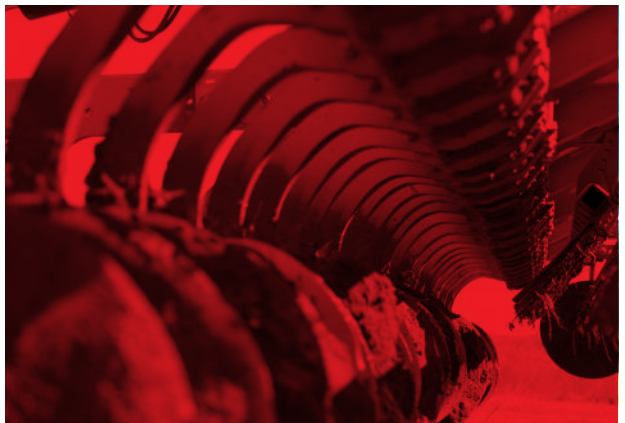


Single Narrative

HOW THE MEDIA IS DISTORTING
THE FACTS
ABOUT SOUTH AFRICA





July 2019

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SINGLE NARRATIVE

The purpose of this memorandum is to provide facts about South Africa with references to the original sources, and to illuminate how these facts have been distorted not only by the South African government, but by the international media in particular.

There is a one-dimensional narrative with regard to South Africa. The narrative goes more or less as follows:

Africa – once a peaceful place – was invaded by the West, only to make things worse in every conceivable way. As a result, any prosperity enjoyed by Westerners in South Africa is regarded as the result of exploitation, oppression or even theft, while any and every hardship experienced by Africans (a term incorrectly used as synonymous to black people) is always the result of oppression through Western colonialism. Inequality of outcome is evidence of the injustices committed by the West and the radical measures by the South African government that are aimed at the eradication of equality of outcome should be welcomed and supported as an attempt to fix the wrongs of the past. The double standards that sprout from this approach is not only acceptable, but desirable.

Any standpoint contrary to this narrative is regarded as problematic and anyone arguing against this narrative should be regarded as a bad person.

South Africa has many problems. The point of this memo is to shed light on three overarching problems in particular, namely:

1. Attacks on farmers
2. Expropriation of private property without compensation
3. The role that China is playing

It will also be pointed out why this is relevant to the USA and what can be done to address these problems.

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1. HOW IT GOT TO THIS (BRIEF HISTORICAL CONTEXT)

South Africa is governed by the African National Congress (ANC), a self-described liberation movement that purports to promote African (i.e. “black” in this context) nationalism and socialism.¹ The ANC was used by the Soviet Union as a proxy during the Cold War and received substantial funding during the 1980s.² The apartheid system was an easy moral target in the Soviet Union’s global strategy at the time. Apartheid started out as the idea that all ethnic groups must govern themselves in “separate development.”³ The system deteriorated into a state-driven programme of social engineering, as a result of which indefensible atrocities were committed.⁴ The atrocities committed by the ANC in its struggle to eliminate rival organisations remain, however, largely hidden from public knowledge, since these were and still are rarely reported by the media.⁵

