what was witnessed in the following years, especially from 2009 onwards, was a climate of fear and a culture of violence and intolerance increasingly defined the ANC's administrative style and its position towards any threat that jeopardised its power, such as opponents (Xolo 2019:5–8).

When the Jacob Zuma faction dominated government structures, especially from 2009, Mongale and Venter (2024:6) assert that violence against the opposition became a defining character of Zuma's administration; thus, members of the breakaway party, COPE, who were called criminals by ANC members, were persecuted (Ardé 2020:59). Members of COPE were either killed or chased away from Glebelands and other areas where COPE was gaining support (Ardé 2020:59). Furthermore, among the residents who aligned themselves with the newly formed COPE were members of block committees and because of their move to COPE, these members were never forgiven despite the fact that many of them subsequently rejoined the ruling ANC (De Haas 2016:32). In the bloodbath that ensued from 2014 onwards, it is important to note that many of the individuals, who were active role players in the 2009 attacks on COPE members, were also responsible for the atrocities that were committed against COPE members in the years that followed (Mongale 2022b:103).

The ANC-led government in KwaZulu-Natal executed tactics of divide and rule, and those block committees who were regarded as 'troublesome' were isolated and accused of 'selling beds' in Glebelands (Xolo 2019:3). Furthermore, one of the people who was interviewed by Xolo (2019), a man by the name of Sibulali, was quoted as dismissing the issue of sales of beds by the residence committee. In his utterances:

This hostel is Satan's den, but it's become the story of my life. I have faced life-threatening attacks, attempted assassinations, and police intimidation. But I won't rest until the truth is revealed. The narrative that people are being killed for selling beds is bogus and undermines the deaths claimed by dirty politicians, police, and hitmen. (Xolo 2019:3)

It is important to highlight that this alleged corrupt practice, involving the sale of hostel rooms to potential residents, had become a common practice in South Africa's hostels (Times Live 2017). These practices serve as a clear indication of the failure by the post-apartheid administration and the ineffectiveness of the police to monitor corruption in hostel communities (Mongale 2022b:103). Following the 2013 service delivery protests around hostel communities, the assassinations began. Glebelands was characterised by widespread terror, as block committee members including community leaders became aware that their names had appeared on a hit list that was allegedly circulating among the hostel community (Shaw 2017:25).

Many women and children were evicted violently from their hostel rooms. Clark (2018:3) stated that in other instances, people were petrol bombed during these violent evictions, thus destroying the unity of the community. The year 2014 was marked by divisions in Glebelands. There was a group of residents who showed their support and loyalty to Mzobe (one of Zuma's clan and faction), who accused the block committees of selling beds (Xolo 2019:6). On the other hand, a group of block committee members accused the ward councillor of nepotism and corruption involving hostel contracts, including the allocation of the new hostel units to residents (Public Protector 2017:35).

Because of the ensuing tension in Glebelands, no-go zones within the hostel grounds and nearby taxi ranks, including shopping centres, were blockaded by members of the block committee who were at risk of being shot, which led to restrictions of freedom of movement and association in the Glebelands hostels (Burger 2019:11). Consequently, these restrictions on freedom of movement and association served as an impediment for people to enjoy their human security (see Table 1). Moreover, because of the dangers associated with using public transport, as hitmen were recruited to carry out killings in Glebelands and they were simultaneously hired as security guards on local taxi routes, many residents were forced to abandon their jobs (Ardé 2020:59). In addition, according to one of the witnesses who testified before the Moerane Commission, residents who were living in blocks controlled by hitmen were regularly compelled to pay 'protection money'. These funds were used to buy firearms and ammunition, hire hitmen and bribe political officers, including court officials – acts that posed as risk disaster and threats to human security (Moerane Commission 2018:221).

Part II

The human security effects of political violence, patronage networks and criminality in Glebelands hostels, Durban

In Glebelands hostels, as explained in the previous section, the prevalence of a climate of violence posed a risk to the human security of hostels' community members. Thus, in the following section, the article highlights some of the common effects of political violence, patronage networks and

criminality, as described by Glebelands residents. In addition, the common effects of political violence, patronage networks and criminality, which will be discussed in the following narrative, were discussed as possible threats to human security in the section on the conceptual framework (see Table 1).

