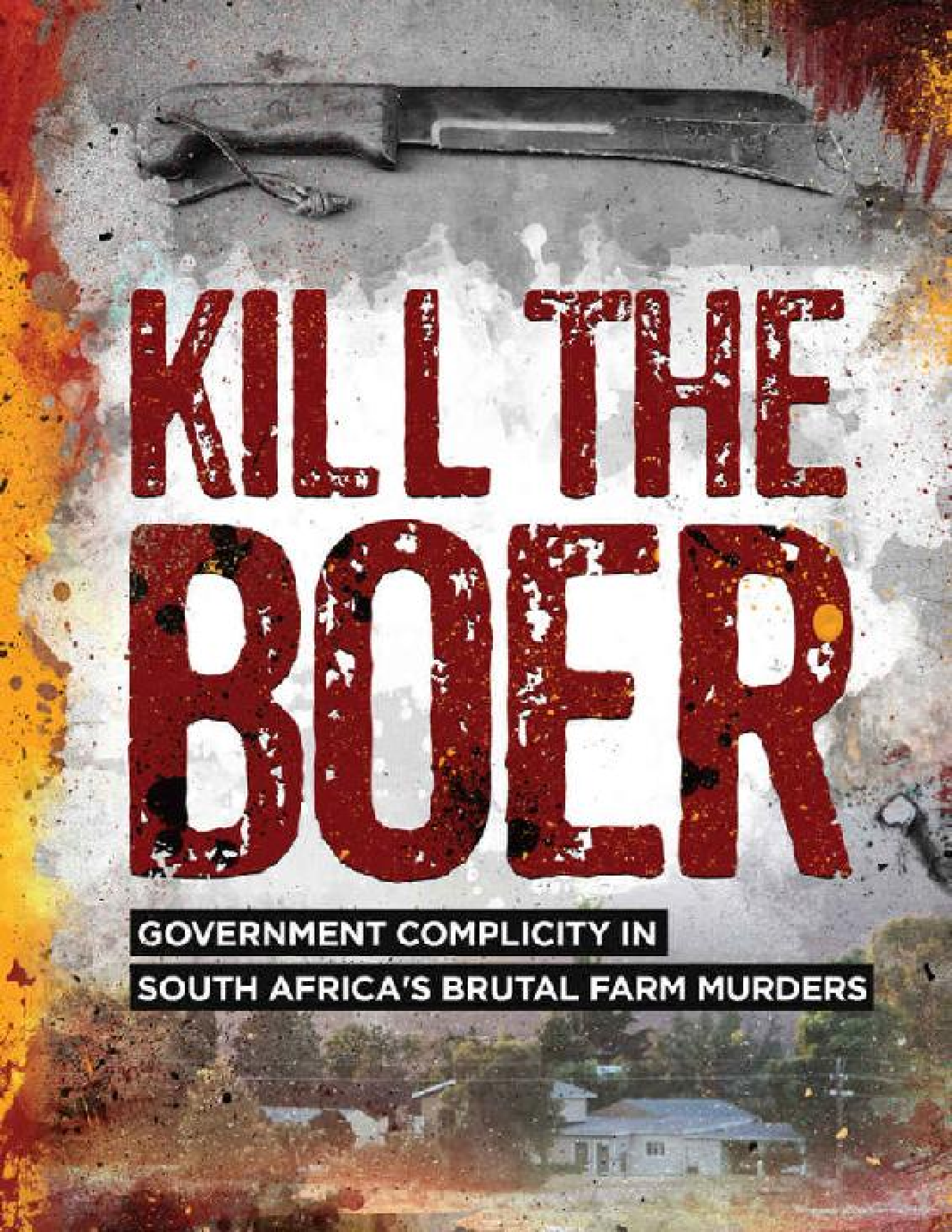
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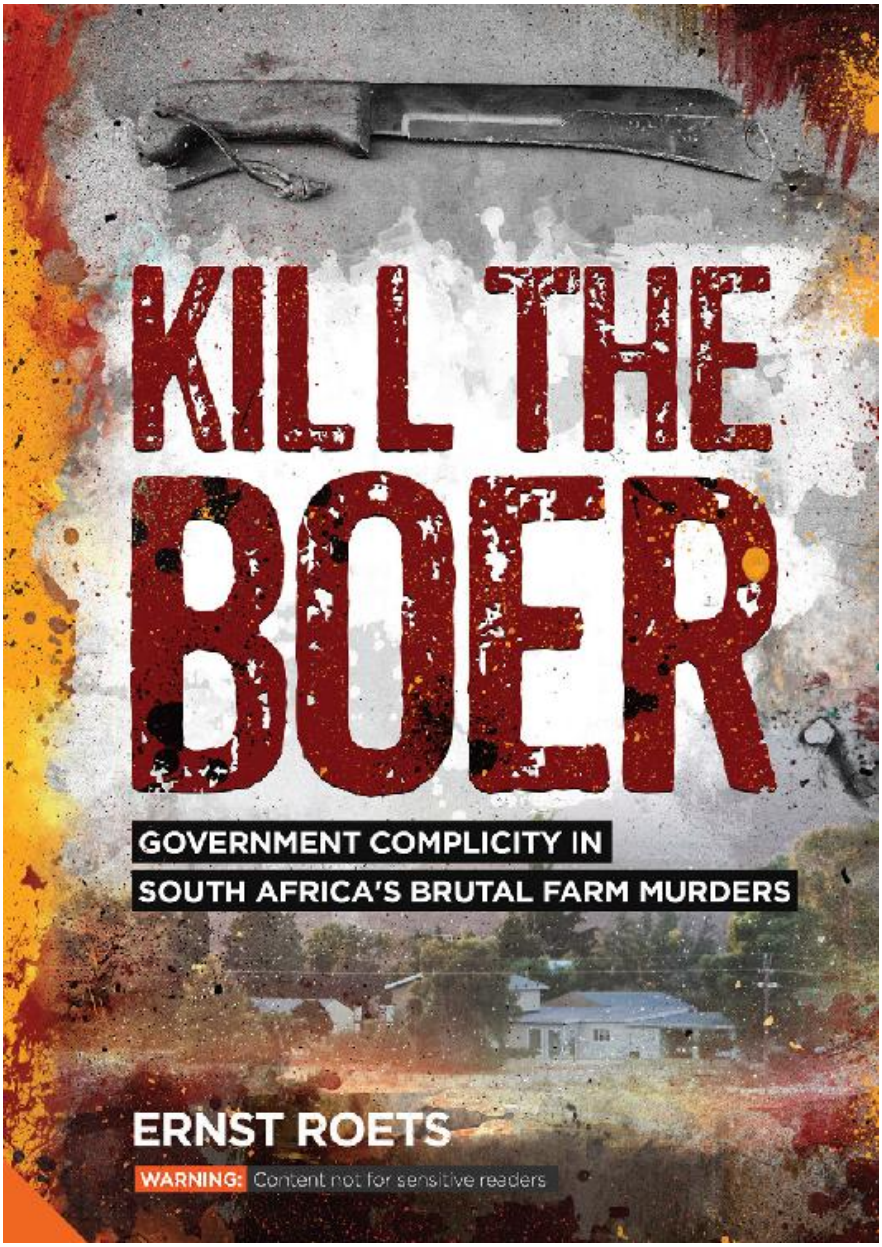

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KILL THE BOER

GOVERNMENT COMPLICITY IN SOUTH AFRICA'S BRUTAL FARM MURDERS

ERNST ROETS

Commissioned by AfriForum

KRAAL Uitgewers AfriForum

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This book is dedicated to the memory of

Wilmien Potgieter

Ephesians 6:12

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ABBREVIATIONS

AFASA African Farmers' Association of South Africa

AFU African Farmers' Union

Agri SA Agriculture South Africa

AI Amnesty International

ANC African National Congress

ANCWL African National Congress Women's League

ANI AfriForum Research Institute

(Afrikaans: AfriForum Navorsingsinstituut)

AWB Afrikaner Weerstandsbeweging

(English: Afrikaner Resistance Movement)

BLF Black First Land First

CIAC Crime Information Analysis Centre

CoGTA Department of Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs

COPE Congress of the People

COSATU Congress of South African Trade Unions

CP Conservative Party

CPF Community Policing Forum

CPUT Cape Peninsula University of Technology

DA Democratic Alliance

DAC Department of Arts and Culture

DAFF Department of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries

DL Department of Labour

DLA Department of Land Affairs

DIRCO Department of International Relations and Cooperation

DP Department of Police

DRDLR Department of Rural Development and Land Reform

EFF Economic Freedom Fighters

FBI Federal Bureau of Investigation

FF Plus Freedom Front Plus

HRW Human Rights Watch

HSRC Human Sciences Research Council

ICC International Criminal Court

ICD Independent Complaints Directorate

ICJ International Court of Justice

ICTY International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia
IFP Inkatha Freedom Party
IJR Institute of Justice and Reconciliation
ILO International Labour Organization
IPID Independent Police Investigative Directorate
IRCT International Rehabilitation Council for Torture Victims
IRR Institute of Race Relations
ISS Institute for Security Studies
ITI In Transformation Initiative
JCPS Justice, Crime Prevention and Security Cluster
JOINTS Joint Operational and Intelligence Structure
JSE Johannesburg Stock Exchange
Kwanalu KwaZulu-Natal Agricultural Union
LPM Landless People's Movement
MK Umkhonto we Sizwe
MMC Member of the Mayoral Committee
MP Member of Parliament
MSM Mainstream media
NAFU National African Farmers Union
NCPS National Crime Prevention Strategy
NDP National Development Plan
NDR National Democratic Revolution
NGO Non-governmental organisation
NIA National Intelligence Agency
NOCOC National Operational Coordinating Committee
NPA National Prosecuting Authority
NP National Party
NRSS National Rural Safety Strategy
NWU North-West University
PFP Progressive Federal Party
PRVG Promotion of the Rights of Vulnerable Groups
RPP Rural Protection Plan
SAAU South African Agricultural Union
SACCI South African Chamber of Commerce and Industry
SAHRC South African Human Rights Commission

SAICE South African Institution of Civil Engineering

SAJEI The South African Judicial Education Institute

SANDF South African National Defence Force

SAPS South African Police Service

SASCO South African Students Congress

SC Senior Counsel

SRC Student Representative Council

SRI Solidarity Research Institute

SSA State Security Agency

TAU SA Transvaal Agricultural Union of South Africa

UCT University of Cape Town

UJ University of Johannesburg

UN United Nations

UNCAT United Nations Convention Against Torture and other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment

UNODC United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime

UP University of Pretoria

US Stellenbosch University

USA United States of America

VOC Vereenighde Oost-Indische Compagnie

WFDY World Federation of Democratic Youth

WFO World Farmers' Organisation

Wits University of the Witwatersrand

ZAR Zuid-Afrikaansche Republiek

(English: South African Republic)

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NAMIBIA
BOTSWANA
Windhoek
Gaborone
Francistown
Selebi-Phikwe
Kanye
Lobatse
Serowe
Mahalapye
Orapa
Maun
Tshane
Kang
Ghanzi
Rundu
Katima Mulilo
Kasane
Victoria Falls
Hwange
Bulawayo
Livingstone
Kariba
Chirundu
Lusaka
Kafue
Chingola
Ndola
Kitwe
Solwezi
Mansa
Kasama
Mbala
Mpulungu
Nakonde
Chipata
Mfuwe
Petauke
Lundazi
Mwinilunga
Zambezi
Kabompo
Mongu
Senanga
Sesheke
Livingstone
Kazungula
Chobe
Caprivi Strip
Okavango
Kwando
Linyanti
Chobe
Zambezi
Kwando
Okavango
Makgadikgadi Pans
Nxai Pan
Boteti
Limpopo
Shashe
Motloutse
Tuli Block
Ramotswa
Gaborone
Lobatse
Kanye
Molepolole
Serowe
Palapye
Mahalapye
Selebi-Phikwe
Francistown
Orapa
Maun
Shakawe
Tsodilo Hills
Ngamiland
Chobe National Park
Kasane
Kazungula
Victoria Falls
Hwange National Park
Bulawayo
Matobo Hills
Plumtree
Tuli Block
Limpopo
Shashe
Motloutse

PREFACE

This is personal

My grandfather was a farmer. So was his father before him. So is his son and today also the sons of his son. I grew up in the agricultural community of Tzaneen in Limpopo, where I spent much of my childhood on my grandfather's farm, which later became my uncle's farm and where my two cousins are now farming with him. Despite having adapted to the metropolitan Gauteng where I have lived since I finished high school, I still refer to myself as a *plaasjapie* (English: farm boy). Visiting my uncle and cousins on the farm still has a mesmerising effect on me. Everything just feels cleaner, fresher and more peaceful. I have always believed Tzaneen to be the most beautiful place in the country – not for the beauty of the town itself, but for the beauty of the farms.

But in this beauty – in this peace – lies a stark paradox: Tzaneen is one of the most dangerous places in the world to be a farmer. This, in a country that is already the most dangerous country in which to be a farmer. Having lived on a farm for three years, I know the feeling of alarms going off in the middle of the night, of branches cracking outside the window, or the sudden silence of crickets, leaving you to wonder if that moment has finally arrived for you …

I have been involved with the civil and minority rights movement AfriForum since its founding in 2006, and have been a full-time employee since 2011. Since its inception the organisation has grown to be the largest civil rights organisation on the African continent and currently comprises more than 200 000 members. The promotion of community safety is one of our core goals. My job includes the coordinating of our campaigns for the prioritising of farm attacks in particular.

Campaigning against farm attacks is more than just a job, however. It is personal.

At the age of 32, the fingers on my two hands are not enough to count all the people I know who have either been attacked or murdered on South African farms and smallholdings, or whose loved ones have been murdered.

Let me prove this to you …

When my friend Henk Greyling (pseudonym) arrived at the farmhouse at 22:30 in the evening, he immediately knew that something was wrong. The large gate was open. The floodlights were off and the dogs were barking. Leaving the scene was not an option, as he knew that his uncle was in the house with five children, two of whom were still babies. The oldest of the children was sixteen and the youngest was only five months old. Greyling's aunt sat in the *bakkie* (English: pickup truck) next to him.

He told his aunt to wait in the car, while he got out to inspect the small gate. Just as he reached the gate, he saw a shiny object swinging at him from the dark. Instinctively, he swung back with his fist, striking an attacker. Another attacker charged at him from behind, striking him hard on the back of his head with the back-end of a shotgun. Greyling fell to the ground. He was disoriented. He felt the man grabbing him from behind, swinging his left arm around his chest, holding him. He knew what would follow. The attacker's right arm then swung in, clutching a blade. Greyling realised that the man was about to slit his throat, so he pressed down hard with his chin onto his neck, succeeding in twisting the blade.

When the man made the cut, he missed Greyling's throat, but sliced open the flesh under his lower jaw. Adrenaline kicked in. Instinct took over. Greyling is a fighter, so he acted on his instinct – he fought back. The two men had, however, already overpowered him. Suddenly he felt a piece of metal in his mouth. The realisation that the barrel of a loaded .45 Magnum was stuck into his mouth seemed to have paralysed him just enough for the attackers to tie his hands behind his back. The thought of the children in the house never left his mind. The attackers dragged both him and his aunt into the house.

Once they were inside, they tied up his aunt next to his uncle, who was already tied up. There were eight or nine attackers in the house. Greyling managed to break loose. He rushed towards one of the attackers, attempting to punch him with his fist. However, he was shot in the right arm and fell to the floor. He immediately got up, so they shot him through the left shoulder. He dropped again. When he got up the third time, they fired two shots through his hips. In the heat of the moment, Greyling did not feel any pain, and so he assumed that they must have missed. His aunt pleaded for him to remain lying on the floor, which he then did. One of the attackers started

kicking him, trampling him with safety boots, breaking his ribs and twisting his spine.

When Greyling got up again, they struck him in the face with the back of a firearm, breaking out three of his teeth.

They asked Greyling's uncle for the keys to the safe, but he responded that he did not know where they were. So they took out a side cutter and made a big cut through his ear. Being a bleeder, Greyling's uncle started bleeding excessively. They asked Henk for the keys to his uncle's safe, but he also said that he did not have them. He noticed, however, that the safe had already been broken out of the wall.

After torturing Greyling, the attackers left the scene with the safe on the back of their vehicle. Greyling had been lying on his uncle and was soaked in blood. Still not realising that he had been shot, he assumed that it was only his uncle's blood.

Greyling's brother Stefan (pseudonym) arrived just after the attackers had left, so they jumped into the bakkie and chased after the attackers. They found the attackers with the vehicle next to the road, trying to open the safe. One of the attackers stood in the road. They started firing on each other. Greyling's brother managed to run over him at full speed, crushing his body. His brother was shot through the collar bone and his lung was perforated. They rushed to the hospital.

Other than the attacker whose crushed body was found the following day on a garbage dump at a nearby black township, everyone survived. The most distressing part of my friend's story will be better understood within the context of the information that I will disclose in the chapters to follow. For that reason, I will revert to my friend's story in the closing chapter of this book.

LOVED ONES

On 31 May 2016, my own brother Pieter Roets was attacked by three men on a smallholding near Muldersdrift in Gauteng.[1] Roets had fallen asleep on the couch and woke up to find attackers climbing through the kitchen window. As one came walking into the living room, Roets charged towards him, only to see the man sticking a loaded revolver into his face. They tied him up, made him lie flat on the floor with his face facing downwards and they threw a blanket over his head. Thinking that they would shoot him in

the head any second, he listened as they ransacked his place. Once Roets believed them to have left, he waited for a little while and then managed to cut the ropes with his pocket knife. The attackers were arrested soon thereafter. They were found guilty on 33 counts, including three murders and five attempted murders, and sentenced to 309 years' imprisonment each.

They had been charged for committing several farm attacks in the area. Up to 13 different incidents were reported. They had also been charged with several murders. My brother seemed to have been the only one of their victims who had suffered no physical harm.

On 22 December 1999, Aldo Wessels (or oom Aldo[2] as we knew him) and his wife, tannie Alta, were attacked on their farm Koelkloof in George's Valley, Limpopo. Aldo (63) was shot in the stomach. Alta (61) suffered head injuries. They survived, but Aldo was paralysed for the rest of his life.[3]

On 16 April 2000, John (77) and Bina Cross (76), the grandparents of a young woman who worked in the office of the farm on which I had grown up, were attacked on their farm near Gravelotte in Limpopo. They were ambushed by two men waiting for them to return home from church. Bina was shot three times – through her knees and back. She was then left to die slowly as she bled out, while the attackers continued torturing her husband. While she was still alive, the attackers also poured boiling water from the kettle over her body. John suffered gunshot wounds to his kidneys. A noose was tied around his neck and used drag him around the house. He was then tied up in the bathroom and put in the bath. The shower nozzle was forced down his throat and the hot water tap was opened. After several hours, he was shot in the head at close range with a shotgun. The post-mortem examination revealed that his internal organs had been burned and that his stomach was filled with water.[4]

On 6 January 2002, a member of our church congregation, Susan van den Heever (71), was attacked and murdered on their farm near Tzaneen, Limpopo by two young men in their twenties. Van den Heever was beaten to death with a hammer. Her skull was crushed and her face was beaten beyond recognition. She was then dragged into the house and tied up.[5] She had stayed home that Sunday morning and her husband, oom Tobie, had gone to church alone. The sermon was interrupted when someone came running into the church to inform him what had happened to his wife.

In February 2003, a young man who had gone to school with me, Joseph Greyling, was murdered at the age of 19 on a farm near Hoedspruit, Limpopo. He and his partner, Johannes Swart (30), were shot through the head while they were sleeping. A 28-year-old Zimbabwean man, Peter Ndlovu, was handed down two life sentences for the double murder.[6]

On 2 February 2011, the body of Frik Hermann (78), the uncle of my colleague Dirk Hermann, was found on his farm near Bela-Bela (previously Warmbaths) in Limpopo. His hands had been tied behind his back. He had been kicked, his ribs had been broken and his lungs had been perforated as a result of stab wounds. He had been dead for about a week before his body was discovered by a friend. He had died a very painful, lonely death.[7]

On 5 December 2012, Arina Muller (29), the sister of Johannes Muller, a friend of mine, was murdered. She was shot point blank as she entered the house on their smallholding near Centurion in Gauteng. Arina was then shot again in front of her mother when she entered the hallway. The attackers ran away.[8]

On 30 October 2016, my father's cousin was murdered on a farm near Ventersdorp, North West. It was early on a Sunday morning when Annerie Grobler (55) went out to feed the animals and was confronted by three attackers. She resisted, after which she was stoned and a garden fork was pierced through her head.[9]

In June 2017, Elsa Erasmus (74) – my neighbour's aunt – went missing from her farm near Schweizer-Reneke in North West. The community searched for her for several days. Her body was eventually found. She had been attacked by three young men, raped and shot in the head, presumably with her own .22 rifle. The police investigation found that the last thing she had done before the incident had been to lay a wreath of flowers at the spot where her husband had died three years before.[10]

On 24 September 2017 my mother-in-law's cousin Johnny Muller and his wife, Dalene, were attacked on their farm near Frankfort in the Free State. Johnny was shot through the head and Dalene was left to deal with the attackers herself. Eventually she managed to press the panic button, which caused the attackers to flee. The bullet that had struck Johnny entered above his right eye and exited close to a main artery on the left side of his neck. Johnny miraculously survived and I was able to sit down with him and

Dalene after he had been discharged from hospital. They explained all the details of the attack on camera.[11]

On 20 November 2017 I received a text message from a friend from high school: ‘With sadness I would like to share this with you today Ernst … Our neighbour and dear family friend was murdered here at Hoedspruit last night.’ Christo Redelinghuys (60) had been a well-known farmer in the area. Redelinghuys and his daughter, Retha (29), had been confronted by three men on the evening of 19 November as they went out to close a farm gate. Redelinghuys asked them what they were doing there. Without answering, they immediately fired at him with a shotgun, murdering him in front of his daughter. They attackers then left the scene, without stealing anything.[12] My friend described Redelinghuys as a beloved man who had been close to their hearts.

On 25 January 2018, Dries Steenkamp (77), the grandfather of my colleague Philip Robinson’s girlfriend, was attacked on his farm near Lydenburg in Mpumalanga. Steenkamp was overpowered by three attackers before daybreak. He was shot three times. The attackers left the scene without stealing anything. Steenkamp passed away in hospital a day later.[13]

But perhaps the most mysterious story of all is what happened to my mother-in-law in December 2009.

My mother-in-law resided on her family’s farm near Frankfort in the Free State. She woke up in the middle of the night when she heard people walking around the house, whispering to one another. Her fear was confirmed when someone shone a light through the window of the main bedroom in which she slept. The intruders seemed not to have noticed her and continued walking around the house. She immediately sent a message to the neighbours and the local community safety structure for help. Shortly thereafter, she could hear the intruders breaking a window in the living room. Around that time, help arrived, rushing to the farmhouse. Upon their arrival, the two intruders casually walked towards them and explained that they were police officers and that they had just come to the house to check if everything was okay. They were not dressed in uniform and they did not have badges with them. Eventually nothing came of the incident and the police were not able to explain what had actually happened that night.

If the reception of this book is what I hope it to be, I will certainly consider publishing a second, updated edition in due course. For the purpose of updating the book, I encourage you, the reader, to contact me with your comments regarding anything that you read in it. While I already personally know many of the victims whose stories are told in this book, I would particularly like to encourage any victim – or the loved ones of any victim – whose name is mentioned in this book to contact me so that we can stay in touch regarding future developments.

Also, together with the teams at AfriForum and Kraal Uitgewers, we have uploaded sharable content regarding a variety of issues dealt with in this book to the website at www.killtheboerbook.com. Once you have read the book, I encourage you to visit the website and to share the content that you find there with your friends and family on social media. By participating in the campaign to raise awareness about farm murders, you might contribute to the saving of lives and to the achievement of the necessary interventions that are required to curb these attacks.

Lastly, I encourage you to participate in the discussion. You can do this by emailing me with your thoughts after reading this book. You can also contact me via the websites of AfriForum and Kraal Uitgewers, as well as on social media.

I look forward to hearing from you.

Ernst Roets

June 2018

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The author

June 2018

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EDITOR'S NOTES

This book is divided into three parts. Part 1 deals with the phenomenon of farm attacks and why the author argues that farm attacks are unique by nature. Part 2 deals with the political climate in South Africa and several topics that overlap with the issue of farm attacks. The author refers to this political climate as the *zeitgeist* (English: the spirit of the times). Part 3 deals with the South African government's official reaction to farm attacks and what should be done to address the problem. The book concludes with a chapter that pulls all of these threads together. There are several overarching themes in this book. The two major themes are:

1. Farm attacks are unique for a variety of reasons, which justifies the prioritising of these attacks by responding with a focused counter-strategy.
2. The South African government is complicit in the problem for at least ten reasons. These include the systematic deprioritisation of farm attacks, negative stereotyping of white farmers in particular, justification of murders, romanticising of violence and in extreme cases even direct involvement of the police in the execution of these attacks.

The book was written to be read as a whole, although it is also outlined to make it easy for the reader to skip to particular sections. For this purpose, the chapters have been organised according to different pieces of the puzzle that makes up the brutal reality of farm murders in South Africa. Farm attacks are unique by nature and deserving of a unique counter strategy. Other than using the table of contents, it is also recommend to use the index as a reference, since there is a degree of overlap between the topics covered in the different chapters.

Considering the fact that the South African government frequently accuses AfriForum of lying about farm attacks, a special effort was put into source references for this book. Many of the source references are not necessary, but the author added them to neutralise the criticism that this book is sure to receive. Even despite effort with source references, it is expected that some people will still describe this book as propaganda of some sort and of engaging with a topic that should not be taken seriously.

This is expected especially from the South African government, the ruling African National Congress (ANC), the Economic Freedom Fighters (EFF), some so-called progressive think tanks, and, most unfortunately, certain noteworthy so-called opinion formers in the media. It is expected that this book will be criticised not so much for its researched content, but for the narrative, which is contrary to the narrative produced by many in the mainstream, and which will therefore be described as counter-productive.

A lot of effort was made to include the ages of murdered victims who are mentioned in this book and also to state where these murders were committed by mentioning the closest town and the province. A map is added at the beginning of this chapter for those readers who are unfamiliar with South Africa's provinces as they are currently known.

References to the South African rand include references on the value in US dollar (abbreviated as $ for the purpose of this book), and references to US dollar include reference on the value in South African rand. A set exchange rate of R12,50 for $1 was used throughout this publication.

A deliberate effort was made to combine as many of the victims' stories as possible with a data-driven analysis to clarify the bigger picture regarding farm attacks. According to the author there are two major components to effectively addressing this crisis – knowing the problem and fighting it effectively. For this reason he mentioned some examples of measures that have been taken to date in the campaign against farm attacks where they are relevant to the topics addressed throughout this book.

Any reference to 'we' in this book is a reference to AfriForum, unless the context clearly indicates otherwise.

In this book the author deliberately refrained from using the word 'African' to refer to black people, given that he has a fundamental problem with the underlying notion that people who are not black cannot also be Africans. In South African legislation 'Black people' are defined in the Employment Equity Act as 'a generic term which means Africans, Coloureds and Indians,'[14] implying that it is only people of a dark complexion who have the right to be called Africans. This is a historical, philosophical and genealogical fallacy. In Chapter 9 it is explained that white people can rightly claim to be Africans. Therefore the word 'black' is used to refer to black people who are not coloureds or Indian.

All quotations from social media platforms are printed verbatim and unedited.

Because farm murders is a topic that can easily be misused for personal gain or profit, the author declined to accept any proceeds or royalties from the sales of this book.

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CHAPTER 1

A land of sorrow

Martin Coetzee noticed that the ceilings and roof panels of the old farmhouse had been stripped. Being a part-time sheep and cattle farmer, the 82-year-old Coetzee was not permanently based on his farm. Suikerboskop, as it is known, was a fairly small farm near Belfast in Mpumalanga that had been in the Coetzee family for generations. Upon visiting the farm he had the habit of inspecting the land to ensure that everything was still in order.

Within a few hundred metres of the old farmhouse, a village was being constructed. Coetzee had been aware of this prior to his arrival on the farm and had refrained from taking legal action to remove the inhabitants from his land.

Visibly frustrated by the destruction of his property, the 82-year-old approached the village, which consisted of about a dozen or so houses. Villagers were busy constructing new homes from ceiling and roof panels when Coetzee arrived. Not knowing who most of these people were, Coetzee started questioning them, asking what they were doing on his farm and why they were destroying the farmhouse. Suddenly, Coetzee was hit over the head with a wooden object. The attacker continued, hitting him on the arms and legs. As Coetzee dropped to the ground, he was attacked by a group of women of the village, who bound his hands and tied him with his back to a large wooden pole, erected in the middle of the village.

Over the five hours that followed, Coetzee was repeatedly beaten by a man who went by the name of Sipho. During the attack, Coetzee managed to loosen the grip of the ropes and unfasten the knot, which only resulted in more severe beatings. When Coetzee noted for a second time that he was able to untether the bindings, he decided not to do so, knowing that any attempt to set himself free would only be followed by more severe beatings.

However, the most appalling part of the attack on Martin Coetzee was what followed. After several hours of beatings, Coetzee was lying flat in the dirt, soaked in blood and with a fractured arm. By that time, the attackers started making phone calls. Despite his condition, Coetzee was still conscious and quite aware of his surroundings.

The first vehicle arrived, and two unidentified men got out. The men were clothed in business attire.

Coetzee could not understand all their conversations, which were in Zulu, but from their talk he concluded that these men were either from the local ANC branch or the local government (which was run by the ANC), and that they had discussed something about ‘taking the farm’. They looked at Coetzee from several metres away, but never spoke to him. Shortly after these men had left, the police arrived. Upon their arrival, Coetzee started struggling again to loosen the grip of the ropes. This time, his attempts were not followed by continued beatings. The police exited their vehicle and approached the crime scene. To Coetzee’s distress, the police seemed not to be interested in him. In fact, they casually approached the attackers and engaged in conversation with them. This was when Coetzee realised that the police had arrived not to rescue him, but because they had been called to the scene by the very people who had been torturing him for several hours.

From the manner in which the police officers engaged in discussions with the attackers, it was clear that they knew each other, recalls Coetzee. After having been in conversation for about 15 minutes or so, the officers turned to Coetzee, who was now sitting on the ground, dripping with blood, loosened ropes around his hands and arms. ‘What are you doing here?’ one police officer asked. ‘This is my farm. I was assaulted by these men,’ he replied. The officer then turned his head towards Sipho, continuing in casual discussion, as if Coetzee had not said anything. About 15 minutes later, they strolled back to their vehicle, driving around the farm before leaving.

By this time, the attackers had clearly lost interest in Coetzee. After a while he managed to get up, stumbling towards his old bakkie (English: pickup truck). Not knowing what to do, he got into the vehicle and pulled away towards Pretoria. After having driven more than 200 kilometres (124 miles) in an old farm bakkie with a fractured arm, Coetzee checked himself in at the Unitas Hospital in Centurion.

The attack on Martin Coetzee took place on 26 May 2014. On 26 June that year – a day of the year that has been declared International Day in Support of Victims of Torture by the United Nations – AfriForum hosted a conference to raise international awareness about the torture that so many of South Africa’s farmers have had to experience in the past two decades. Coetzee, now with his arm in a sling, had decided to attend the conference.

He told his story in private to delegates who were present, as he was not prepared to take the stage on this issue.

The following day I visited the farm together with Coetzee, two colleagues and a senior reporter at *Rapport* newspaper. This was the first time that Coetzee had visited the farm since the incident. Our first stop was the old farmhouse, which by that time had been close to being completely demolished. From there we proceeded towards the village. Upon our arrival, a woman started screaming ferociously, running towards one of the houses. She appeared to be calling for someone to draw their attention to our presence. After noticing that her calls seemed to be falling on deaf ears, we approached the woman, who refused to speak to us and simply turned away, clearly distressed. We then noticed a man who looked like a cattle herder walking towards us. He introduced himself as Piet Mahlangu. Mahlangu appeared to be farming on the land. Having asked him in what capacity he was farming on someone else's land, Mahlangu replied that he was employed on the farm.

At this stage, Coetzee was furious, stating that he had never seen this man, and that he was certainly not one of his employees. Mahlangu then explained that his father was in fact a former employee of Coetzee's, which, according to Mahlangu, implied that he also had the right to live on and to graze his cattle on the farm. In reply to questions about the attack on Coetzee, Mahlangu shrugged, saying that he knew about the incident, but that he could not comment, as he had not been there when it happened. He then described Sipho – the man who had thrown the first blow at Coetzee – as one of his employees. 'Where is he? Can we speak to him?' I asked. Mahlangu shrugged again, saying that he could not tell us where he was, other than that he was somewhere on the farm, busy farming.

Shocking as it might sound, Coetzee's story is not that unique. Sure, the story about the unknown men pulling up and the police officers who did not seem to care seems appalling, but as you will note from other cases in this book, even the most exceptional parts of this story are not really that exceptional once you put all the pieces together. As a matter of fact, Coetzee was only one of more than ten thousand people who have been attacked on South Africa's farms and smallholdings and who were fortunate enough to live to tell the tale. About two thousand cases could be verified by 2018 in which the victims had not been that lucky.

It is because of the immensity of this phenomenon (on average, more than one farm attack has been committed every day in South Africa over a period of time covering more than two decades) that Coetzee's story is not even well known. For this reason it is important to distinguish between farm attacks and farm murders. When we talk of *farm attacks* we refer to incidents on farms that comply with the definition of a farm attack. All farm murders occur during farm attacks, but not all farm attacks result in murder. However, the point is that farm attacks have become a regular phenomenon in South Africa – to the extent that they are rarely reported in the news. On average, more than one farm murder is committed every week in South Africa. With that reality in mind, who could really blame news outlets for not reporting on farm attacks when no one was killed? What made Coetzee's case slightly newsworthy, however, were the details, as explained above. But even these details were not enough to bring Coetzee's case to the public's notice.[1]

If you are not a South African citizen, you might ask: how much worse can it get? If this example is not bad enough, what additional elements should be present in a farm attack for it to be engraved in the hearts and minds of the community?

HE IS HERE TO KILL YOU

30 September 2016 ended like a normal day in the lives of Johann (43) and Mariandra Heunis (32). They lived on a smallholding north of Pretoria. Johann was a self-employed cabinetmaker who also farmed with chickens on a small scale, and did work for other farmers too. His dream was to have his own farm and to be a full-time farmer. Johann and Mariandra had met in 2006 and were married in 2009. They had just celebrated their seventh wedding anniversary. The couple had three little girls – Mieke (6), Mischa (4) and Majandré (2). Mariandra was 36 weeks pregnant with their fourth child, a boy, whom they intended naming AJ, after Johann.

Mariandra and Johann had discussed the dangers of living on the smallholding. They had seen the movie *Treurgrond* (a film in which the lead character and his family are murdered during a farm attack). Johann was really upset by what was happening on South Africa's farms and smallholdings. They discussed the possibility of moving to the city for the sake of their family. However, they decided to upgrade their security.

That evening, the whole family was upstairs in the living room, watching TV. One by one they fell asleep. Mariandra carried Majandré and Mischa downstairs to their beds. Mieke was tucked in and fast asleep on a little mattress on the floor by the TV. Mariandra decided to let her lie there for a little while longer. She went to lie down on the couch next to her husband and daughter.

The dogs started barking. Mariandra woke up. She tried to wake Johann, but he was very tired. Half asleep, he murmured that it was probably a cat. Mariandra went to check all the windows, but she did not see anything. The dogs did not appear to be too distraught, so she assumed that it was just a cat. She went to lie down again. She heard a sound. It sounded like Mischa coming upstairs to lie with them. She sat up straight and looked over the railing for her daughter, but did not see her coming upwards. Something felt wrong. Having already checked the house and knowing that it was locked up like a prison, Mariandra closed her eyes again. Then she heard another sound. It was the sound of a gun cocking. She opened her eyes. In front of her stood two men, pointing a pistol at her.

Mariandra immediately realised what was happening. She screamed frantically. The attackers also started screaming gesturing that they wanted to push her over. Johann woke up, but remained calm. The men asked for money. Mariandra and Johann both explained that there was no money in the house. Mieke woke up and started moving around in the room, completely distressed by what she was seeing. Johann explained to them where all the valuable items in the house were – the TV, the computers, the car. They could take what they wanted. Johann remained lying on the couch, lifting his head upright with his hand, anchored on his elbow. He was making it clear that he was no threat to them. He kept talking to them in a calm voice. ‘Please just leave us alone. You can take anything you want. Just do not hurt my family,’ he said. ‘This man is a killer,’ said the one attacker, ‘and he is here to kill you.’

Then they opened fire.

They fired the first shot at Mieke. They turned to Johann and started firing at him at close range. The first bullet went straight into his heart. They fired five shots into his body, into his arm, his abdomen and his legs. When Mariandra saw the blood, she prayed for them to leave so that she could take her husband to the hospital. She tried to shield her unborn baby.

Mieke was on the other side of the room. The shot had missed her, but she was not able to run to her mother, because the attackers were between them. She then ran to her father, crawling in between him and the back of the couch.

They aggressively grabbed Mariandra by the arm. They told her to go with them downstairs. She refused. They were screaming at each other. In a moment of innocence that befits a six-year-old girl, little Mieke sat down on the mattress. She raised her hand, as if to indicate to the intruders that she had something to say. They did not seem to care. Even though her first language was Afrikaans, she tried her best to address the intruders in English. 'I've got money. You can take my money. I have got a *spaarbussie* [English: piggy bank],' she said. She asked them to take her money and leave her mommy alone. They were pulling at Mariandra to go downstairs with them.

Upon hearing his daughter offer to hand over her piggy bank, Johann, who had fallen off the couch by then, stood up and stumbled towards them. He was able to take two steps. By then he was unable to breathe. He was already drowning in his blood, which was also bubbling from his mouth. He looked at the attackers. 'Please!'

At that moment, the one turned to the other. 'Just kill him brother.' Mariandra screamed at the top of her lungs. The man stepped towards Johann, lifting his firearm to Johann's face. Mieke screamed: 'No! No! No! No!' He pulled the trigger. Johann fell face first on the floor.

They then turned to Mariandra. 'Where are the other children?' they asked, sticking the pistol to her head. All she could grab was a nearby pillow, which she desperately shoved between her head and the barrel of the gun. She said that they had done enough and that they should just go. 'Just go! Just go! Just go! You can take everything. Just go!'

The two men then took the cellphones, casually strolled down the stairs, opened the lock on the front door from the inside and walked out the door.

SLAUGHTER AT LINDLEY

On Saturday, 1 December 2010, Attie Potgieter (40) drove towards his farmhouse outside Lindley, a small town in the central Free State. In his car with him was his wife, Wilna (36), and their little daughter, Wilmien (2). It was Attie and Wilna's wedding anniversary. Upon their arrival, as Attie got

out of the vehicle, a shot was fired at him. He was immediately attacked by six men, armed with a panga (English: machete), a garden fork and a knife. While fighting with Attie, the men also dragged Wilna and Wilmien out of the vehicle.

What followed was a struggle on the lawn around the house during which Attie desperately tried to defend his family from the attackers. Eventually, upon reaching the porch at the backdoor, Attie collapsed. His blood was found on the walls around the house, all the way from his vehicle to the backdoor. He had been hit over the head with a panga, a knife and a garden fork. He had been stabbed 151 times with these objects and he was left dead with the garden fork piercing his neck.

This, of course, happened in full view of his wife and daughter. Wilmien ran to her father. Her feet were covered in his blood and her bloodied footprints were found on the pavement around his body. It is believed that the attackers then picked Wilmien up and carried her to a small storage room. She was shot in the head and thrown in a box, which was later found about half full with her blood.

After having witnessed the murders of her husband and daughter, Wilna was taken into the house, where she was told to open the safe for the attackers. They took R3 300 ($264), then instructed Wilna to kneel and then shot her in the head, executioner style. Wilmien's little body was then collected from the box and thrown on that of her mother. After all of this had happened, the attackers took a piece of cardboard and wrote the words 'We have killed them. We are coming back' in Sotho on it. They then placed the cardboard on the entrance gate to the farm.[2]

Attie was said to have withdrawn R7 000 ($560) from the bank the day before the attack. The suspects had allegedly paid Attie's employees R500 ($40) each for the information that they had been given about the family's activities and movements. Three of the attackers had worked for Attie. The day after the murder took place, the three workers met the son of Attie's neighbour on a nearby road and told him that their employer was lying dead outside his house. The attackers were arrested shortly thereafter. Credit cards and a 9 mm pistol, all covered in blood, were found in a shack near Lindley. Another firearm was found on the scene. The six men, who were eventually found guilty, were between the ages of 17 and 34. The youngest was found to have wielded the garden fork.

WHAT ARE THEY DOING THERE IN THE FIRST PLACE?

During the hours in which the Potgieters were murdered, in Randburg, roughly 230 kilometres (143 miles) away, several youth movements were preparing for a televised debate about imperialism. The panel members were myself (I was the national chairperson of AfriForum Youth at the time), Makashule Gana, who had just been elected leader of the DA Youth, Magdalene Moonsamy, spokesperson for the ANC Youth League (who would later break away from the ANC together with the president of the Youth League, Julius Malema, to form the EFF, for which she would become a member of parliament), and Tiago Vieira, president of the World Federation of Democratic Youth (WFDY) and also a friend and so-called comrade of Malema. Vieira and his movement had been in the country to host the 17th World Festival of Youth and Students. The movement was essentially about promoting socialism and fighting imperialism.

During the debate, Vieira and Moonsamy took a hard line against imperialism in other African countries. I responded, saying that we can indeed engage in discussion about imperialism in Africa, but that there are many atrocities committed in South Africa, farm murders in particular, that deserve our more immediate attention. I also expressed my concern that these murders sometimes occur under the banner of 'anti-imperialism'. Moonsamy, visibly angry, lashed back. Why were we talking about the killing of white farmers, she wanted to know. 'What are they doing on those farms in the first place?' she said, suggesting that white farmers who are killed actually deserve what is coming to them simply because of their being on the land. This was of course said to the great amusement of the audience. Vieira went even further, arguing – in the name of anti-imperialism – that black South Africans have a right to make statements such as 'kill the whites and sing songs such as ''Kill the Boer!'' ', while white South Africans do not have the same so-called right.[3]

This debate was recorded as Attie, Wilna and Wilmien lay dead on their farm, before anyone – other than the attackers – knew about their murders.

I later wrote to Vieira to bring the killing of the Potgieter family to his attention. In my letter, I also asked him to withdraw his statement about black people having the right to encourage the murder of white people, calling on the WFDY to make a statement to the effect that the encouragement of the killing of white South Africans needed to stop. Vieira

did not respond. I also wrote to Urban Brew Studios, where the debate had been recorded, asking for a copy of the video footage. After a long struggle, I finally obtained the footage, only to find that Moonsamy's suggestion that white farmers deserve to be killed had been edited out. I brought this to the attention of the studio, who simply replied that they did not know how that had happened and that they did not have the complete footage anymore.

However, during the court proceedings of the Potgieters' murderers, the ANC Women's League (ANCWL) came out strongly in support of the victims, protesting for harsh punishment of the six accused. While welcoming the ANCWL's condemnation of the killings, AfriForum's view was that the ANC should accept responsibility for what had happened. At that time the ANC was involved in a court battle with AfriForum, arguing that black people and/or the ANC had a right to sing songs such as 'Dubula iBhunu' (English: Shoot the Boer). According to Kallie Kriel, CEO of AfriForum, the murder of the Potgieters made people all the more bitter because it took place in the same week during which the ANC had been trying to convince the court that the slogan 'Shoot the Boer' in ANC songs was not meant literally. 'People are literally being killed on farms and efforts by the ANC to justify "Shoot the Boer" are absurd,' Kriel said in a media statement.[4]

Meanwhile, singer Steve Hofmeyr almost sparked a racial storm in his reaction to the killing of the Potgieter family. 'Most black people I know are not violent but they slurp up the propaganda of entitlement, which gives young killers what they need to justify their brutality,' he wrote on Facebook. Hofmeyr was severely criticised for his remarks, most of all by members of the media.[5]

Two years later, on the anniversary of the Potgieter murders, several hundred farmers marched in Pretoria to the office of the Minister of Police, Nathi Mthethwa, protesting about the continued attacks and the government's unconcerned attitude. The Minister refused to accept the memorandum or to send a representative to accept it. The marchers were also barred from leaving the memorandum at reception. Shortly thereafter, those who call for the prioritising of farm attacks were described by the Minister as people who seek attention and who are attempting to curb the police's initiative to address real crime. More on this later.

A LAND OF SORROW

These examples are of course only three out of thousands. Farm attacks have become a unique phenomenon in the post-1990 South African dispensation. Before 1990 – the year in which the prohibition of communist-orientated movements was rescinded and apartheid was terminated for all practical purposes – farm attacks were virtually non-existent. (There were some noteworthy exceptions, such as the landmine attack on the Van Eck and De Nysschen families in December 1985, which we will deal with in Chapter 10).

In the past two decades, the debate about this phenomenon has been ongoing, with questions as to:

- The extent to which these crimes are motivated by race or politics, or simply by greed (the intention to steal);
- Whether these are simply 'normal crimes' or are in fact hate crimes;
- Whether there is some element of holistic planning or conspiracy behind these attacks;
- Whether struggle songs such as 'Dubula iBhunu' and 'Kill the Boer, Kill the farmer' lead to an increase in attacks;
- Whether the so-called theft of land by white people can be called upon as a justification for these crimes;
- Whether the problem is taken seriously enough and reported in a balanced manner by the media;
- Whether we are in fact witnessing a case of genocide or something else to that effect; and
- Many more questions that we shall deal with in the chapters that follow.

A particular concern about the debate regarding farm attacks is that it is often drawn into one of two extremes. In the one extreme the matter is regarded in its entirety as a political matter in which those who discuss the issue become so caught up in trying to prove their preconceived ideas that the actual facts are easily thrown out with the proverbial bath water. In the other extreme, the matter is analysed and dissected on a factual basis – with complicated calculations, technical definitions, statistical anomalies and so forth – to such an extent that the victims are forgotten in the process. This is particularly true of fact checkers and of those who have taken a stance

against the campaign to have farm murders declared a priority crime. Judging by how they frame their arguments, one cannot help but wonder whether some of them are trying to score political points by attempting to downplay the reality of farm attacks.

It is my intention to write this book with the deliberate aim of not falling into any of these traps. I will be guided by proven facts and reliable figures in the reaching of conclusions. For this reason, my conclusions are conservative. I will not draw any conclusions without having proof to back it up. When I do find myself speculating, I will state so clearly. I will make a deliberate effort to empathetically tell as many stories of farm attacks as are applicable, while also making a deliberate effort to analyse this phenomenon with as much data and as many statistics as I can.

Farm attacks should not be dealt with in isolation, but should be seen as part of a bigger picture and treated as such. That is why I will touch on several controversial topics that are often brought into discussions on farm attacks, such as hate speech, the history of land ownership, land reform, racism, working conditions on farms, media reporting and the state of the South African Police Service (SAPS).

A particular point of concern is that many of South Africa's mainstream commentators ignore the topic altogether, or only comment on farm attacks when they are confronted about this during live discussions, or when they find reason to criticise the campaign for the prioritising of these attacks. Even then, their comments are usually disparaging and critical of those who call for farm attacks to stop.

This might be because the topic is regarded as political, or even worse, that a discussion about the reality of farm attacks may result in these commentators having to deflect from their own preconceived political ideas, or to acknowledge certain things that seem to be contrary to the mainstream narrative in South Africa – the zeitgeist.

This zeitgeist is certainly one in which the stereotype of the 'brutal farmer' and the 'land thief' is aggressively promoted.[6] Farmers are continuously slandered and depicted as racist oppressors who 'stole the land' and who exploit their workers. Acknowledging that these farmers are disproportionately targeted by violent crime, including torture and murder, forces commentators to discuss the 'victimhood' of these farmers – a reality that many commentators are simply not prepared to face.

We constantly find people who are trying to downplay farm attacks in order to focus on other issues, many of which are certainly less extreme. Many argue, for example, that the cause of farm attacks should rather be regarded as part of a general decay of law and order in South Africa, as opposed to looking for political or other reasons.[7] Furthermore, there appear to be thousands of people in South Africa who either believe that the genocide has already started, or that such a process is about to start. These are people who sincerely fear for their lives. In response to this, they are frequently mocked or ridiculed by mainstream commentators and members of the media, as will be pointed out in Chapter 22. The ridiculing of people who believe that their imminent death is near, is nothing short of a reprehensible act. Other than that, there is an alarming number of people who actively and publicly encourage the slaughter of white farmers on social media, or who are prepared to defend those who call for the killing of farmers (or white people, for that matter).

We also find, especially in the mainstream media, that a severe double standard exists with regard to the reporting of farm attacks and also that there is a strong push for a recognition of farm murders as something that happens regardless of politics or race and that it is in fact a ‘normal crime’.

Other than that, the role of the South African government, and especially the SAPS, is particularly concerning. Since 1990, we have witnessed a firm acknowledgement by the South African government of the vastness of the crisis and a process of government prioritisation, followed by a systematic process of deprioritisation and an aggressive denial of the problem, followed again by a brief prioritisation of farm attacks by an acting national police commissioner who seemed like a lone voice in a wilderness of denial. The prioritisation of farm attacks by Lt Gen Khomotso Phahlane (acting National Police Commissioner October 2015 to June 2017) was, however, done in isolation, as the South African government did not follow suit and those in power continued discounting the crisis. Consequently the brief prioritisation of farm attacks in 2016 yielded no real results.

There is also a case to be made with regard to the direct involvement of the SAPS in these attacks, as this book will point out.

As you can see, writing about the topic of farm killings in South Africa is like venturing into a booby-trapped maze. This might explain why no one has ever attempted to write a current affairs book on the topic.

But nonetheless, here we go.

Martin Coetzee (82) next to the wooden pole to which he was tied during an attack on 26 May 2014 on his farm Suikerboskop near Belfast in Mpumalanga.
(Photo: Gallo Images/Foto24/Theana Breugem)

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PART 1
FARM ATTACKS ARE DIFFERENT

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The Irish farmer Robert Lynn (66) and his British wife, Sue (Susan) Howarth (64), the daughter of a Royal Navy Officer, were fast asleep on their farm near Dullstroom in Mpumalanga. The couple had been together for 40 years and married for 32 years. Looking back, Robert recalls the day when he asked her to marry him. 'When I went down on my knee and said "Will you marry me?" Susan said: "It's about bloody time!"'

Suddenly they heard a commotion at their bedroom window. The dogs were barking. The glass in the bedroom window broke.

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CHAPTER 2

What is a farm attack?

The terms *farm murder* and *farm attack* are regularly used in news reports, articles, interviews, academic reports, blogs, documentary films and on social media. Yet, those terms are not defined in South African law, nor do they exist as a distinct category of crime. For that matter, if you had no knowledge of the realities in South Africa and you were to study South African law, you would have no knowledge of even the existence of this problem.

If you were to read the speeches and statements by officials of the South African government, you would realise that there is such a thing as farm attacks; and if this was your only source of information you would probably conclude that:

1. The problem is not that serious.
2. People who complain about this do so because they are racist apartheid apologists who demand special treatment.
3. There is agreement that farm attacks should stop, but also that there are many other, more important issues to deal with, such as land reform, the plight of farm workers and people from other sections of society who are also murdered.
4. A vast number of officials who have spoken about this topic believe that in some way farmers are oppressors who ‘stole the land’.
5. Some believe that farmers even deserve what is coming to them.

When talking about farm attacks, we should therefore acknowledge that we are not talking about a particular crime that is categorised as such, but rather as a crime phenomenon that can manifest in a variety of serious crime categories, including murder, attempted murder, assault, robbery and rape.[1]

The type of criminal activity that is usually prevalent in farm attacks is in many ways similar to what the South African Police Service (SAPS) refers to as ‘robbery at residential premises’ (or ‘house robbery’), which is regarded as a sub-category of ‘aggravated robbery’, writes Johan Burger of the Institute for Security Studies (ISS).[2] The official definition of house

robbery is: ‘the unlawful and intentional forceful removal and appropriation of property from the residential premises of another person.’[3]

‘This definition should have been sufficient to describe a robbery at the residence of a farm or smallholding, but it would obviously not be descriptive of all the other acts of violence and crime that are committed in the process,’ writes Burger.[4] That is why, in 1997, as a result of a steady increase in farm attacks and related crimes since the early 1990s, and at the instigation of Agri SA, a working group of the National Operational Coordinating Committee (NOCOC) was instructed to develop a rural protection plan (RPP).[5] This document included a definition of what constitutes a farm attack. In 1997, Agri SA was still known as the South African Agricultural Union (SAAU). NOCOC comprised of the SAPS and the South African Defence Force (SADF). Agri SA was coopted with regard to rural safety.

The definition has been updated with slight changes in the National Rural Safety Strategy (NRSS) of 2011. The definition of farm attacks provided in the NRSS and that is applied from here on, is as follows:

> Acts of violence against persons on farms and smallholdings refer to acts aimed at persons residing on, working on or visiting farms and smallholdings, whether with the intent to murder, rape, rob or to inflict bodily harm.
>
> In addition, all acts of violence against the infrastructure and property in the rural community aimed at disrupting legal farming activities as a commercial concern, whether the motives are related to ideology, land disputes, land issues, revenge, grievances, racist concerns or intimidation are included.[6]

The updated definition is slightly different in the sense that it refers to ‘acts of violence against persons on farms and smallholdings’, where the RPP simply referred to ‘attacks on farms and smallholdings’

If we were to dissect this definition for clarification purposes, the following can be outlined with reference to the term *farm attack*:

1. Farm attacks are neither limited to commercial farms, nor only to farms, but also include smallholdings.

2. Farm attacks deal with particular acts of violence and not with all crimes on farms and smallholdings.
3. Farm attacks are not limited to farmers only, but include acts of violence against farm workers and people visiting farms.
4. Farm attacks can manifest as one or a combination of a variety of crimes.
5. Farm attacks can also refer to acts of violence against infrastructure and property in the rural community, where the aim was to disrupt legal farming activities as a commercial concern.
6. Farm attacks can be committed with one or a combination of various motives, including ideology, land disputes, revenge, grievances, racist concerns or intimidation.

The government-initiated Committee of Inquiry into Farm Attacks has further elaborated that specific crimes that are included in the definition are murder, attempted murder, rape, assault with the intent to do grievous bodily harm, robbery, vehicle hijacking, malicious damage to property where the damage exceeds R10 000 ($800), and arson.[7]

Furthermore, it is equally important to note what is excluded from the definition of a farm attack, and therefore what does not constitute a farm attack. Cases on farms or smallholdings relating to domestic violence or drunkenness, or resulting from commonplace social interaction between people – often where victims and offenders are known to one another – are specifically excluded from the definition.[8]

As a result, the case of the notorious Griekwastad murders, where a young man, Don Steenkamp, was found guilty of the murder of both his parents and his sister, does not constitute a farm attack as per the definition, because cases of domestic violence – even on farms or smallholdings – are excluded from the definition.[9] (This tragedy took place on 6 April 2012 on a farm in the Northern Cape.)

CRITICISM

The definition is of course not without shortcomings and has consequently attracted criticism. Human Rights Watch (HRW), an international non-governmental organisation (NGO) that conducts research and advocacy on human rights, in particular has levelled several points of criticism at this definition, of which only a summary is provided below.

In the first place, the HRW takes issue with the bundling together of farms and smallholdings in one definition, because the terms *farm* and *smallholding* are not defined to a point of general agreement. According to the HRW, people living on smallholdings are particularly vulnerable to attacks since they are effectively part of the city crime environment. As a result of the bundling together of farms and smallholdings, a picture of remote commercial farms is generated that is based on information derived partly from a very different environment, namely smallholdings in semi-rural areas surrounding the cities.[10]

Secondly, the HRW argues that 'while the definition does not refer to race, in practice racial issues dominate the way the statistics are collected – just as they dominated the decision to start collecting the statistics in the first place'.[11]

Thirdly, the HRW takes issue with the fact that crimes resulting from commonplace social interaction (including murder as a result of a drunken brawl on a farm, for example) are excluded from the definition.[12]

In the fourth place, the HRW is concerned that the term *farm attack* reinforces 'through the use of the word "attack" the idea that there is a military or terrorist basis for the crimes, rather than a criminal one'.[13]

The South African Human Rights Commission (SAHRC) has also expressed a degree of criticism, stating that 'the most limiting aspect of the definition … appears to be the exclusion of victims of domestic violence, or specific reference to violence inflicted on farm workers by farm owners'.[14]

While there is merit in the criticisms levelled by the HRW and the SAHRC, these criticisms are also not free from criticism. If all the criticisms of the HRW were to be incorporated into the definition, the result would be that there would not be much of the definition left – at least not a definition that would be workable on the road to addressing the problem at hand. If incidents of domestic violence were to be included, as is emphasised by the SAHRC, it would result in a higher frequency of farm attacks, but also in a definition that would be severely restricted. The bigger issue when it comes to farm attacks is not the extent to which people are attacking and murdering their own families, but rather the extent to which these crimes are committed by attackers. The definition would undoubtedly be clouded if domestic violence were to be included.

On the issue of whether the term *attack* is appropriate, Burger responds with: 'Why can't we talk about "farm attacks"… House robberies might just as well be described as "house attacks", since you're attacked in your house. If someone attacks you with a weapon, you can call it an attack, even if you don't get hurt.'[15]

Farm attacks are a contentious and controversial phenomenon. As is the case with all contentious issues, any proposed definition will result in a degree of scrutiny and criticism. There is no possible definition for the term *farm attack* that would be free from criticism. The question then is: How do we deal with this problem?

When dealing with theoretical challenges with regard to the solving of practical problems, it is important to bear in mind that the law is supposed to be a system of instruments created by ourselves with the aim of enabling us to protect our interests.[16] Koos Malan, a professor of public law at the University of Pretoria (UP), argues that the limitations that certain legal instruments offer may never prohibit the protection of the interests of the people in question:

> When the law is incapable of accommodating changing needs and phenomena, uncontrolled social disruption may follow. Once the law surrenders its social functionality through its inability to provide facilities, law as such is failing … While it is incumbent on law as a set of practical facilities effectively to accommodate changing social reality, the focus of legal science (among others) is to systematise and explain but also to analyse and critique positive law and to conceive explanatory conceptual frameworks including – very importantly – conceptual frameworks for the legal and just accommodation of changing needs within social reality.[17]

When we conclude that a particular need of protection cannot be dealt with within the framework of the existing legal order, it is the legal order that should be adjusted to serve the interests of those who need protection, not the other way around. If we were to convey to vulnerable communities that they are not deserving of protection because of some technical issue with the defining of concepts, we would also have to conclude that we exist to serve the legal order and not the other way around. We cannot accept this without then also acknowledging that the law has failed us.

We ought thus to be focused on solving the problem through practical measures without allowing ourselves to become entangled in theoretical intricacies and trick questions. Unfortunately, many academics prefer this entanglement because they appear to have (rather selfishly) discovered a sense of joy in arguing that the solutions at our disposal do not really exist and that we should rather entrap ourselves in a theoretical debate that is of no benefit to anyone. This is the type of academic waffling that often occurs in air-conditioned libraries or over cheese-and-wine events, while people in the real world are being attacked and killed.

Fortunately, and despite the criticism, the definition provided is already in use by virtually all the major role players involved with this matter. The reasons put forward to dismiss the definition are unconvincing. That is why, in this book, I will refer to farm attacks as a crime phenomenon and not as a crime in itself, on the basis of the NRSS definition of 2011.

FARM ATTACKS ARE DIFFERENT

In November 2012, I had a meeting with the Tshwane Metro Police about a planned protest against farm attacks. In terms of the applicable legislation,[18] we gave notice of our intention to organise a protest rally against farm murders through the streets of South Africa's capital city, Pretoria. Our aim was to march to the police headquarters to present a memorandum to the Minister of Police, Nathi Mthethwa.

I met with the local authorities in order to deal with the logistics of the march. At the meeting, we were joined by a colonel of whose name I regrettably did not make a note. He introduced himself as being in charge of implementing the NRSS and that he had been sent by the Minister to participate in the meeting. The colonel confronted me about our plans to protest. He regarded the protest as unnecessary and pointless, as the SAPS had already drafted the NRSS which, by implication, also deals with the safety of farmers (although the document does not outline a strategy to prevent farm attacks). His message was that there was no point in marching for the prioritising of a particular crime phenomenon when the crimes committed during that phenomenon were already regarded as a crime. The argument was that the NRSS deals with crime in rural areas in general, but that 'preferential treatment' of farmers would not be acceptable.