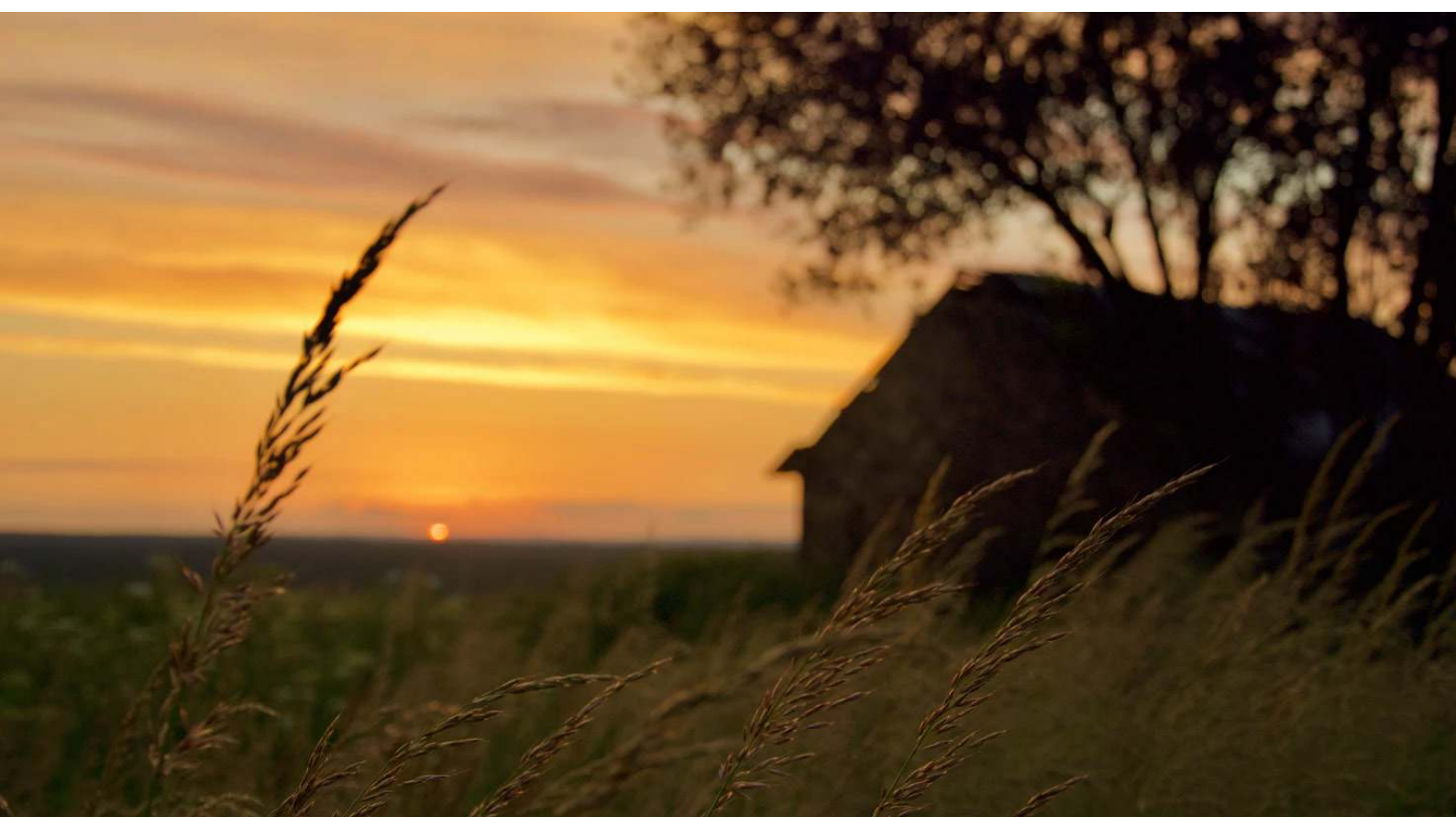
After the collapse of the Berlin Wall, former President F.W. de Klerk believed that communism and socialism had been discredited for good and that the time had arrived to negotiate with the ANC for a democratic South Africa.⁶ The ANC, however, followed a strategy developed by its ally, the South African Communist Party (SACP) based on the strategies of Mao Zedong, which they describe as the “National Democratic Revolution” (NDR).⁷ The NDR had several phases.

1. Phase one was for the movement to present itself as a liberal democratic movement in order to obtain international approval – and increased pressure on the South African (minority) government to transition into a fully representative democracy.

2. Once power was achieved, cadres in the revolution had to be deployed to obtain control over the mechanisms of the state.

3. Once the state had effectively been taken over, the third phase of the revolution had to be implemented, which entailed a transition into socialism, in partnership with other socialist governments – particularly the Chinese.⁸

The impressive economic growth that South Africa experienced after the coming to power of the ANC was more the result of the freeing up of the economy after the collapse of apartheid, than it was the result of the ANC’s good government.⁹ It should, however, be said that the governments of Nelson Mandela and Thabo Mbeki were much more moderate with regard to economic policy than their successors.¹⁰



