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Media Contact: Georgina Alexander    Tel: 011-482-7221    E-mail: [galexander@sairr.org.za](mailto:galexander@sairr.org.za)

### **Sasolburg: Metsimaholo local municipality in numbers**

Currently there are violent protests in the town of Sasolburg, situated in the Metsimaholo local municipality (Free State). The protests centre on plans to include Sasolburg in the neighboring Ngwathe local municipality and not in the current Metsimaholo local municipality. Information compiled by the South African Institute of Race Relations provides a profile of the Metsimaholo municipality.

The municipality is controlled by the ANC. The following socio-economic indicators, obtained from The Gaffney's Group, apply to the area:

- the municipality is 84% rural and 16% urbanised;
- the poverty rate is 42%;
- of the 84 000 people of working age, 30 000 are employed;
- the unemployment rate (expanded definition which includes discouraged work seekers) is 43%. The expanded unemployment rate for South Africa is 36%;
- poor households make up 42% of all households;
- the majority of the population, or 55%, earns less than R400 per month, including social grants;
- only 24% of people in the area have achieved matric or higher;
- 18% of the population lives in informal dwellings;
- 73% of people have piped water inside their houses;
- 88% of households have a flush toilet;
- 9% use a pit toilet; and
- 88% of households use electricity for lighting and 84% for cooking

The Institute's Georgina Alexander said, 'These indicators are not out of line with those of scores of small towns around South Africa where service delivery indicators look fairly good. However, failures in education and labour market access are blocking socio-economic advancement for large numbers of people resident in these communities. The risk therefore is that most small towns in the country are vulnerable to this level of protest and violence.'

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