

# **An overview of farm attacks in South Africa and the potential impact thereof on society**

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# Foreword

## An essential investigation

*Johan Kruger*

The Solidarity Movement (specifically the Solidarity Research Institute [SRI], AfriForum, Solidarity and Kraal Uitgewers), in cooperation with interest groups such as the Transvaal Agricultural Union, has for some time worked to resolve the issue of safety in rural areas. It is no secret that these communities experience serious problems with safety, but no comprehensive research had been done on the extent and seriousness of farm attacks in South Africa. Since the South African Police Service (SAPS) no longer keeps accurate records of the number of farm attacks, it seems as if the matter has been relegated to the background and the necessity of taking action is not a priority.

Therefore, the SRI, as part of the Solidarity Movement's campaign against farm attacks, decided to involve leading experts in the field in a study on farm attacks and murders. The goal of this report is to present reliable information about farm attacks to government and to empower farming communities in South Africa through this information.

Experts investigated, among other things, the nature and extent of farm attacks, the levels of violence during farm attacks, the psychological effect of the attacks on victims, the SAPS's policy on and strategy to deal with farm attacks and community safety networks.

This report will also be published later as part of Kraal Uitgewers' updated version of the book *Treurgrond*, which deals with farm attacks.

# INTRODUCTION

## A national campaign against farm attacks

*Ernst Roets*

Farm attacks are not merely attacks on farmers or the farming community. They attack South Africa and all people that live there. They attack food security and investment potential. They attack the right to privacy and physical integrity and the right to life. They attack peaceful coexistence and healthy race relations. They attack the economy and the battle for justice. This phenomenon is not only an attack; it is also a test. It is a test of political leadership and the priorities of the South African Police Service. What is more, it is a test of the leadership and determination of each member of the civil society who believes that these attacks must stop.

The phenomenon of farm murders is pervasive, complex and multifaceted. By this time it is indisputable that rural safety and farm attacks in particular constitute a crisis that needs to be addressed urgently. This report makes it clear that there is no one single cause or motive for this problem. To counter farm attacks and farm murders effectively, a versatile strategy is needed.

This strategy should employ two broad approaches. On the one hand, we must demand that the government act. It must respond appropriately and make the policy decisions that are needed to address the issue. More important, we need to examine ourselves and decide to move from passivity to action. All things considered, the public can probably do more to address the crisis than the government is able to do.

On the political side of the campaign, activist steps against the government are needed. Like an unrehabilitated alcoholic, the government and particularly the SAPS is still in vehement denial of the problem. Our campaign must be structured to place unparalleled pressure on government so that it will not only admit that farm murders are a reality, but will also respond to them. We demand two steps from government. In the first place farm murders must be designated a priority crime and dealt with as such. Investigating farm murders must receive specific priority and a counterstrategy has to be compiled and implemented. In this respect, police statistics on farm murders must be released to cast light on the subject. Secondly we demand that government establish specialist units for rural safety at ground level. The SAPS' rural protection plan is in itself a document to be welcomed. However, two aspects are cause for concern. The first is that the plan does not pertinently refer to farm attacks and farm murders – which are by far the most significant warning sign in respect of rural safety. The second is the perception of local communities that this plan is not being carried out.

The political side of the campaign is, however, only a part of the enormous task we face. The most important task is to encourage communities to take responsibility for their own safety by becoming personally involved in security initiatives. Research done by the investigation unit in cooperation with prof. Rudolph Zinn of Unisa has repeatedly indicated that the establishment of community safety networks is the most practical step that a community can undertake to ensure that crime in its area

is drastically reduced. It is a legal way in which communities can take the initiative to enhance their own safety. It works with the police and not against them.

Much can be done in this respect. The Solidarity Movement launched a comprehensive campaign against farm murders in March 2012. Within this framework AfriForum, as part of the Solidarity Movement, in August 2012 set out the steps to be taken by this organisation.

A number of separate projects or actions are described here.

- **Creating awareness**

The public must be informed about the reality. Not just about the fact that farm attacks are a reality, but also about what they can do to pressurise government to classify farm attacks as a priority crime, and about what they should do to improve their own safety themselves. The recent attack on the American farmer, Allen Rodgers (61), heightened the international prominence of farm attacks. The international community has to be informed so that they too, in the interests of their citizens, can pressurise the South African government to be serious in addressing farm murders. AfriForum has found that a 'shock tactics' approach to create awareness of farm murders often does not have the desired results. Creating awareness must therefore be grounded in credible information and tested research, in contrast with the dissemination of insensitive visual material that uninformed recipients may regard as propaganda.

- **Involving opinion shapers**

Opinion shapers have an important role to play in informing the public about the reality of farm murders, and to demand that the issue be addressed. Many opinion shapers are already doing invaluable work in this regard. The various persons engaged in compiling this report are part of the initiative to involve opinion shapers. This research report will be used to draw other influential opinion shapers into the campaign. Opinion shapers that will be approached include artists, academics, civil organisations and the media.

- **Community safety networks**

While the campaign will in the main focus on getting government to classify farm murders as a priority crime, it is just as important to get communities to take the responsibility for properly ensuring their own safety. AfriForum's research indicates that the best way to reduce crime in communities is by mobilising the public to form community safety networks. Much remains to be done in this regard.

- **Research**

The fact that government refuses to publish statistics on farm murders, forces civil society to commission its own research in this regard and to release the results. The TAU SA data plays a significant role. This report should not be regarded as the ultimate outcome of research on the topic, but as a new beginning. Research will continue.

- **Lobbying among other organisations**

Many influential institutions have not as yet taken much of a position, or any position for that matter, on farm murders. These institutions in particular will be approached. Moreover, institutions that have expressed an opinion will also be approached. The focus will be on government commissions, research institutions, non-governmental organisations and political parties.

- **Legal strategy**

In 2003, the government of former President Thabo Mbeki abolished local commandos. When it was announced that the commandos would be abolished, a promise was made that alternative structures would be created for rural safety. This promise has never been fulfilled. The possibility of forcing government by means of a court order to create specialist units for rural safety is being investigated.

- **The battle against hate speech**

Struggle songs with offensive content directed at white people or farmers are creating a climate in which racial conflict, particularly violence against farmers, is romanticised. The ANC's recent agreement to stop singing such songs is a major step in the right direction. This agreement, which was concluded with AfriForum and TAU SA, was made an order of the Supreme Court of Appeal. Non-compliance will constitute contempt of court. So far, the ANC has kept its side of the agreement. Although it is a major step toward peaceful coexistence in South Africa, it nevertheless does not mean that the battle against hate speech has been won once and for all. Influential politicians must consistently be called to account for their statements and actions, especially when these incite racial hatred.

- **Preparations for an international campaign**

While several other steps can be taken at local level, AfriForum and Solidarity are also preparing to take this campaign to the international arena. It is clear that the hasty actions of local organisations have contributed to creating certain misconceptions about the matter abroad, and particularly at the UN. These perceptions must be corrected through reliable information and credible conduct.

- **National day of protest**

A national day of protest against farm murders will be held on 1 December 2012. A memorandum demanding that farm murders be declared a priority crime will be handed to at least 100 police stations countrywide. Local communities are to present these memorandums. At the same time, protest meetings will be held in Pretoria and Bloemfontein. A memorandum addressed to the Minister of Police will also be handed over at this event.

- **Liaison with the SAPS**

It is crucial that the South African Police Service should not be seen or treated as an adversary in this matter, but rather as an institution that needs persuading that action is urgently needed. Ongoing information will therefore be supplied to the SAPS, particularly about why and how farm murders should be classified as priority crimes. Appointments with the Minister of Police and the National Police Commissioner will be requested.

- **Local protests**

Protest action will play an important role in the campaign. Government's lack of action in rural areas has caused enormous frustration and it is important to provide an outlet for this frustration. Apart from offering an outlet, protest action is also an important way of demonstrating South Africans' dissatisfaction with government's silence on farm murders at local, national and international level. Local areas often indicate that they are willing to organise protest marches about farm murders, especially when a member of the community has been attacked or murdered. While it is important that local communities use their initiative to arrange such actions, AfriForum will in future play a more supportive role in this connection.

- **Support to victims**

The Solidarity Movement has already done a great deal to support victims of farm attacks, especially in those instances where the police's reaction to a farm attack is less than satisfactory. Although AfriForum has no intention of assuming the police's role in this regard, its investigative unit will continue to support the victims of farm attacks in certain circumstances.

In the end, the campaign's success will depend on the public's willingness to become involved, take a stance and follow through with action. Local communities have a responsibility to stand up and declare that they will no longer be passive spectators at a game that has only losers and no winners. This campaign is far more than a campaign aimed at molycoddling a few thousand farmers. It is a war that must be fought to save this country from going under, for all who live in it. This is no mere campaign. It is a calling. We dare not betray it.

# CHAPTER 1

## Overview of farm attacks in South Africa and their potential impact on society

*Prof. Christiaan Bezuidenhout*

### 1. INTRODUCTION

There is ample evidence of the long history of human involvement in aggression and violence in South Africa. Today South Africans are still under the constant threat of violent crimes such as murder, rape, robbery assault and the like. Through experience and opportunistic situations South Africans have learnt that aggressive behaviour enables them to obtain material goods, land, valuables, prestige, status, and power. It also allows some individuals to avenge past wrongs and to 'even the score' for these alleged damages of the past. Although some scholars might wonder whether the human species could have survived had it not used aggression, others point out that both historically and in the present, aggressive behaviour is at the root of numerous social and individual problems.

Many South Africans are confronted by violent crime on a 24-hour basis. Relative to the rest of the world, violent crime is extraordinarily high in South Africa. A high percentage of people are murdered, raped, tortured and robbed daily. It is not uncommon to hear of a crime incident where gratuitous violence (excessive unnecessary violence) was used against the victims. Gratuitous violence is currently causing tremendous trauma for society in general and more specifically for the farming community. Violence during farm attacks need to be noted as 78% of victims included in the research done in the compiling of the report of the Committee of Inquiry into farm attacks (SAPS, 2003) were seriously harmed. In addition if one does not become a direct victim the possibility exists that vicarious victimisation (usurp others' victimisation) takes place. In South Africa a belief system exists that crime is out of control and because of this many citizens and especially the vulnerable farming community live in fear behind a façade of false security (e.g. carrying of a firearm at all times, guard dogs, burglar proofing, alarms, armed response, electric fencing, electronic monitoring). One reason for this is that the mistaken belief in security acts as a defence mechanism to cope with the strains caused by regular incidences of violence in general society but more specifically during farm attacks in South Africa. Many factors can fuel the fear for personal safety, namely the mass media, the lawlessness of many groupings of citizens, gangs and syndicates, mob violence, emotionally coloured statements of politicians as well as the absence of an effective criminal justice system.

Aggression is the basic ingredient of a violent farm attack. Is human aggression instinctive, biological, learned, or some combination of these characteristics? If it results from an innate, biological mechanism, the methods designed to control, reduce, or eliminate aggressive behaviour will differ significantly from methods used if aggression is learned. Different perspectives exist regarding aggressive behaviour and in lieu with this some believe that aggressive behaviour toward fellow humans is basically biological and genetic in origin, judged to be a strong residue of our



evolutionary past. This physiological, genetic contention is accompanied by compelling evidence that explanations of human aggressive behaviour may even be compared to instinctual aggression in animals. In contrast, those who pledge to the learning perspective believes that, while some species of animals may be genetically programmed to behave aggressively, humans learn to be aggressive from their social role models. It still remains a huge challenge to explain aggressive behaviour amongst humans. This is especially baffling when it comes to extreme violence towards a specific group such as the farming community.

Violent crimes are globally deemed unacceptable. More specifically, crimes such as farm attacks and the offences that occur during these attacks (e.g. murder, assault, robbery and rape) send shivers down most people's spines when they contemplate the possibility of becoming a victim of any of these heinous actions. It is a well-established fact that people fear becoming a victim of senseless violence more than any other type of crime. Violent crimes and the impact thereof are regularly broadcast on television, radio as well as in the written media and the macabre killing of a farmer, his family and farm dwellers (labourers) is the type of crime the news media often favour as 'front-page news'. Violent crime makes us afraid because although people may feel outrage and anger when they are deceived, their homes are burglarised or their cars are stolen, these feelings are greatly surpassed by the thought of dying or being seriously hurt as a result of violent crime. It is the fear of violent crime that fuels drastic steps to protect oneself. Many farmers are in a very vulnerable position and are in a way left to their own devices to organise their own security and protect their farms, belongings and family. Farm attacks and murders are not specifically captured as a crime category in the official police statistics and are seen as a 'typical' crime in South Africa.

In section 12(1)(c) of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa Act 108 of 1996, it is stated that every person has the right 'to freedom from all forms of violence from either public or private sources'. However, this right for farmers is far from guaranteed in South Africa since our country comprises of a society of people with a culture of violence deeply rooted in our history, which is often linked to our high rate of violent crime.

When one compares the scant scientific data on farm killings, it seems as if it is proportionally significantly more dangerous to be a farmer in South Africa than to be a police official who has a so-called high-risk occupation. Relatively analysed one can calculate the risk of a farmer as follows: It was estimated that South Africa had approximately 39 982 active farms in operation during 2007 [this figure is decreasing annually]. Based on the last official police statistics 88 farmers were murdered in the financial year 2005/2006 (88/39 982). In comparison 87 police officials died on duty and as a result of duty during the same period. On 31 March 2006 the police service was 155 532 strong (87/155 532)

**Table 1: Relative calculation based on the last official police statistics to determine a farmer's average murder risk rate**

Population	Deceased	Working total	Financial year
Farmers	88	39 982*	2006/2007**
General Public	38,6	100 000	2006/2007
Police Officials	87	155 532	2006/2007

\* Figure based on active farms in 2007 according to the South African Chamber of Commerce and Industry (SACCI)

\*\* 2006/2007 implies one financial year

**Table 2 Calculation to equate the totals to 100 000 of each population**

Farmers	88/39 982	220.1/100 000
General Public	38,6/100 000	38.6/100 000
Police Officials	87/155 532	55.9/100 000

It is clear from the equating calculation in Table 2 that farmers run a significantly higher risk to be murdered compared to the general public and the police. Furthermore, although farm attacks occur globally, farm attacks on South African soil are estimated to be 700% higher than in any other country in the world. Although farmers from different racial groups fall victim to farm attacks, White farmers stand an even greater risk to become a victim of an attack. In addition, the chances of a farmer being murdered on a farm in South Africa are anything between four to six times higher than the average murder risk rate for the general population. To contextualise the murder risk rate of South Africa I have compared it to the United Kingdom (UK) and the United States of America (USA).

During the financial year from April 2009 to March 2010 the murder rate in South Africa was 16 834 which calculates to a worrisome figure of about 34 murders out of every 100 000 of the population. Although the murder rate apparently declined to 15 940 in the 2010/2011 financial year the SA murder rate is still extremely high compared to the UK and the USA.

In the recorded crime statistics for England and Wales (a combined population of ±53 390 300 million) there were 663 homicides recorded in 2008/09; 618 in 2009/2010 and 642 in 2010/2011 - a rate of about 1 per 100 000 of the population ([www.homeoffice.gov.uk](http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk)). The USA, with a population of ± 308 745 538 million people, dealt with 16 465 murder victims in 2008; 15 399 in 2009 and 14 748 in 2010 – this works out to a rate of about 5 per 100 000 ([www.fbi.gov](http://www.fbi.gov)).

On the Wikipedia Encyclopaedia website ([www.wikipedia.org](http://www.wikipedia.org)) South Africa was listed as the 9th most murderous country in the world in 2007, namely 38,6 murders per 100 000 of the population. According to the Wikipedia website the USA experienced 5,7 murders per 100 000 of the population in 2006. The USA was listed on this scale as number 47 in the world while the UK was listed as number 79 in the world. This translates to a figure of 2,03 murders per 100 000 in 2007 in the UK. Iraq was the top murdering country on this list with 89 murders per 100 000 in 2007 and Venezuela with 65 per 100 000 in 2006 is in the second place.