Zweli Mnisi, the Minister's spokesperson at the time, echoed this sentiment shortly thereafter to the British newspaper *The Daily Telegraph*,

when he said: ‘You can’t have a separate category that says, farmers are the special golden boys and girls. You end up saying the life of a white person is more important. You cannot do this.’[19]

The argument is therefore that farm attacks, as defined in the NRSS, are treated by the SAPS as simply being a manifestation of certain crimes that are already punishable by law, namely murder, assault, rape, armed robbery, etcetera. To develop a focused strategy would send a message that farmers are regarded as ‘special golden boys and girls’. Politically speaking, this might sound like a sound argument. However, speaking from a purely crime-prevention perspective, the argument is fallacious.

UNIQUE CRIMES REQUIRE UNIQUE COUNTER-STRATEGIES

It is not only a basic policing principle, but also basic common sense that unique crimes need to be dealt with by means of unique counter-strategies. The topic of dealing with unique crimes has also been widely written about.[20] While it is not necessary to develop unique counter-strategies for every single type of crime, there are certain crimes that simply can never be proactively addressed and prevented if proper counter-strategies are not put in place. While the South African government largely ignores farm attacks and farm murders, the tragic irony is that this particular crime phenomenon can serve as the perfect example of a phenomenon that will never be prevented effectively if a unique counter-strategy is not in place. This is because the standard methods of operation of the SAPS simply cannot serve as a response, nor as a measure to prevent it.

This is in some contexts also referred to as situational crime prevention or risk-focused crime prevention. The choice of crime-prevention strategies is (or should be) based on empirical evidence about effective methods of tackling crime risk factors. ‘[I]t also depends on what are identified as the most pressing problems in the community,’ writes the American and British criminologists Brandon Welsh and David Farrington.[21] The underlying principle here is that an evidence-based approach should be followed with regard to crime prevention. Crime prevention should be defined not by its intentions, but by its outcomes.[22] These outcomes can be defined in a variety of different ways, including the number of criminal events and the number of criminal offenders. Other ways of measuring the consequences include the amount of harm inflicted, the number of victims harmed repeatedly, etcetera.

In order to achieve these outcomes, the most appropriate method of crime prevention must be developed. When dealing with a particular crime phenomenon that is unique in a variety of ways, it follows that this unique phenomenon could only be countered effectively by means of a unique counter-strategy. In some cases we find that these unique crimes also result in uniquely destructive consequences for society at large. This is where priority crimes come in. This is also, for example, the reason why the poaching of rhinos is not simply dealt with as normal poaching, but rather by a unique counter-strategy, backed by proper crime intelligence and sufficient resources. The same can be said of copper cable theft and of violence against women and children.

Broadly speaking, there are four reasons why farm attacks are different and why it requires a unique counter-strategy, namely:

1. The frequency with which these attacks occur;
2. The levels of brutality that often accompany these crimes;
3. The unique role that farmers play in society; and
4. The unique circumstances in which farmers live.

These reasons will each be dealt with in more detail in the chapters that follow.

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Robert and Sue jumped upright in shock at what was happening. For a moment – only for a second – they looked at each other as they sat upright in their bed. Little did they know that this would be the last interaction between them. She shouted, 'What do you want?' Three people had climbed through the bedroom window. They did not bother to answer Sue's question and immediately opened fire.

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CHAPTER 3

Frequency: What are the numbers?

In my first year at university I took a course in criminology. One of the chapters of our textbook was on farm attacks. Our lecturer was a fairly young woman from Pretoria. At the commencement of the class, she asked us: ‘Who of you are from agricultural communities? Please raise your hands.’ I raised my hand, together with what seemed like a third of the class of a couple of hundred students. She continued: ‘Who of you, with your hands in the air, know someone who has been attacked or murdered on a farm?’ Almost no one lowered their hands. I was not surprised. The rest of the class, those who had their hands down prior to the second question, were utterly amazed, as was the lecturer.

Having grown up in an agricultural community – and one that is particularly plagued by farm attacks – I have noticed how, over time, people in farming communities have started to talk about a death by farm murder as if it were a death by natural causes. People would, sometimes casually, mention the fact that a person had been murdered on their farm as an incidental remark when something about that person was discussed during a social conversation, as if it was a natural cause of death.

The extent to which South African farmers are attacked and murdered is a matter of intense debate. Vastly different numbers are frequently posted on social media and a variety of calculations are made. Even when farm murders were finally discussed in Parliament in 2017, speakers from different political parties confidently provided contrasting statistics regarding the rate at which South African farmers are being murdered.[1] This discrepancy is a direct result of the decision made by the Department of Police in 2007 that no further statistics should be released regarding farm murders.[2] This confusion is, however, fuelled by an abundance of flawed calculations, based on flawed estimations of the true extent of the problem.

There are currently five main sources of data that include statistics on farm attacks and farm murders:

1. The 2003 Report of the Committee of Inquiry on Farm Attacks;
2. The SAPS Annual Reports for the years 2001/2002 to 2006/2007;

3. Individual reports and statements released by the South African Police Service(SAPS) in 2014, 2016 and 2017;
4. The data compiled by the Transvaal Agricultural Union of South Africa (TAU SA) and AfriForum; and
5. Data collected by the KwaZulu-Natal Agricultural Union (Kwanalu).

TAU SA has been collecting data since 1990. AfriForum started collecting data in 2013 and has since joined forces with TAU SA in collecting and verifying data on farm attacks.

The data released by Kwanalu was only for the province of KwaZulu-Natal and will therefore not be elaborated on in this chapter.

DATA RELEASED BY THE COMMITTEE OF INQUIRY INTO FARM ATTACKS IN 2003

In the report of the Committee of Inquiry on Farm Attacks, it is stated that in the year 1991 there were 327 farm attacks, which resulted in 66 farm murders. Ten years later, in 2001, a total of 1 011 farm attacks were committed, resulting in 147 farm murders.[3] This amounts to an increase of 209% in farm attacks and an increase of 122% in farm murders.[4] During these 11 years, 6 122 farm attacks and 1 254 farm murders were committed.[5]

DATA RELEASED BY THE SAPS FROM 2001 TO 2007

The SAPS started publishing data on farm attacks and farm murders in the financial year of 2001/2002 and did so for the six years that followed, until the release of statistics was summarily stopped.

This, despite the fact that the last report published by the SAPS in 2007 indicated a 25% upsurge in farm attacks just in that last year. (More on this in Chapter 17.)

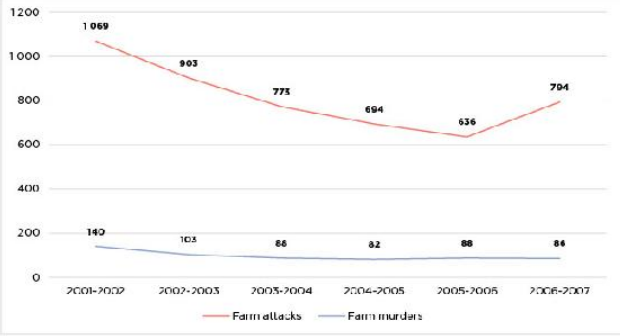

Figure 1: SAPS data on farm attacks and farm murders: 2001/2002–2006/2007[6]

From the numbers published for these six years, we can gather that:

1. A total of 587 farm murders were committed during 4 869 farm attacks.
2. On average 98 farm murders and 812 farm attacks were committed per year.
3. Out of every ten farm attacks, 1,2 farm murders were committed, or put differently: for every farm murder, about 8,3 farm attacks were committed.
4. On average, there were about two farm murders every week and more than two farm attacks per day in the course of those six years.

DATA RELEASED BY THE SAPS IN 2014, 2016 AND 2017

In 2014, the South African Human Rights Commission (SAHRC) hosted a National Investigative Hearing into Safety and Security Challenges in Farming Communities. The hearing was organised following a formal request by AfriForum to that effect. At the hearing, National Police Commissioner Riah Phiyega made available SAPS statistics on farm attacks and farm murders for the first time since 2007. The numbers provided were for the financial years of 2010/2011 to 2013/2014. According to Phiyega, a total of 2 227 farm attacks and 239 farm murders had been committed during those four years, averaging 557 farm attacks and 60 farm murders per year.

In May 2015 AfriForum formally requested the SAPS to release a detailed analysis of its statistics on farm attacks and farm murders. The request was ignored, and when all other options ran out, AfriForum took the matter to court. In February 2016, the High Court granted an order for the SAPS to provide AfriForum with such information within 30 days in terms of the Promotion of Access to Information Act.[7] The SAPS did not comply with the court order within the prescribed time frame, effectively being in contempt of court. The information was finally provided on 6 May 2016.

The SAPS report that was issued to AfriForum explained that information with respect to farm attacks and farm murders was not maintained separately in the corporate systems of the SAPS, but in a ‘stand alone data base/manual data base’, according to the generally-accepted definition of a farm attack.[8]

Then, during a bilateral workshop between AfriForum and the SAPS several months later, the acting National Police Commissioner, Khomotso Phahlane, again disclosed official SAPS data on farm attacks and farm murders. These figures were a continuation of the figures disclosed to AfriForum in May 2016, but with the exclusion of the financial years of 1996/1997 to 2000/2001 and with the inclusion of the financial years of 2014/2015 and 2015/2016.

According to these figures, during the years of 2010/2011 to 2015/2016 a total of 3 074 farm attacks and 361 farm murders had been committed, amounting to an average of 512 farm attacks and 60 farm murders per year.

In October 2017, further statistics about farm attacks were released by the SAPS after a public outcry about the fact that these numbers had again been excluded from the annual crime statistics. In the financial year of 2016/2017, 638 farm attacks had taken place, resulting in 74 farm murders. According to this release, in the years of 1996/1997 to 2016/2017, no fewer than 12 245 farm attacks and 1 700 farm murders had been committed. This should be considered within the context of the fact that there are only roughly between 30 000 and 35 000 commercial farming units in South Africa (see analysis to follow). It should also be considered that all of the 1 700 people who were murdered were not necessarily commercial farmers, given that family members, visitors on the farm and farm workers can also be the victims of farm murders.

If we were to combine these numbers with the SAPS data for 2001/2002 to 2006/2007 that were available to us prior to the release of these statistics, a bigger picture starts to emerge.

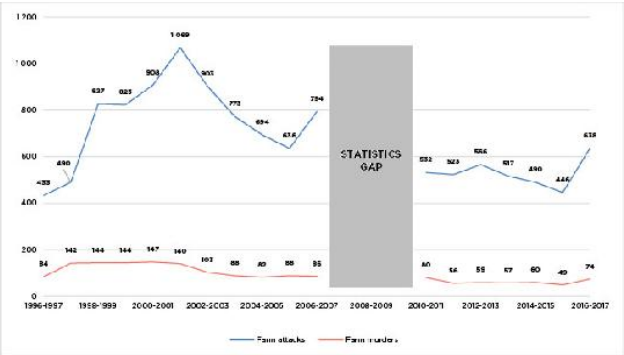

Figure 2: SAPS data on farm attacks and farm murders: 1996/1997–2016/2017[9]

Figure 2 provides an outline of the most complete statistics by the SAPS regarding farm attacks and farm murders available. Since the beginning of 2017, we have heard commentators stating that farm attacks and farm murders are on a downward slope. Those who state this do so with reference to these figures, without considering the data for the financial year of 2016/2017. When the figures released by the SAPS in October 2017 for the financial year of 2016/2017 are compared to the figures released in May 2016 for the financial year of 2015/2016, this amounts to a 43% increase in farm attacks and a 51% increase in farm murders in one year. However, in the statement released in October 2017, it was alleged that farm attacks had increased by 22,9% and farm murders by 27,5% in that year. It is unclear how these calculations were made.

If the reference by the SAPS to at least 12 245 farm attacks and 1 700 farm murders in 21 years is used, and if the three-year statistics gap – for which no statistics allegedly exist – is excluded, this would imply an average of 680 attacks and 94 farm murders per year, or 1,9 farm attacks per day and 1,8 farm murders per week. (The author is aware that these numbers do not correlate with the graph. The reference to 12 245 farm attacks and 1 700 farm murders was specifically provided by the SAPS. No explanation was given as to why these numbers are slightly higher than the total if the numbers for the respective years are added together.)

DATA RELEASED BY AFRIFORUM AND TAU SA

Given the fact that the annual release of statistics by the SAPS was discontinued in 2007, the only credible source since then was the data collected by TAU SA and AfriForum, until the release of statistics by Phiyega in 2014 and by Phahlane in 2016 and 2017.

In order to protect our own credibility at AfriForum, we only work with conservative numbers. It is often mentioned that more than 3 000 farmers have been murdered since 1994. There is, however, no factual basis for this statement and consequently it is a figure that we will not use, simply because we cannot verify that it is correct. Instead, our approach is to only use numbers of which the data were verified. The trouble with this approach, however, is that a ‘verified number’ implies that every single incident that builds up to create the total number has to be checked. While this is an enormous task, it has already been done to a large extent.

The book *Land of Sorrow*[10] provides a detailed account of farm attacks and farm murders that took place between 1990 and 2012. AfriForum's involvement with this project was to encourage people to report incidences of farm attacks,[11] while the daunting task of verifying each and every case was taken on. Verification took place either by confirming the crime with the local police station, obtaining reports by credible media institutions about the incident, or by making contact with surviving victims or relatives of murdered victims. Every case that could not be verified was excluded. The result was an extremely credible, detailed list of incidents that ought to be referred to as a minimum number of the actual incidents. Ever since the publication of *Land of Sorrow*, AfriForum and TAU SA have continued keeping track of incidents, verifying these attacks and murders.

The numbers provided are only those that were brought to our attention and that could be verified. The reality surrounding this method dictates that there will be a discrepancy between the comprehensiveness of murder statistics, as opposed to attack statistics. The reason for this is that farm attacks where no murders are committed are rarely reported on in the media. These attacks occur so frequently that they are generally not regarded as remarkable anymore.

What reduces the available data on farm attacks even further is what we believe to be a growing trend of victims not reporting incidents to the SAPS. In some communities distrust in the SAPS has increased to such an extent that victims believe it to be a waste of time to report a crime. This happened particularly with the crime of assault. In 2012, 93,3% of assaults were reported to the SAPS. By 2016, it was down to 48,6%.[12] This is largely the result of a decline in public confidence in the SAPS's will and ability to do its job – a matter that will be explored in more detail in Chapter 21.

AfriForum has also experienced that many farm murders are not categorised as such. In other words, AfriForum has found cases where people were murdered during farm attacks, but where the incident was not reported by the police as a farm attack, resulting in the distortion of the statistics regarding these attacks. The extent to which under-reporting as a result of miscategorising transpires is unknown.

These realities imply that there may be large numbers of farm attacks that the world will never know about. The size of this ‘dark number’ is unknown, but its existence was confirmed repeatedly during research done by the AfriForum Research Institute (ANI). While conducting case studies across the country, Lorraine Claasen, a researcher at AfriForum, was constantly informed by victims of other farm attacks that had taken place in their communities, and of which AfriForum was not even aware.

While we believe that the number of farm murders we have identified is close to the actual number (with our number being lower than the actual number), we are convinced that the actual number of farm attacks is much higher than that provided by the SAPS. Our numbers on farm attacks should be treated as conservative, or in other words, the ‘at least’ number.

If all the information gathered by TAU SA since 1990 is combined with that collected by both TAU SA and AfriForum since 2013, the graph in Figure 3 can be drawn.

According to this data, a total of 4 482 farm attacks and 1 933 farm murders have been verified by TAU SA, with the assistance of AfriForum and Kraal Uitgewers in recent years.

It is evident from the two data sets that the SAPS data on farm attacks are much higher, while the numbers for farm murders from both data sets are fairly similar.

The most important issue to address with regard to Figure 3 is why the graph indicates such a sharp increase in farm attacks from 2011 to 2017. There could be a variety of reasons for this.

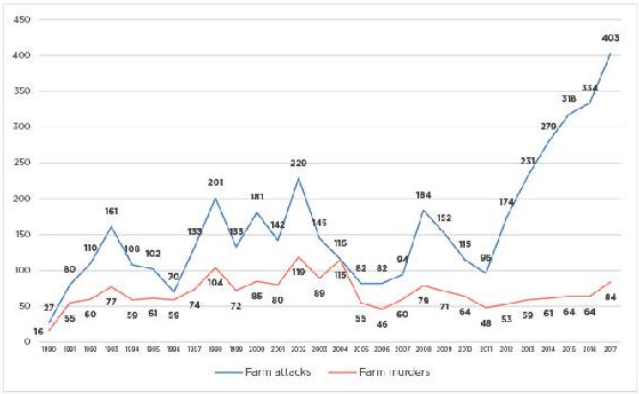

Figure 3: TAU SA data on farm attacks and farm murders for 1990–2016[13]

A major contributing factor to the sharp increase in farm attacks depicted on this graph could simply be the fact that AfriForum and TAU SA have become more efficient at collecting the data. Another factor could be that farm attacks had actually increased in these years. However, it should be pointed out that, while we are firmly convinced that the SAPS data on farm attacks are insufficient for the reasons already pointed out, the AfriForum and TAU SA data on farm attacks remain lower than that of the SAPS.

On the other hand, what is particularly concerning is that, while the TAU SA/AfriForum data clearly indicate lower numbers for farm attacks, the numbers for farm murders in the years 2013, 2014 and 2015 are higher than those of the SAPS. This, while the TAU SA/AfriForum data include only incidents that could be verified. The reason for this could either be that farm murders are under-reported to the SAPS, that the problem is downplayed by the SAPS – most probably in the extent to which farm murders are categorised as such for reporting purposes – or that the SAPS data process should simply be regarded as unreliable. My speculation is that the reason why AfriForum and TAU SA's data on farm murders are more comprehensive than that of the SAPS, is because of a combination of the latter two reasons – a downplaying of the problem by the SAPS, combined with an unreliable data process. (Keep in mind that the SAPS data are published according to financial years, while the AfriForum data are published according to calendar years.)

The discrepancy between the statistics of the SAPS and TAU SA/AfriForum is alarming. It is probably for the above-mentioned reason that the Institute for Security Studies (ISS) has indicated that the figures of the TAU SA/AfriForum carries more weight with them than those of the SAPS.

WORKING WITH RATIOS

But how do these numbers compare with what is happening in the rest of South Africa? It is widely known that South Africa is a violent country, suffering from high crime levels. It has even been described as 'one of the least lawful countries on earth',[14] with its rape and murder rates reaching numbers one and three respectively in the world in 2010.[15] A 2013 report by the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) ranked South Africa ninth in the world for its high murder rate.[16] This slight decline in the murder rate ranking can partly be attributed to the significant increase in

violent crime in the Americas in recent years. This downward trend ended in 2011, however. Since then the murder rate in South Africa has increased every year until publication of this book in 2018.[17]

Figure 4 provides the total number of murders in South Africa from the financial years of 2007/2008 up to 2016/2017.

During the year of 2007/2008, about 50,4 people were murdered on average every day in South Africa. This number declined each year to about 42,6 in 2011/2012, and then increased again each year up to 52,1 murders per day on average for the whole of 2016/2017. This amounts to one murder every 28 minutes.

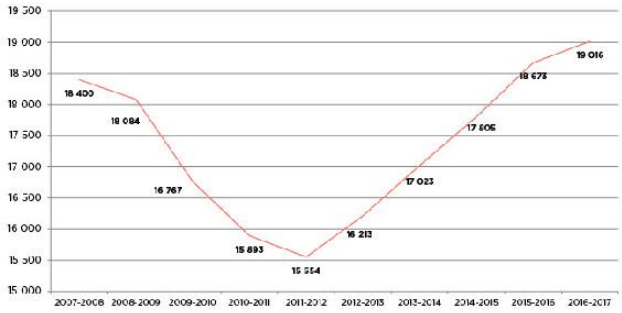

Figure 4: Total number of murders committed in South Africa from 2007/2008–2016/2017[18]

Subsequently, we have often been confronted with the argument that high levels of farm attacks are only another manifestation of the fact that South Africa has high crime levels. As a matter of fact, the argument is often heard that those who complain about farm attacks and farm murders are biased, because the statistics on assault and murder in South Africa's townships are said to be much worse. Some take an even harder line on this, arguing that the call for the prioritisation of farm murders is racist, as the majority of people who are murdered on farms are white, while black people are murdered in higher numbers elsewhere. This argument was used repeatedly, among others by Zweli Mnisi, the spokesperson of the Minister of Police, in 2012 and 2013.

This is especially the argument of many politicians and certain politically inclined officers at the Department of Police.

At first glance, there appears to be merit in the argument that farm murders are merely part of the fabric of an already violent society. Between the financial years of 2007/2008 and 2016/2017 a total of 173 428 people were murdered in South Africa.[19]

In comparison it might seem reasonable to conclude that people complaining about several thousand farm murders need to get their priorities straight. About half a million South Africans have been murdered since 1994[20] and although the number of murders in South Africa has gradually declined since then, a South African still has a bigger chance of being murdered in this country than citizens in countries suffering from terror attacks, announced the Institute of Race Relations (IRR) in 2017. Also, in the financial year of 2015/2016, 623 223 contact crimes (murder, assault, robbery and sexual offences) were reported, which seems to make the number of farm attack crimes look small by comparison.[21]

CALCULATING THE RATIO PER 100 000

The problem with the above-mentioned argument is that it is based on a misunderstanding regarding the nature of statistics. These numbers cannot be compared without considering the size of the group in which these crimes took place. If the proponents of the 'there are more murders in townships' argument were consistent, they would also have to argue that the poaching of rhinoceroses should not be prioritised, since rhinos comprise only a small minority of all animals poached in South Africa. The poaching of rhinos in South Africa is, for example, surpassed by thousands by the poaching of marine species in the Table Mountain National Park alone.[22]

The difference is of course that the total number of rhinos is very small, and that the poaching of rhinos, if not stopped, may lead to their extinction. When the number of rhinos poached each year is compared to the total number of rhinos, the picture becomes much bleaker.

This is precisely the reason why murder statistics are generally determined as a ratio of victims per 100 000 of a particular group. By determining only the total number of persons murdered is not sufficient, as 100 out of ten million is fairly low (1 per 100 000), as opposed to a 100 persons murdered out of ten thousand (1 000 per 100 000).

If murders in South Africa are calculated as murders per 100 000, the size of the South African population has to be taken into account. The South African murder rate can then be indicated as follows:

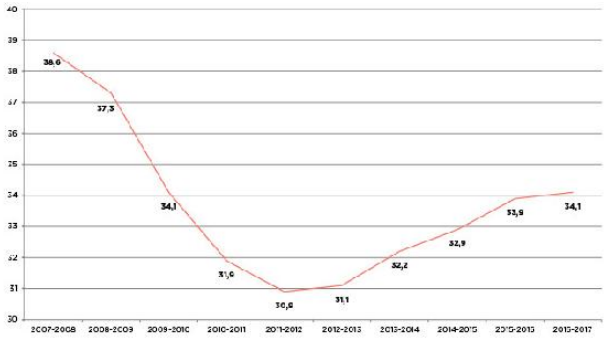

Figure 5: South African murder rate, calculated as the number of people murdered per 100 000 per year[23]

Once again, this is an extremely high number, especially when the South African murder rate is compared to that of other countries. The murder rate in the United Kingdom, for example, amounts to 1 per 100 000 per year. In the US, the figure is 4,7 per 100 000. The global average is about 6,2 per 100 000, as can be seen from Figure 6.[24]

Contrary to popular belief, South Africa does not have the highest murder rate in the world. Not by headcount, nor by rate, although it certainly has one of the highest in the world by both these measures. In 2012, 50 108 people were murdered in Brazil. The murder rate was, however, lower than that of South Africa, because of the fact that Brazil has a significantly larger total population than South Africa. In the same year, South Africa was number six in the world in terms of headcount. When it comes to the rate per 100 000, Honduras is in fact the country with the highest murder rate, with 90,4 per 100 000 people murdered in 2012. Venezuela came in second with 53,7. On this list, South Africa scored 11th place out of 218 countries.[25]

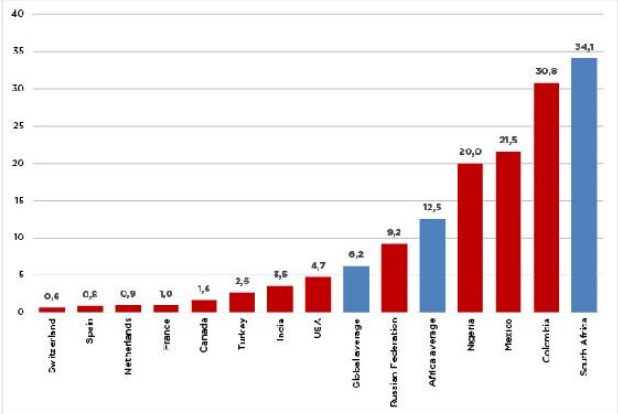

Figure 6: Murder rate per 100 000 of selected countries, compared to that of South Africa[26]

So when we are saying that farm murders are unique because of their frequency, we need to consider not only the headcount, but the rate per 100 000. To do this, we need to compare the number of people murdered during farm attacks with the number of people who could potentially become victims of these crimes. Unfortunately, this is more problematic than it seems, firstly because a highly accurate estimate of the total number of people living on South African farms is unknown, and secondly because it is not only people who live on farms that could be victims, but also people who visit farms. What we may use as a base number is the latest available figures on the total number of commercial farmers in South Africa.

Map 2: Homicide rates by country or territory (2012 or latest year, excluding 2016/2017 data) [27]

According to Ernst Janovsky, Head of Absa AgriBusiness, there were about 128 000 commercial farmers in South Africa in 1980. This number had dropped to 58 000 in 1997, and then again to below 40 000 in 2011. Predictions are that this number will drop to below 15 000 more or less by 2025.[28] The exact number of commercial farmers in South Africa is a debated topic. Johan Burger, senior research consultant at the Institute for Security Studies (ISS), recommends using the 2007 Census of Commercial Agriculture[29] as a frame of reference. The census recorded that there were 32 375 commercial farmers in South Africa. The term *commercial farmers* in this context refers to people running farming operations either full time or part time. This figure only included commercial farms registered to pay value added tax (VAT). This figure cannot be used as a base line for comparing the total number of farm murders, as all who are murdered on farms are not necessarily commercial farmers. To calculate the rate at which commercial farmers are murdered, we would need to determine how many of the victims of farm murders are commercial farmers, as opposed to their family members or their staff or visitors to farms. This is what TAU SA and the ISS have attempted on several occasions. Using these figures, the murder rate of South Africa's commercial farmers (or the *farmer murder rate*) was calculated at 98,8 per 100 000 in 2011,[30] 132,8 per 100 000 in 2014[31] and 156 per 100 000 in 2016.[32]

It should be noted that these calculations are not entirely scientific, for the reasons provided above. 'The size of the numbers involved also makes this type of calculation at best an indication rather than a scientifically acceptable ratio,' says Burger.[33] Gareth Newham, Head of the Governance, Crime and Justice Division at the ISS, adds: 'I do not really know how one could get an accurate estimate of the murder and attack rate on farms given the complexities involved.'[34] Nonetheless, it remains a broad indication and the best attempt to date to calculate a ratio at which farmers are murdered.

The notion that it is 'near impossible' to calculate a farm murder rate has also been expressed by the fact-checking organisation Africa Check.[35] AfriForum is, however, of the opinion that it is not impossible to reach plausible range estimates especially for the rate at which commercial farmers are murdered.

These calculations should be based on the number of likely commercial farmers and the proportion of the victims of farm murders who are in fact

commercial farmers. An analysis of 1 937 victims of farm murders by TAU SA has indicated that 1 255 (64,8%) of the victims were the farmers themselves.[36] We might, for example, use a breakdown by ANI for the financial year of 2016/2017, which revealed that 43 of the 74 farm murders committed in that year occurred on farms, as opposed to smallholdings.[37] We can then multiply that number by 64,8% to reach a closer estimate of the number of victims who were in fact farmers and not families, visitors or labourers. We can then estimate the number of commercial farmers to be somewhere between 30 000 and 35 000. Considering all of these, the farmer murder rate for that year could be estimated to be somewhere between 79,6 and 92,9 per 100 000.

It is conceivable that adding smallholding data would increase the farmer murder rate. This should, however, not be done for the sake of calculating the murder rate, due to uncertainties about the number of smallholdings in the country. This matter will be researched in more detail by AfriForum.

The farm murder rate is extremely high. It is close to double the rate at which police officers are murdered in South Africa. This, despite the fact that one may understand police work to be dangerous, while farming is not supposed to be a dangerous occupation – at least not in terms of your chances of being murdered.[38]

COMPARING TO OTHER CRIMES

It has been pointed out that criticism of the campaign against farm attacks is often embedded in the notion that farm attacks or farm murders are rarely compared to other crimes. It has also been pointed out that the only reasonable way to make such a comparison would be to consider the size of the group.

Using 2002/2003 as a reference, James Myburgh, editor of *Politicsweb*, compares the number of household robberies to the number of households in South Africa, and then also the number of farm attacks to the number of farms in South Africa. He concludes that in that year, South African farms were 16,7 times more likely to be attacked than South African households were likely to be robbed.[39]

Building on Myburgh’s research, Marie-Louise Antoni, a freelance journalist, calculates these numbers for the years 2013 to 2016 and

concluded that farms were still up to eight and nearly nine times more likely to be attacked than other households.[40]

REFINING THE FIGURES

It should be noted at this stage that there is much work to be done in the calculation of farm murder ratios. The fact that the calculations are based on the findings of a census that is more than ten years old is already problematic, not even counting other technical issues that may arise from that particular census. Furthermore, determining national averages and comparing to national averages is often misleading, given the fact that averages may obscure regional or even local extremes that may muddy the waters and distort our conclusions.

South Africa is well known for its extreme crime rates. Twenty per cent of all murders in South Africa are reported at just 30 police stations. This is 2,6% of all the police stations in the country.[41] This is the problem with national averages – these figures can easily become distorted as a result of the inclusion of extreme cases. It would be foolish to simply compare the national average rate at which South African commercial farmers are murdered (or farmer murders) with the national average adult male murder rate, and then draw hard conclusions from this opaque picture. One would first need to understand, for example, whether some parts of the country are more dangerous than others. One should then ask whether comparing farmer murders to the national average male murders is appropriate, or whether farmer murders should rather be compared to rural murder rates or murder rates in urban areas comprising the same socio-economic cohort as farmers.

A more appropriate manner to deal with the South African farmer murder rate would not be to look at national averages, but to determine the rates for particular farming communities and to compare these rates with particular urban communities.

At this stage, it is premature to speak about farm murder rates in South Africa with absolute authority. A lot more hard work and analyses need to be done, not only to derive credible and accurate national averages, but especially to determine regional or even local rates and compare these with other regional or local rates for other communities.

Nonetheless, we can start to draw some important initial insights. Preliminary estimates to date from various sources suggest that farmers are murdered at least at the same rate as the average South African male. However, we also know that the average national murder rate is skewed higher by a few very dangerous precincts in poor, high-density urban areas.

Myburgh rightly points out that a major problem with comparing a national farmer murder rate to the national average is that most murders fall in the category of 'social fabric crimes' – in other words, cases where someone is stabbed by an associate in a drunken brawl or a man beats his wife to death in a rage – while farm murders are by definition not social fabric crimes. 'A like-for-like comparison (of the farmer murder rate to the South African murder rate) would be between the rate of farmer murders with the national rate of South Africans killed during robberies and other such crimes,' explains Myburgh. 'In their report on the 2011/2012 crime statistics, the SAPS states that 16% of murders are committed during the commissioning of other crimes. A back-of-the-envelope calculation puts the national rate for this kind of murder at just under five killings per 100 000 people.' [42]

Social fabric murders must be deliberately excluded from our calculations regarding farmer murders. Stripping out social fabric crimes from the national average murder rate so that one is comparing apples with apples would therefore very likely show that the rate of farmer murders is considerably greater than the national average rate.

Finally, it is clear from provincial data on farm murders that various farm murder hotspots may also skew the national average. Not all farming regions are equally dangerous. TAU SA and AfriForum's data show that the overwhelming majority of farm murders take place in the eastern part of South Africa. (See Chapter 7.)

Another aspect that has not yet been properly researched is a comparison of the frequency with which victims of farm attacks are tortured to the frequency with which victims of household robberies are tortured. It is conceivable that the victims of farm attacks are tortured at a significantly higher rate.

Regardless of the challenges in calculating accurate statistics and making appropriate comparisons, conservative analyses to date with the best

available data show that South African farming communities are among the most vulnerable communities in an already violent country.

The White Cross Monument, erected near Polokwane in Limpopo, to commemorate the victims of farm murders.
Photo: Reint Dykema

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Two shots went off. 'I thought they were firing at me, but obviously they were firing at Susan,' says Robert. What Robert did not know at the time, was that the shooter was the brother of a man who had recently been fired by Sue for his involvement in stock theft. One of the bullets hit her on the forehead, above the left eye. It bounced from her head and came out above the right eye. Sue was knocked out immediately. She was still alive. That was when they grabbed Robert.

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CHAPTER 4

Brutality: How bad does it get?

As if the frequency with which South African farmers are being attacked and killed is not enough, the extreme levels of brutality that accompany these crimes are a matter of grave concern.

According to criminologist Christiaan Bezuidenhout, tortures during farm attacks are both instrumental and non-instrumental by nature, as the victims are sometimes tortured with the aim of obtaining something from them (such as the keys to the safe), but also to inflict psychological harm.[1]

'The most common forms of physical torture that occur during the commitment of a farm attack include beatings, stabbings, burning victims with boiling water, molten plastic and hot clothes irons,' writes Bezuidenhout. 'It also includes instances of detainment against the victims' will, and assaults on the sexual integrity of the person. Some farmers are even slaughtered like animals or dragged behind their own vehicles (they are tied to the vehicle with a rope and dragged for vast distances).'[2] Duxita Mistry, senior researcher at the Institute for Human Rights and Criminal Justice Studies at Technikon SA, and her colleague Jabu Dhlamini found that the most common forms of violence the attackers displayed were burning, strangulation of the victims, pointing of firearms and gagging of the victims with a cloth.[3]

'Psychological torture during farm attacks,' Bezuidenhout continues, 'includes belittling, threats, attempted and threatened assault and threats to other family members. Sometimes they are forced to undress whereafter their sexual integrity becomes the focus of defamation.'[4]

WHAT IS TORTURE?

Torture is defined by the United Nations Convention Against Torture and other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (UNCAT) as follows:

> '[T]orture' means any act by which severe pain or suffering, whether physical or mental, is intentionally inflicted on a person for such purposes as obtaining from him or a third person information or a confession, punishing him for an act he or a third person has committed or is suspected of having committed, or intimidating or coercing him or a third person, or for any reason based on

> discrimination of any kind, when such pain or suffering is inflicted by or at the instigation of or with the consent or acquiescence of a public official or other person acting in an official capacity. It does not include pain or suffering arising only from, inherent in or incidental to lawful sanctions.[5]

The political element included in the definition (involvement of a public official) is problematic, as it makes the use of the word *torture* as it is defined here difficult to apply to severely brutal crimes where public officials are not involved. The consequence is that an act that complies with every element of this definition, except for the political element, would technically not be seen as torture. The result is a definition that is detached from reality.

The International Rehabilitation Council for Torture Victims (IRCT) further explains that torture is often used to punish, to obtain information or a confession, to take revenge on a person or persons, or to create terror and fear within a population. Some of the most common methods of physical torture across the globe include beating, electric shocks, stretching, submersion, suffocation, burns, rape and sexual assault.[6]

Certainly, as we will see in Part 2 of this book, an argument could be made that public officials are involved either directly, as we have seen in some cases, or acquiescent, through government's creation of a political climate in which violence towards white farmers in particular is romanticised, its refusal to acknowledge the extent of the problem and its failure to address it. While verifiable proof that public officials are involved in the killings themselves is slim, it is certainly not non-existent. It is argued in this book that a political climate – or zeitgeist – exists in South Africa according to which farmers are the victims of negative stereotypes and where inflicting violence upon white farmers in particular is romanticised up to the highest level of government. In that sense it can be said that the involvement of public officials in farm attacks is a reality – in some cases directly, but in general terms indirectly.

The inclusion of a political element in the UNCAT definition has been widely criticised. It should be emphasised that whatever the technical definition of torture is, it does not change the realities on South Africa's farms. The point was made in Chapter 2 that we should not be so fixated on technical legal definitions that we lose sight of the realities at grassroots

level. Furthermore, it should also be emphasised that the UNCAT definition is not the only definition. Torture is defined by the Concise Oxford English Dictionary[7] as: '… the action or practice of inflicting severe pain as a punishment or a forcible means of persuasion.'

Regardless of this debate, we will continue to use the word *torture* to refer to farm attacks and farm murders where severe pain or suffering was inflicted as a way of obtaining information from, intimidating or of punishing the victim.

During the financial year of 2016/2017 victims were tortured in at least 13 (17,6%) of the 74 farm murders that occurred that year.[8]

HOW BAD DOES IT GET?

The brutality of these attacks can be illustrated by hundreds of examples. The notorious case of the Potgieter murders, during which Attie Potgieter was stabbed 151 times with a gardenfork, a panga (English: machete) and a knife, before the execution of his baby daughter, Wilmien, and his wife, Wilna, was mentioned in Chapter 1. All that was stolen was R3 300 ($264).

Upon his retirement after 40 years in the South African Police Service (SAPS), Captain Francois Laux said that the 17 farm murders that he had had to investigate during his career were the worst crimes he had ever seen. One of the cases Laux had to investigate was the murder of Johan Fourie (71) and his wife, Cecile (72), near Trompsburg in the Free State in September 2012. They had been hacked to death with an axe and a shovel.[9] Laux's sentiment is echoed by many serving and retired police officers.

On 7 April 2006 Koos (82) and Tina van Wyk (57) were attacked by five men on their farm near Vryheid, KwaZulu-Natal. Koos was struck over the head with an AK-47, after which both victims were tied up with rope so tightly that it cut through their skin. Koos and Tina were then separated: Koos was taken to the bathroom and Tina to the living room. Koos was gagged to prevent him from making any noise, before he was dumped in the tub, which was filled with extremely hot water. Tina was then told that her husband was dead and threatened that her eyes would be cut out if she did not tell them where the keys to the safe were. She was grabbed by her feet and dragged towards the bedroom. One attacker told her that he would make her feel like a 'special woman'. She was laid down in the hallway, after which the attackers stepped on her breasts, legs and stomach. The

attackers later fled with the couple's 4x4, loaded with a television, two sewing machines, firearms, jewellery and R250 ($20) in cash. Tina was able to crawl to Koos, free them from their restraints and call the SAPS. Koos had such severe burns on his feet that the soles came off, which they later found on the dining-room table.[10]

On 6 March 2009, Alice Lotter (76) and her daughter Helen (57) were tortured to death on their farm in Allenridge near Welkom in the Free State. Their home was several hundred metres from the Allenridge police station.

Both women were tortured for hours, being stabbed with broken glass bottles in their vaginas. One of the women also had her breasts cut off while she was still alive.

Helen's injuries were so extreme that the medical examiner was unable to tell if she had also been raped. Alice had been stabbed in the neck and throat and had drowned in her own blood. Their blood was used to write the words 'Kill the Boer' on the walls of their homestead.[11]

On 15 May 2010, Johan Strydom, a 40-year-old farmer from Parys in the Free State, was struck on the head with an iron rod, crushing his skull.[12] He was then tied behind his pickup truck with a chain and dragged over a farm road until he died of a burst liver. His cellphone, wallet and vehicle were stolen, only to be found later.[13] The same happened to André van der Merwe (49) from Ottosdal in North West on 30 April 2011. Upon hearing a noise outside the house, Van der Merwe went to investigate, when he was held at gunpoint by three men. He was shot in the chest, back and head. While still alive, Van der Merwe was tied to his own vehicle with barbed wire around his feet and dragged for approximately 1,5 kilometre (0,9 miles) until the vehicle overturned. After Van der Merwe was dead, the attackers fled with some food, money, a cellphone and clothes.[14] In another case a farmer was pulled behind his own tractor by two attackers before being run over with a plough. His body was found in five pieces.[15]

On 1 June 2011, Barbara (76) and her son Etcel Wortmann (45) survived a brutal attack on their farm near Wartburg, KwaZulu-Natal when they were surprised in their home by six armed men early in the evening. The attackers reportedly asked for money. They then proceeded to assault and torture both their victims. Knobkerries and handguns were used as weapons. They were asphyxiated with plastic bags, and boiling water was

poured over the victims. The attackers fled with the Wortmanns' vehicle, a .22 rifle and a shotgun, which they took from the safe.[16]

On the first day of October in 2011, the Viana family of Walkerville was attacked on their smallholding south of Johannesburg. Tony (53) was hit with a golf club and a panga (machete), before he was made to open the safe. He was then held until his wife, Geraldine (42) and son, Amaro (12) came home. The three were separated into different rooms. Geraldine was raped by two of the men and then shot in the head with her husband's gun. Tony, who had been tied up in the living room, was then shot and killed as well. The attackers then filled the bathtub with boiling water. 'We went to the bathroom and turned on the tap,' testified one of the attackers in court. 'We went to fetch (Amaro) and gagged him because he was crying. We forced him into the bath face down, knowing that he would drown.' After Amaro was dead, the attackers sliced open the stomach of the family dog. When the three attackers (all in their early twenties) were taken to their cells after testifying how they had murdered the Viana family, they could be heard laughing and joking with one another.[17]

On 22 October 2013, Dawid and Ralie de Villiers (both 87 years old) were murdered on their farm near Barkly East in the Eastern Cape. The attacker(s) wrote '666' on the walls of the farmhouse with the blood of the victims. The number was a reference to a gang with the same name. Their disabled son, Dawie (53), was also on the scene. His eyes were gouged out and a machete was left in his throat. When Dawie's sister arrived on the scene in the early hours of the following morning, she was under the impression that they had all been killed, but Dawie survived.[18]

On 20 March 2014, Christine Otto (75) was walking to her car on her way to a funeral when she was ambushed by three attackers. She was dragged inside her home and tied to the shower. The attackers grabbed the container in which her late husband's ashes were held and strewed the ashes over her bed, saying that they knew that she was alone. They then proceeded with repeated beatings, burning her with a hot clothing iron and beating her with a piece of rope that had nails attached to it. The beating lasted for several hours, after which the attackers fled with her vehicle, firearms, a DVD player and some cash. The vehicle was later found.[19]

On 12 January 2015, Toon (72) and Rienie (70) Swanepoel were attacked on their farm near Bloemfontein. Two of the three attackers were 19 years old (they had therefore been born in 1996) and the other one was 25. The couple was tied to a single bed and tortured for hours. Toon was shot in the leg to prevent him from fighting back. The three men took turns to rape Rienie while her husband was forced to watch. The couple was then taken to a remote part of the farm where Toon was shot dead. After they had murdered Toon, they shot and killed Rienie as well. Her body was found lying over that of her husband.[20]

Just before dawn on 4 June 2015, Roger van Parys (71) was attacked by five men on a farm near Rustenburg in North West. His hands and feet were tied together and he was dragged through the house while being beaten and threatened with death. Three of his ribs were broken. Thereafter, the attackers shoved a sword down his throat. He survived the attack.[21]

In November 2016, Koos du Plessis (58) was attacked by six men on his farm near Viljoenskroon in the Free State. Du Plessis was tied up and insecticide was sprayed in his face. His attackers also threatened to burn him with a clothing iron and murder him. ‘Shoot me! Shoot me in the name of the Lord!’ he cried out in the early hours of the morning.[22] They were unable to torture him as planned, however, when they could not get the iron to heat up. They fled with his firearms, electronic equipment, wallet and vehicle. He was severely traumatised.[23]

Well-known businessman Piet Els (66) and his friend, Riekie Alsemgeest (68), were attacked on a farm near Kimberley in the Northern Cape on 23 January 2018. They were overpowered by four men, who burned them with hot clothing irons. Els’s toenails were also pulled out.[24] He never regained consciousness and died after 111 days in hospital.[25]

2017: A YEAR OF TORTURE

On 2 February 2017, Trevor Rees (79) was attacked on his farm near Underberg in KwaZulu-Natal. The attackers attempted to drive through his bedroom wall with a tractor. When their attempt failed, they broke the front door open. Rees’s arms and legs were tied behind his back with an electric cable, after which he was beaten. The attackers then started torturing him with a pair of pliers. The attackers left with the items that had been stored in Rees’s safe, only to return the following day. This time they poured Jik

bleach down his throat. Rees died several days afterwards as a result of the injuries.[26]

On 17 February 2017, a Welsh couple who had immigrated to South Africa, Roger Solik (66) and his wife, Christine (57), were attacked on their farm near Pietermaritzburg in KwaZulu-Natal shortly after they had switched off their lights. The two attackers switched on their bedroom light and demanded money and the car keys. Christine was stabbed and was bleeding excessively. Their hands and legs were then tied together and pillow cases were pulled over their heads before they were loaded in a vehicle. The attackers drove to someone's house and sold them the TV and DVD set for R1 000 ($80). 'We then decided to get rid of them,' testified Xolani Brian Ndlovu (32), who pleaded guilty to the murders.[27]

The Soliks were driven to a bridge over the Inzinga River and thrown into the water. Christine's body was found in the river about 45 kilometres (28 miles) from their home. She had drowned, but she had also suffered multiple other injuries. Roger's body was found the next day. A post-mortem found that he had died of asphyxiation. 'What facts could ever help anyone understand the emotion of knowing your parents were fished out a river; one of them broken and caught on a branch, the other bloated and eaten by crabs?' their son, Gregory, later wrote in a statement. He continued: 'How do you explain what it is like to bury your mother on her birthday in front of her elderly and traumatised mother, my grandmother?' Gregory's sister, Jessica Carelse, wrote that she can no longer admire the beauty of South Africa. 'Every mountain I look upon all I can see are my parents' faces as they passed along a desolate dust road to their unfathomable end.'[28]

In the early morning of 19 February 2017, the Irish farmer Robert Lynn (66) and his British wife, Sue Howarth (64), were attacked on their farm near Dullstroom in Mpumalanga. The men sat Lynn down on a chair in the lounge and started torturing him with a blowtorch and knives. He was burned on his feet, legs and stomach and stabbed in the stomach, hands and neck. A plastic bag was pulled over his head. He was shot in the neck and dumped in a field with the plastic bag still tied over his head. Howarth's skull was fractured and she was towed across the gravel road. Lynn survived, but Howarth passed away shortly after the attack. The story received international coverage due to the fact that Lynn and Howarth were

British nationals. Lynn said afterwards that what troubled him the most about the entire incident was that the men ‘appeared to have no real motive, other than stealing a small amount of money’.[29] The story of how Lynn and Howarth were tortured and what happened following the attack is divided into little pieces, with a piece being told at the beginning of each chapter of this book.

On 10 March 2017, Nicci Simpson (64) was attacked by two men on a farm near Fochville in Gauteng. She was tortured for several hours with an electric drill and sharp objects. Late in the afternoon, a passer-by saw Simpson’s dog lying dead at the farm gate and called for help. Simpson was found lying in a pool of blood with a serious head injury, broken ribs, lacerations to her wrist, stab wounds on her arms, and puncture wounds to her feet. The farmhouse was reported to be ‘covered in blood’. She was rushed to hospital and managed to survive. Four cellphones, a laptop, a firearm and her vehicle had been stolen. The vehicle was found soon after the attack, deserted.[30]

On 6 August 2017, Herman Botha (64) from Groblersdal died during a farm attack. He was overpowered when he came back from viewing his cattle, beaten with an iron pipe and tied up in the bathroom. His wife, Meisie, their daughter-in-law, Benita, and her three children were also tied up. Herman’s son, Bernard, was severely beaten by the attackers. Herman, who had had heart surgery just a few days before the incident, presumably died of a heart attack.[31]

Victor Cooks (75) and his wife, Gwen (74), were attacked on their smallholding near Potchefstroom in the North West on 17 August 2017. They were stripped naked and Gwen was asked to choose whether she prefers to be raped or shot, to which she replied that she would rather be shot. They were then tortured with cooking oil and boiling water. Melted plastic was dripped over their bodies. Victor was also stabbed with a knife. The attackers eventually fled with a few hundred rands, cellphones and a revolver. Victor died in hospital. Gwen survived.[32]

On 19 August, Anton Smuts (62) was attacked on his farm near Kinross in Mpumalanga when he went to check on the cattle. That evening, another farmer in the area saw a fire burning on Smuts’s farm and went to

investigate. Upon arrival, he discovered Smuts's charred body, burning inside his pickup truck.[33]

At around 01:30 on 22 August 2017, Anton Muller (35) woke up on his smallholding near Springs in Gauteng. He walked to the kitchen, where he was overpowered by four armed men. Three of the four carried handguns with silencers. Also, three of them were not wearing balaclavas and they told Muller that they did not mind if he saw their faces, because they intended to murder him. They took Muller back to his bedroom, where they took off his clothes and tied his hands behind his back. They then plugged a clothing iron into the electrical plug and started torturing him with it. They also used a pair of pliers to torture him, while asking him for money. He was then taken through the house and beaten repeatedly with several objects. During the incident Muller prayed out loud, asking God to protect him. At 04:30, the attackers left him there, fleeing the scene with some stolen items, including electronic equipment. He survived.[34]

OBSERVATIONS BY CRIME SCENE CLEAN-UP

Two sisters, Roelien Schutte and Eileen de Jager, who run a company called Crime Scene Clean-up, achieved a degree of fame when the book *Blood Sisters* was written about their endeavours and what they have experienced on crime scenes in South Africa.[35] An entire chapter is dedicated to farm attacks, where they had to clean more than a hundred crime scenes. 'The atmosphere on the scene of a farm murder is noticeably different,' says De Jager. Schutte and De Jager are convinced that the term *farm murders* is misleading. According to these individuals, who have dealt with scenes of all kinds of violent crime, including hits ordered by organised crime, the terms *farm torture* or *farm terror* would be more appropriate.[36] 'In a farm murder, robbery is seldom the motive. Robbery is merely a side effect. Murder is the motive; revenge another element. Actually, after what we've seen on many different scenes, we can't help thinking that it is actually all about torture and murder.'[37]

Schutte and De Jager are concerned that the brutality of farm attacks is fairly unknown among, or underestimated by, the general public. 'Nobody knows about the hours of torture. We see it in what we find after a murder like that. An old woman being raped in front of her husband, an old man whose Achilles' tendons are cut so that he can't walk anymore … After

that, he is executed. On his knees. That is the case with most men being killed in farm attacks. They are shot execution style.'[38]

They have noticed how, in some of the more horrific scenes, the details are concealed in the manner in which the stories are reported by the mainstream media to make it easier for the deceased's family.[39] While one could argue that this might be the ethical way to report on farm murders to show respect for the surviving loved ones, the negative consequences are that the true horror of these attacks are underestimated in the public's perception.

They continue, explaining what they have witnessed with regard to women: 'Attackers like to cut the women's throats. Or to push broken bottles up their vaginas.'[40] The so-called Blood Sisters talk about how sharp objects are pushed up women's genitalia, including fishing rods, glass bottles and sharpened broomsticks. In one case, the woman was found with a sharpened end of a broomstick sticking out of her throat.[41]

They describe a crime scene in which a farmer was tied up, gagged and forced to watch how the attackers took turns to rape his wife. Once the attackers had finished, they took a shard of broken glass and started mutilating her private parts.[42]

Judging from these stories, it is as if there is no limit to the creativity of the attackers when it comes to inventing new and horrendous methods of torture.

Elderly victims and children are especially targeted for brutal killings. In the case mentioned above, where the farmer was gagged and forced to witness the raping of his wife, the couple's son was also drowned in a bathtub filled with boiling water.[43]

One of the most nauseating scenes was where a grandfather, grandmother and their two grandchildren, aged about four and six, had been killed. 'The old man was frail and sickly, and his wife tried desperately to protect her loved ones. We could clearly tell that from the scene.' The grandmother was restrained and raped behind the kitchen counter, while her grandchildren were killed just a few metres from her. 'Judging from the pattern of her bloody hand marks, it looks as if she tried to get to them but was pulled back repeatedly. Can you even begin to imagine the emotions going through

her mind ...' There were two big pools of blood, less than a metre apart, where the children had been murdered.[44]

In another case, an old lady was beaten to death with a golf club under her bed when the attackers realised that they would not be able to pull her out from under the bed.[45]

In some cases the victim's faces are beaten to an unrecognisable pulp, 'beaten over and over and over' until no facial features are discernible. 'Only a bloody mess.'[46]

The Blood Sisters have witnessed cases where the nails of the victims had been removed and placed next to the dead bodies, and frequent cases where body parts, especially genitalia, had been removed. In some cases the victims were scalped.[47] In one case, the dismembered body parts of a murdered farmer were thrown in a chicken coop, where the chickens started pecking at it.[48]

The methods of torture used are not only physical. Often the psychological element is far worse, such as the case with Christine Otto, whose late husband's ashes were poured over her head; Tina van Wyk, who was told by her attackers that they would make her feel like a 'special woman'; and so forth. An extended case of psychological torture, which apparently never made the news, was witnessed by the Blood Sisters: they once had to clean up a scene where a young man had been killed on a farm. A week afterwards, the young man's mother was killed on the same farm. A week thereafter, the father was also murdered. 'We think they wanted to extend the suffering,' says Schutte. 'Just think: one week you bury your son. A week later, your wife. And you know the murderers are still out there …' When the farmer himself was eventually killed, he was cut up and completely dismembered. His hands, arms and legs were all cut off at the joints. The pieces were then neatly put together, back where they should be – a scene described as a 'human puzzle'. His body parts were displayed with the arms spread out, as if he had been crucified. Inside the house, little heaps of ashes and *dolosse* (ox knuckle-joint bones, used by witch doctors or as toys by African children) were found, suggesting that a spiritual ceremony had been executed during or after the attack.[49]

However, it is not only humans that are subject to excessive levels of violence, as pets are also often killed during these attacks. On several

occasions pets' throats are slit.[50] Other methods of killing pets include kicking them to death and crushing their heads. 'It's as if these bastards get joy from this.'[51]

THE SIGNIFICANCE OF OVERKILL

The levels of brutality and violence can be regarded as one of the characteristics of farm attacks, writes Lorraine Claasen, researcher at ANI. 'The apparent motives of the attacks are for the most part out of context with the associated violence displayed,' she concludes.[52]

The extreme levels of violence are used to intimidate landowners with the sole purpose of scaring the farmers away from their property to facilitate the land invasion process, argues Neels Moolman of the Department of Criminology at the University of Limpopo.[53] He further argues that the spoils obtained during these attacks can be regarded as a bonus and not the primary aim of the attack.

Overkill can be defined as 'an excess of something (such as a quantity or an action) beyond what is required or suitable for a particular purpose'[54] or 'the amount by which destruction or the capacity for destruction exceeds what is necessary.'[55] It is evident from all the above-mentioned examples that these attacks coincide with significant levels of overkill and that the brutality of farm murders is in many cases totally unrelated to the value of the items stolen in such attacks. The horrific levels of violence that are evident in farm attacks are, however, a matter that is swept under the carpet by the South African government, politicians who are aligned with the ruling ANC, the SAPS and many mainstream commentators. This, in turn, raises serious questions about the motive of the attackers – a matter that will be explored in Chapter 8.

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Robert was struck on the head with the butt of a gun. 'They were pulling me backwards and forwards,' recalls Robert. They pulled him out of the bedroom and into the lounge. 'I couldn't see Sue, but I knew that she was still alive. I could hear her breathing heavily.' At the time it was still pitch dark. 'One of the attackers walked straight to the light switch, which surprised me.' They were clearly prepared and they had a clear hierarchy. One of the men acted like a godfather.

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CHAPTER 5

Unique role: Why we cannot afford farm murders

Other than the extreme frequency with which South African farmers are attacked and killed and the extreme levels of brutality that often accompany these attacks, the unique role that farmers have to play is a crucial point in the argument for prioritising these attacks.

‘What most people don’t realise is that the farmer on the farm is the lifeblood of our society,’ says Hibbe van der Veen, who has given up farming after being shot during a farm attack. ‘If the milk farmer doesn’t deliver his milk, there won’t be any more butter.’[1]

Farmers are not merely a particular community, but a community of employers and food producers. In his book *How long will South Africa survive?*, RW Johnson dedicates a chapter to the state’s repression of economic activity, of which the looming agricultural crisis is a particular case in point and one of the biggest indicators that the country is on a path towards a crisis at large. ‘If the current attrition in the number of farmers continues there seems no doubt that the country will cease to be able to feed itself, with potentially explosive results.’[2] He continues: ‘Here is the bottom line: under ANC rule more and more South Africans are going to bed hungry.’[3]

ECONOMIC OVERVIEW

South Africa’s gross domestic product (GDP) was estimated to be R4,7 trillion ($376 billion) in 2017,[4] with GDP per capita at R83 000 ($6 640).[5] Out of the roughly 56,5 million people living in South Africa, around 37 million are aged between 15 and 64, of whom 22,3 million people (60%) are economically active, meaning that they’re either in formal or informal employment, or unemployed but actively looking for work. Another 2,4 million people are considered discouraged work seekers, resigned to the fact of long-term unemployment.[6]

Agriculture comprised 2,4% of GDP in 2017, down from 16,6% in 1951 and 4,5% in 1991.[7] The value added to GDP by agriculture alone (excluding forestry and fishing) was around R57 billion ($4,5 billion) in 2015.[8]

‘The fact that the sector represents less than 2,5% of the economy does not provide the true picture of the sector’s impact on the greater economy

since the sector does not operate in a vacuum – it buys inputs from the manufacturing sector, provides raw materials for manufacturing and purchases a host of services,' writes Jan Greyling from the Department of Agricultural Economics at the Stellenbosch University (SU), adding that the agricultural and related sectors represent closer to 7% of economic activity.[9]

Moreover, the agricultural sector contributes about 12% of South Africa's total exports, making it an important earner of foreign exchange revenue.[10] It should therefore be accepted that the significance of agriculture in the South African economy is certainly far greater than just 2,4%.

South Africa suffers from extremely high unemployment levels. According to the narrow definition, 26,7% of people in South Africa were unemployed in the first quarter of 2018, while this number is calculated at 36,7% according to the broad definition.[11] Statistics South Africa reported in May 2018 that of the 10,3 million persons aged 15-24 years, 32,4% (approximately 3,3 million) were not in employment, education or training – implying that close to one in three young South Africans between the ages of 15 and 24 were disengaged with the labour market.[12]

The consequence of the unemployment crisis has been that political pressure is put on the agricultural sector to create more jobs. This is particularly evident in the National Development Plan (NDP), which outlines a series of proposals to boost the economy in order to eliminate poverty and reduce inequality by the year 2030.[13] In particular, the NDP calls on the agricultural community to create one million new jobs by 2030.[14] Rural communities are also recognised as an 'economically viable group' in the National Rural Safety Strategy (NRSS).[15]

On the other hand, it is a known fact that employers in the agricultural community (i.e. commercial farmers) have been declining at a rapid pace. As was stated in Chapter 3, commercial farmers have declined from more than 120 000 in the 1980s to somewhere between 30 000 and 35 000 currently. It is also estimated that this number may halve within the next ten years.[16] This would imply a decline by roughly 90% over 45 years.

The decline in the number of commercial farmers should not necessarily be interpreted as bad news for the agricultural economy, but rather as part of a global trend of conglomeration in agriculture. Commercial farmers have increasingly embarked on a process of buying out other farms, resulting in a

decline in the number of commercial farmers, but not necessarily a decline in output – hence the rise of the so-called *mega farmer*.

Furthermore, the ambitious goal of creating one million jobs in agriculture may also be misdirected. The problem with the NDP is that it aims to create more jobs in a sector where the trend is one of mechanisation and a decline in the number of jobs, explains economist Russell Lamberti. ‘Large farms are increasingly mechanised and the use of technology means that greater output can be achieved with fewer employees. Trying to make more jobs in agriculture could actually be bad for farming and food production by coming at the expense of efficiency, and the cost of making agricultural jobs may cause resources to be direc- ted away from other important sectors, causing job losses elsewhere.’[17]

Employment in the agricultural sector has indeed shrunk, falling from nearly 1,2 million in 2001 to around 800 000 in 2016.[18] Agriculture employed 16% of the workforce in 1994, but today that is down to 6%.[19]

It would, however, be more useful to measure the success of the agricultural sector not by employment, but by output. In this sense, the balance between imports and exports is instructive, as well as comparisons with global peers.