2. FARM ATTACKS

The South African civil rights organization AfriForum has been campaigning for international recognition of the crisis of farm attacks in South Africa. This included a liaison trip to the USA in May 2018. The trip entailed liaison with government officials, meetings with several think tanks and representatives in Washington, D.C. as well as media appearances, most significant of which was the interview on *Tucker Carlson Tonight*.¹¹ After a follow-up segment on *Tucker Carlson Tonight*, US President Donald Trump tweeted on 23 August 2018 that he had asked the Secretary of State, Mike Pompeo, to study farm expropriations and farm murders in South Africa.¹²



Donald J. Trump
@realDonaldTrump

I have asked Secretary of State @SecPompeo to closely study the South Africa land and farm seizures and expropriations and the large scale killing of farmers. "South African Government is now seizing land from white farmers." @TuckerCarlson @FoxNews

The South African government responded by accusing the US President and AfriForum of spreading "blatant lies" and "misinformation" about South Africa.¹³ This was followed by a liaison tour by the South African President to the US to "tell the truth" about South Africa. In an interview with Bloomberg, Ramaphosa claimed that President Trump had been misinformed about South Africa and continued by denying the existence of the problem. He said: "There are no killings of farmers, or white farmers in South Africa. There is no land grab in South Africa."¹⁴

Although this narrative was widely reported by the media and supported in opinion articles,¹⁵ it is grossly false, as will be pointed out below.

2.1. Frequency

South Africa has been ranked as one of the most dangerous and unsafe countries in the world.¹⁶ Despite this, criminologists have calculated the ratio at which commercial farmers are murdered in South Africa as about twice the rate at which police officers are murdered.¹⁷ Currently, on average more than one farm attack is committed per day in South Africa and more than one farm murder per week (see graph below). A report was published in 2018 that concluded that farm murders are the lowest it has been in 19 years.¹⁸ The report, however, was quickly discredited for including inaccurate numbers that could easily be disproven by doing a basic Google search.¹⁹ Despite the report having

been debunked as inaccurate almost immediately, it was widely reported (and still is) by international news outlets such as *The New York Times*,²⁰ *Washington Post*,²¹ *Foreign Policy*²² and many others.²³ The authors of the report have themselves conceded subsequently that the numbers provided by them were inaccurate.²⁴

There are different sources with regard to the statistics on farm murders. For the purpose of this report, the numbers of the South African Police Service (SAPS) can be used:

Farm attacks and Murders
National Comparison: 1996/1997 - 2017/2018

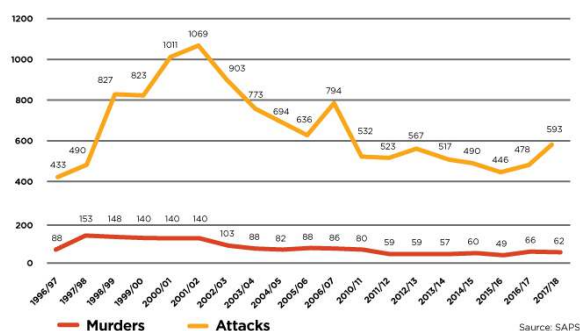


Figure 1: Farm attacks and murders

It is frequently argued that farm murders are a minor problem, because they make up a small percentage of all people who are murdered in South Africa annually.²⁵ The problem with this argument is that it doesn't take account of the nature of statistics, given that there are roughly 58 million people in South Africa²⁶ but only about 32 000 commercial farmers.²⁷ In order to compare the overall South African murder rate with the farmer murder rate a per 100 000 ratio has to be calculated. The per-100 000-ratio at which commercial farmers are murdered is controversial due to technicalities with the calculation. A reasonable estimate is, however, that the South Africa farmer murder ratio is roughly 100 per 100 000 per year.²⁸ Compare that to the South African average of 34 per 100 000 per year,²⁹ the global average of 6,2 per 100 000 per year³⁰ and the US average of 4,7 per 100 000 per year.³¹

A major problem with comparing a national farm murder rate to the national average is that most murders fall in the category of "social fabric crimes"³² while farm murders are by definition not social fabric crimes. "A like-for-like comparison (of the farmer murder rate to the South African murder rate) would be between the rate of farmer murders with the national rate of South Africans killed during robberies and other such crimes," explains James Myburgh, Editor of Politicsweb. "In their report on the 2011/2012 crime statistics, the SAPS states that 16% of murders are committed during the commissioning of other crimes. A back-of-the-envelope calculation puts the national rate for this kind of murder at just under five killings per 100 000 people."³³