When the farmer murder rate in South Africa (88/39 982 or 220,1/100 000) is contextualised against this backdrop one abruptly realises the dire position the farming community in South Africa finds themselves in. Comparatively speaking the chances of a farmer being murdered on a farm in South Africa are anything between four to six times higher than the average murder risk rate for the general population.

## **2. DEFINING FARM ATTACKS AND MURDER**

South African statutory or common law does not define a 'farm murder' and 'farm attack' as a specific crime category. The concept 'farm attack' is used to refer to a number of different crimes committed against persons specifically on farms or smallholdings. Most people know what is meant by a farm attack and that several crimes that belong to the different serious crime categories (assault, robbery, rape and murder) are usually committed during a farm attack. According to the South African Police Service National Operational Coordinating Committee (NOCOC): Attacks on farms and smallholdings refer to acts aimed at the person of residents, workers and visitors to farms and smallholdings, whether with the intent to murder, rape, rob or inflict bodily harm. All actions aimed at disrupting farming activities as a commercial concern, whether for motives related to ideology, labour disputes, land issues, revenge, grievances, racist concerns or intimidation, should be included in the definition of the concept 'farm attack'. This definition includes actions such as murder, attempted murder, rape, assault with the intent to do grievous bodily harm, robbery, vehicle hijacking, theft of vehicles, malicious damage to property where the damage exceeds R10 000 and arson. The SAPS Crime Research and Statistics component of Crime Intelligence (previously known as the Crime Information Analysis Centre [CIAC]) uses these categories for their own purposes as the SAPS no longer categorises farm attacks in a separate crime category. The definition does not include cases of social contact crime, such as violence, drunkenness or ordinary interpersonal crimes between individuals who know each other. A farm attack therefore refers to all criminally inclined attacks on the farming community of South Africa.

## **3. A CLOSER LOOK AT FARM ATTACKS IN SOUTH AFRICA**

It is difficult to highlight a single reason why farmers are attacked, maimed and murdered on their farms when the types of aggression are considered. It is also difficult to predict when a farm attack is going to take place because human behaviour is difficult to predict. Please note that aggression is not always synonymous with violence, and that an aggressive person is not always violent. It is extremely difficult to predict violence and aggression in humans. Prediction remains an unreliable mechanism in the determination of 'dangerousness' or aggression in humans. The problem arises when it is necessary to predict future aggressiveness or the level of dangerousness of individuals who had been aggrieved by a farmer or who adhere to propaganda to attack a family on their farmstead. Adding to the dilemma of future predictions of the probability of a hoodlum violently attacking a farmer is determining what type of violence and aggression embroils during the attack. The complication lies in the motivation and intent of the aggression. It is somehow possible to delineate if a distinction is made between hostile aggression and instrumental aggression. Hostile (expressive) aggression is shown in situations that elicit anger. The main aim of the aggressor is to hurt or cause suffering to the person

causing the anger. The anger may be defined as a state of arousal, which elicits frustration or attack. It is an almost automatic impulsive response to the other's action. If a farmworker is scolded and demeaned by the farmer he may commit a hostile action since he would like to hurt the object that caused the immediate pain, anger and hostility. He might retaliate and assault the farmer. Usually crimes of this nature are extremely difficult to deter or prevent. In most cases, the heightened emotions of the situation undermine the person's ability to control their feelings and to make rational decisions.

In the case of instrumental aggression the perpetrator of the violence is usually motivated by competition or the wish to have something that someone else has. In the case of a common robbery, instrumental aggression becomes relevant as it usually involves a criminal that focuses on material goods, such as a successful farm, laptop computer or a cell phone. Although the initial aim is not to necessarily severely injure someone physically, emotional and material harm is done to the victim. In most cases the perpetrator will use force to attain his goal of getting the merchandise or commodities. Thus the perpetrator places just enough pressure on victims to make them comply. In South Africa, an anomaly exists since many 'instrumental' farm attackers use extreme force and violence to get what they want.

It is a matter of concern that these perpetrators often torture and kill their victims after they have satisfied their instrumental need of attaining the loot, firearms, vehicles or money with force. Many farm attackers use excessive unnecessary violence towards the victims. This unnecessary violence (overkill) is known as gratuitous violence. The perpetrator shows prolonged unnecessary violence after they have attained their instrumental goal during a farm attack. The perpetrator who shows gratuitous violence seems to be oblivious to the impact of severely assaulting the victim without any need for it. To put it into perspective, a perpetrator may take a life for a very small gain, for example, ambush a farmer at his farm gate, assault him severely with a blunt instrument, tie a noose around the farmer's neck, tie him to a vehicle, drag him behind the farmer's own vehicle, stab him several times and douse him in petrol, after which the perpetrator sets the farmer on fire for the instrumental gain of a firearm, a wallet and a mobile phone. In this scenario, gratuitous violence was used without weighing up the consequences of taking a person's life for the relative small gain when compared to a human life.

Many factors play a role in the human's ability or motivation to show aggression towards other humans in a gratuitous way. In a number of instances, farm attacks may be related to alcohol intoxication, drug abuse, socialisation, a lack of opportunities, frustration, poverty, factors related to a decrepit neighbourhood, peer pressure or because of political influences. Violent farm attacks may also be ascribed to the result of a personal or a cultural belief system, for example, the culture of violence in South Africa. Violence can also be directed at a specific group because of prejudice or pre-conceived ideas, such as hatred towards the predominantly White farming community in South Africa. The array of reasons why certain individuals (mostly Black perpetrators) aggressively attack farmers is difficult to determine. It is clear that a variety of reasons can be put forward why these attacks occur. Some scholars postulate that the perpetrators of farm attacks are common criminals who target farms because farms are soft targets. Others believe that the will of some political leaders entice perpetrators to claim back the farm in any way possible as the land formerly belonged to their forefathers. Some

intellectuals believe that politicians could be labelled as the architects of the current farm attack phenomenon in South Africa. Others insist that the poverty of the country and the prejudiced socialisation of individuals play a role in these attacks.

The role of socialisation and the modelling of behaviour need a closer look in this context. In general, humans model behaviour from three main role models:

- family members
- members of a subculture/peer group, and
- the media.

Also, a human's predetermined genetic constitution – or, in other words, their biological, physiological and psychological programming – in some way predetermines a person's inclination to show aggression during a farm attack. This complex interdependency between nature and nurture eventually impacts on a human's ability to deal with and or show aggression and violence. Social behaviour in general and aggressive criminal behaviour in particular, is controlled largely by cognitive scripts learned and memorised through daily experiences (learn behaviour and the justifications for it from role models). A script determines how a person should behave in response to environmental stimuli and what the outcome of the behaviour would be. A cognitive script eventually becomes very resistant to change once it has been 'programmed' into the memory. The evaluation of the 'appropriateness' of the cognitive script plays an important role in determining which scripts are stored in the memory for later retrieval and used when necessary and which scripts are used regularly.

The working of cognitive scripts in this context with regards to farm attacks could probably be instilled in the following ways:

- Introducing a violent or related script [a politician who regularly chants in public 'Shoot the Boer' (The concept 'Boer' denotes a White farmer in South Africa)];
- Indoctrinating a child [a child who is regularly told by elders to recapture their land one day and assault the enemy of their forefathers who pilfered the land from them]; or
- Prompting a vulnerable person [regularly voicing to people that they are poor because of the White farmer].

The environmental factors are cues or stimuli in a person's life and determine which script is 'appropriate' for the occasion. An individual with poorly integrated internal standards or buffers against hostility, or who is convinced that an aggressive approach is the only way to solve problems or to get what you aspire, is more likely to incorporate aggressive scripts in their day to day behaviour. Importantly, the hostile person who has been indoctrinated over time to claim back the farm that was taken from his forefathers is apt to instigate aggressive reactions to the farmer during a farm attack no matter if they had a hostile (expressive) or instrumental intent during the farm attack.

It is therefore important to realise that many factors in a human's life will impact on the manifestation of aggression and the eventual decision to attack a farm, torture or even murder the farmer, his family as well as the farm dwellers and labourers. One's cognitive scripts to use violence will be partly determined by nature and partly by nurture. If someone grows up in an environment where their biological,

socioeconomic and environmental factors, as well as the community circumstances, place them at risk of showing aggressive behaviour and more specifically hostility towards a certain group, their cognitive script on aggression will become quite permanent and relevant in situations where they use that script to guide their behaviour. In addition, situations that trigger them to show expressive aggression will even bring more severe violence. General violent behaviour is therefore caused by multidimensional factors, which include biological, psychological, environmental, historical, cultural and economic factors. No single factor can be highlighted as the most important contributing factor to violent farm attacks we often witness in South Africa. In addition some farmers are attacked by legal/illegal immigrants from neighbouring countries such as Zimbabwe where land grabbing and violence toward White farmers also take place. Many White farmers have also been tortured and killed in Zimbabwe. As a result many White farmers have left Zimbabwe. The ripple effect of this is that many Zimbabwean citizens do not have food currently and the Zimbabwean economy crumbled completely after farms were forcefully removed from the White farmers. Many Zimbabwean farmers who were not killed evacuated Zimbabwe rapidly often leaving behind all their worldly possessions.

The worrying factor is the torturing and unnecessary violence during the commitment of farm attacks in South Africa and in Zimbabwe. Torture, gratuitous violence and mayhem during farm attacks have become a general phenomenon in South Africa. It is as if a shift in crime patterns has come to the fore because traditional crime as a survival mechanism has now made place for increasingly torturous sadistically violent acts especially during farm attacks.

### **3.1 Torture**

According to popular definitions of torture, such as the one provided in Article 1 of the United Nations Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment of 1975, torture constitutes: '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 committing, 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'. It is the political connotation that proves a problem in this definition, because it makes the application of the word torture to normal, non-political crime more difficult. The word torture has however gained prominence in the popular media in describing extreme violence and/or aggression used during the commitment of a farm attack. These attacks include crimes such as robbery, rape, kidnapping, vehicle theft and murder.

For the purposes of this report I will redefine torture as the threat or use of violence and aggression to intimidate or assault a farmer, his family, friends, farm labourers and farm dwellers. The sole purpose of this violence and aggression is to cause the victim (s) severe emotional and/or physical distress.

This definition has certain distinct elements:

- Threat of, or use of violence and/or aggression; and

- The violence and aggression, or threat thereof, causes the victim emotional or physical distress.

Based on the two different types of aggression explained earlier one can now also distinguish between two different types of torture, namely instrumental and non-instrumental torture.

Firstly instrumental torture could be seen as torture that is implemented as a means to an end, such as getting information [e.g. combination or code to a safe] or exercising control [e.g. exerting control over the farmer to redress the balance of internal conflict, inner compulsions and frustrations]. Non-instrumental torture (expressive/hostile torture) can be defined as a torturous act that has no other purpose than causing physical or emotional harm to the victim. The latter usually occurs after the first, where torture continues even after the needed information or control has been obtained. The hoodlum probably applies unnecessary gratuitous violence on the farmer to demolish the 'source' of all his frustrations and failures. In some way one can probably argue that the torture and murdering of the farmer shows commitment to the call by some leaders to remove farmers from the farm/land which previously belonged to some forefather of the hoodlum or his grouping.

Traditionally aggression during the commitment of crime was used as a means to an end, usually to obtain information and to pacify the victim. The violence and aggression would then end when the desired results were achieved. However, during instances of aggravated farm attacks, a primary analysis of newspaper articles suggests that the violence continues, even after the desired results were obtained. This is also clearly illustrated in the documentary film 'War of the Flea'.

This would suggest that at some point during the commitment of the farm attack torture would become non-instrumental or expressive in nature. From the definition it can be seen that torture during the commitment of a crime can take on two forms, physical torture and psychological torture, both of which have adverse negative effects on the human psyche.

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. 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). Psychological torture during farm attacks includes belittling, threats, attempted and threatened assault and threats to other family members. Sometimes they are forced to undress where after their sexual integrity becomes the focus of defamation.

It is impossible to draw up an individual profile that accurately describes or encompasses all hostile, potentially violent farm attackers. It is, however, clear that those risk factors are not isolated from each other and the multiplicity of factors illustrates the complexity of the problem. Because of the culture of violence in South Africa community violence, sexual violence and violence in the home are everyday phenomena and many citizens have accepted violent crime and aggressive outcomes as 'normal'. Thus violent crime has become a normal everyday

occurrence or cognitive script for many in the home, school and in society in general, which is transferred from generation to generation. This may be one of the reasons why the South African Police Service has ceased releasing figures on farm attacks and murders in 2007 – it is just another violent crime in South Africa.

In addition to the aforementioned multiplicity of factors that contributes to violent acts and torture, we need to understand that each human is unique and that an 'underlying' factor in each person still plays an important role in the choice to commit a farm attack and act aggressively along with the choice to take up a life of violent crime. This underlying factor is difficult to pinpoint, but it does exist. In many cases, children who have been the victims of violent and sexual abuse, who were forced by peers to fit in and who grew up in appalling neighbourhoods characterised by poverty, drug abuse, as well as crime and violence, never take up a life of crime and violent behaviour. This is perhaps that indefinable and obscure underlying factor hard at work in that person's constitution.

The rhetorical question that remains is: Why will the remainder and probably the majority of those individuals that grow up in the same unacceptable circumstances never progress to a life of violent crime and torture fellow humans? Many people grow up in appalling socio-economic conditions, they are politically indoctrinated and bear the brunt of the harsh conditions South Africa can offer but they never evolve into hardened murderers who torture and kill with impunity.

This question will probably remain unanswered ad infinitum...

### **3.2 Contextualising farm attacks and murders and illuminating the possible impact thereof**

Slayings on farms or farm killings have come to haunt the rural communities of South Africa. They arouse strong emotions in many concerned South Africans, regardless of what citizens believe to be the causes of this type of violence. Farm attacks and especially the ruthless murdering of farmers, their family members and farm labourers, are somewhat unique to South Africa. Although farmers from different racial groups fall victim to farm attacks, White farmers stand a substantial risk to become a victim of an attack because most active producing farms are owned by White farmers.

Most farm attacks leave a trail of blood, death and destruction. As was mentioned before, often these attacks are accompanied by extreme violence and torture (gratuitous violence). It seems as if perpetrators not only focus on killing the victim, but also on inflicting pain and bringing about suffering. Most farm attacks are precisely executed and thoroughly planned because the character of farms in South Africa usually allows perpetrators enough time to execute their attacks unhurried.

Farms are usually more isolated and the perpetrators have time and know no one will hear the agony during the torture and brutality. In addition, many farmers hunt on their farms so a gunshot usually does not attract attention. Generally a farm attack could be divided into three phases, namely:

- The reconnaissance phase – This phase includes different strategies, such as monitoring of movement on the farm, intimidation and strange occurrences



such as the poisoning of dogs or livestock as well as the sudden absconding of a farm labourer.

- The operational phase or attack – During this phase the attack takes place lasting from a few minutes to several hours.
- The escape phase – After the attack, the perpetrators will leave the farm with their own vehicles, on foot or they will take the victim's vehicle(s) as a getaway vehicle or as part of their loot.

Significant political and racial sensitivities surround farm attacks in South Africa. For example, the singing of the 'Shoot the Boer' song (Julius Malema) has been declared unconstitutional in the High Court of South Africa, but is still being debated vigorously by politicians to claim the 'naivety' of the song.

Sporadically the song is still illegally chanted at meetings and political rallies. The African National Congress (ANC), the majority and leading political party in South Africa, is of the opinion that the song should be seen as a 'struggle' song with no reference to White farmers whatsoever.

