## Rural households are buying more food and growing less and less

**Jonathan Crush** 

WHILE there is much talk in global and national policy arenas about the relationship between migration and development, the link between migration and food security rarely enters discussions.

At the same time, those debating food security disregard migration in their focus on enhancing agricultural production by smallholders.

And while these policy conversations are happening, rural households throughout southern Africa are buying more and more of their food, rather than growing it, and doing so with cash that they receive from household members who have moved to cities within the country and across borders to earn money.

The reality is that migration is a critical food security strategy for rural, and many urban, households.

The evidence for southern Africa is that households that receive remittances do not invest this money in agriculture but in basic necessities - mostly food.

Research by the Southern African Migration Programme has found cash remittances to be the most important source of income in all Southern African Development Community countries, with 74 percent of all migrant-sending households receiving remittances (with as many as 95 percent in Lesotho and 83 percent in Zimbabwe). In-country wage employment was a source of income for 40 percent of households, followed by remittances in kind, including food (37 percent).

At the other end of the spectrum, only 8 percent of households receive income from the sale of agricultural produce and only 5 percent receive

This means that rural food security may be improved but will not be resolved by the current approach that focuses only on agriculture.

The simplest way to examine the relationship between international migration and food security is to ascertain how migrants address their own food and nutrition needs in the country they move to, as well as what happens to the income they

These questions are related because the amount of money available to send home is to some degree contingent on the food-related expenditures of the breadwinner in the destination country. Migrants rarely live alone and their income may often support people in their new households who cannot find

Migration within and to southern Africa has changed significantly and all the evidence suggests that the region is undergoing a rapid urban transition through internal migration and natural population increase. There has also been significant growth in the numbers of people who cross borders for short time periods. They almost all head

The primary determinant of food insecurity in South Africa's cities is not production shortfalls but people's lack of access to food, which is caused by not having the regular income they need to buy it.

In its research, the Cape Townbased African Food Security Urban Network (Afsun) found that even within the poorest areas of Joburg, Cape Town and cities in neighbouring states, having enough food to meet households' needs varies considerably. Factors influencing this wage employment, other

### Four out of five African households surveyed suffered food shortages

income-generating activity, the size and structure of the household, the educational level of members, access to social grants and the strength of social links.

Afsun conducted a survey in 11 cities in nine countries in the region and found that four out of five households sampled had insufficient food to meet their needs.

Researchers found there is no simple and direct correlation between household income and food security

because of many variables, including the price of food and the cost of other necessities such as clothing, shelter and transport. Their statistics also showed a gender dimension to food insecurity, with female-centred households the most insecure.

The research probed whether migrants are more food insecure than other residents of the poorer areas of southern African cities and found that, while levels of food insecurity are alarmingly high among everyone, migrant households have a greater chance of being food insecure, with all of its attendant health

and nutritional problems. The rapid urbanisation and increased movement across borders that has led to the growth in the number of migrants in cities is likely to continue. Most poor households in southern African cities now consist entirely of migrants or a mix of migrants and locally-born. The impact of this on food security needs to be recognised by policymakers and acted upon.

While improving food security for the poor at the same time as addressing the problems inherent in the current growth trajectory of cities is an enormous challenge, it

comes with major opportunity. Addressing sustainability from the point of view of food security provides a tangible approach to creating healthier, more economically stable and resilient cities.

• Crush is the CIGI chair in global migration and development at the Balsillie School of International Affairs and honorary professor at the University of Cape Town. He will be a key speaker at a November 26-27 conference in Cape Town at which the links between food security, urbanisation and migration will be explored.

### **KEEPING TRACK OF SCANDALS**

# Is President Jacob Zuma competent?

**Allister Sparks** 

WHEN Judge Chris Nicholson threw out the corruption charges against Jacob Zuma on procedural grounds four years ago - only to have a full Bench of the Supreme Court of Appeal scathingly overturn him soon afterwards – he warned, prophetically, that unless the arms deal scandal was fully investigated and ventilated, "a cloud of suspicion and scandal" would continue to hang over the government.