The human security perspective places psychological trauma as one of the threats to health security (Table 1). In Glebelands hostels, as postulated by Burger (2019:13), most residents revealed different degrees of untreated and unattended post-traumatic stress disorder because they were exposed to extended and cyclical periods of violence and intimidation. According to Clark (2018), the prevalence of political violence in Glebelands hostels has produced many victims who required material relief of distress such as food parcels and non-material relief such as counselling to deal with challenges of post-traumatic distress order. Although a few were able to receive support from state social workers, most of these social workers did not have the skills and experience required to deal effectively with police torture victims or the casualties that resulted from the violence and brutal attacks on residents (Mongale 2022b:103). Cultural differences, the prohibitive costs, language barriers and the sheer number of victims also had a negative impact on the process of dealing with traumatic experiences because all these factors impeded the victims' access to consult private traumatic counsellors (Burger 2019:13).

In the report by the Public Protector (2017), the Department of Social Development (DSD) has claimed that some of the victims of political violence were left unattended because of the lack of contact details that made it difficult for social workers to track them down and provide them with assistance. Nevertheless, despite these claims by DSD, the study by Clark (2018) points to the fact that seven family members who lost their breadwinner were easily reachable and all of them have said they had not received any support from DSD. In this sense, it appears as if there is a lack of willingness by government departments to assist victims of political violence in Glebelands hostels. Sadly, this poses a threat to human security as people continue to suffer from their loss of family members and personal experience to violence in Glebelands, all of which pose a threat to their psychological wellbeing.

According to Burger (2017), children's exposure to high levels of violence caused learning disabilities, fear and aggression. One of Glebelands residents, a mother of four, who was 8 months' pregnant when she was evicted during a petrol-bomb attack on her partner's room in 2014, explained how violence had influenced her 7-year-old son who failed at school that year. In one event, she found her son beating a lizard to a pulp with a stick and she reiterated: "Something has gone wrong here, she said, tapping her head". He is always angry and it's getting worse' (Mongale 2022b:103). Taking this into consideration, it is visible that

political violence in Glebelands has dire effects on children's psychology as many are affected by these violent acts, resulting into the development of anger and resentment from victims of political violence. Therefore, political violence tempers human security in Glebelands as many of the victims have not received any counselling to assist them to deal with post-traumatic disorder (Public Protector 2017:56).

Furthermore, several residents also reported that their children's performance at school had been affected because of the political violence, which had instilled fear in many children. When looking at the notion of human security perspective, it advocates for freedom from fear and want (Alkire 2003); however, fear continues to be a challenging factor in Glebelands as victims of political violence continuously fear for their safety. Thus, many children had failed at school because they were worried and fearful for their own and their parents' safety (Burger 2019:13). Yet, another Glebelands resident described how, when a wooden plank was dropped from the second floor of a residence block to men loading a bakkie below, a group of young children who were nearby, on hearing the loud noise, responded by instinctively flattening themselves on the ground. "They thought it was shooting", he said. "They responded instantly, like soldiers, yet they are so small" (Burger 2019:13).

Political violence had left widows, orphans and even extended families bereft of their sole breadwinner resulting in an increase in poverty levels and thus leading to food security (Clark 2018:4). This was seen in the situation of Mamthina Pina (46), whose husband Themba was shot in the head on his way to work at a local butchery on 5 June 2015. Themba used to serve as a block committee member before his assassination, and at the time, he became embroiled in a disagreement with the local councillor, Robert Mzobe. Mamthina Pina explained how her 15-year-old son has been affected by his father's death. Shortly after the shooting, he threw himself out of his bedroom window in an attempt to take his own life, but only suffered minor injuries (De Haas 2016:47).

The high levels of poverty were exacerbated by illegal evictions, dispossession and job losses when it became too dangerous to use public transport, such as taxis, which employed hitmen. In addition, the loss of breadwinners among rural families, who had previously received remittances from their relatives working in Durban, was devastating and had stunted the future of many children (Burger 2019:13). Poverty serves as one of the human security threats as advocated by the human security perspective (UNTFHS 2016); hence, its prevalence resembles human (in) security in affected areas. Furthermore, the cost of numerous funerals (in 2015, there were two funerals a month on average) meant a further drain on the community in general, whose members usually contributed towards the funeral

expenses of relatives killed at Glebelands (Public Protector 2017:38). 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 mortuary 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 (Mongale 2022b:104).