Whether the intention of the song is noble in nature it was declared unconstitutional and as a form of hate speech. A few lyrics from the song will be presented to illustrate the content thereof:

*Ayasab' amagwala (the cowards are scared)*  
*dubula dubula (shoot shoot)*  
*ayeah*  
*dubula dubula (shoot shoot)*  
*ayasab 'a magwala (the cowards are scared)*  
*dubula dubula (shoot shoot)*  
*awu yoh*  
*dubula dubula (shoot shoot)*  
*aw dubul'ibhunu (shoot the Boer) ...*  
*Ziyarapa lezinja (these dogs are raping)*  
*dubula dubula (shoot shoot)*  
*ay iyeah*  
*dubula dubula (shoot shoot)*  
*Ziyarapa lezinja (these dogs are raping)*  
*dubula dubula (shoot shoot)*  
*ay iiiyo*  
*dubula dubula (shoot shoot) ...*  
*Aw dubul'ibhunu (shoot the Boer) ...*

*(Abridged lyrics of the 'Shoot the Boer' song sung by representatives of the ANC political party (e.g. Julius Malema)).*

In the past, political leaders also uttered slogans like 'One Settler, one bullet' and the slogan was regularly chanted at political rallies (Peter Mokaba) or social gatherings. Other political figures, such as Oupa Kgotle, have openly acknowledged that the White farming community contributed to the apartheid economy and that he sees this as one of the main reasons behind farm attacks. Jan Shoba, the commander of the Pan Africanist Congress (PAC) task group, actually instructed members of the PAC to attack the farming community. Recently, African National Congress Youth League deputy president Ronald Lamola alleged during a public lecture pertaining

to youth unemployment that this issue could only be addressed as soon as land was expropriated. He stated that 'we need an act as forceful as war to bring it back to the Africans'.

These controversies appear to have completely blinded politicians who are responsible for the curbing of the phenomenon and scientists who should research the phenomenon. There are no reliable statistics on farm attacks after 2007 in South Africa. Although the abovementioned political will has been swept under the carpet in recent times, other reasons have been put forward for farm murders and farm attacks, such as revenge, retaliation, hatred, negative working relationships, poor wages, poverty, unemployment, hardship and easy access to a 'big' score. On most farms the perpetrators will get money, vehicles, food, alcohol and high-tech electronic equipment as well as firearms. A farm is therefore a profitable target for robbery. Illegal immigrants who are flocking to South Africa for a better life meet an already overburdened economy and then several apparently turn to a life of crime.

A number of illegal immigrants have also been implicated in farm attacks and murders in the past few years. The deputy president Kgalema Motlanthe indicated that farmers should be blamed for the violent attacks on them, since they use illegal immigrants on their farms, pay them poorly and sometimes treat them badly.

Likewise, racism and xenophobia have also been put forward as reasons for farm murders. According to the Institute for Contemporary History land claims and racism are regarded to be the main motives for farm attacks. The actual figures of farm attacks in South Africa are far from clear or complete. However, since SAPS discontinued releasing figures on farm attacks and murders in 2007, different organisations have put together their own statistics with regard to the extent of farm murders in South Africa. This data only focuses on the number of murders and not all the farm attacks that have taken place since democratisation in 1994.

The existing data on farm murders and attacks is out of date, covers different time periods and fails to give detailed breakdowns of who, within farming communities, is under attack. Nevertheless, it provides some indication of the extent of farm murder in South Africa.

#### • **Farm murders**

- AgriSA, recorded 1 541 murders and 10 151 attacks in the period from 1994 to 2008 – an average of 0,3 murders a day.
- The Transvaal Agricultural Union (TAU) recorded 1 266 murders and 2 070 attacks in the period from 1991 to 2009 – an average of 0,2 murders a day.
- The Institute for Security Studies of the University of Pretoria, using statistics provided by TAU in June last year (2009), reported 1 073 murders and 1 813 attacks in the period from 1993 to 2009 – an average of 0,2 murders a day.

#### • **Farm attacks**

The only available figures on the SAPS website concerning statistical information about farm attacks pertain to a general overview of murder statistics in South Africa as a whole. AgriSA has reported that more than 10 000 farm attacks have taken place since 1994. The media have also flirted with figures of more than 13 000 farm attacks. The only definite fact is that farm attacks are on the increase in South Africa.

### • Economic implications

The economic implications of farm killings are far-reaching. According to the South African Chamber of Commerce and Industry (SACCI), every farm murder or attack costs the South African economy approximately R2 million annually. This figure was based on the annual contribution of the agricultural sector to the country's gross domestic product (GDP). In their statement SACCI said: Using the nominal GDP figure for 2009 of R2,4 trillion, a 3,22% contribution of agriculture to GDP and an estimate of 39 982 farms (as at 2007) in South Africa, the cost of a murder/attack on a farm, to the economy, was R1 932 869 per annum. This estimate assumes a permanent loss of the farming unit. This figure is substantially higher in the present-day.

From the foregoing, it is clear that farm attacks do occur very regularly and have significant, psychological implications for the farming community in general and for many members of society. It also has severe economic implications for the country.

Once a farmer has been killed most of the production is halted on the farm. In most cases, the farm is put up for sale or left abandoned. This implies job losses and if this trend continues, South Africa will become economically strained, much like Zimbabwe. Fresh produce will have to be imported from neighbouring countries and abroad. Currently farmers are still feeding the majority of the population. Farming has, however, become a high-risk enterprise in South Africa.

The possible psychological, emotional and monetary impact of a farm attack and the array of crimes that are committed alongside the attack are difficult to quantify in fiscal terms.

In this report the focus is more on the emotional and psychological impact of farm attacks and not so much on the unconstructive impact thereof. Along these lines, I will attempt to verify the affecting and psychological strain and burden farm attacks in South Africa exert on the primary and secondary victims as well as the concerned populace.

It is not really possible to holistically determine the effects of farm attack on a human being. The majority of victims experience severe trauma and eventually manifest with post-traumatic stress syndrome (PTSS) should they survive the ordeal of a farm attack. Without trying to generalise one can deduce that a violent farm attack can have extreme psychological, emotional, physical and indirect consequences on the self.

#### - Post-traumatic Stress Syndrome (PTSS)

Almost any trauma, described as an event that is life-threatening or that severely compromises the emotional well-being of an individual or causes intense fear, may cause PTSS to the self. Such events often include either experiencing or witnessing a severe accident or physical injury, being the victim of a farm attack or torture, being the victim of rape, assault, enduring physical, sexual, emotional, or other forms of abuse.

It was evident from the literature review, interviews with survivors and news reports that most survivors of farm attacks experienced recurrent memories of the incident.

The experience also caused sleep disturbances, eating disorders, feelings of alienation and emotional numbing as well as other anxiety-related symptoms (e.g. intense fear, terror, avoidance and helplessness). Especially in cases where vicarious victimisation (a person usurps the victimisation of a primary victim – a wife witnessing her husband being tortured and vice versa) takes place helplessness often manifests as a significant emotion. Severe post-traumatic stress syndrome can also manifest over a period of time. These individuals experience changes in their personality. They do not feel wanted and they do not feel that they belong. Identity deformation can also manifest, which makes people particularly vulnerable to repeated victimisation or harm. One should take note of the fact that symptoms of PTSS may not emerge immediately. This is known as delayed onset of PTSS. In addition PTSS often persist for many years and is frequently associated with exposure to multiple traumas.

- Desensitisation and damage to the self-esteem

A farm attack can shatter basic assumptions about oneself and the world. Nonetheless most people need healthy self-perceptions and positive perceptions of the world in order to function normally. Humans need to believe that they are safe from harm and that the world is meaningful. Furthermore, well-balanced humans must believe in the world as unprejudiced and that every other individual are good and decent. A great deal of the strain victims of farm attacks experience after a brutal incident, whether directly or indirectly, is when these assumptions are shattered by an aggressive hostile farm attack [i.e. often a farm labourer who has worked alongside the farmer for many years one day brutally attacks and murders the farmer with the help of unknown hoodlums]. People want to believe in their invulnerability, they want to believe in the world as a meaningful place and they want to have some form of self-worth. This reality helps us to build up certain expectations about others around us and ourselves. Many farmers I interviewed stated that they wish for everything in South Africa to settle down as they want to do their job - farming. They do not want to get involved in politics and the majority did not wish to fight fire with fire. In spite of this if these expectations and realities are shattered by a vicious farm attack they are confronted by disbelief, psychological distress and distrust in strangers especially if they denote those individuals who were the perpetrators in the first place. This desensitises them and this can cause prejudice and faulty judgments in future. For example, studies with regard to farm attacks show that a significant number of the victims of farm attacks felt uncertain about the future, loss of control and an absent sense of security. Victims suffer guilt feelings and often blame themselves for the attack. Their self-image may become negative and they internalise the negative self-perception. This can impair the process of healing after the incident.

It is not uncommon for victims to question their own behaviour and actions. They doubt their own judgments and more often than not question their role in their own victimisation. In many cases the surviving victim experience recurring thoughts of 'I should have done something to help'. This kind of self-blame can cause long-term emotional damage and social isolation. In many

cases these symptoms are compounded by a lack of support and the aloof political will to curb the predicament of farmers in South Africa.

#### - Secondary victimisation

Secondary victimisation should not be confused with vicarious victimisation. Secondary victimisation occurs when an individual experiences victimisation by individuals who are supposed to support them (e.g. relevant government agencies [e.g. the police and criminal justice officials], medical personnel, significant others, family etc.). Secondary victimisation arises when agencies (or individuals) that are responsible for the care of survivors neglect this responsibility, and as a result the survivor suffers additional trauma and pain. Victims of crimes such as farm attacks are sometimes partially blamed for the crime and poorly treated by the relevant agencies and role-players concerned. This kind of reaction by politicians, the police, health service personnel or a person's significant others can cause stigmatisation, blaming and re-traumatisation.

In contrast to the blaming by significant others one should also remember that some significant others and relatives are the indirect victims of a violent farm attack. This implies that they are also shocked and overwhelmed by the news of the event and that they feel closer to the victimisation because of the trauma their loved one or an acquaintance had to endure. This is probably the beginning of vicarious victimisation or the usurping process of the crime impact. Thus relatives, friends, farm workers or acquaintances can start with condemnation and blame and they often project their hurt and frustration onto another role-player (e.g. the police) for the incident. I see this as a defence mechanism, which is known as 'displacement'. In the context of a farm attack and the inner conflict one experience a person can transfer their feelings about one object (violent farm attack and the hoodlums responsible for it) onto a less threatening substitute object (the police who arrive on the scene). In addition many South Africans blame the police as the culprits as they view the police as unprofessional, corrupt and incompetent. The police are turned into the medium to voice their aggression on. In some way the blaming acts as a mechanism to channel their frustrations with the current political system or toward specific politicians. The police act as the punch bag for a political system that fails the farming community.

When the gatekeepers (the police) of a criminal justice system become the scapegoat the whole system is affected because the justice machinery is set in motion by the decisions or discretion of the police.

#### - Avoidance

It is not uncommon for victims of vicarious victimisation (usurped victimisation) or primary victims of the violent farm attack to react to their dilemma by means of avoidance. This entail that they avoid thinking and talking about the farm attack or their victimisation. It can be seen as a form of numbing or defence mechanism as a coping strategy. By avoiding talking or thinking about the farm attack they control their fear and vulnerability to re-live the ordeal or if they stay on to continue farming to most likely be re-victimised (read the actual case study after the paragraph on paranoia).

## - Paranoia

When one suffers from 'paranoia' your thought process is disturbed and characterised by excessive anxiety or fear, often to the point of irrationality and delusion. Paranoid thinking typically includes persecutory beliefs concerning a perceived threat. In one of my interviews with a couple who were attacked on their farm the wife indicated that she feels paranoid and that she actually believes that the perpetrators are waiting in the grass close to their farm house (read the actual case study hereafter). This belief was held although her husband proved to her that there were no attackers in the grass. Paranoia can change your social patterns and behaviour, it can develop distrust and disbelief.

### **Case study from my interviews with victims of a farm attack**

A middle-aged couple that lives on a farm was attacked during April 2008. They have been the victims of burglary twice before the farm attack. Six males with firearms attacked them one evening while they were sleeping. Their small dog that sleeps in the house woke the husband. He grabbed his pistol and as he reached his front door he realised that two perpetrators were already inside the house.

They opened fire on him. He returned fire and they ran out of the house. He followed them and saw four more perpetrators that stood approximately 15 metres from the house. He kept on firing and heard two attackers scream. The six attackers immediately started running away when he managed to hit two of them. He told me that the forensic team later identified three different blood types on the scene, which means that he probably wounded three perpetrators. He is of the opinion that he did not need any debriefing after the incident (avoidance). However, when I asked his wife how she experienced the incident she replied as follows: 'I'm paranoid. I see them in the grass especially during full moon. I am afraid and I wanted to sell the farm the next day. It will haunt me for the rest of my life. I cannot sleep anymore'. When I probed her about this, she said that she could remember that it was full moon and that she associates the full moon with trouble. She told me that she did not directly witness the attack. She could only hear the shots that were fired and her husband who screamed at them all the time.

Effects of the victimisation on the wife: She has trouble with her sleeping habits. She is very paranoid, especially if they leave the farm and return after sunset. She actually believes that the perpetrators are hiding in the grass and they will attack them if they get an opportunity. She also said that she lives in fear, but that they were unable to leave their farm because they used their pension money to buy and develop the farm. They have nowhere else to go and the property market in SA is dormant because of the inflation and interest rates as well as the global economic recess.

## - Prejudiced judgments and anger

Xenophobia can be the result of mass indoctrination or erroneous socialisation (e.g. a father from another racial group revealing to his children that White farmers illegally seized their land from their ancestors). I came across some news reports that stressed the fact that the perpetrators of some

farm attacks left chilling notes at the crime scene stating that they want their land back or communicated to the victims during the attack that they will take their land back forcefully. In a way I see this as a type of xenophobia. These xenophobic attackers blamed the White farmers for the poverty some Black members of society experience currently. In addition they insist that White farmers pilfered their land illegally from their ancestors. This statement is incorrect as many victims of farm attacks in South Africa legally bought their farms and many are still buying their farms with large financial loans from Banks and other financial institutions ([www.News24.com](http://www.News24.com)).

These prejudiced statements are also erroneous as most active farms provide many Black families in South Africa with an income, a home, and a sense of belonging.

Many ill-informed citizens in South Africa currently blame White farmers for the high unemployment rate in SA. Numerous farm attackers manifested with precariously high levels of anger because of these prejudiced viewpoints.

Many Black farm attackers see the farming community as the enemy and they are therefore treated with disrespect and resentment. These angry responses can also be seen as an emotion-focused coping strategy. To vent anger, to take law into your own hands, to talk about the high unemployment rates and to blame others for pilfering land illegally can present as emotion-focused coping skills to deal with other internal conflicts and erroneous hostile cognitive scripts.

#### - Psychosomatic symptoms

A respondent (also a survivor of a farm attack) divulged to me that he holds the belief that his stomach ulcer developed because of his ordeal. Behavioural and health scientists know that any form of stress especially chronic stress because of a brutal victimisation can inflict permanent bodily damage or contribute to disease. In other words humans react physiologically to a stressor such as a farm attack. In some diseases or illnesses, psychological stress factors seem to play a particularly important part. They can influence not only the cause of the illness, but can also worsen the symptoms and affect the course of the disorder. It is these illnesses that are termed psychosomatic disorders or psychogenic physical disease.

Physical symptoms are therefore caused or aggravated by psychological factors (e.g. nausea, sleep disturbances, sexual inability, migraine, back pain, irritable bowel syndrome, asthma, ulcers etc.). The impact of a farm attack in the development of these symptoms is often disregarded. Stress as a result of the attack can affect a person's susceptibility to infection or their recovery from illness.

#### - Other probable reactions to a violent farm attack

It is not uncommon to lose one of the family members during a brutal farm attack. This in itself causes many psychological problems for the survivors. After some traumatic situations families experience severe stress and adjustment problems and the trauma influence their interpersonal relationships. This is usually the root cause of family disintegration and

unfortunately many families disintegrate after a traumatic experience on their farm. For example, many females who are in a marital or cohabiting relationship cannot cope with the pressures of a family environment after they have been brutally raped during a farm attack.

