

Fears of fuel running out in South Africa as important refinery closes

The South African Petroleum Refineries (Sapref) has shut down its fuel operation in Durban as a safety measure during ongoing protests and unrest in the region. Sapref is the largest crude oil refinery in the country with 35% of South Africa's refining capacity.



Source: [Pexels](#)

Sapref said the following in a letter to its clients: "We have been obliged to make the difficult decision to shut down the refinery. As a result of the foregoing, Sapref hereby declares the occurrence of an event of force majeure, excusing Sapref from performing under the agreement."

"Due to the civil unrest in the country and disruption of supply routes in and out of Kwazulu-Natal, suppliers of materials critical to Sapref operations communicated the suspension of deliveries to the refinery due to safety concerns for their staff and damages to their vehicles on the roads."



Unrest leads retailers and malls to temporarily shut up shop

Lauren Hartzenberg 14 Jul 2021



Layton Beard, a spokesperson for the Automobile Association (AA), said the following on Sapref's closure and the possibility of fuel shortages:

"If we are in a situation where fuel supply becomes limited, our economy will be impacted. However, we are not in that predicament right now as far as the AA is aware. We have not received any formal indication that fuel is a major problem. We have to wait for the next couple of days to get a clearer picture."

Beard also noted that the AA has not heard anything that specifically suggests fuel tankers are being targeted during the ongoing protests.

Petrol stations closed

Some petrol stations in the region have also closed as a precaution and some have run out of fuel, a SABC [report](#) said. Long winding queues are have formed outside petrol stations in the greater Durban area of KwaZulu-Natal.

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