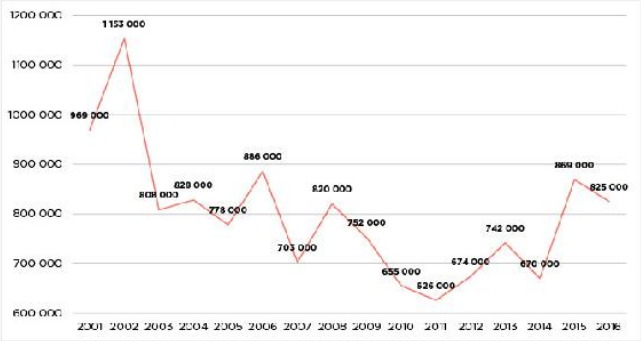

Figure 7: Employment in agriculture: 2001–2016[20]

The balance between the exporting and importing of food has been shifting over the years. During the 1970s and 1980s, South Africa exported about three times as much in agricultural products as were imported. This gap has been narrowing and exports are currently about one-and-a-half times the size of imports.[21] By 2016, agricultural export earnings amounted to $9,2 billion (R115 billion), while imports of agricultural and food products were $7 billion R87 billion). [22] According to the Department of Agriculture,

Forestry and Fisheries (DAFF), the estimated value of imports of agricultural products during 2016 came to approximately R82,4 billion ($6,8 billion) – an increase of 22,5% in one year. On the other hand, the estimated value of exports increased by only 13,7% to about R97,9 billion ($8,2 billion) in 2016. Agricultural output has maintained a slower growth path since the 1980s.

Two things should be said about this. Firstly that imports and exports are influenced by a variety of factors that are not the focus of this book. Secondly, as Lamberti points out, when the real contribution of agriculture to the GDP of South Africa is compared to other countries, we find that agricultural output in South Africa has grown faster than it has in New Zealand, the United Kingdom and Mexico, but slower than Australia and much slower than Chile and Brazil.[23] On balance, then, the economic success of the farming community for the past few decades is rather mixed. Through technological adoption, conglomeration and relatively open global markets, South African agriculture has just about managed to remain competitive, despite numerous domestic challenges.

THE TRIPLE CHALLENGE

According to Lamberti, there are three major challenges that South African commercial farmers face and that could have a significant impact on the future of agriculture in South Africa. These are macro challenges, property rights and violent crime.[24]

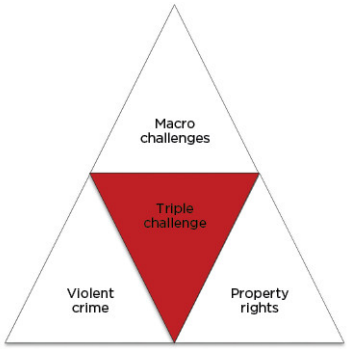

Figure 8: Agriculture's 'triple challenge'

Macro challenges include the difficulties of farming in arid and semi-arid regions, droughts and other weather-related challenges, distances to market, capital constraints, currency volatility, onerous labour laws, and macroeconomic stagnation. Macro challenges are partly natural and partly

man-made, but they are generally beyond farmers' control and beyond the purview of agricultural policy per se.

Property rights particularly refer to land reform and the South African government's push for expropriation without compensation.[25] However, farmers are also at tremendous risk when it comes to property rights to water, as the state regards itself as the sole custodian of water rights.[26]

With regard to violent crime, the main crisis is farm attacks. Some macro challenges for farmers could be mitigated by better state-economic policy, greater economic freedom and less state corruption and fiscal waste. Various global indices show that greater economic freedom, cleaner governance and more predictable, business-friendly economic regulations tend to lead to lower currency volatility, better functioning capital markets, more cooperative labour relations and better economic growth. Since 2000, South Africa has become less economically free, more corrupt, and less business friendly, leading to wild currency fluctuations, slow economic growth and fiscal mismanagement.

The most important aspect with regard to property rights is to provide certainty to South African farmers that their constitutionally- recognised property rights are protected and that they can continue improving their farms without fear of expropriation or other forms of predation by the state.

The reality of farm attacks, combined with police inefficiency and government's unconcerned attitude, has developed into a major crisis for South African farmers.

'The problem here is the opportunity cost,' says Lamberti. The situation for farmers should be measured in terms of their 'next best alternative' – think of the prospects of the farmer's hypothetical twin brother who makes a living in a nearby town or city. The prospects of moving to towns or cities, or of emigrating to farm abroad is becoming increasingly attractive for South African farmers. 'If these three challenges aren't addressed, it is safe to predict a further rapid decline in the number of commercial farmers,' says Lamberti. This situation is also discouraging farmers' children from making a living in agriculture as their parents have done, which diminishes the pool of skilled agricultural human capital.[27]

QUANTIFYING THE ECONOMIC IMPACT OF FARM ATTACKS

Quantifying the economic impact of farm attacks has proved to be extremely difficult, largely due to the fact that there are so many variables that should be considered. Several attempts at quantifying the economic impact of farm attacks have, however, been made.

Depending on the commodity, when a farm has been taken out of production it can take up to eight years before it reaches full production again, warns Bennie van Zyl, general manager of TAU SA.[28] Dianne Kohler Barnard, Shadow Minister of Police for the Democratic Alliance (DA), adds that on average, a farmer feeds about 2 000 people in South Africa.[29]

Using 2009 as a base reference, the South African Chamber of Commerce and Industry (SACCI) estimated that every farm murder costs the South African economy approximately R2 million ($160 000) if we are to assume a permanent loss of the farming unit as a result of the attack. In their statement, SACCI says: ‘Using the nominal GDP figure of R2,4 trillion ($0,192 trillion), a 3,2% contribution of agriculture to GDP and on an estimate of 39 982 farms in South Africa, the cost of a murder/attack on a farm, to the economy, was R1 932 869 ($154 630) per annum.’[30]

The SACCI estimate is, however, open to criticism, since farm murders do not necessarily result in the permanent loss of the farming unit. What remains a fact is that every time a South African farmer is murdered, the South African economy loses a highly-skilled, creditworthy individual who had the capacity to create wealth and to contribute productively in a variety of ways. The main channel through which farm murders impact the economy is by reducing the number of skilled people generally, and the number of skilled farmers in particular. This gives rise to a greater skills shortage, meaning farmers and farm managers can demand even higher incomes, raising the cost of food production higher than it would otherwise be.

SOCIO-ECONOMIC STABILITY

Fewer skilled farmers also accelerates the trend of conglomeration and mechanisation in farming. Although this trend can mitigate the impact on food output, it changes the complexion of rural areas, reduces the vibrancy of rural communities, and may even lead to permanent economic decline in small country-district towns. This would cause a faster decline in farming employment than otherwise would have occurred, and can also lead to

reduced economic prospects generally in rural areas and small towns. It should be obvious that a knock-on impact of this is greater rates of urbanisation, putting pressure on already highly strained urban infrastructure, townships and job markets. One effect of greater urbanisation is to increase the supply of available urban labour. This either depresses urban wage rates or, under a minimum wage law, perpetuates mass urban unemployment, incubating social frustration and the many social ills that accompany mass urban poverty. An additional consequence is a greater demand for urban and peri-urban land by impoverished communities, leading to greater political discontent and fermentation of land invasions and policies that would further undermine property rights.

Rural areas and country-district towns are kept alive by their farming communities. Farmers are usually the only producers in rural areas who sell goods to the cities and even overseas. In this way, they bring buying power into rural areas that would not otherwise exist, and this helps support rural economies and communities.

Farmers therefore represent the economic lifeblood of rural societies. If farms fall into disuse or are transformed into large conglomerated commercial operations, the dynamism and economic vibrancy of small towns will be negatively affected. Other businesses that support farmers and their families will go out of business. Some small towns in South Africa have already fallen into terminal economic depression and decline as the face of farming has changed. Some of this trend is inevitable, but if the triple challenge is not addressed, it will accelerate and could impact certain areas far faster and more intensely than would naturally occur. This is potentially highly destabilising for rural societies. Those too old or too poor to move to urban areas are at risk of becoming a permanent rural underclass, totally dependent on state welfare handouts and doomed to wretched poverty. This terrible rural decay can already be felt in many far-flung parts of South Africa that most city folk never get to see.

It is ironic then, that the government pays so little attention to farm attacks and murders or dismisses them merely as ordinary crime. These phenomena threaten to further impoverish the very people the government claims to stand up for – poor black people. To add insult to injury, the killing or driving to emigration of highly skilled people worsens the problem of wealth and income inequality by placing a salary premium on

skilled people and worsening unemployment. Once again, for a government that claims to hate income inequality, ignoring farm attacks and murders will achieve the exact opposite of what it desires.

FARM MURDERS AND EMIGRATION

The economic impact of farm murders might be compared to the economic impact of skilled emigration, suggests Lamberti.

An estimated 126 000 self-declared emigrants left South Africa from 1990 to 2003, of whom close to 86 000 emigrated between 1996 and 2003.[31] A more recent population estimate however states that roughly 500 000 white people had left South Africa in total between 1996 and 2008.[32]

According to InterNations (a network of expats with local communities worldwide), about 62% of South African expats have stated personal safety and crime as a major consideration for leaving the country (the world average for this measure is 32%).[33] 70% of South African expats are generally satisfied with leaving the country.[34] 50% of South African expats are employees or managers (the world average is 47%).[35]

Heinrich Bohlman from the Department of Economics at the University of Pretoria estimated that if the number of skilled managers and professionals declined by 6% due to emigration, GDP would be about 3% less over an eight-year period than the no-emigration baseline scenario. ‘After the initial increase in real wages due to the sudden reduction in labour, real wages start to drop as the impact of lower productivity is felt… In general, these results show that skilled emigration has a predominantly negative effect on a macroeconomic level,’ says Bohlman.[36]

He concludes:

> The resulting loss in competitiveness severely curtails export oriented industries, with declining rates of return hurting the investment sector. With a relatively smaller population compared to the baseline scenario, GDP per capita does not decline as much, but households are still left worse off.
>
> Skilled emigration, especially where permanent, is therefore shown to reduce economic growth and welfare over the long term. Such emigration represents a loss of investment in human capital, which most developing countries such as South Africa can ill afford… It is

> therefore essential that authorities create a suitable environment and policies that manage and protect their human capital investments.[37]

Skilled peoples' higher incomes indicate that they contribute most to national output and GDP, both individually or through creating and running successful companies. If we consider the top two tax brackets in South Africa as representing the population of skilled workers, then we could say that skilled workers earn at least R700 000 ($56 000) per year or more. Economically speaking, people must produce at least as much value as their incomes. If these people are lost and not replaced by foreign skilled immigrants, we lose their productive contribution and consequently their consumption spending contribution too. Some of that productive value might be replaced by existing skilled workers at the expense of their extra time and effort or by improving technology and mechanisation, but this does not stop the fact that losing productive people causes overall economic potential to decline by their individual productive potential. Skilled emigrants also tend to leave with their children, meaning future generations of productive people are lost as well.

Losing skilled entrepreneurs and business owners arguably makes for an even greater loss than just their personal income potential. They provide jobs and value for many other people beyond themselves, including suppliers and customers.

The same could be said about the loss of human capital as a result of farm murders. Farmers tend to be highly-productive individuals and also business owners whose farming operations employ staff, buy from suppliers, and sell to customers. Farmers may be murdered before they have children and so their murder also deprives the country of future skilled citizens. Or perhaps the murder causes spouses and children or extended family to emigrate for fear or lack of economic options domestically.

FOOD AND FARMERS

Omri van Zyl, CEO of Agri SA, said that farmers currently produce enough food and that much of it is exported, but that this could change if farm murders were not stopped.[38]

Rising food prices are already a reality in South Africa. Since 2008, food prices have risen by about 13% more than overall prices.[39] This is, however, not far out of sync with what is happening elsewhere in the world.[40]

An important point in this regard is that the National Intelligence Agency (NIA) was commissioned by the South African government to investigate the Arab Spring to see what lessons South Africa could learn from the riots that resulted in revolutionary regime changes in several countries. The NIA reported that the key common factor that triggered the Arab Spring was rising food prices.[41]

We should therefore give credit to South Africa's farmers and the farming community, who have managed to keep up with global output trends, despite operating under severe pressure with regard to macro challenges, threats that their property rights would be violated (more on this in Chapter 13) and violent crime. This is evidence to the notion that they are indeed some of the best farmers in the world. It could be argued that agricultural output would be even greater if macro challenges were managed more effectively, if property rights were protected and – of the greatest importance to this book – if farm attacks were to stop.

It is clear that the farming community has a critical role to play in the well-being of South Africa – not only because this is a fact, but also because the South African government has particularly indicated that the farming community needs to fulfil an important role in the boosting of the economy as a means to alleviate poverty and reduce inequality, not to mention food production and food security. All of this would, however, remain a pipe dream if the realities that South Africa's farmers are confronted with are not changed as a matter of urgency. The important role that farmers have to play in the future of South Africa dictates that any government that is serious about the above-mentioned goals would certainly prioritise the attacks on the farming community at large, but on commercial farmers in particular.

The fact that the South African government is not prepared to regard these attacks as a matter of national priority (as will be pointed out in Chapter 17), despite evidence that these attacks result in an increase in inequality – the prevetion of which the South Arican government states as their first priority – raises serious questions about what the true priorities of the South African government are.

Whatever motivates the South African government to deprioritise its reaction to these attacks seem to carry more weight than what the ANC publicly claims to be their first priority: reducing inequality.

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‘As they pulled me into the lounge, I managed to look at the clock on my way there. It was 02:10 in the morning.’ Robert did not know that what was about to happen would carry on for almost four hours and that he would only see another person after the sun had risen.

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CHAPTER 6

Remoteness: Unique circumstances

Regardless of all the already-mentioned factors, from a practical perspective the most important motivation for the prioritisation of farm murders is simply the fact that farmers live in unique circumstances. Farms are isolated, usually far from the nearest towns or cities, and are often accessible only by gravel roads. Many farmers do not use landline telephones any more, and on many farms the cellphone signal is inadequate. Other than that, copper theft is a major problem that also has an impact on the ability of farmers to communicate, especially during night time, when they suddenly discover that the cables have been stolen.

Intervention by members of the local South African Police Service (SAPS) and even by concerned neighbours cannot take place within a matter of minutes. The circumstances of farmers certainly cannot be compared to those of citizens living in urban areas.

'I don't think the public knows that the attackers often spend hours on the scenes of farm murders,' says Eileen de Jager from Crime Scene Clean-up. 'Remember, it's normally in a remote area with nobody around to hear the victims scream and plead.' There are reported cases of farm attacks and tortures being executed over time frames extending up to five or even nine hours, says Roland de Vries, a retired Major General of the South African National Defence Force (SANDF), who recently became involved in the battle against farm attacks.[1]

'We see how they even prepared food and ate during the torture. We see how they took their time with the torture,' says De Jager. 'To burn somebody with a heated dropper – an iron pole normally used in the farm's fencing – takes time. To sharpen a broomstick before you push it up a woman's vagina, takes time.'[2]

The remoteness of many of South Africa's farms also implies that they are situated far from police stations, and even reaction time from the SAPS might take several hours. On top of that, the South African Institution of Civil Engineering (SAICE) found in 2018 that between 88% and 98% of South Africa's dirt roads can be described as either 'bad' or 'very bad'.[3]

Richard Stofberg (74) was ambushed on his farm near Rustenburg in the North West on 27 March 2017. After returning from shopping, he was

attacked upon his arrival at the farmhouse by two men, presumed to be teenagers. He was repeatedly beaten in the face with the backside of an axe, threatened with a revolver and tied to the bed with electric cables and wires. The attackers then left him there and fled the scene. Stofberg was tied up so tightly that he was unable to free himself. He soon realised that he would have to wait there in the hope of someone coming to his aid. Eventually, he spent four nights being tied up before help finally arrived. 'I was lying in my own urine and my throat was dry and sore, I struggled to shout for help,' he said.[4]

This fact, namely that farms are situated in remote areas, is also recognised in the Rural Safety Strategy of the SAPS when it declares that:

> Farmers, farm workers and residents within rural communities are considered soft targets by criminals. This is due to the remoteness of farms, high market value of properties, large distances between farms and villages and the inaccessibility to the police as well as basic infrastructure, such as roads, to support service delivery.
>
> Rural police stations are often isolated and responsible to police vast areas. The extent and high levels of poverty and unemployment within rural communities create a particular challenge to policing. Communities are less willing to participate in partnerships with the police. Inadequate response to the needs of rural communities and resource constraints hamper the rendering of effective policing in many rural areas.[5]

Testifying at the South African Human Rights Commission (SAHRC) in 2014, Bernadette Hall spoke of the murder of her husband David (49) when they were attacked on their farm near Fochville. The SAPS investigation into their case could only be described as a matter of extreme negligence (see Chapter 19).[6] One of the issues that turned out to be problematic in the investigation of the murder of David Hall was that his farm was on the border between Gauteng and North West. This was said to imply that two different police stations had jurisdiction over different parts of the farm. Consequently, each of the two police stations was reluctant to investigate the matter as they both argued that the matter should rather be dealt with by the other station. The result was that justice was not served and that the attackers were never convicted.

This can be attributed to the fact that the uniqueness of farm attacks is not acknowledged. Consequently, it is left to local police stations to deal with a national crisis that would best be dealt with as a matter of national priority.

Even if the other factors that contribute to the uniqueness of farm attacks were irrelevant, this factor alone – the fact that farmers live in unique circumstances, where they are far away from their neighbours and far away from police stations – is sufficient reason to acknowledge that farm attacks should be countered with a unique counter-strategy.

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The first question they asked Robert was 'Where is the money?' 'The godfather was asking the questions, while the other two were tying me up with binding twine – the stuff that you use to bind bales of hay. As they were tying me up, I said "Whoever gave you the information that there was money in this house, gave you the wrong information". The man shot back: "No they didn't!"'

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CHAPTER 7

A closer look

Having discussed the frequency and the brutality of these attacks, as well as the unique role that farmers play in society at large, and the fact that farmers live in unique circumstances, a variety of other questions arise with regard to the manifestation of these attacks. Various issues must be considered including the areas that are most vulnerable to attacks; the frequency with which various crimes such as murder, rape and assault occur during these attacks; the months and weeks in which, and the time of day at which these attacks happen the most; typical traits of the attackers and victims; the modus operandi of the attackers; a variety of questions regarding the characteristics of these attacks; and the psychological impact on the victims. In this chapter, I will focus on these questions.

PROVINCIAL BREAKDOWN

Treurgrond, the second edition and translation of the book *Land of Sorrow,* details a total of 3 319 farm attacks on both farms and smallholdings, stretching over a period of 23 years from 1990 to 2012. A division of these attacks per province is illustrated in Figure 9.

A 2016 provincial comparison by the South African Police Service (SAPS) for the financial years of 2010/2011 to 2015/2016 provides results with a slightly different conclusion. According to the SAPS data, most of the attacks occurred in North West during those six years, followed by Gauteng and KwaZulu-Natal. The Northern Cape is indicated as the province with the smallest number of farm attacks, as can be seen in Figure 10.

If the SAPS data are used to indicate farm murders, instead of farm attacks, Gauteng is listed as the province with the highest rate, followed by KwaZulu-Natal and Limpopo.

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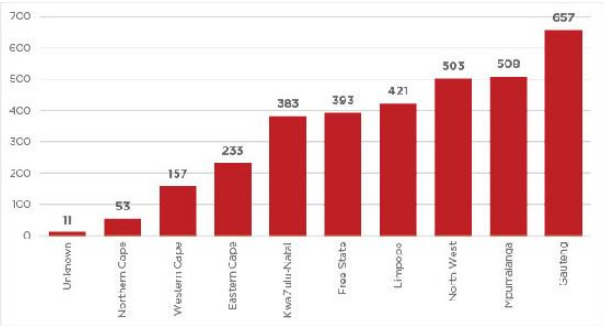

Figure 9: Farm attacks per province: 1990 to 2012[1]

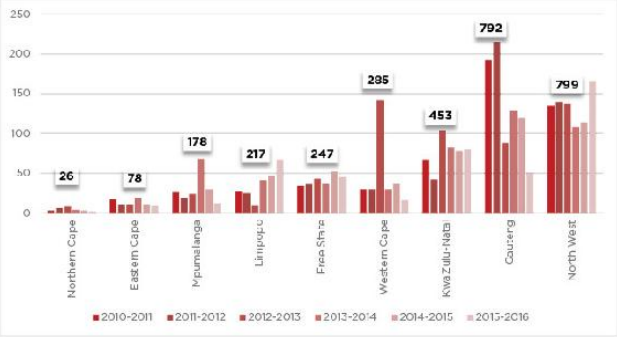

Figure 10: Farm attacks per province: 2010/2011 to 2015/2016, according to the SAPS[2] *with total number of attacks over period per province indicated.*

North West drops to the fifth place, with the Northern Cape (the least populated province) still the province with the smallest number of incidents of all. If farm attacks are plotted on a map of South Africa, it becomes clear that certain areas are more vulnerable than others.

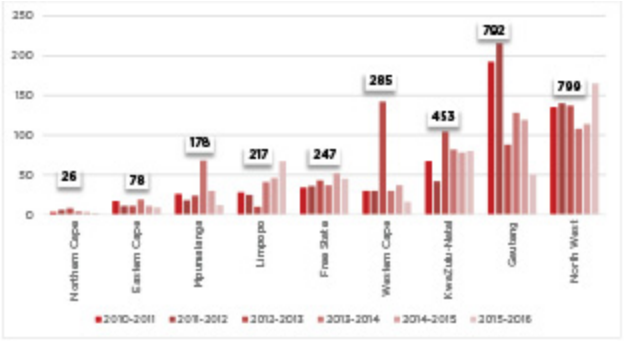

Figure 11: Farm murders per province: 2010/2011–2015/2016, according to the SAPS[3]

HOTSPOTS

The SAPS has identified a list of hotspots in their analysis of the 2015/2016 data on farm attacks. Stations where more than two incidents were reported

in that year were identified as primary hotspots, while stations where two incidents were reported were identified as secondary hotspots. Hotspots were limited to only seven of the nine provinces, with the Northern Cape and the Eastern Cape being excluded.

BREAKDOWN BY MONTH, WEEK AND TIME OF DAY

A more detailed analysis was done by the Committee of Inquiry into Farm Attacks on the basis of the data acquired by the committee. The report included a breakdown of monthly, daily and hourly distribution. The months in which the most attacks occur have been identified as March, May, July and October, while Friday has been identified as the day of the week on which most attacks occur. A breakdown according to the time of day indicates that the majority of attacks happen from 18:00 to 23:59.

PROVINCE	PRIMARY HOTSPOT STATIONS	SECONDARY HOTSPOT STATIONS
KwaZulu-Natal (13)	KwaDukuza	Margate; Port Shepstone; Hibberdene; Eshowe; Babanango; Paddock; Harding; Dramond; Camperdown; Msinsini; Himeville; Bergville
North West (15)	Brits; Rustenburg; Potchefstroom; Mooinooi	Koster; Wolmaransstad; Marikana; Biesiesvlei; Assen; Hartbeesfontein; Ventersdorp; Ottosdal; Klerksdorp
Gauteng (7)	Hercules; Hekpoort; Mulderscrift	Randfontein; Kameeldrift; Cullinan; Devon
Free State (7)		Cornelia; Kroonstad; Edenburg; Virginia; Bainsvlei; Zastron; Bloemspruit
Limpopo (9)	Modimolle; Westenburg; Lotsitcle; Lephalale	Mokopane; Marble Hall; Louvubu; Polokwane; Groblersdal
Mpumalanga (2)		Middelburg; Delmas
Western Cape (7)		Ashton; Stellenbosch

Table 1: Stations identified by the SAPS as hotspots for farm attacks: 2015/2016[4]

	JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN	JUL	AUG	SEPT	OCT	NOV	DEC
1998	35	61	69	53	83	57	62	81	68	80	61	59
1999	63	71	69	76	72	72	53	63	63	61	69	59
2000	71	83	79	77	82	72	107	76	62	61	70	66
2001	70	73	92	84	82	78	83	79	82	119	84	85
TOTAL	239	288	329	290	319	279	305	299	275	321	284	269

Table 2: Monthly distribution of farm attacks: 1998–2001 (CIAC)[5]

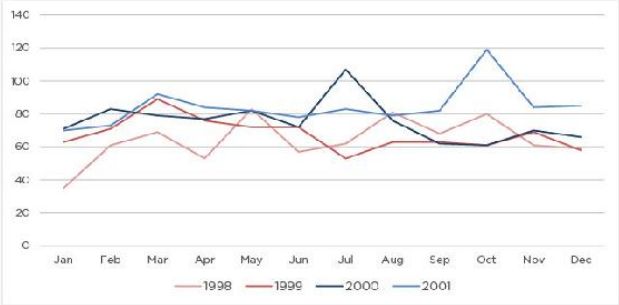

Figure 12: Monthly distribution of farm attacks: 1998–2001 (CIAC)[6]

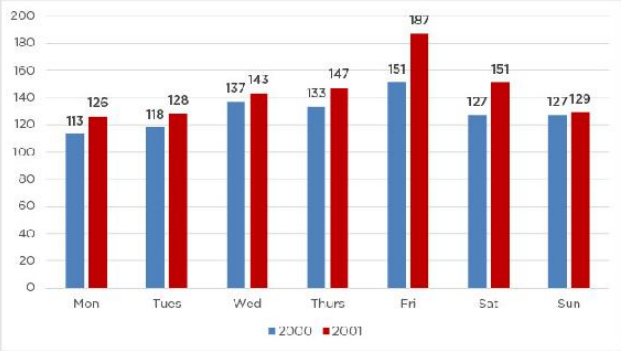

Figure 13: Daily distribution of farm attacks: 2000–2001 (CIAC)[7]

Table 7: Analysis of murder victims by TAU SA[22]

	MON	TUES	WED	THURS	FRI	SAT	SUN
2000	113	118	137	133	151	127	127
2001	126	128	143	147	187	151	129
TOTAL	239	246	280	280	338	278	256

Table 3: Daily distribution of farm attacks: 2000–2001 (CIAC)[9]

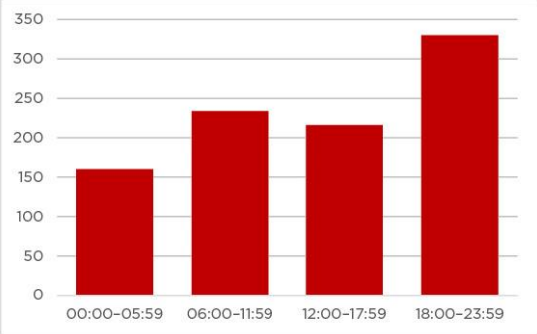

Figure 14: Hourly distribution of farm attacks: 2001 (CIAC)[10]

00:00–05:59	06:00–11:59	12:00–17:59	18:00–23:59
160	234	216	330
17%	24,9%	23%	35,1%

Table 4: Hourly distribution of farm attacks: 2001 (CIAC)[11]

CRIMES COMMITTED

A docket analysis by the CIAC on all farm attacks committed during 2001 found that armed robbery had been committed during 68,2% of farm attacks, murder during 14,5% and rape during 6,9% of these attacks.

CRIMES COMMITTED	NUMBER	AS % OF ALL ATTACKS
Armed robbery	689	68,2%
Attempted murder	245	24,2%
Assault	208	20,6%
Murder	147	14,5%
Rape	70	6,9%
Other	81	8,0%

Table 5: Most prevalent crimes committed, indicated as a proportion of all farm attacks in 2001[12]

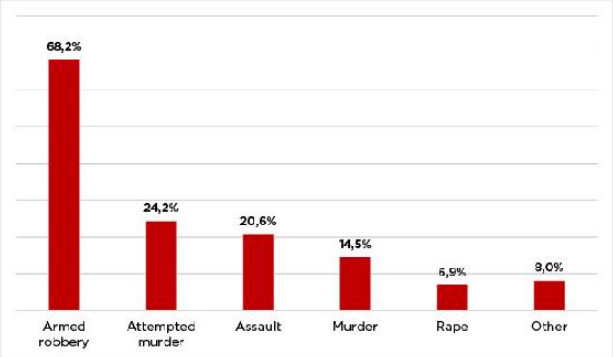

Figure 15: Most prevalent crimes committed, indicated as a proportion of all farm attacks in 2001[13]

THE ATTACKERS[14]

On average there are three attackers per farm attack[15] and in the vast majority of cases the attackers are youngsters in their teens, twenties or early thirties. However, farm attacks can be executed by groups as large as 15, as was the case when Christelle van der Merwe (39) and her two little girls were attacked on the farm near Tzaneen in Limpopo on 28 March 2017. She was severely beaten in her attempt to protect her children and lost her right eye because of the attack. Nedine (10) was beaten with a golf club. Christelle's husband, Gert, was away at the time. 'Every dad's greatest fear came true for me. I wasn't there when I should have protected my family. One feels so powerless,' he said.[16]

Attackers are almost exclusively black males. (It is only in one case that the author is aware of that an Indian male was also involved in a farm attack.) An increased number of foreign nationals tend to be involved with these attacks, especially in the outlying districts. From the 41 case studies that my colleague Lorraine Claasen of the AfriForum Research Institute (ANI) conducted, 30 of the attackers were South African citizens and six were Zimbabweans. A total of 43,9% of the attackers communicated with their victims in English, and 31,7% in Afrikaans.

Typical weapons used during farm attacks include firearms (handguns and shotguns), knives, pangas (machetes), clothing irons, pitchforks and other gardening equipment, hammers and a variety of blunt and sharp objects.

Attackers come from the outside and forcibly gain access to the property. It appears that the majority of these attacks are organised and planned in detail. The property is spied on and monitored for days, weeks and often

months before the actual attack takes place. The routines and habits of farmers and other residents are carefully observed and noted. Attackers then gain the advantage as victims are caught off guard or when they are at their most vulnerable – this element of surprise places the attackers in immediate control. In many of these attacks it is evident that the attackers were very well prepared, not only with regard to their planning, but in some cases also with regard to their equipment and information. When three farm attackers were spotted by a security camera on a farm near Sannieshof in 2015, one of the attackers could clearly be seen carrying a military-type signal jammer on his back. In another night-footage clip that was taken in pitch darkness, it is clear from the movement of the attacker that he knew exactly what the terrain looked like, including how he would have to move in which areas to minimise his chances of being detected. On one of the scenes that the Blood Sisters had to clean, the attacker had changed clothes during the attack, leaving his trousers on the scene. In his pocket a flash disk was found that contained photographs of the inside of the house.[17]

MODUS OPERANDI

Claasen developed a list of characteristics typically associated with farm attacks. Although there are several similarities and characteristics, each attack contains a combination of different dynamics, variables, circumstances, contexts and reactions or behaviour of the individual perpetrators as well as the victims. For example, the attackers cannot predict how the victim is going to react upon the initial realisation that he or she is in danger. The possibility that the victim may retaliate and fight back in self-defence should be a deterrent in itself, but this is not the case.[18] This could be because of the fact that the attackers are in many cases very well prepared and that many of these attacks seem to be committed according to a predetermined plan, which may include contingency plans.

Particular characteristics that have been identified include:

- Some attacks are more organised and planned than others. Firearms, tools to break into a house, wire or cables used to restrain victims, or escape vehicles that are taken with the perpetrators to the targeted properties indicate the offenders' intent in premeditating and planning the attack in advance.

- Perpetrators who have already selected their target often keep the property under surveillance for weeks in advance, sometimes attempting to gather information from farm labourers about the movements of the residents or the general layout of the farm and house.
- There is usually more than one attacker who commits these crimes. Accomplices who can restrain victims, collect loot or keep watch allow for the attack to be completed in a shorter period of time. Despite this, we find that in many of these incidents, the attackers remain on the property for much longer than is necessary.
- The initial contact with the victim can happen in various ways. Some attackers ambush their victims by either waiting at the farm gates or in the house when the unsuspecting victims arrive home. Others surprise their victims inside their homes by gaining access to the home through windows and doors. Attackers may also lure their victims from their house by pretending to want to buy cattle or products or look for jobs, or even by setting fire to the vegetation outside the home. This allows the attackers to overpower their victims, leaving them powerless and with phones or firearms out of reach.
- The victims of the attacks are not limited to farmers and their spouses or families, but may also include domestic workers and farm labourers.
- Upon initial contact with the attackers, most victims are overpowered, assaulted and restrained. There are cases where the victims fought back inself-defence, often shooting the perpetrators and causing them to flee.
- Victims are mostly restrained with shoe laces, telephone wires or electriccables that are tied around their hands and legs.
- During these attacks victims may be harmed with several objects such as steel pipes, pangas (machetes), axes, sticks, shovels, pitchforks, broomsticks and knives or by kicking, beating, slapping or hitting them.
- Victims are often threatened in order to gather information about the whereabouts of safes, the keys to these safes, money, firearms and other valuables. Threats to kill them or their spouses or to cause them serious physical harm, or pouring methylated spirits over the victims may force them to provide the information that the attackers demand.

- Some victims are horrifically tortured by pulling out their nails, pouring boiling water over their bodies, burning them with clothes irons, breaking their fingers, dragging them behind moving vehicles or repeatedly hitting them with objects before they are ultimately murdered.
- The attackers ransack the premises while looking for valuables and loot.
- Female victims are sometimes raped during the attack.
- Victims are shot, in some cases fatally, when they try to resist the attacks or to defend their families, while they shoot at the attackers and also – much too often – for no apparent reason at all.
- The attackers' loot, if any, may include firearms, money, vehicles, jewellery, electronic devices, clothes, shoes, food, alcohol or farming equipment.
- Attackers either flee the scene on foot, in waiting escape vehicles or in the farmers' own vehicles. It is concerning that stolen vehicles are in most cases left abandoned a short distance from the farm or property where the attack occurred.

A 2015/2016 SAPS docket analysis of the modus operandi of farm attackers can be summarised as portrayed in Table 6.

Premises	Shift in target selection from smallholdings to farms
Day and time	Thursday: 06:00 to 09:00 and 16:00 to 02:00 Friday: 19:00 to 02:00 Sunday: 19:00 to 03:00
Approach	Overpowered at their premises/forced entry to the premises. At night, victims mostly asleep. Victims bound – legs and arms/threatened physically with weapon.
Weapons used	Primarily firearms, but also knives and sharp objects.
Number of perpetrators	Varies between two and eight. Mostly two to four (new trends show two groups of suspects – the first group enters the house while the other group remains outside to monitor, then joins the group that is inside). Male suspects, involvement of foreign nationals.
Age of perpetrators	Majority between 20 and 35 years.
Age of victims	35 years and above, but majority are 50 years and above.
Arrests	Several incidents involved arrests immediately after the incident through good cooperation from the local (farming) community.
Items stolen	Firearms and vehicles. Easily disposable items such as cellphones, electronic equipment, jewellery, vehicles.

Table 6: Modus operandi during farm attacks, as identified by the SAPS[19]

THE VICTIMS[20]

A total of 5 818 victims are listed in *Treurgrond*, and their average age can be calculated as 53,3 years. A distribution of the ages of the victims clearly indicates that people above 50 are the most vulnerable, while children and young adults between 15 and 20 are the least vulnerable group.

In their research on farm attacks, the Transvaal Agricultural Union (TAU SA) also categorises the victims according to their identity. A breakdown by TAU SA of all the farm murders from 1990 to June 2015 indicates that farmers represent 64,5% of the victims, while immediate family represent 26,6%, workers 7,7% and visitors on farms 1,2%. Farmers and their immediate family therefore make up more than 90% of murdered victims, as indicated in Table 7 and Figure 17.

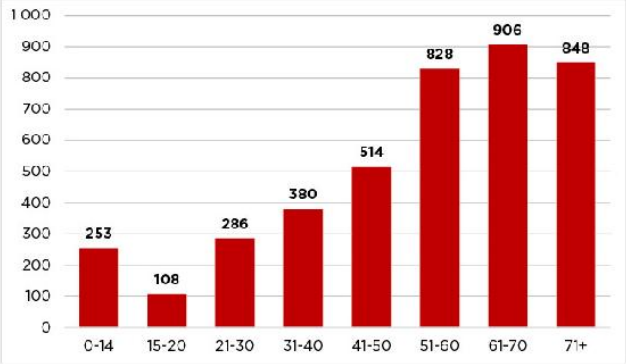

Figure 16: Division of victims (1990–2012) according to age groups[21]

CATEGORY	NUMBER OF MURDERED VICTIMS	PERCENTAGE OF ALL
Farmers	1 152	64.5%
Immediate family	474	26.6%
Workers	138	7.7%
Visitors	21	1.2%
TOTAL	1 785	100%

Table 7: Analysis of murder victims by TAU SA[22]

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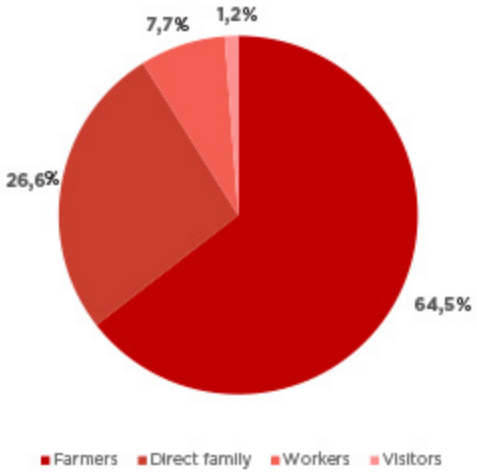

Figure 17: Analysis of murder victims by TAU SA[23]

According to Claasen's study, 65,9% of the victims did what they had been ordered to do, while 31,7% tried to confront the attackers.

About 6% of those attacked or murdered during these attacks were black, according to the popular current affairs TV show *Carte Blanche*.[24]

This, while according to figures provided by the African Farmers' Association of South Africa (AFASA), black people make up 12% of commercial farmers in South Africa.[25]

IMPACT ON THE VICTIMS[26]

The impact of a farm attack on the loved ones of murdered victims is much bigger than one tends to think, says Caty van der Merwe, head of AfriForum's Trauma Unit. 'There is an emotional impact … and a feeling of powerlessness and of fear together with that emotional impact. Then there is also a physical impact. In many cases the victims lose limbs. There is also a financial impact that causes financial trauma as a result of a loss of income and then obviously the loss of life.'[27]

Van der Merwe says that they do not encourage victims to try to take it day by day, but rather breath by breath.

'My life has finished. One half of me sort of hopes that they would have pulled that trigger, so that I wouldn't have to go through what I'm going through now,' says Beth Bucher, who was attacked with her partner, Dan Knight (55), near Underberg in KwaZulu-Natal in October 2013. Knight was beaten to death by two attackers, aged 28 and 33,[28] while Beth was

forced to witness this. The attackers grabbed her head, pointing it in the direction of her husband, and forced her eyes open with their fingers. She continues: ‘And then they used 10 pound hammers and they used a huge monkey wrench. And they were beating Dan’s skull, beating it and beating it. I just saw the blood flying everywhere and then they smashed him right in his face with a big hammer. So it crushed his whole face and his teeth were smashed. Obviously his whole face just collapsed. And then they started kicking him with gumboots. I have flashes regularly. Not just now and again. It’s there all the time. I cry and I’m shaking and I’m terrified. I have such anger now, it’s frightening me. I’m not an angry person, but I’m so angry. I’m so angry.’ [29]

‘My mother doesn’t want to live anymore,’ says Gawie Stols, brother of Kyle Stols (21), who was murdered on a farm near Bloemfontein in October 2017. ‘She isn’t prepared to continue. My father is devastated, he doesn’t speak. He’s broken.’[30]

‘It’s not only a man that lost his life. It was our breadwinner, it’s our lives, it’s our house, it’s our past, our future, everything, gone. Everything comes to a halt,’ exclaims Mariandra Heunis, widow of Johann Heunis (43), who was shot in front of his family near Pretoria in Gauteng.[31] The couple had three little girls and Mariandra was about eight months pregnant when her husband was murdered. Her baby boy was born just a few days after his father’s funeral.[32]

Victims may still suffer emotionally in various ways for weeks, months and even years after an attack. Challenges may include struggling with basic everyday tasks such as eating and sleeping, and victims may feel too ashamed to discuss these problems with their family, friends and peers. Trying to cope alone will prolong the suffering and trauma further. On the other hand, accepting and relying on help from wherever it may come may increase a sense of community, belonging and self-worth.

‘It takes you about ten years to live normally again,’ says Herman de Jager, whose father, Piet (65), was murdered near Levubu in Limpopo in September 2003. ‘The first ten years were very difficult. They say after such an attack, most farms fail, production stops, it is halted. I also experienced it. You can’t drive at night anymore to switch the pumps off.

We are irrigation farmers. We have pumps that have to be switched on or off at night.'[33]

Some victims may deny the magnitude of the events or withdraw completely. Victims may become physically ill and present with symptoms such as heart palpitations, shortness of breath when reliving the event, headaches, as well as a lack of or increased appetite, lack of concentration, difficulty sleeping or an increased startle response. They may lose interest in activities that they enjoyed before and relationships with family and friends may suffer. In the long run, they may be diagnosed with depression or post-traumatic stress disorder. The symptoms found among the victims after the attacks are depicted in Table 8.

Secondary victimisation may also occur in a court setting where victims must testify against alleged attackers. By testifying or attending court proceedings, victims may even experience a certain sense of relief in that the perpetrators will not be able to hurt other people in a similar manner. If criminals are given prison sentences, it may also give assurance that the specific offenders will not come back and victimise them again. Successful sentencing may further improve a diminished trust in the criminal justice system and provide the victims with relief that the proceedings are dealt with and completed. It will not, however, bring back their loved ones or erase any memories of the attack.

Neighbours and peers of farm attack victims may themselves develop an intense fear of being victimised. Media reports and firsthand experiences recounted by victims may leave these individuals feeling anxious about their own safety and may cause them to alter their lifestyles.

SYMPTOM	PERCENTAGE
Fatigue	68,3%
Dry mouth or thirst	53,7%
Rapid heartbeat	51,2%
Weakness	43,9%
Shakiness	41,5%
Gritting of teeth	39,0%
Cold chills	39,0%
Nausea	34,1%
Difficulty in breathing	26,8%
Dizziness	26,8%
Problems with eyesight	19,5%
Excessive sweating	19,5%
Chest pains	12,2%
Increased blood pressure	12,2%
Fainting	2,4%

Table 8: Symptoms found among victims after farm attacks[34]

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A family friend of a murdered victim was quoted as saying that they are paralysed with fear because the attack on their friend left them feeling defenceless and exposed. In a certain sense, it may force individuals who live in rural areas to take responsibility for their own security. By taking precautions and being vigilant, individuals can adopt a proactive approach in preventing farm attacks.

‘How wrong is it that I have to teach a child of 10 and one of 8 years old to handle a firearm? Just in case, for that one day, when daddy or mommy is injured and they have to defend themselves,’ says Fanie Havenga, a farmer from Levubu. ‘I made steel cages and put them up outside the window, so that he (the attacker) cannot get in. A steel cage, still with burglar proofing on the windows also. It will give me the edge. I will hear when he tries to break the steel cage,’ adds Fanus Viviers, also from Levubu. ‘Before dark, we are in the house, then I check that all the doors are locked. I make sure my weapon is ready, that it is with me and that my wife’s weapon is with her.[35]

Children are often impacted in the most horrible ways by farm attacks. At about 20:00 on the evening of 30 April 2012, Venessa Stafleu (34) was murdered in front of her two children, aged 3 and 5. After having witnessed the death of their mother, the children ran across the farm, in the middle of the night, towards the main road. They were severely traumatised by the events.[36]

Farm attacks also have a devastating impact on farm workers, for a variety of reasons. In many of these attacks farm workers are also injured or killed. When farm attacks lead to a halt in production, it mostly results in job losses. Furthermore, the psychological impact is usually glossed over. In many cases, farm workers are the first ones to discover the dead bodies. This was evident in November 2016 when James Khiba (47) testified in court about the murder of Bennie Cilliers (61) and the severe assault of his wife, Cecilia (59). Khiba burst into tears as he was testifying to the court how he had found his employers. Khiba was calling for the Cilliers couple, when he saw the bedroom curtains, spattered with blood. When he peered through the window, he saw Bennie’s dead body, his face soaked in blood. They had been beaten and stabbed with an iron rod. Bennie had been shot in the chest and both of them had been shot in the head. Khiba jumped into one of the couple’s vehicles to get help. When he returned to the scene with

the SAPS, he saw the hallway was also spattered with blood. Bennie's hands and feet had been tied together. Cecilia lay with her hand over his head and a piece of cloth was stuffed in her mouth. When they removed the cloth from her mouth, she suddenly gasped for air. She was still alive, but passed away shortly thereafter.[37]

Victims may also suffer severe psychological damage in cases where the attack was accompanied by horror, terror, torture and intimidation, especially where victims were constantly threatened with imminent death. The son of victims who were brutally murdered on their farm in 2009 shares how finding his parents' bodies still affects his daily life: 'Every day of my life, I recall even the smallest details of what I saw when I discovered my parents.'[38] He continues by saying that the murders have left him feeling totally helpless and that no therapist can empathise adequately with his situation.

Secondary victims of attacks may also include employees who are left without any income as a result of the loss of production or because the owners may have decided to sell the property. Farms not only provide employees with income, but also a place where they can live and care for their families. These people can therefore be viewed as the silent victims because they are indirectly affected to a great extent. Having to relocate or being unable to provide for their families may leave them feeling uncertain and forgotten.

MOTIVE

Arguably the most controversial issue on the topic of farm murders is the question of motive. Why are these attacks committed? What did the attackers have in mind when they planned these attacks? What could have happened prior to these attacks that would have nullified the attackers' need for taking such action? Unfortunately the question of motive is more complex than it might seem at first glance. For that reason we will dedicate an entire chapter (Chapter 8) to this topic.

Mariandra Heunis, widow of Johann Heunis (43), with her children Mieke, Majandré, A.J. and Mischa participating at the Black Monday commemoration for the victims of farm murders.
Photo: Reint Dykema

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‘They kept threatening me. They saw the charity box for Border Collie Rescue. The godfather asked me for a can opener. I said I don’t know where it was. That’s when he stabbed me the first time. At that moment, I realised that they meant business and that this was serious.’

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CHAPTER 8

The question of motive

‘We are definitely under the impression that a third force is organising something,’ says Thys Odendaal of the Vryheid Agricultural Union. ‘And that is why we are now calling on the police to come and investigate these issues. Because we clearly feel that there is something political behind these murders, or it is about the land and land claims.’[1]

Probably the most controversial issue regarding farm murders is the question of motive. The controversy regarding attempts to answer the question as to why these attacks take place can largely be attributed to the unconcerned attitude of many officials in the South African government and the Department of Police (DP) in particular. The lack of sufficient information compels people to draw their own conclusions and the malicious arguments that we often hear from senior people in government add fuel to the suspicion that there might be more behind these attacks than meets the eye.

The debate regarding the underlying motive behind farm attacks is usually between the argument that these are simply acts of criminality where the overwhelming intention is to steal,[2] as opposed to the view that there is some underground force or a conspiracy that promotes these attacks. Those who make the criminality argument are unable to explain the excessive levels of brutality and torture that have become a characteristic of farm attacks, while those who make the third-force argument are unable to provide proof for their claims.

The proponents of the criminality argument are usually accused of being naive, while the proponents of the third-force argument are accused of being conspiracy theorists.

In this chapter, I will point out the problems with both of these arguments and explain what I believe should be done regarding the question of motive and also what I believe the appropriate response should be in an attempt to answer this question with the available information.

CLAIMS BY FARMERS

The view expressed by Odendaal above is one that is held by many farmers in South Africa. Those who are not convinced of a third-force involvement

are certainly open to the possibility that it might be the case. Many, perhaps even the majority of farmers, believe that political factors such as ideological views, stigmatisation of white farmers and land reform play a major role. An opposing view has, however, been expressed, not by farmers themselves, but by organised agriculture. Francois Strydom, CEO of Senwes, says that farm attacks are not racial in essence and that people should stop saying that, because by doing so would only serve to tear South Africa apart even further.[3]

During the research conducted by my colleague Lorraine Claasen, of the AfriForum Research Institute (ANI), one of the questions she asked the victims was what they believed the motives of their attackers to be. Claasen found that 56,9% of the victims believed that their attackers were motivated by greed, while another 41,4% believed that they were either motivated by racial hatred, wanted to commit revenge, to intimidate them as landowners, to instil fear or that they were paid by a third party.

The study also included the possibility of secondary motives or facilitating factors. In responding to a different question, 11,1% of the victims said that they believe that government's land-reform process undoubtedly played a role in motivating the attack, while another 19,4% believed that it could have played a motivational role to a lesser degree.

From Claasen's research, only 19,5% of the attackers were known to the victims and only 12,2% were employees. It has been made clear in this book that there are many cases in which farm workers are also attacked and murdered. They often rush to the scene to assist their employers in fighting off the attackers, for example Elias Skosana (70), who attacked the people who had attacked his employer, Hennie Gerber (72) in August 2017 near Sundra, Mpumalanga.[4]

PERCEIVED MOTIVE	PERCENTAGE
Robbery	56,9%
Racial hatred	11,8%
Paid by third party	9,8%
Revenge	7,8%
Intimidation to get off the land	7,8%
Instil fear	3,9%
No reason	2%

Table 9: Victims' perception of motive[5]

CLAIMS BY THE SOUTH AFRICAN GOVERNMENT

The South African government has repeatedly stated that the majority of farm attacks happen as a result of labour disputes and the exploitation of farm workers and that these attacks are mostly incidents of revenge. This argument is put forth by the South African government as a justification for why farm attacks should not be regarded as a priority.

At a meeting of the Priority Committee on Rural Safety, Teresa Yates, a representative of the Department of Land Affairs (DLA), proclaimed that farm murders happen as a result of farmers evicting their workers from their land and exploiting them. Yates was asked by the Committee to provide evidence for her claims, to which she responded that she would bring it to the next meeting. The point was then added to the agenda as an unresolved matter. At the next meeting Yates was asked to provide feedback, to which she responded that she would bring it to the next meeting. This happened several times before she eventually stopped attending those meetings. She was then replaced by another representative of the Department, who was asked for feedback on this unresolved matter. He stated that he did not have any knowledge of the claim, but that he would get the information and provide feedback. At the next meeting he was not able to do so. The matter remained on the agenda. Eventually, the Department stopped attending those meetings altogether and no evidence for the claim was ever provided. 'They put a bunch of hogwash on the agenda,' says Johan Burger, who was the Chairperson of that meeting at the time, 'but the moment when they are asked to prove it, they disappear. And this is the rhetoric that you get out there (in the political arena).'[6]

The sentiment that labour-related issues are the major cause for farm attacks was pertinently expressed by the Minister of Police, Nathi Mthethwa, in 2012. Dirk Hermann, Deputy General Secretary of Solidarity at the time, responded that Mthethwa's figures were a thumbsuck, bringing to his attention that the Committee of Inquiry into Farm Attacks found in 2003 that only 1,6% of farm attacks had been committed as a result of labour-related issues. The agricultural economist Herman van Schalkwyk stated the figure to be 1,25%.[7] Mthethwa did not respond. The South African government, however, continued to use this figure.

In 2014, the then Deputy Minister in the Presidency, Obed Bapela, re-emphasised: 'We find that most of the issues of the killings are labour-

related in many respects. And then also others are because of the ill treatment that people go through and they then come back and [take]revenge. But there are obviously other patches where people just go in for the robbing, to go and rob.' [8]

FINDINGS BY THE COMMITTEE OF INQUIRY INTO FARM ATTACKS

In 2001 Steve Tshwete, the former Minister of Safety and Security, ordered a committee of inquiry into farm attacks.[9] The report was published in 2003. As part of the investigation, the Committee conducted interviews with investigating officers and perpetrators. They arrived at the conclusion that farm attacks are overwhelmingly incidences of robbery. An evaluation of 2 631 cases in the database on farm attacks of the National Operational Coordinating Committee (NOCOC) found that in 89,3% of the cases the motive was clearly robbery, while intimidation was the motive in 7,1% of the cases. It was also found that politics or racial hatred was the motive in about 2% of the cases.[10]

MOTIVE	PERCENTAGE
Robbery	89,3%
Intimidation	7,1%
Political or racial	2%
Labour-related	1,6%

Table 10: Motivations for farm attacks, according to the Committee of Inquiry into Farm Attacks: 2003[11]

This study has been used since its publication to shrug off any concern about political or racial motives on the topic of farm murders in South Africa. Ironically enough, those who support these findings tend to also argue that farm attacks are largely a result of labour-related incidents, while the study finds that farm attacks motivated by labour-related factors are even less frequent than those motivated by political or racial factors.

While the value of this study is not to be underestimated, many of the conclusions drawn from the finding that 89,3% of farm attacks were motivated by robbery are fallacious, misleading and may even be a barrier in the way to addressing farm attacks.

CRITICISM ON THE FINDINGS

I believe there are at least ten reasons why the findings of the Committee of Inquiry into Farm Attacks regarding motive should not be accepted at face value.

1. The inclusion of intimidation as a motive is troublesome, since intimidation is a means to an end and cannot be regarded as a motive as such. A person can be intimidated to hand over his belongings, to fill the attacker with a sense of satisfaction due to political or racial motives or to commit revenge for whatever reason. Intimidation can also be executed in response to exploitation or other labour-related factors (see Chapter 13). The point is that intimidation cannot be counted as an independent motive alongside motives such as robbery, political or racial or labour-related motives. Doing so only serves to distort the findings.
2. Significant weight is attached to what convicted murderers say their motives were. The possibility of dishonesty about motives is summarily dismissed in the report.[12] The possibility of a political agenda that is deliberately withheld from the interviewer is not considered. One could even argue that, had the attacker been motivated by labour-related factors, they would be up front about this in a way to shift the blame to the victim. However, had they been motivated by political or racial factors, they would rather state that they went there to steal. To argue that you committed a farm attack because you were poor and hungry and you wanted to steal is a stronger ‘political argument’ than to simply state that you committed the crime in the execution of your political ideology or because you are a racist.
3. While the possibility of multiple causes is acknowledged in the report,[13] this is not considered several pages later when the report concludes that the motive was ‘clearly robbery’ in 89,3% of the cases. This is a classic example of the fallacy of the single cause,[14] also known as oversimplification or causal reductionism. The conclusion ignores the obvious fact that a person who hates white people or who is influenced by songs such as ‘Kill the Boer, kill the farmer’ may also murder a white person with the intention of stealing his property. In such a case, the purpose may still be said to be robbery, while a variety of other motives may have led to the eventual committing of the crime.

Put differently, a person may harbour racist beliefs or political motives subconsciously. When Knowledge Paulus Mandlazi was charged for committing five farm murders, he responded in court that he had murdered these people because he wanted their money. He added that 'my hate for white people made me do it' and that he regarded murdering white people as merely 'going to work'. However, the judge found that there were no racial motives in this case and that these crimes were committed only with the intention to steal.[15] This case is also dealt with in Chapter 11.

4. The severe levels of violence and even torture that accompany many of these attacks are not sufficiently considered in the finding regarding the motive of farm attackers. While a study about the percentage of cases in which the victims of farm attacks have been subject to torture has not yet been undertaken, observers are virtually unanimous in their conclusion that farm attacks are severely more brutal and grotesque than most other crimes in South Africa. In many of the torture cases mentioned in Chapter 4, the conclusion could still be made that the attackers went there with the intention to rob or steal. After the brutal slaughter of the Potgieter family, the attackers testified in court that they had murdered them with the intention to steal, and their stated version on what their motive was, was generally accepted. This, despite the fact that during the attack, Attie Potgieter (40) was stabbed 151 times with a panga (machete), a knife and a garden fork in full view of his daughter, Wilmien (2), and wife, Wilna (36), before they were executed with a gunshot in the head. After the attack, the attackers placed a sign on the front gate on which was written 'We have killed them. We are coming back.'[16]
5. The drastic discrepancy between the extreme levels of violence committed during these attacks and the small value of stolen items is ignored in this finding. If a person were to torture a farmer for several hours before fleeing with his wallet, and then told the police afterwards that he went there to steal the man's property, the motive would be counted as robbery. It is glaringly suspicious and irresponsible to simply accept robbery as the only motive in such a case.
6. The observation from crime scene cleaners that black farmers are not subject to the same levels of torture as white farmers[17] is almost never

considered in discussions about farm murders and particularly not in attempts to determine the motive behind these attacks.

7. The fact that in many of these attacks the items that have been stolen (especially vehicles) were simply abandoned shortly after the attack, is often not considered when concluding that the motive was merely to steal. Several examples are mentioned in Chapter 4.
8. If a motive of mere robbery results in the levels of torture that are often executed during farm murders, the implication is that there is nothing out of the ordinary about the torture of victims during robberies in general. It is sometimes stated that the torture can be explained by the fact that farmers live far away from their neighbours and the nearest police stations. However, this argument is also based on the presumption that torturing during robberies is not out of the ordinary and that the distance from other people is the only reason why robbers do not torture their victims in general. It should be noted in this regard that one of the most brutal farm tortures to date – that of Alice Lotter (76) and her daughter Helen (57) – occurred several hundred metres from the nearest police station (see Chapter 4).
9. The notion that stealing is the main motive is also averted by the observation that, in many farm attacks, the victims are either lured from the house, or the attackers wait for them to leave the house, upon which they are attacked. It is common for farm attackers to wait for their victims to return home from church or some other event, before they are surprised and immediately confronted with violent attacks. The ambushing of victims where the opportunity existed to break into the house while the victims were not at home, is not reconcilable with the notion that the motive was simply to steal.
10. The possibility of secondary motives or facilitating factors is not considered in the report. A person can commit a farm attack with the primary motive to steal, but also chooses a particular target due to racial, political or other factors.

The point is clear: While the findings of the report by the Committee of Inquiry into Farm Attacks cannot be dismissed outright, the fact that its findings on the motives of farm attacks have not been scrutinised for 14 years may have restricted the debate on farm attacks significantly.

It is also known that assassination in general, but political assassinations in particular, has been on the increase in South Africa. While the actual figure remains unknown, 159 assassinations were reported in 2017 – a figure up by 36% from 2016 (a year in which 117 assassinations were recorded) and up by 346% from 2012 (46 assassinations).[18] Assassination Witness, an organisation recording criminal hits and their impact on South African society, found that the taxi industry accounted for the largest number of hits (43%), followed by the political (22%) and organised crime (22%) categories. Hits that fall in the personal category represent the smallest proportion of the cases (13%).[19]

We cannot (and should not) conclude that farm attacks are generally motivated by racial or political factors or by labour-related issues, as there is not sufficient evidence to substantiate this claim. The point at issue will, however, be made clear in the chapters that follow that South Africa has been suffering from a culture of violence for some time. There also exists a political climate in which violence towards white people in general – but white or Afrikaner farmers in particular – has been romanticised and encouraged from public platforms for several decades. To argue that all farm murders are motivated by racial or political factors would be inaccurate. It would, however, be equally inaccurate to suggest that the political climate that exists in South Africa today is irrelevant when it comes to the safety of South Africa's food producers.

ATTEMPTS TO FIND THE THIRD FORCE

When he was in charge of rural safety within the South African Police Service (SAPS) Johan Burger, senior researcher at the Institute for Security Studies (ISS), investigated all the clues that came to his attention regarding claims of a third force or an underground movement responsible for farm attacks. According to Burger, there were several incidents during his time in the SAPS where press coverage was given to claims that proof had been found to this effect, especially around 2000 and 2001. All the claims that he was aware of turned out to be false. These included:

- Claims of a report that proved that farm murders were the result of political interference. The report in question was, however,

misinterpreted, and it turned out only to be a report about the history of South Africa.

- An alleged training video on how to commit farm murders, which the claimant was not able to provide.
- Documentary proof that was alleged to have been swept under the carpet by the SAPS, which turned out to be a business card and a piece of wool and string found in an attacker's pocket.
- Claims regarding the organising of farm murders by the Landless People's Movement (LPM). The LPM turned out to be a paper tiger with no political impact or structures. While the LPM may be described as a paper tiger, there have been cases of LPM involvement in the disruption of farming activities. In the early 2000s, for example, the LPM initiated a protest on a farm in Newcastle, intimidating the farmers and threatening them with violence. These riots were said to have inflicted irreparable damage to the once good relationship that the local farmers had had with the local Zulu community for more than a hundred years.[20]
- Claims to this effect by an unknown organisation called Black Jack. It was alleged that they had offered to pay R10 000 for every farmer who was murdered. The SAPS investigation found that the story had been made up by a farm worker who had hoped that he would be rewarded with money by his employer for coming up with this story.[21]

Burger, however, believes that the situation has changed drastically since 2003 and that a new study on the motive behind farm murders may reach a different conclusion. 'The situation has changed dramatically, politically and otherwise. There are many more political statements. Think of Julius Malema and his party, threats of land grabs, the issue of land reform.'