A coping strategy that has stood the test of time and is regularly associated with the stress that was caused by a farm attack is alcohol and drug abuse. One of the respondents that I have interviewed asserted that his increased alcohol use was a coping strategy to deal with his ordeal on his farm. Substance abuse numbs the emotional and psychological aroused state and eases the pain of traumatising. However it also decreases inhibitions and can cause self-destructive behaviour like suicide. Victims of severe trauma like a farm attack often become addicted to a substance, as an intoxicated state is the only time they can relax and forget about all their problems and stresses.

Another understandable response after a farm attack is the inherent fear of a follow-up farm attack. The logical outcome of this fear is safety amplification in and around the farm dwelling to regain a false sense of security. Conklin (1998:407) stated in this regard that 'fear of crime causes people to lock their doors and windows, install expensive alarm systems and bright lighting, engrave identification numbers on their possessions, enrol in self-defence classes, and buy firearms, watchdogs, electronic beepers, and cellular phones'. Most farm dwellings in South Africa have alarms, are linked to an armed response unit, or to a farm watch (several farmers formulate strategies to secure themselves [24 hour two way radio communication, regular vehicle, motorcycle or horse patrols in the area]), many erect high security fences, and they install closed circuit television cameras (CCTV), as well as burglar bars. This is also known as problem-focused coping strategies.

The state of farm attacks and the extremely unsafe conditions in which the declining farming community has to produce food for the whole nation forces most farmers to either look for other farming opportunities [many skilled South African farmers are emigrating to other less violent countries who offer them farming opportunities abroad or elsewhere in Africa] or to spend vast amounts on security. The latter at least creates a sense of 'false' security as most farmers in South Africa go to extremes to install all kinds of safety measures available on the market. The only role-players that benefit from these exorbitant expenses is the private security industry [e.g. installing alarm systems, link up to armed response as well as installing monitoring and other technologically advanced devices] along with the government who benefit indirectly from the taxes the private security companies must pay as revenue based on their profits.

#### **4. Conclusion**

It is evident that South Africa is struggling to cope with violent crime in general but more specifically with farm attacks. Many farmers become weary of the ineffective functioning of the justice machinery and sometimes a few farmers tend to take the law into their own hands out of desperation. These farmers are often labelled and treated as outcasts without achieving the real reason behind their actions. It is true



that a few farmers treat their labourers poorly, but the majority of farmers in South Africa provide job opportunities, food, homes and a safe haven for many Black families. Many farmers also build schools on their farms and develop sport fields (e.g. soccer fields). There are many astonishing stories that I have read about, heard of and seen during the compilation of this report that leaves me deeply worried about the real motivations behind various farm attacks. The inconsistency of this is that many politicians propagate violence and actions that defuse the current human rights ethos that we are trying to vend to the outside world. Politicians openly use hate speech that specifically allure to the killing of farmers in South Africa.

I am under the impression that the current government is not taking the disastrous enigma of farmers under siege seriously enough and they are making the farmer the outcast instead of the provider of the nation. Many farmers, relevant organisations and concerned citizens sense that the government is actually empowering the offender who attacks the farmer and disempowers the shrinking farming community. It is as if the government expects the farming community to look out for themselves (e.g. security amplifications, private security companies, farm watches and short term insurance policies). This sentiment is difficult to interpret differently since certain politicians condone violence against farmers and the government has disbanded the commandos<sup>1</sup> who amongst other duties were tasked to protect the farming community in the past.

Although crime is unacceptably high and violent in South Africa and poses a threat to national security farm attacks and killings pose an even bigger challenge. If the government do not adhere to the urgent beseech of the farming community, concerned citizens and relevant role-players to introduce drastic measures and sustainable strategies to protect farmers, South Africa will soon face the same fate as Zimbabwe. South Africa will not be able to produce sufficient food supplies to its almost 60 million inhabitants and current successful farms will perish completely.

The political figures that condones this problem and who refrained from acting with sternness to end this abomination will one day probably be adjudicated for crimes against humanity and ethnic cleansing<sup>2</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> Commandos were responsible for the safeguarding and protection of specific communities such as farmers in the rural settings of South Africa. Commando services are usually referred to as area protection, a system which involves the whole community. Each community is divided up into smaller more manageable sections called cells. Each cell comprises a number of farmers and or households, depending on the size of the area. Cell members are in contact with each other by means of telephones or a two way radio system (also a backup communication system in the event of the telephone lines being cut. The disbanding of the rural commandos (announced by the government in 2003) left farmers and farm workers unprotected and easy targets for criminals. Commandos were phased out between 2003 & 2008 and the then Minister of Safety and Security, Charles Nqakula stated that the government is phasing it out 'because of the role it played in the apartheid era'.

<sup>2</sup> Ethnic cleansing is the term used to describe the systematic and violent removal of undesired ethnic groups from a given territory.

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Note: Some primary websites (e.g. Home Office (UK); FBI (USA); News24) that were accessed can be found in the text.

## **CHAPTER 2**

# A proposed model for a basic community safety network

*Nantes Kelder*

### **1. Background**

In February 2003 the then president of South Africa, Thabo Mbeki, announced in his state of the nation address that the commando system would be phased out. The announcement shocked farmers and other stakeholders. It was an ill-considered decision, since no alternative was in place at that stage.

Discontinuing the commandos left a significant vacuum in the fight against crime in rural areas. The replacement for the commando system, namely sector policing, did not achieve the envisaged results. Several factors contributed to the failure. Among other things, the police were unable to implement the plan effectively. After using the commando system successfully for so many years, farmers were reluctant to participate in sector policing. In my experience, sector policing cannot be effective as long as mutual respect and trust between the police and the community is lacking. However, the reality is that it is useless to keep trying to overthrow the decision to phase out the commandos. It is a done thing and a way forward must be found.

When farm attacks and farm murders began to escalate, the farming community increased pressure on government to produce a plan of action for putting a stop to this type of violent crime. After many consultations between farmers and the police, a national rural safety strategy was devised. The strategy has been implemented, but is still not applied effectively. Since the police have failed to implement the rural safety strategy effectively, the community has no other option but to assume responsibility for ensuring safety in rural areas.

### **2. The way forward**

The introduction makes it clear that the only way to combat crime in rural areas will be if the community shoulders the responsibility and puts farm guards in place. The national rural safety strategy makes provision for farm guards. The ideal would be to establish a national farm guard system under a single umbrella.

The violent strike actions late in 2012 on Hex River Valley farms have put safety in rural areas in the spotlight yet again. The lesson is clear: it is imperative to establish information networks on farms as well. Crime can only be put to a stop by proactive action. Community safety networks therefore have to be intelligence-driven. If information can be obtained beforehand and contingency plans are in place, prompt action will ensure that events do not deteriorate into another Hex River Valley situation.

Safety is and will primarily remain government's responsibility. However, communities need get off the fence and do what they can to create hope in their communities with regard to safety.

A question that is often heard is, 'where or how does one start?' In June 2011 AfriForum published a report titled *Basic framework for an efficient community safety network*. The research was carried out by Dr. Rudolph Zinn of Unisa and myself (Nantes Kelder). The study researched in depth how community safety networks function. The objective was further to provide guidelines to communities on how such a network could be established successfully.

Based on Zinn and Kelder's report and reproduced with AfriForum's permission, a model for establishing a community safety network is described here.

### **3. A proposed model for a basic community safety network**

This basic model provides a framework that people or communities can use to establish a community safety network. The model is not a rigid set of guidelines. Developing a community safety network will be shaped by the specific needs and circumstances in a particular area.

The model is discussed under the following headings:

- Control structure;
- Crime prevention actions;
- Finance;
- Communication; and
- Additional actions that may determine the sustainability of the community safety network.

The model's name remains neutral and is linked to a geographic area. In this way, the name is acceptable to residents and can be marketed.

#### **3.1 Control structure of community safety network**

The basic control structure is a simple model in which the individual taking the initiative is in control of the community safety network. At the core of the success and continued existence of a community safety network is the type and quality of its management. The management style must be transparent, inspiring, friendly and people-oriented, making it attractive for volunteers to become part of the community safety network.

- Chairperson or coordinator  
The next step, still basic, is to elect someone to coordinate operations.
- Operational coordinator  
The next development step is generally taken when funds become available and have to be managed.
- Treasurer  
A full structure could look something like this:
  - A Chairperson;
  - Deputy chairperson;
  - Secretary;
  - Treasurer;

- Operational manager;
  - Media officer;
  - Other, more advanced community safety networks have managerial levels or portfolios to make provision for marketing, sales, environmental management, control room management, youth outreach, information technology, weekly or daily patrol management, night or day shift coordinators, contingency planning and mass action coordinators, security (other than patrols), estate managers, project managers, leaders for different neighbourhood watch sections within a single community safety network, sector leaders where farms have been allocated to different sectors, leaders and chairs of community policing groups, and communication.

### **3.2 Crime prevention actions of a community safety network**

Visible policing in neighbourhoods is the most important crime prevention action undertaken by all community safety networks. Visible policing mostly consists of patrolling in vehicles and in some cases also on foot or bicycle.

In a basic structure, crime prevention actions will consist of:

- Foot patrols; and
- Vehicle patrols by the community.

Foot and vehicle patrols can be extended in cooperation with the SAPS and reservists to include the following:

- Patrols by security guards in addition to communities' own patrols;
- Roadblocks;
- Stop and search actions in the neighbourhood;
- Mass patrols (saturation principle); and
- So-called sweep actions.

The crime prevention actions and technological resources will develop further as the community safety network's membership expands and finances become available.

High-tech resources that can be used include:

- CCTV cameras;
- Scanners;
- Integrated databases (for example of suspicious persons and vehicles).

The following examples serve as guidelines for operations and actions to prevent crime in neighbourhoods:

- Other policing actions include special actions in which a great many residents all patrol the neighbourhood simultaneously (saturation principle), support for the local police's crime prevention operations, prevention of copper theft on farms, the prevention of game



poaching, and so-called 'sweep' actions in terms of which a bushy area for example will be combed for possible criminals hiding there. An example of the saturation principle comes in the form of an action one of the researchers had experienced at first hand in Pierre van Ryneveld Park. In this instance, 40 patrol cars were deployed in a joint crime prevention operation between the police, the community safety network and private security companies. Air support was provided by a private security company, which made a helicopter available. The area was intensively patrolled with the police and metro police manning road blocks on all the access routes into the neighbourhood. These types of actions are good examples of how a well-organised and efficient community safety network can operate in collaboration with various partners.

- Other actions undertaken by most of the community safety networks include acting as a reaction unit where crime incidents occur, fire-fighting duties on farms in the area and in some cases acting as a medical reaction unit and establishing means of communication with the community through its own information network.
- Most of the community safety networks collect crime information on an ongoing basis, and this includes crime statistics for the area. The statistics are analysed in an attempt to pinpoint emerging crime trends in the area. Crime prevention initiatives are thus developed in order to address new crime trends. Intelligence patrols are normally undertaken in response to those trends that have been identified, including heightened patrolling at those times that crimes seem to be prevalent at a given place.

### **3.3 Finance**

Finances are not a key factor for the establishment of a community safety network. Initially, community members (patrolling members) use their own funds or available resources to finance the actions of the community safety network. This basically means that patrolling members each use their own vehicle, cell phone, radio and identity decals.

Even when the community safety network expands its actions, it remains mainly a volunteer movement financed by the members themselves. In most cases, this is achieved by establishing a non-profit Section 21 company.

The whole community can be mobilised to reduce the financial burden of those persons responsible for the community's safety. This may include local businesses, a company sponsoring two-way radios as well as a small financial contribution towards the fuel costs of residents who undertake patrol duties in their own vehicles.

In practice, a lack of capital does not prevent the establishment and effective functioning of a basic community safety network by local members. Actions and services can be adapted to suit the community safety network's financial capacity.

The ideal is a business model which will be discussed at a later stage.

### **3.4 Communication**

Communication is critically important in a community safety network. It includes communication between network members and between the members of the community safety network and residents in the area. The communication should serve to improve relationships and to motivate people. It can range from elementary means to using advanced technology. The most elementary way of communicating in emergency situations to summon help is by making use of whistles. This method can be successfully used in any community that does not have funds for more advanced communication means. All members should preferably have the same type of whistle so that its sound will be easily identifiable and discernible as an alarm signal throughout the neighbourhood. Cell phones can also be used as an emergency service – see [www.afriforum911.co.za](http://www.afriforum911.co.za) – and for communicating through SMS messages. In those neighbourhoods where residents can afford it, a two-way radio network is used for communication.

As the community safety network expands, the following can also be used:

- Newsletters;
- Newsletters via email; and
- Websites.

Communication can thus develop from basic to advanced:

- Meetings;
- Whistles;
- Cell phones;
- Two-way radio networks;
- Newsletters;
- Email
- Websites; and
- Notice boards erected at access points.

### **3.5 Additional actions**

It is important for a community safety network to consider additional actions in order to ensure its sustainability. Such actions can include the following:

- Walks, for example groups of mothers taking small children in prams for walks;
- Market days;
- Fun days;
- Individuals maintaining parks in the area;
- Transportation services (e.g. taking senior citizens to the shops);
- Establishment of a domestic worker watch. Workers are trained to become vigilant;
- Trauma counsellors;
- Information technology;
- Youth matters;
- Medical reaction units;
- Fire-fighting teams;
- Changing over to a business model;

- Some of the more advanced community safety networks operate joint operation centres (JOCs) in their neighbourhood. The joint control centre has emergency telephone lines staffed by residents, while trained operators (also residents) coordinate crime prevention operations from the control room. In addition, staff continuously monitor two-way radio communication conversations, footage on CCTV monitors as well as the alarm system linked to scanners that continuously scan the registration numbers of vehicles entering the neighbourhood. Some of the community safety networks also offer trauma counselling to victims of a crime incident.

## CHAPTER 3

# Investigating the psychological aftermath of farm attacks

Lorraine Claasen

### Introduction

Becoming a victim of a crime is not something any person would voluntarily choose to be. Criminal victimisation forces a person against whom the crime was committed to handle and cope with the situation during as well as after the crime, assuming the victim survived. It is not in anyone's immediate frame of reference to automatically know how to deal with shock, guilt, coping after a brutal attack and grieving. Over time, primary and secondary victims may learn to deal with the devastation and destruction they experienced. While some victims try to avoid dealing with their own psychological needs, their family bear witness to a traumatised person in need of support.

The initial step in attempting to deal with a traumatic experience is to begin to make sense of mixed feelings, thoughts and beliefs about some of the basic human needs including being secure and protected, to trust, feeling some sense of control, feeling self-worth and re-connecting with oneself and others (Rosenbloom & Williams, 2002:122). The aim is to identify what happened, what emotions resulted because of the event, how to manage these feelings, coping in a positive manner and taking care of oneself following the trauma.

It cannot be assumed that all victims of violent crimes such as farm attacks will react the same way during the attack. The decisions the victims have to make and the dynamics of different attacks may vary in intensity and may cause a range of different outcomes. A person's background, personality and situational characteristics all include a victim's behaviour during and after an attack. The reactions of the victims to being victimised are therefore individual and unpredictable (Williams, 1999:51).

Trauma can be defined, according to the DSM-IV, as follows (Briere, 2004:7):

*Direct personal experience of an event that involves actual or threatened death or serious injury, or other threat to one's physical integrity; or witnessing an event that involves death, injury, or a threat to the physical integrity of another person; or learning about unexpected or violent death, serious harm, or threat of death or injury experienced by a family member or close associate. The person's response to the event must involve intense fear, helplessness, or horror.*

### Consequences of farm attacks

Consequences of farm attacks may range from basic needs such as repairing damages to the property or having to make funeral arrangements for loved ones who lost their lives during an attack. It is therefore important not to forget the family

who is left behind, but to provide them with help and support where they need it. Immediate needs may include, as mentioned, repairing structures damaged during an attack, assistance with police and insurance reports, replacing stolen goods and help with continuing production on the farm (if needed). The support of one's family and friends of victims who survived the attack, or the immediate family of a loved one who lost his or her life during the attack, are extremely important for the recovery process. Weeks, months and even years after an attack, the victims might still suffer emotionally in various ways. Struggling with basic everyday tasks such as eating and sleeping may be challenges victims are faced with (Vandag vrek jy... 2006) and victims may feel too ashamed to address these problems with their family, friends and peers. By trying to cope alone will prolong the suffering and trauma even more. Relying and accepting help from wherever it may come from, may increase a sense of community, of belonging and of self worth.

