

Another national shutdown on the cards for South Africa



Leader of the March and March anti-illegal-immigration movement, Jacinta Ngobese-Zuma, says the government has three months to meet demands or face a ‘real’ national shutdown.

Addressing protestors in Zulu on 30 June, Ngobese-Zuma said that the demonstrations held on the day were not a national shutdown but rather the start of a months-long campaign.

Ngobese-Zuma said that, while the government had feared and warned of a national shutdown on 30 June, that was not the purpose of the day.

However, she said that March and March would launch weekly protests over a three-month campaign—and if “the government doesn’t answer us, [then] there will be a shutdown”.

She added this looming national shutdown would be “where nothing will move”, and alluded to the three months of protests being the movement “asking our government nicely, while we are still asking.”

Tensions against illegal immigrants in South Africa have been escalating over the past 12 months, led by protest groups like March and March.

The group was founded by Ngobese-Zuma—a former radio presenter for Vuma FM—in March 2025, evolving from an initial anti-immigration protest called “March in March”.

Since its founding, thousands of protesters have marched under its banner in over 100 demonstrations.

Its anti-immigrant stance culminated in a demand for all illegal immigrants to leave South Africa by 30 June 2026.

This date—an arbitrary deadline set by the protest group with no state input or backing—was also scheduled for simultaneous mass protests across all provinces.

Responding to the growing anger and wanting to avoid an escalation into riots similar to those in July 2021, President Cyril Ramaphosa put the country’s security forces on high alert for a national shutdown.

The government’s security cluster budgeted R600 million to increase police and military deployments to hotspot areas on the day.

Ramaphosa, meanwhile, met with community leaders, royals and the protest groups themselves to try and keep a lid on the demonstrations.

These efforts were ultimately successful, with June 30 protests being largely peaceful, with relatively minor disruptions on a national level.

However, while the protests were not as disruptive as many had feared—and the country avoided having the marches escalate into riots—damage was done, lives were lost, and businesses were impacted.

Reports point to at least one fatality linked to the protests, over 900 arrests, and millions of rands in business losses—though largely restricted to the township economy.

Three months to meet demands



March and March protestors. [Image: [Department of Employment and Labour](#)]

Following the 30 June protests, March and March outlined its next moves and its list of demands to the national government.

It said that South Africans had collectively organised over 120 successful marches across the country to date, and over 98% of the said marches were incident-free

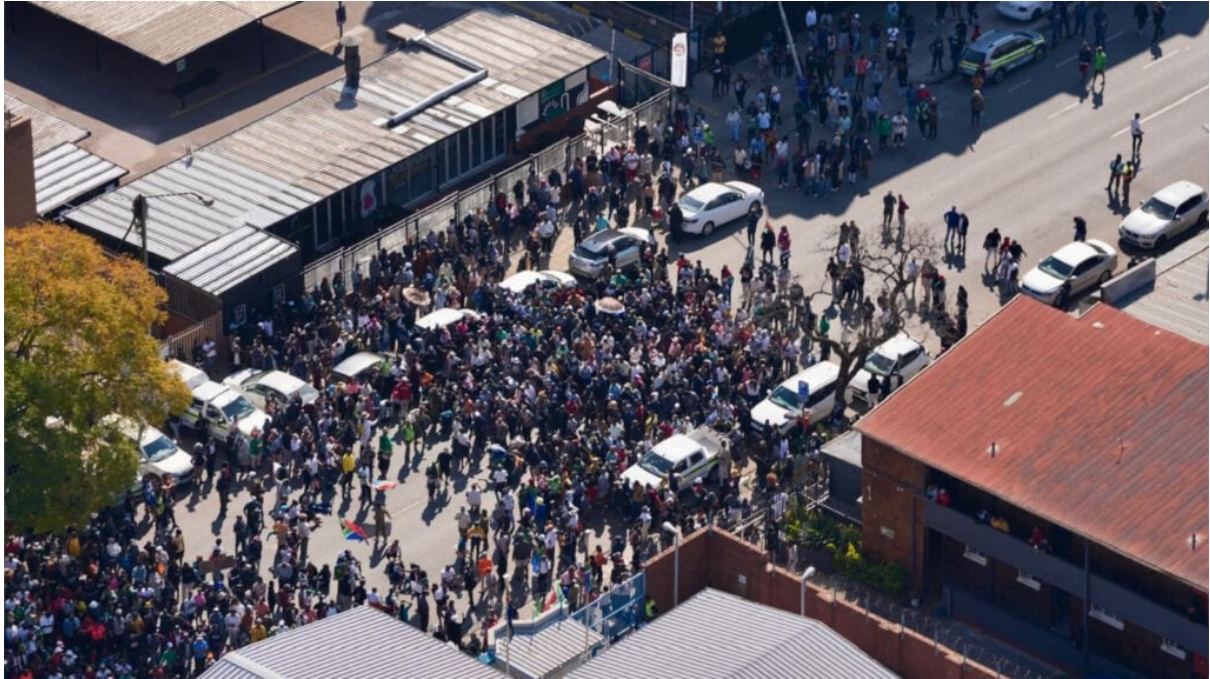
It added that it has a plan of action for the next three months that will include “a massive rollout of peaceful demonstrations, picketing, and blitz across the country”.

In terms of its demands, the group outlined the following:

- It wants to work with various stakeholders and political parties to participate in a National Dialogue on the causes of irregular migration, its impacts, and possible solutions.
- It wants to meet with all political parties to get as many on board to “sing from the same hymn book” on irregular immigration and the implementation of immigration laws.
- It wants to engage with all municipalities and the Department of Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs to pass bylaws, focusing on reserving township economies for South African citizens.
- It wants the South African Police Service and the Department of Home Affairs to roll out operations in all Central Business Districts and private dwellings, particularly properties hijacked by foreign nationals.

- It wants to “educate” South Africans about aiding, abetting and harbouring illegal immigrants.

“The only language that the government understands is the mass rolling action, and we accordingly encourage our members across the country to consistently take to the streets peacefully until our demands are met,” it said.



30 June protests [Image: SAPS]

