

Violent protests will affect the province's economy

— Analyst Page 10 SEMPHETE 7 MAY 2018 (SAPS (NW) PAs



Some of the stolen goods recovered from homes in Mmabatho and Lomanyaneng following police operations
Photo supplied by SAPS

Obakeng Maje

It's going to be hard for the economy of Bokone Bophirima province to recover after violent and destructive protests that took place in several parts of the province recently.

This is the view of a political analyst from University of Free State, Dr Sethulego Matebesi, who added that these violent protests would also affect the judgement of potential investors who would have liked to invest in the province.

"The economy of the province might take a nosedive after violent protests that took place recently. More foreign-owned shops were looted and others torched. Those foreigners are destitute because of the situation. These eruptions of violence are serious economic shocks and

setbacks.

"Now potential investors will be skeptical to come and invest in the province. The violent protests harmed the economy in many different ways and retarded the province's economic development. It is important for protesters to embark on peaceful protests and stop disrupting the normal functioning of economic activities," Matebesi said.

He said because many shops were closed due to protests, that has decreased production in several sectors of the economy, deterred foreign investment and indirectly impaired tourism.

Police have recovered most of the goods that were stolen during the looting of shops. Provincial police spokesperson, Brigadier Sabata Mokgwabone, said: "As part of asserting the authority

of the State and dealing with the criminality that accompanied the recent violent protests that erupted in the province, 65 suspects appeared at the Klerksdorp and Mmabatho Magistrate's Courts respectively on Monday.

"The suspects were arrested after they were found to be in possession of suspected stolen goods and for business burglary. Out of this number, 56 appeared in the Klerksdorp Magistrate's Court following their arrest last week in Johannesburg. They were granted R300 bail each and will appear again in court on the 30th of May 2018."

Mokgwabone said the other nine accused aged between 18 and 48 appeared in the Mmabatho Magistrate's Court after being arrested during the weekend in Mmabatho and Lomanyaneng. He added

that the suspects were arrested following positive information that was given to the police about possession of suspected stolen goods.

"During the track and recovery operations, the police found goods such as building and plumbing materials. Groceries that were looted from a local hardware business and tuck-shops during the protests were also recovered. One of the accused was granted R300 bail and will appear in court again on 28 May 2018. Other eight accused were remanded in custody until 10 May 2018," Mokgwabone said.

North West Provincial Police Commissioner, Lieutenant General Baile Motsenyane applauded the community for working together with the police to help find the looters.