2.2. Torture

Farm murders are frequently committed with the most inhumane methods of torture imaginable. Methods of torture include burning of victims with boiling water,³⁴ mutilation of women’s genitals,³⁵ tying up of victims and dragging them behind vehicles across farm roads,³⁶ asphyxiation,³⁷ raping,³⁸ gouging out of eyes,³⁹ spraying with insecticide,⁴⁰ burning with clothing irons,⁴¹ pulling out of toenails,⁴² forcing bleach down victims’ throats,⁴³ drowning,⁴⁴ various methods of burning with fire, including the use of blowtorches,⁴⁵ drilling of holes through victims’ hands and feet,⁴⁶ severe beating,⁴⁷ torturing with cooking oil or melted plastic⁴⁸ and torturing with pliers,⁴⁹ to name only a few.⁵⁰ One victim even had a samurai sword (katana) shoved down his throat.⁵¹

In some cases political slogans are chanted during these tortures and in some cases messages, such as the words “kill the Boer” or the name of criminal gangs are written on the walls of the farm house with the blood of the victims.⁵² Psychological torture is also frequently employed.⁵³

During the 2016/2017 financial year, victims were tortured in at least 13 (17,6%) of the 74 farm murders that occurred that year.⁵⁴

2.3. Political climate

A particular problem with regard to farm murders is the political climate that has been created by the ruling party in South Africa, as well as the mainstream media, according to which it is regarded as less condemnable to murder a white farmer than to make a racist comment about black people, for example.⁵⁵ It is a climate in which speeches are continuously made about how the white minority – and white farmers in particular – should be blamed for everything that is wrong with South Africa and in which speeches are frequently concluded with the singing of songs about murdering white farmers.⁵⁶

2.4. Motives

It is frequently reported in the media that farm murders are simply motivated by the intention to steal. This is because a study on the motives of farm murders was conducted in 2003, which came to this conclusion.⁵⁷ The researchers of this study, however, committed the fallacy of the single cause, by denying that an attacker can have multiple motives: whenever the intention to steal was part of the motive, it was regarded as the only motive. In truth, an attacker can have multiple motives, including the intention to steal, political factors, labour-related grievances, racism etcetera.⁵⁸

International media frequently try to debunk the campaign against farm murders by claiming that it is not a “white genocide”. The reality is that no-one, other than extremely small fringe groups, regard what is happening as a genocide.⁵⁹ To argue that it isn’t a genocide can in no way lead to a conclusion that the crisis isn’t real.

2.5. The racial component

While it is undoubtedly true that not all farm murders are committed as a result of racism and that one should caution against reading racial motives into any crime when there is no evidence, the racial component to farm murders is frequently downplayed by the media. Even more alarming is that an analysis of the media’s reporting on incident of violence on farms points to a clear double standard in terms of how these crimes are reported on. It has been found that the single most significant variable that may serve as an indication on how an incident of violence on a farm in South Africa will be responded on by the media is the race of the perpetrator.⁶⁰ This becomes particularly evident when one compares the incidents reported by the media during 2016 and 2017 to the number of times that such incidents were repeatedly mentioned by the media, as is illustrated in the table⁶¹ and graph⁶² below.

Table 1: Media reporting and race (English media)

RACIAL CHARACTERISTICS	MENTIONS	INCIDENTS	MENTIONS PER INCIDENT
White-on-black	761	13	59
Black-on-white	352	82	4
Black-on-black or victim’s race unknown	44	12	4
White-on-white	5	2	3
Other	27	24	1
TOTAL	1 189	133	9

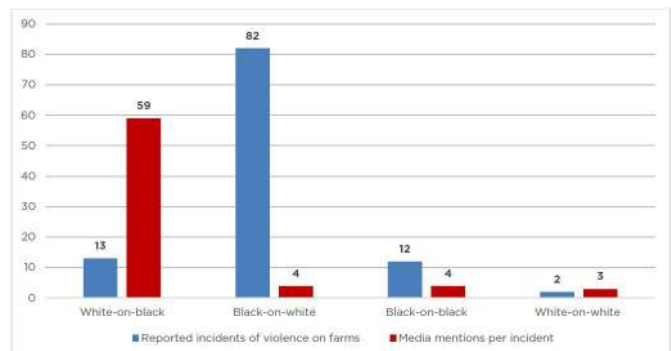


Figure 2: Media reporting and racial characteristics (English media)

