

The Google Map shows us the locations of the farm worker uprisings in the Western Cape, South Africa. This is the first time that farm workers have gone on strike in democratic South Africa. As illustrated one can see the route along which protests have happened as uprisings against slave wages have spread.



Timeline of Events (taken from various news reports) **Monday, 5 November 2012:** 8000 Farm workers in De Doorns in the Hex River Valley down tools. Vineyards are set alight. They also block the N1 highway at De Doorns near Worcester. Their demand is a raise in salary from R70 to R150 per day.

Tuesday, 6 November 2012: News reports state that 30 hectares of vineyards were burnt and five people arrested, later reports state that seven people were arrested. Police continue to patrol the area and rubber bullets are used against the protesters. The CCMA enter the issue to try and negotiate a wage deal. One farm owner is arrested for attempted murder after firing shots at protesters in the street.

Wednesday, 7 November 2012: Western Cape Agriculture officials try to intimate that a third force is at play. This is nipped in the bud by civil society/NGOs and it is found that there is no third force. CCMA negotiations continue.

Thursday, 8 November 2012: More vineyards are torched as Wednesday talks offer no way forward. The N1 highway is closed and motorists are urged to use alternative routes. Media reports state that there are high rates of absenteeism at schools in the area. Reports also state that protest action has spread to the Boland and Wellington. Western Cape Premier, Helen Zille, is chased out of De Doorns as she tries to speak to the workers, the crowd proceed to hurl stones at her and she is escorted to a nyala.

Friday, 9 November 2012: Western Cape Premier, Helen Zille, denies being chased out of

De Doorns. Zille states that the situation is being politicised. The CCMA continue to negotiate.

Saturday, 10 November 2012: Media reports state that many De Doorns farmers and their families have fled due to unrest. Senior government officials are expected to meet to discuss resolutions.

Monday, 12 November 2012: It is made official that negotiations have deadlocked. Farm workers from other areas express preparedness to down tools in solidarity with De Doorns. There is a call for rolling mass action in solidarity with De Doorns. Police continue to patrol the area. 10 People are arrested amid continued unrest. Minister of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries, Tina Joemat-Petterson, holds a meeting in Pretoria to discuss the unrest. There are reports of protests in Ceres.

Tuesday, 13 November 2012: Farm worker uprising spreads to surrounding districts. Farm workers in Robertson block the main roads to stop labour brokers from entering the districts. Police respond by blocking roads to Robertson and De Doorns where more vineyards burn. Police presence is heavy as well as the presence of helicopters. Union leaders and leadership from the various organisations meet at Klein Plasie where the Minister of Agriculture and fisheries, Tina Joemat-Petterson, assures them that the government is behind the call of workers to receive a decent living wage. Ceres farm workers start burning store houses. Protests spread to Touwsrivier. At this stage protest action has spread to many areas of the Western Cape wine region. Farm workers in solidarity with De Doorns are as far afield as Tzaneen in Limpopo. Workers reject an offer of R80 per day.

Wednesday, 14 November 2012: “Black Wednesday” – Farm workers in De Doorns continue to burn vineyards as wage demands remain unmet. Ceres workers start to burn fruit crates. Minister Joemat-Petterson tells media that the strikers must not be prosecuted, stating that “No case must be brought against a single worker. Each and every criminal case or charge that was laid against a farm worker must be withdrawn.” Meanwhile, Premier Helen Zille calls for the army to be deployed to the Hex River valley as police are too few. Violence flares up in Wolseley leaving one farm worker, 28 year old Michael Daniels, dead at the hands of police. Police open fire in Nkqubela, Robertson. They shoot from helicopters as well. The day ends with one dead and 10 arrested in the Robertson area. Unions and government call a ceasefire, but message not communicated properly to workers.