

AfriForum

Media Release

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Trump tweet: Here are the facts on farm murders and property rights in South Africa

The South African civil rights organisation AfriForum said that US president Donald Trump's Tweet on South Africa expresses justified concern about what is going on in South Africa, and requested those who doubt this to familiarise themselves with the facts regarding farm murders and the threat to property rights in the country.

According to Kallie Kriel, CEO of AfriForum, it is false that the number of farm murders in South Africa is decreasing. "Statistics on farm murders by the agricultural union TLU SA – including verifiable victim names, farm names and dates when the murders were committed – confirmed that farm murders were at their highest level in 13 years last year. A well-grounded analysis of the South African Police Service (SAPS) statistics by PoliticsWeb further indicates that the police statistics used by AgriSA to create the impression that farm murders are decreasing, have serious shortcomings."

According to Kriel, those who try ignore farm murders by showing that the number of farm murders is lower than 20 years ago, ignore the fact that the number of commercial farmers has almost halved over the same period. (See graphs and links to PoliticsWeb's analyses below.)

Kriel also pointed out that PoliticsWeb's finding that a farmer's chance of being killed is estimated to be 3.2 times higher than the country's already outrageously high average murder rate, confirms that the phenomenon of farm murders is a serious crisis that needs urgent attention. "The attempt to dismiss the concern about farm murders and the horrific torture that sometimes accompanies farm murders as an exaggeration of the problem, shows a lack of sensitivity toward the victims of farm murders."

AfriForum regards farm murders as a serious violation of human rights, which Kriel believes should be condemned by all mainstream role players and governments worldwide who believe in the protection of human rights. The fact that there are small groups of white nationalists who try to hijack the battle against farm murders, does harm to a justified case, while THOSE THAT DENY farm murders try to discredit the battle by falsely trying to connect it to peripheral figures. Kriel pointed out that AfriForum therefore deliberately avoided any liaison with peripheral figures and white nationalists at all costs during its foreign campaign against farm murders.

Those who try to dismiss fears about the violation of property rights and expropriation without compensation in South Africa as false, apparently ignore the fact that the South African president, the country's government leaders and the ruling ANC have on numerous occasions made statements that confirm that they are committed to violating property rights in the country. The following are examples of this:

- In December 2017, the ANC officially decided at its congress to accept expropriation without compensation as party policy.
- On 27 March this year, the South African newspaper City Press reported that Maite Nkoana-Mashabane, Minister of Rural Development and Land Reform, said government would not wait until the Constitution was amended and that her department was preparing a test case to expropriate land without compensation. She also indicated that her department has already identified the land they want to expropriate, but that she was not going to reveal the list of farms because that would warn the owners concerned to prepare for legal action. The minister has never contested the content of this article and it is therefore accepted as a correct version of what she said.

- On 31 July 2018, pres. Cyril Ramaphosa made a late-night announcement on television that he and the ANC had decided to continue to amend the South African Constitution to allow expropriation without compensation. This announcement was the tenth instance during which Ramaphosa expressed his support for expropriation without compensation in public. This announcement was made while the South African parliament's open-ended participation process was not yet completed, thus reducing the participation process to a farce. Foreign pressure is therefore of paramount importance now.

- On 5 August this year another article appeared in City Press, indicating that the Department of Rural Development and Land Reform, upon instruction by the ANC, identified 139 farms for expropriation without compensation. Zizi Kodwa, member of the ANC's national executive committee (NUC), is cited extensively in this article. The article's content has not been contested by the ANC. On the same day, the South African newspaper The Sunday Times reported that according to the party's spokesperson Ronald Lamola, the ANC identified 139 farms that would serve as "expropriation targets".

- The ANC and the government's expropriation plans unfortunately became racially tainted when David Mabuza, South Africa's deputy president, said in Pretoria on 6 April this year that white farmers should voluntarily give up their land in order to prevent a violent takeover.

- Pres. Ramaphosa also declared publicly that expropriation without compensation is necessary so that the land can be given to "our people". The conclusion can therefore be made that the president does not regard all people as part of his people.

- The statement on 7 July this year by Zweli Mkhize, Minister for Co-operative Governance and Traditional Affairs, that no property of any black person or black group will be expropriated, further gave a racial dimension to government's expropriation plans.

According to Kriel, AfriForum's analysis of the facts at its disposal indicates that the state has only now begun to expropriate farms at a price significantly below its market value. The proposed expropriation process of a farm called Akkerland Farming in Limpopo, the owner of which has received notice to vacate his farm within seven days, has already begun. "The state is offering the owner only 10% of the land's market value as compensation. If this expropriation succeeds, it will in itself already constitute a serious violation of property rights, and will pave the way for president Ramaphosa's announced plan to amend the Constitution to eventually expropriate property without any compensation," said Kriel.

Kriel also pointed out that the ANC uses false statistics about land ownership patterns in South Africa to try to justify its violation of property rights. "It is false that so-called "white" farmers own 72% of land in South Africa. According to PoliticsWeb's analysis, the figure is about 22% of South Africa's total surface area."

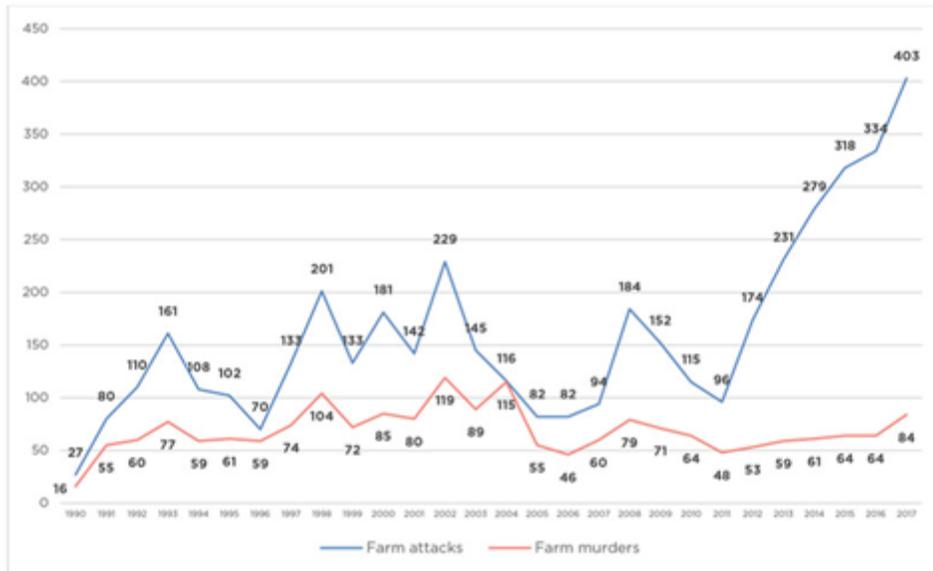
Links to PoliticsWeb's articles:

<http://www.politicsweb.co.za/opinion/news24s-dodgy-farm-murder-report>

<http://www.politicsweb.co.za/politics/farm-murders-factchecking-the-factcheckers>

<http://www.politicsweb.co.za/opinion/ramaphosa-and-the-effs-dodgy-land-stats>

Figure: TAU SA verified farm murder statistics 1990-2017 + AfriForum additions (2015).



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