In one incident, which involved the killing of William Mthembu (a father to Cindy and Thando), who hailed from the Eastern Cape and moved to Durban to live with their father to pursue tertiary education. Following Mthembu's death, these two sisters were left stranded as they could no longer pay rent without the help of their father's salary; therefore, Thando, as the youngest sibling, was forced to drop out from her studies because of the financial crisis (Clark 2018).

The death of Mthembu tempered with economic security of his children as one of them had to put her studies on hold, whereas the human security perspective advocates for access to education as a means of improving economic security because of opportunities that come with educational attainment (Table 1). In the words of Mthembu's friend who commented on this situation said 'It is particularly painful that now one of his daughters can't afford to study. He always said he'd do anything for them to get an education so that their life would be better than his' (Clark 2018). Taking these remarks into context, it is clear that education brings hopes of an improved and better life to those who attain it; thus, it contributes to human security because of the benefits attached to it, such as creating opportunities for employment.

In the study by Burger (2019:13), there were unconfirmed (but numerous) reports that, in Glebelands hostels, incidents of sexual abuse committed by *izinkabi* [hitmen] were not being reported to the police because many of the women who were harassed and abused were threatened with eviction from their hostel rooms or received death threats (Human Rights Commission 2017). As such, hostel life remained a patriarchal society (Mongale 2022b:103); women struggled to make their voices heard, as there was no visible audience. All the women expressed concerns about raising their children in such an environment, with unhealthy living conditions and violent surroundings (Burger 2017).

The widow of one of Glebelands' most charismatic leaders, who was assassinated in 2015, described the living conditions in the hostels:

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 blocks into family units. (Burger 2019:13)

Many residents among the group targeted for assassination appeared to suffer from stress-related illnesses, such as strokes and high blood pressure, and general ailments. Owing to the political violence, at least three men died from what appeared to be stress-induced strokes after they were violently evicted in 2011 (De Haas 2016:47). In this regard, the lack of proper maintenance of sewage system in Glebelands had effects on health security for the residents of Glebelands as many of them caught infectious diseases because of poor sanitation, which serve as human security threat (see Table 1).

Furthermore, the report by the Public Protector of South Africa (2017) stated that some residents whose rooms were petrol bombed or who were violently evicted were forced to abandon their personal effects, which were subsequently destroyed, commandeered or sold by the perpetrators; victims of violent attacks also lost essential documents, such as identity books, bank cards, birth certificates and hospital cards (Burger 2019:13). Consequently, this situation limited and delayed urgently needed access to health care facilities and assistance, social support and entrance to schools (Mongale 2022b:104). As such, this posed a threat to personal security such as physical violence, loss of personal documentation, which deter people from accessing public hospitals because of loss of hospital cards, identity books or birth certificates (Table 1). Furthermore, political violence posed a threat to health security as some of the residents suffered from body injuries and stress-induced strokes (Clark 2018).

According to testimonies provided in the Moerane Commission of inquiry (2018), community members whose names were believed to be on the hit list or who received death threats described having to change their whole way of life and develop complicated survival strategies. Aside from some losing their jobs, others were cut off from loved ones living in blocks controlled by hitmen. According to Burger (2019:15), an elderly Glebelands man compared the actions of the ANC-aligned hitmen with the apartheid government's forced removals after he was compelled to flee from the room he had 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!' (Burger 2019).

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 their family members. Consequently, because of a climate of fear, they stopped visiting their families (Public Protector, 2017). Furthermore, to minimise relatives' fear for the safety of their loved ones living in Glebelands, husbands often did not inform their spouses about what was going on (Nxumalo 2023). Thus, 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 learnt of their partners' death weeks after they were executed. Moreover, they were often not informed of their death by the police and struggled to obtain information about investigations and access to state support mechanisms (Moerane Commission 2018).

