

UJ accuses cops of lying to get billions

Academics from the University of Johannesburg have accused President Jacob Zuma and the police of manipulating civil unrest figures for political purposes...



© Dejan Bozic – 123RF.com

They claim ANC and police officials have exaggerated the level of violent unrest in the country to justify an extra R3.3-billion a year on public order policing.

The University of Johannesburg's social change research unit analysed 156,000 detailed incident reports in the SAPS's Incident Registration Information System between 1992 and 2013.

The unit obtained this information through the Promotion of Access to Information Act.

Professor Peter Alexander said: "From our analysis, we have demonstrated that not all incidents classified as unrest are violent.

"We found that only 54% of protests sampled were violent."

Alexander said the police's loose definition of "violent protest" included incidents at police roadblocks. This, he said, skewed the statistics.

But in September, Lieutenant Elias Mawela told parliament that incidents of violent protest had escalated from 1226 in 2011/12 to 1882 in 2012/13, and then to 1907 in 2013/14. President Zuma appeared to have used the same statistics in this year's State of the Nation Address.

Alexander said national police commissioner Riah Phiyega was using these figures to justify an extra R3.3-billion a year on public order policing.

The university researchers' report states: "Misrepresentation of numbers was central to justifying massive increased spending."

Phiyega's spokesman, General Solomon Makgale, disagreed with the university.

"Violent incidents are not defined by 'police intervention' but by all actions of participants that violate or infringe the rights of other people. Violent actions include blocking the streets, throwing stones or vandalising property," Makgale said.

Source: The Times

For more, visit: <https://www.bizcommunity.com>