That little white cloud has now billowed into a dark and thunderous-looking cumulus nimbus.

Last Saturday night, journalists and lawyers were back in court as the National Prosecuting Authority (NPA) made a desperate last-minute bid to stop the presses rolling out the Sunday Times's latest exposé of leaked documents throwing further light on acting NPA boss Mokotedi Mpshe's controversial decision to drop the case against Zuma.

And so the arms deal scandal lives on 13 years after the deal itself was signed in November 1999 and seven years after Zuma first appeared in court following the conviction of his then-financial man ager, Shabir Shaik.

It is also nine years since I wrote the first of many columns warning that if the full details of the scandal were not cleared up swiftly, it would become an ongoing saga that "threatens to tear the government, the country and some of our most important institutions apart". Which indeed it has done and will

continue to do. Citing the Watergate scandal that brought down US President Richard Nixon, I noted, too, that in such cases it was the cover-up that turned out to be more damaging that the scandal itself.

Now we appear to have entered a second generation, as it were, of this kind of political folly, with Friday night's court action amounting to an attempt to cover up the original cover-up of secretly taped conversations, the so-called "spy tapes", that supposedly provided the grounds

for withdrawing the charges. The court action failed, so now





**COMPOUNDED:** Whether on the arms deal or Nkandla, President Zuma must be confused by the multitude of scandals, explanations and cover ups of cover-ups, says the writer.

we know that in withdrawing the charges against Zuma, Mpshe acted against the overwhelming advice of the top prosecutors involved in the

The question is, Why? And is that decision now challengeable?

Meanwhile, Zuma's lawyers are in default of a court order to hand over the actual tapes which led to that decision, which compounds the issue and darkens the cloud of suspicion further.

What is it they are so anxious to hide? Who did the secret taping? Was it legally done? And was it legal to hand the tapes over to Zuma's lawyers for them to use to get him off

the hook? I also wrote, when Zuma became president in 2009, that he would go naked into the world as the leader of our country.

Naked in the sense that he would have trouble ever defending himself against accusations of malfeasance. Because to sue anyone for libel or slander would require him to enter a witness box and face cross-examination under oath by skilled lawyers who would question him relentlessly about his role in the arms deal to establish how much of a character he had to defame

It is something to which I suggested he would probably not want

to subject himself. I thought of that column again

the other day when at the last

moment, Zuma dropped his libel

action against Zapiro, the cartoonist offering some unsuspected sensitivity to possibly harming free speech as his reason.

Now Zuma is grappling with the even more daunting issue of accounting for the public money spent on upgrading his private home, or compound, at Nkandla. The two cases are in fact con-

nected: the original charge sheet included the cost of building Nkandla among the many perks Zuma received during his 10-year relationship with Shaik.

That charge sheet accused Zuma of receiving 783 payments totalling R4 072 499.85 from Shaik between 1995 and 2005 – a piffling sum compared with the R158 million of pub-

lic money being spent on upgrading

the security features at Nkandla. All of which, of course, makes the funding of Nkandla even more intriguing. If the original building costs came out of the stream of money that allegedly reached Zuma from his crooked financial manager, why then did he still need a bond, which he says he is paying off – but which City Press's investigative reporters say doesn't exist?

So what kind of bond is this? A loan from another friend or benefactor, perhaps?

Zuma has also been reported as saying his family paid for the building of Nkandla, and that the R158m of public money being spent on the property is only for security

upgrades, including bullet-proof glass, a bunker with elevator and houses for security guards outside the complex.

So how much was paid by Shaik, if anything, how much by the family, and how big is the bond, or loan, or whatever it is? Why is there such a staggering difference between building costs and the cost of security upgrades? And why such extravagant security? Not even the loathed Ou Krokodil had a bunker.

Zuma says he can't account for these puzzling figures because he is not a bookkeeper, and presenting Parliament with a breakdown of the costs is not his job.

