

21 November 2017

To Whom It May Concern:

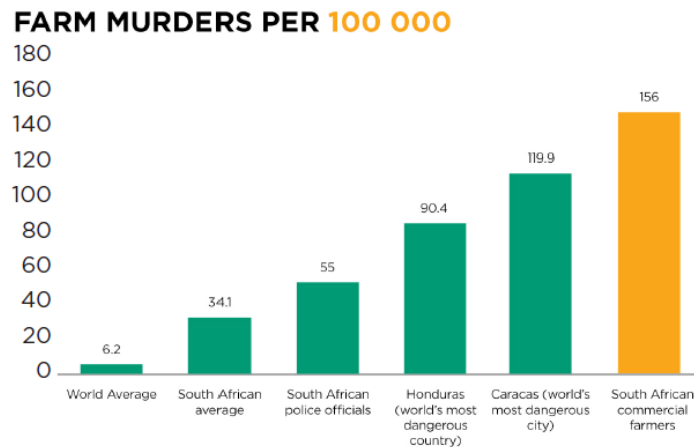
The Reality of Farm Attacks

Today memorandums highlighting the reality of farm attacks in South Africa are being presented to more than a hundred police stations across the country, as well as to a number of South African embassies, opinion makers and media outlets abroad.

This memorandum provides you with a summary of crucial facts regarding this crisis.

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

Currently there are more or less 32 000 commercial farmers left in South Africa, compared to 128 000 in 1980 and 58 000 in 1997. These farmers are being attacked and killed at completely disproportionate levels and often in the most brutal ways imaginable. A calculation of the murder ratio per 100 000 indicates that South African commercial farmers are 26 times more likely to become victims of murder than the global average, four and a half times more likely than the average South African and almost three times more likely than the average South African police officer.



Farm murders compared to other murder rates per 100 000 (2016 figures).

In addition, these attacks are often accompanied by the most brutal levels of torture imaginable. This includes the dragging of victims behind vehicles along dirt roads, burning them with boiling water or molten plastic, the severing of limbs, gouging of eyes and excessive stabbing, to name but a few methods.

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Despite the abovementioned phenomena, the South African government has been deprioritizing this crime ever since 2003, when the commando system (a voluntary part-time force of the South African National Defence Force that protected rural areas) had been disbanded. In 2007 it was announced that no further statistics about these attacks would be released. Ever since repeated statements have been made by senior government officials in which the victims of these attacks, and those who call for the prevention thereof, are ridiculed. This includes a statement by the Minister of Police in 2013, alleging that the attempt of a victim (whose brother and father had both been murdered) to present a memorandum to his office was “grandstanding” and a “publicity stunt”, as well as a statement in October 2017 contending that those who call for the prioritisation of farm attacks are members of Isis and of the Ku Klux Klan, supporters of Adolf Hitler and part of a “fascist mafia”. Furthermore, several attempts have been made to prevent the victims of these attacks from protesting or engaging in activities to raise awareness about this category of crime.

AfriForum and several other organizations will march to the office of the State President on 25 November 2017 to present a memorandum about the reality of these attacks, concerns about the systematic deprioritisation of these attacks by the South African government and proposals of certain practical steps that can be taken to address these attacks in future.

We are concerned by the fact that, apart from the personal devastation caused by these attacks, food security in Southern Africa is seriously being jeopardised by the state’s failure to protect the South African agricultural community. In addition, the income of both skilled and unskilled labour are being threatened as a direct result of farms being abandoned after attacks, adding to unemployment, economic and political instability in the country. Thus even the business interests of non-South Africans are suffering and being threatened.

AfriForum therefore appeals to you to apply pressure on the South African government to prioritise the prevention of farm attacks and to join forces with all stakeholders in the effort to do so.

Your attention to the plight of South African farmers is greatly appreciated. Should you need more information, you are welcome to contact us. We also wish to point out that the person presenting this memorandum to you, is not a mandated representative of AfriForum, but merely a person sympathetic to the cause, assisting AfriForum and the farming community in a volunteer capacity.

With appreciation and sincere regards

C.M. Kriel
CEO: AfriForum

AfriForum is a South African civil rights organisation aimed at the protection of minority rights and comprising more than 200 000 individual members.

For further information, please contact Ernst Roets, Deputy CEO of AfriForum by email ernst@afriforum.co.za and Lorraine Claasen, crime analyst and researcher of the AfriForum Research Institute (ANI), stophemurders@afriforum.co.za.