Burger also agrees that there may be periodic increases between incidents of hate speech and farm murders and that there can be multiple motives or facilitating factors to crime, implying that a perpetrator can have more than one motive to commit a crime. He believes that the motive in the majority of cases is robbery, but agrees that there can be facilitating factors, such as the fact that the victim belongs to a particular cultural or ethnical community, or influence by political leaders. 'It's difficult to interpret political influence as a motive,' says Burger, who argues that such elements

should in most cases rather be interpreted as an encouragement, sub-motive or facilitating factor to commit the crime.[22]

He agrees, however, that there are cases where the crime was undoubtedly motivated by pure racial hatred. ‘That, however, doesn’t define farm attacks for me. At this stage, cases like that are the exception.’[23]

There have been reported cases of organised syndicates committing farm attacks, though. A syndicate in the Tzaneen area of Limpopo that was tracked down by Crime Intelligence was presumed to have been responsible for many farm attacks in the area. Five suspects aged between 24 and 54 were arrested. Fourteen rifles, two pistols and 318 bullets were confiscated.[24]

POLITICAL CLIMATE

It is hard to make any broad conclusion regarding the underlying motive on farm murders, as the issue is a complex one. Any generalised conclusion can easily be shot down, based on available evidence that proves otherwise. The available research on the matter was conducted more than a decade ago and there are sufficient reasons to be sceptical of the finding that 89,3% of farm attacks are simply motivated by the intention to steal.

The question of motive has not been scrutinised sufficiently. And while it should be noted that in the vast majority of farm attacks the attackers have stated that they were primarily motivated by the intention to rob or steal, other factors such as the possibility of multiple motives, the culture of violence in South Africa, political scapegoating of white farmers, hate speech, land reform, labour disputes, racism and political agendas should not be dismissed outright.

What is however a very serious matter – and one that is often underplayed – is the political climate that is actively created in South Africa by political leaders that actively and continuously vilify white farmers in particular and even go as far as romanticising violence against them. The South African government’s unconcerned attitude regarding farm murders should be seen within the context of a governing party that is prepared to go to court to protect their so-called right to sing songs in which the murder of white farmers is encouraged, even if only in the lyrics.

This matter will be dealt with in the chapters to follow.

When three farm attackers were spotted by a security camera on a farm near Sannieshof in 2015, one of the attackers could clearly be seen carrying a military-type signal jammer on his back.

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‘I said to them that there was a safe in the bedroom. They asked me for the combination. I never use the safe and I didn’t know the combination. I asked them to put in my birthday. It didn’t work. They stabbed me again. I just knew it was a knife, but I later found out that it had been one of our steak knives from the kitchen. I really couldn’t remember the combination, but I tried to. I then asked them to put in Susan’s birthday. It worked. But there wasn’t any money in the safe. At least, I don’t think so. They then took me back to the lounge.’

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PART 2
ZEITGEIST

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CHAPTER 9

Swords, shields and spears

Recent South African history is swamped with examples in which white people, but white and Afrikaner farmers in particular, are condemned and blamed for what is wrong with this country – sometimes literally for *everything* that is wrong with the country. It goes further than criticising or slamming white and Afrikaner farmers. There are in fact many cases in which violence towards this community is actively encouraged, especially by leaders within the African National Congress (ANC) and lately also by other, newly-established revolutionary or so-called progressive groups. This will be dealt with in the chapters to follow.

In the turmoil that is South African politics, one factor is indisputably plain as a pikestaff: history.

This is of course not a history book, but a discussion on farm murders would be incomplete without at least a brief overview of the history of conflict and landownership in what is today known as the state of South Africa. Note that South Africa has a very complex history and that no attempt to reduce South Africa's history to one or two chapters would do it justice. The focus of the following two chapters is, however, to highlight certain historical events, with the emphasis on the history of the acquisition of land, agriculture and race relations in South Africa.

THE FIRST HUMANS

The question of the origin of humankind is very relevant to the question of landownership in South Africa. Belief about the origin of humankind is largely determined by religion. Eighty-six per cent of people in South Africa regard themselves as Christian, followed by 5,4% who hold ancestral, tribal or other traditional African beliefs. More than 5% have no religion or are uncertain as to what their religion is.[1]

Given that these three views make up 97% of the religious views held by people in South Africa,[2] I will provide a brief overview of the major theories regarding the origins of humankind, as purported by people who share these views. This is relevant to the context of this book, because all three provide particular responses to the question of who can claim rightful ownership of land in South Africa. I shall start with the traditional belief.

When the well-known Zulu sangoma (English: traditional healer)and folklore author Vusamazulu Credo Mutwa wrote *Indaba, my Children*[3] in 1963, it was soon referred to as one of the most iconic African books ever written.[4] In it, he tells the mythological story of the creation of the earth and the first humans, as told in the Zulu tradition. According to The sacred story of the tree of life, the Great Mother *Ma* created the stars, the sun and 'the body on which we stand'.[5] When *Ma* had finished creating the stars, sun and earth, she sat on the Mountain of Iron, Taba-Zambi (a reference to the iron mines of Thabazimbi in Limpopo), awaiting the Great Spirit's further instructions. However, she became lonely and wept most bitterly, causing the stars to tremble and fall from the sky. Her tears flowed into a great lake at her feet, flowed across the land in all directions, 'forming murmuring streams and the mighty rivers we see today.'[6]

The Great Spirit provided her with a partner. 'He shall bring contentment to you and both you and he will bring forth life upon the earth,' said the Spirit.[7] To the Goddess *Ma's* discontent, the Spirit did not send a man, but the Tree of Life to mate with her. 'Aieeee,' shrieked *Ma* – 'it cannot be!' upon feeling the tree's rock-studded mouth bruising her silvery lips with a savage kiss. 'Release me, you ugly, most monstrous thing!' 'Release you, while I've only just caught you!' replied the tree. 'You, my heart's desire! I did not catch you only to release you!'[8]

After the tree had had his way with her, the Goddess fled through the bleak barren wastelands 'which in future years became known to mortals as Ka-Lahari' (a reference to the Kalahari desert of Southern Africa) and through the waters of lake Makarikari, only to be caught again.[9]. The tree held her tightly, never to let her escape again.[10] After fifty agonising years of pain and suffering, the Goddess *Ma* was able to free herself from the tree's embrace. At long last, she was relieved from her pain:

> And the first mighty nation of flesh and blood,
> A countless number of human beings, was born.
> And in their multitudes they spread
> To populate the barren Ka-Lahari.[11]

The Tree of Life bore living, snarling, howling animal fruit in the millions and from a great crack in the trunk of the tree, birds of all kinds came flying

and waddling forth. From its roots came reptiles of all kinds and shapes and cloud after cloud of all sorts of insects.[12]

> The Song of Life had begun on earth-
> The Song which is still being sung,
> But which one day may trail off into oblivion-
> Leaving at most the faintest echo.
> History's sun had risen, and still shines today.
> But it will no doubt set one day-fore'er![13]

The Biblical view teaches that the earth was created by God in six days. Humankind was created on the sixth day, to God's image.[14] According to the book of Genesis, the first man, Adam, was created from dust. God then took one of his ribs, from which the first woman, Eve, was fashioned.[15] Adam and Eve were put in the Garden of Eden, a garden that was planted by God 'in the East'.[16] They were instructed to: 'Be fertile and multiply; fill the earth and master it. Take charge of the fish in the sea, the birds in the sky, and everything crawling on the ground.'[17]

God continued: 'I now give to you all the plants on the earth that yield seeds and all the trees whose fruit produces its seeds within it. These will be your food.'[18]

The book of Genesis goes on to tell of how Adam and Eve were deceived by the snake to eat from the fruit of the tree in the middle of the garden, despite God's instruction not to do so. Adam and Eve were then banished from the Garden of Eden by God, after God said to Adam:

> [C]ursed is the fertile land because of you; in pain you will eat from it every day of your life. Weeds and thistles will grow for you, even as you eat the field's plants; by the sweat of your face you will eat bread – until you return to the fertile land, since from it you were taken; you are soil, to the soil you will return.[19]

Later, when 'all people on the earth' built a big tower in the land of Shinar to ensure that they did not disperse across the earth, God said: 'There is now one people and they all have one language … Come, let's go down and mix up their language there so they will not understand each other's language.' They were then dispersed from there across the earth.[20]

Of course, there are many Christians who believe that the Old Testament, and the book of Genesis in particular, should be read for its religious value

and not as a strict historical account of events. A more secular view of the origin of humankind is based on scientific discoveries. While controversial to many Christians, a more scientific approach with regard to history is supported by the majority of Christians.[21]

Historians believe that the first human-like species and the first humans appeared between four to two million years ago in eastern and southern Africa.[22] The recent discovery of a human jawbone, believed to be 2,8 million years old, in Ethiopia has led palaeontologists to regard the parallel origins theory as a distinct possibility. According to the parallel origins theory, humankind developed in Ethiopia and South Africa. This theory is of course also based on the discovery of *Australopithecus sediba.* These skeletons are believed to be 1,9 million years old.[23]

The *Australopithecus sediba* (English: southern apes) is said to have been prehuman apes that lived between 4,5 and 1,5 million years ago in eastern and southern Africa.[24] The fossilised bones of 15 bodies from a human-like species were recently unearthed from a site near Johannesburg that is known to the world as the Cradle of Humankind World Heritage Site.[25]

The first actual humans of whom fossil remains were found were *Homo habilis,* who is said to have lived between 2,2 million and 1,8 million years ago in eastern and southern Africa. They were simple hunters and gatherers of veld foods, but were physically and intellectually capable of developing and utilising stone tools.[26] Scientists have discovered fossilised skeleton parts of the *Australopithecus sediba,* as well as stone tools of *Homo habilis* at the World Heritage sites of Sterkfontein, Swartkrans and Kromdraai.[27]

Many of the tools of the *Homo erectus* people of the Early Stone Age were also found in South Africa, particularly along the southern coast and near the Orange and Vaal Rivers.[28]

Homo sapiens is said to have lived between 500 000 and 100 000 years ago, spread across Africa, southern Europe and Asia. These people are believed to have been physically, intellectually and in many other ways similar to the modern human.[29] The more recent so-called *Homo sapiens sapiens* lived between 150 000 and 100 000 years ago, writes historian Fransjohan Pretorius. They were physically and intellectually similar to

modern humans. *Homo sapiens sapiens* gradually spread to the Americas, Australia and Tasmania.[30]

The dominant model of the geographical origin and early migration of modern humans consequently proposes that all humans are to a certain extent Africans. The model continues that modern humans started to disperse through the world roughly 50 000 to 100 000 years ago. This theory is also known as the 'Out of Africa' theory, as indicated in Map 4.[31]

During the Later Stone Age in South Africa, which is said to have lasted from about 20 000 years ago until about 200 years ago, nomadic, specialised hunters and gatherers lived in South Africa, using a variety of specialised stone tools for various purposes. These people were the forefathers of the Khoisan, according to Pretorius.[32]

RETURNING TO SOUTH AFRICA

Between the 6th and 16th centuries, a gradual southward migration of black tribes started occurring.[33] This coincided with the European Age of Discovery that occurred between the end of the 15th century and the 18th century. By 1488, Bartolomeu Dias managed to round the Cape of Good Hope and enter the Indian Ocean. His successor, Vasco da Gama, completed the quest for a sea route to India by a voyage around the Cape of Good Hope to Calicut by 1498. Once routes to the East Indies and to America had been established, exploration occurred at a quicker pace, which essentially implied 'filling in the gaps of the known'.[34] This process was continued actively during the 1500s, primarily through the efforts of the Spanish and the Portuguese.[35]

More or less at the same time when so-called white people were 'returning to South Africa' by ship from their 50 000 years of wanderings, black tribes from the northern parts of Africa started returning on foot.[36] Black tribes trekked in four main groups: the Nguni, the Sotho, the Tsonga and the Venda.[37] (These tribes are often referred to as the Bantu tribes of South Africa. The term Bantu means people. While the word is frequently used in historical sense, it is regarded by some as a derogatory term when used in a political context.) The Southern Nguni had reached the Mzimvubu River in the Eastern Cape more or less by the year 1600. This group included the Mpondo, Mpondomise, Thembu and Xhosa.[38]According to

legend, the Ndebele tribes had settled in what is today known as Gauteng, Mpumalanga and Limpopo between the 17th and the 19th centuries.[39]

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Map 4: Early human migrations, indicating the 'Out of Africa' theory[40]

The Sotho people are said to have lived in southern Africa since the fifth century,[41] displacing the aboriginal inhabitants of South Africa.[42] According to early Portuguese reports, the Tsonga had lived in Mozambique in 1554. Their survival was threatened by the Nguni people, who forced them to flee across the Limpopo River and settle in South Africa.[43] The Venda had crossed the Limpopo River and settled in the north of what we know as Limpopo and the Soutpansberg area at the beginning of the 18th century.[44]

The Khoisan is made up of two distinct groups: the San (also known as Bushmen) and the Khoikhoi (also known as Khoekhoen). The Khoisan are descendants of people of the Later Stone Age and are accepted to have been the true indigenous people to South Africa.[45] One of the richest Khoisan cave painting sites is said to be about 4 000 years old.[46] The evolutionary geneticist Pontus Skoglund believes that the Khoisan was the largest population on earth at some point.[47] Having once been spread across large parts of South Africa,[48] the Khoisan's distribution became restricted to the areas west of the Fish River and in deserts throughout the region.[49]

'The Khoi and San generally were nomadic; they moved from place to place and enjoyed the prosperity and territory that was fertile,' says Mosioua Lekota, struggle veteran and president of the Congress of the People (Cope). 'But as we arrived in these big formations, they got driven out, defeated, taken over. Many cooperated, but many others ran away. No human being would have chosen to live in dry territories like the Kalahari when there was a whole territory that had plenty of water and game. Even animals would not live in dry territories, when there are territories with lots of water and grass, etc. We began to dispossess and to take these territories on. We are actually the second arrivals – I am speaking of the Bantu-speaking sections – and not the first and original that had been and so on.'[50]

Since the various black tribes that settled in South Africa did not have the technology for extracting groundwater, or for reticulating irrigation water, their settlements were restricted to wetter areas. More arid areas could only be occupied for limited periods of time. With only about 30% of South Africa's surface area capable of supporting agriculture in the absence of this technology, black tribes were restricted by their lifestyles to such areas.[51]

On 6 April 1652, Jan van Riebeeck set foot ashore in Table Bay. He had arrived with three ships, the *Dromedaris*, *Goede Hoop* and *Reijger*. As an employee of the Vereenighde Oost-Indische Compagnie (VOC) (English: Dutch East India Company) Van Riebeeck was given instructions to establish a refreshment station in a small area where ships could break the long voyage between the Netherlands and the VOC's main settlement at Batavia in Java.[52] By 1657, nine employees of the VOC had been dismissed from service with the intention of allowing them to become full-time commercial farmers. They were known as *vrijburgers* (English: free citizens).

Friction had already developed between the white settlers and the local Khoikhoi people.[53] What made the Cape Colony unique compared to other European settlements, writes historian Hermann Giliomee, was not that violence occurred between the settlers and the indigenous people, but that the Dutch settlers had decided to trade with the locals and to employ them on a large scale, rather than to exterminate or to drive them out.[54] Contrary to the belief that is widely held and frequently propagated by political leaders,[55] the Dutch did not enslave local black people living in South Africa. Laws of the VOC determined that local people may not be conquered or enslaved.[56] Slaves were imported from Angola, Dahomey (Benin), Madagascar, Mozambique, Ceylon (Sri Lanka), Indonesia, India and other countries.[57]

A further uniqueness in the Dutch settlement was that the purpose of the settlement was not to claim a piece of land by the so-called 'right of discovery'. '[T]he Dutch had neither a basis for such claims in southern Africa nor an interest in acquiring more land than they needed for the maintenance and protection of their fort and garden in the shadow of Table Mountain,'[58] writes George Fredrickson who taught American history at Stanford University. 'In South Africa ... the official ideology of the colonizers put a much greater premium on trade than on control of the land.'[59]

Initially, the relationship between the Dutch and the local Khoikhoi was good, as the Khoikhoi had a long experience of trading with ships of various European nations in Table Bay. Only when the Khoikhoi began to realise that the Dutch had arrived to settle for good and were slowly

increasing in numbers and enlarging their land holdings, did tension begin to develop. The first Khoikhoi-Dutch War broke out in 1659 and was resolved by a treaty acknowledging the rights of white landowners to occupy parts of the territory that was disputed.[60] The Khoikhoi-Dutch war of 1673–1677 broke out after the murder of white elephant hunters (presumably also farmers) by a local tribe.[61] After the Dutch who had also become known as the *Boers* started farming their own cattle and a smallpox epidemic broke out in the Khoikhoi community, many of the Khoikhoi became herdsmen, ox trainers and wagon drivers for the Boers.[62] The smallpox epidemic led to a devastating loss of numbers among the Khoikhoi people. Entire tribes disappeared as a result of the epidemic.

Meaning of Boer

The word *Boer* has a Dutch and Afrikaans origin. Originally referring to farmers, the word was also used to refer to Afrikaners during the 17th and 18th century because of the fact that they had a particular speciality in agriculture. The term received a new meaning with the establishment of the former Boer Republics in the 19th century. The word was, however, used not only to refer to farmers, but to the white Afrikaans-speaking community in South Africa. The words *Boer* and *Afrikaner* have become similar to an extent. However, a further meaning to this word has also developed during the 20th century. Apart from the agricultural and cultural contexts of this word, it has also gained a derogatory political context. Referring to someone as a *Boer* or a *Boertjie* in a political context is often done with a derogatory intention, although the term is generally not regarded as derogatory or offensive by Afrikaners. The word *boorish* developed in Britain and is derived from the word *boer.* It is generally regarded as an insult. To be boorish is to be a rough or a bad-mannered person,[63] or to be a rustic, clownish fellow.[64] To be a boor is to be an uncultured person.[65]

Between 1688 and 1700, about 200 French Huguenots arrived in the Cape.[66] A significant number of Germans also settled there.[67] Giliomee writes that a significant number of mixed marriages between white and black people occurred in those early days of the Dutch settlement.[68] This was partly a result of the fact that there were about twice as many white men as white women in the Cape District and three white men for every white woman in the inlands. The famous genealogical researcher Johannes Heese wrote that

an estimated 7% of Afrikaner families of the twentieth century had non-European ancestral mothers.[69]

Upon expanding towards the Eastern Cape, the Boers reached the Fish River in the 1770s and collided with another expanding population, the Xhosa branch of the Nguni-speaking people. A conflict over land between the Boers and the Xhosa soon erupted,[70] which resulted in several wars between the two nations before the Xhosa were driven out by the British in 1812.[71]

BRITISH ANNEXATION AND THE GREAT TREK

Meanwhile, the Cape had become colonised by the British, first temporarily from 1795 to 1803 and then permanently in 1806.[72] Slavery was abolished in the early 1830s, largely as a result of white farmers in the wine regions of the Cape freeing their slaves, albeit mostly for economic reasons. In 1825, the British government lowered the tariff on the importing of wines from Europe, dealing a severe blow to the local wine industry. The wine industry and the whole Cape economy fell into a depression, which resulted in a dramatic drop in the value of slaves. Slave owners who had bought slaves on credit faced bankruptcy. This resulted in a demand for the abolishment of slavery and for the British government to pay compensation to slave owners as a result of this.

Frustration among the Boer people as a result of political, economic and social issues culminated in the Great Trek of 1835 to 1846, during which period several thousand Voortrekkers packed their ox wagons and migrated inwards towards what is today known as South Africa.[73]

However, the Great Trek was preceded by three Commission Treks that moved out of the Cape in 1835. One went to what is today known as Namibia, one to the Soutpansberg, in the northern part of Limpopo, and one to Natal. The goal was to establish whether there were open lands for the Voortrekkers to occupy and whether black tribes were prepared to negotiate with the Voortrekkers in order to sell them land. ‘The trek to Natal (led by Piet Uys) was especially significant,’ says historian Liza-Marie Oberholzer.

‘Upon arrival in Natal, they negotiated with [the Zulu king]Dingane for a piece of land between the Thukela and the Mzimvubu Rivers. Dingane agreed to this. Upon his return, Uys communicated this with other potential Voortrekkers at that stage. That is why they chose Natal [as destination]

initially.'[74] Other than Uys's negotiations, the Commission Trek found that most of the land appeared to be empty. 'They found themselves riding in open grassland, seeing good stock land areas and nobody,' says Ernest Pringle. 'That's fundamentally why they were able to "trek" with their women and children and cattle without being molested through a lot of South Africa at the time. Try it now – you wouldn't get very far.'[75]

Fredrickson points out that the Voortrekkers had outflanked the Xhosa people by moving into areas where there seemed to be more open land and where they could continue their pastoral existence in a more secure environment. 'But that security turned out to be illusory; they soon came into conflict with other African peoples such as the Zulu, the Ndebele, and the Sotho, who were no more willing than the Xhosa to tolerate white encroachments. Consequently, warfare with indigenous peoples continued to be a central element in the Boer experience.'[76]

Several legendary battles were fought, including the battle of Vegkop (1836) against the Ndebele of Mzilikazi, and the battles of Italeni and Blood River (1838) against the Zulus as the Voortrekkers were moving towards the northern and eastern parts of the country.

It should be noted that the Great Trek commenced just as the Mfecane (or Difaqane, as it is known in Sotho and Tswana, al meaning crushing, scattering, forced dispersal or forced migration) was coming to a close. The Mfecane was a period of widespread, forced dispersal among black tribes throughout most of South Africa, sparked largely by the war and expansion campaigns by the Zulu king, Shaka, and the Ndebele chief, Mzilikazi.[77] Although the death toll of the Mfecane has never been satisfactorily determined, normal estimates put the total number of deaths at between one and two million.[78]

The Mfecane was undoubtedly the single greatest event of land invasion, land dispossession and genocide that South Africa has ever experienced. If the low figure of one million deaths is used as a ballpark number, it would imply that the destruction of the Mfecane (in terms of death toll) was roughly ten times that of the Anglo-Boer War (1899-1902) and 50 times that of apartheid. This is calculated considering an approximate death toll of 100 000 during the Anglo-Boer War and a death toll of 21 000 people as a result of political violence during apartheid. It should be noted that,

according to the South African Human Rights Committee, the death of only about 600 of the 21 000 people killed in political violence during apartheid was directly attributable to the overt actions of government security forces.

The Mfecane came to an end with the arrival of the Voortrekkers and the resulting battles between the Voortrekkers and the Zulus and the Ndebele, which resulted in the defeat of Dingane and the flight of Mzilikazi to the north of the Limpopo River into what is today known as Zimbabwe.[79]

The result of the Mfecane, during which entire tribes were annihilated or absorbed, was that vast areas of land in South Africa were left uninhabited, just as the Great Trek was commencing. Unoccupied buffer zones were effectively created between hostile ethnic groups, some of which were quite extensive and in relatively arable areas, such as the Oranje-Vrijstaat (English: Orange Free State) and the southern areas of what would later become the Zuid-Afrikaansche Republiek (ZAR), and the Republic of Natalia. This was said to have had a major effect on the Voortrekkers' decision to emigrate, as well as which areas they chose to settle on.[80]

This is especially evident in travellers' reports and the diaries of the Voortrekkers. The diary of Voortrekker religious leader Erasmus Smit, among others, creates an impression of the destruction of the Mfecane. The establishment in many areas of farmers who were moving in and the subsequent Voortrekkers therefore took place without any opposition worth mentioning in areas in which black groups had resided in the few centuries prior to that, and who now sheltered in the mountains and ravines, writes historian Jan Visagie.[81]

The perspective of the Voortrekkers was that they had settled in uninhabited land and thus had the right of residence, while the perspective of the surviving black tribes was that they had not left permanently the areas where they had resided before the Mfecane.[82] The law of conquest, writes historian Louis Changuion, was recognised in Africa at the time and was especially applied where black tribes waged war against each other. Mthimkhulu III, king of the Hlubi people, explains: 'In our tradition, if you are being conquered, then that land belongs to me. Even your people belongs to me. If I come and fight you and I conquer you, then you must know I'm taking over that land and I'm taking over your people – you must follow me wherever I go. And I will be ruler there because you are

defeated. That's how it worked a long time ago.'[83] With the commencement of the Great Trek, black tribes were complaining that white people were driving them from their homes.[84] One such example was the defeat of Mzilikazi by Voortrekker leaders Andries Potgieter and Piet Uys, who claimed ownership by right of conquest of Mzilikazi's land – the land that Mzilikazi had obtained by conquest shortly before. Using South Africa's provinces as they are known today as reference, this land included all of Gauteng, most of the North West and Limpopo, about half the Free State and a small section of the Northern Cape.[85]

Furthermore, a series of trade deals between the Voortrekkers and black tribes took place during the Great Trek, many of which are still held in the state archives.[86] In some cases, occupied land was also given back to people who had lived there before they were driven off their land during the Mfecane. One such case was when Moilwa of the Hurutshe visited Potgieter at Mooirivier and requested him to allow his people to live on the land that they had inhabited before they were driven out by Mzilikazi. Potgieter agreed to this and assisted with the drawing of borders for the Hurutshe area, near where Zeerust is situated today.[87]

A stark reality was, however, that an important difference existed between the Voortrekkers and black tribes in their understanding of landownership and land rights.[88]

The most famous treaty for obtaining land was certainly the one between Voortrekker leader Piet Retief and the Zulu king Dingane. On 5 November 1837, Retief and Dingane reached an agreement on the purchase of land. Dingane again promised to sell the land he had earlier promised to Uys when he had visited Dingane during the Commission Trek to the Voortrekkers in exchange for the return of Dingane's cattle that had been stolen by the Tlokwa under Sekonyela. After obtaining the lost cattle, Retief departed with a party of 60 Voortrekkers, accompanied by another 30 coloured helpers, to the Zulu capital of Mgungundhlovu. A written agreement between Retief and Dingane was signed on 6 February 1838. As Retief's party was about to depart, Dingane invited them to bid farewell during a traditional ceremony. Appearing unarmed before the Zulu king, they drank beer and watched a ceremony by Zulu dancers. Suddenly Dingane gave the order for the 'wizards' to be killed. They were dragged to

the ‘Hill of murder’, KwaMatiwane, and slaughtered.[89] Dingane then instructed about 67 000 of his warriors to exterminate all the remaining Voortrekkers within the boundaries of Natal. They attacked Voortrekker camps in the night and killed more than 500 people, the majority of whom were women and children.[90]

In retaliation the Voortrekkers commissioned a commando of 470 men, led by Andries Pretorius, to confront the Zulus. This led to the Battle of Blood River, where Pretorius’s commando was attacked by a Zulu army of more than 10 000 men. Prior to the battle, religious leader Sarel Cilliers drafted a vow to God that if they were to be victorious in the upcoming battle, they would build a church and that that day would be regarded as a day of worship in the years to follow to give the glory of the victory to God. The battle took place on 16 December 1838. On the Voortrekker side, three were wounded (including Pretorius), but no lives were lost. The day after the battle, three thousand dead Zulu bodies were counted by the Voortrekkers.[91]

For the Voortrekkers, the battle resulted in a dramatic boost in Afrikaner nationalism and a sense of *uitverkorenheid* (English: divine selection) of the Afrikaner people.[92] After the battle, Dingane’s half-brother Mpande joined forces with the Voortrekkers, eventually defeating Dingane before he was crowned the king of the Zulus and a vassal of the Republic of Natalia, arguably the first republic in Africa,[93] that was established by the Voortrekkers in 1839.[94]

The Republic of Natalia was, however, annexed by the British and declared a British colony in 1844, five years after its founding.[95] In 1887, after the Anglo-Zulu War, Zululand was also annexed by the British and a large part of its coastal area was given to white farmers.[96]

Although British influence can be partly credited for the abolition of slavery in South Africa, Britain also embarked on a process of introducing racialised laws into South Africa. Before the British arrived in South Africa, there was no law preventing interracial marriages, nor on segregated residential areas. With the annexation of Natal, the British also started implementing pass laws there, like in the Cape Colony. This was to prevent black people from moving into their (the British) areas or from moving between different districts without permission from the British government.

Long before the establishment of the Boer Republics, black people were not allowed in British streets after dark and were forced to carry pass books. This policy was eventually recorded into legislation in the form of the Franchise and Ballot Act of 1892 and the Natal Legislative Assembly Bill of 1894. The General Pass Regulations Bill of 1905 (when South Africa consisted of four British colonies) denied black people the right to vote, restricted them to determined areas and codified the pass book system. At least ten other so-called ‘apartheid laws’ were implemented by the British government before the National Party (regarded as the ‘architects of apartheid’) took power in 1948.[97]

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Robert told the attackers that he only had R320 ($26) on him and tried to negotiate with them, giving them his bank card and pin and promising not to report it as missing for the next 24 hours. It did not work.

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CHAPTER 10

Apartheid and dispossession

In the 19th century, farming was the main industry of the vast majority of people living in South Africa. By the end of the century, the country was divided into two British colonies, the Cape Colony and Natal, and two Boer Republics, the Zuid-Afrikaanche Republiek (ZAR) and the Republiek van die Oranje-Vrijstaat (English: Republic of the Orange Free State).

As a result of the battles of the Ndebele of Mzilikazi, the Ngwane, the Hlubi and the Batlokwa, the area between the Orange and Vaal Rivers was almost deserted by the time the Voortrekkers arrived there in 1836. After their arrival, King Moshweshe of the South Sotho claimed this area as his territory. The Voortrekkers clashed with Moshweshe and Adam Kok of the Griquas in the south-western region of the Orange Free State before the British intervened in 1843 and established three treaty states with Adam Kok, Moshweshwe and Faku of the Pondo to act as buffers between the Cape Colony and the Voortrekkers. However, this policy was reversed in 1848, when the entire area was annexed as a British colony. After further conflict with the Boers, the Orange Free State was recognised as a Boer Republic in 1854. Black people were then prohibited from purchasing or renting land in that area, although the Thaba 'Nchu and Witsieshoek areas were recognised as independent black states with their own governments.[1]

Other than the Moilwa, whose land (on which they had settled before the Mfecane) was given back to them by the Voortrekkers, other tribes whose land was given back to them included the Matlaba, Kwena and Kgatla.[2] In 1846, a purchase agreement was concluded with the Swazi king in terms of which the area between the Olifants and Crocodile Rivers was exchanged for cattle. In 1855, a similar agreement was concluded with regard to the Lydenburg district. In that year, the Swazi king also ceded a strip of land along the north bank of the Pongola River to the ZAR, with the idea that a wedge of European settlers would give the Swazis a measure of protection against Zulu raids.[3] Also in 1855, some Boer farmers bought land from the Zulu king, Mpande, between the Buffalo and Blood rivers. This land was incorporated into the ZAR as the districts of Wakkerstroom and Utrecht in 1859. A resolution of 1853 of the National Assembly of the ZAR gave the commandant general and the commandants of each district the responsibility of allocating land to blacks where needed for their

occupation. By 1858 it was decreed that white people were not allowed to own land where a black tribe was settled.[4]

All the black communities were subject to the authority of these four governments.[5] When it was proposed that black people should have fewer rights than whites, President Paul Kruger of the ZAR opposed the idea, stating to the *Volksraad* (English: House of Assembly) that black people should have access to courts and to the executive authority, where they must be able to submit requests and complaints.[6] Racist sentiment was, however, also noticeable in the Boer Republics, with *De Volkstem* newspaper writing, for example, that black people who were found walking on the sidewalks of Johannesburg should be given a hiding.[7] It is clear that white people were trying to exclude black people in the interest of their own preservation, writes Giliomee: 'And where is the line between self-preservation and selfishness?'[8]

The First Boer War broke out in December 1880, and was won by the Boers after the Battle of Majuba Hill on 27 February 1881.[9] After the war, the Convention of Pretoria set up the Location Commission, with the task of identifying reserves for the various black tribes. As far as possible, these reserves had to be allocated where black tribes were already settled. Five hectares per household were set as a guideline.[10]

Conflict broke out between different Zulu tribes in 1884. The uSuthu faction, led by the lawful successor to the Zulu throne, Dinizulu, turned to the Boers on the ZAR border for assistance in ensuring the survival of the royal lineage. With the assistance of a hundred mounted Boers, Dinizulu was victorious. He then ceded 800 farms comprising 4 000 square miles just below what is today known as Swaziland to the Boers 'for services rendered.'[11] This area became known as the New Republic.[12]

The Anglo-Boer War broke out in October 1899.[13] Despite the great odds against them, the Boers scored several dramatic victories in the field. However, by June 1900 the British had taken control of both the Boer capitals, Bloemfontein and Pretoria.[14] The Boers were not prepared to surrender and embarked on a strategy of guerrilla warfare.[15] It was during this time that the British initiated a scorched-earth policy, with Boer farms being especially targeted and burned down.[16] Women and children were

taken to concentration camps and black people were placed in camps separate from their white counterparts.[17]

The political activist and lawyer Tembeka Ngcukaitobi argues in his acclaimed book *The Land is Ours* that the circumstances in the camps in which black people were held, were far worse than those in which the Boers wer held. 'The total losses in the Boer camps amounted to some 26 000 women and children (sources more recent than those quoted by Ngcukaitobi estimate the number of Boer women and children that died in the concentration camps to be 32 000), while the camps for blacks held large numbers of men. By the end of the war, 21 000 black men, women and children had perished in camps established by the British.'[18]

Although the war was essentially a war between the Boers and the British, black people were severely affected by it. The majority of black people hoped for a British victory and the resulting possibility of qualified voting rights for black people, similar to that in the Cape.[19] Black people were involved in the war on both sides, although not to a great extent.[20]

The war was won by the British by 1902 and British rule was declared over the whole of South Africa. The Boers were shattered economically and psychologically by their loss, that resulted in massive poverty in their community. Black people were also dealt a severe blow, suffering economically as a result of the war. Qualified voting rights were not instituted as had been hoped for. Shortly after the establishment of the Union of South Africa in 1910, the South African Native National Congress was founded in 1912 – a movement that would change its name to the African National Congress (ANC) in 1923.[21]

APARTHEID

The South Africa Act was passed by the British in 1909. This became the first constitution of the new Union in 1910. According to this, all black tribes, excluding the residents of Lesotho and Swaziland, were placed under the control of a central government.[22]

Meanwhile, the Afrikaners' so-called Second Great Trek occurred between 1904 and 1951, when people moved from farms to the cities in large numbers. The number of urbanised Afrikaners increased by about a million in the first half of the 20th century.[23]

However, farming played an important role in the development of the Natives Land Act of 1913. Black people started renting land from private landowners and by the end of the 19th century, about a third to half of the ZAR was occupied in this manner. Black tenants were also working for white farmers, who had provided them with land where they could herd their own cattle. Thirdly, there were cases of sharecropping, where black people provided the ploughs, oxen and seed, and then ploughed, sowed and harvested on white-owned land. A part of their income was subsequently paid to the landowner.[24] Many white people started fearing that sharecropping would eventually result in equal voting rights for black people, who were larger in number and would then take over the government. Sharecroppers and future black voters were a threat to the growing number of impoverished white people, writes Giliomee.[25]

General JBM (Barry) Hertzog served during the Anglo-Boer War. He also was Minister of Justice and Native Affairs, and later became Prime Minister of the Union of South Africa. He quoted black American writers such as William H Thomas, author of *The American Negro,* in his argument that racial integration would be fatal for both white and black people in South Africa and that the place of 'developed black people' was with their own people.[26] Hertzog started developing the idea that South Africa should be divided between white and black, under the banner of 'separate but equal'. His belief was that white, coloured and black people should all have the right to self-determination in South Africa, each within its own territory, where they would have the right to vote for their own governments.[27] Hertzog believed in the fair treatment of black people, write historians Louis Changuion and Bertus Steenkamp. But this 'fairness' should be seen within the context of the time.

> It did not necessarily mean equal treatment, but that black people had to be protected against exploitation due to their undevelopment and accompanying defencelessness. And here the concept of paternalism is raised that gave cause for the policy of guardianship - to lead black people to self-determination. [28]

The Natives Land Act of 1913 declared that white people were not allowed to buy land in designated black areas and vice versa without the approval of the Governor-general.[29] Anthea Jeffery, head of policy research at the Institute of Race Relations (IRR), writes that the view that is widely held

today that the 1913 Land Act resulted in ‘white settlers expropriating more than 90% of the land’ is untrue, as black people with title deeds retained their landownership until the 1960s, when the National Party (NP) began implementing forced removals to clear the so-called ‘black spots’ (pockets of black-owned land within supposedly white areas that the Natives Land Act had not removed from black ownership).[30] ‘In addition,’ writes Jeffery, ‘the 1913 Act restricted, rather than barred, Africans from buying land outside the scheduled areas, for it allowed such purchases to proceed if the state gave its permission.’ Black Africans who managed to obtain the necessary state consent bought more than 3 200 farms and lots outside the scheduled areas between 1913 and 1936.[31]

The Natives Land Act of 1913 and the Urban Areas Act of 1923[32] served as a cornerstone for racial segregation in South Africa.[33]

The notion that black people were dispossessed of their land in large numbers as a result of the Natives Land Act of 1913 is also disproved by the findings of the Beaumont Commission at that time, which found that ‘natives’ (the terminology of the day) owned some 11 million hectares of land, or 9% of the 122 million hectares making up the total land area in South Africa. The commission also found that black people had exclusive occupation of another 4,2 million hectares, bringing the amount of land in African ownership or occupation to 15,2 million hectares, or 12,5% of the total. Unoccupied Crown lands (state land) made up another 12,4% of the country, and urban areas another 1,2%. Farms owned or leased by white people constituted the remaining 74%.[34]

During a parliamentary debate in 1917, Prime Minister Louis Botha proclaimed that the principles of the 1913 Land Act were proclaimed by the British, stating that the entire principle of territorial separation ‘came out of the heads of these people’.[35]

The term *apartheid* was used in Parliament for the first time in 1944.[36] The NP proposed apartheid in its 1948 election manifesto as a so-called guarantee for racial harmony. It was stated that territorial separation between white and black people had to be instituted and that native reserves, as they were known at the time, should be developed as a homeland for black people. The NP further argued that the economic

development of these areas would have to be promoted and that schools should be provided there.[37]

In the 1950s, the government cleared up black squatter camps and built about 100 000 houses for black people.[38] These houses were fairly small and had relatively few public facilities, writes Giliomee. The idea that black people were in white towns and cities only temporarily influenced city planning and the provision of services and administration. The policy was that black people were in the cities, but not from the cities.[39] However, about 90% of black city residents' houses were built by the government.[40]

In 1950, Hendrik Verwoerd, the then Minister of Native Affairs, remarked that black people would have to return to their own areas if they had ambitions of full citizenship.[41]

The prevalence of *small apartheid* – division of public facilities according to race, complete with signs that proclaimed 'Whites only' and 'Blacks only' – soon surpassed the notion of *grand apartheid* (homelands for different peoples), however, and apartheid became known as a system in which white and black people were not allowed to share the same beaches, bars and benches.

THE RISE OF THE ANC

In the late 1970s, the ANC had started to gain momentum as a champion of the struggle for the emancipation of black people. The ANC had established its own military wing, Umkhonto we Sizwe (MK), for this purpose and had received substantial backing from the Soviet Union and other communist countries at the time.[42] Its goal was to execute a national democratic revolution (NDR) in South Africa. The aim of the NDR was to overthrow the colonial state, achieve control over all government institutions, nationalise key industries and execute radical transformation of landownership.[43]

In June 1985 the leadership of the ANC convened a national consultative conference in Kabwe, Zambia. The aim was to assess the gains it had achieved in its fight for liberation and to raise the struggle to new heights.[44] Among other things the conference resolved for the distinction between hard (military) and soft (civilian) targets to fall away in ANC military operations. Shortly thereafter, several members of the Afrikaner families of Van Eck and De Nysschen were killed in a landmine attack on a farm in

Messina.[45] Siphiwe Nyanda, former commander of MK explained the ANC's decision to target farmers as follows:

> We had to take decisions like the one we took about farmers. Technically people could say those farmers are just farmers and these farmers were defending themselves but we began to identify why we said why we should regard them as targets. Also there might be soft targets because I mean they are farmers and they have wives and children staying with them on those farms and they might be with their families when they tread on those land mines we wanted to plant on their farms but we thought since they are assisting and abating the system and trying to help the Apartheid regime to survive that they will become legitimate targets.[46]

A lesser known, but properly-researched and documented fact, is the use of torture by ANC leaders in several of the organisation's camps abroad. Upon discovering this fact and studying the methods of torture executed in the ANC's torture camps, I was shocked to find that many of these methods are still used in farm murders today. Three reports on the activities at these camps, released in the early 1990s, indicated that prisoners had been subject to beatings and various methods of torture.[47] These methods of torture included:

- Dripping of melted plastic on prisoners' naked bodies and genitalia.
- Whipping of prisoners while they were tied to immovable objects such as trees.
- Beating of prisoners with blunt objects and whipping them with electric cables on the soles of their feet to avoid marks. Prisoners were whipped with sticks from coffee trees.
- Trampling on prisoners with military boots.
- Ordering prisoners to strip naked, followed by beating of their naked bodies.
- Some prisoners were ordered to inflate their cheeks and were then slapped hard, sometimes with the soles of sandals, on their inflated cheeks. This resulted in the bursting of their eardrums. This method was called the *ukumpompa* (English: pumping).[48]

Although some of the survivors went public about the atrocities that occurred in the ANC's camps, little is known about the leaders who were behind these tortures. In 1992, the human rights group Amnesty International (AI) requested the ANC to come forward with the names of its leaders who had been involved in or aware of these atrocities. The human rights advocacy group stated that in the absence of a full disclosure, the ANC can never be regarded as an accountable government. Although the ANC acknowledged that members had been imprisoned, tortured and executed, it did not heed Amnesty International's call. What is known, however, is that in 1991, ANC president Nelson Mandela ordered a commission of inquiry into abuses within the ANC in exile. Mandela's proposal was met with fierce opposition in the ANC's National Executive Committee. Mandela's instruction was adamantly opposed by three members in particular, namely Joe Nhlanlha, Chris Hani, and Jacob Zuma.[49]

Nhlanlha was the head of the ANC's Department of Intelligence and Security from 1987, and thus head of Security while Quatro, one of the most notorious ANC torture camps, was in operation.

At the time Hani was the General Secretary of the South African Communist Party and former Deputy Commander of Umkhonto we Sizwe, while Zuma was a leading member of the ANC and of the South African Communist Party in exile as well as the head of Intelligence within the ANC and Umkhonto we Sizwe.

Notwithstanding the political violence that took hold in South Africa's black townships, international pressure and economic challenges facing the white minority government, there were two political developments in particular that finally convinced the NP to initiate a process of negotiations with the ANC for a new South Africa in 1990. In the first place, the NP's political competitors on both sides started to gain ground. The more liberal Progressive Federal Party (PFP) under Frederik van Zyl Slabbert began to meet with the ANC in exile, while the support of the Conservative Party (CP) (at that time the official opposition) was gaining ground voters at the expense of the NP.[50]

The second development was the end of the Cold War in November 1989, when the Berlin Wall – which divided West and East Germany – was destructed. The destruction of the Berlin Wall has been described as the

single greatest political event of the 20th century.[51] The destruction of the wall and the reunification of Germany eventually led to the collapse of Eastern European regimes,[52] which led to a worldwide decline in communism.[53]

A NEW SOUTH AFRICA

The banning of the ANC and other communist-aligned organisations was rescinded in February 1990.[54] This resulted in a return of between 10 000 and 15 000 MK soldiers who had been living in exile, including in ANC camps in various African countries. Farm murders especially started skyrocketing since 1990.[55] Although the ANC's policy of targeting white farmers in the 1980s has never officially been rescinded, it is reasonable to believe that the decisions made at the 1985 Kabwe Conference are no longer ANC policy. Over the years, however, a disturbing silence from government leaders, and particularly leaders within the ANC alliance (including the South African Communist Party (SACP) and the trade union federation COSATU), on the issue of farm murders has developed. Where government leaders do speak out on the topic, their concern almost never results in any form of action.

A key issue that was discussed from the outset right up to the very end of the negotiations was the question on the extent to which minority communities should receive protection within a new constitutional dispensation.[56] The idea of group rights was fiercely opposed by Mandela.[57] ANC leader Pallo Jordan acknowledged that the recognition of minority rights was indeed a prerequisite for empowerment and self-determination (of minorities), but that it would be 'reactionary' to acknowledge minority rights in South Africa, since the recognition of minority rights was regarded by the ANC as undermining the rights of the majority.[58]

When the NP lost a strategic by-election in Potchefstroom to the CP, FW de Klerk announced a referendum in which white people had to vote on whether they supported the continuation of the reform process that had been initiated by the government with the aim of drafting a new constitution.[59] Sixty-nine per cent of white people voted 'yes', which provided the NP with the mandate it wanted to continue its negotiations with the ANC.[60]

The Interim Constitution of 1993 was accepted by the governing Tricameral Parliament, in which coloured and Indian people had voting

rights. This 1993 Constitution paved the way for the election of 27 April 1994, during which equal voting rights for all races were acknowledged for the first time.[61] After the election, a government of National Unity was established, which led to the acceptance of the 1996 Constitution on 10 December 1996.[62]

The Constitution states that South Africa is a sovereign, democratic state, founded on the values of human dignity, the achievement of equality, the advancement of human rights and freedoms, non-racialism, non-sexism, supremacy of the Constitution and the rule of law and others.[63]

The Constitution further states that everyone is equal before the law[64] and that everyone has the right to human dignity[65] and the right to life.[66] Freedom and security of the person[67] and the right to privacy[68] are also protected, among other things.

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‘Where’s the iron?’ asked one of the attackers. ‘I immediately knew what they meant, but I pretended that I didn’t. ‘The iron? Here’s the iron,’ Robert answered, pointing to the iron stove. ‘No!’ they screamed. ‘The iron! The iron! The iron!’ ‘You mean an iron for clothes?’ asked Robert. ‘Yes! Where’s the iron?!’ ‘We don’t iron clothes, we send it out,’ responded Robert. That was when they saw the blowtorch on the coffee table.

Robert was tied up and made to sit down on the couch. They made him sit on his usual spot. Given that they could not find the clothing iron, they decided that the blowtorch would suffice.

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CHAPTER 11

Zeitgeist

Equally or perhaps even more concerning than the sudden surge of farm attacks since the rescinding of the prohibition of the ANC and other communist-aligned organisations and the lack of action to address these attacks, is the continual verbal attacks that are launched towards white farmers in particular, not only by senior government leaders, but by political leaders in general.

Since the early 1990s, a political climate – or zeitgeist, if you wish – has started to develop in which white and Afrikaner farmers in particular are continuously presented as the source of evil in South Africa. It is a climate in which white farmers are depicted as racist 'criminals' who stole the land and who exploit the workers. In the political sphere, the white farmer has become the personification of the Afrikaners/Boers, and Afrikaners/Boers have become the personification of everything that is wrong with South Africa. Consequently, white farmers are repeatedly slandered from political platforms, in speeches, in statements and even in struggle songs. It has been argued that white farmers acquired what they have through 'violence' and that there is no moral qualm about responding to this 'violence' with physical violence. As a result, violence towards white farmers is frequently romanticised, especially in struggle songs. These songs are not merely sung by fringe groups, but by government leaders. In 2010, the ruling African National Congress (ANC) even went to court to protect its so-called right to sing songs in which the murder of white farmers is romanticised. More on this in the chapters to follow. Other than that, AfriForum has found that the mainstream media have also become an active role player in the campaign to depict white farmers as racist oppressors. The media's reporting on farm murders will be dealt with in Chapter 16.

Zeitgeist

The German word *Zeitgeist* means 'spirit of the time'. It is generally used to refer to the dominant set of ideals and beliefs that motivate the actions of the members of a society in a particular period in time. Where the word is used in this book, it is particularly used with reference to the perceptions propagated about white farmers by the ruling elite, radical activists and the mainstream media.

THE BRUTAL FARMER/LAND THIEF STEREOTYPE

‘The concept of the “farmer” has been deployed as a signifier of depravity and an expression of abuse in the South African countryside. (I wonder if any other occupational group has had the dubious honour of attracting, or being targeted by, a political chant: “Kill the farmer, kill the Boer”?) Their supposed propensity for brutality is a commonly vented trope – even when … it is unfounded,’ writes Terence Corrigan of the Institute of Race Relations (IRR).[1]

He continues: ‘In reality, there is little hard evidence to support this narrative. There are certainly instances in which farmers have behaved criminally. Each one is to be condemned, and each is grist to the mill of the farming community’s detractors. But, by all appearances, these are individuated cases, and hardly constitute a trend.’[2]

There are so many examples of hatred that is encouraged towards white farmers that it would not be possible to deal with each one. The few examples mentioned in this chapter should be regarded as only the tip of a much larger, disturbing iceberg.

In February 2013, for example, Lulu Xingwana, the then Minister for Women, Children and People with Disabilities, said during a television interview with the Australian Broadcasting Corporation that young Afrikaner men were raised to believe that they owned ‘everything’, but particularly women and children, and that they therefore believed that they can murder them when they please:

> Young Afrikaner men are brought up in the Calvinist religion believing that they own a woman, they own a child, they own everything and therefore they can take that life because they own it.

Xingwana later apologised, but faced no consequences for her comment.[3]

ANTI-WESTERN SENTIMENT

This political zeitgeist and the targeting of white and Afrikaner farmers by politicians should be seen in the light of the significant levels of anti-Western sentiment by those in power in South Africa. There is ample evidence of this. In 2008, the ANC pushed to have the street in which the embassy of the United States of America (USA) is situated renamed after former Cuban President Fidel Castro.[4] In 2014, it was formally proposed that one of the main streets of the capital city be renamed after the communist dictator, Mao Zedong.

The ANC argued that this had to be done because Chairman Mao, as he was known, was a revolutionary who should be credited for South Africa's relationship with China and that 'he was never found guilty'.[5] Both these proposed changes were prevented, however, partly as a result of pressure by AfriForum. In the same year, when the then Public Protector, Thuli Madonsela, released a report about corruption and illegal state expenditures at the private homestead of president Jacob Zuma, she was accused by Deputy Minister of Defence and Military Veterans, Kebby Maphatsoe of being 'on the payroll of the CIA'.[6]

In 2016, then ANC Secretary General Gwede Mantashe accused the United States of holding regular meetings at the USA embassy to plot a regime change in South Africa. He was unable to provide any proof for his claim.[7] Finally, in 2018, it became known that the USA was considering cutting funding to South Africa, after an analysis of South Africa's voting record at the UN found that South Africa was among the top ten countries that most frequently opposed the USA at the UN. [8]

ENCOURAGING VIOLENCE

On 8 January 2012, during the centenary celebrations of the ANC in Bloemfontein in the Free State, former President Jacob Zuma burst into song. The words of the song can be translated as follows:

> We are going to shoot them with the machine gun
> They are going to run x 2
>
> Shoot the Boer
> We are going to hit them
> And they are going to run x 2
>
> We are going to shoot them with the machine gun
> They are going to run x 2
>
> Shoot the Boer
> We are going to hit them
> And they are going to run x 2
>
> The Cabinet is going to shoot them with the machine gun x 2[9]

It would seem inconceivable that the bearer of the highest office of state of the most developed country on the continent could utter these words

without attracting international outrage, and yet, the deafening silence lingers on.

During the ANC's 2013 election campaign current President Cyril Ramaphosa, (then Deputy President), told people that they should vote for the ANC, otherwise 'the Boers' will come back into power, presumably to oppress black people.[10]

In January 2015, former President Jacob Zuma said at the ANC's 103rd birthday celebrations in Cape Town that the arrival of Jan van Riebeeck in Cape Town in 1652 had been the beginning of all South Africa's problems. Van Riebeeck is of course generally seen as the founding father of white people, Afrikaners or even of Western civilisation in South Africa. Zuma was seriously chastised for his remark.

Pieter Mulder, the then leader of the FF Plus, accused the former President of resorting to 'scapegoat politics' and filed a complaint of hate speech with the South African Human Rights Commission (SAHRC) against the President. 'What is the understanding of ordinary ANC supporters?' asked Mulder. 'They understand that if one gets rid of the white man, all problems are solved.' Dave Steward, Executive Director of the FW de Klerk Foundation and spokesperson for former President FW de Klerk, said that the anti-Jan van Riebeeck campaign is 'yet another example of the disturbing and increasingly overt anti-white posture of the president and the ANC'. The story made international headlines.[11]

In February of the same year the former President Zuma rephrased, insisting that he did not intend Afrikaners to leave the country, but re-emphasised that 'the problem began when Jan van Riebeeck came here'. He then continued, saying that the black masses should be given the land.[12]

This is the same President who said earlier that his understanding of democracy was that minority communities should have 'fewer rights' than the majority: 'Sorry, we have more rights here because we are a majority. You have fewer rights because you are a minority. Absolutely, that's how democracy works.'[13]

In 2016, Zuma's sentiment on the arrival of white people was echoed by an ANC MP who claimed in Parliament that Jan van Riebeeck came to South Africa '2 000 years ago,' to 'steal everything':

> Also (be reminded) that not all who visit our country come with the right intention, as they did 2 000 years ago, by a person named Van Riebeeck … They stole everything, even our dignity, because they took advantage of our kindness.[14]

The MP was mocked by opposition parties for believing that Van Riebeeck's arrival happened 2 000 years ago, claiming that she was confusing Van Riebeeck with Jesus Christ. She reiterated: 'Whether two thousand years or whatever, but, they took, they stole our land … This is the story to tell our children.'[15]

Zuma's sentiment on minority rights was also echoed in 2017 by the ANC's spokesperson Zizi Kodwa. When members of the mostly coloured community of Eldoradopark in Johannesburg protested the appointment of a black principle at a local high school, Kodwa responded that people who played an integral part in the Struggle should not feel as if they have been reduced to the status of a minority group.[16]

In 2010, students at the Cape Peninsula University of Technology (CPUT) started complaining about posters that were put up by members of Sasco, the ANC Youth Leauge- (ANCYL-) affiliated student movement. At this time Julius Malema was still President of the ANCYL . The posters were displayed for the upcoming student council election and were intended to persuade students to vote for the South African Students Congress (SASCO). The poster read:

A vote for Sasco is a vote for ANC and
A vote for ANC is a vote for Julius
MALEMA*
One Boer one bullet
Viva Julius Malema viva!!!
Students please vote for SASCO 100%
BLACKS ONLY ORGANISATION
(STRICTLY SOUTH AFRICANS)
Amandla!!

Mbulelo Mandlana, the then President of SASCO, denied ownership of the poster, but also refused to investigate whether it had been drafted by one of its branches or members. Instead, Mandlana alleged that the poster had been 'produced by white racist students'.[17]

Andile Mngxitama, leader of Black First Land First (BLF), said that farmers are being killed as a form of retribution from their 'black slave' farm workers. 'If you look at the gruesome manner in which farmers are attacked, it is more like a response or revenge. Even the farmers that are not involved in brutality end up becoming victims because of the culture of violence. The death of these farmers is minuscule compared to the horrors that black people face. Black people are backed into a corner … Farm life for black people is characterised by dispossession and violence. Farms are controlled by white people and the workers are just property,' Mngxitama said. 'The murders of black people on farms are not counted. (Actually, the murders of black people on farms are also counted and form part of the statistics on farm attacks in so far that they comply with the definition.) Occasionally people react when white farmers are slain.'[18] Mngxitama argues that 'the history that we inherited' was one of '500 years of white supremacy'.[19] 'Until all black people are liberated from poverty, unemployment and inequality, no black people are free, with the implication that whites are to blame.'[20]

But driving white people into the sea would still not be enough to solve the so-called problem of white privilege, argues Gugulethu Mhlungu, *City Press* columnist.[21]

On 27 February 2017 Esethu Hasane, spokesperson for Fikile Mbalula, who was Minister of Sport at the time, tweeted: 'Only Western Cape still has dry dams. Please God, we have black people there. Choose another way of punishing white people.'[22]

This was at a time when the Western Cape was suffering from the worst drought in decades. AfriForum requested Hasane's dismissal, but received no response from Mbalula.[23] Mbalula was appointed as Minister of Police shortly thereafter.

In 2016 AfriForum opened a complaints channel through which members of the public can report cases of hate speech or incitement to violence on social media. Since then, AfriForum has received more than a thousand complaints about the encouragement of the genocide of white people, the slaughter of white farmers and other atrocious acts such as the raping of farmers' wives and children.

One such case is that of Lindsay Maasdorp, spokesperson for the BLF movement – an organisation said to be funded by the billionaire Gupta family,[24] Maasdorp repeatedly called for the attacking and murder of white people, but white farmers in particular, on social media. Several examples are listed verbatim:

- On 29 February 2016, he tweeted: 'We must turn our anger towards the enemy. A few of us will have to act and turn majority to see @Mngxitama #BLF #africansspeak'[25]

- On 7 March 2016, he tweeted: 'Let's not be lazy with #FeesMustFall #endoutsourcing, decolonisation is no process! Its a violent revolution, a taking back of the land!'[26]

- On 23 February 2016, he tweeted: 'FUCK WHITE PEOPLE!'[27]

- On 11 February 2016 he tweeted: 'Let's unite principled black forces of occupied Azania. We must remove the non-whites, go on and destroy white-power. #ShutDown SONA'[28]

(Azania is the Pan-Africanist name for South Africa.)

- On 23 March 2016, he posted a link to a *News24* article titled 'Resign, for the kids, Johann Rupert urges Zuma', on his Facebook profile, accompanied by the following comment: 'We need to do it for our children. No flight, and no ship; 3ft under, a shallow grave! This arrogant white fool has reaped from the blood and sweat of black lives, we must deal with him decisively'.[29]

- On 3 January 2017, when the Cape Town area was scorched by veld fires, he posted on his Facebook page: ‘black god needs servants in CT: wind + matches + white owned farms.’[30]

Confronted about these comments by the investigative journalism television show *Carte Blanche*, Maasdorp responded that ‘Black people are upset and angry and rightfully so, because land has been stolen historically and it needs to be returned. And so if black people are responding to that violence with violence then they are well in their rights to take back the land by any means necessary.’[31]

In March 2017, during a session of the National Assembly, where the crisis of farm murders was discussed for the first time in the South African parliament, ANC MP Duduzile Promise Manana shouted ‘Bury them alive!’ during a speech by Pieter Groenewald, leader of the Freedom Front Plus (FF Plus), in which he pleaded for the prioritising of farm murders.[32]

‘This is proof that the utterances of political leaders could lead to violence and murders and that the issue of farm murders is of little importance to the ANC,’ says Ian Cameron, Head of Community Safety at AfriForum. ‘Certain members of the ANC were chatting during the debate and not listening nor partaking at all. Political parties, such as the ANC and the Economic Freedom Fighters (EFF), that do not want to accept that farm murders are a major issue, kept emphasising a single occurrence during which a farm worker was shot on a farm in Letsitele.’ [33]

‘The onus and responsibility are not only on the police and communities in rural areas to prevent farm attacks. Those who are in charge of our country particularly cannot make statements such as “Bury them alive!”. Members of Parliament must be held accountable for utterances that encourage and incite violence against any person,’ adds Lorraine Claasen, researcher at the AfriForum Research Institute (ANI).[34]

The ANC refused to take disciplinary action against Manana.

POLICE INCITEMENT

The public incitement of farm murders is, however, not limited to members of the public and politicians. In some cases, members of the South African Police Service also publicly encourage farm murders.

Mveleli Molwane Gwabeni, a police officer in the Eastern Cape, posted on Facebook that ‘[W]e must continue to kill more of their farmers atleast to make up for what they did to us’.[35] Chris Gumotso, who works at the Gauteng Youth Crime Prevention Desk of the SAPS, stated that ‘All white man…deserve to die…in future…fuck u…Mr white man…’. He also posted pictures of firearms and ammunition lying on a desk in a police station and added: ‘I predict th civil war.. in mzansi [English: South Africa] …by 2019…take out ur guns… fighters coz Asijiki [English: We won’t turn back]’. Separate criminal charges were filed against Gwabeni and Gumotso,[36] but no progress about either of these cases is known to the public.

Another police officer, Constable Elvis Thabiso Sithole, was charged for posting the following on Facebook: ‘I normally suffocate a bit with a refuse bag this kind of racists, before booking them in the holdings cells, b coz it doesn’t leave any marks. They just become red and after doing the paperwork I lock them up and take the docket home so that no one can release them until they meet with the Honourable Magistrate in court the next court date’.[37] (The comment was made in response to a video clip of a white person making a racist statement.) When he was told that his comments would be reported to his station commander, he responded by saying ‘Great news indeed…’[38] A complaint was also lodged with the SAHRC but the SAHRC ‘finalised its investigation’ seven months later by simply concluding that the messages ‘may not have been posted’ by Sithole, but by his brother.[39] When Sithole denied making the statement, the station commander immediately accepted his version and stated that the matter was considered to have been resolved.[40]

TARGETING BOER HERITAGE

The destruction and vandalising of statues that are perceived to represent white people erupted in 2015 under the banner of the so-called Rhodes Must Fall movement. The movement gained momentum after Chumani Maxwele hurled a bucket of faeces at the statue of Cecil John Rhodes at the University of Cape Town (UCT).[41] Statues that have been targeted include that of Cecil John Rhodes in Cape Town, Paul Kruger in Pretoria and CR Swart in Bloemfontein. Even the Horse Memorial statue in Port Elizabeth (a statue raised in memory of horses that died during the Anglo-Boer War)

was attacked and broken down by the EFF, who claimed that the statue was a ‘symbol of an economic system that has been imposed on (black people) by foreigner settlers.’[42]

In fact, the movement was inundated with anti-white racist rhetoric. The statement ‘One settler, one bullet!’ has become associated with the movement.[43] Mcebo Dlamini, former president of the Student Representative Council (SRC) at the University of the Witwatersrand (Wits) and leader in the movement, stated on Facebook that he loved Adolf Hitler.[44] Members of the movement were also seen on campus wearing T-shirts with the words ‘Kill the whites’ written on it.[45]

AfriForum was present together with various stakeholders at a consultative meeting to discuss the future of Afrikaner heritage in South Africa, following on the campaign by the Rhodes Must Fall movement. At the meeting, a senior representative of the Department of Arts and Culture (DAC) asked all who were present to stand up and applaud the leaders of the Rhodes Must Fall movement who were present at the meeting, praising them as ‘national heroes’.