But accounting for the expenditure of public money on private

property is somebody's job – somebody in government, of which Zuma himself is the head.

I think it was President Harry Truman who said, pointing to his desk, that when it came to government accountability, "the buck stops here"

So, I'm afraid, President Zuma, that in this whole horribly entangled mess of your lavish public and private expenditures, the buck does stop right there, on your desk.

You may not be a bookkeeper, but you are accountable for explaining the mess to the taxpaying public, a lot of whose hard-earned money is involved. Even if that requires hiring a bookkeeper to disentangle it for you.

Meanwhile, that dark cloud is growing darker and heavier. My own suspicion is that our president has become so confused by the multitude of scandals and explanations and cover ups of cover-ups that he genuinely doesn't know what is

I think it was probably exasperation at this damn buck that just won't go away that brought him close to tears in Parliament the other day, rather than outrage at

people suggesting he is corrupt. To be fair, there is still the fact that Zuma has agreed to the appointment of a commission of inquiry into the arms deal. It was patently obvious, though, that he did so to ward off the tenacious Terry Crawford Browne's move to have the Constitutional Court order such an

investigation. However, the pace at which the commission is moving makes it questionable whether it will com-

plete its work in Zuma's lifetime. Packaging all this stuff together gives one cause to ponder the fact that Zuma, with all his problems and cover-ups, is going to be with us for another seven years.

And what the ANC needs to realise is that by sticking to him so tenaciously it is making all those issues its own.

Zuma comes as a long-term package of problems.

 Sparks is a veteran journalist and political commentator.

## Rescue remedy for deep south

NEWS that the French research ship Marion Dufresne had been holed off Crozet Islands in the Southern Ocean last Thursday brought an immediate response from the French operators of the cableship Leon Thevenin who dispatched her from her Cape Town base to the islands on Friday night.

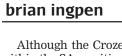
As most of her compartments are still watertight, Marion Dufresne is in no danger of sinking and will probably be anchored in the lee of the islands; however, a severe turn in the weather could aggravate the damage.

To accommodate the 80 scientists who were aboard the research vessel, several crew members disembarked from Leon Thevenin prior to her departure from Cape Town.

Carrying a large consignment of salvage equipment and a Smit salvage team that includes divers, the cableship is expected to reach the damaged vessel today. That the cableship could sail from Cape Town that quickly is due to the splendid co-operation among her owners, agents, World Shipping, the salvage

team and insurance underwriters. The salvors will assess the damage before the ship heads to South Africa for repairs for which East London's under-utilised drydock would be ideal. Thevenin will escort the damaged vessel during the voyage.





Although the Crozet Islands fall within the SA maritime monitoring zone, the South African Navy could not dispatch a frigate to undertake the transfer of the scientists.

For the Antarctic summer window, the first polar ships are heading south. Chartered by the Indian Antarctic team, the ice-breaker Vladimir Ignatyuk left last week to break open a passage through the ice for Ivan Papanin, following a few days astern of the ice-breaker. She is also ready to assist with the Crozet

evacuation operation if required. The smart Danish vessel Mary Arctica, carrying supplies for the Belgian, Norwegian and British Antarctic bases, and the German ship Polarstern will arrive in Cape Town next Tuesday, also en route to the ice. SA Agulhas 2 will leave early in December on her maiden voyage to Antarctica with the South African polar research team and

stores for the base. On her return voyage from Antarctica, Mary Arctica will bring 50 containers of rubble from the dismantled British Antarctic base that

was replaced by a modern one, much of which was manufactured in South Africa and moved south two years ago in the Russian vessel Igarka. I understand that a good consignment of containers has been booked from South Africa to Europe aboard Mary Arctica when she sails from Cape Town in January.