In the KwaZulu-Natal province, and in Glebelands in particular, becoming a hitman was often the most viable job opportunity for many young men (Shaw 2017:26). The power and status that came with owning a firearm, earning relatively large amounts of money and having control over the life or death of others could be seen as an attractive means of defeating the ends of poverty (Ardé 2020:59). The rapid increase in the number of hitmen resident at Glebelands indicated that the market for their skills was growing, as was the demand for unlicensed firearms (Mongale 2022b:104). In Glebelands, many residents complained that they experienced discrimination and prejudice associated with living at the 'notorious' Glebelands hostels. This had singularly negative impacts on job seekers' prospects and on inhabitants' interactions with others (Burger 2019:15). Because of its reputation for violence, health workers were also afraid to visit the hostel. Residents who needed to obtain or renew firearm licenses (for instance, those who worked in the security industry) reported that licenses were routinely refused; they suspected that this happened because they lived in Glebelands, and they were therefore automatically suspected of criminal activity. This improved since early 2018 when the violence began to subside (Mongale 2022b: 104).

In reflection to the findings provided in the article, it can be argued that there is deep interconnectedness between political violence, patronage networks and criminality in the administration of Glebelands hostels of Durban. This is evident on incidents of political violence that was executed by those who were responsible for the administration of Glebelands hostels, as they employed violence to deal with anyone of anything that stood in their way of attaining political ends. For instance, members of the ruling ANC-party used violence and murder against those who were outspoken about their clandestine and corrupt practices such as selling hostel beds and allocating hostel rooms to their loyal ANC members. To a larger extent, those who opposed block communities (led by ANC members) were evicted from their hostel units; this includes those who supported opposition parties such as COPE. Former members of the ANC who joined COPE following its breakaway from the ANC in 2008 were violently attacked and evicted from their hostel units as they were perceived as defectors of the ANC. The irony behind this is that those who participated in the eviction of COPE members were rewarded with the same hostel units, which shows how political violence, crime and patronage networks relate to each other in the governance of Glebelands hostels.

Also, job opportunities within the hostel were allocated through patronage networks, as those who have proven their loyalty to the ANC-led government, especially those who

were in support of former president Jacob Zuma's faction were rewarded with hostel rooms or units. Meanwhile, those who did not vouch for Zuma's faction were often met with resentment and violent treatment such as being tortured, persecuted and evicted from their hostel units. Consequently, the prevalence of political violence, crime and patrimonial networks in Glebelands hostels has resulted into human security threats that include loss of life, post-traumatic disorder, poverty, unemployment, poor service delivery (water and sanitation), loss of personal documentations, body injuries, school dropouts and climate of fear. As such, all these factors were listed in Table 1 as some of the threats to human security; thus, their prevalence showcases that human security remains a challenge for the residents of Glebelands hostels.

Conclusion

The article concludes that, in the Glebelands hostels in the KwaZulu-Natal province, a deep interconnectedness between political violence, patronage networks and criminality appeared to exist. This was seen in members of the ruling party, who were subsequently responsible for administering hostels, using violence and killings against their opposition. This included those who were outspoken about corrupt practices, especially in the administration of Glebelands hostels. Because of the patron-client network, hostel units and job opportunities were allocated to those who had proven enough their loyalty to the ruling ANC, more especially the faction that supported the former president, Jacob Zuma. Whereas those who were perceived to oppose this faction and the ANC were often evicted from their hostel rooms, persecuted and tortured, actions that denoted elements of criminality. Hence, the prevalence of the link between political violence, patronage networks and criminality in Glebelands posed as a risky disaster and a threat to human security. These human security threats included deaths, malicious bodily injuries, traumatic experiences, gender-based violence, health problems and poverty and unemployment. In light of this, the article recommends that, in order to mitigate the challenges faced by residents of Glebelands hostels, the current government, which is responsible for administering the hostels, should prioritise preserving and protecting the lives of the citizens. This includes creating a safer living space for the residents of Glebelands hostels. However, all this could be attained if the ruling party eradicates corrupt practices, which often impede the provision of decent services to its constituents. In addition, patronage networks, used as a mechanism of allocating resources and for criminal enterprises, are also used as a mechanism of intimidating and killing people for the sake of acquiring lucrative government contracts.

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Data availability

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