

South African township malls thrive over holiday season - Vukile

By Nqobile Dladla

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Shopping malls in South Africa's rural areas and townships saw a rise in visitors over the Black Friday weekend and in the run up to Christmas, despite widespread power cuts, the retail-focused Vukile Property Fund said on Wednesday, 1 February.



Source: Reuters/Siphiwe Sibeko

That continues their recent outperformance as retailers race to increase their market share in lower-income areas.

Footfall up

The Black Friday discount event attracted 18% more people to Vukile's South African shopping centre portfolio in 2022 compared with the previous year, with footfall 15% higher over the Black Friday weekend as a whole, it said.

Shopper numbers were up 10% in November, with footfall up 13% in rural shopping centres, 9% in township centres, 10% in commuter centres and 11% in urban shopping centres.

The momentum was sustained into December, with overall visitor numbers up 8%, Vukile said.

Last month, bigger rival Redefine Properties, which operates larger malls in urban areas, said total footfall was at 94% of pre-Covid levels, with 2% growth in 2022, while sales across its retail portfolio were above pre-Covid levels.



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Redefine warned, however, that this did not mean the economy was out of the woods as the rising cost of living squeezes disposable incomes, while power cuts and energy costs dampen prospects.

Surging food and fuel prices have been affecting lower and middle income shoppers the most, as indicated by recent soft holiday sales at budget clothing retailers [Mr Price](#) and [Pepkor](#).

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