



# 11 arrested in De Doorns

Eleven people were arrested after police "took action" against protesting farmworkers in De Doorns on Monday (12 November), Western Cape police said.

"The situation at De Doorns is still tense," spokesman Colonel Andre Traut said.

He said violence broke out in the area when a group of about 80 people carrying sticks and pangas intimidated farmworkers and prevented them from going to work.

"We took action," said Traut.

He wouldn't say what measures were used, but SABC radio news reported rubber bullets were fired. Ten people were arrested for public violence, and another one for intimidation.

ANC Western Cape legislature spokesman Koos Grobler said he had been told by an ANC councillor in the area that police were breaking up groups of five people walking together and that there were police helicopters, and privately hired helicopters, in the air.

Last week protesters in De Doorns blocked the N1 highway in the area and set vineyards alight. They wanted their salaries increased to R150 a day. The current minimum wage for their type of work is R69.99 a day.

Earlier, *The Star* reported that Agriculture Minister Tina Joemat-Pettersson was expected to hold an urgent meeting in Pretoria to discuss the strike action.

Agri Wes-Cape has called on farmworkers to return to work as the table grape season was in full swing. Talks between the minister, the Congress of South African Trade Unions and farmer representatives took place last weekend.

Cosatu provincial secretary Tony Ehrenreich said workers rejected an offer of R80 a day and called on them to stay away from work on Monday (12 November). He said farmworkers in Mpumalanga had started striking. Workers said they had heard Cosatu was representing them, but most were unrepresented.

Labour Minister Mildred Oliphant is attending a conference abroad.

Source: *Sapa* via I-Net Bridge

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