MURDERING FARMERS

There have also been many cases where white farmers in particular were murdered and where the attackers openly acknowledged that they had committed murder because that had been their intention. Other than that, many cases of farm attacks during which the attackers chanted political slogans or made racist or political statements towards their victims have also been reported.

In April 2010, Leon Koekemoer (39) was attacked on his farm near Cullinan in Gauteng (See Chapter 15). The attackers screamed the words: ‘Die, white man! Viva Malema!’ as they were attacking Koekemoer.[46]

In June 2014, Knowledge Paulus Mandlazi (28) admitted to murdering five white farmers in three months between March and June 2014. ‘My hate for white people made me do it,’ he said. He described his conduct as merely ‘going to work’ and boasted in the courtroom about the fact that he now had six murders under his belt. ‘They also had money, which he wanted,’ the judge said,[47] once again proving that a murderer can have a racist motive, as well as a simultaneous motive to commit robbery disproving the notion that a farm attacker can only have a single motivation,

as was assumed by the Committee of Inquiry into Farm Attacks of 2003 (See Chapter 8).

On 10 May 2017 a person who goes by the name Mdu Bantubemzonda Mzelemu posted the following message on Twitter: ‘Me and my hommies planning to attack these farmers around south coast of kzn ……they r shooting everything down we gona shoot back since police r friends with these famers.’[48]

That evening, KwaZulu-Natal farm owner Michael Kernick (64) was attacked by unknown suspects while he was alone. He was stabbed and his body was then set alight. The house was ransacked. The police stated that they could not determine the motive for the attack and that it was not clear if anything had been taken from the house.[49]

When Mike Bonnette (70) was attacked and tortured on his Gauteng farm in April 2018, his attackers referred to him as a ‘white shit’ and accused him of having stolen the land.[50]

In 2017, a copy of a conversation between a National Intelligence Agency (NIA) agent and a so-called general of the notorious prison gang, the 28s, was broadcast on *Carte Blanche*. The gang leader spent more than 20 years in prison for farm murders and was released in December. On the audio clip, he makes the following statement:

> They also told me while I was on the inside that when I get out, I have to contact Julius Malema, the guy from Limpopo, from the EFF. Because he was also here now in September. Julius Malema was in Pretoria, in New Lock. When he got there, at New Lock, he asked, he said, when you gangs want a golden team, when you want a team, come and see me in Limpopo. I can give you a team. What I will give you is a balaclava, a gun, and cash. He says straight that he is against the farmers, Julius Malema. He says you only have to murder a few farmers, on farms.[51]

Malema was invited to respond. His spokesperson Mbuyiseni Ndlozi only responded that he was unable to respond to these allegations, due to his busy schedule.[52] The story soon faded away and there was no media outcry about this.

I have also personally experienced a similar conversation. In 2014, I received a phone call from a prison in Gauteng. The person introduced

himself as John Jackson (pseudonym used for security purposes). Jackson told me that he had read about our campaign against farm murders and that he urgently needed to speak to me. He told me that he was in prison for murdering a white farmer and that there was important information that I should take note of. Together with a colleague and former detective in the SAPS, I went to visit Jackson. He gave us the details about the farmer he had murdered (details that could be verified by us) and told us that there was an important part of the story that was not public knowledge. He then said that the leadership of the ANC was fully aware of the farm attacks and were also involved.

He told us that he was a veteran of Umkhonto we Sizwe (MK), the ANC's military wing, and that he was actively involved in the activities of the ANC. He had been in conversation with the 'Top Six' (the leadership of the ANC), who had asked him to murder that particular farmer. They did so because they wanted to send a message to white farmers and to scare them off their land. He then gave us a little piece of paper with a telephone number on it, saying that this was the number from which he had been called to get instructions (we were able to verify that the number was in fact a number in Luthuli House, the ANC's headquarters). Jackson said that he would soon be out of prison and once that happened, he would have to go back to Luthuli House to report to the Top Six.

We questioned why he would give this information to us and how we could know if he was telling the truth.

Jackson said that he sought revenge for the fact that he had been given instructions to murder a white farmer, and once he had done so, he had been deserted by the party leadership, who pretended that they did not even know who he was.

He also agreed to testify to this under oath and that I would have to come back to discuss the matter with him at a later stage. Shortly thereafter, I was back to continue talks with Jackson. He then gave me his precondition for making an affidavit as discussed: AfriForum had to buy him a house and pay for him to study at a tertiary institution.

I told him that there was no way in which AfriForum could use the money donated to us by people whose loved ones had been attacked and

killed on farms, to buy a house for a farm murderer. From there on, we were not able to make progress.

Whether Jackson was telling the truth or not is still an open question. What should be taken note of is that there have been several incidents where prisoners openly spoke of political involvement in farm murders. This is something that should be investigated as a matter of extreme urgency.

While these claims are a matter that a reasonable person would regard as a potential national crisis, it is also a matter that appears to be simply swept under the carpet by the South African government.

Former President Jacob Zuma at the ANC Centenary where he sang a variation of 'Shoot the Boer'.
Photo: Getty Images/AFP/ Alexander Joe

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They took the blowtorch and started burning Robert. They started at his feet, moving up slowly.

'I was screaming too much, so they took the red throw that was draped over Susan's chair and started wrapping it around me. It was so tight. I thought I'm going to die in any case, because I can't breathe.

'They realised I couldn't speak and that was defeating the whole object of tying the rug around me, so then they let me go.' They made Robert sit on the couch again. They started burning him again.

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CHAPTER 12

A scourge of racism

While the focus of this book is on farm attacks and not on broader societal problems in South Africa, it is necessary to briefly shed light on those issues that can never be fully untethered from the topic of farm attacks. Three issues stand out in particular: racism, labour relations on farms and land reform. There is of course a degree of overlap between these issues. The reality is, however, that all these topics have become political ploys, flooded with fabricated figures and clearly embedded in the interest of a particular ideological narrative.

These issues are frequently described as ticking time bombs by political commentators and activists – a notion that certainly seems justifiable if one were to turn to social media for an indication of what people in South Africa feel like.

These issues will now be dealt with one by one.

A SCOURGE OF RACISM

Judging from Facebook and Twitter, it is fair to conclude that racism is in fact a major crisis in South Africa. Frans Cronje, Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of the Institute of Race Relations (IRR), makes the argument about racism and violent protests: Between 2007 and 2017, the level of violent anti-government protests more than doubled, and since 2015 South Africa has seen the sharpest increase in violent protests in the world.[1]

The focus of these protests has shifted in recent years from mostly local service-delivery issues to become more about national issues, such as university fees and corruption. In 2013, 19,6% of people indicated that they either would use, or have used, violence for a political cause. This number had increased to 30,3% by 2017.[2] ‘Protest leaders are often guilty of the crudest form of race baiting and racial nationalist incitement,’ says Cronje. With regard to the university riots, he points out:

> When almost 80% of students of the University of the Witwatersrand voted to return to class in late 2016, the protest leaders said the vote revealed the racism of white students and a message was circulated calling for the killing of white students. F&#$ the whites was a slogan seen on T-shirts worn by student protesters and shouted in lecture theaters. When warnings were issued of the harm being caused to

higher education, the protest leaders responded that this showed how whites dominated the university community.[3]

Intellectuals and so-called thought leaders have become major contributors in this debate. ‘It is all about power. Who has the power?’ asks Pierre de Vos from the Law Faculty at the University of Cape Town (UCT). ‘And power is not just about whether you have political power. It’s whether you have economic power, whether you have social power. If you have a white skin in a racist society you have more social power,’ says De Vos.[4]

Conferences and discussions about whiteness, white privilege and white supremacy have become a popular intellectual activity. The focus of these discussions is usually on white racism exclusively, and we have found that black racism tends to be glossed over in South Africa, or at the very least, not condemned consistently.

At one such conference, Dirk Hermann, Chief Executive of Solidarity, and I were invited to speak on the topic of whiteness. In the audience were former President Kgalema Motlanthe and several other senior ANC members. We decided to point out what we regard to be a double standard in conversations about race and to make a plea for consistent condemnation against racism, regardless of whether the perpetrator was black or white.[5] We were severely chastised and accused of inflicting sorrow upon the audience with views that opposed theirs.[6]

‘I’m fucking angry,’ says radio host and political commentator, Eusebius McKaiser.[7] ‘Just like men can pretend that sexism isn’t a thing, and just like homophobes can pretend that being gay “isn’t an issue anymore”; so, too, white people can afford to be wilfully ignorant about the reality of racism.’[8] McKaiser makes the argument that South Africa is an inherently anti-black country, despite the fact that the government is run by a black nationalist liberation movement. ‘We live in a country that is saturated with racism: institutional racism, systemic racism, racism in all our social spaces, interpersonal racism.’[9]

His views are echoed by the president of the extremist movement Black First Land First (BLF), Andile Mngxitama – a man who constantly appears to make no effort to check his facts before speaking: ‘South Africa is a racist country. What we see from time to time is just a flaring up of individual acts of racism, but South Africa has institutionalized racism. If

you want to understand it better, go to the distribution of wealth in this country and even just earnings … Only 35 000 white farmers and trusts own about 80% of the land and we are the black majority who are landless in our own country.'[10]

'Everywhere I turn, a generation born free is talking as if it is at once obsessed by and imprisoned by whiteness and white supremacy,' says Ferial Haffajee, editor-at-large for *Huffington Post South Africa*. 'The black obsession with whiteness and white privilege is all, it seems, we ever talk about in sustained ways in our national conversations. To my ear it sounds as if whites are spoken of as if they are a majority in power, rather than a small group of varied political sentiments.'[11]

'It is truly frightening to read some of the things that are written – not by drunken louts but by educated people in what one might have thought were respectable publications,' says Cronje. 'Lectures are held at universities, the transcripts of which read like a throwback to Germany in November of 1938. When a university building is burned to the ground, media commentators write reams about the emotional pain that must have driven the students to embark upon such an act of vandalism. This is nonsense. Arrest the vandals and tell the rest to grow up.'[12]

'Where will it end if "feeling unhappy" is sufficient justification for arson? The entire country will be burned to the ground,' says Cronje.[13]

Consequently, people have turned to social media to vent their anger about racism. There are several well-known cases of white racism that have received substantial coverage in the media, largely as a result of posts that went viral on social media. These include the cases of Penny Sparrow, Matthew Theunissen and Vicki Momberg. Incidents of white racism are usually met with fierce condemnation and severe consequences for the person involved.

After Sparrow referred to black people as monkeys on Facebook, she was fined R150 000 ($12 000).[14] Theunissen settled a lawsuit by the South African Human Rights Commission (SAHRC) to do community work after he had placed a post on Facebook that contained the derogatory 'k-word' as a reference to black people.[15] When Momberg repeatedly used the word after she had been robbed in a smash-and-grab incident, she was convicted on four counts of crimen injuria.[16] She was directed to pay the police officer

to whom she had used this word R100 000 ($8 000) as damages.[17] On top of that, Momberg became the first person to be sent to prison for racism. In March 2018 she was sentenced to an effective two years in prison.[18]

Also, there are many cases that are widely reported as incidents of racism, despite the fact that no evidence of racism exists. One such case is that of Chris Hart, who lost his job as economist at Standard Bank after a flood of allegations of racism against him. Hart was accused of racism for tweeting the following: ‘More than 25 years after apartheid ended, the victims are increasing along with a sense of entitlement and hatred towards minorities …’[19]

In May 2016, comments made by High Court Judge Mabel Jansen regarding black people came to light. ‘Want to read my files: rape, rape, rape, rape, rape, rape of minors by black family members. It is never-ending,’ she wrote in a private message on Facebook. She continued that in black culture, ‘a woman is there to pleasure’ men, that women tell their children it is their father’s birth right to be the first, and that gang rapes of baby, mother and daughter were a ‘pleasurable pass time’.[20]

Mabel later stated that she was referring to specific cases and not to black people in general, but it was too late.[21] She resigned soon thereafter.[22]

On the other hand, we also find grotesque examples of anti-white racism, committed by black people. Generally speaking, there are several differences between the typical examples of white racism and black racism.

A DOUBLE STANDARD

In South Africa, white racism is typically vested in derogatory comments by white people about black people, while black racism is typically articulated as an incitement to inflict violence upon white people. White racism is typically committed by unknown individuals, while black racism is typically committed or endorsed by public figures who have a degree of influence or a following. White racism typically results in a public outcry and extensive reporting by the media, while black racism typically results in a degree of justification by elaborating on the reasons why this person was angry in the first place. Lastly, white racism typically results in severe consequences for the (alleged) racist, while black racism rarely leads to negative consequences for the (alleged) racist.

In the same week in which Momberg was sentenced to two years in prison, the news broke about how the South African National Defence Force (SANDF) dealt with anti-white racism. Major MV Mohlala responded to a vicious attack on Braam van Wyk, an 80-year-old white reverend in Randparkrif, Johannesburg by saying that '[a]ll of these old white people think we are stupid when they say they were opposed to apartheid. We will not forget what they have done. Now it is the white people's turn.' He added that Van Wyk's eyes and tongue should have been poked out. In response to his racism, he was reprimanded and asked not to say it again.[23] Mohlala was later dismissed, but faced no further consequences.[24]

Just a few days after the publication of the racist comments that led to Penny Sparrow's fine of R150 000 ($12 000), an employee of the Gauteng Department of Sports, Arts, Culture and Recreation, Velaphi Khumalo, posted on Facebook:

> I want to cleans this country of all white people. we must act as Hitler did to the Jews. I don't believe any more that the is a large number of not so racist white people. I'm starting to be sceptical of even those within our Movement the ANC. I will from today unfriend all white people I have as friends from today u must be put under the same blanket as any other racist white because secretly u all are a bunch of racist fuck heads . as we have already seen.[25]

In another post he claimed that 'white people in south (sic) Africa deserve to be hacked and killed like Jews.'[26] In reaction to this, Khumalo was suspended on full pay, only to be reinstated in his government job soon thereafter.[27]

'Now note here, the difference (between what Sparrow said and what Khumalo said) is that there is a call to action. What Mr. Khumalo calls for is a genocide,' says Mark Oppenheimer, advocate and constitutional law expert. 'What is interesting to note is that, if you had to ask the average person in public whether they have heard of Penny Sparrow, most of them will say yes. They will denounce her. Then they'll say "Who's Velaphi Khumalo?" So there is this disparity in the reporting on these two issues.'[28] More on the media's reporting on farm murders in Chapter 16.

Also, during the same week in which the national news media were dominated by a report of a white teacher from Pretoria who had asked a black schoolgirl to trim her Afro, a member of the Economic Freedom Fighters (EFF) and of the Student Representative Council (SRC) of the University of Pretoria (UP), just opposite the school in question, said the following on Facebook:

> Reasons why I hate white people:
> White previllage
> White dominance
> White arrogance
> White monopoly capital
> White superiority
>
> Closing remarks: FUCK WHITE PEOPLE, just get me a bazooka or AK47 so i can do the right thing and kill these demon possed humans.[29]

AfriForum Youth charged Luvuyo Menziwa with hate speech. While Menziwa's comment was clearly more inciting than that of Vicki Momberg, given that it contained a call to action – to murder white people – it is reasonable to expect that his punishment would be more severe. However, while Momberg was sent to prison for two years, Menziwa was ordered to apologise and to do community service. [30]

During 2017 alone, AfriForum filed a total of 113 criminal charges against people who took to Facebook and Twitter to encourage violence against other people on the basis of the colour of their skin. In virtually all these incidents, white people were targeted. In many of them, white farmers in particular were the target.

Here are some examples of the messages, as they were posted, that prompted criminal charges by AfriForum:

- @Charleeea tweeted that 'black students need to stop protesting and start killing. The white supremacy made it clear they aint hearing it'.
- A fake profile that goes by the name of Chris Sankara posted a picture on Facebook of a black man assaulting a white woman and added the caption: 'We Will Hit Them Where It Hurts Most They Will Not Even See Coming'.

- Dumisa Ngcai commented on a picture of the bodies of three dead white men: ‘I love this pic, bloody boers killed in cold blood. Hope history repeats itself and more are butchered this way.’
- @juphter tweeted: ‘Chris hart and all his family need to be killed for disrespecting the majority .and insulting the sons and daughters of the soil.’
- Teddy Maile posted on Facebook: ‘Do I support white farm killings in south africa?hell yeah.we have to protect our land from European colonialists.’

To date, none of these people have been prosecuted by the National Prosecuting Authority (NPA), nor investigated by the South African Police Service (SAPS).

After AfriForum had been informed by the SAPS in writing that these cases would not be investigated, the SAPS publicly announced that a white man would be charged with *crimen injuria* for referring to black people as ‘baboons’ and ‘kaffirs’ on Facebook.[31]

In a report entitled *Racism, hate speech and double standards* trade union Solidarity found that there is a massive discrepancy not only in the way racism is reported in the media, but also in the reaction of the SAHRC:

> Media coverage so widely different based on the race of the transgressor contributes even more to the creation of a climate where minorities are targeted. Ethical, objective journalism is not often found in reporting on matters of race. Indeed, even normal conflict situations are turned into racial matters by the South African media. The fact that open incitement to slaughtering white people did not remotely receive the same coverage as a racially driven description of black people, speaks volumes.[32]

Solidarity continues:

> As watchdog over race relations in South Africa, the HRC appears to be asleep. From its own initiatives and reactions it appears that the HRC is allowing the media and politicians to dictate to it what racial discrimination is. When the HRC does act, such action appears to be one-sided and unbalanced … Low-level white racists are made examples of, while the vertical influence of racist black opinion

makers is not addressed. We see the result of this in the social media reactions of white and black becoming ever more scathing.[33]

THE DATA ON RACISM

Despite all the above, the good news remains that racism in South Africa is not as big a crisis as the likes of McKaiser and Mgxitama would like us to believe. This is evident from virtually every opinion survey that has been undertaken on the topic.

In a 2017 survey on racism by the IRR, members of the public were asked what they believed the country's biggest unresolved problems to be. The vast majority pointed to unemployment and crime, and only 3,2% regarded racism as such to be South Africa's biggest unresolved problem. What is even more interesting, is the fact that almost four times as many white people (9%) as black people (2,4%) regarded racism as the biggest problem. If the crises of inequality and xenophobia were to be included in the definition of racism, the number of people regarding it as South Africa's biggest problems increases to a mere 6,4%.[34] Furthermore, 71,9% of respondents indicated that they had never personally experienced racism.[35] In response to the statement that all this talk of racism and colonialism is an excuse by politicians to divert the attention from their own failures, only 25,8% disagreed.[36]

These findings correlate with similar studies by other institutions: The so-called progressive think tank Plus 94 Research found that 73% of people reported not to have experienced racism.[37] From those who claimed to have experienced discrimination, 80% of white people claimed to have been discriminated against by black people, as opposed to 73% of black people who stated that the discrimination that they had experienced was perpetrated by white people. [38] The Institute for Justice and Reconciliation (IJR), endorsed by the Struggle icon Archbishop Emeritus Desmond Tutu, found that less than 25% of people in South Africa regarded race as the primary source of division among people in South Africa,[39] and that 20,7% of people had experienced discrimination in the workplace.[40] The IJR also found that white people were more frustrated than black people as a result of the lack of both political and economic power that they had.[41]

It is therefore fair to conclude that the vast majority of people in South Africa are not racist and do not harbour racist sentiments. Racism remains a

problem, however, in the sense that racists have largely succeeded in hijacking the national debate and in convincing us that racism is a major crisis akin to a ticking time bomb. This, while the available data disprove this. The crisis is, however, exacerbated by the double standard in public reaction to racism, not only by state institutions such as the SAHRC, but also in the way racism is reported on by the media – a matter that will be explored in more detail in Chapter 16.

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‘One of them brought the laptop in and asked me for the password, which I gave to him. He asked “Is this tracked?” I said “Yes, it’s all tracked. Everything is tracked in this house.” “What about the bakkie?” he asked. “Yes,” I said to him. “Everything is tracked”.’

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CHAPTER 13

Land and labour

‘Our pursuit of economic justice through the resolution of the land question can no longer be a dream of tomorrow, but a reality of today,’ writes Ayanda Dlodlo, Member of Parliament (MP) for the African National Congress (ANC). She adds: ‘Our people have suffered too long to stand idle and nurse the feelings of those who hold on to white privilege to the exclusion of the rest. It is therefore more crucial that we seek to restore the dignity of our people who have for hundreds of years been removed from their ancestral land.’[1] Once the ruling ANC had adopted a policy that land should be expropriated without compensation at its 54th National Conference in December 2017, its newly elected President, Cyril Ramaphosa, said that taking the land owned by white farmers should increase food production and that ‘South Africa could turn into the ultimate paradise if the implementation of the policy of expropriation of land without compensation leads to higher food production.’ He added: ‘We can make this country the Garden of Eden.’[2] On 27 February 2018, the South African Parliament carried a motion that a process had to be started to review Section 25 of the Constitution (the property rights clause) and other clauses where necessary to make it possible for the state to expropriate land without compensation.[3]

In April 2018, Deputy President David Mabuza made it clear that the ANC regarded land reform as a racial matter when he threatened that there would be a ‘violent takeover’ if white farmers did not agree to volunteer some of their land. Mabuza quoted fabricated statistics that ‘80% of the land was in the hands of a few people’ and stated that ‘the land will come back; do not despair’.[4]

There are, however, three major problems with the ANC’s stance on land reform. The first is that it is based on a flawed perception of history. The second is that there is no real hunger for land – in fact, the vast majority of black people in South Africa have no interest of owning agricultural land. The third is that where government has intervened with regard to landownership, it has had catastrophic results.

The matter of South African history has already been dealt with. The other two issues will now briefly be addressed.

NO HUNGER FOR LAND

The Restitution of Land Rights Act[5] allowed for people to institute claims for land of which they had been deprived of as a result of racially discriminatory practices such as forced removals. By the time the cut-off date was reached in 1998, about 80 000 land claims had been filed. Government was not satisfied and opened the process again in 2014, claiming that they believed that 400 ··· land claims would be filed in total.[6] What came as a source of frustration to government was the fact that 93% of those who had instituted land claims indicated that they did not really have an interest in owning agricultural land and that they would prefer to take money as compensation. Government responded angrily to this, stating that it was 'hurting land reform'. Bheki Mbili, Chief Director Land Restitution Support in KwaZulu-Natal, explained what black land claimants say:

> Many of the claimants already have small pieces of land and some don't even live in those areas where their forefathers were removed from. Some say to us that they don't want more land than they already own and the risk involved if they ask us to buy them those huge pieces of land that will go out of production.[7]

He then explained why this was a problem for government:

> The problem with this is that if you look at the outcome of [the] first phase of the land audit, the amount of land that is private land particularly that is owned by white people in this country is still in the region of between 70 and 80%. We can only change the land ownership pattern if people opt for restoration. If they opt for financial compensation the pattern stays the same. If you take the money you don't dent the problem that currently exists.[8]

Notwithstanding the fact that the figures of white landownership provided by Mbili are inflated (at least 34,5% of all land in South Africa and 26,7% of agricultural land are black-owned),[9] the problem is therefore that the South African government is dedicated to reducing the amount of land owned by white people, while this is not regarded as a priority by the majority of black South Africans.

The notion of a large-scale hunger for land is a myth – at least with regard to rural or agricultural land, this is further supported by the fact that

58% of land claims were filed in urban areas[10] and that 84% of land grabs occur in metros.[11]

This is also evident from the rapid pace at which urbanisation among black South Africans is taking place. Black South Africans, more than any other group, seem to want to live in cities, rather than in rural areas. From 2000 to 2015, the population of so-called black Africans in Johannesburg increased by 76,7%. The corresponding number for Cape Town is 122,4%, and for Pretoria 71,6%. During the same period, the number of white people in Johannesburg declined by 8,1% and in Cape Town by 0,7%. In Pretoria, the number of white people increased by a mere 2,7%.[12]

With regard to the intention to enter agriculture, Statistics South Africa (Stats SA) found that only 2,8% of all university students enrolled to study agricultural science and similar courses.[13]

Furthermore, when the Institute of Race Relations (IRR) surveyed South Africans and asked them what they believed had to be done to improve their lives, a mere 1% indicated that they believed that land reform would improve their lives.[14]

The survey also found that a mere 0,6% of people in South Africa regard land distribution as South Africa's most serious unresolved problem. It is noteworthy from this survey that white South Africans regard land reform as a more pressing issue to be resolved than black South Africans.[15]

FAILURE OF LAND REFORM

According to the South African government, about 9% – almost 8 million hectares – of agricultural land has already been distributed to black African people.[16] However, it was admitted that more than 90% of farms distributed by government to black African communities failed and usually reverted very quickly, either to subsistence farming or to squatter camps.[17] A study by the Land Bank found that approximately 4 000 farms had been acquired since 1994 at a cost of R10 billion ($800 million), of which only 10% were productive.[18]

Roelf Meyer, director of the In Transformation Initiative (ITI) stated that government already owned 4 323 'farming units' (presumably a combination of smallholdings and farms) that had been bought as a result of

successful land claims, but that had never been transferred to the new owners.[19]

While the South African government has already spent more than R45 billion ($3,6 billion) on land reform, only 6,3% of the land that was acquired by the state has been transferred into private land.[20]

Land reform is a political ploy, a policy that is rigged for failure and one that only serves to escalate the friction that already exists with regard to South Africa's food producers. While the primary targets are white farmers, the primary victims might just as well be poor black people.

EXPLOITING FARM WORKERS

In 2012, violent unrests erupted in the agricultural community of De Doorns in the Western Cape. The riots were about the exploitation of farm workers and particularly with regard to the low wages that farmers paid their workers. The Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU) representative Tony Ehrenreich warned that 'the ill treatment and under-payment of workers by some farmers must stop or we will see a Marikana (massacre) in De Doorns,'[21] adding that 'the land war will be coming soon.'[22] Three people were killed[23] and more than 180 people were arrested for public violence.[24] At least 30 hectares of vineyards were left in flames. [25]

However, Western Cape Premier Helen Zille believed that the riots were politicised,[26] given that the Western Cape was the only province not governed by the ruling ANC, but by the opposing DA, and that the ANC and its alliance partners (including COSATU) had embarked on a campaign to make the Western Cape 'ungovernable'.[27] The notion that the riots were sparked in support of a political cause was strengthened when AfriForum sent representatives to De Doorns during the riots to investigate what the causes were, only to find that many of the rioters were not even farm workers or local residents.

The then Minister of Labour Mildred Oliphant intervened, increasing the minimum wage from R69 ($5,52) per day to R105 ($8,40) per day. However, this major hike in the minimum wage (52%) forced farmers to look for less labour-intensive methods of farming, resulting in a slashing of the workforce. The 3,5% decline in employment was reported to be minimal,[28] although there were farms where it had a major impact. One

farm near Worcester went from 96 employees to only 25 in the season following the wage increase.[29]

A call for the revival of the strike was made a year thereafter, only to be met with fierce opposition from many workers in the area.[30]

However, the De Doorns unrests created a lasting impression that farmers were severely exploiting and even oppressing their workers.

When thousands of people dressed in black to protest the scourge of farm murders in October 2017, the ANC's military wing, Umkhonto we Sizwe (MK), responded that they would rather march to highlight the plight of black farm workers.[31] Early in 2018, COSATU alleged that white farmers were 'on a rampage killing black vulnerable workers'.[32] Exploitation of workers was said to occur in a variety of ways, including low wages, withheld benefits, poor housing, labour malpractices and violence committed against workers.

It has been pointed out that many in the South African government argue that farm attacks are mostly a result of these factors, suggesting that farm attacks should not be prioritised and that it would stop if only farmers were to stop exploiting their workers.

In the aftermath of the De Doorns riots, the International Labour Organization (ILO) embarked on an investigation into the realities of working conditions on South Africa's farms. What the ILO found was that, with the exception of isolated cases, these claims were mostly unjustified.

WAGES

It was found that most farmers complied with minimum wage legislation, even before the De Doorns riots, and that these riots had to do with wages that were said to be too low, despite the fact that most farmers complied with the minimum wage.[33] Wages of farm workers were found to be under-reported by the workers by between 1% and 14%.[34] The ILO warned that, while wages reported by workers can be taken as an indicator, more caution had to be displayed when assessing whether workers were paid more or less than the minimum wage.[35] Despite the fact that only about 37% of farm workers indicated that they knew their rights,[36] there was also a fairly high compliance by farmers regarding the granting of key rights to their workers.[37]

BENEFITS

As far as benefits are concerned, the ILO found that a wide range of benefits was offered to farm workers in the Western Cape. Of the permanent farm workers, 100% had transport to work, 97% had transport to social events and 82% had transport to health services. Eighty-seven per cent of farm workers had free housing, 86% had free work clothes, 72% had vegetable gardens, 64% had access to a crèche, while 64% were on a funeral fund, 43% had subsidised electricity and 8% got electricity for free. Forty-three per cent had provident funds, 36% had access to on-farm medical facilities, 32% received contributions to medical costs, 22% received free food, 22% received food rations, 22% had access to grazing land and 8% had access to aftercare facilities.[38]

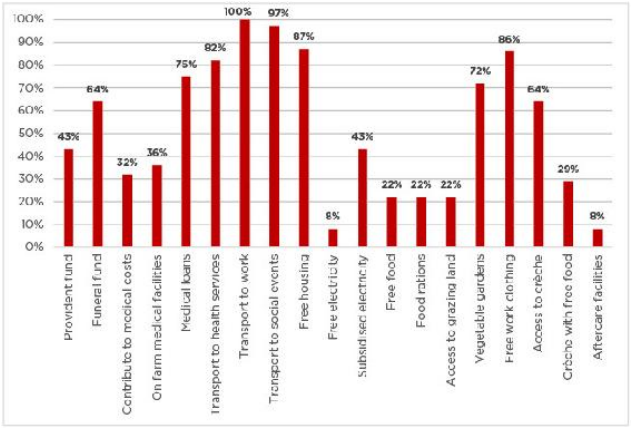

Figure 18: Benefits to permanent farm workers in the Western Cape[39]

HOUSING

With regard to housing, it was found that the houses of workers who lived on Western Cape farms were considerably better than those of workers who resided elsewhere. Of the on-farm houses, 77% were built with bricks and mortar, as opposed to 11% elsewhere. Ninety-six per cent of the on-farm houses had a bath or shower in the house, which was available to only 44% of houses of farm workers who lived elsewhere. Eighty-eight per cent of on-farm houses had separate kitchens, compared to 72% of off-farm houses. Also, 24% of houses provided on farms were reported to have roof leaks, as opposed to 39% of houses elsewhere.[40]

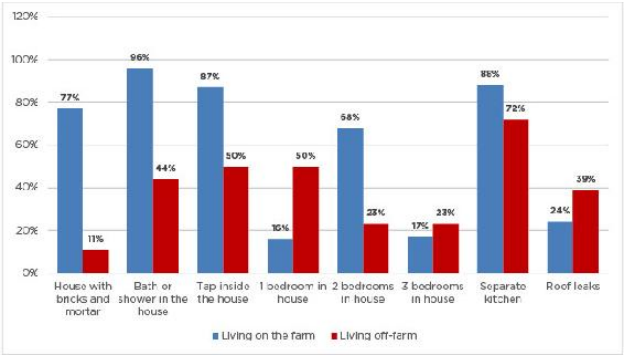

Figure 19: Comparing: on-farm houses and off-farm houses in the Western Cape[41]

EVICTIONS

It is also frequently stated that evictions of farm workers is a major problem. Of course evictions per se are not illegal, as long as the necessary procedures are followed. It turns out, however, that finding credible information on evictions proves to be extremely difficult, according to the ILO, mostly because government authorities (municipalities in particular) seldom have records of evictions readily available. 'More often than not a special search … had to be done before statistics were made available,' write researchers Margareet Visser and Stuart Ferrer. 'The Land Claims Court is supposed to be the main source of information on legal evictions, but in spite of numerous requests to an officer of that court, no information on evictions was received by the researchers. Where statistics were made available by different levels of government, the information provided was often conflicting, making it very difficult to get a real sense of the problem. The Department of Rural Development and Land Reform (DRDLR) acknowledges that one of their biggest challenges is obtaining reliable statistics on eviction.'[42]

LABOUR DISPUTES AND UNIONS

It was also found that the majority of farm workers directly take up their issues with management, rather than to workers' committees or unions.[43] Seventy-one per cent of workers interviewed in the Western Cape felt that management had responded to their complaints.[44] Only about 14% of permanent workers belonged to a union.[45] The most common answer as to why workers were not part of a union was that they were not interested in joining a union.[46] Reasons for lack of interest in joining a union were that they were happy on the farm; that they did not feel a union could add much

to their lives; that they felt management could be approached about problems and complied with all labour legislation; and that they felt that unions soured labour relationships on the farm.[47] Ninety-four per cent of respondents said that they had never been stopped or prevented from joining a union,[48] and 18% of permanent workers indicated that they had participated in a strike in the past.[49]

GOVERNMENT INTERVENTIONS

The greatest irony is that, while farmers in general have put in a lot of effort to improve the working conditions of their workers, similar attempts by the government have failed dramatically. A national summit hosted by the Department of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries (DAFF), entitled 'Towards a better life for vulnerable workers in farms, forestry and fisheries', concluded with 45 resolutions of what the government should do to ensure a better life for farm workers. Organising and hosting the national summit alone cost R14 million ($1,12 million). The Portfolio Committee on Rural Development and Land Reform remarked two years later that nothing substantial had been achieved in the implementation of the summit resolutions. Researchers from the ILO inquired about the progress with the implementation of the resolutions, but were not allowed an interview to discuss the matter with the DAFF, nor was any information provided to them.[50]

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‘They asked me if people were coming. I knew no one was coming, but I told them that people were coming at 07:00.’ Robert was burned on his feet, legs and stomach and stabbed in the shoulders, hands and neck. A plastic bag was then pulled over his head.

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CHAPTER 14

Kill the Boer, kill the farmer

On 5 June 2012, two attackers approached a smallholding in Mnandi, just outside Centurion in Gauteng. As Arina Muller (29) came home from the gym that evening, they presumably slipped onto the property as she entered. As she exited her vehicle, she saw the two men and immediately screamed. She was shot through the chest and left to die in her mother's arms while the attackers fled the scene. Nothing was stolen.[1] Muller's murder had a big impact on me personally. Not only did it happen just a few kilometres from where I was living, but Muller was also the sister of a good friend of mine. I knew her too. Furthermore, she was murdered on the same day on which I became a father. After the birth of my son, I sent SMSs out to all my friends to inform them that I had just become a father and that our son was healthy. I received a reply from one of my friends: 'Johannes' sister was murdered today.'

Earlier that day and just a few kilometres from the smallholding where Arina Muller was murdered, the African National Congress Youth League (ANCYL) had been hosting a conference on the issue of land reform. Ronald Lamola, President of the ANCYL at the time, addressed the media with the following words:

> I am just giving a warning to white South Africans: They must voluntarily bring back the land, and voluntarily bring back the mineral resources … there will be a moment when these service-delivery protestors will invade the land of Mr Van Tonder and Mr Van der Merwe and we can no longer be able to guarantee the continued safety of Mr Van der Merwe.[2]

These words were uttered in the presence of a large variety of media and broadcasters and they were consequently also replayed on TV networks throughout the day. From what was said, it was clear that Lamola was calling for white people to voluntarily surrender their alleged wealth and interests in land and mineral resources. The reference to two prominent Afrikaner surnames, namely Van Tonder and Van der Merwe, created a reasonable impression that Afrikaners or Afrikaans-speaking white South Africans were particularly threatened by his statement. Afrikaners are purported to be the legitimate targets for the anger and aggression of protestors. It was also made clear that, should Afrikaners fail or be

unwilling to surrender their wealth (and their land in particular), service-delivery protests would progress towards land invasions, that violence towards Afrikaners who own land is implied and that the ANCYL claims not to be able to guarantee their safety.[3]

This is of course a vile threat.

After it became known that AfriForum and Transvaal Agricultural Union of South Africa (TAU SA) had announced their intention to take legal action against Lamola, the ANCYL lashed back, stating that they stood behind their President. The ANCYL went even further:

> Such a precautionary note raising the hopeless plight of our people, blacks in general and Africans in particular, can only be construed as an incitement to violence … by those hell-bent to protect white minority privilege at the expense of the black majority.[4]

The only way to achieve economic freedom, the League said, was through 'urgent, unapologetic and radical land redistribution'.[5] Once again violence was implied, since the mere owning of land by white people was said to be interpreted by black people (presumably only black people who supported the ANCYL) as an incitement for them to inflict violence upon white landowners.

Shortly before this, Lamola said in Durban that '[w]e need an act as forceful as a war to bring it [the land] back to the Africans',[6] and shortly thereafter Magdalene Moonsamy, the then spokesperson of the ANCYL, warned the country to prepare for the 'fight of their lives'.[7]

In referring to the murder of Muller a few hours later and a few kilometres away from where Lamola uttered these words, it is not to say that Lamola's threat was an essential condition to the murder of Muller, as there is no evidence of this. However, the point is that a culture of violence and a political climate in which violence towards white people – Afrikaners or white farmers in particular – is romanticised and in many cases even actively encouraged up to the highest levels of the ruling African National Congress (ANC), the South African government and certain opposition parties. Although a direct link between Lamola's hate speech and the murder of Muller on a smallholding cannot be proven, it should be noted that, in the month following Lamola's hate speech, seven farm murders took

place. If you compare that to the average of 2012 (4,4 farm murders per month), it amounts to an upwards variance of 60%.[8]

A study by AfriForum found that it is not uncommon for farm murders to increase in the months following on incidents of hate speech that received substantial coverage in the media.[9] In the month that followed on former President Jacob Zuma's singing of 'Shoot the Boer' (as discussed in Chapter 11), for example,16 farm attacks took place, during which six people were murdered.

The effect of this was that farm attacks in the month that followed were 11% higher and farm murders were 36% higher than the average for 2012.[10] Upon analysing five high-profile incidents of hate speech directed at white farmers, we discovered an average increase of 74,8% in farm murders in the months that followed on these incidents.[11]

KILL THE BOER, KILL THE FARMER

From the ANC's legal entry into politics in 1990 until the inauguration of Nelson Mandela as President of South Africa, its youth wing (the ANCYL) was led by a militant man named Peter Mokaba. Mokaba was then sworn in as a Deputy Minister in Mandela's Cabinet. Although described as 'a man of considerable intelligence, charisma and courage,'[12] Mokaba was always a deeply controversial figure.

Mokaba was particularly known for popularising the song 'Kill the Boer, kill the farmer'.[13] (The word 'song' is used here, although this particular 'song' is actually a chant.)

On 17 April 1993, Mokaba addressed a mass rally in Khayelitsha, just outside Cape Town in the Western Cape, where he led the crowd in chanting: 'Kill the Boer, kill the farmer!'[14] The slogan *Bulula Amabhunu* (English: Kill the Boers) was used.[15] The song had been a popular song of the ANC and its military wing, Umkhonto we Sizwe (MK), in its armed struggle against the white minority government. Despite severe criticism, Mokaba persisted, going even further at a rally at Soshanguve Technikon near Pretoria, Gauteng on 21 April of that same year: 'Let me make it clear. What I said was, " Kill the farmer, kill the Boer. Shoot to kill." This is our culture; this is our tradition. Those who disagree can go to hell.'[16]

Mokaba then urged the students to ‘prepare for war’.[17] He later rephrased, saying that he did not mean for these comments to be taken literally.[18]

On 22 August 1992, Godfrey Frederick Lanz Heuer was murdered in front of his wife, Amy, on their farm near Vryheid in KwaZulu-Natal. The killer was a 28-year-old man named Ntuthuko Chuene. A Rossi Special firearm, ammunition and a suitcase containing about R1 000 ($80) in cash, a pocket calculator and books were also stolen from the scene. Chuene was convicted of murder and sentenced to life imprisonment.

He would later testify to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) that the only reason he had committed that murder was because he had been influenced by the ANC’s chanting of ‘Kill the Boer, kill the farmer’. He continued: ‘I could have killed any other white man I came across at that time. My frustrations were directed to white men because they had what we did not have.’[19]

The song was sung at various public gatherings, including a public gathering of the ANCYL in Kimberley in the Northern Cape in June 2002, at the funeral of Chris Hani in 1993[20] and eventually also the funeral of Peter Mokaba in 2002.[21] In 2011, during the Shoot the Boer case (see Chapter 15), Julius Malema, the then President of the ANCYL, testified that he had sung the song with Mokaba when he was younger and that he had no problem with it.[22]

The Freedom Front Plus (FF Plus) party had filed a complaint with the South African Human Rights Commission (SAHRC), requesting that the song in question be declared hate speech. The SAHRC found that they could not find any reason to categorise the song under section 16(2) of the South African Constitution and therefore that it was not hate speech. In other words, what the Commission found was that the chanting of the words ‘Kill the Boer, kill the farmer’, combined with angry protestors imitating the sound of a machine gun, within the context of farm murders and Mokaba’s statement that he actually meant ‘shoot to kill’ did not amount to any of the following (as per section 16(2) of the Constitution):

- Propaganda for war;

- Incitement of imminent violence; or
- Advocacy of hatred that is based on race, ethnicity, gender or religion, and that constitutes incitement to cause harm.[23]

The finding was of course ridiculous. The result was a severe breach of minority communities' faith in the objectivity of the SAHRC. The matter was taken on appeal and heard by a different panel.

On appeal, the SAHRC found that calling for the killing of people because they belong to a particular community or race must amount to the advocacy of hatred, unless the context clearly indicates otherwise.[24] With reference to the words 'incitement to cause harm' in section 16(2) of the Constitution, the Commission found that 'harm' must be defined broadly to include psychological, emotional and other harm, but the subsection mentioned then contains its potentially adverse impact by limiting its application to four categories, namely race, ethnicity, gender and religion.[25] An important finding in this matter, which was also hotly debated in the Shoot the Boer case that followed, was the test as to whether expression amounts to hate speech for the purpose of section 16(2) of the Constitution. The Freedom of Expression Institute (FXI) had argued in this matter that the subjective intent of the inciter (eg. Mokaba) must be shown to have influenced the incitee (eg. an ANC supporter) to commit an offence. The Commission found that:

> It is the advocacy of hatred that must constitute the incitement to cause harm. The focus must be on whether the expression itself causes or is likely to cause harm and not on the subjective intention of the person articulating it.[26]

The argument of the FXI was thus rejected. In other words, in determining whether a particular statement amounts to hate speech, the question lies not in what caused the statement or what the intention of the person making the statement was. What is more important is the consequence of the statement. In looking at the consequence, it is not necessary to prove that the statement led to actual physical harm, such as that any person was attacked.

The Commission found that:

> The slogan, under consideration in this appeal, was chanted at high profile functions organised by the African National Congress, the ruling party in this country. These events and the chanting of the

> slogans were widely publicised. There can be no doubt that the slogan, given its content, its history and the context in which it was chanted, would harm the sense of well-being, contribute directly to a feeling of marginalisation, and adversely affect the dignity of Afrikaners.[27]

The Commission continued:

> The slogan says to them that they are still the enemy of the majority of the people of this country. It contributes to the alienation of the target community and conveys a particularly divisive message to the majority community that the target community is less deserving of respect and dignity.[28]

On that day, 'Kill the Boer, kill the farmer' was found to be hate speech.[29]

Since then, the ANC leadership has largely refrained from singing the song at public gatherings, although the song was and is still regularly sung by ANC supporters.[30]

In the month following on 17 April 1993 – the first public chanting of 'Kill the Boer, kill the farmer', which was widely reported in the media – 19 farm attacks took place, during which 15 people were murdered. Compared to the monthly averages for that year, an upwards variance of 41% in farm attacks and 135% in farm murders was evident.

	TOTAL FOR THE YEAR	MONTHLY AVERAGE	MONTH AFTER 'KILL THE BOER, KILL THE FARMER'	VARIANCE
FARM MURDERS	77	6,4	15	135% increase
FARM ATTACKS	161	13,5	19	41% increase

Table 11: Variance in farm attacks and murders after Peter Mokaba's chanting of 'Kill the Boer, kill the farmer'[31]

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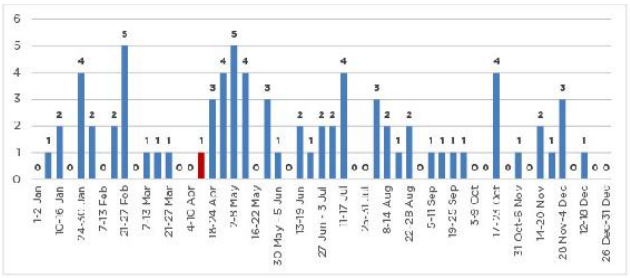
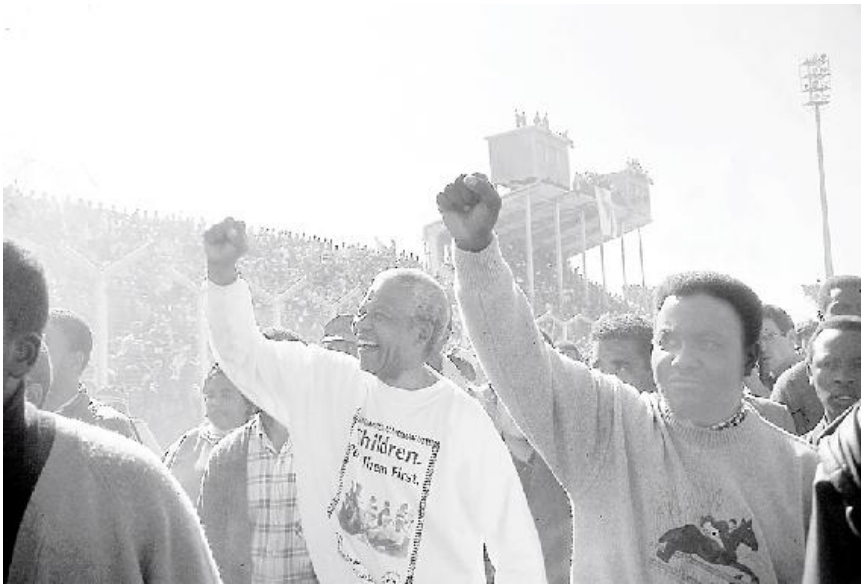


Figure 20: Farm murders per week during 1993 (The week in which Peter Mokaba publicly started chanting 'Kill the Boer, kill the Farmer' is indicated in red.)[32]



Former President Nelson Mandela with Peter Mokaba, former President of the ANC Youth League. Mokaba popularised the song 'Kill the Boer, kill the farmer'. The song was later declared to be hate speech by the South African Human Rights Commission.

Photo: Gallo Images/Sunday Times

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Robert managed to bite a hole in the bag, however, allowing him to breathe. They made him sit in the double-cab bakkie, behind the driver's seat. He heard a thump in the back and realised that they had just thrown Susan into the back of the bakkie. 'It was like they dropped a bag of potatoes,' recalls Robert.

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CHAPTER 15

Shoot the Boer

One young member of the African National Congress Youth League (ANCYL) who was particularly inspired by the words and actions of the League's President Peter Mokaba was an unknown fellow called Julius Sello Malema. In 2008, several years after Mokaba's death, Malema was also elected President of the ANCYL. Malema describes himself as a product of Winnie Madikizela-Mandela and Peter Mokaba,[1] both figures known for their radical views and deeds. Madikizela-Mandela claimed to have groomed Malema from before he became President of the ANCYL and referred to him as her 'product'.[2] Other than for facing corruption charges, Madikizela-Mandela was also known for her involvement with the murder of the 14-year-old Stompie Seipei[3] and her public encouragement of the use of necklacing as a method of murder.[4]

The 'necklace' was a method often used by members of the African National Congress (ANC) during the 1980s to execute members of rival black organisations or people who had been accused of being spies for the government. Typically, the victim's hands would be tied behind his back, often with wire, after which a rubber tyre filled with petrol would be pulled over the victim's head, around the victim's body. A match would then be struck to set the petrol-filled tyre on fire. The victims were then usually kicked and stoned by a cheering mob, while burning to death.

However, Malema's self-ascribed role model in life is Peter Mokaba.[5] Malema once described how he had gone to Mokaba's grave to ask for his blessing before the conference where he (Malema) was elected President of the ANCYL and how he had gone back to his grave after the conference to 'report back' on his election as such.[6]

THE RISE OF THE MALEMAPHILES

Malema took over the ANCYL presidency from Fikile Mbalula, under whose leadership the ANCYL had become known for being 'thuggish'.[7] The ANCYL had always been controversial and more aggressive than its parent organisation, but it was clearly reaching new levels of extremity.

It was a time when Jacob Zuma, aspiring to become President of South Africa, was facing prosecution for several hundred charges of corruption. From the very start of his term as ANCYL President, Malema took the

‘thuggishness’ to new heights when he said that he (Malema) and the ANCYL were prepared not only to die for Zuma as his predecessor had said, but even to ‘take up arms and kill for Zuma’.[8] Former President Kgalema Motlanthe, (Deputy President of the ANC at that time), responded angrily: ‘We have had so much killing and violence and for someone at this point to talk about killing! It is one thing if you are prepared to die and lay your life down, but to kill? What do you mean?’ He continued: ‘They started by throwing water bottles and next time it will be hand grenades. That is how it starts.’[9]

Motlanthe’s criticism was almost the opposite to that of Zuma, who simply said that Malema had explained what he meant. Malema merely said that he would never apologise for what he had said.[10]

Leadership in the ANC, but particularly the ANCYL, has reached the point where those who are not radical are sidelined completely. This militancy is directed against ‘white monopoly capital’ and in favour of aggressive ‘redistribution’ of land, particularly agricultural land.

Malema had started making name for himself within the ANC structures back in 2003 when Madikizela-Mandela was found guilty on 68 charges of fraud and theft. Malema responded that he would paralyse the country if she went to jail. ‘The prosecutor is white, the magistrate is also white and the court buildings also represent the “Boer” regime, however the accused is a black woman from a township called Soweto and it does not come as a surprise she was found guilty,’ he said.[11]

In 2009, he called Helen Zille, the then leader of the opposition party, a ‘racist little girl’ who ‘must remember that Zuma is her boss’.[12] A few months later, he called her a cockroach.[13] The cockroach comment was particularly striking as it was the same word that was used by the Hutu of Rwanda to dehumanise the Tutsi minority as they were preparing for genocide.[14]

Motlanthe distanced himself from Malema’s statement again, repudiating the cockroach statement and stating that it was ‘bad manners’,[15] but the ANC refrained from taking disciplinary action.

On 8 May 2011, Malema and Zuma were addressing an election rally of about 3 000 supporters at Kimberley in the Northern Cape. With Zuma

sitting on the stage behind him, Malema uttered the words: ‘Once we agree they [white people] stole our land, we can agree that they are criminals and must be treated as such.’[16]

Despite broad condemnation by minority communities, the ANC President never repudiated or even attempted to contextualise what Malema said that day.

THE ECONOMIC FREEDOM FIGHTERS (EFF)

Malema was later expelled from the ANC, not for his attacks on white people, but for his misconduct towards the leadership of the party.[17] He went on to establish the ‘radical, leftist, anti-capitalist and anti-imperialist movement’, the EFF, in July 2013.[18] The first of its ‘cardinal pillars’ declares that South Africa’s land must be expropriated without compensation.[19]

At the launch of the movement, branded banners were displayed with the words: ‘A revolutionary must become a cold killing machine motivated by pure hate.’

Another banner read: ‘Honeymoon is over for white people in South Africa.’ The EFF responded to criticism saying that the banners were not official. [20]

Criminal charges were filed against Malema after he encouraged black people to illegally invade the land of white farmers. Appearing before the Magistrate in Newcastle on 7 November 2016, Malema defended his position:

> We are not calling for the slaughter of white people, at least for now … The rightful owners of the land are black people. No white person is a rightful owner of the land here in SA and the whole of the African continent.[21]

Responding to criticism about his speech, Malema elaborated after appearing in court in Bloemfontein. Several extracts of his speech are published here:

- My wish is to see [the last white President of South Africa, [FW] De Klerk suffering, for a very long time, for the crimes they committed

against black people! They were never punished for that!

- When we leave here, you see any beautiful piece of land, you will like it, occupy it! It belongs to you! It is your land! It is the land of your forefathers. It was the land that was taken from us by white people, by force, through genocide! They killed our people!
- We are not talking violence, we are not promoting violence, but I cannot guarantee the future. I am not a prophet. I am talking now. We are not carrying any weapons. I will never kill white people. Why should I kill them? I will never revenge for what they did. I am asking politely for the land to be returned. And if they don't return it, I cannot guarantee what will happen.
- Afrikaner boys, the *poppe sal dans*! (English: The dolls will dance. It is an Afrikaans idiom to express that there is going to be trouble.) The EFF is coming for you, boy!
- Just pray, pray to ancestors, pray to [DF] Malan, pray to [Hendrik] Verwoerd, pray and ask them for EFF not to come into power. Because we come into power 'Afrikaner male this side! This is where you belong.'
- We are not scared of Afrikaners! This is not your land! You must know your place, you are visitors here. And the long stay of visitors depends on their conduct. If you continue to misbehave, feeding our people to lions, putting our people who are still alive in the coffins, then you are applying for something else.[22]

As is the case with the ANC's leadership, Malema's hate speech is usually directed at white people in general, but importantly also to a certain cultural ethnic group in particular – the Afrikaners, or Boers. In the month following Malema's speech about white people and Afrikaners in Newcastle, 12 farm murders were committed, as opposed to the monthly average of 6,25 for that year.[23] This constitutes an upward variance of 92% in farm murders.[24]

On 28 February 2018 while speaking at a political gathering in Soweto, Gauteng, Malema reiterated:

> We don't back whites. We don't care about their feelings. They have made us suffer for a very long time. It's our turn now. They must be happy we are not beating them up. They must be happy we are not

calling for genocide. We are exercising our political freedom and we are hurting them the most.

We are exercising political power. It is more hurtful, it is more painful than a gun. It is more painful than a spear. We hurt you and take from you without a drop of blood.[25]

The latter statement was a reference to the EFF's call for the expropriation of white-owned farmland without compensation and the claim that white farmers will or should not resist when their farms are taken from them.

Malema called on his supporters to occupy land 'legally, but by force if necessary.' He explained that it was their right to have land and that it wasn't illegal to occupy something that belonged to you in any case.[26] He added that those who had not yet taken a piece of land for themselves were cowards.[27]

When thousands of South Africans protested against the continued scourge of farm murders on 30 October 2017 (an event which became known as Black Monday), EFF spokesperson, Mbuyiseni Ndlozi responded, labelling the marches against farm murders as an act of racism.

'The EFF has observed with disgust the racist marches that took place yesterday going under the name of Black Monday,' he said. 'These marches proudly promoted anti-back racism by a tiny white minority which seeks to gain public sympathy using apartheid symbols like the apartheid government flag ... The premise of these marches is a full-blown stupidity that there is an orchestrated killing of white farmers by black people. This fear, unfortunately, is part of the persistent colonial settler collective guilt of thinking one day black people will punish whites for their apartheid and colonial crimes. As a result, they withdraw into an apartheid memory with its deep wishes for a whites-only society in Africa,' Ndlozi added.

The party also called on those who demonstrated to leave the country. 'We call on all who took to the streets yesterday, who wish for the return of apartheid and protection under its values to take the next convenient boats and leave our country. The land and farms that they occupy will simply be assumed by other commercial farmers,' Ndlozi said.[28]

SHOOT THE BOER

Since the finding by the South African Human Rights Commission (SAHRC) that 'Kill the Boer, kill the farmer' was hate speech, the ANC

leadership resorted to the singing of other similar songs that simply had different words.

On 9 March 2010, Malema was addressing a crowd of about 250 people at the University of Johannesburg (UJ), when he suddenly burst into song. The song was ‘Dubula iBhunu’ (also referred to as ‘Ayasaba Amagwala’).[29]

In fact, Malema had also sung the song in Polokwane in Limpopo at his birthday party a week before this event – Limpopo is a province in which six farmers were murdered in that month alone.[30] The words of the song were translated by a professional language practitioner at UJ as follows:

> *Ayasaba amagwala* (They are scared, the cowards)
> *Awudubule (i)bhunu* (Shoot the/a Boer)
> *Ziyarobha le zintsha* (They rape, these dogs)[31]

The SAHRC had received ten complaints of hate speech within one day after Malema’s singing of the song on 9 March.[32] AfriForum had also announced that it would take up Malema’s conduct in the Equality Court.[33] Two days after Malema’s singing of ‘Dubula iBhunu’ when Jackson Mthembu, ANC Spokesperson, was arrested for drunk driving, he sang ‘Dubula iBhunu’ while being held in a prison cell. Mthembu continued:

> This song was sung for many years even before Malema was born ... Julius doesn’t even know who’s the writer of the song. He got it from us (the ANC). You must blame the ANC, don’t blame Julius. But when you blame the ANC, then contextualise it.[34]

Moeletsi Mbeki, political commentator and brother of former President Thabo Mbeki, responded, saying that what Malema was doing was nothing more than a call for the slaughter of Afrikaners.[35] Gwede Mantashe, the then Secretary General of the ANC, attacked critics of the song, saying that the song would not be erased from the ANC’s history because of people who were sensitive.[36]

In the meantime, farm attacks were increasing. Within days after Malema’s singing of the song at UJ, at least two farmers were murdered. An unknown number of attackers fired multiple shotgun blasts through the bedroom window of a Potchefstroom farmhouse at around midnight, fatally wounding a sleeping 46-year-old farmer in his back. The attackers did not attempt to break into the farmhouse or steal anything. This attack came one day after five men had overpowered 65-year-old Jan Wheeler in his

bedroom, stabbing him repeatedly before shooting him multiple times. This was the 36th violent farm attack in Limpopo in just over four months.[37]

Meanwhile, a Malema supporter started publishing updates about farm attacks on Malema's Facebook page every few hours. The page had about 12 000 followers at the time. One of the posts stated: '3 000 farmerz dead since '94 … we lost more people than that … we r far from being even … So kill da boer, kill da farmer.'[38]

In another post, the same Malema supporter wrote that eight farmers had been murdered on farms in Limpopo since the beginning of February 2010. When asked about his intentions behind the post, he responded that he had never killed anyone, but that he did not have any sympathy for farmers who were murdered. '[S]ue me for not shedding a tear.'[39]

Another Malema supporter posted on his public page:

> You fucking white pigs. Malema is our leader. He will kill zuma within 6 weeks, look ahead my fellow black people. We will then take our land, and every trespasser, namely white whores, we will rape them and rape them until the last breath is out. White kids will be burned, specially those in pretoria and Vrystaat. Men will be tortured while I take a video clip and spread it on You tube.
>
> Collen, we shall stand together and rape those fuckers. Its true what Malema said, silently we shall kill them… Police will stand together…. OUr leader will lead us to take our land over. Mandela will smile again..
>
> White *naaiers* we are coming for you!!!!!!! Households will be broken into and families will be slaughtered.[40] ('Naaier' is the Afrikaans word for 'fucker'.)

A few days later, the Chairperson of the South African Students Congress (SASCO), the student wing of the ANCYL, shouted 'Dubula iBhunu' during a political debate on the Potchefstroom campus of the North-West University.[41]

The ANC came out in support of Malema, threatening to take legal action against those who campaigned for Malema to stop singing 'Dubula iBhunu' on the basis that these campaigns were putting his life at risk. 'As the ANC, we draw the conclusion that it (the campaign) is meant to incite, instigate and mobilise some people to harm and even lead to the execution of the

ANCYL President,' said Ishmael Mnisi, ANC spokesperson.[42] 'Whoever has a problem with that song, has a problem with the Struggle,' added Mthembu.[43]

By 20 March 2010, the SAHRC confirmed that it had received 109 complaints about Malema's singing of 'Dubula iBhunu'. The Commission said, however, that it was not prepared to investigate the matter, given the fact that a complaint had been lodged against Malema at the Equality Court. The Commission was severely criticised for this.[44]

On 14 March that same year, I participated in a live televised debate on the matter with Floyd Shivambu, the ANCYL's Spokesperson (now a Member of Parliament (MP) for the EFF). Shivambu argued that it was not possible to accuse a black person of racism, since it was not possible for a black person to be racist: 'Black people can be despondent and obviously be developing attitude on whatever white people do, but they can never be racist.'[45]

After the debate, Shivambu said to me that he would like to see 'white people' marching to Luthuli House (the ANC's headquarters) to express their disapproval about the situation. In his view, it would demonstrate that the tables had turned in South Africa and that blacks were now truly in power. I responded that we had already decided to protest on the matter and that he would be receiving correspondence from me shortly.

