

Kenichi Serino - South Africa's Wave Of Discontentment

aljazeera.com. March, 2014. Sebokeng, South Africa - In the early hours of March 10, in a small town in South Africa called Sebokeng, about 100 people gathered to protest their imminent evictions from government housing. They blockaded the road - a major route into Johannesburg known as the "Golden Highway" - with stones and burning tyres. They sang songs in defiance of the eviction orders, promising they would die in their houses before they left them.

The Sebokeng protest did not make the news, except perhaps in the odd traffic report announcing the road closure. It was just one of hundreds of demonstrations by South Africa's poor and marginalised, which in recent years have become increasingly common - sometimes with fatal results.

So-called "service delivery protests" often take place in semi-urban areas, far from South Africa's wealthier and more affluent urban districts. About one-quarter of these protests turn violent, according to police estimates, sometimes leaving shops looted or libraries and clinics burnt to the ground.

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