



Violence in South Africa

Why in News

Recently, **Riots and looting in South Africa** have left more than 70 people dead, hurt thousands of businesses and damaged major infrastructure.

- It is the **worst civil unrest since the end of white minority rule in 1994.**



Key Points

- **Reason for Recent Violence:**
 - Protests began over calls for **release of former president Jacob Zuma, who served the country from 2009-18** and is facing corruption charges.
 - Former Cabinet ministers, high-ranking government officials and executives of state-owned enterprises have **implicated Jacob Zuma in corruption.**
 - Many feel that **his successor as president, Cyril Ramaphosa, has failed to provide decisive leadership** - either to calm anger over Zuma's imprisonment or to reassure South Africans that they will be safe.
 - While the violence may have been spurred on by the **imprisonment of Jacob Zuma**, it's being **fanned by underlying problems in the country amid a raging pandemic and failing economy.**
 - In 2020, the country had witnessed its sharpest decline in annual **Gross Domestic Product** since 1946.
 - **Unemployment** stood at a record high of 32.6% in the first three months of 2021.

▪ Government's Response:

- The government has **condemned the violence** and has stated that there is no justification for the violence. A lot of **criminals or opportunistic individuals are trying to enrich themselves during this period.**
- It has **deployed its army to support the South African police**, however, the rioting and looting haven't stopped.

India- South Africa Relations

▪ Background:

- India's links with the struggle for freedom and justice in South Africa date back to the period during which [Mahatma Gandhi](#) **started his Satyagraha** movement in South Africa over a century ago.
- India was at the forefront of the international community in its **support to the anti-apartheid movement**; it was the **first country to sever trade relations with the apartheid Government (in 1946)** and subsequently **imposed a complete -- diplomatic, commercial, cultural and sports -embargo** on South Africa.
- After a gap of four decades, India re-established trade and business ties in 1993, after South Africa ended its institutionalised **racial segregation ([apartheid](#))**.

- In November 1993, **diplomatic and consular relations were restored.**

▪ Political Relations:

- After South Africa achieved democracy in 1994, it was the **Red Fort Declaration on Strategic Partnership** between India and South Africa, signed in March 1997 which set the parameters for a rekindled relationship.
- The Strategic Partnership between the two countries was again reaffirmed in the **Tshwane Declaration (October 2006)**.
 - Both these declarations have been instrumental mechanisms that have contributed in the past to both South Africa and India for achieving their respective national objectives.
- India and South Africa have a **long history of working together by coordinating their views and efforts** in institutions of global governance/multilateral fora, in order to achieve greater autonomy and ensure that the agenda of 'South' is prioritised.
 - **For Example:** [BRICS](#) (Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa), [IBSA](#) (India, Brazil, and South Africa), [G20](#) , [Indian Ocean Rim Association](#) (IORA) and [World Trade Organisation \(WTO\)](#).

▪ Economic:

- India is **South Africa's fifth-largest export destination**, and **fourth-largest import origin** and is the **second-largest trading partner in Asia**.
 - Both countries are working to boost trade volumes in the coming years. Bilateral trade between India and South Africa **currently stands at USD 10 billion.**
- In **2016** both the countries agreed to collaborate in the defence sector, especially in terms of the opportunities available for South African private sector under '[Make in India](#)' **initiative**, energy sector, agro-processing, human resource development, and infrastructure development.

▪ Science & Technology:

- The Department of Science and Technology of both countries have collaborated, especially in the [Square Kilometer Array \(SKA\)](#) project.

▪ Culture:

- With the help of the [Indian Council for Cultural Relations \(ICCR\)](#), an intensive

programme of cultural exchanges is organised throughout South Africa including scholarships for South African nationals.

- The 9th [World Hindi Conference](#) was held in September 2012 at Johannesburg.

▪ **Indian Community:**

- The **major part of the Indian origin community came to South Africa from 1860 onwards** as farm labour to serve as field hands and mill operatives in the sugar and other agricultural plantations.
- South Africa is **home to the highest number of Indian Diaspora in the African continent**, with a total strength of 1,218,000 thereby constituting 3% **of South Africa's total population**.
 - Since 2003 onwards, India has celebrated [Pravasi Bhartiya Divas \(PBD\)](#) each year on 9th January (the day Mahatma Gandhi returned from South Africa to India).

Way Forward

- India-South Africa **partnership is progressive and forward looking**. Their rich culture and people-to-people contacts lends character and quality to India-South Africa ties.
- It is natural that South Africa needs other partners in Asia just as India is engaged in forging other partnerships in Africa. However, **both India and South Africa will need to keep in mind constantly that their own bilateral relationship deserves priority** and has immense potential that is yet to be realized.

[Source: IE](#)

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