We gave notice to the Johannesburg Metro Police that we intended organising a public gathering on 19 March 2010. The plan was to gather at Mary Fitzgerald Square in Johannesburg, from where we were to march to Luthuli House, where the offices of the ANCYL were also based, to deliver a memorandum of grievance to Malema. Our argument was that farm murders were a real phenomenon and that the singing of a song about killing white farmers at a political gathering was conducive to a climate in which violence towards farmers was condoned or romanticised.

On 17 March (two days before the intended protest gathering) Shivambu requested the leadership of AfriForum Youth to meet them on the following day. During the meeting, Malema insisted that we withdraw the hate speech charges that had by that time already been filed with the Equality Court. I responded that we would do so if Malema undertook to apologise for

singing the song and to refrain from singing it in future. ‘I would never do that!’ he responded angrily.

Malema then explained his singing of the song as follows: He had been singing the song since he was nine years old. It was intended to incite and encourage members of Umkhonto we Sizwe (MK) to take up arms against the white minority government. He had sung it as a small boy while carrying equipment and weapons in furtherance of the Struggle. There were also many other songs in which violence towards the so-called *ama’bhulu* (English: Boers) was encouraged. Shivambu explained to me that the word in question did not particularly refer to farmers, but to Afrikaners in general and that the word (which refers to Afrikaners or Boers) is also used to symbolise the evil of white oppression and the exploitation of black people in South Africa. It was clear that their hatred was directed at a particular cultural ethnic group – the Boers.

Not all whites are oppressors, Malema explained, referring to the communist leader Jeremy Cronin as an exception. Institutional apartheid may be dead, said Malema, but apartheid was still a reality and therefore he would continue to sing the song. ‘We have defeated [institutional] apartheid and we will defeat you!’ he said, leaning forward, pointing at me with his finger. He accused AfriForum of being an organisation of ‘white monopoly capital’ (which he had frequently stated as the enemy that had to be defeated) and white people of having too much wealth. White people still owned the banks, farms and expensive cars, he said. I pointed out that a wealthy black elite was emerging in South Africa, upon which he challenged me to name one rich black man. ‘Well, you,’ I said, pointing to the three of them (Malema’s comrade, Steven Ngubeni was the CEO of the National Youth Development Agency (NYDA) at the time, for which he earned a salary of more than R2 million (about $160 000) per year).[46] They burst out laughing simultaneously, as if they had anticipated that I would refer to their wealth and had planned their response beforehand. The insinuation was false and I (Ernst) was a victim of the media and its lies, said Malema. ‘If that is so, what about Tokyo Sexwale and Cyril Ramaphosa?’ I asked. Malema responded, saying that these men were very poor. ‘They owe the bank money and white people own the bank,’ said Malema. If the court ordered him to stop singing the song, he would encourage his supporters to continue singing it, so that he could dance to

the rhythm of the song, he said. He would then, in addition, sing other songs in which violence towards the Boers is encouraged.

I responded that we were wasting each other's time and that we would see them the following day when we delivered our memorandum. Malema's anger visibly flared up, with him swinging his finger in our faces again. 'If you come to Luthuli House tomorrow, what happened to the Inkatha Freedom Party (IFP) when they came to Shell House (as the ANC's headquarters was formerly known), is going to happen to you!' I asked him to clarify what he meant, to which he responded: 'Come and see.' He was of course referring to the Shell House Massacre of 28 March 1994, in which 19 members of the IFP were shot dead by members of the ANC when they protested in front of the ANC headquarters.[47] This was a chilling and horrible threat.[48]

The threat worked to an extent. We discussed the matter and decided to go ahead with the gathering in Mary Fitzgerald Square, but not to continue with the march to Luthuli House, because we did not want to test Malema's integrity at the risk of the people who came to the gathering that day to express their concerns.

Instead, we gathered at Mary Fitzgerald Square as planned and continued with the proceedings there. A small contingency then drove to Luthuli House, equipped with a memorandum and a list containing the names of about 1 600 farmers who had been murdered in recent years. Upon our arrival, we found a barricade of armed South African Police Service (SAPS) officers, joined by a senior official of Luthuli House, who declined to give us his name. We informed them that we were there legally as we had complied with all the legal prerequisites to be there and requested to present our memorandum and the list to the leadership of the ANCYL. They refused to call them, as we expected. We then requested to deliver the documents at the reception desk, but we were refused permission to do so as well. When it became clear that they had been given instructions to make sure that the memorandum was not presented to anyone, AfriForum's CEO, Kallie Kriel, took the documents and attempted to walk past the police officers into the building. He was immediately pushed out. Visibly angry, Kriel said: 'You tell Julius we'll see him in court. What is in here, he's going to get in court, because you didn't want to take the documents.'

Kriel then dropped the documents over the police officers' heads, only to find that the documents were thrown out again. The list containing the names of murdered farmers was not bound, but kept in a folder. As a result, when it was thrown out, all the pages containing the names of the murdered farmers blew into the air, with the pages landing on the sidewalk and in the street. The ANC members who were present stomped on the sheets of paper, kicked them around in the street, crumpled them up and tore them to pieces. Through the scramble, I explained to them that they were literally stepping on the names of murdered farmers, to no avail. Pictures of the torn and crumpled pieces of paper were on the front pages of newspapers the following day[49] and a video of the events was published on YouTube.[50]

Shortly thereafter, AfriForum obtained an interim interdict prohibiting Malema from continuing to sing the song until the matter had been heard in the Equality Court. Malema then went to Zimbabwe to 'cement ties' with President Robert Mugabe and sang the song there. He told reporters that the order had been granted by an untransformed judicial system, which was the same one that had been operating during the apartheid system and that the judiciary had been defeated by the Struggle. He added that he was prepared to go to jail for singing the song.[51] 'This is war,' Malema said:

> Arm yourself now, like you did in the past giving us AK-47s to go and fight the regime. But today the Struggle is different. You are arming us to prepare ourselves for another confrontation. Because the Struggle today is a struggle for economic emancipation. And we shall overcome.[52]

Malema praised Mugabe and the Zimbabwean government for its role in expropriating land from white landowners.

> In South Africa, we are just starting … Here in Zimbabwe you are already very far. The land question has been addressed. We are very happy that today you can account for more than 300 000 new farmers, against the 4 000 who used to dominate agriculture. We hear you are now going straight to the mines. That's what we are going to be doing in South Africa.[53]

The case of hate speech against Malema was heard in April 2011. The ANC had sent their big leaguers to attend the proceedings, including Madikizela-Mandela, ex-wife of former President Nelson Mandela, Mantashe, the then

Secretary General of the ANC, and several members of the ANC's National Executive Committee.

The ANC had jumped in to join Malema as the second respondent in the matter, arguing that they did have a right to sing about how white people were racist dogs that had to be shot. Of course, the argument was not that they actually wanted to embark on some kind of white genocide, but rather that the song had been sung during the 1980s in defiance against apartheid and that, if the song was sung in the 21st century, it was sung simply to commemorate the Struggle against apartheid. However, Malema diverted from this argument, stating that apartheid and the Struggle was not over and that he was singing the song to entice ANC members to continue with the Struggle.

In cross-examination, Malema was asked why he was convinced that it was inappropriate to sing 'Kill the Boer, kill the farmer,' but acceptable to sing 'Dubula iBhunu'. His response was:

> When we were discouraged to sing 'Kill the Boer, kill the farmer', the explanation was that 'the farmer' is directed at a particular group of people. And what is worse is that farmers are not only whites. You are going to even kill people who are part of your struggle if you want to kill farmers, so you are actually pushing away the potential supporters of your struggle when you say 'kill the farmer'.[54]

'Is that seriously your answer?' Martin Brassey, SC, advocate for AfriForum, asked Malema. 'Yes, that is my answer!' he said angrily. Brassey then concluded that Malema believed that killing white people was not as bad as killing his own supporters.[55] In fact, Malema had clearly indicated that the target was not merely white people, but a particular cultural ethnic group.

In his judgment, Judge Colin Lamont found that minority groups are particularly vulnerable. It is precisely the individuals who are members of such minorities who are vulnerable to discriminatory treatment and who in a very special sense must look to the Bill of Rights for protection.[56] The song was found to constitute hate speech.[57]

THE MURDER OF EUGENE TERRE'BLANCHE

On 3 April 2010, the same afternoon that Malema was singing 'Dubula iBhunu' in Zimbabwe, an event took place in South Africa that shocked the

entire country: Eugene Terre'Blanche (69), notorious leader of the Afrikaner fringe group the Afrikaner Weerstandsbeweging (AWB) (English: Afrikaner Resistance Movement), was beaten to death with pipes and pangas (machetes) on his farm outside Ventersdorp in the North West province.[58]

He had allegedly been involved in an argument with two employees. His mutilated body was found on his bed, along with a panga and a *knobkierie* (a traditional weapon, akin to a club). 'He was hacked to death while he was taking a nap,' a family friend informed the media.[59]

Malema responded: 'We are unshaken. Nobody, including the right-wingers, can intimidate us in that country. We have more important issues to concentrate on than killing an individual … I'm not going to be scared of Boers – I've fought them many times before. If they want to fight me, they are welcome.'[60]

Helen Zille, Democratic Alliance (DA) leader at the time, called on political leaders to reject hate speech such as songs that include the lyrics 'kill the Boer'. 'The singing of songs such as "Kill the Boer" creates a climate in which violence is seen as an appropriate response to problems, whether personal or collective,' she said.[61]

Two people were arrested for the murder of Terre'Blanche soon thereafter; one 29 years old, the other 15. The murderers were hailed as heroes by the local community for their roles in the killing of Terre'Blanche. Racial friction reached an all-time high during the trial of the suspects.[62] Placards outside the court included statements such as 'Rest in hell'. This particular protestor also waved a white baby doll with a sign around it saying 'Sorry Martie' (referring to Terre'Blanche's widow).[63] Many feared that the killing might trigger political violence, dividing the country along racial lines.[64]

Some people began to fear that a process of ethnic cleansing or genocide of Afrikaners was on the way and Malema was described as 'an accessory to the wiping out of farmers in South Africa'.[65] The Institute of Race Relations (IRR) stated that Malema and the ANC were reinforcing the perception that commercial farmers were under siege.[66]

At the court proceedings, hundreds of people gathered in support of those on trial for Terre'Blanche's murder. Terre'Blanche supporters waved the old South African flag, carried posters with slogans such as 'Die Boere is hier om te bly' (English: The Boers are here to stay)[67] and called on Malema to refrain from singing liberation songs believed to encourage farm murders.[68] The crowd in support of the killers, on the other hand, was whistling and ululating in support of the murder of Terre'Blanche.[69] 'We are celebrating the death of a man who has abused us so much,' shouted one woman.[70] When one of the attackers walked out of the court, the crowd started chanting: 'Viva!'[71] As the police drove off with the attackers, the crowd chanted: 'Hero! Hero!'[72]

Similar protests occurred when the killers were sentenced to life in prison.[73]

Malema came out in strong support of the protestors who supported the accused murderers of Terre'Blanche:

> Those people who went to Ventersdorp, they must be saluted. Those are real defenders of the revolution ... They must be saluted for standing up for their own country, for who they are at a time when all of us were scared to provide leadership. Our masses rose to the occasion and said: 'This is our land.'[74]

Malema added that he did not condone murder, but that the killing of Terre'Blanche should teach white people a lesson about what will happen to them if they were to oppress black people.[75]

'SHOOT TO KILL THE BOERE'

In January 2018, during an EFF riot against the use of Afrikaans as medium of instruction in schools serving the Afrikaans community, members of the EFF broke into song:

> One of you, you must die.
> Shoot to kill the Boere
> White man, you must die.
> Voertsek white man, voertsek![76]

(Voertsek is a South African expression that can be translated as 'sod off' or 'be off'.)

AfriForum sent an attorney's letter to the leadership of the EFF, asking the organisation to distance itself from this song.[77] EFF Spokesperson Mbuyiseni Ndlozi praised the behaviour of these members and stated in the media that they would never apologise for singing the song. AfriForum consequently filed charges of hate speech against the EFF in February 2018. The matter has yet to be heard by the Equality Court.[78]

Various posters that contained hate speech, were also displayed at the rally, including one with the words 'Please Zuma, give us the guns to defend our democracy. One bullet, one Boerekind' (English: one Boer child).[79]

JUNE 2010 – THE MONTH FARM ATTACKS STOPPED

In the month that followed on Malema's singing of 'Shoot the Boer' in March 2010, 18 farm attacks took place, during which eight people were murdered, as is indicated in Figure 21.[80] Compared to the monthly averages for 2010, it amounted to an 88% upwards variance in farm attacks and a 51% upwards variance in farm murders.

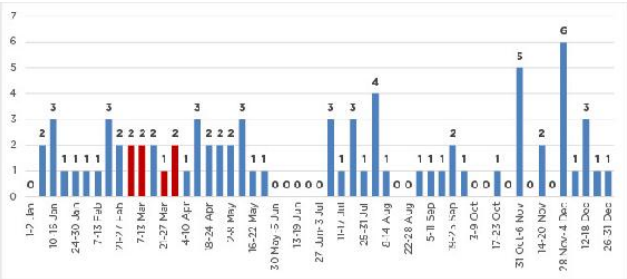

Figure 21: Farm murders per week during 2010 (The weeks in which Malema sang 'Shoot the Boer' are all indicated in red.)[81]

What is particularly interesting about the year 2010 is that not a single farm murder took place during South Africa's hosting of the FIFA World Cup in June that year – an event that was organised and packaged by the South African government to present South Africa to the international community as a fantastic tourism destination. In fact, only one farm attack could be verified during the entire month in which the event took place. This, despite the fact that there had been about two farm attacks per day on average over the previous 18 years.

An abrupt suspension of farm attacks as decisive as was evident during the 2010 FIFA World Cup has never happened since 1990. What is more peculiar is that this followed immediately on a very clear increase in farm

attacks and farm murders and that the murders continued in even higher numbers immediately after the conclusion of the event. It is reasonable to ask what sort of power is required to bring about a nationwide cessation of farm attacks of this magnitude. Where is the tap that can be closed, as was evidently done during the FIFA World Cup? And what should be done to close it?

These questions remain unanswered.

Former President of the ANC Youth League Julius Malema when he sang 'Dubula iBhunu' (Shoot the Boer) at a political rally in 2010. Malema would later establish his own political party called the Economic Freedom Fighters (EFF).

Photo: Gallo Images/Foto24/Felix Dlangamandla

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‘When they threw her in the back of the car, I was sitting already in the back seat and it was like a bag of potatoes had been thrown in, because you could feel the thing jerking. Then I heard her moaning. But it wasn’t the same moan. I didn’t realise that they had stuffed a plastic bag down her throat.’

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CHAPTER 16

Media complicity

A nationwide protest against farm murders erupted on 30 October 2017. Tens of thousands of people participated, protesting on highways and at public gatherings across South Africa. The event – known as Black Monday – saw people wearing black in protest against farm murders, calling for the prioritising of these attacks and mourning those who had been murdered. The event was largely sparked by several farm murders that had taken place during October 2017, including that of Philadelphia farmer Mark Fagan (46), Bloemfontein farm manager Kyle Stols (21), and Klapmuts farmer Joubert Conradie (47). The purpose of the event was twofold: Firstly to send a message that the victims of farm murders are still remembered, and secondly that these attacks should be prioritised.

Fagan was shot in the chest while fighting off attackers who tried to kill his 14-year-old daughter. It was her friend's birthday and the Fagans had hosted the birthday on their farm.[1] Stols was shot dead outside the farm's guesthouse. He had bullet wounds in his chest, head and feet. He managed to broadcast an emergency message that he had been attacked to a group of people, but when they arrived, he was already dead.[2] Conradie heard a noise at around 01:00 in the morning, took his firearm and went to investigate. He was shot in the chest by intruders. He ran back to his wife, Marlene, and told her that he had been shot. He died during surgery soon thereafter.[3]

The reaction of the loved ones of these murdered farmers struck a chord with the community at large. Mark Fagan's wife, Jo, spoke to several news outlets about how her husband had died fighting off intruders and saving the lives of his daughter and her friends.[4] Gawie Stols, the brother of Kyle Stols, delivered a heart-breaking message at a press conference hosted by AfriForum.[5] Marlene Conradie allowed the media to produce a video clip of her discussing how she had held her husband in her arms as she told him that she loved him for the last time while he was choking on his own blood, fighting for his life. Their daughter had stood by watching.[6]

One of the biggest triggers that led to the Black Monday protests was a video clip of Conradie's friend, Chris Loubser, sitting on his farm in his *bakkie* (English: pickup truck) speaking into his cellphone. Loubser was visibly fighting back tears as he said the following:

> I feel so powerless and I feel so badly that I want to do something for the country's farmers. If I could do magic, then the whole of Cape Town would have been surrounded this morning by big tractors, so that nobody can get in or out. Because it seems that you can only get heard if you create chaos. I feel that we need to do something to be heard as farming community. [I ask] the few people that I know, to support me and dress in black on Monday, for our country's farmers. I'm not on Facebook or Twitter or any of these things, but I believe that the twenty of you that are on my cellphone, that you will forward the message to your friends. So that we can distribute this thing, not only us as farming community, but also my friends who work in offices. Let's wear black on Monday – at least I have a black T-shirt in my dresser – so that we can show respect to the farmers that have lost their lives this year. I ask you to support me. I ask you to send this to your friends, so that we can contribute in a way … My wife gets a cup of tea in bed, every morning and every evening before she goes to bed. Sometimes a man doesn't feel like it. But this morning it was a privilege again to make her a cup of tea. So I ask you, let's wear black on Monday.[7]

Loubser sent the message to his friends. It quickly went viral from there. A 21-year-old local resident, Talita Basson, started organising a public march from Klapmuts (where Conradie had been murdered) to Cape Town on 30 October. AfriForum threw in its support and encouraged its members to support Loubser's plea by participating in the events to be held across the country on that Monday.

On that day, tens of thousands of people participated in the public gatherings across the country, as well as abroad. Protests took place in Oudtshoorn, Vryburg, Tzaneen, George, Johannesburg, Brits, Bethlehem, New Zealand, Perth, Melbourne, and South Dakota in the USA. A big truck with the words 'Stop. Pray for South African farmers' was displayed in South Dakota.[8]

About ten thousand people gathered in Klapmuts in support of Basson's *Genoeg is genoeg* (English: Enough is enough) initiative. The convoy of vehicles was so big that it took over four hours to reach Cape Town from Stellenbosch. People of all races participated in the events. Calla Arendse, a brown farm worker in the Western Cape, spoke to the media:

> Actually, we as farm workers, we don't even know if we're safe in our houses. And the reason I say that is, in the old days we had a good life. We could go wherever we wanted, but these days we can't go wherever we want, because you don't know where the danger is waiting for you. In South Africa I think it's reached a stage where we all have to stand together to put a stop to this.[9]

As the convoy drove through black townships, people lined up along the streets in support of the campaign, chanting slogans such as 'Enough is enough!' [10]

Mariandra Heunis, widow of Johann Heunis (43) – who had been murdered in a farm attack one year prior to the event – attended an event in Pretoria together with her three little girls and baby boy, who had been born five days after his father's funeral. She gave a message of hope:

> They shot my husband six times in front of me and my eldest girl, of which the last was a shot to the head … They took my husband, but they cannot take my children. I've spoken to a couple of widows of farm attacks. We all have our own story and our own sorrow. But the one thing that we all have in common is that the road that we have to walk is a lonely road. It doesn't matter how many people are around you, it remains a lonely road. But this morning, as I stand here in front of you, I realize that we are not alone and I thank you for that.[11]

The event was, however, severely criticised in the media, allegedly for suggesting that farmers are more important than other people. Some even went as far as depicting the events as racist.

BLACK MONDAY IN THE MEDIA

Controversy soon erupted when pictures of the old South African flag started circulating on social media. Pictures of the flag were posted by the then Minister of Police, Fikile Mbalula, and various journalists, including eNCA reporter Nickolaus Bauer. Mbalula tweeted three pictures of people wearing the old South African flag, photoshopped into a picture of Mmusi Maimane, leader of the Democratic Alliance (DA), and asked: '@MmusiMaimane, is this the #BlackMonday you're in support of? What is this arrogance display of insensitive and disregard of our past?'[12]

Bauer tweeted two other photos, one with a couple wearing T-shirts of the old South African flag and one of a white man burning the new South

African flag. He added: ‘#BlackMonday Regardless of #Farmurder numbers, highly doubt you’ll EVER enjoy any sympathy in democratic SA if you wear old flag&burn new one.’[13]

The tweets went viral and the protestors were severely criticised in the media for being racist. However, it soon came to light that the pictures that were said to have been taken at the Black Monday protests had been taken years before at another event. The picture of a man burning the South African flag had been taken in 2012 and several of the other photos had been taken at the Red October march hosted by singer Sunette Bridges several years earlier. One photographer threatened to take legal action for the distribution of the pictures he had taken years ago.

This did not stop Mbalula, who said in Parliament: ‘The lawlessness racist insurgency by hood rat racists who hijacked a serious civic topic for a racist political insurgency agenda was open for all to see.’ However, Mbalula refused media interviews about this.[14]

Neither did it stop the media, who kept reporting about the display of the old South African flag at these marches as the major news angle. Several journalists called me for comments about the old flag. None of them was deterred by my reaction that it was fake news. One journalist even asked me to accept, for the purpose of our conversation, that the flag had been displayed and then to comment on that.

Complaints were filed against Bauer with eNCA and the press ombudsman for distributing fake news. Bauer apologised in another tweet, posting some additional pictures of people displaying the old South African flag, including a picture of a man standing on a bridge over a highway. Bauer added: ‘#BlackMonday These images did not come from today’s march. I have severely erred in sharing them. However, the message remains relevant.’[15]

Eventually, the only alleged evidence that the old South African flag had been displayed at an event that was aggressively covered by the media, was a tweet by the mayor of the Midvaal Local Municipality, who claimed to have seen someone standing next to the road, displaying the flag on that day.

Musician Chris Chameleon, who attended the Black Monday celebrations, reacted to the reports of the old South African flag:

> One very upsetting aspect of Black Monday to me was the way in which the issue at hand was in many cases and by a great many influential people opportunistically ignored for the sake of focussing on the rare and isolated incidents of displays of old South African flags, which eventually were proven to be even rarer than first thought, because many of the images attributed to Black Monday were in fact stock footage from years ago. As if the cause of so many people to end the senseless murders of so many people can at once be delegitimised by the isolated and senseless provocation of a single displayed icon. How is it that waving a flag can justifiably delegitimise an entire movement that has nothing to do with the flag? And if it's that simple, I should be able to find out which slogan, image or icon is most offensive to every good cause in South Africa and pitch at these protests, brandishing that icon and thus delegitimising the entire cause. Is it really that easy? And why do we thus prey for unrelated iconography to neutralise the good intentions of good people using their good time to fight bad?[16]

But it was too late. The perception had already been entrenched that the event had been racist. That evening I was invited to participate in a televised panel discussion about Black Monday on eNCA.[17] The event quickly erupted into a heated debate, mostly about the flag.

Kevin Ritchie, Editor of *The Star* newspaper, described the event as a 'lost opportunity', suggesting that farm attacks are pulled out of proportion and expressing his concern about the narrative of the event. 'This could've been a nation building exercise. Instead it does create a narrative especially when the old South African flag is displayed, that white lives matter at a premium to other lives.'[18]

'They [the protestors] were just longing for the past,' added eNCA news anchor Vuyo Mvoko. 'These are not people who belong to the kind of South Africa that everyone wants to build.'[19]

As I explained why we argue that farm murders need to be regarded as a priority, the visuals on the screen interchanged to images of the old South African flag and a stereotypical white right winger, sitting on the back of a bakkie, dressed in what appears to be leather and khaki clothes, with a cowboy hat and a big grey beard.

Jonas Sibanyoni, former ANC MP, turned Commissioner at the South African Human Rights Commission (SAHRC), said that the protests infringed on other people's rights, expressed his dismay at the fact that we had not been arrested and called on me to publicly condemn the event.

'Do you agree with the issues that they are raising?' asked Mvoko. Sibanyoni struggled to answer to a simple yes or no question:

> You know, it is not only the farm owners who are on the receiving end. We have got also farm dwellers who've complained. We have been monitoring the coffin assault case. We have also other incidents. Our statistics, Mr Mvoko, the issues on racism or discrimination based on race is topping all the complaints that we as the Human Rights Commission have received in the past financial year. And then also, maybe further than that, to say AfriForum, we'd like AfriForum to join hands whenever other issues are addressed. For example we've got the 16 days of activism for no violence against women and children. Nowhere is AfriForum seen to be participating.[20]

I responded, explaining that the difference between the campaigns against farm murders and the campaign against violence against women and children was that the one is a priority crime with a government-backed counter-strategy, while the other was not, and that we were campaigning for farm murders to also be regarded as a priority crime. However, the Human Rights Commissioner was not prepared to publicly state that he agreed that farm murders need to be prioritised.[21]

Mvoko agreed with Ritchie's criticisms and accused me of creating a narrative that there is white genocide in South Africa. 'Today at ten o'clock this morning, two things happened,' I responded.

'A photo emerged of a man standing on a bridge with an old South African flag, out of thousands of people protesting, and Bokkie Potgieter, a 70-year-old man was hacked to death with a panga [machete] ... '

Mvoko didn't allow me to finish my sentence and interjected: 'In Midvaal the mayor objected to people who came to him with an old South African flag.' I angrily lashed back:

> While I'm saying to you a man was hacked to death with a panga, you're objecting to me. This is exactly the point. We're sitting here debating the fact that there was some guy with a flag on a bridge.

> There was a man hacked to death today, while these people were protesting. Why are we not discussing this? This is exactly the problem. This is why people are angry. This is why it's not a nation building exercise, because we are being marginalised. The people who are trying to raise awareness about these attacks are being depicted as racist, are being accused of things they've never said. Now you're accusing me of claiming that there is a genocide happening. We're not saying that. We're just saying the murders need to stop.[22]

Ritchie interjected, expressing his concern about 'the binary position that we're in' and that the 'Africa Addio' or 'it's all going to hell' narrative should not be tolerated.[23]

A DOUBLE STANDARD

During the course of writing this book, AfriForum conducted a quantitative study about the manner in which the South African media report on farm murders. Our suspicion was that there is a double standard in the manner in which the media report on farm murders.

For this purpose, we identified 15 of the most popular news outlets and checked every article about violence on farms we could find that had been published by each of them, and that had been published during the whole of 2016 and 2017. These are *The Citizen, Daily Sun,* eNCA, EWN, *Huffington Post SA,* IOL, *Jacaranda News, Mail & Guardian,* Maroela Media, Netwerk24, News24, SABC, *Sowetan Live, The New Age* and *Times Live*. The results were published in a report called *Complicity: A critical evaluation of the mainstream media's reporting of incidents of violence on South African farms.*[24] Our pessimistic suspicion was proven to be accurate.

THE ROLE OF THE MEDIA

A serious crisis arises when media outlets claim to be objective while executing a very clear political or racial double standard in their reporting. The main problem with this is that the readers, listeners or viewers of that outlet tend to know about those incidents reported on, while they tend not to know about those incidents that the media outlet chose to ignore. This leads to false narratives, negative stereotyping, misdirected public policy and opinion, and in extreme cases, a justification of violence directed at particular communities.

REPORTING ON FARM MURDERS

During the time frame that forms the focus of this report, at least 148 farm murders were committed during at least 737 farm attacks. The numbers provided here are the incidents that could be verified by AfriForum, in cooperation with the the Transvaal Agricultural Union of South Africa (TAU SA). These figures should therefore be regarded as the ‘at least’ numbers. It is fair to conclude that the actual number of farm attacks could be much higher, while the number of farm murders is fairly accurate. These figures (which should be treated as the minimum figure) constitute more than one farm attack per day and about 1,4 farm murders per week.

As a result of the high frequency of these incidents, it is reasonable not to expect the media to report on every farm attack that happens where no one is murdered. However, a decision not to report on these attacks due to the vastness thereof, could not coincide with severe condemnation and excessive reporting of isolated incidents where farmers or even white people are perpetrators. The former is understandable. The latter is unethical and conducive to negative stereotyping. That is, however, the unfortunate reality with South Africa’s media.

During the course of the study, a total of 2 331 media reports were published, dealing with a total of 264 incidents. These incidents were mentioned 2 773 times in the media (some reports mentioned more than one incident). Of the 264 incidents, 241 were farm attacks, of which 105 were farm murders and 136 were attacks during which no one was murdered. This effectively means that the media reported on 71% of farm murders and 33% of farm attacks. (Other incidents that were reported included: twelve vigilante incidents, three incidents where people had been shot because they were thought to be animals, three incidents of worker abuse, four incidents of crime, one incident of domestic violence, and one incident which we categorised as ‘other’.)

It is, however, not sufficient to simply count which incidents are covered by the media and which are not. The more important question is the extent to which particular incidents are mentioned repeatedly by news outlets, as this provides an indication of the weight attached to the particular incident by the editorial team, the type of information that tends to be emphasised in the media’s choice of what the public at large should take note of, and the possible negative stereotyping that could take place as a result.

The goal here is to determine the number of mentions that a particular type of incident tends to receive in the mainstream media.

CATEGORY	MENTIONS	INCIDENTS	MENTIONS PER INCIDENT
Farm attack	1 516	241	6
Attack only	404	136	3
Murder	1 112	105	11
Vigilante	1 097	11	100
Animal incident	82	3	27
Worker abuse	11	2	6
Crime	33	5	7
Domestic violence	6	1	6
Other	28	1	28
TOTAL	2 773	264	11

Table 12: Media mentions per incident, by crime categories[25]

It is clear that vigilante incidents, such as the so-called ‘coffin case’ – an incident where two white farmers allegedly caught someone stealing on a farm and stuck him in a coffin while making a video of the incident – or the ‘Parys killings’ – an incident where farmers were accused of murdering two farm workers who had attacked an elderly farmer and had fled the scene, only to be caught by the local farmers – receive substantially broader media coverage than farm attacks or farm murders, for example. Vigilante incidents are covered on average more than ten times as much as farm murders.

STRENGTHENING THE ‘BRUTAL FARMER’ STEREOTYPE

It is evident from the research that the race of the victim or perpetrator tends to be a major factor in determining the extent to which a particular incident is covered by the media. Incidents of violence where the perpetrators are white are reported much more extensively than incidents where the perpetrators are black. There is also a stark difference in the manner in which incidents where the victims are black are reported by the media. Incidents where the victims are black and the perpetrators are also black tend to be largely ignored (six mentions per incident), while incidents where the victims are black and the perpetrators are white are reported on exponentially more, with 75 mentions per incident on average.

RACIAL CHARACTERISTICS	MENTIONS	INCIDENTS	MENTIONS PER INCIDENT
White-on-black	1 206	16	75
Black-on-white*	1 379	206	7
Black-on-black or victim's race unknown	97	15	6
White-on-white	30	3	10
Other	61	24	3
TOTAL	2 773	264	11

Table 13: Media reporting and racial characteristics – summary of all incidents[26]

(Black-on-white include incidents where race of the perpetrator is known. According to the data verified by AfriForum, 100% of the perpetrators of farm attacks are black. Therefore it is safe to assume that where a farm attack was committed and the race of the perpetrator is not mentioned as newsworthy, that the perpetrator was black.)

It is clear from Table 13 and Figure 22 that white-on-black incidents are on average mentioned 11 times as much as incidents where the victims were either black or white, and the perpetrators were black or unknown, and 7,5 times as much as white-on-white incidents.

If the white-on-black incidents are categorised according to the type of incidents, an even clearer picture emerges, as can be seen in Table 14.

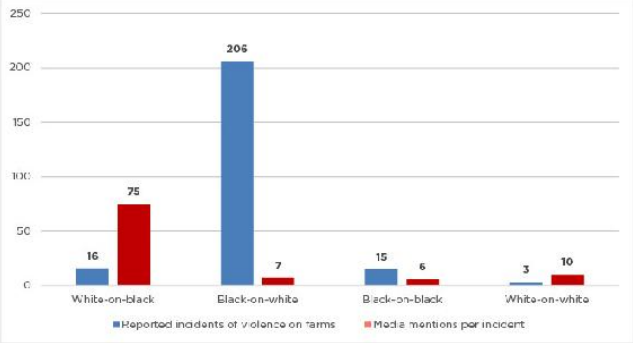

Figure 22: Media reporting and racial characteristics (Afrikaans and English media)

CATEGORY	MENTIONS	INCIDENTS	MENTIONS PER INCIDENT
Vigilante	1 089	9	121
Animal incident	69	2	35
Worker abuse	11	2	6
Other	28	1	28
Crime	9	2	5

Table 14: Media reporting of white-on-black incidents, categorised according to the type of incident[27]

When reporting on incidents according to racial characteristics are categorised into those reported by the Afrikaans media and those reported by the English media, another clear discrepancy is evident.

RACIAL CHARACTERISTICS	MENTIONS	INCIDENTS	MENTIONS PER INCIDENT
White-on-black	445	15	30
Black-on-white	1 027	197	5
Black-on-black or victim's race unknown	53	13	4
White-on-white	25	3	8
Other	34	19	2
TOTAL	1 584	247	6

Table 15: Media reporting and race (Afrikaans media)[28]

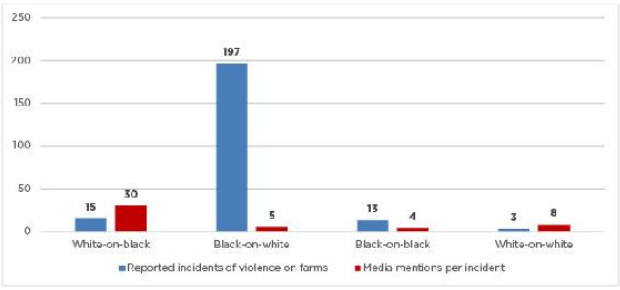

Figure 23: Media reporting and racial characteristics (Afrikaans media)[29]

While a double standard is still evident in the Afrikaans media, it is clear that the Afrikaans media tend to be less unbalanced than the media in general. White-on-black incidents are on average mentioned six times as much as black-on-white incidents, and about four times as much as white-on-white incidents.

RACIAL CHARACTERISTICS	MENTIONS	INCIDENTS	MENTIONS PER INCIDENT
White-on-black	761	13	59
Black-on-white	332	82	4
Black-on-black or victim's race unknown	44	12	4
White-on-white	5	2	3
Other	27	24	1
TOTAL	1 189	133	9

Table 16: Media reporting and race (English media)[30]

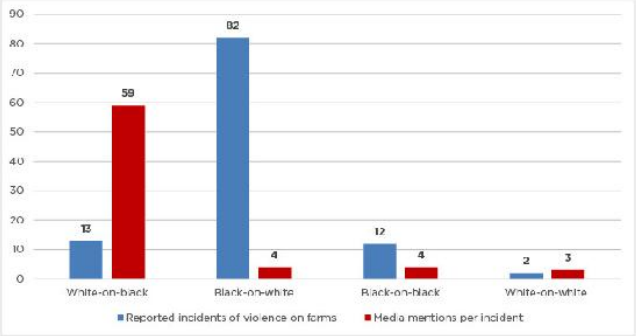

Figure 24: Media reporting and racial characteristics (English media)[31]

The double standard with regard to reporting on incidents according to race is even more evident when only the English media are considered. White-on-black incidents are on average mentioned 16 times as much as black-on-white incidents.

REPORTING OF KNOWN INCIDENTS BY RACE

If the number of incidents that are known to the media is considered, it is also clear that a serious double standard exists. For the purpose of the study, it was accepted that if information on a particular incident had been published in at least one of the media outlets that formed part of the study prior to the report in question, then it should be regarded as a 'known incident'. The question then arises what the extent is of known incidents that are covered by the media. Also on this question, it became clear that the race of the perpetrator is a major determining factor in whether a known incident will be reported.

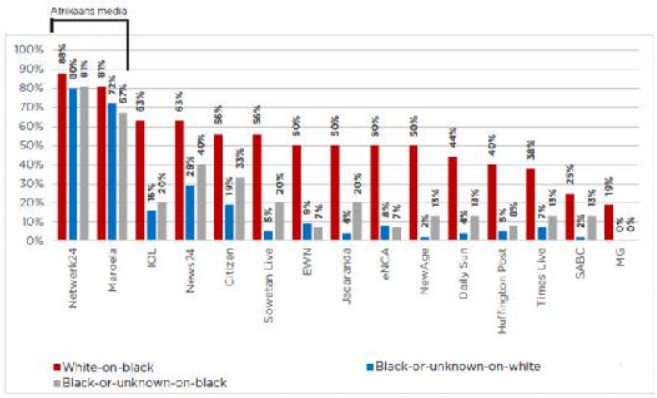

Figure 25: Reporting of known incidents, according to race.[32]

It is clear from this data that known incidents where the perpetrators are white and the victims are black tend to be covered extensively, while known incidents where the perpetrators are black and the victims are white tend to be ignored. Known incidents where both the perpetrators and the victims are black also tend to be ignored by the media. On this variable, it is also evident that there appears to be a major discrepancy between the Afrikaans media and the English media, where the Afrikaans media (Netwerk24 and Maroela Media) tend to report on these incidents in a much more balanced way. It is also noteworthy that during the two years in which the study was conducted, The *Mail & Guardian* did not report on any farm attacks, nor on any other incident where the victims were white.[33]

REPORTING OF DEATHS BY RACE

There is also a clear discrepancy in the manner in which incidents of violence on farms are reported on in the media, when the number of people who were killed as well as the race of the perpetrator and victim is considered. In order to understand this, it is useful to start with the number of known incidents where people were killed, categorised according to the number of deaths:

Known incidents	0 persons killed	1 person killed	2 persons killed	3 persons killed	4 persons killed
White-on-black	5	9	1	0	0
Black-on-white	110	86	8	0	2

Table 17: Number of persons killed in known incidents, according to race[34]

When considering the reporting of incidents where white people were murdered by black people it is clear that the number of mentions per

incident tend to increase in the Afrikaans media (Maroela Media and Netwerk24) as the number of deaths increase, while the number of deaths appears to be irrelevant in the English media.

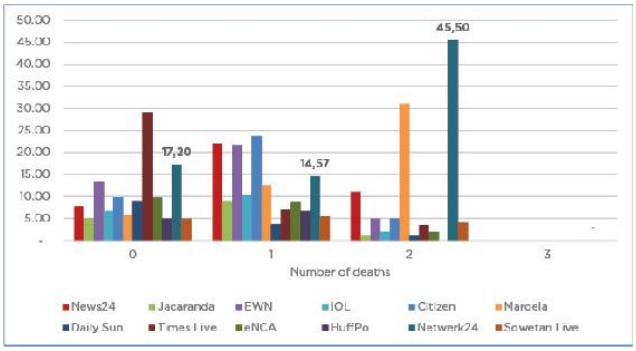

Figure 26: Average media mentions by number of deaths (white-on-black)[35]

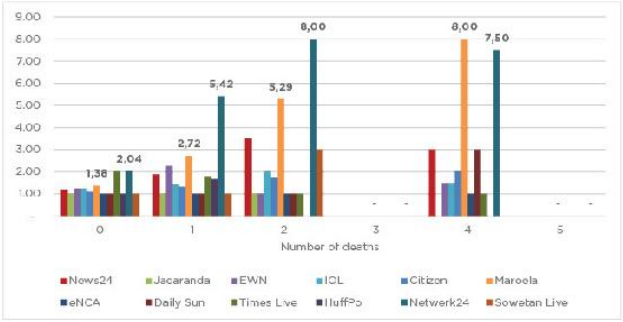

Figure 27: Average media mentions by number of deaths (black-on-white)[36]

On the other hand, when considering black-on-white violence, it is clear that the extent of media reporting is dramatically lower, while the number of persons killed again appears to be irrelevant to the English media. Regardless of the race of the victims or perpetrators, the Afrikaans media tend to report increasingly on incidents, as the number of people killed increases. This is not evident in the English media.

With regard to black-on-black violence, the number of deaths appears to be irrelevant to all, with the exception of Netwerk24. There is also extremely low reporting of black-on-black violence.

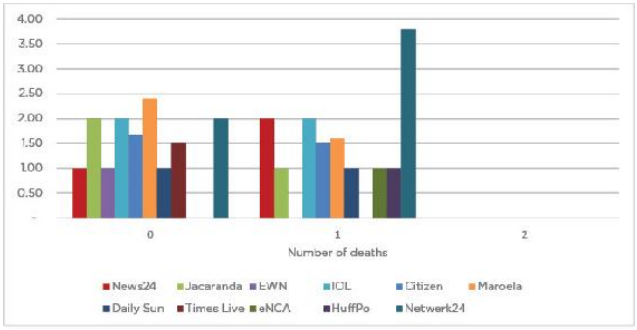

Figure 28: Average media mentions by number of deaths (black-on-black)[37]

REPORTING OF RACIAL DESCRIPTIONS

There is also a major discrepancy on how the media deal with racial descriptions in incidents on farms where the perpetrators and victims are of different races. In white-on-black incidents, the race of either the perpetrator or the victim is frequently pointed out as part of the article (with a distinction again evident between English and Afrikaans media). On the other hand, where the perpetrator is black and the victim is white, the race of either of the two is never pointed out by any of the mainstream media outlets, with the exception of the *The Citizen*, which pointed out race in 4% of the cases. *Mail & Guardian*, *The New Age* and Netwerk24 never indicated race, and Maroela Media only indicated race in 1% of white-on-black incidents.

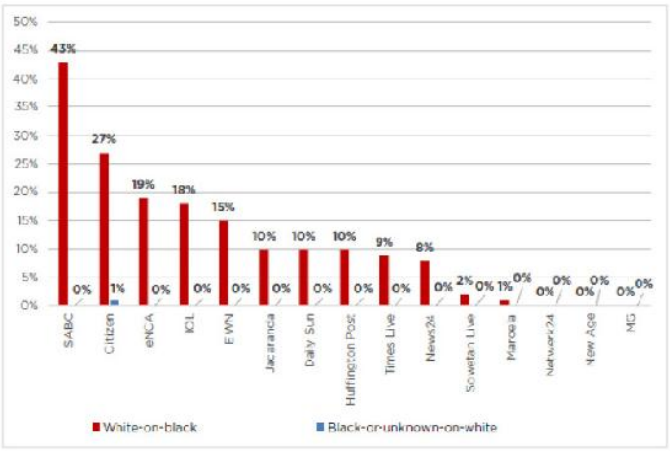

Figure 29: Mention of race by media outlet[38]

What is most concerning about Figure 29 is that the SABC – the state broadcaster – is clearly the most complicit in creating and strengthening negative stereotypes regarding white farmers. While the SABC never

mentioned the race of the victim or perpetrator in cases where the victim was white and the perpetrator black, race was particularly mentioned in 43% of the incidents where the victim was black and the perpetrator white.

REPORTING OF NAMES

There is also a major discrepancy with regard to the publishing of names in white-on-black incidents, as opposed to black-on-white incidents. The name of either the victim or the perpetrator is regarded to be known if it is published in at least one of the media outlets that form part of this study. When comparing white-on-black incidents to black-on-white incidents, it is clear that the mainstream media tend to publish the names of either the victim or the perpetrator in cases of white-on-black violence, while they tend not to publish the names in cases of black-on-white violence. Figure 30 indicates the extent to which the name of either the perpetrator or the victim is not mentioned, despite the fact that it is known.

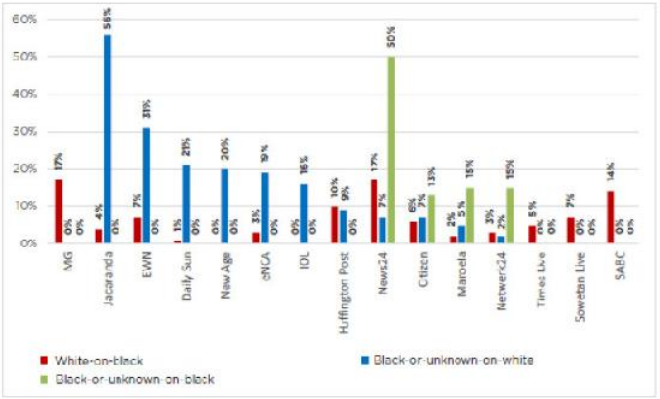

Figure 30: Names not mentioned in the media though known, according to race[39]

USING ILLUSTRATIONS

The discrepancy between reporting of white-on-black incidents, compared to black-on-white incidents, is also evident in the use of illustrations. Illustrations are generally used to boost the visibility of a story, to elevate that story above others or to indicate the race of those involved. The use of an illustration with a story can also be an indication that the editorial team may regard that story as more important than those without illustrations.

Also on the use of illustrations, we find that the Afrikaans media tend to be more balanced than the English media and that incidents of white-on-black violence are accompanied by illustrations substantially more than black-on-white violence.

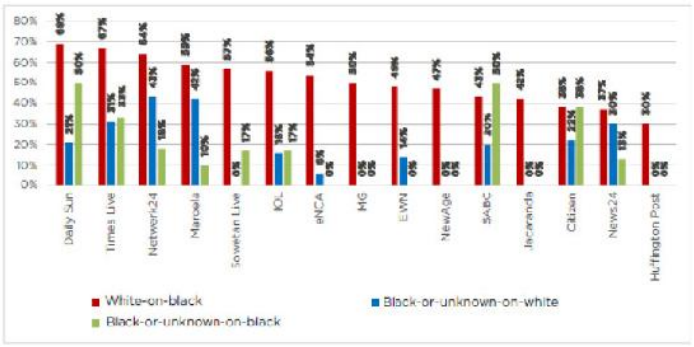

Figure 31: Media illustrations of victim or perpetrator, according to race[40]

COMPARING FARM MURDERS TO OTHER INCIDENTS

It has been pointed out repeatedly that there is a discrepancy in the manner in which the South African media report on incidents of violence in rural areas, particularly with regard to the race of the perpetrators and the victims. It has been stated that a total of 105 out of at least 148 farm murders have been reported. The double standard is particularly evident when the extent of media reporting on farm murders is compared to that on other incidents.

SPECIFIC INCIDENTS	MENTIONS (ALL)	MENTIONS (AFRIKAANS)	MENTIONS (ENGLISH)
Coligny	415	113	302
Coffin assault	383	94	289
Parys	187	147	40
TOTAL	985	354	631
148 farmers murdered (only 105 reported in the media)	1 091	793	298

Table 18: Comparing media coverage per incident[41]

In the English media, the number of media mentions of the Coligny case, the coffin assault and the Parys incidents combined are more than double the combined number of media mentions for at least 148 farm murders that took place during the years of 2016 and 2017.

DEPICTING VICTIMS AS PERPETRATORS

The Nazi propagandist Joseph Goebbels famously said that a lie told once remains a lie, but that a lie told a thousand times becomes the truth. There is little dispute over the claim that narratives carry more weight than realities and facts. Earlier studies have shown that there is a clear ‘white perpetrator/black victim’ narrative in South Africa. The report *Revealing*

Race: An analysis of the coverage of race and xenophobia in the South African print media reveals that there is a predominantly 'black victim/white perpetrator' narrative in South African media.[42] It found that:

> Blacks consistently appear in the role of victim both of the crime committed against them and the unjust manner in which the justice system hears their cases. The media tends to represent the justice system as serving the interests of the rich and usually White people who can afford the best legal representation.

Upon analysis of all the news articles monitored for the purpose of the report by the Media Monitoring Project, a list of the propositions that were most prevalent on the topic of race was compiled. This list was compiled from a list of six of South Africa's largest daily newspapers, six of South Africa's largest weekend papers and one particularly influential weekly paper. All the articles that dealt with race and racial discrimination for the period from February 2006 up to and including May 2006 were monitored. It was found that the proposition that 'all whites are racist' was most prevalent, followed by 'Africans are victims' and 'race is the primary explanation'.

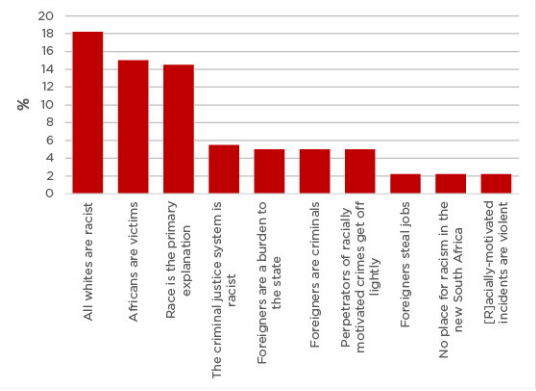

Figure 32: Most prevalent propositions on race in the South African media[43]

There are also very particular stereotypes and narratives with regard to white South African farmers. White farmers are frequently depicted as thieves and criminals and they are regularly accused of abusing others (particularly their workers) and of inflicting violence upon black people.

While the available evidence clearly indicates that the above-mentioned narrative is largely fabricated and limited only to isolated cases, it appears that the stereotype is actively promoted by the mainstream media.

It is clear that the newsworthiness of an incident on a farm is not linked to the severity of the incident, but rather to the race of the perpetrator and victim – where more weight is attached to the race of the perpetrator. This is less evident in the Afrikaans media (which serve a minority of people in South Africa) than in the English media. There is minimal reporting by the media of incidents on farms where the perpetrators are not white, even when four people are murdered during one incident.

Besides this overarching inconsistency, there are also other ways in which the media report discrepantly on incidents of violence on farms, depending on who the perpetrator and the victim are. These include the mentioning of the names of the perpetrator and/or victim, the mentioning of race and the use of illustrations.

There is a clear and consistent double standard with regard to the reporting of incidents of violence on farms, especially with regard to the English media.

As to the reasons for these double standards, one can postulate a range of conspiracies. It is not my job to indulge in conspiracy theories, and AfriForum is particular about the use of fact-based research for its conclusions. It is, however, understandable that the requirement for sensation is a reality for the financial success of a news outlet. Sensation is not generated by the ordinary, but rather by the exceptional. This leads to an uncomfortable relationship with the truth in which the rarer, more unusual occurrence generates the most coverage, specifically due to its relative rarity, which, in turn, raises the question of the media’s role in exemplifying the exceptional into a false status of generality.

There can be no doubt that the skewed reporting of farm incidents will create and further fuel misconceptions about farm attacks and negative stereotypes about white farmers in particular. The result is increased vilification of farmers and a diversion away from black victims of farm attacks.

This negative stereotype may even contribute to a political climate in which discrimination against white people in general, and white farmers in particular, is regarded as justified, in which political activists engage in hate speech against white farmers, and where perpetrators who may be

susceptible to committing farm murders may find the justification that they were looking for.

In this sense, as long as the double standard persists, those who participate in it should be regarded as potentially complicit in the alarming phenomenon of farm attacks and farm murders in South Africa.

ANC members hanging and crucifying white dolls at a protest rally. These depictions were very poorly covered by the media who were present when it happened.

Photo: Gallo Images/Beeld/ Felix Dlangamandla

Cartoonist Jerm responded to the scewed reporting of the Black Monday protests by media.

Illustration: Jerm

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PART 3
FIGHTING BACK

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‘They took us on the Burgersfort road. They argued along the way. But I couldn’t make out what they were saying, as I didn’t understand the language.’ Suddenly the vehicle stopped. ‘They took me through the veld, through a barbed-wire fence, maybe another 50 metres. The godfather then forced me on my knees.’

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CHAPTER 17

How farm attacks were dropped from the agenda

Contrary to what many people believe today, farm murders were in fact at one stage regarded as a national priority by the current/post-1994/ANC South African government. Various initiatives were implemented to curb this phenomenon. However, before these initiatives could make a significant impact, the South African government embarked on a process of deprioritising its response to farm attacks.

It has been pointed out in this book (see Chapters 3 and 10) that farm attacks really became a problem in 1990 – the year in which the prohibition on the African National Congress (ANC) and other communist-aligned organisations was rescinded, effectively signalling the end of apartheid and the white minority government. Most of the political activity from February 1990 to April 1994 was consumed by the negotiations for a new political dispensation and the national elections of 1994, followed by the inauguration of Nelson Mandela as President and the establishment of a new government. The first significant initiative to address the crisis of farm attacks came in 1996 with the National Crime Prevention Strategy.

1996: NATIONAL CRIME PREVENTION STRATEGY (NCPS)

In May 1996, the National Crime Prevention Strategy (NCPS) was launched in reaction to high levels of crime in South Africa.[1] The objectives of the NCPS included:

- The establishment of a comprehensive policy framework that addresses all the policy areas that impact on crime as part of a greater initiative to improve economic growth and development; and
- The generating of a shared understanding among South Africans about what crime prevention involves.[2]

‘To effectively reduce crime, it is necessary to transform and reorganise government and facilitate real community participation. We need to weave a new social fabric, robust enough to withstand the stresses of rapid change in a new-born society,’ it was stated in the NCPS.[3]

Within about five years after the launch of the NCPS, it had become clear that the NCPS had failed, despite it being regarded as an excellent strategy.

Johan Burger of the Institute for Security Studies (ISS) mentions two reasons for the failure of the NCPS, namely:

- A lack of understanding of and insight into the intricate relationship between crime and its underlying causes (socio-economic and other risk factors) by political leaders; and
- Other principles and 'as a result, a lack of conviction, commitment and support to implement the NCPS'.[4]

1997: THE RURAL PROTECTION PLAN (RPP)

Since the coming to power of the ANC, there has been a gradual increase in farm murders – from 59 in 1994 to 74 in 1997.[5] The RPP was implemented in October 1997 as government's reaction to calls by the South African Agricultural Union (SAAU), now Agri SA, that 'something needs to be done to address the increases in violent crime on farms and smallholdings'.[6] It was developed by a task team comprising members of the South African Police Service (SAPS), the South African National Defence Force (SANDF) and organised agriculture. The main plan of the RPP was to integrate and coordinate the activities of all the role players and to ensure effective cooperation in joint planning, action and the combating of crime in rural areas.[7] It was structured mostly around the commando system and it was based on two pillars, namely:

1. Area-bound reaction forces; and
2. Home-and-hearth protection forces.[8]

Area-bound reaction forces were staffed by local commando members who were called up regularly in times of crisis for paid duty and issued with the necessary uniforms and other equipment to perform their commando responsibilities. They were also trained jointly with SAPS members and SAPS police reservists to conduct patrols, roadblocks, follow-up operations, cordon-and-search operations and farm visits.

The home-and-hearth protection forces comprised two sub-groups: the home-and-hearth protection reaction force commando members, and the home-and-hearth protection commando members.[9]

Both groups were staffed by farmers, smallholders and their workers. The first group was responsible for assisting other farmers and smallholders in the event of a farm attack, and the second group was responsible for their own protection.[10]

1998: NELSON MANDELA AND THE RURAL SAFETY SUMMIT

Despite the introduction of the RPP, there was a sharp increase in farm attacks at the time, rising from 433 attacks in 1997 to 767 in 1998.[11] In October 1998, a Rural Safety Summit was convened on the instruction of former President Nelson Mandela 'to deal with rural safety in general, but farm attacks in particular'.[12] At the Summit, Mandela stated:

> Beyond the immediate human suffering, lack of security and stability in our rural and farming community causes serious disruption to our economy. It threatens to bring reduced growth or production, loss of wages and profits and in time unemployment. It brings the spectre of deepening poverty, and potential social instability and upheaval.[13]

Mandela went on:

> The government deplores the cold-blooded killings that have been taking place on the farms in the past few years. While killings on farms, like crime in general, have been a feature of South African life in general, the incidents of murder and assault in farming areas have increased dramatically in recent years.[14]

At the conclusion of the Summit, a declaration was adopted in which murders and other crimes affecting rural communities were condemned. The problem was recognised as complex and multi-faceted. The importance of effective law enforcement was stressed. The necessity of involving all people in the RPP was recognised. Better cooperation was pleaded for. Certain improvements to the criminal justice system were referred to. The rights of victims were recognised. The necessity for further research, sustained effort and the need to strengthen moral values was also stressed. Furthermore, three working groups were established to give effect to these issues, to deal with communication, information and research with operational interventions and with rural safety policy.[15]

1999: JOINTS COMMITTEE

The task team formed the basis of what eventually developed into the Priority Committee on Rural Safety in 1999.[16] The Priority Committee was representative of a number of government departments such as the SAPS, SANDF, Justice, Land Affairs, and Agriculture, as well as agricultural organisations such as Agri SA, Transvaal Agricultural Union of South Africa (TAU SA), the African Farmers Union (AFU) and Action Stop Farm Attacks. The Priority Committee reported directly to the interdepartmental Joint Operational and Intelligence Structure (JOINTS), which reported to the Justice, Crime Prevention and Security Cluster (JCPS).[17] It presided over a variety of responsibilities, including the management of the RPP, attending to reports or complaints by any group, investigating serious allegations, consulting with all role players on a regular basis, and compiling regular reports to the National Operational Coordinating Committee (NOCOC) and (from 2000) to its successor, the JOINTS.[18]

The NOCOC was the joint interdepartmental operational structure until 2000, representing the SAPS, the SANDF, Correctional Services, and the departments of Welfare and Justice. In 2000 NOCOC was replaced by JOINTS. The JOINTS is representative of the above departments as well as the rest of the departments of the JCPS.

Despite these interventions, farm attacks were still on the rise.

2001: INVESTIGATIVE COMMITTEE

More and more farmers began to believe that there was more to farm attacks than ‘ordinary crime’. TAU SA pointed out that many of these attacks were executed with ‘military precision’ and that in many of these attacks, little to nothing was stolen, while the attacks were often accompanied by high levels of brutality.[19]

A committee of inquiry into farm attacks was established in 2001 by the then Minister for Safety and Security, Steve Tshwete.[20] Tshwete’s announcement of a commission of inquiry was followed by another severe increase in attacks.[21]

The report by the committee of inquiry was released on 31 July 2003. In conclusion it stated among other things that:

- The majority of cases were motivated by the desire to rob or steal.

- Farm attacks were generally not carried out with ‘military precision’ and there was no indication of an organisation behind farm attacks in the narrow sense of the word, with the exception of certain incidents connected to land invasions.
- Land invasions often led to farm attacks.
- Many farm attacks were extremely violent and the high publicity given to these cases gave rise to the perception that all farm attacks were of that nature.
- Just over 60% of the victims of farm attacks during 2001 were white but it seems that there is a considerably higher risk of a white victim of farm attacks being killed or injured than a black victim.
- The investigation of farm attacks was given high priority and the conviction rate for farm attack cases was higher than for other similar crimes. This was linked to the fact that investigations were handled by specialised units.
- Security on many farms was inadequate or non-existent and there was a general lack of alertness on farms.
- The trauma had serious consequences for the victims of farm attacks and had not been given sufficient attention.[22]

The appointment of a committee of inquiry into farm attacks in 2001 was the last comprehensive step taken by the South African government that gave an indication that farm attacks should be regarded as a priority. In 2003, the same year in which the report was published, the process of deprioritising farm attacks effectively began.

2003: COMMANDOS SHUT DOWN

On 14 February 2003, during the State of the Nation Address at the opening of Parliament, former President Thabo Mbeki announced that the commando system would be phased out. This came as a shock at the time, as there had been no indication of any plans to take such a step. The commando system was the cornerstone of the RPP and the closing down of the commandos effectively implied the end of this plan.[23]

‘Given the structure and staffing of the RPP, closing down the commandos would obviously mean the death knell for this particular plan,’ write Burger and Henri Boshoff from the Institute for Security Studies (ISS). ‘There has been no indication that this plan was or is to be substituted

by another, other than the announcement by the South African president on 14 February 2003 that with the phasing out of the commandos a "new system" was to be created "whose composition and ethos accord with the requirements of all rural communities".'[24]

'The effectiveness of the RPP (and the commandos) is reflected in the notable decrease in farm attacks which fell by 40,5% from 1069 incidents in 2001/2002 to 636 incidents in 2005/2006,' writes Burger.[25] Similarly, farm murders decreased by 41,4% from 140 cases in 2001/2002 to 82 cases in 2004/2005. This achievement attests to the impact of the RPP and the work of the Priority Committee. However, with the phasing out of the commandos in 2003 and a clear change in government's perception of the problem, the early indications were that the situation was again deteriorating. In 2006/2007, the last financial year for which the police reported on farm attacks and related murders, there was a 24,8% increase in the number of attacks (from 636 to 794) and the number of murders increased from 82 in 2004/2005 to 88 in 2005/2006.[26]

Burger was in charge of rural safety in the SAPS at the time when the commandos were shut down. On the reasons for the abolishment, he writes:

> The ANC had been opposed to the continuation of the commando system, partly because of the role these units played in support of the apartheid system, but also because the commandos were perceived to represent the security interests of the white farming community only.[27]

This correlates with the explanation provided by Siphiwe Nyanda, Chief of the SANDF at the time:

> We thought that they were a nest of reaction and that they had to go because they had been part of the security apparatus at that time (referring to the 1980s). We thought that they were a nest of reaction and most of the activities really were reactionary and even were in the defence when we took them over. We didn't think that they had a positive role to play in the new defence force we were creating because we wanted to create a new defence force comprising both black and white soldiers with a new mindset and we thought that the commandos had a different mindset from the one that we wanted to inculcate.[28]

With the disbanding of the commandos, an undertaking was given that the system would be replaced by a new plan and/or strategy that would fall under the SAPS, instead of the SANDF. The following were to be put in place:

- A revised SAPS reservist system based on an amendment of the National Instruction for Reservists;
- A substantial increase in SAPS personnel figures;
- The implementation of sector policing;
- The restructuring of specialised investigation units; and
- The establishment of area crime combating units.[29]

However, as Burger points out, in 2014, National Instruction 3 of 2014 replaced National Instruction 1 of 2002. National Instruction 3 of 2014 provides for two categories of police reservists, namely functional policing and specialised operational support. 'As a consequence, the provision for dedicated rural and urban sector police reservists disappeared.'[30] This effectively means that the promise that was made in 2003 – that the commando system would be replaced – was not kept.

