

His Excellency, President Cyril Ramaphosa

Dear Mr President

## **REQUESTING A MEETING ON THE FUTURE OF AFRIKANERS**

As you are surely aware, AfriForum is a civil rights organisation registered within in the Republic of South Africa with the aim of protecting minority rights. It is our aim to ensure that Afrikaners can have a free, safe and prosperous future here at the southern tip of Africa, in peaceful coexistence and in a state of mutual recognition and respect with other communities. Everything we say and do is aimed at ensuring such future. At the time of writing this letter, AfriForum has more than 260 000 members who make monthly contributions to our work. With more than a quarter of a million contributing members, we are the largest civil rights group not only on the African continent, but also in the southern hemisphere.

In the last few weeks, the country has been struck by the tragic death of the young farm manager Brendin Horner. Although the prosecution of the accused in the murder of young Horner is still underway, what we gather from news reports is that he was attacked on a farm when he discovered intruders who seem to have been involved with a stock theft crime syndicate. He was tied to a pole, stabbed and beaten to death. A knife was left on the scene of the murder, neatly placed on Horner's cap, seemingly to convey some sort of message. The alleged murderers were arrested not long after the incident.

As you know, a group of more than a thousand people gathered in Senekal on 6 October 2020 at the first court appearance of the accused. The event was peaceful. However, after it dispersed, a group went to the police station and the magistrate's court, resulting in a public clash between the police and local protestors. A police vehicle was overturned and set alight and the police had to use firearms to disperse the crowd.

While the events at Senekal were unfortunate and while we are all grateful that it didn't escalate into something much worse, the purpose of this letter is to inform you that tensions are not only likely to worsen, but also that such incidents are likely to happen again, even if we condemn such actions.

Government and police spokespeople commented that they do not understand the anger of these people, especially given that the accused have already been arrested. This sense of astonishment is merely evident of the extent to which the frustration of the Afrikaner community is misunderstood and underestimated.

Mr President, you should take note of the fact that what happened at Senekal, and the escalation of political friction in this country in the last few weeks, is not merely the result of the murder of Brendin Horner. The tragic death of Mr Horner – and the thousands of others who have been murdered in farm attacks – is viewed as a symptom of a deeper problem, of a sense of alienation among Afrikaners who experience treatment by the South African government comparable to that of second-class citizens.

The murder of Mr Horner is seen within the context of, among other things, the following:

1. The destruction or removal of Afrikaner statues and monuments, the veneration of those who vandalise these monuments by senior members of the South African government and your derogatory comments about Afrikaner heritage on 24 September 2020.
2. Increased discrimination against minority languages at institutions of public learning, including public schools and universities, which is evident in the phasing out of Afrikaans as medium of instruction at virtually every public university.
3. Hate speech, discriminatory speech and inciteful speech by some of the most influential politicians in the country, including senior members of the ruling party. This includes the singing of songs in which violence towards farmers is romanticised, as well as political speeches in which Afrikaners and white farmers are frequently held up as a political punching bag and blamed for everything that is wrong in South Africa.
4. The unrepentant hateful comments by Julius Malema, including his comments that he is not calling for the slaughter of white people “at least for now”, that all white people are criminals and should be treated as such and that he doesn’t mind engaging in a civil war against white people, coupled with your apparent friendly relationship with him. This was particularly evident when you commented that Malema is still a member of the ANC deep down in his heart and that you would like for him to return to the ANC, only days after he claimed that he intends to “slit the throat of whiteness”. This was also evident at the events in Senekal on 16 October 2020, when members of the EFF sang “Kill the boer, kill the farmer” outside the courtroom, only for the Minister of Police to go and sit next to Malema inside the courtroom in what – if photographs create an accurate depiction – appears to be a very friendly relationship.
5. The as yet undenied comment attributed to you that white people have to be dealt with “like boiling a frog alive, which is done by raising the temperature very slowly.” You are reported to have made these comments during the CODESA negotiations for a new democratic dispensation, in response to a question about the future of white people in South Africa. Despite a media uproar about these comments, you have never denied making these claims.
6. Negative stereotyping of Afrikaners and white farmers in particular by influential political leaders, including members of cabinet and even yourself. Surely you would recall the speech you made at a political rally in which you said people have to vote ANC in order to prevent the Boers from coming back (seemingly to oppress black people).
7. The notion that minorities in South Africa “have less rights” because they are fewer in number, as purported by former President Jacob Zuma, a statement by ANC spokesperson Zizi Kodwa that angry disillusioned members of the coloured community “shouldn’t feel as if they have been reduced to the status of a minority community” and an earlier comment by Pallo Jordan that the protection of minority rights is regarded by the ANC as a mere continuation of apartheid.
8. The refusal to publicly reprimand those who commit hate speech towards white farmers in particular, and the ruling party’s willingness to go to court to

