



CHRISTMAS FOR FARMERS IN SOUTH AFRICA

On 1 December 2021, eight armed men attacked a farm in the eastern sector of South Africa, in the Mpumalanga province. The farm belonged to Niek Bierman. He and his family - wife Sonja and their three boys aged 13, 10 and 6 - were tied up by the attackers who proceeded to drag Sonja through the house searching for the safe. In one of the children's rooms, they found what they were looking for and demanded it be opened. Furious that all the safe contained were farm weapons and some antiques, they demanded money. When told there was none, the men took the 6-year-old child, turned on the oven and tried to push him in, but he didn't fit. Undeterred, they cleared out the house of what little money the family had, plus computers, cell phones and other valuables and disappeared with the family car. The family is of course traumatised – they said they are prepared for night invasions but could not believe this happened on a Saturday morning! At the very same time, three other farming families were attacked in the Free State province.

During the month of November 2021, there were 27 farm attacks and three murders in South Africa. October 2021 saw 14 farm attacks and three farm murders. The police refuse to categorise these attacks priority crimes. In most cases there is gratuitous violence, even torture. One old lady had her arm burned with a blow torch, while another woman was hacked with a panga (machete). Attackers drilled through another old lady's hands and feet, while a farmer in Northwest province was forced to drink bleach. Other farmers were tied to the back of pick-up trucks and dragged for miles along farm roads. In one of the worst examples, a young man who spotted farm produce being stolen was beaten to a pulp by the thieves and tied to a tree where he was discovered some hours later. Check out <https://youtu.be/im1B71ZiH34> for the full story on targeted farm barbarity in South Africa. The savages who perpetrate this violence are so primitive that they don't realise they are killing the people who feed them! Yet these thugs have a vote in the ANC's "democracy"!

Nearly 10 000 rape cases and more than 6,100 murders were reported in SA between July and September this year, according to SA government figures.

While good people are slaughtered in their homes, our travelling salesman president Cyril Ramaphosa jetted off to Kenya, Nigeria, Ghana, and Senegal to discuss trade with these models of economic success. He was of course accompanied by a large contingent of “businessmen from various sectors”. The President wants to strengthen economic ties with these countries in order that Africa can be more successful and self-sufficient, he said. Watching Kenyan president Uhuru Kenyatta pontificate about borders that were created by colonialists and that SA and Kenya would form an airline that would be run by Africans was something to behold! While Ramaphosa boasted about the number of SA businesses already established in Africa, he forgot to mention that none were there courtesy of the ANC.

Within the Ramaphosa contingent were Fikile Mbalula, minister of transport and Thulas Nxesio, minister of labour. While they were enjoying the 5-star perks up north, South African commercial transport was being held to ransom on the N3 highway between van Reenen and the Tugela tollgate. Lorry drivers protesting the use of non-South African truck drivers had stopped their vehicles, driven them across the highway and removed the keys. The reason: the two ministers mentioned above who were part of the president's travel jaunt to West Africa had promised to meet with these truck drivers within seven days of a previous meeting to report back on the foreigners' issue. The seven days were up, and these ministers were nowhere to be seen. Hence the punishment meted out to the whole of South Africa because two lazy ministers went on a perks jaunt. (What was discussed in these African countries that had anything to do with transport and labour?) The perpetrators of the truck “keys” incident were arrested, but the damage was done.

Hence the chaos on the N3, South Africa's chief economic artery connecting the Durban port to the financial and industrial heart in Gauteng. This road carries thousands of tons of agricultural export products to the world. To add insult to injury, exports sent out on the N4 to Mozambique via the Lebombo border post were also held up - for three days - because the Mpumalanga provincial administration did not change laws allowing the border post to be open 24/7 because of “financial constraints”. Trucks could not move between 22:00 and 06:00 the next morning. Delays at this border post have already cost the country R1,3 billion this year. According to the Mineral Council of SA's chief economist Henk Langenhoven, malfunctioning at Lebombo and other SA border posts, as well as serious problems at SA harbours, has meant that R16

billion worth of coal, R13 billions of iron ore and R1,5 billion of chrome ore could not be exported.