According to Williams (1999:51) victims may experience the following various emotional responses after a crime was committed against them: fear, shame, resentment, anger against the offender and the criminal justice system and humiliation. Victims may act proactively concerning security measures or they may feel unable to cope with the stress following the attack. Some victims may deny the magnitude of the events or withdraw completely. Physically, victims may become ill. Heart palpitations, shortness of breath when reliving the event, headaches, lack of or increased appetite may occur. They may experience lack of concentration, difficulty sleeping or increased startle responses. They may lose interest in activities they enjoyed before and their relationships with family and friends may suffer. Over the long term, they may be diagnosed with depression or post traumatic stress disorder.

This proves that a victim may suffer emotionally while trying to cope. Pleas of help through these behaviours might be ignored or made off as not important by friends or family. The importance of a solid and reliable support structure cannot be over emphasised (Williams & Joseph, 1999:297). Joseph (1999:71) adds to this point in stating that it is necessary to have other people who are simply willing to listen, to provide emotional and practical support and who do not make the individual feel worse in some way.

### **Experiencing the attack**

Following an attack on a smallholding in Gauteng, a father recounts the ordeal his family had to live through (Family terrorised... 2007). The attackers entered their home and overpowered the father and forcing him into his office. They then began to threaten to rape his wife and his daughter and he pleaded with them to shoot him instead. After being threatened and attempted to suffocate the mother, they forced a gun into the father's mouth and threatened to shoot him. 'All I can see every time I close my eyes is the gun being shoved into my mouth and the man's eyes. They were dead. There was nothing in them' the victim recalled. The family survived the attack and the attackers fled with money, cameras, cell phones and car keys.

Unlike a mugging or burglary, the trauma of an attack may be something the victim has to deal with for the rest of his/her life. Situations which may remind the victims of

the attack, certain sounds, smells or objects may trigger an emotional response or 'flashback' long after the attack occurred.

Research regarding victim's emotional responses they experienced and the thought behind certain decisions made are lacking. The seriousness and sensitivity of attacks may expose the victims to being victimised again by being forced to recall small details of their horrific experiences. Secondary victimisation may also occur in a court setting where victims must give their testimony against alleged attackers. By testifying or attending court proceedings victims may experience a certain sense of relief when one considers that the perpetrators would not be able to hurt anyone else in a similar manner. It may also give assurance that the specific offenders will not come back and re-victimise them if they are given prison sentences. Successful sentencing may 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 one or erase memories of the attack.

### **Who are the victims?**

Neighbours and peers of victims of farm attacks may themselves develop an intense fear of being victimised (Steyn, 2012). Media reports and first-hand experienced recounted by victims may leave these individuals feeling anxious about their own safety and may cause them to alter their lifestyles (Williams, 2004:103). A family friend of a murdered victims was quoted as saying that they are '**..paralyzed with fear..**' as the attack on their friend left them feeling defenceless and exposed (Louw-Carstens, 2007).

In a certain sense, it might encourage individuals living in rural areas to take their responsibility of their own security seriously. By taking precautions and being vigilant, individuals can take a proactive approach in preventing farm attacks.

The victim's perception of the crime committed must not be down-played or ignored at any stage. Service providers and role players have to keep in mind that the victim did not ask to be victimised or to be in this situation. Empathy and support should be given during the process of completing police and insurance reports.

### **Primary victims**

Primary victims refers to the individuals who were themselves present during an attack on themselves or their property and who were subjected to physical harm including dying as a direct result of the actions of the offenders. While stressing that victim blaming should be avoided, certain characteristics of individuals living in rural areas may predispose them to become victims of crimes. Lack of cell phone coverage, the distance to the nearest town or police station and even to their closest neighbours might make farmers easy targets. A long response time of police or security might allow perpetrators to successfully obtain their goals. It also leaves the victims with more time in the presence of the perpetrators which may increase the dangerousness of the situation as well as the possibility of being harmed.

Siegel (2011:67) refers to three specific types of characteristics which may increase the probability of victimisation:

1. Target vulnerability: The victim's physical weakness or psychological distress leaves them not able to resist or deter crime successfully, making them easy targets. A considerable amount of victims of farm attacks are pensioners living by themselves on the property.
2. Target gratifiability: Victims may be in possession of objects the offender wants to acquire. Knowledge of fire-arms on the property may be why individuals on farms are targeted.
3. Target antagonism: Certain characteristics may increase risk because they produce anger, resentment, or destructive impulses in potential offenders.

The victim of a farm attack's life is undeniably changed as a direct result of the attack. The moment the victim becomes aware of the perpetrator's intentions, swift and irreversible decisions need to be made (Fattah, 1991:192). Immediately the victim needs to decide whether to resist or comply with the perpetrator's demands, to struggle, scream, keep motionless or try to escape, to argue or to keep silent. The victim and the offender's personal characteristics, situational characteristics and the dynamics of the incident will determine the victim's response, the offender's reaction to the victim's response and the final outcome of the crime (Fattah, 1991:192).

During the process of being attacked, the victim may face actual, potential or threatened use of physical violence. The presence or lack of a weapon, the level of potential danger innate during the event and the possible options available to the victim concerning courses of action will induce specific psychological and behavioural responses in the victim (Fattah, 1991:192). Where some victims will attempt to defend themselves, their families or their properties, others might be compliant to every order of the perpetrator. By defending or resisting, the victim may cause the offender to use force or violence in order to demand control and dominance of the situation and may lead to physical injuries or death (Fattah, 1991:208).

A worrying amount of victims are further subjected to extreme and unnecessary levels of violence and torture. A victim may suffer severe psychological damage when the attack was filled with horror, terror, torture and manipulation while all the while being threatened with death. Impaired functionality in day to day behaviours, activities and responsibilities may cripple a person's self-esteem and motivation for a person's future.

Family members of victims who survived an attack may be the best source of gaining information regarding the victim's psychological state. Even when a victim may be in denial of the changes in his or her personality, family members may be able to view and identify changes in character and daily functioning. Restless sleeping habits, short temperedness and substance abuse may be identified by family members (Kudler & Davidson, 1995: 76).

If a victim survives such an attack, they have to make serious decisions regarding their immediate future concerning basic needs such as security for example. Having to make these decisions while still feeling out of control and unable to cope may put even more pressure on victims. Again the importance of an effective support structure can not be over emphasised.

## **Secondary victims**

The loss of a loved one through violent crime has a profound and permanent impact and may have extreme consequences for those left behind (Williams, 1999:54). As the wife who lost her husband during an attack testifies '..My life is totally ruined. My marriage of 40 years with a very good, loving man is destroyed...' (Versluis, 2012).

These victims may have been exposed to the crime scene and may have seen their loved one's body battered, disfigured, tortured and mutilated. This may lead to extreme physical and emotional reactions and may cause feelings of panic, intense fear, anger, horror or helplessness. Stamm (1999:15) is of the opinion that individuals are specifically at risk for developing pathologies when the fatality involves elements of being grotesque, violent or sudden.

The son of victims, who were brutally murdered on their farm in 2009, shares how finding his parent's bodies affect his daily life: 'Every day of my life, I recall even the smallest details of what I saw when I discovered my parents' (Man haunted by brutal..., 2012). He continues to say that the murders left him feeling totally helpless and that no therapist could empathise adequately with his situation.

Secondary victims of attacks may also refer to employees who are without any income due to loss of production or because of the family deciding to sell the property. Farms may provide employees not only with an income, but also a place to stay and to care for their family and small children. Employees are often themselves the individuals who come upon murdered employers. These persons can be considered as silent victims as they are indirectly affected to a great extent. Having to relocate or by being unable to provide for their family may leave them feeling uncertain and forgotten.

## **Suffering psychologically after the attack**

Individuals who survive an attack or secondary victims are left to deal with various changes in their own environment. Trauma, as a physical stressor, not only affects the functioning of the body's central nervous system, but may also lead to various mental reactions. These may include the following (Rosenbloom & Williams, 2002:120):

- Changes in thoughts regarding the inability to control fate and feelings of fearfulness and vulnerability.
- Changes in thoughts about the world due to trouble finding explanations for tragic events.
- Disruptions in thought as uncontrolled unwanted traumatic images fill the individual's mind.
- Being overly alert and aware of surroundings
- Experiencing disconnectedness from one's self
- Confusion and uncertainty
- The inability to feel safe
- Difficulty trusting other people
- Diminished self-esteem/shame and/or self-hate
- Feelings of helplessness



- Feeling empty
- The inability to feel
- The inability to modulate feelings.

Victims of crime, families of murdered victims and emergency personnel exposed to brutal crime scenes may experience prolonged trauma and emotional distress. Post-traumatic stress disorder, depression and other pathologies can develop over time leaving individuals feeling confused about not being able to cope. The diagnostic criteria included in post-traumatic stress disorders as stipulated in the SDM-IV-TR (2000:467) are as follows:

- A. The person has been exposed to a traumatic event in which both of the following were present:
  1. the person experienced, witnessed, or was confronted with an event or events that involved actual or threatened death or serious injury, or a threat to the physical integrity of self or others
  2. the person's response involved intense fear, helplessness, or horror. **Note:** In children, this may be expressed instead by disorganised or agitated behaviour.
  
- B. The traumatic event is persistently re-experienced in one (one or more) of the following ways:
  1. recurrent and intrusive distressing recollections of the event, including images, thoughts, or perceptions. **Note:** In young children, repetitive play may occur in which themes or aspects of the trauma are expressed.
  2. recurrent distressing dreams of the event. **Note:** In children, there may be frightening dreams without recognisable content.
  3. acting or feeling as if the traumatic event were recurring (includes a sense of reliving the experience, illusions, hallucinations, and dissociative flashback episodes, including those that occur on awakening or when intoxicated.) **Note:** In young children, trauma-specific re-enactment may occur.
  4. intense psychological distress at exposure to internal or external cues that symbolise or resemble an aspect of the traumatic event.
  5. physiological reactivity on exposure to internal or external cues that symbolise or resemble an aspect of the traumatic event.
  
- C. Persistent avoidance of stimuli associated with the trauma and numbing of general responsiveness (not present before the trauma), as indicated by three (or more) of the following:
  1. efforts to avoid thought, feelings, or conversations associated with the trauma

2. efforts to avoid activities, place, or people that arouse recollection of the trauma
  3. inability to recall an important aspect of the trauma
  4. markedly diminished interest or participation in significant activities
  5. feeling of detachment or estrangement from others
  6. restricted range of affect (e.g. unable to have loving feelings)
  7. sense of a foreshortened future (e.g. does not expect to have a career, marriage, children, or a normal life span)
- D. Persistent symptoms of increased arousal (not present before the trauma), as indicated by two (or more) of the following:
1. difficulty falling or staying asleep
  2. irritability or outbursts of anger
  3. difficulty concentrating
  4. hyper-vigilance
  5. exaggerated startle response
- E. The disturbance causes clinically significant distress or impairment in social, occupational or other important areas of functioning.

*Specify if:*

**Acute:** if duration of symptoms is less than 3 months

**Chronic:** if duration of symptoms is 3 months or more

*Specify if:*

**With delayed onset:** if onset of symptoms is at least 6 months after the stressor.

Every person who suffered because of these brutal attacks should have access to psychological help and therapy if needed. Ignoring the psychological consequences could do a lot of harm not only for the individual, but also for their family and friends. By having access to good quality psychological assistance and therapy may decrease the intensity and long-lasting psychological symptoms victims may have to deal with.

Davidson, Neale and Kring (2004:164) grouped the symptoms of PTSD into three major categories:

- **Re-experiencing the traumatic event**  
 Recollecting the event on a frequent basis and experiencing nightmares about it. Stimuli which the victim associates with the event may cause the victim to relive the incident. In various news reports, victims often give an account of their experiences with nightmares and intrusive unwanted thoughts regarding the attack.
- **Avoidance of stimuli associated with the event or numbing of responsiveness**  
 Avoiding stimuli (place on property where attack took place or tasks the victim was busy with when attack occurred) or numbing may be experienced. Numbing refers to decreased interest in others, feeling estranged or the incapability to feel positive emotions. Victims may lose interest in activities or in the farm in general. These behaviours may be strange

and upsetting to family and friends as it was activities victims loved to do before the attack occurred.

- **Symptoms of increased arousal**

Symptoms may include difficulties falling or staying asleep, poor concentration, hyper vigilance and exaggerated startle responses. Victims may jump at the slightest noise and experience physical symptoms accompanying panic attacks.

## **Victim support**

An aspect prominent in research regarding farm attacks is the support victims receive from their immediate farming community. This may guarantee the victims that they are not alone and that they are cared for, important and loved. Neighbours look out for each other and are more than willing to assist their peers with assistance and support where ever they may need it. A sense of camaraderie provides farmers with positive feedback and experiences.

Having a Victim Empowerment Programme in place for survivors of farm attacks is an important goal to reach for relevant role players. Several obstacles have, however, been identified which may hamper the success of such programmes (van Zyl, 2008:144). These include the desensitisation of the general public, general lack of faith in the criminal justice system, being regarded as 'soft' or 'weak' because of therapy or professional help as well as the notion that 'real men don't cry'. The image when one thinks of a farmer is a big, strong, capable man who can do or fix almost anything. Being a victim of an attack may, however, leave the farmer with feelings of shame, because he may struggle with coping successfully. These obstacles need to be overcome in order to provide victims with the necessary assistance that they rightfully deserve. By having service providers' work together, we can make a positive and lasting impact on the rest of these victims' lives, be they primary or secondary victims of farm attacks.

## **Conclusion**

It is important to note that all the emotions and psychological consequences a victim may experience, are normal responses to an abnormal event. When this concept sinks in, the victim may regain a sense of control after the event and turbulent and uncertain emotions experienced. The extreme trauma that victims endure can not be denied or ignored.

Vesti and Kastrup (1995:213) states victims, following torture experiences, are often unable to function in previously routine psychological and social roles:

*Their lives are ruined, and they live as deterrents to other people. This latter fact is particularly striking when personalities who were outspoken visibly appear as subdued persons broken in spirit and body following torture.*

We certainly cannot imagine what victims of farm attacks had to live through during and after an attack. By conducting interviews with willing victims we may gain better insight into the aftermath experienced. A victim of farm attacks' humanity was stripped of them during the attack. By being handled and treated with no regard to human life leaves victims in need of acknowledgement of themselves as

human beings as well as having acknowledged the unacceptable acts that was committed against them. In no society, in no way, shape or form can these crimes be justified.

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# CHAPTER 4

## The significance of the level of brutality and overkill

Lorraine Claasen

### Introduction

Targeting farmers and the level of violence and brutality can be regarded as one of the characteristics of farm attacks. We want to raise awareness of the physical assaults and sometimes torture the victim has to endure, even after death. What is the purpose of this? What are the motives of the attackers? Murdering victims seems senseless if the motive for the crime is theft of valuable items, yet victims are only seen as a hindrance in obtaining the desired bait and perpetrators will not hesitate to use any means necessary to achieve their goals.

It is not insinuated or assumed that farm attacks are the only crimes where brutal and hostile murders are committed. Murder in urban areas throughout South Africa and even between a victim and perpetrator who are known to each other, may include the same high levels of violence. The aim of this report is, however, to indicate the prevalence and level of brutality which may be regarded as a characteristic of a farm attack or a factor commonly included in the perpetrator's *modus operandi* in committing a farm attack.

