The rise of protests, including so-called service-delivery protests, is a key theme in the Centre for the Study of Violence and Conflict's research into protests in South Africa. The centre, which is part of the University of Johannesburg (UJ), has been conducting research into protests in urban areas since 2012. The research has shown that protests are often driven by problems such as the lack of adequate housing, electricity, street lighting, paved roads and access to social services. This highlights the need for governments to address these issues at a community level.

Protests are fueled by a combination of factors, including a sense of injustice and a lack of trust in government. The research has also shown that protests are often triggered by incidents such as the death of a protestor, which can escalate into a更大规模的 movement. The research has also identified the role of civil society in this context, and how NGOs and community-based organisations (CBOs) came together to support the victims of protest and to represent the families and the Association of Mineworkers and Construction Union.

Protests are often motivated by social and political exclusion. This is evident in the context of South Africa, where unequal power relations between the wealthy and the poor, as well as the lack of accountability of political elites, contribute to a climate of protest. The research has also shown that protests are not just about material benefits or access to services, but are also about issues such as freedom of expression, political participation, and the right to be taken seriously when thinking and speaking through community-based organisations.

In all instances, protests only occurred following recognition of their rights. However, the research has also shown that protests are often associated with a democratic deficit. This deficit is evident at the local-government level, where political parties and seldom represent the citizenry; local ward committees are often dominated by political parties rather than the community.

The research has also highlighted the role of government in these protests. The government has been accused of not responding to the growing securitisation of the state and especially the clampdown on protesters, needs to be critically assessed. For example, today very few @SA_GovHR have the capacity or will to conduct an assessment of the situation and to provide criminal justice to those unlawfully arrested, detained, charged, or tried.

There is perhaps need for radical of the strategies and approaches employed by civil society and social movements to counter the growing security momentum. Perhaps the government should also be critical of the strategy and approach of the state in order to counter normal repression in South Africa. However, in doing so, it is crucial to understand the current context and to avoid painting a picture of a black, white world where protest and repression are the only options available.

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