The closing down of the commandos can be seen as the first step in a decade of the deprioritisation of farm attacks.

2007: SEIZURE OF STATISTICS

Without any announcement or explanation, the publication of statistics on farm attacks and farm murders was summarily discontinued in the financial year of 2007.[31] This happened despite a 25% increase in farm attacks in the last year in which statistics were published: According to SAPS data, there were 794 farm attacks in the financial year of 2006/2007, up from 636 in 2005/2006.

According to this new policy, farm attacks were, despite the sharp increase, officially no longer a priority.

'Suddenly it was said that farm murders is no longer a priority and the moment when this happened, gone are the statistics, gone are the data, gone is the information and we cannot plan anymore,' commented Dirk Hermann, Deputy General Secretary of the trade union Solidarity in an interview done in 2012.[32]

2008: SOUTH AFRICAN HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION (SAHRC) REPORT

Following the 2003 report, a second investigative hearing into farm attacks was convened by the SAHRC in 2008. Some of the recommendations in the report included that it was necessary for a nationwide discussion to be carried out between the state and civil society to agree on the true underlying causes of farm attacks in order for effective strategies to be developed to address these causes; that the RPP should remove all references to *farm attacks* or *farm killings* from its text 'as this nomenclature served to create a perceived hierarchy of crimes that was racially defined in terms of who the victim was'; that the RPP should address all forms of crime; and that the recommendations of the 2003 report receive the highest possible support from the state, and the implementation of the recommendations should be based in the Office of the President.[33]

2014: SAHRC INVESTIGATIVE HEARING ON FARM ATTACKS

In 2014, upon receiving a written request to this effect by AfriForum, the SAHRC organised a national investigative hearing into safety and security challenges in farming communities. In the subsequent report, the SAHRC expressed its concern that farm attacks remained a serious concern, despite previous attempts at intervention.[34] The recommendations made in the report included the following:

1. Follow-up dialogues to keep farm attacks on the national human rights agenda.
2. A stepping up of involvement by law enforcement agencies such as the SAPS and the National Prosecuting Authority (NPA) in the combating of farm attacks.
3. Particular attention should be given to race relations in farming communities.
4. Stereotypes in farming communities need to be addressed.
5. Continued research into farm attacks.
6. A policy document should be developed to establish a standard on the specification of housing provided to farm workers.
7. The Department of Justice and Constitutional Development should:

1. Include farming communities more concretely in the Promotion of the Rights of Vulnerable Groups (PRVG) programme.
2. Provide a report on the programmes the Department conducts in farming communities.
3. Ensure that the NPA brings to the courts' attention the circumstances of the farming communities, particularly with reference to providing bail with regard to farm attacks.
4. Ensure that the court officers are better prepared to attend to victim support, with specific regard to farming communities. A report to this effect should be provided to the SAHRC within 12 months.
5. Evaluate the Victims' Charter, with particular emphasis on marginalised communities, rural communities and farming communities.

8. The SAPS should:

1. Review the National Rural Safety Strategy (NRSS) and involve the SAHRC in the review process.
2. Create an Agricultural Forum in cooperation with all role players and stakeholders.
3. Conduct a crime threat analysis for farming communities.
4. Organise a farming safety summit.
5. Provide the steps taken to ensure that programmes on family violence, domestic abuse and sexual offences are in place at police stations close to farming communities.
6. Issue guidelines for visible policing of rural and farming communities and distribute these to the community policing forums (CPFs) and the farming community.
7. Implement the NRSS in farming communities.
8. Establish and implement sensitisation programmes for police officers working with vulnerable groups in rural communities.
9. Implement effective policies on dealing with stock theft, which includes the appointment of personnel in vacant positions.

10. Inform the SAHRC about all programmes and outcomes on safety in farming communities.

9. More CPFs should be established in farming communities and they should be incorporated into crime-prevention strategies."

10. Multi-pronged strategies should be introduced to reduce violence in farming communities. This includes an improvement of attitude towards a human rights-based culture and a political encouragement of social cohesion.

11. The Department of Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs (CoGTA) should take note of the report and its recommendations and the SAHRC should be provided with feedback with the implementation of programmes in this regard.

12. The Department of Labour (DL) should take note of the report and its recommendations.

13. A special sub-committee should be established by the JCPS Cluster Priority Committee to develop an action plan to address the issues raised, to engage with the community and also to monitor and evaluate the related activities of the departments.

14. The South African Institute for Judicial Education (SAIJE) should provide sufficient detail as to how the court processes are attended to, the improvement of the judicial system, and in particular address impunity in farming communities.[35]

Three years after the publication of the 2014 SAHRC Report, no substantial progress could be shown on any one of the above-mentioned recommendations.

SHORT-LIVED PRIORITISING OF FARM ATTACKS IN 2016

In May 2016, acting National Police Commissioner Khomotso Phahlane met with AfriForum to discuss farm attacks and possible counter-strategies. After the meeting, during a joint press conference, Phahlane announced that farm attacks would again be treated as a national priority by the SAPS.[36]

Shortly thereafter, facing charges of corruption and suspension, Phahlane agreed to resign from his position[37] and the short-lived prioritisation of farm attacks led by Phahlane became shipwrecked once again.

A COLD SHOULDER

The South African government's reaction to farm attacks should not be evaluated just on the basis of the policies implemented, the reports published and the projects initiated. What is even more concerning than the process of deprioritisation outlined above, is the repeated mocking, ridiculing and shunning of the victims of farm attacks and those campaigning for its prioritisation.

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‘The next thing I remember was lying in the veld. I had been shot in the neck. I was still tied up. I looked up and I remember that it was a beautiful night. There were stars everywhere. When I saw the stars, I could hear the bakkie going up the road. I heard some talking. Then I heard two shots and I heard the tyres spinning on the dirt road.’ Robert was covered with stab wounds, burns and bruises. The bag was still tied around his neck.

‘I managed to stumble towards the road. It was about 20 to 30 metres up the road. That’s where I found her.’

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CHAPTER 18

A cold shoulder

‘Listen to me when I hand you this volume. I’m not giving it to you because I am white. I’m giving it to you because I am a South African and because you have a responsibility to protect all South Africans – including farmers.’

Those were the words of Belinda van Noord on 17 January 2013 to Colonel Simon Chabangu, Secretary to the Minister of Police, Nathi Mthethwa. In her hands she held a red folder. It was filled with letters, written by victims of farm attacks. During the last month, Belinda’s family had become part of the farm murder statistics, not once, but twice.

On 13 December 2012, her father and brother – both called Gerhardus Rudolph – were finishing off the day’s work in their farm butchery near Brits in the North West, in an area ironically called Geluk (English: Happiness). But Geluk has been all but happy. During one of my visits there, one of the local people took me on a tour through the local cemetery, showing me all the graves of farmers and their loved ones who had been murdered in recent years and telling me their stories.

It was shortly before 19:00 and Gerhardus Senior (65) and Gerhardus Junior (31) and the domestic worker, Rebecca, were about to leave the butchery when four men with assault rifles stormed the shop. Belinda’s younger brother, De Beer (14), and her nephew, Rudolph (13), were in the office next door when they heard the first shot. Rudolph ran to the butchery where his uncle and grandfather had been, but his cousin grabbed him, saying ‘No! Don’t go. They will kill us!’ Through a little window the two boys witnessed the entire event unfolding in the butchery. Both men, father and son, were shot on the scene. Upon the departure of the men, the two boys ran to the shop. However, it was too late for Gerhard Senior. He was already dead. De Beer ran out, screaming: ‘Please someone help us; they killed my father!’

Gerhard Junior and Rebecca were rushed to the hospital. They survived. During the two weeks that followed, Gerhard Junior’s father was buried while his wife and children sat at his bedside as he fought for his life. Three days after Christmas, Gerhard Junior passed away.[1]

In the early days of January 2013, I received an email from Belinda, explaining how her father and brother had been shot dead and that she could

not sit around doing nothing, knowing well that theirs was not the only tragic story of farmers being murdered. So she became an activist.

At the insistence of the Van Noord family, I invited a Danish film crew to join me in attending Gerhard Junior's funeral. At the funeral we saw his wife, squatting down next to her husband's coffin, clutching her children, crying – heartbroken about the loss of her husband, trying to convince her children that everything was going to be all right.

But none of this was known to the Minister of Police prior to 17 January. As a matter of fact, the absurdly inattentive manner in which the murders of the Rudolphs were investigated by the local police department was another cause of great concern.

In her letter, Belinda wrote that their family had been robbed of their stalwarts and that they struggled to cope with the trauma. She concluded her letter:

> South African citizens are no longer safe because violent criminals roam our streets, cities, towns and rural areas. Hardly a day goes by without there being news reports of people being killed in their homes, women being brutally assaulted and raped and, in some cases, of children who have to look on in horror how their parents are being killed.
>
> If government can prioritise 'Save the Rhino', why can't government protect the citizens of South Africa? Is a rhino worth more than the life of a human?
>
> In the Brits (Geluk) region the farming community has decreased from an original 260 farmers to only nine at present. Of the original number, eleven have been killed, while the others have sold their farms to the state (land claims). The farm workers in the Brits/Geluk region say that they don't leave their homes after dark, because they fear for their lives. Yet our Police Commissioner still insists that farm killings are not a problem in South Africa.
>
> When will our government take action against these criminals? No one is safe anymore. We live in fear!
>
> Yours faithfully,
>
> Mrs Belinda van Noord
>
> (Bereaved daughter of Gerhardus Rudolph)[2]

But the red folder in Belinda's hands contained more than just her own story. It was a collection of 100 letters from families who had either survived such attacks, or had lost loved ones as a result of such attacks. AfriForum had been collecting the letters with the intention of presenting them to the Minister, but Belinda's insistence on becoming involved led us to agree that she should be the one handing over the letters to the Minister. Belinda's letter was not uniquely tragic. The file included letters from wives who had seen their husbands murdered in front of their families, families having to come to grips with torture that their loved ones had had to endure, families who had to look for a loved one for days, only to find that he had been buried near the farm dam by his murderers. The constant theme in virtually all these letters was an outcry about the negligence of their local police departments and the careless attitude of the Department of Police and the SAPS.

Belinda performed like an experienced activist. As the Minister's secretary came through the door, she greeted him with a gracious smile, thanking him for his time in coming down from his office on the upper floors to meet with us, waiting in the reception area. As the Colonel took the red folder from Belinda's hands, her grip on her side of the folder suddenly tightened. It was in that awkward moment, with the Colonel holding the folder at one end, Belinda clutching the folder at the other end and a few media microphones squeezed in between the two of them, that Belinda uttered the words at the beginning of this chapter.

Belinda's reference to the colour of her skin was not the result of her being a race-conscious person, but in frustrated reaction to a statement by the Minister's spokesperson, Zweli Mnisi, just weeks before this event – a statement that I will mention later on in this chapter.

Little did we or Belinda know that several minutes before our arrival there, Mnisi had issued a press statement from the office of the Minister, a few storeys above our heads, stating that they did not take Belinda's attempt to communicate with the minister seriously. Under the heading 'Afriforum's (sic) Publicity Stunt Compromises the Fight Against Crime,' Mnisi's press statement read as follows:

> The Ministry of Police has noted a very disturbing trend by Afriforum (sic) over the past few years, which has the potential to compromise our efforts in the fight against crime.[3]

At the time when the statement was issued, Mnisi was very well aware of the events that were about to unfold in their reception area. In fact, I personally corresponded with him about the matter prior to our arrival. But even before he had received the letters, he had described the presentation as a mere ‘publicity stunt’ that could not be taken seriously.

In the statement, Mnisi also suggested that AfriForum should not be taken seriously. ‘Yesterday, a similar stunt’ was pulled by Afriforum (sic),’ wrote Mnisi. The ‘similar stunt’ that Mnisi referred to was an alleged gathering two years before where AfriForum was said to have informed the media that the Minister would be there, while the Minister had had no notice of this. To this day we could not determine what gathering he was talking about, as AfriForum had never invited the media to any gathering with the Minister at that time. Our only conclusion was that Mnisi had either made up the story, or had AfriForum confused with another organisation.

In the statement Mnisi wrote:

> The office of the Minister received several queries from the media about a meeting with the Afriforum (sic) which, apparently, is scheduled for today. Again, no official meeting was confirmed with Afriforum (sic) and we accordingly advised members of the media, of this unfortunate publicity stunt. Most media expressed shock, to say the least.
>
> Below is an email extract, sent to the Minister’s spokesperson by the Deputy CEO of Afriforum (sic), Ernst Roets, long after the media had begun enquiring about this purported meeting. It read, quote: ‘This e-mail serves to inform you that a lady whose brother and father was murdered on a farm during the holidays will be delivering a bundle of letters, addressed to the minister at your office tomorrow. AfriForum will assist her and will also present the memorandum on farm attacks that you refused to accept on 1 December 2012. We are planning to arrive at your offices at about 12:00. I should mention that members of the media might be present. We are not expecting a meeting with the minister or yourself tomorrow, but it will be appreciated if you or another representative of the minister were to accept the letter, instead of leaving us to drop it off at the reception.[4]

Mnisi then went on about how the Department of Police took crime seriously and how they engaged with stakeholders other than AfriForum, that were more respectful and professional (presumably more agreeable) and he hinted that these stakeholders were happy with the South African Police Service's (SAPS) attitude regarding farm murders.

He then cited the rural safety plan as a solution to the problem and concluded:

> We therefore strongly condemn such actions and urge Afriforum (sic) to stop misleading the public, compromising government's efforts on crime and begin to contribute to the fight against crime through intellectual, society-building initiatives and developmental safety agendas.
>
> The continuous mocking, grandstanding and publicity-seeking stunts at the expense of real crime victims do not serve any good cause. We urge Afriforum (sic) to refrain from their divisive approach of racialising crime. Crime affects us all, black or white, young or old, rich or poor. What concerns us is to fight crime, fight it smartly and toughly.[5]

This statement had been issued in the year that marked a decade of the effective deprioritisation of farm attacks by the South African government. The statement by the Ministry of Police was not indicative of a new attitude towards farm murders, but rather the unveiling of a sentiment that had been brewing in government circles for years. And I was unfortunate enough to experience it firsthand.

But the case of Belinda van Noord was not unique. In fact, the South African government has repeatedly scorned the victims of farm attacks' plight for the prioritising of these attacks.

In October 2017, the then Minister of Police Fikile Mbalula was asked in Parliament by Pieter Groenewald, leader of the Freedom Front Plus (FF Plus), what steps were being taken by the SAPS to increase safety in rural areas in the light of the scourge of farm attacks that had occurred in that year. The Minister responded that the SAPS would focus on farm attacks, but that they did not intend establishing specialist units for rural safety that would have a focus on incidents on farms.[6]

When asked for comment about the fact that the ratio at which farmers were being murdered was considerably higher than the South African

average murder rate, Vuyo Mhaga, Spokesperson for the Minister of Police, responded by saying: ‘Let’s not make race part of the picture. It’s about murders on South Africans.’[7] Should farm murders be regarded as a priority? he was asked. ‘Every murder should be a priority. Surely you cannot provide priority protection to someone who provides food to South Africa above others?’[8]

THE MTHETHWA DOCKET

Since the launch of AfriForum’s campaign against farm murders in 2012, within a time frame of about one year, AfriForum’s call for the prioritising of farm murders was scorned on at least ten different occasions by the then Minister of Police, Nathi Mthethwa, or his representatives. Some of the noteworthy examples are mentioned.

On 25 May 2012, AfriForum hosted a wreath-laying ceremony in front of the Minister’s office with victims whose loved ones had been murdered. A total of 1 445 roses were laid down on that day, representing the total number of murdered farmers, according to the first edition of the book *Land of Sorrow.*[9] On this day, a memorandum was presented to Colonel Simon Chabangu, Mthethwa’s personal secretary.[10] In the memorandum, it was requested that farm murders be declared a priority crime and that specialist units for rural safety be established.[11] Shortly thereafter, AfriForum received a confirmation of receipt. No further correspondence was received and no further feedback was provided by the Minister.

On 19 June 2012, a protest march against violent crime was organised at the insistence of the Afrikaans singers Bobby and Karlien van Jaarsveld. A wide variety of South African actors, singers and other artists participated. The crowd of more than a thousand people gathered at the Pretoria Art Museum and proceeded towards the Union Buildings, where the office of the President of South Africa, Jacob Zuma, was situated.[12] A memorandum was presented to a representative of the President. The memorandum referred to the extreme levels of violent crime in South Africa and the President’s urgent intervention was requested. The memorandum particularly asked for the prioritising of farm murders, among other requests. The President was also asked to respond before 31 July 2012.[13] A confirmation of receipt was issued by the President’s office shortly thereafter, as well as was a short letter indicating that the matter had been

referred to the Minister of Police.[14] To eliminate any uncertainty, the memorandum was then also sent to Mthethwa's office by AfriForum. Mthethwa, however, ignored the referral to him by the President and never responded to the memorandum.

On 2 July 2012, AfriForum wrote to the newly-appointed National Police Commissioner, Riah Phiyega. Phiyega was congratulated on her appointment and AfriForm urgently requested the Commissioner, in collaboration with the Minister of Police, to take deliberate steps to address the crisis of farm murders. Mtethwa's office was also informed of the letter in which he was mentioned.[15] Mthethwa did not respond to our request. Phiyega responded about four months later, referring us to the National Rural Safety Strategy (NRSS).[16]

On 4 October 2012, AfriForum wrote to a variety of international organisations regarding the reality of farm murders in South Africa. A copy of the letter was also delivered to a representative of the President by hand. The letter provided a brief summary of a list of facts regarding farm attacks. The President's intervention was requested.[17] No response was provided by the President, nor by the Minister of Police, to whom a copy was also sent.

A follow-up protest march on the one initiated by Bobby and Karlien van Jaarsveld on 19 June 2012 was organised to take place on 21 November that year. This one, however, was held in Cape Town. The memorandum that was presented to the President in June was also presented to the Speaker of Parliament, Max Sisulu.[18] Confirmation of receipt was provided, but no further response or action followed.

On 1 December 2012, a national day of protest against farm murders was declared by AfriForum. In a coordinated effort, victims of farm attacks, assisted by AfriForum's local structures, presented a memorandum in which the prioritisation of farm attacks was requested to more than one hundred local police stations across South Africa on 30 November 2012.[19] A copy was also sent to the office of the Minister of Police, who never replied.

Less than two weeks thereafter, Belinda van Noord's brother and father were murdered in their farm butchery near the town of Brits, about 45 minutes' drive from the Minister's office. Her attempt to raise the issue with the Minister and the Minister's response have already been stated at the beginning of this chapter.

Exactly one year after the initial march by more than a thousand people to the President's office, on 19 June 2013, AfriForum released a report in which gross police negligence in dealing with farm attacks was revealed. The report was released during a conference on farm attacks.[20] A copy was also sent to the Minister's office. The Minister attacked the report publicly on the very same day, presumably before he had read it, stating that the report was racist and that he did not care much for its content.[21]

SHOVED OUT OF THE SAPS HEADQUARTERS

In July 2015, when AfriForum assisted Bernadette Hall to present a memorandum calling for the prioritising of farm murders to the Minister of Police, Hall and members of AfriForum were aggressively shoved out of the SAPS headquarters by members of the SAPS. Hall's husband, David Hall, had been murdered on their farm in 2012. The memorandum contained a motion of no confidence in the Department of Police and the SAPS.[22] The police refused to accept Hall's memorandum.

NOT RESPONDING TO LETTERS

In March 2018, AfriForum directed an urgent letter to the newly appointed Minister of Police, Bheki Cele, requesting a meeting to discuss a strategy to combat farm attacks. 'Cele didn't even acknowledge receipt of this letter.[23] Cele's refusal to meet with civil society about farm murders is however not isolated, but part of a decade-long trend. His predecessor, Fikile Mbalula also refused,[24] as did Mbalula's predecessor, Nkosinathi Nhleko,[25] as well as Nhleko's predecessor, Nathi Mthethwa.[26]

POLITICAL BLACKMAIL

Perhaps the best way to illustrate the frustration of those campaigning for the prioritising of farm attacks is to tell the tale of AfriForum's protest march for the prioritising of farm murders in December 2012.

On 23 October 2012, I called Mnisi, the spokesperson for the Minister of Police, to inform him about a march for the prioritising of farm attacks that was scheduled to take place on 1 December 2012. I requested a confirmation letter that the Minister or one of his representatives would accept our memorandum on the said day. Mnisi responded by stating that they were not comfortable with our plans. He suggested arranging a meeting between AfriForum and the Minister of Police, on the condition

that we discontinue our planned march. He used the words: ‘We don’t want AfriForum creating headlines on this matter.’ I agreed to Mnisi’s proposal to meet with the Minister and added that we would discontinue the march if the Minister were to agree that farm murders should be treated as a priority crime. Mnisi also indicated that he was not aware of any previous correspondence from AfriForum on this matter.

I followed up on our telephone conversation by sending a formal letter to Mnisi, explaining our concerns about farm attacks, what we required of the Department of Police, our plans for 1 December and attachments of previous correspondence between AfriForum and the office of the Minister of Police.[27] Mnisi did not respond to the letter and did not provide a confirmation of receipt thereof.

On the same day, we formally notified the Tshwane Metro Police of our intention to march against farm murders. Two days later, I sent another email to the Minister’s spokesperson, asking for a response. He still did not reply. After another three days, I sent the following text message to Mnisi’s cellphone: ‘Please confirm whether you have received my e-mails last week. Regards, Ernst Roets, AfriForum’. Mnisi responded with: ‘Yes I have, we are trying to secure a date for a meeting. Will keep u posted. Rgds, Zweli.’

On 8 November I sent another email to Mnisi, informing him that we were still waiting for his feedback and a confirmation letter that they would receive our memorandum on the prioritising of farm attacks. In the event that he did not understand the extent of the applicable legislation, I also explained that the Minister’s refusal to provide such a confirmation letter would not render the march illegal and that we would continue with the march to the Minister’s office, regardless of whether such a letter was provided or not. In the case of a refusal to accept the memorandum, we would then read the memorandum aloud in the street outside the Minister’s office. Again, Mnisi did not respond.

On 12 November I sent another text message to his cellphone: ‘I sent you an e-mail requesting a confirmation letter that you will accept our memorandum on the 1st of December. Regards, Ernst Roets, AfriForum.’ He did not reply. The day thereafter, I sent him another text message: ‘Please respond to my request for a confirmation letter for accepting of a memorandum on 1 December.’ Mnisi responded with: ‘I will speak to the

Minister & revert. I cud not arrange meeting with u last week because of other engagements in Parliament.' Mnisi did not revert as promised.

The following day I sent another email to Mnisi, again requesting a confirmation letter. Mnisi again neglected to respond. Five days later, on 19 November, I called Mnisi on his cellphone. He did not take the call, but responded with a text message, asking me to text him.

On that same day, I called the Tshwane Metro Police about our notice to march. The officer informed me that there was nothing wrong with our application and that the march would be legal, but that we would need to have a routine logistics meeting, as required by the applicable legislation.

On 20 November I sent Mnisi another text message: 'Can we expect a confirmation letter for our march on 1 December, as requested? Ernst Roets, AfriForum.' Mnisi did not respond. Shortly after texting Mnisi, I followed up with the Tshwane Metro Police. The officer told me that they had received a phone call from 'top management' minutes before I called them. Top management had instructed them that the march could not continue and that it would have to be declared an illegal gathering. I asked what the reasons for this instruction were, to which the officer responded that no reasons had been provided. I then suggested that we postpone the march, but the officer told me that I had misunderstood what she was trying to convey: It was not the date or the place of the march that was problematic, it was the march itself. I was told that AfriForum would not be allowed to march against farm murders 'until further notice'.

The following day, our attorneys served a legal notice on the Minister of Police, as well as the City of Tshwane Metropolitan Police, indicating that the conduct of the Minister of Police amounted to an abuse of power and a violation of our rights and that we intended taking the matter to court should an adequate written response not be provided by the close of business on that day.[28] Mnisi responded, denying that he had ever said that he intended to prevent the march from taking place 'at any cost'.

On 27 November I met Touch Mashaba, a representative in the office of the Member of the Mayoral Committee (MMC) for Police in Pretoria. Mashaba bluntly refused to give me his name and I was only able to obtain it through other methods after the meeting. During the meeting I repeatedly asked him to provide me with reasons why the march could not continue.

He was not able to provide answers, nor was he able to explain why the march could not take place at a later stage. I explained to him that AfriForum had a clean track record of peaceful public gatherings, but this was not sufficient. Mashaba asked me whether I would be interested in meeting with the National Police Commissioner to discuss our concerns about farm attacks, to which I responded with great interest. Mashaba then stated that such a meeting could only be arranged on the precondition that we cancel all plans to organise a march against farm attacks. I responded that it was already too late, as the march had already been marketed and was scheduled to take place in four days. Mashaba then stated that in the event of such a march taking place, AfriForum could be assured of the fact that a meeting with the National Police Commissioner would be out of the question. This was in line with Mnisi's earlier statement that a meeting with the Minister of Police could only take place on the condition that no protest march take place. This was, of course, a blatant abuse of power.

Mashaba said that he would contact me if he believed that there was a need for further communication, which he never did.

We went to the Gauteng High Court on 29 November 2012. The Court found that no fault could be found with our intended march and that the march could continue as planned.

The following day (the day before the march), I finally met with the Tshwane Metro Police, as prescribed by law. The panel unanimously agreed that no fault could be found with our intended march. I was told that the reason why the march had been declared illegal prior to the court proceedings was as a result of the interference of the Department of Police. The planned march was then also 'preliminarily' declared to be legal by the Tshwane Metro Police, pending any further objections by the Minister of Police. By closing time that day I had not received any further correspondence.

On 1 December, the march continued as planned. About five hundred people, including dozens of people who had either been attacked on farms, or whose loved one had been murdered, arrived in Church Square, in Pretoria's city centre. From there we would march to the Minister of Police's office. We were, however, disturbed to find that no police officers had been dispatched to look after the safety of the marchers and to regulate traffic as we proceeded through the city centre. This was required by law.

We managed to find two police officers in the area who were unaware of the march and thought that we were organising an illegal gathering. After I had showed them the court order, they agreed to assist in regulating traffic, although this was grossly insufficient.

The Minister refused to accept our memorandum and we had to read the memorandum in the street, before proceeding back to our gathering point.

Two days after the march, I saw that I had been sent an email on the evening before the march by senior superintendent William Mohlala of the Tshwane Metro Police. Mohlala informed me that the march would still be regarded as an illegal gathering because we had allegedly never informed the Department of Police of our plans to protest.

In a subsequent complaint that we filed at the office of the Public Protector, I stated that:

> I regard the events that led to and that followed on 1 December 2012 as a series of violations of our rights, especially the rights to freedom of expression, the right to protest and the right to fair administrative action. Furthermore, it is clear to me that the conduct of the Minister of Police, through his representatives, amounted to maladministration, abuse of power and even blackmailing. I am afraid that our plans to march on an issue of crime has been politicised by the Minister of Police to such an extent that active steps were taken to prevent us from exercising our constitutional rights. Given the circumstances, it is not farfetched to conclude that the Minister is not only indifferent to South Africa's farm murder catastrophe, but that his department is prepared to abuse its power to prevent the public from speaking out about it.[29]

INTERVENTION AT THE UNITED NATIONS

In November 2015 AfriForum participated at the United Nations' (UN) Forum on Minority Issues to raise awareness about the plight of South African farmers. The conference was organised by the UN's Special Rapporteur on Minority Issues, among other things with the aim of determining the extent to which minority communities' rights are respected and protected by their respective governments. The conference was also attended by Henk van de Graaf of the Transvaal Agricultural Union of South Africa (TAU SA) and André Fourie of the FF Plus.

In a strange twist of tragic irony, a senior representative of the South African government was able to speak before it was my turn to address the conference. The representative aggressively questioned the mere fact that I was allowed to speak at an event like this, claiming that AfriForum only speaks for a minority and that our concerns should therefore not be taken seriously. She added that those who call for the prioritising of farm attacks are only doing so because they intend to ‘bring back apartheid’ and that it is a racist attempt to categorise crime according to racial lines. In a strange contradiction, she then stated that farm attacks should not receive priority treatment, because the South African government is not prepared to racialise its crime prevention strategies, but also that we need to remember that many black people are also attacked and killed during farm attacks.

I was allowed the opportunity to speak the next morning. That evening, I had to rewrite my prepared remarks in order to respond to what the South African representative had said. The following day, it was my turn, so I lashed back:

> I feel unfortunately that it is more important for me to respond to some of the statements that were made yesterday by the South African representative regarding this issue … The South African government is very inconsistent with its approach, because it’s easy for the South African government to prioritise the poaching of rhinoceroses. It’s easy for the South African government to dispatch more police officials to black townships where there is a high crime rate, and we support that. It’s easy for the South African government to draw up a counter-strategy when police officials are being killed in disproportionate numbers. In South Africa it’s twice as dangerous to be a farmer than to be a police official, but when we talk about farm murders, then all of a sudden the response is that is doesn’t make sense to prioritise these attacks.
>
> The reality is that farmers in South Africa are being attacked and killed in complete disproportionate numbers and that these attacks are committed in a very brutal fashion, that many of them are subject to hours of torture. Attie Potgieter, for example was stabbed 151 times with a garden fork while his two-year-old girl watched. Johan Strydom was tied to a pickup truck and dragged over a dirt road until his organs burst. Annatjie van Rooyen was still alive when she was stuck in a

> deep-freezer. Roger van Parys had a samurai sword pushed down his throat and still we get no reaction from the South African government regarding these attacks. What we do however get – and it is on record – is that some of the victims have been mocked and ridiculed by representatives of the South African government. As a matter of fact, the spokesperson for the Minister of Police issued a press statement saying that it is only publicity stunts when the victims call for the prioritising of these attacks. Mr. Chairperson, I have to go back and report to our constituency what is being done about this problem and I come here to find the South African representative saying that the people who want these crimes to be prioritised are only doing so because we want to bring apartheid back. I find it offensive and I wish to state for the record that it is not the case and I wish to call on the representatives here to take note of this problem.[30]

Earlier that year, the Department of International Relations and Cooperation (DIRCO) took deliberate steps to prevent AfriForum from being granted special consultative status with the non-governmental organisation (NGO) Branch of the United Nations (UN). While attending a session in New York to register AfriForum at the said UN forum, I discussed AfriForum's application to be granted such status with the newly-appointed representative of the South African government. The representative told me that he had gone through AfriForum's application and that there was nothing wrong with it. He even told me not to worry, as the South African government had great influence over the committee. He then mentioned China, Sudan and Cuba as some of the countries that are in alliance with the South African government. Shortly before I was called to respond to questions about our application again, the representative approached me, visibly angry. He told me that his superiors at DIRCO just called him from Pretoria. He was instructed to use his influence over the panel to prevent AfriForum from being granted consultative status at the UN. The reason for this was that AfriForum is 'too arrogant' to be allowed to speak to the UN about South African affairs. The representative even went as far as to tell me that he likes me personally and that I should not take it personally. 'It's not me,' he said. 'It's my instructions from government.' He then told me that he had already approached South Africa's allies and that he had planted some questions that would be posed to me in order to derail our application to be granted consultative status. 'Whatever I ask you, I am going to tell

you to put it in writing. So it doesn't matter if you answer the questions here or not. You will need to go back and answer in writing and come back next year,' he said. The representative then gave two reasons to motivate the claim that AfriForum was 'too arrogant'. The one was AfriForum's objection to the fact that the then Zimbabwean President, Robert Mugabe, had been invited to the inauguration of former President Jacob Zuma. The other was AfriForum's campaign against farm murders. The fact that AfriForum is discussing farm murders at meetings of the UN was regarded as an act of arrogance that should not be tolerated. Before walking away, he gave me one piece of advice if we wanted our application to be successful. 'You must just stop talking too much. You talk too much.'[31]

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Sue was shot three times. The first was in the bedroom. The last two shots were shot into her right eye. 'Her nose wasn't broken, but her whole face was as if someone had beaten her up, but that was because of the gunshot, I think. From here up to here, it looked as if she had been pulled through a cheese shredder,' Robert said, holding his one hand up to his neck and the other hand at his lower body. It was as if her skin had been ripped off. They just dragged her over the gravel.

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CHAPTER 19

Investigating farm attacks

(With recognition to Nantes Kelder, former head of AfriForum's Trauma Unit.)

Over the years, AfriForum has been inundated with complaints from victims of farm attacks who believe that their cases were not dealt with sufficiently by their local South African Police Service (SAPS). It has become clear that negligent investigations are not limited to isolated cases, but occur on a regular basis.

In the study conducted by Lorraine Claasen of the AfriForum Research Institute (ANI) as part of her research for this book, 50% of victims complained that they were not satisfied with the way in which their cases had been investigated by the SAPS.

Complaints vary and include the following:

- Crime scenes were not properly protected;
- A large number of police officers were present at the scene, simply out of curiosity;
- Statements were taken incorrectly or poorly;
- Statements were taken days or even weeks after the attack;
- Forensic evidence was not handled properly and according to prescriptions;
- Pieces of evidence were left behind on the scene;
- Suspects were taken back to the crime scene to be identified by the victims (a practice in violation of identification procedures);
- Information provided to the police was not followed up properly;
- No feedback to victims;
- Poor response times; and
- Instructions of prosecutors in dockets were not adhered to.[1]

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Some of these cases are elaborated on in the pages that follow.

BLOODY TROUSERS IN A POLICE VEHICLE[2]

Roelof van der Westhuizen was attacked on his farm near Rustenburg in North West on 28 June 2006. During the attack, he was beaten several times with an eight pound hammer and stabbed with an object. Van der Westhuizen's hands and feet were tied behind his back and he was left for dead by his attackers. The attack took place at around 13:30 and he was only found at 18:25 by his wife, Andriëtte. By that stage he had already lost a lot of blood.

During the investigation of the attack, Andriëtte found a pair of trousers on the scene that did not belong to her husband. It was soaked in blood. The trousers were identified by their neighbours as belonging to one of their workers. Andriëtte handed the trousers to the investigating officer in the matter on the same day. On 7 July 2006, more than a week after the incident, the investigating officer in the matter visited Van der Westhuizen. Van der Westhuizen noticed that the pair of trousers that had been handed over to the police as evidence was still lying in the back of the police vehicle. The evidence was not packaged as forensic evidence and was also not signed into the appropriate register.

The SAPS also never seized the objects with which Van der Westhuizen was attacked – a knife, pipe and a hammer – and they remained in the possession of the victim. After further usage of those items on the farm, the evidential value was lost. Several investigating officers worked on the matter and the suspect was released on bail. The matter was later scrapped from the roll because the docket was allegedly not in court. After several complaints, a warrant was issued for the arrest of the accused, but he was never arrested.

In 2008, more than two years after the attack, basic investigative work on the docket had not been done. A prosecutor made the following note in the docket: 'I think the complainant has reason for complaint. Several things have to be investigated.'[3]

Van der Westhuizen never received feedback from the SAPS and the matter was never settled.

INCAPACITATED DOG UNIT

When Venessa Stafleu (34) was murdered in front of her children (3 and 5 years old) on their farm near Randfontein in Gauteng on 30 April 2012, the children had to hide from the attacker. After some time, they ran across the farm in the middle of the night towards the farm of their grandfather, Corrie Nel.

'The crime scene was chaotic,' recalls Nel. The dog unit was on the scene to take the scent and pursue the attacker, but they did not have any lights or torches with them, so they could not do anything. The investigating officer only received the file two weeks after the incident.[4]

Venessa's alleged murderer fled to Lesotho and the SAPS was not prepared to take steps to ensure that he was extradited. Nel has been attending various events relating to farm attacks in order to get someone who is able to assist to ensure that justice will be done to Venessa's murderer.[5] 'The police said that they would catch him when he comes back to South Africa,' says Nel. 'I'm considering suing the National Police Commissioner and the Minister of Police,' says Nel. '[Shrien] Dewani, who allegedly had his wife murdered in South Africa, was fetched from England at great expense.'[6]

DISAPPEARANCE OF FORENSIC EVIDENCE[7]

David (48) and Bernadette Hall (44) were attacked on their farm near Fochville in Gauteng on 20 February 2013, as they went out to milk the cows at 06:00. Five suspects came walking from the maize field in the direction of the dairy. One was armed with a firearm. David realised that they were in danger and locked Bernadette in the tank room.

David was attacked and shot dead. Bernadette was also attacked and taken into the house, where she was tied up. She sustained several injuries during the attack. After the attack, the suspects fled with the Halls' vehicle.

The SAPS arrived on the scene about an hour after the attack. Some of the neighbouring farmers who were also on the scene commented that the SAPS did not have a clue what to do in order to safeguard the crime scene. Only about three hours after the attack was the crime scene cordoned off. The local farmers had to take the lead in telling the SAPS what evidence to confiscate and how to determine from which direction the attackers had come. The SAPS trotted around on the scene without taking proper notice

of the pieces of evidence that were lying around. This was eventually collected by the local farmers and handed over to the SAPS.

From the SAPS's photo album it seems that the evidence was properly packaged and signed into the register. According to the proof in the docket, the evidence was sent to the forensic laboratory in Pretoria. Statements in the docket were, however, poorly taken and the use of language in the statements is concerning. Furthermore, the DNA reports from the laboratory were not prepared for the court proceedings and could not be presented as evidence.

Two suspects were arrested. Bernadette was asked to participate in an identification parade, where she positively identified the suspects as the people who had murdered her husband.

However, both suspects were declared to be not guilty on all charges against them due to a lack of evidence and released. Due to the double jeopardy principle, even if the evidence in the matter were to be presented now, these two individuals could never be charged for the same crime again, as they have already been released.

NOT RETURNING PHONE CALLS[8]

At around midnight on 16 July 2012, Hibbe van der Veen (64) was attacked on his farm near Bronkhorstspruit. He had already gone to sleep at the time. It was his birthday and his cousin and his cousin's wife, Jurie (65) and Bettie Smith (60), were with him in the house. He had been living alone on the farm since his wife's passing in 2009.

That evening, three attackers broke the window of one of the rooms in order to get in. They were not able to get in and then proceeded to the window of the main bedroom. Van der Veen was already awake by then and was waiting for them. The attackers fired blindly and shot Van der Veen in the stomach. Meanwhile, the Smith's locked themselves in their room in order to protect themselves. The attackers tried to access their room, when Jurie fired a shot through the door, injuring one of the attackers before they fled the scene.

Not far from the farmhouse, the attackers hid in the veld. An ambulance was called to take Van der Veen to the hospital. Upon its arrival, the ambulance was stopped by the attackers. The injured attacker was shoved into the ambulance and the driver was forced to take him to the hospital.

The attacker was found in Mamelodi Hospital, where he had been treated for a gunshot wound. He was arrested. The matter was later scrapped from the roll due to a lack of evidence. It became clear the matter could not be dealt with due to poor investigative work. Forensic evidence such as blood samples disappeared, for instance. Fingerprints had also not been taken.

Van der Veen attempted on several occasions to contact the investigating officers in the matter to assist in solving the matter, but with no success. Promises were made that feedback would be given, but this never happened.

Van der Veen was in a coma for more than four weeks and thereafter in hospital for a considerable time. The medical costs amounted to roughly R1,4 million ($112 000). He had to sell his farm and move to a retirement village in Pretoria.

DOCKETS DISAPPEARING

Koos Ludeke (59) was attacked on his farm near Hoopstad in the Free State on 22 November 2017. He was overpowered by four men, armed with pangas (machetes), knives and an iron bar. The men tried to decapitate Ludeke, but he was able to fight back.

They eventually fled when Ludeke's wife, Delia, managed to fire off a warning shot.

One of them was released on bail and had to pay R3 000 ($240). When they had to appear in court again, the docket was nowhere to be found. The matter was postponed again. Shortly thereafter the matter was struck from the roll and the suspects were set free, because the docket had disappeared. Ludeke was told that they would be arrested again once the docket was found. 'I am angry and disappointed in the police. I was never informed that the men had been released. The station commander was dishonest,' said Ludeke. 'What message does this send to the attackers? They will think that they can do as they please, because of the police's inefficiency.'[9]

LACK OF WILL, INCAPACITY AND INCOMPETENCE

Many of the victims of farm attacks have dreadful stories about the manner in which their cases have been investigated by the SAPS. This is probably due to a lack of will combined with the incapacity and incompetence of local SAPS members.

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‘I knew she wasn’t conscious, but I didn’t know that she was tied up. I also didn’t know that she had a bag in her mouth.’ Robert then stumbled towards the road to call for help.

‘I spent about an hour next to the road. No one wanted to stop. All the trucks hooted. It was already daylight.’

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CHAPTER 20

Prioritising farm attacks

‘Let me … make it clear that my opposition to farm murders does not mean I’m okay with any other murder, any more than wearing a pink breast cancer awareness icon means I feel prostate cancer is a good thing or even just less important,’ said musician Chris Chameleon in an interview in 2017. ‘Farm murders touch me personally. A friend of mine was killed on his farm this year. My uncle, a farmer, was murdered a few years ago. And I farm, and like many other farmers live in fear because of the unusual vulnerability that comes with living out in the sticks, far from help, where no-one can hear you scream out your last breath.’[1]

It has been argued throughout this book that farm attacks should be regarded and treated as a priority crime. AfriForum has been campaigning for the prioritising of farm attacks since 2012. It was pointed out in Chapter 17 that farm attacks were in fact treated as a priority crime in the 1990s up until 2003, when a process of deprioritisation effectively started.

The issue of priority crimes is not without controversy, however, since there is no broad consensus of what exactly a priority crime is. It has been argued that AfriForum’s campaign is misdirected, given the fact that there is already a committee within the South African Police Service (SAPS) with a particular focus on farm attacks as a priority. This is part of the reason why it is argued that farm attacks should not only be regarded as a priority crime, but also responded to as such.

It has also been argued in Part 1 of this book that the argument for prioritisation of these attacks should not be vested in the identity of the victims, the identity of the perpetrators, or even the political climate in South Africa. The main determining factor whether a crime should be regarded as a priority is whether that particular crime results in particular consequences that need to be prevented, and whether standard methods of policing would be sufficient to effectively combat this crime.

Consequently it has been argued that farm attacks are unique – and require a unique counter-strategy – for at least four reasons. These reasons are:

1. The frequency of farm attacks;

2. The levels of brutality that often accompany these attacks;
3. The unique role that farmers have to play in our society; and
4. The fact that farmers live in unique circumstances.

It has also been argued that the last of these four should be regarded as the most important reason why a unique counter-strategy must be developed. It is also the least controversial of the four.

'This is a particular type of crime that requires particular attention,' the then Deputy General Secretary of the trade union Solidarity, Dirk Hermann, said in a television interview in 2012. 'That is why it requires specialist attention and that is also why we are demanding specialist units.'[2] Hermann continues:

> This problem is however greater than the agricultural community. This is a type of war in which the state has to be involved on a much greater level, as well as the police and in certain cases – especially in the areas of South Africa's borders – also the South African Defence Force.[3]

WHAT IS A PRIORITY CRIME?

'Technically speaking, there isn't such a thing as a "priority crime",' explains Johan Burger.[4] The concept of priority crimes developed as part of the Joint Operational and Intelligence Structures (JOINTS) within the SAPS. 'The goal was that a certain type of crime should be treated as a priority, for which they would then have to allocate a committee,' explains Burger. In the late 1990s farm attacks as a crime phenomenon became the task of the JOINTS.[5]

Other crimes that have been regarded as priority crimes by the South African government include copper cable theft – which has been estimated to cost the South African economy R5 billion ($400 million) a year,[6] rhino poaching,[7] cash-in-transit robberies,[8] violence against women and children,[9] and gang-related violence.[10] It should be noted that gang-related violence has not officially been declared a priority crime and that a national priority committee for gang-related violence does not exist, but that it is regarded as such and that particular operations to curb this phenomenon are planned and executed by the SAPS.[11]

It has been argued by opponents of our campaign for the prioritising of farm attacks that farm attacks cannot be a priority crime, because farm

attacks in themselves do not constitute a particular crime. This is fallacious reasoning, given that none of the above-mentioned priority crimes constitutes a crime in itself. Copper cable theft is a manifestation of theft. Rhino poaching is a manifestation of poaching. Cash-in-transit robbery is a manifestation of robbery. Violence against women and children can be a manifestation of a variety of crimes, including murder, rape and assault. The same goes for gang-related violence and, of course, farm attacks.

On the surface, it is sometimes argued that the determining factor of whether a crime is regarded as a priority should be answered by determining if a committee exists within the SAPS that deals with that particular manifestation of crime. If this is the determining factor, then farm attacks could indeed be regarded as a priority crime, since a committee on farm attacks does exist.[12] With regard to farm attacks, the existence of a committee on paper is, however, insufficient, mainly for two reasons. The first is that the committee is dysfunctional. The second is that it has been argued by various government leaders, including the Department of Police, that farm attacks are not and should not be regarded as a priority crime.[13] That is why the more important question is not whether a committee for that particular crime exists, but rather whether it is regarded and responded to as a priority. When it comes to farm attacks, this is certainly not the case. Whether a crime is a priority crime is not a question of a de jure reality, but a de facto reality.[14]

HOW TO PRIORITISE FARM MURDERS

The Directorate for Priority Crime Investigation (better known as the Hawks) has been established as an independent directorate within the SAPS and is responsible for combating, investigating and preventing national priority crimes such as serious organised crime, serious commercial crime and serious corruption.[15] There is no doubt that farm attacks constitute a serious violent crime. Despite this fact, farm attacks are not on the agenda of the Hawks. [16]

In order for farm attacks to effectively be dealt with as a priority crime by the South African government, the following steps should be taken:

1. **Quarterly release of statistics**

Statistics on farm attacks have become a major source of controversy, mainly due to what is perceived as secrecy by the South African government regarding farm attacks. The release of statistics on farm attacks ceased in 2003, despite a 25% increase in farm attacks revealed by the last available statistics. Since then, AfriForum's campaigns for the release of statistics have achieved a degree of success, with statistics being released sporadically. However, statistics need to be released not merely on an annual basis, but on a quarterly basis. The absence of comprehensive, up-to-date statistics is the first major indication that a particular crime is not regarded as a priority. Quarterly statistics would allow for identifying and responding to trends as they occur.

2. **Continued independent research**

It is impossible to sustainably combat any unique crime without proper research. The South African government should regard ongoing research into farm attacks as a core priority. This should also be done by independent researchers and not by government officials or anyone else who may have a vested political interest in the findings of the research.

3. **Fulfil the commando promise – community involvement**

It has been pointed out that, with the scrapping of the state-supported commando system in 2003, it was promised that the system would be replaced by an alternative structure operating in affiliation with the SAPS. It has been 15 years and that promise has still not been fulfilled. A system should be created through which the SAPS can effectively join forces with civil society and local communities in combating these attacks. AfriForum has found that civil society and local communities tend to be better organised and more up to date about the situation at ground level, and they have the ability to effectively respond to attacks, especially due to their knowledge of the terrain and the local people, among other. This could be achieved through sector policing, in combination with cooperation with and the empowerment of communities.

4. **Priority of the Hawks**

Farm attacks are a form of violent crime and could fall within the scope of the Hawks. Despite the perfect fit, the Hawks have not

yet taken up the issue of farm attacks as a priority.

5. **Partner with civil society**

   Within civil society, there are a variety of organisations that have a tremendous amount of information and skills that could be shared with the SAPS regarding farm attacks. This is already happening to a certain extent. However, the extent of SAPS cooperation with civil society appears to be dependent on political mood swings and on who the National Police Commissioner is. Partnerships should be stable and consistent.

6. **Revise the National Rural Safety Strategy (NRSS)**

   The NRSS is not a bad plan in general. There are, however, two major problems with the NRSS. The first is the fact that farm attacks are not even mentioned in the plan, and the second that the plan does not determine a counter-strategy with particular focus on the uniqueness of farm attacks.

7. **Specialist rural safety units – visibility**

   Pursuant to a focused counter-strategy, specialist rural safety units must be established. These units must have a particular emphasis on farm attacks. This should include dedicated vehicles, communication systems, research and analytical capabilities, intelligence capabilities, special powers in terms of legislation, visibility operations and preventative measures.

8. **Holistic approach**

   One of the major drawbacks in the government's reaction to farm attacks is the apparently exclusive localised focus. A holistic approach would allow for the analysis of trends and more effective preventative measures. It would also prevent disputes between local police stations over jurisdictional issues, as we have seen.

9. **Victim support**

   Victim support should be executed with a multidimensional approach. It should include the training of SAPS officers on how to interact with survivors and family members on a crime scene, for a start. It should also include a clear protocol on keeping victims updated on the progress of police investigations, referrals for counselling or psychiatric treatment, treatment during identification parades, preparing for trial, and assistance and

support during trials. An overarching complaint by the victims of farm attacks is that the state is more concerned about the rights of the perpetrators than the rights of the victims.

10. **Legislation**

    Legislation should be adopted in terms of which farm attacks are dealt with more comprehensively. The proposed act should include special powers to the SAPS to allow for proactive measures to prevent these attacks, as well as special powers to respond to them. It should also provide for community and civil society involvement. Penalties should be prescribed. The proposed act could also provide for the criminalisation of hate speech in which violence towards farmers is romanticised.

Breakthrough. The author with acting National Police Commissioner Khomotso Phahlane at a press conference where farm attacks were declared a priority crime in 2016. The prioritisation was however short-lived and Phahlane was replaced as National Police Commissioner soon thereafter. Photo: Gallo Images/Beeld/Herman Verwey

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‘Then I heard a bakkie approaching. It had all these lights on the canopy and a trailer on the back. I thought this is it. He’s going to have to run over me. So I sprang into the middle of the road. They braked and they nearly jack-knifed the trailer. The passenger got out. He said: “Jesus, what’s wrong with you?!”’

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CHAPTER 21

Fighting back

On a little farm in Limpopo an elderly couple was attacked one evening. (The date of the attack and the details on where the farm is situated were omitted in the source.) The farmer was 83 and his wife in her 70s. The house and the security systems in place were said by observers to resemble Fort Knox, with guard dogs, security walls, special security doors, floodlights, a panic room and all. Even the doors did not have hinges and could not be kicked out.

One morning, the farmer got up at 05:00 as usual, switched off the alarms and floodlights and called the dogs in. On this day, the dogs were not there, so he turned around to get his firearm. Just as he touched the door, three men grabbed him from behind. He screamed for his wife to run to the panic room. As he scuffled with the attackers (he was a fairly big man), his wife ran to get the double-barrelled shotgun. Quite dramatically, she threw it to him before she ran to the panic room.

He started firing, quickly killing one of the attackers. The second attacker then started hacking at him with a panga (machete) as the third attacker ran away. The farmer was struck 14 times on the head and back. He was then also stabbed ten times with a knife. Soaked in blood, he eventually dropped to the floor.

His wife, safely locked away in the house, was listening to the events unfolding outside. She could hear her husband screaming with pain, followed by a complete silence. Outside, he was still alive, but lying flat on his back, half-blind from the blood gushing over his face.

The third attacker, who had gone to the back of the house to break open the back door, then came running back in the direction of the farmer.

At that moment, the farmer looked up and saw the man running in his direction, picked up the shotgun and fired away, killing him instantly.

His wife remained locked in the panic room, believing that her husband had been killed, while he lay outside, believing that he was taking his last breaths. The second attacker spent some time in the house and eventually left. The next morning, the couple’s daughter arrived on the scene and found her father miraculously still breathing. He was immediately rushed to hospital.

Upon investigation of the scene, the blood-covered clothes of the second attacker were found in a cupboard, presumably because he had exchanged his clothes for clean clothing. In his pocket, the local South African Police Service (SAPS) officers found a flash disc that was filled with pictures of the house – from the outside as well as the inside. They also found a folded piece of paper containing a timetable of the couple's routine movements.[1]

This particular farmer and his wife managed to survive (although just barely), because they had taken a long list of precautionary measures. But, as it turns out, many of these precautionary measures proved to be insufficient to prevent an attack.

'I describe it as fourth generation warfare,' says retired Major General Roland de Vries, who became involved with AfriForum's community safety campaigns in 2017. 'These are people who operate in gangs. If you study their conduct and their tactics, it borders on the tactics of revolutionary warfare and a low-scale insurgency warfare in many ways … We need to look at the principles of counter-revolutionary warfare, to apply it in the type of strategies that we need to develop and the types of operational concepts that we need to execute on grassroots level.' [2]

SAPS IN CRISIS

A very concerning reality in South Africa is the degree of the crisis in which the SAPS finds itself. The crisis is manifested on a variety of levels.

The physical and emotional state of the SAPS has been described as 'catastrophic', among other things due to the fact that 89% of the active members of the SAPS who are treated for psychiatric conditions suffer from depression.[3]

During 2015, a total of 88 members of the SAPS were killed during the course of their duties. The African National Congress (ANC) responded that a heavier sentence should be instituted against such crimes, said ANC Member of Parliament (MP) Jerome Maake in 2016. Police murders should actually be declared a crime against the entire country – like high treason. When such people are arrested, they should be kept in separate prisons and get separate food and clothing. It cannot be treated like and ordinary murder, Maake added.[4]

SAPS members at grassroots level are usually armed with 9 mm pistols, and often find themselves confronted by criminals with AK-47s.[5] Their

bulletproof vests were more than 20 years old, for example, but the material actually lasts only for six years, said one police officer.[6] There no longer are specialist units in the SAPS, but criminals are becoming increasingly specialised, said Ian Cameron, Head of Community Safety at AfriForum.[7]

The office of the Minister of Police disclosed in 2017 that the SAPS has a shortage of about 3 000 police members.[8] However, lack of resources appears not to be a crisis when it needs to be utilised for political purposes. In March 2017, the news broke that the office of the Chief Justice had been broken into and robbed of 15 computers that contained the personal information of 250 of South Africa's judges. John Steenhuisen, MP for the DA, reacted on Twitter, saying: 'My money's on [Minister of State Security, David] Mahlobo and the kak-handed SSA [State Security Agency]. Signal jammer, imaginary social media villains and inept break ins. Intimidation of judiciary.' Later, Steenhuisen was called out of a committee meeting in Parliament to be informed by four SAPS officers who had driven more than 1 400 kilometres (870 miles) from Pretoria that Mahlobo had filed charges against him as a result of his tweet. Steenhuisen described it as an intimidation tactic and a blatant waste of SAPS resources.[9]

It was disclosed in December 2017 as another example of wasting of SAPS resources for political purposes, that a police unit was watching over a private, yet abandoned house that belonged to Mahlobo 24 hours a day for three years. 'We know we're not supposed to work here,' said one of the police officers who asked to remain anonymous. He explained that they were forced to look after the building by management.[10]

The SAPS is increasingly called in to deal with service-delivery protests and violent unrests as a result of political issues. 'Few commentators have sufficient understanding of, or sympathy for, the impossible situation in which the police are being placed,' says Frans Cronje, CEO of the Insitute of Race Relations (IRR). 'They have neither the numbers nor proper riot policing resources to keep up with what the politicians are demanding of them.' Cronje points out that a General in the SAPS confided to him that they (the SAPS) 'are not Plan B to govern the country':[11]

> A police general explained how every time his officers are deployed to quell one of these violent uprisings, he hears the same story. The politicians made wild promises, failed to keep them, and all too often

> misappropriated the funds meant for the issue in question. The community sought to complain, but the relevant local, provincial or national political leadership either ignored them or promised to follow up but never did.[12]

What is more alarming is the increased involvement of members of the SAPS in criminal activities. This is evident from grassroots level, right up to top management. Since the appointment of George Fivaz as National Commissioner of Police in 1995, South Africa has had six other National Police Commissioners. Of the seven, at least three have been accused of corruption while in office.

Vuyo Mhaga, spokesperson for the Minister of Police, shrugged off concerns about the repeated suspension or disciplining of members of the top management of the SAPS by saying that people would do well to remember that those people were clean when they were appointed and that the scandals only came later.[13]

A 2011 report by the IRR on the extent to which the SAPS is involved in perpetrating criminal violence found that allegations of SAPS officers' involvement in serious and violent crimes are not simply isolated incidents, but a pattern of criminal behaviour. It was found that SAPS criminality particularly includes involvement with violent crimes and that low conviction rates of implicated SAPS officers suggest that the SAPS do not take the problem seriously.[14]

In 2013 the SAPS it was disclosed that 1 448 serving SAPS officers had criminal records. This boils down to 747,6 SAPS officers with criminal records for every 100 000 SAPS officers. Table 19 indicates the crimes for which the officers had criminal records, as well as an indication of the number of police officers per 100 000 who were found to have been convicted of that that particular crime. (The ratio was calculated considering that the SAPS had 193 692 serving members in the year 2014/2015.)

CRIME CATEGORY	NUMBER	PROPORTION	CONVICTIONS PER 100 000
Murder	54	4%	27,9
Attempted murder	116	8%	59,9
Rape	37	3%	19,1
Attempted rape	33	2%	17
Assault	917	63%	473,4
Other offences	291	20%	150,2
TOTAL CONVICTIONS	1 448	100%	747,6

Table 19: Convicted SAPS personnel by crime category: 2013[15]

The acting Deputy National Commissioner for Human Resources, Lieutenant-General Nkrumah Mazibuko, said to Parliament that action would be taken within a year to clean out the SAPS's ranks. Pressured to provide a time frame, a 'temporary date' of June 2014 was given. By July 2014, the newly appointed Police Minister, Nathi Nhleko, conceded that all 1 448 SAPS members with criminal records remained in active duty.[16]

The independent criminologist Liza Grobler, who conducted an enquiry into SAPS corruption, found that out of 892 policemen who faced criminal charges for corruption in 2012 (a drop in a far wider ocean), only 22 (2,5%) had been suspended.[17]

In a three-year period, the Independent Police Investigative Directorate (IPID) investigated nearly 130 criminal complaints against the SAPS in Khayelitsha only, half of which had been lodged in 2012.[18]

The 2013/2014 annual report by the SAPS revealed that 5 578 disciplinary actions had been instituted against their own members over one year. In 3 435 cases some or other sanction, ranging from a verbal warning to a fine, was issued, and in more than 500 of these incidents the member in question was dismissed.[19]

A 2015 follow-up on the IRR's 2011 report found that there had been no significant decline in the extent of SAPS criminality and that there had been extensive SAPS involvement in perpetrating serious violent crimes continues. It was found that SAPS criminality is not a series of isolated incidents and that the SAPS's efforts fall far short of what is required to stamp out the problem. The report continues:

> The failure of police efforts – despite their extent – is evidence of the extent to which the police may have been infiltrated by criminal gangs

> and syndicates. What is expected is that the police infiltrate criminal gangs. In South Africa criminal gangs have infiltrated the police.[20]

It was furthermore found that SAPS officers often use their policing powers, as well as official equipment, to perpetrate crimes.[21]

The Independent Complaints Directorate (ICD) has indicated that more than 2 000 serious criminal cases involving SAPS members had been reported to it every year since 2007. The ICD investigated 720 deaths involving the SAPS in the 2011/2012 financial year and found evidence of criminality in 162 (22%) of the cases.[22]

These findings are consistent with what I have been told by SAPS officers. One officer who had been operating in a location determined by the SAPS to be a farm murder hotspot told me that he became concerned when he noticed that farm attacks in their jurisdiction were almost always committed during the shifts of particular officers. He was convinced that some of his fellow SAPS members were not only complicit by not fulfilling their duties, despite them knowing when and where these attacks would take place, but also that some of them were actively involved in some of these attacks.