Research teams venturing into

those high latitudes is understandable, but the wisdom of passenger ships going south is questionable. No matter how competent the officers, or to what ice standards the ship is built or how thoroughly certain areas have been surveyed, abnormal conditions can develop very quickly. Only calm weather and the close proximity of another ship saved a perilous situation when a small cruise ship sank two years ago in southern latitudes. Next time a passenger vessel gets into difficulties down there, sea conditions could be extreme and the nearest ship may be hundreds of miles away. And our frigates might not be

available to help! • German cruise ship Deutschland berthed at A Berth on Monday, the first to berth there for a while. The smaller Hanseatic and large MSC Opera arrived yesterday, the latter to begin her anticipated cruise season in southern African waters.

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#### ANTI-NUCLEAR energy activists put up a rather impressive show on November 10 as they marched to the Department of Energy to present their memorandum. It is a pity

there was no one from that department to receive them. They looked like a decent number as they marched with their neat posters opposing the intentions of our country to build nuclear power stations. South Africa is doing this in an effort to

create an electricity generation mix

including coal, solar, wind and nuclear in suggested proportions. This is a tough balancing act as none of these sources of electricity is without its pros and cons. Coal is a cheap and plentiful fuel. Although it is dirty and responsible for our country being the biggest polluter on the African continent, it is un-

realistic to suggest that our country

stop using it with immediate effect. We have such vast reserves of coal that it should be assumed that we are going to burn it for a very long time to come. However, we need to put our scientists to work to find cleaner technologies for the burning of coal and therefore drastically reduce its emissions of the undesirable greenhouse gases.

Authorities have to contend with protests from business and citizens

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Recipe to generate right mix of electricity

on the high price of electricity, while environmentalists demand a reduction in our reliance on coal.

The imperatives of climate change demand that we do our bit against global warming. Although there is no definitive proof that extreme weather occurrences such as superstorm Sandy that hit the US and Haiti with devastating force are consequences of climate change, it would be foolish to close our minds about this issue.

We have had our own experiences with destructive floods in Mpumalanga and the Eastern Cape recently, wreaking havoc in their wake. We are duty bound to sit up and take notice of the warnings given frequently by scientists.

Nuclear energy is clean, reliable and safe, except when something goes wrong. Japanese nuclear power stations have withstood frequent earthquakes, yet the latest tsunami crippled a nuclear station. Radiation from the damaged power station overshadowed the tsunami

The storage of nuclear waste,

with its long life, continues to provide a headache for scientists. Of course, anti-nuclear energy campaigners seize upon these two factors to mount their occasional toyitoyi against this power source.

Wind energy is a sexy, dandy and squeaky clean one that invites a passionate embrace. But its shortcomings are daunting.

You do not have wind blowing all the time and the technology to store electricity that might be generated when you do not need it, is not yet in place. Further, you need a lot of those windmills to produce enough electricity to make a dent on the power requirements of a country as big as South Africa.

There was a faint suggestion by some scientists that the windmills are dangerous to birds and that they affect the breeding habits of some insects. Now, insects have a very big say in every aspect of our lives. We don't want to mess with them, particularly their ability to reproduce.

With wind energy being so expensive and our population being so unwilling or unable to pay for expensive electricity, we cannot plunge head first in that direction.

We would be hurt. Solar energy is just as much a darling as wind energy and with us being so blessed with plenty of sunshine the whole year round, it is capable of playing an important role in our power configuration. However, the technologies asso-

ciated with this area are still being developed and are therefore expensive. Wholesale adoption of this technology would put the power authority on a collision course with society.

The energy area is difficult and complex and requires that we craft a balanced and prudent path. We need to listen to one another and where possible accommodate different views and concerns.

It would have been great if the anti-nuclear protesters had been received by the relevant authorities. Let all ideas, protests and proposals see the light of day.

What should be taken to heart is that it is not helpful to have fundamentalists who demand that only their way should be embraced by the country. If we have zealots who believe that only their ideas are valid and everybody else should go and jump into the sea, then we

would have more problems. By the way, the relevant electricity generation authorities need to add fuel cells to the mix as an extremely promising source of electricity, especially for rural areas.