

## South Africa's mood sours

LYNLEY DONNELLY | JOHANNESBURG, SOUTH AFRICA - Jul 17 2008 06:00

A report commissioned by the government shows that nearly 40% of adult South Africans are no longer committed to the country and some 29% are actively seeking to emigrate or have thought about doing so.

The *Mail & Guardian* has seen a copy of the report, which forms part of tracking research done for the Government Communication and Information System (GCIS).

The report of key findings is understood to have been compiled on behalf of the International Marketing Council, an arm of GCIS, and investigates levels of commitment to the country, as well as participants' levels of pride in South Africa.

TNS Research Surveys, the company that compiled the report, said it cannot comment on its contents as the research was done on behalf of the GCIS.

The data are drawn from as far back as July 2006 and state that between April 2007 and July 2007 the mood of the nation turned more negative and more pessimistic.

According to the report, participants were drawn from all race groups across the country.

Participants who are uncommitted to the country are categorised by TNS as either "shallow" or "convertible". Convertible South Africans rate other countries above South Africa and are the most likely to emigrate. During January and April this year the proportion of convertible individuals rose to 19%.

However, the report also notes that between January and April this year 29% of South African adults indicated their "availability" to switch to an alternative country.

This, according to the report, is an "indicator of the proportion of people who are actively seeking or passively thinking of leaving the country".

Commitment to the country, decreases with levels of education and age.

Of the 36% of recipients who are uncommitted to SA 41% have a matric or equivalent qualification and some 53% have a post-matric qualification.

The figure also rises with their Living Standards Measure or LSM group.

Forty-six percent of the uncommitted respondents felt that the country is going in the wrong direction and that government was doing badly.

Themba Maseko, CEO for the GCIS, said he could not comment on the report. He confirmed, however, that the GCIS conducts tracking research to understand the mood of the nation better and uses the research as a "scientific basis around which to develop our communications strategies".

The report also assesses communication needs and media behaviour.

Of those uncommitted to South African some 55% are termed "media savvy" and access information from TV and newspapers.

"If this research shows a dip in the mood of the nation, it is very worrying," said Maseko.

He said, however, that it is unsurprising in the light of tragic events like the recent xenophobic attacks that swept the nation.

"But despite these problems government is still on course and committed to addressing these issues," he added.

The document comes to light following the release of research by media-monitoring organisation, Media Tenor, which says South Africa's reputation in foreign media is becoming increasingly negative. This is seen as a result of South Africa's foreign policy, particularly the government's silence on Zimbabwe, as well as the country's high levels of violence and crime.

**Source: Mail & Guardian Online**

**Web Address: <http://www.mg.co.za/article/2008-07-17-south-africas-mood-sours>**