### Violence and farm attacks

Strydom and Schutte (2005:115) mentioned the significance of the extreme levels of violence and aggression used by perpetrators during the attacks. The apparent motives of the attacks are for the most part out of context with the associated violence displayed. The media sensationalises these attacks and the public are almost daily confronted with brutal and graphic events and images, to such an extent that it doesn't have the initial shock value of reading about the horrific crimes. This does not take away one bit of the pain and terror these families of the victims have to endure, undeniably changing their lives forever.

The level of excess violence is used to intimidate land owners with the sole purpose of scaring the farmers away from their property to facilitate the land invasion process, according to Moolman (2000:68). He is furthermore of the opinion that the bait obtained during the attacks was a bonus and not the primary aim of the attack.

Regardless of the motives of the perpetrators, the torturing and murdering of people, often of old age or children, it certainly seems senseless and not necessary in any situation. What is it that the perpetrators want to achieve by the inhumane actions?

There are continuous debates regarding the categorising of farm attacks. It is difficult, however, to group farm attacks with any crime. The reason for this is the lack of research and understanding regarding the motives for the attacks. Before farm

attacks can be grouped as a hate crime or genocide, among others, one also needs to establish the possibility of the majority farm attacks being organised and planned by a group of people whose aim is to target farmers. The alternative is that farm attacks occur on a random basis by individual groups of perpetrators, aiming to rob, threaten or murder individual farmers in order to achieve their own personal goals.

## **Hate Crime**

When we consider what a hate crime entails, certain elements and similarities regarding farm attacks emerges.

Nel (2005:241) defines hate crimes as follows:

'...extreme expressions of prejudice through violent criminal acts that are committed against people, property or organisations because of the group to which they belong to or identify with.'

Nel (2005:241) continues in saying that Perpetrator Prejudice is the distinguishing factor between a hate crime and any other act of violence. Most research or writing on this subject, however, only focuses on two types of hate crimes. These are 'race' (mainly referring to xenophobic attacks) and 'sexual orientation'.

Can farm attacks be regarded as a Hate Crime? Is there a criterion which stipulates how many murders or attacks against a certain group of people, constitutes the use of the term Hate Crime? Can people who hold a certain occupation – a farmer or 'boer' in this case – be targeted just because of their occupation, or is the prejudice against who or what a farmer or 'boer' represents in South Africa namely a Caucasian middle-aged male? These are some of the questions which are problematic to answer when attempting to categorise farm attacks. The dynamics of the crime creates various assumptions regarding the motive of the perpetrator, most of which still needs to be verified by valid research. Another reality to take into consideration is the amount of farm workers who are often present and attacked along with the farmer and/or members of his family. When one takes in to regard the extremely loaded, violent and brutal attacks, undeniably fuelled by hate, shouldn't farm attacks be prioritised, the same as xenophobic attacks?

Williams (2004:97) is also of the opinion that authorities should view hate crimes and prejudice more broadly. Hate crimes – from genocide, ethnic cleansing and serial killing to name calling and harassment – all degrade the certain human being solely because of the group which they are perceived to belong to.

## **The perpetrator**

In trying to understand the dynamics of a farm attack and the circumstances surrounding the behaviour of the attackers, one has to take into consideration that the crime is mostly committed by a group of perpetrators. Alarid, Burton Jr, and Hochstetler (2009:1) attempts to explain robbery characteristics in their article entitled *Group and solo robberies: Do accomplices shape criminal form?* These authors are of the opinion that apart from apparent practical attractions of committing crime in a group (co-offending), accomplices enjoy functioning in a team in order to achieve a goal. A robbery may be used to demonstrate one's

skilfulness or character to the accomplices. They also note that individuals who acted with co-offenders often do so because of loyalty or obligation to the other individual if the motive is financial gain (Alarid, Burton Jr & Hochstetler, 2009:2). Other perpetrators may be under pressure to gain the group's trust and respect, which may in turn cause the perpetrator to act impulsively and emotionally. Acting in a group also provides offenders feelings of anonymity, intimidation because of group numbers and diffused accountability. Co-offending may present perpetrators with intensified arousing physical awareness of offending. The result of these factors is that individuals acting in a group are more likely behave differently than they would if they acted alone.

Acting in a group allows offenders to depersonalise the contact involving themselves and the victims which in turn allows them to generate group anonymity and in so doing avoiding an individual power struggle, allowing for better handling of victims who resist (Alarid, Burton Jr & Hochstetler, 2009:3).

### **Modus Operandi**

*Modus Operandi* is defined in the *Crime Classification Manual* (Douglas, JE & Douglas, LK, 2006:20) as follows: 'Actions taken by an offender during the perpetration of a crime in order to perpetrate that crime.' These authors continue in stating that a *Modus Operandi* is a learned set of behaviours that the offender develops and continue with because of its efficiency. These methods or behaviours are however, dynamic and malleable as it evolves with the criminal.

Level of violence and brutality used in farm attacks is a separate and unique element which must be viewed in addition to the *Modus Operandi* of the perpetrator. The reason for this is that the level of force used by the perpetrator was in many cases not necessary in order for him/her to complete the crime successfully. Is the intent to harm greater than the eventual value of the bait?

Mistry and Dhlamini (2001:23) found in the study they conducted on perpetrators of farm attacks that the most common form of violence the offenders displayed was burning, strangulation of a victim, pointing of a firearm and gagging the victim with a cloth. This aggressive behaviour preceded shooting the victim. A notable finding in their research is that half of the offenders who participated in the study were of the opinion that the violence they used on the victims was provoked, meaning the victims tried to fight off the attackers and arguably only tried to defend themselves. The following findings were reported regarding the emotional state of the attacker before and during the attack, and the level of violence displayed at that times (Mistry & Dhlamini, 2001:23):

- Preceding the attack: Offenders who felt calm before the attack were likely to stab their victims or tie them up with a rope. This signifies that the offender was in control. An offender who felt anxious, in contrast, were more prone to hit their victims with an object, burning, strangling or gagging them as well as pointing a firearm at them. Offenders who felt angry before the attack (lack of control), were likely to assault their victims with an object, or shoot them.
- Throughout the attack: Burning, hitting, strangling or stabbing victims is likely behaviour displayed by an offender who felt anxious or nervous during an attack. As a result of this, the heightened emotional level or



state of the offenders, correlated with the impact on the level of violence used.

## **Aggression**

Trying to explain the intent of the offender to cause brutal bodily harm is difficult when considering Criminological theories concerning why people commit crime (e.g. biological factors or learned behaviour). When the level of aggression is taken into account, two types of aggression can be recognised (Bezuidenhout, C & Klopper, H. 2011:186; Bartol, C.R. 1980:175-176):

- Hostile or Expressive Aggression  
This type of aggression can be a response as result of an anger-inducing condition such as insults, physical attacks and personal failures. The aim of the person expressing this aggression is to make the victim suffer. Hostile aggressions precipitate various violent crimes where victims are physically harmed, including murder and rape. The conduct is characterised by extreme anger experienced, resulting from certain stimuli, being evoked and frustration.
- Instrumental Aggression  
Desire for valuables and competing for something another individual has, may entice Instrumental Aggression. The offender aims to attain the desired item or objective despite the consequences. Although there may not be any initial intent to harm anyone, the perpetrator would not hesitate to hurt someone who gets in the way of him/her acquiring the desired possession.

It is interesting to note that Bartol (1980:176) specifically mentions that Instrumental Aggression may also be a feature of a 'calculated murder committed by a hired, impersonal killer'.

Bezuidenhout and Klopper (2011:186) refer to a report compiled by the Centre for the Study of Violence and Reconciliation regarding the presentation of excessive, unnecessary violence, also referred to as gratuitous violence. The perpetrators show disproportionate amounts or levels of violent behaviour after they have achieved their initial instrumental goal during a robbery. This perpetrator seems to be ignorant of the consequences of severely assaulting the victim without purpose.

This level of callousness, brutality, cruelty and complete disregard for a human life presented in some farm attacks is what leaves us feeling angered and shocked. These murders leave the rest of the family and community feeling threatened, fearful and vulnerable. These facts and implications of these crimes justify the need to prioritise and categorise farm attacks as a separate area of concern for the Government and the SAPS.

## **Characteristics of a farm attack**

Although there are several similarities and characteristics of farm attacks, each attack contains a combination of different dynamics, variables, circumstances, contexts and reactions or behaviours of the individual perpetrators as well as the

victims. The attackers can, for example, not predict how the victim is going to react upon the initial realisation that he or she is in danger. The possibility that the victim might retaliate and fight back in self-defence should be deterrent in itself, but this is not the case.

The following are factors and characteristics which the author found predominant in farm attacks:

- Some attacks are more **organised** and planned than others, as with any other crime. Firearms, tools to break into a house, wire or cables used to restrain victims or a getaway car brought with the perpetrators to the targeted property, indicate the offender's **intent** in premeditating and planning the attack in advance.
- Perpetrators who have already selected their target often stake out the property weeks in advance, sometimes trying to **gather information** from farm labourers about the comings and goings at the homestead and the general layout of the farm and the house.
- There is usually **more than one attacker** committing the crimes. Having someone to work with, restrain victims, collect bait or keep watch allows for the attack to be completed in a shorter time period.
- There are cases where at least one of the attackers was **known to the victim**, in other cases the attackers were complete **strangers**.
- The initial contact with the victim can happen in various ways. Some attackers **ambush** their victims by either waiting or hiding from the unsuspecting victims arriving home, inside their homes or at the farm gates. Others **surprise** the victims inside their homes by gaining access to the home through windows, or somewhere else on the property. Attackers may also **lure the victims outside the house** on the pretence of buying cattle or products, looking for a job or even setting the grass outside the home alight. This allows the attacker to overpower the victims, leaving them powerless and with phones or firearms outside of reach.
- The **victims of the attacks** are not limited to the farmer and his/her spouse or family but also include domestic workers and farm labourers.
- Most victims are upon initial contact with the attackers **overpowered, assaulted and restrained**. There are cases where the victims fought back in self-defence, often shooting the perpetrators and causing them to flee.
- Victims are mostly **restrained** with shoe laces, telephone wires or electric cables tied around their hands and legs.
- Victims may be harmed with several objects during attacks. Attackers **assault** victims with **steel pipes, pangas, axes, knobkerries, shovels, pitch**

**forks, broomsticks** and **knives** or by kicking, beating, slapping and hitting the victims.

- Victims are often **threatened** in order to **gather information** about the whereabouts of the safe, the keys to the safe and the location of money, firearms and other valuables. Threatening to kill them or their spouses, to cause them serious physical harm, or by pouring methylated spirits over the victims may force the victims to give the information that the attackers demands.
- Various victims are horrifically **tortured** by pulling out nails, having **boiling water** poured over their bodies, being **burned** with electric irons, breaking their fingers, being **pulled behind a moving vehicle**, repeatedly hitting them with objects before they are ultimately murdered.
- The attackers ransack the house, looking for valuables and bait.
- Female victims are sometimes **raped** during the attack.
- Victims are shot at, some **fatally**, when trying to resist the attack, trying to **defend their families**, while shooting at the attackers and much too often for **no apparent reason** at all.
- The attacker's **bait, if any**, may include firearms, money, vehicles, jewellery, electronic devices, clothes, shoes or farming equipment.
- Attackers either **flee the scene** on foot, in a getaway car ready for the escape or in the farmer's own vehicles. It is troublesome that in a lot of cases, the vehicle stolen was left **abandoned** a short distance from the farm or property where the attack occurred.

### **Describing farm attacks**

If the motive in the majority of farm attacks is theft or obtaining desired objects, money or fire-arms, the question can be raised why the attacks occur when there are people at the homestead at the time of the attack. Even though their presence should be a deterrent to anyone trying to get access to the home, this is sometimes not the case as victims are often killed without saying a word upon entering the property on which the home is situated.

The following cases cited only represent a small percentage of farm attacks and murders. The reason why the following cases are included is to show what a farm attacks consists of. There are numerous variables to take into consideration upon attempting to categorise and sort attacks according to *modus operandi*, total fatalities, motives etc. The task proves to be daunting because of general lack of factual information, follow-up investigations and statistics available. At this stage, the media plays a vital role in gathering valuable information. The aim of identifying various attacks and reporting on it for this purpose is to give the reader a glimpse of what the victims go through. When reading statistics, the public are shocked and dismayed but little thought goes to the terror these victims had to endure. This is along with *Land of Sorrow* (2011) aimed at giving the victims a voice.

### *Attacked without saying or demanding anything*

- A case of such unjustified killings is the murder of the owner of a smallholding in Kameeldrift West in Gauteng. The perpetrators walked up to the owner after gaining access to his property on a Wednesday evening in 2008 and opened fire (Hosken, 2008). The victim's wife ran outside to investigate and the perpetrators assaulted her and beat her repeatedly over the head, after which they fled with their bait consisting of jewellery and cell phones.
- A farmer and his wife from Mpumalanga were surprised by their attackers while they were sleeping during the early hours of the 3<sup>rd</sup> of March 2008 (Edwards, 2008). The attackers beat the farmer over the head and in his face with a panga. When the farmer struggled and fought with the attackers, they shot him in the chest. The attackers then fled without taking anything or saying a word. The farmer survived the attack after having emergency surgery.

### *Torturing the victims*

- In April 2006 an elderly KwaZulu-Natal couple was attacked on their farm. The farmer (82) and his wife (57) were surprised by five armed men who tortured and assaulted the couple for several hours (Reddy, 2006). The farmer was suffered burns on the soles of his feet and his buttocks after the attackers tortured him with boiling water. The soles of his feet were found on the dining room table. His wife suffered severe internal injuries after she was repeatedly kicked and stepped on. The attackers threatened to rape her and to cut her eyes out if she didn't tell them where the keys to the safe were. She later suffered a heart attack. The perpetrators fled with R250, a television, two sewing machines, three firearms, jewellery and the couple's vehicle.
- A Free State farmer (27) and his fiancé (33) were attacked at their home in March 2007 (Fourie, 2007). The couple awoke to the sound of their three-month-old baby crying. When the farmer went to attend to his baby, he saw four attackers inside his house. He called for his fiancé to lock herself and the baby inside their room. He was shot during a struggle outside their door and died shortly afterwards. The attackers forced the bedroom door open and tied the female victim up and tortured her with boiling water thrown over her body and beaten her with a broomstick in order to force her to reveal where the key to the safe was. The baby was unharmed during the attack. The attackers fled upon the arrival of the police and were arrested within 12 hours after the attack.
- In June 2011 a widower and her son from Pietermaritzburg were brutally attacked on their farm (Mngoma & Saville, 2011). The victims were beaten with knobkerries, asphyxiated with plastic bags and had boiling water poured over them. During the assaults, the six attackers demanded money. They fled the scene with a pick-up truck and two firearms. The farmer and her son survived the attack.

### *Children being harmed and murdered during Attacks*

- In 2006 in Mpumalanga province, eight men poured methylated spirits on three children, threatened to set them alight at gunpoint, if their grandparents did not meet their demand to grant them access to their safe (*Children doused with meths...* 2006). After assaulting the children and their

grandparents who were all tied up, the attackers managed to open the safe and then fled with an undisclosed amount of money, a firearm and jewellery.

- In the widely publicised Lindley farm murders in December 2010, a farmer (40), his wife (36) and their two-year-old daughter were brutally killed by six attackers (*Farm murder suspect...*, 2011). The farmer was hacked and stabbed with a panga, knives and a garden fork 151 times (*Lindley farm murder...*, 2011; *Grim details of Lindley...*, 2011) while his wife suffered several deep lacerations to her head and a gunshot wound to her neck. Wilmien (2) was shot in the back of the head.

#### *Arson and burning of victims*

- A Free State farmer (36) sustained second and third degree burns after he was ambushed outside his farm gate in April 2012 (*Free State farmer attacked...*, 2012). Upon his arrival at the gate, the attackers threw a petrol bomb through his open bakkie (pick-up) window. The farmer jumped out of the car and the attackers assaulted him with a metal pipe, they attempted to stab him, poured more petrol over him and set him alight. The victim managed to escape.