Agricultural losses have also been serious because of our road and rail transport failures, plus the chaos at our harbours. The SA Citrus Growers Association has flagged Transnet, the SA rail agency, as “the biggest threat to the fruit export industry”. The canned fruit business is also in a pickle. Conditions at Cape Town port when wind and rough weather prevail are difficult because no investment has been made for years in infrastructure. Cargo handling is poor and cargo ships will not wait around for undue delays. SA harbours have been called the world’s worst by the World Bank. Fruit exporters have had to move their produce to Port Elizabeth as a matter of urgency to comply with overseas contracts.

The only real stars in the SA economic firmament are mining and agriculture. Yet these two sectors have suffered more than others because of a government which doesn’t know the meaning of the word “maintenance” and doesn’t know how money works. For most of them, it is there to steal and this they have done with spectacular alacrity.

Apart from violence, SA farmers are beset by problems akin to the plagues of Egypt. The country is dry - only one percent is irrigated, while only 11% is arable. Yet farmers produce enough to feed 60 million people, and they export produce to boot. Pitiless drought assaults the land at regular intervals. Farmers lose their farms and cannot obtain bridging finance because the Land Bank, created years ago to assist the farming community, is in the middle of a “debt crisis”. At present this bank holds around 29% of agricultural debt. Like everything else in SA, the Land bank is beset with maladministration. In early 2021, a poll revealed that only 26% of farmers who applied for loans were successful. The minister of agriculture recently completed a concept document regarding bank assistance to what the government euphemistically refers to as “upcoming farmers”. Not many of these people contribute to the quantity of food needed to feed South Africa. But where is the support for the farmers who feed the people? The bank asked the treasury for a further R7 billion to solve its cash flow problem, which amount was included in February 2021’s budget. Most of this money would not go to commercial farmers but to the “upcoming” ones who are responsible for only 4% of the food produced in the country.

STOCK AND HARVEST THEFT

Farmers live with this curse every day. Our supermarket food prices include the costs of this relentless criminal activity. TLU SA general secretary Bennie van Zyl

stated that although it appears stock theft cases are declining, this is not the truth. Many farmers do not report cases to the police in whom they have little confidence. "Many policemen are actually part of the stock theft syndicates," said van Zyl. These mushroomed under a slack and disinterested ANC regime. "Livestock theft is a large, organised industry with big money at stake," declares TLU SA. Currently only about 20% of cases are reported and only 4% of them are completed successfully to a conviction. In addition, police forensic work on stock theft is not up to standard. A DNA sample data base has about 400,000 samples outstanding. In the meantime, "the thugs continue to steal," says TLU SA.

A farmer from Northwest recently offered a reward of R150 000 after 98 of his specially bred calves disappeared. How organised these types of thefts is evidenced by syndicate helicopters flying over farms to pinpoint where cattle are situated. This farmer has been farming for 60 years but his losses under the current government are worse than ever before. The missing cattle were worth more than R1 million. There are thousands of incidents of stock theft in South Africa per year, but few are reported to the police unless for insurance or other business purposes. The chance of ever seeing one's animals again are virtually nil unless a farmer looks for his cattle himself.

Farm produce is also stolen. One avocado farmer lost thousands of Rands when 30 tons of his fruit was looted in one night. Syndicates have emerged – tons of fruit are heisted throughout the growing areas, then washed and packed. The boxes end up in the local market. Stolen fruit in little bags hardly appear at the side of the road anymore. Theft of this precious harvest has entered the realm of big-time crime. Macadamia nuts are also on the thieves' list. These are the most expensive in the world, and the South African variety is coveted internationally and can fetch a price of between R750/R800 a kg in this market. Because of this scourge which only emerged under the toxic ANC government, farmers must now pay millions for electric fencing, private security guards and cameras. Yet the theft continues unabated. The police say they cannot confirm there are syndicates because they are unable to conduct proper investigations. Private security guards call the police about a theft, but the office phone remains unanswered. One Limpopo police office told some complainants they could do nothing to help because there was only one police vehicle at the station, and this was unavailable.

