

Small traders suffering as a result of Cape Town taxi violence

By [Vincent Lali](#)

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For yet another day on Thursday, small traders at the Bellville taxi rank sat without customers. The taxi violence in Cape Town has seen people too afraid to use taxis or buses.



Tafadzwa Chakachaka sells cheese and yoghurt at the Bellville taxi rank. She is struggling to find buyers because the taxi violence has chased her customers away. Photos: Vincent Lali.

Tafadzwa Chakachaka, who sells cheese and yoghurt, said, “No one buys our wares when the two modes of transport are not working.” The handful of people who are using buses do not loiter but “rush past our stands without buying,” she said.

She said she is also scared, but “we have no other source of income”.

“When the taxi drivers shoot at each other, we lie on the ground next to our stock. Our stock will be stolen and we will get caught in the ensuing stampede if we run.”



Brakpan community members protect immigrant-owned spaza shops

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The violence has also affected the vendors trying to transport their goods for selling. “I can’t load all my wares in a bus when I travel back home in the evenings, but I can do so in a taxi,” she said.

The taxis would drop her near her home. But now, she says, “I have to hire youngsters to take my wares with a trolley to my place after I get off the bus.”

She supports two children and pays R3,500 to rent a RDP house in Khayelitsha. She is feeling the pinch. “I used to eat nice takeaways, but now I have to cook at home and bring my food here to eat as I can no longer afford them.”



Madiba Kanana sells sweets, snacks and cool drinks. Business is so bad he can't even give his customers change for R20.

Madiba Kanana, who sells sweets, peanuts, chips and cook drinks, said, “I’m starving because I can’t make money anymore.”

He said he was doing a roaring trade before the taxi violence. “My cool drink stock used to run out several times in one day ... but now I get stuck with my stock the whole day,” he said. “I can’t send money to my parents under the present circumstances. Now I sell just so that I can buy food.”

Kanana said he and other small traders set out at 5am from Wallacedene, where he rents a backyard shack, to walk two hours to the Bellville rank.

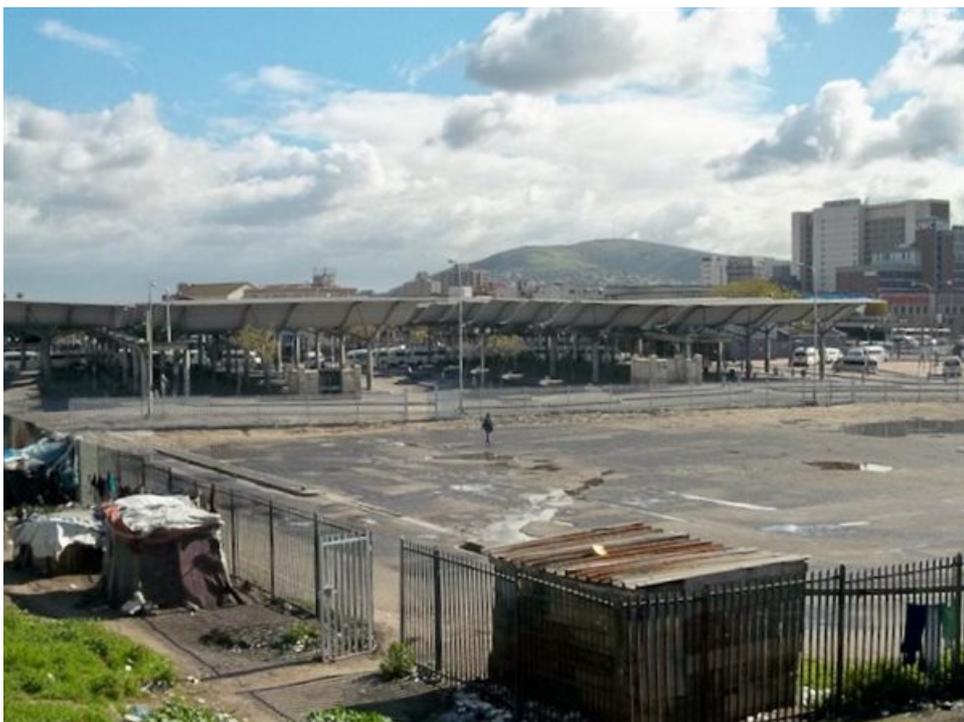


There were no customers at Ali Dop's leather bag and clothing stall. "I have been sitting here for two hours, but not a single person has even asked how much," he said.

Ali Dop, who sells leather bags, masks and clothes near the Shoprite, said he used to make about R400 per day, but some days he can't make even R100 now.

"I must pay the trolley man R10 to bring my wares to my stand and another R10 to take them back to the storeroom. Now, I don't even have money to pay them ... I continue to wait for customers in the hope that I may get R20 or R50 to buy sugar and milk," he said.

A leader of the Bellville African Traders Organisation who did not want to be named, said, "Traders are really crying. They are scared of being shot, but a few continue to sell their goods because of their financial needs."



The Bellville taxi rank was a ghost town on Thursday.

Rosheda Muller, president of South African Traders Alliance, said violence has “caused havoc among the small traders”.

“As we are talking, our people are suffering as they cannot earn a living,” she said. “We call upon the taxi drivers to settle their differences in the interest of the vulnerable informal traders.”

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