#### *Using an axe as a weapon*

- A farmer from Mokopane aged 85, was assaulted with an axe and hit in the face and head (Louw-Carstens, 2007). The attacker fled with a small amount of money and clothes. The farmer survived the attack.
- A farmer (30) and his fiancée (26) from Malmesbury in the Western Cape were the victims of an attack in November 2011 (*Farmer assaulted with axe...*, 2011). The couple was overpowered in the early hours of the morning by three men who demanded money and valuables. The intruders proceeded to assault the farmer with an axe and a steel pipe. He suffered multiple injuries to his back, chest arms and legs. The intruders fled with wine and a hi-fi system.
- A couple who lived on a smallholding outside Vereeniging, were attacked on a Sunday morning in June 2011. Their bodies were found by a domestic worker. The male was found with stab wounds to his side and head and his wife's throat was slit. The attacks were committed with a knife and an axe. It is unclear if anything was stolen. The attack followed the poisoning of the couple's dogs the Monday before the attack (Steenkamp, 2011).

#### *Victims being raped*

- In February 2007 a 33 year old farmer from Memel, KwaZulu-Natal was gang-raped by four attackers. The attackers fled the scene with jewellery and bank cards (*Five suspects nabbed...* 2007).

#### *Excessive violence used during the Attack*

- A more recent and shocking attack was committed against a woman from the North West in August of 2012 (*Mom shot in the face...*, 2012). The victim was ambushed at the farm gate upon returning from dropping her son at school. She was shot three times and one of the bullets hit her in the face. She managed to phone a neighbour for help after the attackers left but died on the way to the hospital. The perpetrators fled with the victim's car which was later found abandoned.

- In another attack in June 2012 on a Limpopo farm, an elderly farmer (77) was shot dead while sleeping in his bed. His wife (65), lying next to him, was shot three times and suffered severe spinal injuries. The four attackers, who gained access to the property by cutting the electric fence and bending burglar bars, fled with firearms. The female victim succumbed to her injuries less than two weeks after the attack (*Limpopo farmer killed...*, 2012; *Farm attack victim...*, 2012; *Rage at boiling point...*, 2012; *Widow of Limpopo farmer...*, 2012; *Paralysed farmer's wife dies...*, 2012).
- In March 2012 a Magaliesburg farmer and his family awoke to dogs barking and someone hammering on the back door (Vos, Ü. 2012). When investigating the noise, they found an intruder in the kitchen telling them that someone was slaughtering their cattle. He then opened fire on the family. The farmer managed to fetch his own weapon and fired shots at the attacker who then fled. The intruder fired a shot through the window when he fled, which hit the farmer and left him with severe spinal injuries. The attacker and four other men fled by car.
- A Fochville farmer (48) was overpowered by five robbers early on a Monday morning when he and his wife (44) were out milking cows in February 2012 (*Dog frees attacked...*,2012). The farmer was assaulted and fatally shot in the chest. His wife was beaten on her head and body with a panga, gun and pipe as they forced her to the farmhouse. The attackers demanded guns and money but left without taking anything but the couple's car which was later found abandoned. The farmer's wife survived the attack.
- In January 2012, a North West farmer (77) was overpowered, assaulted and tied to a tree. He was then shot in the forehead. The events of the attack are unclear. The farmer's bakkie was found close to the farm (Snyman, 2012).
- A farmer (49) from Ottosdal was surprised by three men who gained access to his house at 20:00 on a Saturday night (*Murdered farmer named...*, 2011). The victim was held at gunpoint while the attackers searched for money. He was then shot in the chest, the back and in the head. He was then dragged behind his own vehicle for approximately 1.2km before the bakkie rolled. His body was still tied to the vehicle when police arrived on the scene. It is suspected that cattle may have been stolen during the attack.

## Conclusion

Victims of farm attacks experience both terror and torture during attacks. The extreme fear of facing an attacker who decides whether you should live or die must be paralyzing and incomprehensible. Yet the victims' experiences are mostly overlooked and they are often traumatised further during their contact with the criminal justice system.

In an article on Terrorism and Torture, Bennoune (2008:17-18) makes the following statement:

*The similarities between the practices of terror and torture are significant and defining. These include the visitation of severe pain on victims, the intentionality of doing so, and the tremendous fear deliberately provoked in victims, survivors and those around them. Terrorism and torture both share some characteristics with hate crimes. Both torture and terror involve the infliction of extreme suffering, often on a victim chosen on a basis which may include dis-criminatory*

*motives, often with a message intended for a broad audience and meant to impact the lives of many...*

*... Ultimately, the concrete results of what is called torture and what is called terrorism are often experienced as much the same: the devastation of the bodies and minds of those targeted by these practices; grave physical and psychological injury to many with profound and lasting sequelae for survivors, some of which may be invisible to the eye; and the spread of fear among many others of falling victim to the same fate.*

It is disconcerting that farm attacks are still not given the attention it deserves even after reading the details of only a few of thousands of farm attacks. During the research conducted for this topic, the author noted a significant lack of valid research and analysis of various themes regarding farm attacks. This concern was also noted in the Report on farm attacks published in 2003 (2003:446).

In conclusion, no human being deserves being killed and in such an inhumane, unjustified and brutal manner. Why is this allowed?

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## CHAPTER 5

# From rural protection to rural safety: How government changed its priorities

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### INTRODUCTION

Attacks on farms and the brutal killing of farmers their workers and other persons remains a sensitive and controversial subject in South Africa. These attacks are also often associated with crimes such as rape, serious assault and torture.. Yet Government appears to believe that this problem is being overstated and that the criminal victimisation risk of farmers is no greater than that of the average South African.<sup>i</sup> This is despite the disruption of the commercial farms and smallholdings targeted in such attacks which has serious implications for the country's food security, and for the rural economy in general.

This is almost a complete turn-around from the position the government held just over a decade ago when in 2001 it appointed a Committee of Inquiry into farm attacks.<sup>ii</sup> Three years before, in October 1998, the situation was serious enough for then President Nelson Mandela to convene a Rural Safety Summit 'to deal with rural safety in general and farm attacks in particular'.<sup>iii</sup> In the following year the NOCOC (National Operational Co-ordinating Committee) established a Priority Committee on Rural Safety.<sup>iv</sup> The responsibilities of the Priority Committee included the management of the Rural Protection Plan (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 NOCOC and (from 2000) to its successor the JOINTS<sup>3</sup>.<sup>v</sup>

The purpose of this paper therefore is to take another look at the phenomenon of farm attacks and farm murders and to determine what happened to the government's priorities in this regard and what needs to be done to address this challenge.

### DEFINING THE CONCEPTS

One of the most difficult aspects of the idea of farm attacks is to define it. A 'farm attack' or 'an attack on a farm' is not officially defined as a specific crime category, but can be considered as a planned and violent action by one or more perpetrators against persons on a farm or smallholding with the primary intention to

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<sup>3</sup> The NOCOC was the joint interdepartmental operational structure until 2000, representing the South African Police Service, the South African National Defence Force, Correctional Services, and the departments of Welfare and Justice. In 2000 NOCOC was replaced by the Joint Operational and Intelligence Structure (JOINTS). The JOINTS is representative of the above departments as well as the rest of the departments of the Justice Crime Prevention and Security Cluster (JCPS).

commit a robbery. Very often however these attacks are accompanied by extreme acts of violence resulting in crimes such as murder, attempted murder, rape, assault and torture.

This type of criminal activity is in many ways similar to, and generally recorded as, what the police refer to as 'robbery at residential premises' (or 'house robbery') which is regarded as a sub-category of 'aggravated robbery'. According to the police's official definitions house robbery is defined as:

... the unlawful and intentional forceful removal and appropriation of property from the residential premises of another person.<sup>vi</sup>

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. The same argument would of course be applicable to house robberies. The commission of this crime type is often accompanied by various other crimes and acts of extreme violence inclusive of torture. As with 'farm attacks' it would therefore perhaps be more descriptive to refer to 'house robberies' as 'house attacks' or 'house invasions' as is the case in the United States of America. In this regard, Professor Rudolph Zinn, in his book on 'home invasions', describes 'house robberies' as:

... deliberately planned to take place when residents are home. This form of intrusion is in many ways more traumatic than any other type of crime. It shatters the sense of privacy, control and security that people should feel in their own homes.<sup>vii</sup>

In the case of 'house robberies' in the rural areas and specifically in relation to farms and smallholdings it is obvious that farmers, their families and their workers are considered soft targets by criminals. Farm houses are geographically more isolated than houses in urban areas and therefore further removed from the possible deterrent presence of close neighbours, the police and other security institutions and an immediate response by them. There is also a popular perception that all farmers are rich or at least relatively wealthy, and therefore lucrative targets. In 1997, as a result of a steady increase in farm attacks and related crimes since the early 1990's and at the instigation of the South African Agricultural Union (SAAU, and predecessor of AgriSA), a working group of the National Operational Co-ordinating Committee (NOCOC), forerunner of the JOINTS, was tasked with the development of a Rural Protection Plan (RPP). Included in the RPP was a definition of what constitutes a farm attack:

Attacks on farms and smallholdings refer to acts aimed at the person of residents, workers and visitors to farms and smallholdings, whether with the intent to murder, rape, rob or inflict bodily harm. In addition, all actions aimed at disrupting farming activities as a commercial concern, whether for motives related to ideology, labour disputes, land issues, revenge, grievances, racist concerns or intimidation, should be included.

[Cases related to domestic violence, drunkenness, or resulting from commonplace social interaction between people - often where victims and offenders are known to one another - are excluded from this definition. 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, and arson.]<sup>viii</sup>

The current definition, in the National Rural Safety Strategy (NRSS) of 2011, is only slightly different and refers to 'acts of violence' rather than 'farm attacks':

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.

[Cases related to domestic violence or liquor abuse, or resulting from commonplace social interaction between people are excluded from the definition].<sup>ix</sup>

## **EXTENT OF THE PROBLEM**

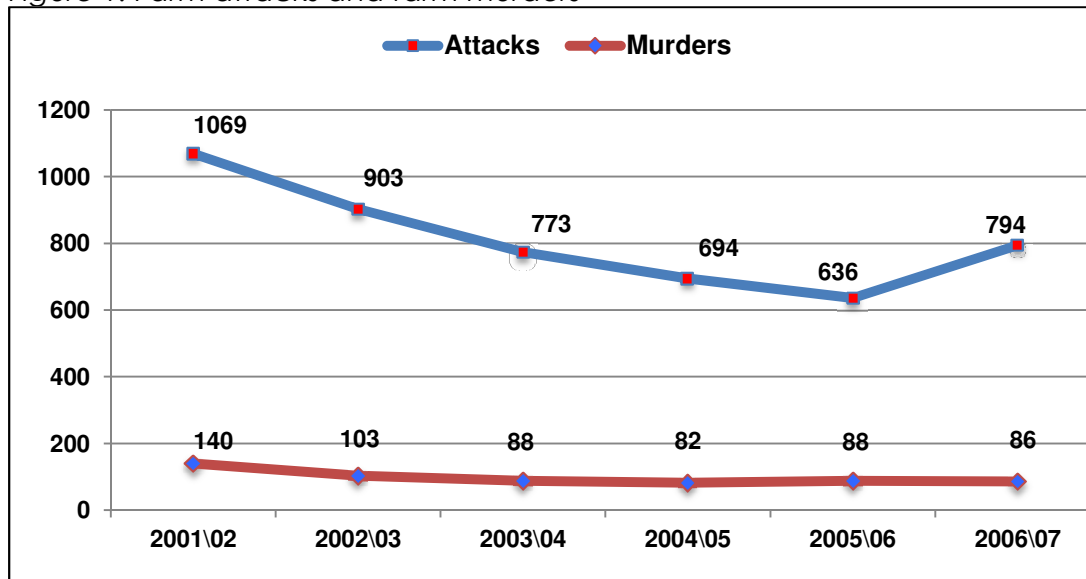
There are currently three open sources of data that include statistics on farm attacks and farm murders:

1. the Report of the Committee of Inquiry on farm attacks (2003);
2. the SAPS Annual Reports (2001/02 – 2006/07); and
3. the Transvaal Agricultural Union of South Africa (currently).

According to the Report by the Committee of Inquiry, who relied almost exclusively on the data provided by the NOCOC and agricultural unions, there were 327 farm attacks and 66 farm murders reported in 1991. By 2001 this had escalated to 1 011 attacks (an increase of 209%) and 147 murders (an increase of 122%). In total there were 6 122 farm attacks and 1 254 murders in the eleven years between 1991 and 2001.<sup>x</sup>

According to the SAPS Annual Report for 2006/07 there were 1 069 attacks and 140 murders in 2001/02, decreasing to 636 attacks and 88 murders in 2005/06.<sup>xi</sup> In 2006/07 the attacks unexpectedly increased by almost 25% to 794 while murders dropped slightly from 88 to 86.<sup>xii</sup> The graph in Figure 1 illustrate the trends in attacks and murders between 2001/02 and 2006/07.

Figure 1: Farm attacks and farm murders



The incidence of these attacks and murders were also uneven across the provinces and in 2006/07 certain provinces were particularly affected. The provincial increases in farm attacks were as follows:

- North West: 68 to 132 cases (94,1%);
- Free State: 30 to 49 cases (63,3%);
- Gauteng: 215 to 338 cases (57,2%);
- KwaZulu-Natal: 59 to 82 cases (39%).

During the same period murders increased by 12 in Mpumalanga, by 10 in the Free State, by 7 in KwaZulu-Natal, and by 2 in North West.<sup>xiii</sup>

The SAPS Annual Report reveal that in the six year period ending in 2006/07, there were a total of 4 869 farm attacks resulting in 587 murders. When these are added to the numbers contained in the report by the Committee of Inquiry, there were 10 991 attacks resulting in 1 841 murders in the 14 years between 1991/92 and 2006/07. Suddenly, and without explanation the SAPS discontinued the reporting of farm attacks and murders after the 2006/07 Annual Report. As a result, the Transvaal Agricultural Union of South Africa (TAUSA) became the only remaining open source of data in this regard.

TAUSA, however, does not have the capacity or capability to monitor the situation as extensively as the SAPS. This is because TAUSA is not necessarily informed of attacks on smallholdings, where up to 40% of attacks classified as 'farm attacks' occur. So, for example, in 2007 TAUSA recorded 94 attacks and 60 murders, while the SAPS recorded 794 attacks and 86 murders across the country.<sup>xiv</sup>

However commendable its efforts in attempting to monitor this phenomenon, the inability of TAUSA to capture the full extent of attacks on farms and smallholdings means that the situation could probably be worse than its figures suggest. According to TAUSA's figures for the period 2008 to September 2012, there were 634 farm attacks resulting in 306 murders. This amounts to an average of one murder during every second attack. This figure compares badly to aggravated robbery in general

where there is on average one murder in approximately every forty cases of aggravated robbery.<sup>xv</sup>

According to TAUSA, most of the murder victims are the farmers themselves, followed by their spouses and other direct family, their workers and, in a few cases, visitors to farms. For example, of the 37 murders for the first nine months of 2012,

- 25 were farmers,
- 8 were spouses or other direct family,
- 3 were workers and
- 1 was a visitor.