LAND INVASIONS

Atop all the other scourges the ANC has imposed on agriculture, illegal land invasions have become commonplace. Egged on by the rowdy and venal Economic Freedom Fighters (EFF), a political party whose public

representatives take a huge parliamentary salary (public money) every month. This rabble with socialist appetites declares that South Africa's land was "taken away" by whites from blacks and thus every piece of land is fair game for repossession by "their people". Thus, illegal land seizures have become par for the course in SA's rural and peri-urban areas. Last year a group of farmers from the Ottoshoop area in Northwest province complained that the police did nothing to remove illegal invaders on their land. The police declared – correctly – that they cannot remove illegals if they have already set up structures on the land.

State land is fair game. The Johannesburg council was forced to place an ad in newspapers warning people not to build on state land which had been illegally sold to them by people who didn't even own the land! There are millions of poor people, including millions from Africa who entered this country by walking across a border, who have "occupied" land by simply putting up a shack. If they see land "not used" then they take it. In many cases this is a farmer's land which is lying fallow for a purpose. In another incident, invaders settled on ground belonging to a private company whose application to court to remove them succeeded. These invaders had already pegged the land and were selling portions to all and sundry. Trees had already been cut, bush removed, and fires used to "clear" the property. The local municipality was ordered to find other land for these invaders to occupy!

A farm in Rustenburg was invaded by a group while the farmer was overseas on business. On his return he complained to the police who refused to do anything because structures had already been set up. It took a court order to remove them, at serious expense to the farmer. In another incident the Black Lands First radical activist group simply walked into a privately-owned KZN lodge and took over. Vacationers staying there were forced to flee while the owner "negotiated" with the invaders to leave. The owner was threatened that if he called the police, the lodge would be burnt to the ground.

In Cape Town land occupiers recently made the central railway line near Phillipi their home. The line had been temporarily "out of order" due to vandalism, theft, and arson. About 7 000 people were living on the tracks. Notices were issued to the invaders to leave the property so that repairs could be done to open the railway tracks. The people refused to move, and the railway authorities were forced to go to court.

Drought, veld fires, government recalcitrance in renewing firearm licences, farmers arrested as they try to defend their properties, open uncontrolled state borders where millions of potential criminals walk into South Africa without any papers, never mind visas, uncontrolled sewage seeping into farmland

because of poor local government servicing of water pumps, illegal dog hunting of wildlife on farms. These and other plagues bedevil the life of many South African farmers. Yet only 35 000 of them produce food for the whole of South Africa under an ungrateful and spiteful government whose members and officials could not grow a potato successfully. Surely these farmers are modern saints, to put up with these torments. They are also unsure of the future, wondering about future legislation being threatened which will take away their farms without compensation.

These farmers have achieved miracles, on poor land, with no official support, no subsidies, no low-interest bank loans, and no police force to support them.

SO, WHERE ARE THE POLICE?

This is the million-dollar question. They are nowhere when you need them. Under the present minister Bheki Cele who is in his position for purely political reasons, a once proud security service, the best in Africa, is not even a shadow of its former self. It doesn't even resemble its former self. During the country's worst unrest in history in KZN this year, the police were nowhere to be seen. They are disorganised, corrupt, inept and they don't know what they don't know. They are a disgrace to our once beautiful country. There are some who come up to the plate, but they are few and far between.

From one end of the country to the other, there is little to be proud of. The crisis of police vehicles is country wide. In the Eastern Cape only 14 of the 48 speed patrol police vehicles are operational. Cocaine to the value of more than R200 million was stolen under the nose of the police special unit The Valke in Port Shepstone, KZN last month. The possibility that it was an inside job is being investigated by that same unit. The independent police unit charged with investigating police misdemeanours has 39 000 cases still outstanding. In the past book year, public claims against the police amounted to R16,7 billion. Unauthorised spending during the year amounted to R1,58 billion. They spend money like water. They were given an unqualified audit report from the Auditor General. They spend 95% of their budget but only 75% of their goals were reached. Of the R50,7 billion for visible policing, R35 billion was spent on fitting out police offices. Only 15% of biological DNA testing is completed within 90 days. Their budgets were fully spent in dozens of areas, but they are unable to contain law and order in South Africa.

Surrounded by this miserable clique calling itself a government, these commercial farmers continue producing some of the best agriculture in the world. But this is how we live in a South Africa controlled by the most corrupt,

venal, and inefficient government the country has ever seen. But their reign will come to an end. Let us hope we won't have to wait too long.circumstances.