



PARLIAMENT
OF THE REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

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DIANNE KOHLER BARNARD, MP
SHADOW MINISTER OF STATE SECURITY

30 NOVEMBER 2020

Kenneth Roth
Executive Director
Human Rights Watch
New York, 10118

Dear Mr K. Roth

SOUTH AFRICA'S FARMING COMMUNITIES LIVING IN FEAR DUE TO THREAT OF HEINOUS VIOLENCE

South Africa's farming communities are currently under siege due to the violence which has become a common occurrence, particularly on farms. Farmers, farmworkers, their families and visitors have in recent years become the targets of the most heinous instances of torture, murder and rape.

What is concerning is the lack of urgency in with which the South African government has reacted to this violence. In some instances, the government has outright downplayed the severity of the situation.

As South Africa's Official Opposition, the Democratic Alliance is concerned about the crime and violence which is disproportionately targeted at South Africa's farming communities.

Your organisation is renowned globally as a principled human rights organisation, which is professional, and non-partisan. The Democratic Alliance hopes that you can use your vast global platform, to bring global awareness of the tortures, abuse, rapes and murders happening in rural communities.

The South African government's narrative that no farmers are being killed in South Africa is wrong and has been erroneously accepted as fact globally. We, therefore, request that your organisation put pressure on both the South African government as well as domestic human rights organisations to pay attention and advocate for the end of this violence.

Farmers and farmworkers, across all demographics, are being targeted by this violence and we view the lack of action by the South African government as an infringement on the farming communities' fundamental human rights to safety and security. On top of local syndicates, there may be links between stock theft syndicates, cross border syndicates and farm tortures and attacks.

Farmers and farmworkers are a National Strategic Asset in South Africa and must be supported and protected as such. It would be remiss of the Democratic Alliance if we did not alert the world to the situation faced by rural communities in our country.

We are duty-bound to highlight the suffering of people in rural South Africa who are exposed to the murderous farm attacks on a daily basis without any concrete safety and security interventions from the government.

We are committed to lessening the dangers faced by rural citizens – we are firmly of the view that, with your agency's assistance we can address these challenges, and put the necessary pressure on the South African government to bring about increased equipment, manpower and intelligence to end these senseless acts that are threatening our country's food security.

Kind regards,

Dianne Kohler Barnard MP

Democratic Alliance Shadow Minister of State Security

(Sent electronically without signature)