Three of the murdered farmers were black, which highlights the fact that black farmers and black persons in general on farms, often are victims of these attacks. The Committee of Inquiry into farm attacks found, for example, that of the 1 398 victims of farm attacks during the period of their inquiry:

- 61,6% were white,
- 33,3% were black,
- 4,4% were Asian and
- 0,7% were coloured.<sup>xvi</sup>

Of the 12,3% rape victims, 71% were black. According to the TAUSA records 71 of the 1 022 farmers murdered since 1990 were black, 32 of the 407 direct family that were murdered, were black and 105 out of 115 workers murdered were black.<sup>xvii</sup>

The seriousness of farm attacks and murders becomes particularly apparent when one compares the murder rate of farmers to that of all South Africans. According to Statistics South Africa's Census of Commercial Agriculture, there were 32 375 commercial farmers (i.e. people running farming operations either full-time or part-time) in South Africa in 2007,<sup>xviii</sup> but this number is dropping. According to Dr Pieter Mulder, the deputy minister for agriculture, the number of commercial farmers has declined by almost 50% since 1996.<sup>xix</sup> In October 2011 ABSA's head of agribusiness, Ernst Janovsky, predicted that commercial farmer numbers will decline to 15 000 individuals over the next fifteen years, causing significant job losses in rural areas.<sup>xx</sup> These concerns are shared by the CEO of the Agricultural Research Council (ARC), Shadrack Moephuli, who warned that the agricultural sector is in a 'state of crisis' and for the 'need to find incentives for people to become interested in being farmers and growing food for the rest of us.'<sup>xxi</sup>

How serious the problem is becomes even more apparent when the number of murders are expressed in ratios which is the acceptable way of undertaking a meaningful comparison. Using the latest available census figures from 2007 for the number of farmers in South Africa (32 375), the murder of 32 farmers (exclusive of their families and workers) in 2011 provides a murder ratio of 98,8 killings per 100 000. This is over three times higher than South Africa's national average of 30,9 murders per 100 000 in that year and 14 times the global average of 6,9 murders per 100 000.<sup>xxii</sup> South African farmers are also almost twice as likely to be murdered as police officials where 81 murders were recorded during 2011/12, i.e. a ratio of 51 murders per 100 000.<sup>xxiii</sup>

It is against this background that we must consider what Government is doing about the safety of our farming community which has important consequences for the country's food security and rural economy.

### **THE RURAL PROTECTION PLAN (RPP)**

The Rural Protection Plan (RPP) that was implemented in October 1997 was the government's reaction to calls by the South African Agricultural Union (SAAU), that 'something needs to be done to address the increases in violent crime on farms and smallholdings.'<sup>xxiv</sup> The plan was developed by a working group, or task team, comprising members of the South African Police Service (SAPS), the South African National Defence Force (SANDF) and organised agriculture. This group visited all the provinces and consulted with large and diverse groups of people. The main objective 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.<sup>xxv</sup>

The task team formed the basis of what eventually developed into a Priority Committee on Rural Safety in 1999. When the NOCOC was replaced by the JOINTS in 2000, the Priority Committee formed part of the new coordinating structure. The Priority Committee was representative of a number of government departments such as the SAPS, SANDF, Justice, Land Affairs and Agriculture, although the latter two departments seemed to have lost interest over time. The Priority Committee also included organised agricultural organisations such as AgriSA, the Transvaal Agricultural Union of South Africa (TAUSA), the African Farmers Union (AFU) and 'Action Stop Farm Attacks'. The Priority Committee reports directly to the JOINTS, which, in turn, reports to the Justice, Crime Prevention and Security Cluster (JCPS) at director-general and cabinet minister levels.<sup>xxvi</sup>

The RPP itself was structured primarily around the commando system. It was based on two concepts: area bound reaction forces and 'home-and-hearth' protection forces.<sup>xxvii</sup> The area bound reaction forces were staffed by local commando members who were called up regularly or in times of crises for paid duty. They were issued with the necessary uniforms and other equipment to perform their commando responsibilities. They were also trained jointly with the police and 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 house-and-hearth protection commando members.<sup>xxviii</sup> The first sub-group was staffed by farmers, smallholders and their workers, who were responsible for assisting other farmers and smallholders in the event of a farm attack. They would be the first to react to an attack or call for help and remain in action until they could hand over to the area-bound reaction force. The second sub-group was also staffed by farmers, smallholders and their workers, but they were responsible only for their own protection.

The effectiveness of the RPP is reflected in the notable decrease in farm attacks which fell by 40.5% from 1 069 incidents in 2001/02 to 636 incidents in 2005/06. Similarly, farm murders decreased by 41.4% from 140 cases in 2001/02 to 82 cases in

2004/05. 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 2006/07, 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 2004/05 to 88 in 2005/06.<sup>xxix</sup>

## **THE CLOSING DOWN OF THE COMMANDOS**

The commando system and its composition was always a contentious issue in South Africa's recent history. This was reflected in the serious debate during the development of the new South African defence policy through the White Paper and Defence Review processes in 1995 and 1998 respectively. The African National Congress (ANC) had been opposed to the continuation of the commando system, partly because of the role these units had 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.<sup>xxx</sup> In chapter 11 of the Defence Review it is stated that:<sup>xxxi</sup>

Special mention needs to be made of the commandos, which now form part of the territorial units, in view of the sensitivity surrounding their name and perceived role. This sensitivity derives from the perception in certain quarters that the commandos were politicised during the apartheid era through frequent deployment in the support of the police.

There was, however, no indication at the time that plans were underfoot to close down the commandos. These units were undoubtedly the cornerstone of the RPP and given the structure and staffing of the RPP the closing down of the commandos would clearly mean the end of this plan. It is against this background that it came as a complete surprise when on 14 February 2003 the President of the Republic of South Africa, in his State of the Nation address at the opening of Parliament, announced that the commando system would be phased out. In his address he said:<sup>xxxii</sup>

Measures will be taken to ensure that the structures meant to support the security agencies such as the Commandos ... are properly regulated to do what they were set up for. In this regard, in order to ensure security for all in the rural areas, including the farmers, government will start in the near future to phase out the SANDF Commandos, at the same time as we create in their place a new system whose composition and ethos accord with the requirements of all rural communities.

Other than referring to a 'new system' that would 'accord with the requirements of all rural communities' the President gave no clear indication of what the Commandos would be replaced with. This was apparently left to the Minister of Safety and Security, Charles Nqakula, who in his budget vote speech in Parliament on 10 June 2003, stated that the commandos would be replaced by:

... a revised SAPS reservist system based on the amended National Instruction for Reservists. This system is linked to various initiatives which form part of the National Crime Combating Strategy's normalisation phase, such as the drastic increase in the SAPS personnel figures over the next three years, the restructuring of specialised investigation units, the implementation of sector policing and the establishment of crime combating units for each police area.<sup>xxxiii</sup>



At a parliamentary media briefing on 15 February 2005, the Minister confirmed both his own and earlier statements by senior SAPS officers, namely that the commandos would be replaced by a combination of police approaches. This would entail the implementation of the sector policing concept; the area crime combating units; the recruitment and utilisation of police reservists (for purposes of sector policing a new category of reservists was created, namely urban and rural sector police reservists); and an increase in police numbers.<sup>xxxiv</sup>

At a meeting on 26 August 2003 between AgriSA and the ministers of Defence and of Safety and Security, AgriSA emphasised that in the process of the SAPS replacing the commandos, 'they should ensure that a security vacuum does not develop as a result of these changes.' In reply, the Minister of Defence, Mr Mosiuoa Lekota, 'assured AgriSA that no commando would be withdrawn before the police are able to take over completely the security responsibility in a particular area.'<sup>xxxv</sup> In his media briefing on 15 February 2005, the Minister of Safety and Security reiterated that 'the SANDF Exit/SAPS Entry strategy will be executed in a well-planned fashion so as to avoid a *security vacuum* (own emphasis).' In a follow-up meeting on 10 February 2006 with the Minister of Safety and Security, AgriSA pointed out that, according to its information, limited progress had been made in rural areas with the introduction of sector policing in most localities where commandos had been closed down.<sup>xxxvi</sup>

Between November 2007 and December 2008, at the request of the civil rights organisation, Afriforum, two senior researchers from the Institute for Security Studies set out to establish whether and to what extent Government had kept these promises. They found, at least in the four areas they visited, that a security vacuum had in fact been created:

It is obvious that a security vacuum exists in the areas visited by the research team. This conclusion is based principally on the observation that in none of these areas had all the measures announced by Government been fully implemented and in some areas almost nothing had been done. And despite government assurances that this would not happen, the process of closing down the commandos was carried through.<sup>xxxvii</sup>

## **THE 'NEW SYSTEM' AND THE NATIONAL RURAL SAFETY STRATEGY (NRSS)**

The disbandment of the Commandos meant that the police were required to replace not only the 'system', but also that a new plan or strategy had to be developed to replace the RPP. The undertaking was that the police would replace the commandos by putting in place the following alternatives:

- 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

The *National Instruction* on the South African Reserve Police Service (No.1 of 2002), provided for a new category of reservists, (i.e. Category D: Rural and Urban Safety.)<sup>xxxviii</sup> The National Instruction was already in place at the time of the

President's announcement on the commandos and did not happen as a result thereof. From a reading of section 2(2)(d) of this instruction it is clear that the aim with the creation of this category of reservists was to enhance the role of police reservists in both rural and urban security. The intention, in fact, was to ensure that there would be adequate staffing of sectors for sector policing.<sup>xxxix</sup> As of 2012, a new police reservist policy is apparently underway and early indications are that many of the good intentions in this instruction may not survive the current process. For some reason the draft policy is being delayed at the office of the Minister of Police resulting in a *de facto* moratorium on the recruitment of reservists.<sup>xl</sup>

There was quite a dramatic increase in the number of police officials (sworn officers) between 2001/02 and 2011/12 from approximately 100 000 to 157 472.<sup>xli</sup> Overall SAPS personnel increased by 66% from approximately 120 000 in 2001/02 to 199 345 in 2011/12.<sup>xlii</sup> However, there are no indications that the additional staff at rural police stations were ever utilised for duties previously performed by the commandos or that their presence contributed in any meaningful way to safety on farms.

Sector policing is supposed to be one of the anchors of the 'new system', but it took the SAPS seven years to finalise its applicable National Instruction.<sup>xliii</sup> The long delay in finalising the National Instruction created uncertainty and made it difficult to prioritise and allocate resources for its implementation. According to the *SAPS Annual Report 2011/2012* sector policing has been implemented in 1 056 of the 1 125 police stations across the country (i.e. 93,86%).<sup>xliii</sup> This, however, is not a true reflection of the state of sector policing. These figures do not indicate the extent to which sector policing is properly functioning at each of these police stations or whether it is functioning at all. The SAPS themselves, in an analysis to determine the state of sector policing, found amongst others, the following challenges:

- a lack of common understanding of the concept of sector policing
- a lack of standardisation guidelines for the demarcation of sectors
- a lack of clarity in relation to the roles and functions between community police forums, sub-forums and sector crime forums
- a rigid implementation of sector policing guidelines which does not allow for the varying dynamics of police station areas
- inadequate or a lack of sustainable human and physical resources to support the implementation of this concept, and
- at station level sector policing is used as a replacement for crime prevention units.<sup>xlv</sup>

It is unclear what the Minister had in mind when, in parliament in 2003, he referred to a restructuring of specialised investigation units. The only restructuring of specialised investigation units that had any direct relevance to the safety and security on farms and smallholdings involved the Serious and Violent Crime Units (SVC units). The restructuring of the SVC units resulted in its members being 'decentralised' to the 169 'high contact crime' stations.<sup>xlvi</sup> On average only two members were available for each of these stations and in reality this effectively meant the end of these units as a specialised investigative force. This had negative implications for the investigation of the serious crimes committed during farm attacks where these units had an above average detection rate of more than 70%.<sup>xlvii</sup>

The creation of the Area Crime Combating Units (ACCUs) were simply the previously named Public Order Policing (POP) units with a different mandate. Their new

mandate included, amongst other operational duties, the responsibility for follow-up operations after farm attacks. The POP units, tasked to manage public events and marches, underwent major restructuring in 2001 and again in 2006. Due to a perceived reduction in public protests and increasing crime levels at the time, a decision was taken to utilise these units in support of the implementation of the National Crime Combating Strategy (NCCS) which was launched in 2000. The POP units were renamed Area Crime Combating Units (ACCU's), effectively changing their primary focus to crime combating and prevention operations, with crowd management operations becoming a secondary function.<sup>xlviii</sup> This was a convenient way of finding a replacement for the reaction force capability of the commandos.<sup>xlix</sup>

In 2006 the ACCU's were again restructured when the SAPS Area offices<sup>4</sup> were closed down and they were re-named Crime Combating Units (CCU's). In the process the number of units were drastically reduced (e.g. in Gauteng only three out of seven units remained while the total number of operational personnel was reduced from 1 383 to 614).<sup>i</sup> Ironically, by this time public protests were again escalating and becoming increasingly violent.<sup>ii</sup> During 2011/12 there were on average three violent public crowd management incidents every day in South Africa. This has effectively meant an end to the deployment of the CCU's for rural protection and they are now fully deployed for crowd management and public order operations.

The National Rural Safety Strategy (NRSS) was approved in 2011, almost nine years after the President's announcement effectively ended the Rural Protection Plan (RPP).<sup>iii</sup> It is a fairly comprehensive strategy, but unlike the RPP it's focus is on rural communities in general and not specifically on farms and smallholdings. For example, it refers not only to farmers and farmworkers, but also includes 'residents within rural communities'.<sup>iiii</sup> This is of course to give effect to what the President referred to in 2003 when he said that the composition and ethos of the 'new system' must 'accord with the requirements of all rural communities.'

By broadening the scope of rural safety the NRSS is largely duplicating what the National Crime Combating Strategy (NCCS) is supposed to be doing and is less focused on the particular problem of farm attacks. The NRSS is further weakened by its dependence on a range of police practices and units that are not well implemented or properly functioning, such as sector policing, police reservists and crime combating units and the absence of a dedicated investigating capability such as the Serious and Violent Crime units were able to provide.

In 2005 Dr Jonny Steinberg, an independent researcher, almost prophetically warned how the closing of the commandos, combined with a different set of priorities for the police, would weaken their ability to police the agricultural sector:

A combined reading of the SAPS national instruction on the police reserve, together with its crime reduction and police action targets, tells us that, for better or for worse, the closing of the Commandos will see a transfer of policing resources from rural to urban sectors of police stations throughout the country. The result will be a deterioration in the policing of rural sectors, and in

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<sup>4</sup> The Area Offices of SAPS were created during 1995 to replace the District Commandant Offices of the former South African Police. It had the responsibility to oversee on average 25-30 police stations in terms of operational, logistical, administrative and other support services. It also housed various specialised units such as the Serious and Violent Crime (SVC) Units, Public Order Police (POP) Units and the Family Violence, Child Protection and Sexual Offences (FCS) Units.

particular of agricultural crime. The potential gain is that residents of rural town centres will be better policed.<sup>liv</sup>

## **CONCLUSION**

It is obvious that the government no longer considers the ongoing attacks on farms and the murder of persons involved in the farming community as a priority. This is in spite of President Zuma's statement in parliament during May 2009 that food security is included in priority three of South Africa's Medium Term Strategic Framework for 2009-2014. The strategic and operational response to the threat of farm attacks and murders is clearly not based on the acknowledgement that the farming community is disproportionately targeted when compared to the victimisation risk of other citizens or groups in South Africa. The economic and other implications such as loss of production and food security are equally underestimated.

It should be clearly understood that the farming community is a very specific group, very much the same as you would find bankers, doctors, teachers and police officials. The fact is that farmers are twice as likely to be murdered than policemen in South Africa and more than three times as likely as any other citizen. If any of these groups would be attacked and killed at the rate this is happening to farmers there would be a national outcry. A good example is the outrage last year when a number of policemen were murdered in short succession. The Minister of Police organised a national summit on police killings and part of the outcome was a so-called Ten Point Plan focused on the reduction of police killings.

This situation should be recognised for the national crisis that it is and therefore deserving of priority status and focused attention. That would mean the implementation of a strategy or plan that focuses on the specific problem of farm attacks and associated violent crimes. Such an approach cannot be allowed to disappear within overall or general crime combating strategies such as the National Crime Combating Strategy and the National Rural Safety Strategy.

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## ENDNOTES

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- viii Ibid, *Report of the Committee of Inquiry into Farm Attacks*, 11.
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- x Ibid, *Report of the Committee of Inquiry into Farm Attacks*, 2.
- xi South African Police Service, *Annual Report 2006/2007*, Department of Safety and Security, Pretoria: Government Printer, 2007, 50.
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- xiii Ibid.
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- xxxiii Ibid, Johan Burger & Henri Boshoff, *The state's response to crime and public security in South Africa*, 20.
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