In the 2012/2013 financial year civil claims against the SAPS had already exceeded R14 billion ($1,12 billion) for cases of assault, accidents, shootings and damage to property.[23]

In 2017 data released by the SAPS to AfriForum indicated that at least 7 829 guns were lost or stolen between 2009 and 2014, and that some if these weapons had been used to commit violent crimes.[24]

The involvement of prison wardens in the escaping of prisoners is also a matter of major concern. In April 2016, two prison wardens were arrested for the escape of sixteen prisoners from the Sun City prison in Johannesburg. One of the prisoners had to face trial for the murder of TV personality Johann Botha (53), who was killed together with his friend Werner Perchtold (76) in a Johannesburg restaurant.[25] When three alleged farm attackers who were accused of murder and rape escaped from police custody in the North West town of Sannieshof in June 2017, a local councillor said that the only way in which they could have been able to escape, was with the help of outsiders.[26] In fact 37 correctional officers were charged with and found guilty of corruption in the 2016/2017 financial

year (up from 34 in the previous year), while 118 were fired during 2015/2016.[27]

A 2011 study by the Human Sciences Research Council (HSRC)found that about 66% of the adult population of South Africa believed that corruption was a widespread problem in the SAPS and that only 41% of the respondents had some level of trust in the SAPS.[28] Even when there is a decrease in crime, public trust in the SAPS seems to be dwindling.

According to Statistics South Africa's 2016/2017 Victims of Crime Survey South African households' satisfaction with the SAPS dropped from 64,2% in 2011 to 58,8% in 2015/2016 and 57,3% in 2016/2017. In 2011, 43,5% of people said that they saw members of the SAPS at least once a day. This dropped to 33,1% in 2015/2016 and increased slightly to 33,8% in 2016/2017. There also appears to be a decreased sense of approval when it comes to the agricultural community. While 95% of murders and 89,5% of incidents of vehicle theft were reported to the SAPS in 2015/2016, reporting of the theft of fresh agricultural products was only 17,3% and that of stock theft only 29,3%. Reporting of assault to the SAPS declined from 93,3% in 2012 to 48,6% in 2015/2016. On top of that, there is also a drop in public trust of the justice system as a whole, but particularly with reference to the treatment of perpetrators by the courts, where approval dropped from 64,5% in 2011 to 52,3% in 2015/2016.[29] In 2011, 36,9% of households felt safe to walk around in their own neighbourhoods at night. This figure dropped to 30,7% by 2015/2016. By 2016/2017 this figure dropped even further to 30%.[30]

A DOUBLE STRATEGY

The initial prioritisation of farm attacks by the South African government, followed by a process of deprioritisation, has been illustrated in Chapter 17. In the absence of farm attacks being regarded as a priority crime, the question arises how local communities and civil society can fight back to curb the scourge of farm attacks.

As tax-paying citizens, we can expect safety and security to be a core priority for the government, and an argument can be made that fighting crime is not the role of the community but the role of the state. On the other hand, it could equally be argued that it serves no purpose to sit back and

wait for the South African government to come to the table to address these attacks while people are attacked on a daily basis.

It is for this reason that AfriForum's reaction to farm attacks is based on a dual strategy. On the one hand, the South African government has to be held accountable for the fact that the safety of its farmers is not regarded as a priority. This is referred to as the *pressure campaign*. On the other hand, local communities need to be organised to look after their safety more effectively. This is known as the *self-reliance campaign*.

The pressure campaign includes a wide variety of activities, including protest action, wreath-laying ceremonies, conferences, legal action, stakeholder engagement, petitions and international liaison. The self-reliance campaign also includes a variety of activities, centred around one major theme: community involvement. The aim of this campaign is not only to encourage people to look after their own safety more effectively and to be more vigilant, but particularly to organise communities into community safety networks and to establish regional, provincial and national coordination between these networks.

THE PRESSURE CAMPAIGN

The purpose of the pressure campaign is to hold the South African government accountable. The government has failed significantly in its duties to keep tax-paying citizens safe. This is particularly evident with regard to farm murders. In so far as the South African government fails to recognise the severity of farm murders, it also fails not only to protect that particular portion of its tax base, but also to secure food security for the population as a whole.

Of particular importance in this regard is the goal to internationalise the campaign against farm murders. While we regard local protest action as a fundamental part of the campaign against farm murders, even if only to create a track record of the South African government's disregard for the crisis, our experience is that international campaigns tend to lead to better results. The South African government and the ruling ANC have been benefitting from high levels of international approval, particularly as a result of their struggle credentials. The complete disregard for the safety of South African farmers does not suit the narrative that the ruling party is one that has the interest of all South Africans at heart, and therefore we have found that the African National Congress (ANC) is particularly sensitive to

international criticism or commentary that contradicts that narrative. As a result, we find that the South African government is prepared to take deliberate steps to prevent organisations such as AfriForum from speaking on international platforms about these issues. When we do, we find that international pressure tends to influence what the ANC refers to as the so-called balance of forces in favour of the concerns that we believe need to be addressed. The result is that doors that have previously been shut tend to open.

When I attended a UN conference on minority rights in 2014, I was approached by a representative of the South African government before it was my turn to address the gathering. She wanted to know why we felt that it was necessary to take our campaign to an international platform. ‘Why don’t you just talk with the Department of Police?’ she asked. I explained to her we had made dozens of attempts to discuss this issue with the department and that it always fell on deaf ears. Frustrated, she said that she would have to take the matter up with her superiors. ‘This creates a problem for us,’ she said, referring to the Department of International Relations and Cooperation (DIRCO). ‘The fact that the Department of Police is not talking to you in South Africa, implies that we have to manage the situation outside of South Africa.’[31]

THE SELF-RELIANCE CAMPAIGN

While campaigning for the prioritising of farm murders, the self-reliance campaign is about empowering local communities to look after their own safety better, to be more vigilant and to be more organised. This had to be done not only to respond to farm attacks, but to proactively prevent these attacks from taking place. The campaign entails a variety of activities, including the use of private security and establishing and coordinating community safety networks. The aim is to address these issues in cooperation with the SAPS, not in competition. We have also found that in many local communities, the local SAPS are eager to work together and that friction is often limited only to those cases where the South African government becomes involved at a national level.

As part of this campaign, AfriForum has launched project Nehemiah with the assistance of Major General Roland de Vries. Project Nehemiah is a project aimed at ensuring the safety, peace, prosperity and self-preservation of defenceless people and minority groups in South Africa by actively

contributing to the effective fight against violent crime. Together with this, the project integrates different communities and safety structures to fight violent crimes together and thus put more pressure on the government to act against crime.[32]

'The criminals clearly have the initiative. They have the intelligence networks. They are properly organised,' says De Vries.[33] As part of Project Nehemiah, AfriForum has undertaken to place a stronger focus on obtaining information that may lead to the proactive prevention of farm attacks, as opposed to only responding to these attacks. 'I always speak of the below-the-line preparation,' says De Vries, 'where the criminals prepare for their crimes, doing their networking, planning and organising where they are invisible. Then for one moment in time, they enter into our world for a few minutes – or in farm attacks, sometimes for up to nine hours, where they commit brutal tortures, but no one knows about it, because they operate below the line. The question then is how do you prepare for this? You can only achieve this if you execute information-driven operations and – this has to be your main driver for the type of operations that we must execute against the brutality that we are confronted with. And, of course, joined to this is proper command and control, seen from a military perspective.'[34]

This includes the integration of various communication systems, including WhatsApp groups that are already in operation across the country. It is for this purpose that AfriForum has established a central control room to integrate the various communication and information systems to which the organisation has access, to process that information and to take that to local communities for the development of proper counter-strategies.[35]

PRIVATE SECURITY

The private security industry in South Africa was virtually non-existent until 1985, when SAPS manpower was increasingly withdrawn from suburban police stations to deal with violent crime in townships. Those who could afford to pay for their own security increasingly did so in response to this development. By 1985, about 60 000 security guards worked in South Africa. By 1997, this number had increased to 115 ٣٣١. Private security increasingly started doing the work for which the SAPS had previously been responsible. This includes patrols in suburban areas, protection of private enterprises and storage facilities, and reaction to burglar alarms.

Currently there are up to ··· \· private security companies in South Africa, employing up to ··· 0·· private security guards.[36] This is more than the SAPS and the South African National Defence Force (SANDF) combined.[37] Other than that, there are also thousands of unregistered security companies, employing more than 200 000 security guards.[38]

While the ratio of SAPS officers to the general population has more or less remained the same, the ratio of private security to the general population has not only skyrocketed, but has surpassed that of the SAPS. By 2014, there was one private security guard in South Africa for every 111 members of the public, as opposed to one SAPS officer for every 353 members of the public.[39]

The increase in private security has greatly contributed to the serious decline in many contact crimes since the year 2000. Cash-in-transit robberies, for example, have declined from 467 in 2006 to 119 in 2014/2015.[40]

COMMUNITY SAFETY STRUCTURES

A community safety structure is a network of persons within a particular community who are assuming responsibility for their community's own safety and who undertake crime-prevention actions.[41] Community safety structures usually form part of community policing forums (CPFs) – forums in which all role players in a particular policing area, including the SAPS, jointly serve.[42] The concept of community structures stems from the European concept of a town watch. However, the notion disappeared with the introduction of professional policing in the 19th century.[43] The concept of community policing is, however, still implemented globally, with recorded successes in countries such as Australia, England and Wales.[44]

The establishment of community safety networks or neighbourhood watches was found to result in a decline of between 16% and 26% in crime in affected areas.[45]

With the increase in violent crime in South Africa, community safety structures started emerging. A community-involved farm watch system developed during die 1990s, particularly in reaction the increase in farm murders.[46]

AfriForum regards community safety as its core priority, given that people can never be free if they are not safe. As a result, the civil rights organisation has put considerable effort into establishing a network of community safety structures across the country and to assist these communities with information, training, resources and communication networks. AfriForum has consequently established more than a hundred community safety structures across South Africa and developed a team of full-time employees to coordinate the activities of these structures. Farm attacks are a core priority. Where these community safety structures operate efficiently, a decline in crime in general, but farm attacks in particular, is almost always clearly visible.

The emergence of community safety structures is one of the major reasons why farm murders started to decline from 140 in 2001 to 57 in 2014.[47]

These structures are, however, dependent on the involvement of volunteers. It is difficult to quantify the decline in crime that results from the establishment of these structures, largely due to the fact that the areas of operation mostly do not coincide with the areas covered by crime reports for SAPS districts. Where community safety structures usually focus on towns and rural areas around these towns, local police stations tend to include in their jurisdiction large informal settlements with high crime rates that are not covered by these structures.[48]

A consistent theme in the feedback by these structures is, however, that violent crime is on the decline. In those areas where farms are patrolled, farm attacks tend to decline together with other farm-related crimes, such as stock theft. In the farming community surrounding Elliot in the Eastern Cape, stock theft declined by more than 90% in the year after the establishment of community safety structures.

One of the most important lessons that AfriForum has learned in the process is that there is no blueprint for a successful community safety network. Every network has to be developed in a way that fits the needs and preferences of that particular community. The involvement of the right people and the right leadership are key components of the functioning of these structures. On the other hand, certain basic requirements are needed

for the effective functioning of such networks. These include proper communication, training, realistic strategies and equipment.[49]

The author with colleague Guido Urlings at the United Nations Forum on Minority Issues in 2015, to put farm murders on the agenda.
Photo: AfriForum

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‘I told them what had happened and I pointed in the direction where Sue was. They rushed us to Belfast, but they didn’t have any doctors. The nurse took one look and said “There’s nothing we can do here for you, Sir.”’

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CHAPTER 22

The question of genocide

In recent years there has been a gradual increase in international reporting on farm murders, often with particular focus on the South African government's careless attitude towards the problem. Talks of a looming white genocide have also increased dramatically. The international news outlet Reuters reported:

> In a country cursed by one of the world's highest murder rates, being a white farmer makes a violent death an even higher risk … Some of South Africa's predominantly white commercial farmers go as far as to brand the farm killings a genocide. [1]

'Official statistics on farm attacks are non-existent, due to what human rights groups have described as a "cover-up" by the notoriously corrupt — and potentially complicit — South African government,' reported Fox News.[2]

Claims about white genocide have been met with mockery and opposition from mainstream journalists. 'The term "farm murders" has become fundamentally politicised,' writes columnist Rebecca Davis. '[It has become] associated with false right-wing claims about "white genocide".'[3]

'If you believe there is a white genocide going on you have to believe that every leader in the ANC is a murderer. See the stupidity or not?' tweeted radio personality Johrné van Huyssteen,[4] who tweeted earlier that with 40 million against 3 million (presumably black people against white people), we (presumably white people) would have been 'moertoe' (Afrikaans slang word for stuffed-up or destroyed) if there really was a genocide.[5]

When singer and activist Steve Hofmeyr claimed that white South Africans were being killed 'like flies', the story dominated the news. The fact-checking website Africa Check reported that white people's chances of being murdered were considerably less than those of their black counterparts.[6]

Gregory Stanton, president of Genocide Watch, conducted a study tour of South Africa in 2014 to investigate claims about genocide. (Genocide Watch is a Washington-based organisation that works closely with the United Nations (UN) and exists to predict, prevent, stop and punish genocide and other forms of mass murder, and seeks to raise awareness and influence public policy concerning potential and actual genocide). Malema's singing of 'Dubula iBhunu' in 2010 prompted Genocide Watch to describe the song as 'once a revolutionary song, but now an incitement to commit genocide'.[7] The matter has largely been ignored by the mainstream media and particularly those who make fun of those who are calling for the recognition of white genocide.

According to Genocide Watch, genocide is a process that develops in ten stages that are predictable but not inexplorable. At each stage, preventive measures can stop it. The process is not linear and stages may occur simultaneously. Logically, later stages must be preceded by earlier stages, but not all stages continue to operate throughout the process.

Genocide Watch stated that although genocide was not underway in South Africa, it had become quite concerned about the escalation of racism in South Africa when Julius Malema was still President of the African National Congress Youth League (ANCYL). The organisation even raised the danger level for genocide in South Africa from polarisation (stage 6) to preparation (stage 7). After Malema was expelled from the ANC, Genocide Watch returned South Africa to polarisation. 'We remain concerned about his new EFF [Economic Freedom Fighters] party, and remain convinced that his ideology is "Marxist" and "racist",' said their statement.

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‘The criminals who are inspired to commit hate crimes by Malema’s racist incitement may or may not be Marxists. But their desecrations of bodies are definite signs that the murders are racist hate crimes.’[8]

Stanton continued:

> One of the false uses of Genocide Watch’s model for genocide prediction is the claim by some South Africans, racists in the United States (like the mass killer in Charleston and David Duke), and a few South African expatriates, that South Africa is undergoing a ‘white genocide.’ Genocide Watch has never said ‘white genocide’ is underway in South Africa and in fact South Africa is not even close to stage nine, which would legally be called genocide. Hate crimes fall short of genocide.[9]

THE TEN STEPS TO GENOCIDE

According to Stanton and Genocide Watch,

there are ten steps on the genocide continuum, namely:

1.	Classification	6.	Polarisation
2.	Symbolisation	7.	Preparation
3.	Discrimination	8.	Persecution
4.	Dehumanisation	9.	Extermination
5.	Organisation	10.	Denial

The fact of the matter is that the debate on whether farm murders constitute genocide is misdirected and damaging to the campaign to stop this scourge. Farm murders do not constitute genocide, for the simple reason that the phenomenon does not comply with the definition of genocide.

The problem is that disproving the false claims of genocide leads some to believe that farm murders are not something to be concerned about. The fact that farm murders do not constitute genocide can in no way render this phenomenon less important and should never lead a rational person to conclude that it is not a matter to be concerned about. We find that many argue that farm murders do not constitute genocide in an attempt to discredit those who are concerned about this phenomenon, implicitly concluding that it is not really a problem, simply because it is not genocide. ‘You’re wrong, it’s not genocide. So stop complaining!’ the argument goes.

The *Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide* (the *Genocide Convention*) was adopted by the General Assembly of the United Nations (UN) on 9 December 1948. The Convention still serves as the highest authority on the crime of genocide. Genocide is defined as follows in article II of the Convention:

> In the present Convention, genocide means any of the following acts committed with intent to destroy, in whole or in part, a national, ethnical, racial or religious group, as such:

1. Killing members of the group;
2. Causing serious bodily or mental harm to members of the group;
3. Deliberately inflicting on the group conditions of life calculated to bring about its physical destruction in whole or in part;
4. Imposing measures intended to prevent births within the group;
5. Forcibly transferring children of the group to another group.

Acts that are declared punishable by the Convention include genocide, conspiracy to commit genocide, direct and public incitement to commit genocide, attempt to commit genocide and complicity in genocide.[10]

The restriction of the crime of genocide to only national, ethnical, racial or religious groups is troublesome. It has been argued that the wording of the *Genocide Convention* is so restrictive that not one of the genocidal killings committed since its adoption is covered by it,[11] and also that potential perpetrators have taken care to victimise only those groups that are not covered by the convention's definition.[12] As it is currently defined, the extermination of groups on the basis of their identity as political, economic, social, linguistic or gender groups (to name a few) cannot be described as genocide, because those groups do not comply with the definition of genocide as defined in the *Genocide Convention*.

There has been particular emphasis by the UN that economic or professional groups are not and should not be covered by the definition of genocide, as this would be 'going too far'.[13] Also, already in 1947 the Secretariat of the UN warned that 'protection (against genocide) is not meant to cover a professional or athletic group'.[14] It could thus be argued that farm murders cannot constitute genocide, simply because this crime

phenomenon deals particularly with members of a professional group. On the other hand, it could be argued that the murder of white farmers could in fact comply with the definition, as it is particularly that 'part' of the larger ethnical group (see definition) that is destroyed. The latter could even be backed up with reference to claims by political leaders conflating claims about expropriating white-owned farmland in order to get them off the land with verbal attacks on Afrikaners or Boers, and the singing of songs in which violence towards that ethnic group is romanticised, as was pointed out in Part 2 of this book.

There is, however, a global demand for the broadening of the definition of genocide to include other groups.[15]

THE TWO ELEMENTS OF GENOCIDE

Stepping away from the protected groups, it can be said that there are really only two elements of genocide. The first is the physical element (also known as *actus reus*), and the second is this mental element (also known as *mens rea).*

The physical element requires one of the acts defined in article II of the Convention to be committed, whether it be killing members of the group, causing serious bodily or mental harm to members of the group, deliberately inflicting on the group conditions of life calculated to bring about its physical destruction in whole or in part, imposing measures intended to prevent births within the group or forcibly transferring children of the group to another group. In terms of 'killing members of the group', it has been said that it needs to be 'a large number of victims' for killing to be considered as genocide,[16] although the number has not been defined. As a matter of fact, it seems that the actual number of people who have been killed is not that important to the question of whether the act constitutes genocide. The quantitative dimension, as it is called, that genocide involves the intentional destruction of a group 'in whole or in part', belongs to the mental and not the material element.[17] In other words, the question of how many people have been killed is not as important as the question of whether the perpetrator had the intention to destroy the said group, in whole or in part. The total destruction of the group is not required.[18]

The mental element has two components: knowledge and intent.[19] The perpetrator should have knowledge of the fact that he or she is engaging in

genocide. The application of the knowledge component has, however, been deemed troublesome. The existence of a plan or policy to commit genocide is not a legal prerequisite, although the existence of such a plan may become an important factor in determining whether genocide has been committed.[20] The more important aspect of the mental element is the question of intent. The level of intent required is in legal terms referred to as *dolus specialis*, which means that the offender must have a specific intent to commit genocide.[21] The International Court of Justice (ICJ) has stipulated the requirement of intent as follows:

> It requires the establishment of 'the intent to destroy in whole or in part,... [the protected] group, as such'. It is not enough to establish, for instance in terms of paragraph (a), that deliberate unlawful killings of members of the group have occurred. The additional intent must also be established, and is defined very precisely. It is often referred to as a special or specific intent [or *dolus specialis*]. It is not enough that the members of the group are targeted because they belong to that group, that is because the perpetrator has a discriminatory intent. Something more is required. The acts listed in Article II must be done with intent to destroy the group as such in whole or in part.[22]

When it comes to farm murders, as has been highlighted in Chapter 8, the available research indicates that the vast majority of perpetrators mention greed or robbery as their main motive for committing these attacks. Even if the perpetrators were to have said that they had committed these crimes because they wanted to murder the farmers, perhaps even because of their race or ethnicity, this alone would still not be enough to constitute genocide, as proof is required that the perpetrator had the intention to destroy the group, either in whole or in part. A murder based on race could be defined as a hate crime, but not as an act of genocide unless this intention can be proven. It has been said that, because of the large scale of genocide, its association with a state plan or policy (although this is not required), and the requirement of a racist climate in public opinion, as a minimum, there is actually no shortage of examples in the case law of perpetrators betraying their intent through public speeches or in meetings with others.[23]

As atrocious as farm murders are, the scale of it is not comparable to recent genocides across the globe. Without dismissing the extreme levels of violence that often accompany these farm attacks – a level of torture and

violence that is comparable or perhaps even worse than what the world has witnessed in recent genocides – these attacks still occur in a manner that is not comparable to the mass killings of 1,5 million Armenians in 1915–1917, 6 million Jews in Nazi Germany and Nazi-occupied countries in 1933–1945 (according to the broad definition of the Holocaust), 2 million Cambodians in 1975–1979, and 800 000 to a million Tutsi Rwandans in three months of 1994.[24]

These genocides include stories of how Armenian mothers had to leave their dying children by the side of the desert roads and how they desperately tried to give their children away in the hope of saving them from almost certain death,[25] or the burning down of entire Armenian towns and villages, killing as many as 60 000 people,[26] with some starving Armenians resorting to cannibalism in a last desperate attempt to survive.[27]

Or the stories of how Jewish families were rounded up, only to be executed. How entire families were put in front of firing squads, to be shot down solely on the basis of their ethnic identity. How children as young as two years old were thrown into fire ovens while still alive. All of this in numbers that would eventually add up to six million deaths.[28]

Or how 200 Tutsi children had been assembled in a church in April 1994, only to be massacred. How 67 000 bodies were picked up from the streets of Kigali in the first week of the genocide, with a death toll in the city of about 10 000 people per day. How 20 000 people were killed at a Catholic Church compound in three days. In the compound of Butare, an estimated 70 000 people were trapped inside a church compound. The attackers opened fire on them, continuously firing from 10:30 until 17:00, when they finally ran out of bullets. They killed about 40 000 people.[29]

It should be mentioned again that even in the above-mentioned cases, the international community was very hesitant to label these atrocities as genocide. Commenting on the fact that even some of the most prominent leaders of Nazi Germany – perpetrating arguably the best-known genocide in world history – were not found guilty of genocide, international law expert Philippe Sands writes:

> Proving the crime of genocide is difficult, and in litigating cases I have seen for myself how the need to prove the intent to destroy a group in whole or in part, as the Genocide Convention requires, can have

> unhappy psychological consequences. It enhances the sense of solidarity among the members of the victim group while reinforcing negative feelings towards the perpetrator group. The term ‘genocide’, with its focus on the group, tends to heighten a sense of ‘them’ and ‘us’, burnishes feelings of group identity and may unwittingly give rise to the very conditions that it seeks to address: by pitting one group against another, it makes reconciliation less likely. I fear that the crime of genocide has distorted the prosecution of war crimes and crimes against humanity, because the desire to be labelled a victim of genocide brings pressure on prosecutors to indict for that crime. For some, to be labelled a victim of genocide becomes ‘an essential component of national identity’ without contributing to the resolution of historical disputes making mass killings less frequent.[30]

As a matter of fact, the first time an international court found a person guilty of the crime of genocide was only in September 1998, and the person was the Rwandan politician Jean-Paul Akayesu.[31] However, even in Rwanda, where close to one million people were slaughtered in public in a matter of months, the UN, its Security Council and virtually all the main international role players refused to acknowledge these atrocities for what they were: genocide.[32]

The chance of having farm murders acknowledged as genocide by the international community is therefore, realistically speaking, close to zero.

ETHNIC CLEANSING

Given the limitations resulting from the narrow definition of genocide, the crime of ethnic cleansing was also defined in the 1990s, during the first stage of the war in Bosnia.[33] Ethnic cleansing means rendering an area ethnically homogeneous by using force or intimidation to remove persons of given groups from the area.[34] During the prosecution of Serbian military leaders Radovan Karadžic and Ratko Mladic, the prosecutor was asked to explain what ‘ethnic cleansing’ actually means and how it is different from genocide. He said:

> [E]thnic cleansing is a practice which means that you act in such a way that in a given territory the members of a given ethnic group are eliminated. It means a practice that aims at such and such a territory be, as they meant, ethnically pure ... So, in other words, the members of the other group are eliminated by different ways, by different

> methods. You have massacres. Everybody is not massacred, but I mean in terms of numbers, you have massacres in order to scare these populations ... So whenever you have massacres, naturally the other people are driven away. They are afraid. They try to run away and you find yourself with a high number of a given people that have been massacred, persecuted and, of course, in the end these people simply want to leave. They also submitted to such pressures that they go away. They are driven away either on their own initiative or they are deported. But the basic point is for them to be out of that territory and some of them are sometimes locked up in camps. Some women are raped and, furthermore, often times what you have is the destruction of the monuments which marked the presence of a given population in a given territory, for instance, religious places, Catholic churches or mosques are destroyed. So basically, this is how ethnic cleansing is practiced in the course of this war.[35]

In short, ethnic cleansing can be described as the systematic purge of the civilian population with a view of forcing it to abandon the territories in which it lives.[36] The goal is to remove a people and often all traces of them from a concrete territory – 'to get rid of the "alien" nationality, ethnic, or religious group and to seize control of the territory they had formerly inhabited.'[37]

Ethnic cleansing could therefore be a form of genocide, but not necessarily, depending on whether the acts committed comply with article II of the *Genocide Convention*. 'They *might* also amount to genocide if associated with an intent to destroy the group,' writes William Schabas a Canadian expert on the law of genocide and international law. 'But it does not seem at all helpful to muddy discussions about apartheid, or aggressive war or colonialism by suggesting that in some cases they may also be genocidal.'[38] Ethnic cleansing can also be a process of forced deportation or what has been called 'population transfer' to get people to move.[39] This may be achieved by a combination of systematic attacks on that group and the expropriation of the property of members of that group in order to force them out of the area that has to be 'cleansed'.

The best way to explain the difference between genocide and ethnic cleansing would be to compare Nazi leader Adolf Hitler with Slobodan Milošević, leader of the Socialist Party of Serbia. Schabas writes:

> Hitler had the modest ambition of eliminating all Jews in Europe, but given the chance he would have extended his murderous campaign to the rest of the world. Milošević, on the other hand, wanted to drive Muslims from Kosovo, although he seemed untroubled by the idea that they might live elsewhere, in Macedonia or Albania for example.[40]

The difference here is that Hitler was concerned with genocide, while Milošević was concerned with ethnic cleansing.

From this perspective one could make a slightly stronger argument in comparing farm murders to ethnic cleansing than to genocide, especially if we were to consider the repeated statements by extremists calling on white farmers to 'go back to Europe'. The sentiment that 'Africa is for Africans' and that 'white people are just visitors' who need to obey black South Africans is consistent with the thoughts of an ethnic cleanser. This is, of course, aggravated by the alarming number of people in South Africa who are actively calling for the extermination of white people, but of Boers and/or white farmers in particular. The public comments made by EFF leaders about implementing Zimbabwe-style land grab policies in South Africa to get rid of the Boers are also consistent with the ideology of an ethnic cleanser.[41] The caveat that in South Africa, forcing white people off their land would not be accompanied with physical violence as was the case in Zimbabwe, is irrelevant.[42] The problem for ethnic cleansers is that forced deportation is usually met with resistance, which leads to violence. Reading about the type of violence that often accompanies ethnic cleansing, it is hard not to be reminded of the horrors that are often evident in farm murders. Take this passage by the American historian Norman Naimark, for example:

> In some sense, almost all violence against human beings is gratuitous, but in cases of ethnic cleansing all the explanations in the world cannot account for the sheer horror inflicted on the victims by their persecutors – the chopped off ears and fingers, the brandings, the mutilated genitals, the brains of babies splattered against walls; the gauntlets that victims are forced to run, the sexual assaults. The litany of abuses is unending, and it repeats itself from case to case throughout the century.[43]

This is not to say that farm murders are a form of ethnic cleansing per se. In South Africa we find people publicly talking about ethnic cleansing,

especially with reference to chasing the Boers or the white farmers out, as we have seen in Part 2 of this book. Also, we find that the levels of torture often accompanying ethnic cleansing are especially prevalent in the murder of white farmers. A reasonable person not convinced that this amounts to ethnic cleansing should at least display a degree of patience, empathy or compassion with those who believe that ethnic cleansing is under way. Instead we find that many in the media prefer to ridicule and make fun of those who believe that South Africa is currently being subject to such a process. Ridiculing of people in a minority community who are afraid for their lives is nothing short of a disgusting act that will only serve to polarise the country even more.

The decision by the South African National Assembly that the Constitution has to be reviewed to allow for expropriation without compensation[44] brings us one step closer to proving an intent of ethnic cleansing, especially when considering the comments made when motivating why the land belonging to white farmers has to be expropriated. Julius Malema's statements that all white people are criminals and should be treated as such,[45] that he is not calling for the slaughter of white people, 'at least for now',[46] that trouble is coming for the 'Afrikaner boys',[47] and that white people 'must be happy' that he is not calling for genocide,[48] are of particular importance. This, should be seen in the context of President Cyril Ramaphosa and Deputy President David Mabuza urging Malema, one week after the last of these comments, to return 'home' to the ANC. 'We would love to have Malema back in the ANC. He is still ANC down, deep in his heart,' the President said. [49]

Ramaphosa's comment that Malema's 'home' is in the ANC, regardless of his blatant racism towards Boers and white farmers in particular, can be read within the context of Ramaphosa's comment regarding how the ANC intends to deal with white people. In his memoirs, political veteran Mario Oriani-Ambrosini wrote what Ramaphosa confided to him in a private conversation in the early 1990s, during the negotiations for a new South African Constitution:

> In his brutal honesty, Ramaphosa told me of the ANC's 25-year strategy to deal with the whites: it would be like boiling a frog alive, which is done by raising the temperature very slowly. Being cold-blooded, the frog does not notice the slow temperature increase, but if

> the temperature is raised suddenly, the frog will jump out of the water. He meant that the black majority would pass laws transferring wealth, land, and economic power from white to black slowly and incrementally, until the whites lost all they had gained in South Africa, but without taking too much from them at any given time to cause them to rebel or fight.[50]

AfriForum wrote an open letter to Ramaphosa to explain his statement, but Ramaphosa did not respond, nor denied making such a statement.[51]

It should also be noted that there is no international treaty that specifies a specific crime of ethnic cleansing.[52] Ethnic cleansing in the broad sense of the word can, however, be characterised as a crime against humanity under the statutes of the International Criminal Court (ICC) and the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia (ICTY).

Despite the fact that ethnic cleansing should be easier to prove than genocide, the international community has also been extremely hesitant to acknowledge ethnic cleansing where it has been committed.[53]

CRIME AGAINST HUMANITY

Crimes against humanity are certain acts that are deliberately committed as part of a widespread or systematic attack or an individual attack directed against any civilian or an identifiable part of a civilian population. These include persecution on political, racial, national, ethnic, cultural, religious, gender or other grounds that are universally recognised as impermissible under international law.[54]

Crimes against humanity can be committed during peace and war[55] and any of the following deeds can constitute a crime against humanity if the above-mentioned criteria are met:

1. Murder
2. Extermination
3. Enslavement
4. Deportation or forcible transfer of population
5. Imprisonment or other severe deprivation of physical liberty in violation of fundamental rules of international law
6. Torture

7. Rape, sexual slavery, enforced prostitution, forced pregnancy, enforced sterilisation, or any other form of sexual violence of comparable gravity
8. Persecution against any identifiable group or collectivity on political, racial, national, ethnic, cultural, religious, gender as defined in paragraph 3, or other grounds that are universally recognised as impermissible under international law, in connection with any act referred to in this paragraph or any crime within the jurisdiction of the court
9. Enforced disappearance of persons
10. The crime of apartheid
11. Other inhumane acts of a similar character intentionally causing great suffering, or serious injury to body or to mental or physical health[56]

The term was developed by international lawyer Hersch Lauterpacht, who later became a judge in the ICJ. Lauterpacht emphasised the protection of individuals, fearing that the crime of genocide with its focus on groups would undermine the protection of individuals and that it would reinforce latent instincts of tribalism enhancing the sense of ‘us’ and ‘them’, pitting groups against each other.[57] In its most simple terms, the biggest difference between the crime of genocide and crimes against humanity is that genocide is concerned with the destruction of groups, while crimes against humanity are concerned with atrocities inflicted upon individuals.[58]

Take farm murders for example. If two thousand farmers were murdered, the question of genocide as opposed to crimes against humanity would boil down to a question as to what the intention of the perpetrators were. If the intention was to destroy the group, then it would be a question of genocide, on the condition that the *actus reus* (physical) element was complied with, of course. If, however, the perpetrators were to be prosecuted for crimes against humanity, it would not be necessary to prove an intention to destroy the group.[59]

Crimes against humanity are not isolated or sporadic events, as they have to be part either of a government policy (although the perpetrators need not identify themselves with this policy) or of a wide practice of atrocities tolerated or condoned by a government or a de facto authority. In order for farm murders to be declared a crime against humanity, it would therefore be necessary to prove that these attacks are tolerated or condoned by the South

African government. For this to be proven, the fact that farm murders are not prioritised in the same way that the poaching of rhinos is prioritised, or that these crimes are not combatted with a unique counter-strategy, would not be sufficient. It would have to be proven that the South African government is actively encouraging the slaughter of white farmers, or at least is in agreement with the fact that white farmers are in fact murdered in disproportionate numbers.

HATE CRIME

Hate crimes (also known as bias crimes) are prejudice-motivated crimes, usually violent by nature, that occur when a victim was targeted due to his or her membership (or perceived membership) of a particular social group. It is defined by the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) as a 'criminal offense committed against a person or property which is motivated, in whole or in part, by the offender's bias against race, religion, disability, ethnic/national origin group, or sexual orientation group.'[60] If a person is thus attacked, assaulted, raped, murdered or targeted for any other criminal offence based on his or her identity as belonging to a particular race or ethnicity, for example, that would constitute a hate crime. Usually that crime would then be punished more severely than if the crime had been committed for reasons that had nothing to do with the victim's membership of a particular group. This would depend on the relevant legislation. Note, however, that at the time of writing, South Africa does not have hate crime laws in place, which renders the discussion on hate crimes with reference to farm murders partially irrelevant. It is helpful, though, to briefly discuss farm murders within the context of hate crimes, as it is a topic that is frequently discussed and may become more relevant in future.

Arguably the greatest problem with regard to hate crimes is what to do when various motives are (or may be) present. This would certainly be a major factor in terms of farm murders, given that more than 90% of perpetrators have indicated that they were motivated by greed.[61] As was already mentioned, a perpetrator can certainly have multiple motives when committing a crime. This reality is, however, severely downplayed when discussing farm murders, with a conclusion often being drawn that more than 90% were 'only' motivated by greed. A study of hate crimes in the United States of America (USA) has also found that where multiple motives

are (or may be) present, law enforcers usually opt for whatever explanation eliminates the possibility of a hate crime.

Take the case of Arthur ‘JR’ Warren, a 26-year-old gay black man from Grant Town, West Virginia. In July 2000, Warren was murdered by two white teenagers. He was beaten until unconscious and believed to be dead. $20 (R250) was taken from his wallet. Warren was then put in the trunk of a Camaro and driven to a remote area to be dumped. While en route to the dump site, the teenagers discovered that Warren was still alive. They stopped the car, dragged Warren’s body out of the trunk, and while he was still conscious, they repeatedly drove their vehicle over his body, crushing him to death. The case was popularly considered to be a hate crime in minority communities and in the media. This is because all the right elements were present: the victim was black and openly gay, while the perpetrators were young white males from a rural southern town. However, the police refused to recognise the crime as a hate crime because there was also another explanation for the crime that had nothing to do with the above-mentioned: the perpetrators had been under the influence of drugs.[62]

It turns out Warren’s case was not isolated, but merely one in a long list of ambiguous cases that could possibly be described as hate crimes, but possibly not. Upon analysing various cases it becomes clear that in the majority of ambiguous cases like that of Warren, law enforcers tend to side with whatever explanation excludes hate crime. This is largely due to a lack of clarity in the relevant legislation that directs law enforcers to deal with hate crimes.[63]

If (or when) South Africa enacts hate crime legislation, we can reasonably expect that this will also be the case in South Africa.

A BETTER STRATEGY

Combating the scourge of farm murders by attempting to have such murders recognised as genocide is an unwise strategy. To engage with the concept of genocide is to engage with a highly controversial, hotly-debated, technical legal definition, where the tendency is almost always to interpret whatever is happening as not complying with the definition. Other than the fact that the crime of genocide does not extend to occupational or economic groups, and given that insufficient evidence exists of a coordinated campaign to destroy the group, the term *genocide* remains arguable. The

link between hate speech against farmers and acts of violence against farmers is not sufficient to prove genocide, as the evidence that these acts of violence are an immediate consequence of the incitement that was committed remains a vague science. Also, being proved wrong on the question of genocide tends to create an impression that farm murders are not really a crisis.

On the other hand, it appears that the argument that a process of ethnic cleansing might be happening in South Africa is becoming increasingly stronger, particularly with reference to white landowners. A variety of factors have to be considered in conjunction with the stark reality of farm murders – matters that have all been touched on in this book. These include:

1. The destruction or removal of Afrikaner statues and monuments.[64]
2. Hate speech by some of the most influential political leaders, including Julius Malema, members of Parliament, members of Cabinet and even former President Jacob Zuma.[65]
3. The comment by President Cyril Ramaphosa that Julius Malema has a 'home' in the ANC,[66] shortly after Malema's comments that he intends to 'slit the throat of whiteness' and that white people could be happy that he was not calling for genocide.[67]
4. The as yet undenied comment by Cyril Ramaphosa that white people have to be dealt with like 'boiling a frog alive, which is done by raising the temperature very slowly'.[68]
5. Negative stereotyping of white farmers by influential political leaders, including members of Parliament, members of Cabinet and even by President Cyril Ramaphosa.[69]
6. The notion that minorities 'have less rights' because they are fewer in number, as purported by former President Jacob Zuma, and the statement by the ruling party's spokesperson that angry and disillusioned members of the coloured community 'shouldn't feel as if they have been reduced to the status of a minority community'.[70]
7. Refusal to publicly reprimand those who commit hate speech towards white farmers in particular, and both the ANC and the EFF's willingness to go to court to protect their so-called right to sing songs in which the murder of Boers and white farmers in particular is encouraged.[71]

8. The refusal to prioritise farm murders, despite all the evidence that prioritisation would be the most reasonable government response.[72]
9. The scorning and ridiculing of those who call for the prioritising of farm attacks, including even the victims of farm attacks and those whose loved ones have been murdered.[73]
10. The claim that white farmers are ‘land thieves’ and that they should be treated as criminals by senior members of the ruling party.[74]
11. Disproportionate media reporting of incidents of violent crime where farmers are perpetrators, and severe under-reporting in the media of incidents of violence where farmers are victims. This is particularly evident in the reporting of the state broadcaster.[75]
12. The motion adopted in Parliament to review section 25 of the Constitution (the property rights clause), and other clauses where necessary, to make it possible for the state to expropriate land without compensation and that this has to be done because ‘whites stole the land’, in spite of the historical inaccuracy of this comment.[76]

The most effective strategy against farm attacks would be to campaign against farm killings with the necessary vigour, without making statements that are impossible to prove. In adopting this approach, we maintain our credibility in speaking about a crisis that is very real and that has far-reaching consequences. On the other hand, as long as the South African government refuses to decisively deal with these 12 issues, it is safe to argue – even if a motive of genocide or ethnic cleansing is hard to prove – that the South African government is at least complicit in an extremely alarming crisis developing in their midst.

Robert Lynn (66) in his living room holding the blowtorch with which he was tortured on 19 February 2017. The blowtorch was never confiscated by die police for forensic evidence.

Photo: Ernst Roets

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‘We were then rushed by ambulance to Middelburg – about a 45 minute drive.
‘I only remember waking up at 21:30 that evening. They said that they weren’t going to operate on me, as the bullet was too close to my brain. Sue never regained consciousness and her life support was eventually switched off.’

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CHAPTER 23

It’s not over

ROBERT LYNN

The attack on Robert Lynn and his wife, Sue Howarth, received international press coverage due to the fact that they were British nationals.

The stolen pickup truck was found soon after the attack, deserted. The attackers had taken R320 ($26), two cellphones and a small video camera.

When my colleague Nantes Kelder and I sat down with Lynn in the living room where he had been tortured, I asked him what he thought about the South African Police Service (SAPS).

‘Pathetic!’ said Lynn. ‘They don’t tell you anything.’

Four months after the incident, the SAPS found his video camera in the bushes at the house of a girlfriend of one of the attackers. Instead of keeping the camera as evidence, they just gave it back to him. ‘Try getting your car back from the police,’ he exclaimed. ‘Administrative-wise they are absolutely inept. It cost me R3 000 ($240) to get my car back. And that was just for the key.’

Lynn pointed to the coffee table. ‘There it is. That’s the blowtorch that I was tortured with. They didn’t even take it as evidence. It’s still here. They never even looked at it.’

By the time this book was published, the case had been postponed ‘probably about eight times’ already. ‘Actually I’m not sure,’ said Lynn. ‘I lost count.’

Howarth and Lynn’s docket was destroyed because the building in which it was stored had been burned down. It had been stored in an empty building beside the post office. They had more than 90 police files in there. Lynn was told that a criminal who was awaiting trial knew where the files were and so he went and burned down the building.

‘How could a common criminal know that the files were in that place?’ asked Lynn ‘Conspiracy theories are quite rife in this place.’

‘The trust between the police and myself is gone. I don’t care what they do for me now. They can kiss my feet. They crossed the bridge with me. There is no trust left.’

Part of Lynn’s frustration is with the fact that the SAPS regard the crime merely as opportunism and as ‘robbery gone wrong’.

‘It’s clear that they went there to assassinate Susan. How can you go through a window at 02:10 in the morning and start shooting? And you don’t even know where the money is. They went there to kill Susan. I was just collateral damage.’

HENK GREYLING

Henk Greyling (pseudomyn) and his family rushed to the hospital. Greyling had had his teeth bashed out, his ribs cracked and his spine twisted. He had been shot four times and he had a big flesh wound beneath his lower jaw from when his attackers tried to slit his throat. His brother, Stefan (pseudonym), had been shot through his collar bone and his lung had been perforated. His uncle was a bleeder, and had been bleeding excessively from where his ear had been cut open with a side cutter. His aunt seemed not to have sustained serious injuries, although she had been traumatised by the attack.

Greyling still did not know what had happened to the five children who had been in the house when he arrived on the scene.

Upon arrival at the hospital, the doctor seemed to be slow in responding to his brother, so Greyling tried to attack him. ‘The doctor was black. I had just been attacked by eight black people, who tried to slit my throat,’ explained Greyling ashamedly. ‘Suddenly I saw another black man who knew how to help my brother, but who didn’t bother to do so. I went for him. I shouldn’t have.’ At that moment, the five children arrived at the hospital – all were unharmed. When Greyling saw the children, he collapsed. ‘It’s only then that they realised that I had been shot,’ he said.

‘Their plan was to kill us,’ said Greyling. ‘They immediately tried to kill me. The most distressing of it all, said Greyling, was that at least two of the attackers had been SAPS officers. ‘We know they were police,’ he said. They had firearms like the SAPS have. They moved like the SAPS. At least one was wearing a bulletproof vest. He carried his gun on his chest. They were even wearing SAPS boots – at least two of them were.

MARIANDRA HEUNIS

‘When they left the house, a sense of logic was knocked into me that could only have been sent from God,’ recalled Mariandra Heunis. Her husband,

Johann (43), had just been shot in front of her and her six- year-old daughter, Mieke. The last time she had seen Mischa (4) and Majandré (2) was when she had tucked them into their beds downstairs earlier that night. She was 36 weeks pregnant.

‘I knew that Johann was dead, because Mieke and I saw them shoot him in the head. But I kept hoping that maybe there was a chance. I checked if he was breathing. He wasn’t. I realised that I had to check that the doors were locked. I ran downstairs, locked the door and ran back upstairs to Johann again.’

‘I saw that the phones were gone. For a moment I thought that I had to send an email for help.’ The thought of her sending an email to get help made her smile, slightly embarrassed. Amid what she had been sharing with me for the past 30 minutes, Mariandra’s smile shook me back to reality. It was 2018, almost a year and a half since that night. We were sitting in the boardroom of Sonja Smith Funeral Group, where Mariandra had started working after they had assisted with Johann’s funeral. She had been a stay-at-home mom and they did not have life insurance. Other than dealing with Johann’s passing, getting a job was just one of the many obstacles that she had had to overcome.

‘But who’s going to check their emails at 02:30 in the morning? That’s not going to work.’ She shook her head.

‘I just knew that I had to get the children out of here. I didn’t know if they were coming back. I didn’t know if they were waiting for us. I didn’t know what was happening. I didn’t know how they got in.’

‘The hardest decision of my life was to leave Johann there.’

The fleeting smile on Mariandra’s face was quickly replaced by a tear running down her cheek. She stared at the table with both her hands covering her mouth.

‘I’m really sorry,’ I said, bitterly self-conscious about the fact that she would not have been crying if I had not asked all these questions.

‘No,’ she said. I could see that she wanted to push through, so I asked another question. ‘When the shots started firing, did you hear the other two children?’

‘No, they were just silent. When I turned Johann around and I saw his face, I knew that there was no way that he was still alive. Then I ran down to the other girls. I ran to Mischa. She was wide awake, just lying there under her blanket. She asked me: “Mommy, who is dead?” I just said “Mischa we need to go. Grab a blanket and come.” Both Misha and Mieke then ran after me to Majandré’s room. She was also awake. The relief I felt at seeing them unharmed was indescribable. I picked up Majandré and I had the girls stand at the back door. I said to them: “Mommy is going to open this door now. When it’s open just big enough for you to fit through, I need you to run to the car as fast as you can. Jump in the car and lie down.” ’

‘Somehow I managed to fasten Majandré in her baby seat. I then rushed to the nearest petrol station. The road to the gate was a narrow, curvy dirt road. I rushed down the road with the lights off, because I didn’t want them to see us. I don’t know how I managed to do that.’

‘Mieke asked me why are we leaving without daddy. I said to her that we had to go and that daddy was “oorlede” [English: deceased]. But she didn’t know what that meant.’ Only later, when Mieke heard the police officer tell Mariandra that Johann was dead, did she understand.

IT GETS WORSE

As we were having these conversations, there were (and still are) people who actively argue that farm attacks are ‘just crime’, that these attacks do not occur in disproportionate numbers, that they are not extraordinarily brutal and that farmers and their families are ‘not deserving of special treatment’. But it gets worse. It is not ordinary people who argue this. They are some of the most influential people on the African continent, let alone South Africa. It is the President, it is his Cabinet, it is the Minister of Police, the National Police Commissioner. It is even opposition parties and, to a large degree, also the media.

But yet again, it gets worse.

Not only are we confronted by these arguments. Not only have I personally been told by a member of the ruling African National Congress’s (ANC’s) youth league that I need to bear in mind that little Wilmien Potgieter deserved what had happened to her and her family, because she was ‘guilty by association’, despite the fact that she was two years old ...

We have to switch on our televisions in the morning, open the newspaper, tune in on the radio, to hear the most influential people in our country sing songs about how we should be murdered. ‘Kill the Boer, kill the farmer,’ we hear. ‘Shoot the Boer, they are rapists,’ we hear. ‘One bullet, one settler,’ we hear. ‘White man, you must die,’ we hear. ‘Shoot to kill the Boere,’ we hear.

Despite the fact that farmers are attacked and killed in completely disproportionate numbers, despite the fact that many of these people are murdered with the most horrifying methods of torture imaginable, despite the fact that farmers are expected to feed a nation and instructed to create more jobs, and despite the fact that farmers live in remote areas where they are far away from their neighbours and far away from the SAPS, we are told that there should not be a counter-strategy to curb these attacks. We are told that doing so would amount to discrimination against people who are not farmers, because it would create the impression that farmers are special.

On top of that, these farmers are told that they are criminals and that they should be treated as such. They are told that they are racist, brutal oppressors, who exploit their workers and who are merely murdered because of labour disputes, or because people are taking revenge on them for all the evil things that they have done. This, despite the fact that all the available research proves the opposite.

Yet these farmers persist. They continue to farm. They continue to produce food for a country that clearly regards them as expendable. They continue to employ, to care for and to develop the very people whom these political leaders claim to represent. They continue to develop their land, despite threats that their land will be taken from them without compensation.

The question is then, what should we make of the evidence? We have seen repeatedly that these attacks are not only romanticised by the South African government, but in some cases, that members of the South African government, including the SAPS, appear to be actively involved with these crimes. We find that government employees who publicly state that white people must be dealt with in the same way in which Hitler dealt with the Jews, and senior members of the South African National Defence Force (SANDF) who call for the eyes and tongues of white people to be cut out, are simply slapped on the wrist and asked not to do it again. On the other

hand we find that people who have no political influence and who are not known to society at large are aggressively persecuted by the media, heavily fined and even sent to prison when they say things that may be regarded as offensive.

We have seen that many in the media have become active roleplayers in this regard, particularly through their tenacious reporting of isolated incidents in which white farmers are the perpetrators as if these incidents constitute trends (of farm murders), and their persistent disregard of the actual trends, as if they do not exist. We have seen this especially in the state broadcaster. While we are grateful for the excellent journalists who still operate within South Africa, we find that the media elites have largely succeeded in creating a narrative where those who call for the murders to stop are ridiculed and regarded as racists who are exaggerating and who are ‘just longing for the past’.

We have also seen that the history of South Africa – and the history of land ownership in particular – has become so distorted by political and media elites that the mainstream narrative has become an extraordinary distortion of history. A distortion that serves those who seek justification for the persecution of minorities in South Africa, and of white farmers in particular.

All of this has created a perfect storm. It has created a climate in which these attacks are more, rather than less, likely to occur. Despite this, the elites have persisted in this, even upping the ante, long after the most horrific effects have become public knowledge. This suggests intent.

I have found that there are at least ten different ways in which the South African government should be regarded as complicit to the farm murders crisis. These include:

1. The deprioritising of SAPS response, despite an increase in attacks.
2. Scorning and ridiculing victims who call for a focused counterstrategy.
3. Negligent police investigations and violation of victims’ rights.
4. The negative stereotyping of white farmers in particular.
5. The double standards and a hierarchy of recognition with regard to victims.
6. The encouragement of hate speech against white farmers.

7. The continued romanticising of violence against white farmers.
8. The shieling of criminals and of those who encourage genocide.
9. The justification of murders.
10. Direct involvement.

While I agree that genocide is not taking place in South Africa, I (unlike our political and media elites) have taken note of the concerns expressed by Genocide Watch. In writing this book, I have also reached the disturbing conclusion that a systematic process of ethnic cleansing has become a looming threat to minorities in South Africa, but to white farmers in particular.

I think of my own brother who was attacked, my friends who were murdered, my father's cousin who had a garden fork pierced through her head, my mother-in-law who was alone on the farm when her window was broken by two men wearing informal clothes who – once they had been caught – claimed to be police officers only doing a routine check.

I drove to my home town of Tzaneen, to the farm where I grew up – in one of the so-called farm murder hotspots – and I asked my uncle why he persisted. 'They want to take the land that has been in our family for generations. Why do you persist?'

He said to me that in order to be a successful farmer in South Africa, you are required to pretend that you are politically ignorant. 'It sounds terrible, but you can't base your future in agriculture on these things. If you do that you will lose your focus.' He said to me that farmers are forced to put these things in the cupboard, close it and lock it. 'You need to say to yourself: I am here. I'm here to stay. I will stay here. These things will not affect me. I need to focus on the right things in business to be cost efficient. All these things – put your focus on that. Live your passion, because if your passion becomes to try and get answers to these political threats, I'm sorry, eventually you will disappear. And maybe it would happen that you disappear long before they've taken your land.'

LOOKING BACK

The blinds covering my living room window were only slightly open, but Henk Greyling kept staring at them, squinting his eyes and moving his head up and down ever so slightly as if to see if perhaps someone was creeping around in my garden. We sat down to talk about what exactly happened that

night when he miraculously survived a farm attack and how it changed his life.

The attack on his family happened almost ten years ago. I have known him for two years and only when I told him that I was writing a book on farm murders did he tell me that he was also a victim. He then showed me the massive scar beneath his lower jaw, and the scars left by the bullet holes.

Telling me his story for the first time, Greyling became visibly emotional. 'I'm not myself anymore. I haven't been since the attack,' he told me. 'When people see me, they think I'm happy, but I'm really not. I'm only pretending to be happy.' He was still in his twenties, slightly brawny and in good physical shape. Yet he seemed surprisingly vulnerable – vulnerable in a way that I had never seen him before.

'My aunt died several years later,' he said. 'She couldn't take the stress anymore.'

Ever since the attack, he has been working as a security guard, preferring to work night duty. 'When I go to bed during the day, I get nightmares, but when I go to bed at night, the nightmares are even worse, so I prefer not to sleep at all.' Greyling now sleeps about three hours a day, preferably during daytime. When he dreams, he keeps dreaming of that night, playing out different scenarios of what else could have happened, what could have been different.

He stared at the window for a while.

'I'm too scared to go to sleep,' he murmured, then staring down at his feet stretched out in front of him, his hands clutched together in his lap.

After a moment of silence, he stared at the window again, but this time only in a gaze. The vigilance that filled his eyes only a few minutes before was gone.

'I lost everything. I even lost my fiancée. After the farm attack, I wasn't myself anymore. She said to me that she cannot remain with me if I'm like that ... My personality changed. I chased away many of my friends. I don't even go out for a beer anymore. I know for a fact that if I go out and the place is crowded, I lose my head.'

After the attack, Greyling took up martial arts, Taekwondo, Kickboxing and lessons in Close Combat. 'I've never used what I've learned in martial arts, but I know one day I will.'

'When I go to a farm now, I carry two firearms with me and sometimes even a bulletproof vest. I sleep with my firearms with me in bed.'

Years after the attack, he opened fire on some teenagers who shot at him from a vehicle with a paintball gun. They approached him slowly, late at night with the lights off, opened the window slightly, stuck the barrel of the gun out of the window and fired at him, striking him three times. He immediately thought that they had fired with live ammunition and he fired back, hitting the vehicle five times. Luckily he was aiming for the wheels and so no one was hurt.

Suddenly, his voice turned from sorrow and bitterness to bitter anger: 'When I heard the EFF singing "Kill the Boer" I called my brother and asked him to bring my 7x57 mm rifle. I will take them out if I have to,' he said.

'I'm trying to put all of this in the past behind me, but the past catches up with you,' he said. On the other hand, he said, 'I don't want to lose that memory. It's a memory that I will keep and it's a memory that will help my family. I will go to the farm again. If this happens again, I will be more vigilant.'

…

Looking back, Robert Lynn said that he clearly went through different phases of grief. 'The one I can't get away from is anger. Sue was nearly 65. She had to end her life in a ditch. She ended up on a mortuary table, mutilated. I couldn't even bury her properly. She had to be cremated.

'I now know the weight of my wife's brain. I know the weight of her heart. And her kidneys. They didn't want to give me the post mortem report, so I had to get it through the backdoor from the British consulate.'

…

Baby AJ was born five days after his father's funeral. Even as a baby, he looks just like his dad.

Dealing with Johann's passing was excruciating. For a while, Mieke resented Mariandra. First because she had just left him there where the

attackers were when they drove off. Then she said that Mariandra should have gone downstairs to get her dad something to fight the intruders off with. Fortunately it only lasted for six months, says Mariandra. She understands now.

Her love for her children is clearly noticeable. 'It had an impact on me, but I understood where it was coming from. Mieke was a broken, broken, broken little person last year. She was scared of the dark. She refused to sleep. She even refused to look at pictures of her dad. Eventually, in one of her trauma sessions, Mieke told Mariandra that whenever she saw pictures of her dad, she saw the eyes of the man who killed him. Looking at pictures made her sad.

Mariandra and her children moved to an apartment in Centurion. When Mariandra finishes work, she picks up the children from the school's day-care facilities. Then they all go home, do their chores, eat dinner, wash up and go to bed. It was a massive change to move from the farmhouse to an apartment.

There are also the triggers. 'We are all triggered by loud noises and banging sounds. Sometimes, when Mieke gets triggered, her screams take me back to that night and then I get triggered as well. Then we cannot help each other. Then we just go and sit on the kitchen floor.' Mariandra laughed.

'I was very smart,' Mieke told her. 'I ran up and down.' Mieke explained that she had heard Jesus's voice, telling her that she had to run up and down so that the intruders would miss her when they tried to shoot her. She keeps asking why it happened. 'One day, when I go to Heaven, I will speak to God. I know He can explain to me why they killed daddy,' she told her mother.

As if the trauma was not enough, dealing with the SAPS made matters worse.

'The investigating officer was very kind, but extremely insensitive,' said Mariandra. 'One day he came in here and he started slapping our file on the table.' I said to him "To you this is just a file. Please consider that to me, it is my whole life that you are holding in your hands. It's not 'the deceased'. It's Johann. He had a name. He was the father of my children.

It's not 'the residence'. It was my home." He then gave me a look and asked me if what had happened to Johann made me hate black people like him.'

'One day he came in here with the post mortem report. He didn't tell me what it was and then he just opened that file in front of me and started showing me the pictures indicating where my husband had been shot, telling me where the blood stains were and so forth. I was horrified.'

She managed to find out how they got into the house. On the second floor, there were little aluminium windows. The clip on one of the windows was broken, allowing the intruders to open it from the outside and fit through. The only way for them to get there was with a ladder. 'I have no idea how they could've known that, but they did. When they arrived at our house, they took a ladder and they went straight for that window.

'One day the police called me and asked me to go to an identification parade. I identified one of the attackers and they said that they also believed that it was him. A few months later, I asked them what had happened and they said that they had failed to charge him within 48 hours, so they had to let him go.

'They keep trying to involve Mieke in the whole affair. As far as Mieke knows, those people are already in prison. I will not allow them to drag my daughter into this.'

Before the funeral, Mariandra was able to do a viewing of Johann's body. 'I sat next to him for a very long time and I just spoke to him. The children painted his coffin and pressed their painted hands on it.

Almost immediately after the attack, I decided that they have taken my husband from me, but I will not allow them to destroy my children's lives any further. It's only me that can ensure this. I will carry the cross. They don't need to. They must have happy lives.'

…

When Greyling walked out the door, I realised for the first time that the friend that I had known for two years was in fact a broken man. I understood for the first time the pain that my friend was still going through and I realised that there are more than 10 000 people like my friend who are struggling to cope with the reality of what had happened to them on South Africa's farms – each one with a different story.

I now understood the expression of taut resentment on Corrie Nel's face when he told me how his daughter, Venessa Stafleu, had been murdered in front of her five-year-old son and three-year-old daughter and how his grandchildren had had to run across the farm in the middle of the night, crying for help.

I understood the look in Robert Lynn's eyes when he said to me that at least he still had the dogs that his wife had loved so dearly and that their presence reminded him of her.

I understood the tear running down Marianda Heunis's cheek when she told me that leaving Johann's body as she fled with their three little girls was the hardest decision that she had ever made in her life.

I have accepted that I cannot comfort even my friends who have experienced this. I cannot erase the pain. If there was something that I could do to reverse what had happened, I would have done it. If there was something I could have said to ease the pain, to help them get through it, I would have said it. If those deeds or those words exist, I have yet to find them.

I sent Mariandra a text message: If I feel that there are no words to describe what had happened to you, I cannot imagine what it must feel like to you.

I said to her that Johann had saved their lives. The attackers had gone there to kill. They had seven bullets. The first shot was fired at his daughter. Then he took five bullets, the first of which was later pulled from his heart. When Johann heard his murderers tried to pull his wife downstairs, when he heard his daughter plead for them to take her piggy bank, a miracle happened. He stood up and he walked towards them. In doing so, he managed to take the last bullet as well – a bullet that would undoubtedly have been fired at his pregnant wife or his daughter.

I have never experienced anything remotely close to the horror experienced by the people who shared their experiences with me. We have done the research, we have analysed the data, we have organised protest marches, we have been to court, we have been shoved out of the headquarters of the ANC and of the SAPS, we have spoken at the United Nations and in several countries about this crisis. And now I wrote a book. We will continue to do all of these things, and we will do so with even more

compassion and vigour. I am determined that this fight is not over. In fact, I know that it has only just begun.

But for a moment, all of that became irrelevant. In that moment, if only for a brief moment, I understood.

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