- defend their so-called right to sing songs in which the murder of Afrikaners and white farmers in particular is encouraged.
9. The refusal to prioritise farm murders, not merely in theory, but also in practice by instituting a focused counterstrategy to prevent these murders before they happen. This includes the refusal by yourself and the Minister of Police to respond to letters in which practical steps for the prioritisation of government's response to farm attacks are proposed. This also includes the continued victim blaming by senior members of the ruling party and the South African government, who continuously suggest that the murders will end if only the victims were to change their attitude or their behaviour.
  10. The scorning and ridiculing of those who call for the prioritisation of farm attacks, including even the victims of farm attacks and those whose loved ones have been murdered.
  11. The claim by senior members of the ruling party that white farmers are "land thieves" and that they should be treated as criminals.
  12. The current process to amend the South African constitution to empower the state to expropriate private property without compensation, coupled with comments by Minister Zweli Mkhize that once government embarks on this process, no property of black people will be touched, and the threat by Deputy President David Mabuza that the property of white people will be taken through violence if they do not hand it over voluntarily.
  13. The continued racialisation of the South African economy through racialised affirmative action and black empowerment policies, culminating in the government policy that support for companies struggling as a result of the economic lockdown in response to the Covid-19 pandemic will be given on a race basis. A recent analysis shows that at least 83 laws discriminate against minorities in South Africa.
  14. The swift response to the events at Senekal on 6 October in which the conduct of the farmers who were there is condemned, including press statements by the departments of police, justice and agriculture, as well as the Free State government, compared to the no-care response to the violent riots at Clicks stores and H&M-stores in the last two years. In fact, when you commented on these incidents you seemed to sympathise with those committing the violence, as opposed to those who fell victim to it.

This is why your recent letter to the nation and the meetings held by Minister Bheki Cele are not sufficient to address the problem, nor to give assurance to Afrikaners that their voices are heard and that they are regarded as a respected section of society. In fact, these actions are interpreted by many within the Afrikaner community as a mere PR exercise to ostensibly deal with the problem, despite the fact that the crisis isn't taken seriously by the South African government. Not only is it the interpretation of the Afrikaner community that the crisis isn't taken seriously by the government, but that it is a crisis deliberately created by the South African government as collateral damage on the road to what the ruling party describes as the National Democratic Revolution.

As pointed out, AfriForum strives to promote mutual recognition and respect, and peaceful coexistence. AfriForum therefore aims to play a constructive role in society by not only advocating sustainable policy, but also by actively contributing to and working with other communities in this regard. The purpose of this letter – and the

requested meeting – includes to ensure that the necessary conditions exist for Afrikaners to play such a role.

The question of whether the crisis is taken seriously cannot be answered by the words of the President and the Minister of Police, but by the actions that sprout from these words.

This is why, Mr President, we seek an urgent meeting with you to discuss the future of the Afrikaner community in this country. At this meeting, it is our intention to propose practical steps that could be taken in order to ensure that there is also a future for our community, despite being a minority.

With kind regards

Kallie Kriel  
CEO  
AfriForum