3. EXPROPRIATION OF PRIVATE PROPERTY

On 27 February 2018, the South African parliament adopted a motion that a process had to be started to amend Section 25 (the property rights clause) in the South African Constitution to allow for expropriation of private property (particularly land) without compensation.⁶³

“(A)lmost 400 years ago, a criminal by the name of Jan van Riebeeck landed in our native land and declared an already occupied land by the native population as a no-man’s land,” argued Julius Malema, leader of the EFF, as he introduced the motion in parliament, which was supported by Ramaphosa and the ruling ANC. “Van Riebeeck, a first descendent of the Dutch to arrive in the Cape would later lead a full blown colonial genocide, anti-black land dispossession criminal project, arguing that simply because our people could not produce title deeds, this land, that they have been living in for more than a thousand years, was not their own.”⁶⁴ He continued: “The time for reconciliation is over; now is the time for justice.”⁶⁵ These sentiments are also shared by the ruling ANC⁶⁶ and many commentators in the mainstream media.⁶⁷

It is often said that this policy is only with regard to farms and rural land, due to the fact that skewed patterns of rural land ownership is presented as motivation for the policy. However, the ANC has made it clear that they also intend to “empower the state” to expropriate private property in urban areas.⁶⁸

In summary, several points should be highlighted to understand the push for expropriation without compensation.

3.1. Promising to create utopia

President Cyril Ramaphosa has been promising to create a utopia in South Africa since he was elected president of the ANC in December 2017. Speaking in January 2018, he said that “South Africa could turn into the ultimate paradise if the implementation of the policy of expropriation of land without compensation leads to higher food production.” He added: “We can make this country the Garden of Eden.”⁶⁹ The State of the Nation Address in June 2019 re-emphasised the goals of expropriation without compensation and was delivered in similar utopian vein with promises about smart cities, bullet trains, the eradication of hunger and that violent crime would be halved, if not eradicated completely.⁷⁰ These utopian promises are enthusiastically supported by commentators in the mainstream media, despite the fact that even the Zimbabwean government has now acknowledged that land reform was the reason for its economic collapse.⁷¹

3.2. Targeting the white minority

While it is frequently argued by mainstream media outlets, commentators and – in certain circumstances – even government officials, that this policy has nothing to do with race, the contrary is quite evident. President Ramaphosa used the term “our people” to refer to black people as the beneficiaries of land reform.⁷² David Mabuza, Deputy President, threatened white farmers with a “violent takeover” should they not volunteer to hand over their land.⁷³ The Minister of Cooperative Government and Traditional Affairs, Zweli Mkhize, assured black South African citizens that no black-owned land would be targeted, and he emphasized that the South African government was targeting the land owned by white people.⁷⁴ The motivation for the push to empower the state to expropriate private property also makes it clear that there is a strong racial element.⁷⁵

3.3. Distorting history

It is often argued that land reform has to be executed in order to correct historical injustices. While it is certainly true that a variety of injustices occurred throughout South Africa’s history, it should be pointed out that the history of land ownership in South Africa is more complex than what is regularly argued by political leaders and opinion journalists. The truth is that white-owned land was acquired in three different ways, namely occupation of empty land, acquiring of land through negotiation, and conquest. Two comments should, however, be made regarding the obtaining of land through conquest. The first is that it was common practice among black tribes at the time.⁷⁶ The second is that obtaining of land through conquest was not that common among white people who settled in South Africa. The majority of land was acquired either through the occupation of empty land or through negotiations with local black tribes.⁷⁷ Under the white minority (apartheid) government, the state embarked on a process of forced removals in order to create white and black areas. Several million people were affected by these removals.⁷⁸ As a result of these dispossessions, the Restitution of Land Rights Act was passed to allow for affected communities to institute claims for land they had been deprived of as a result of racially discriminatory practices such as forced removals.⁷⁹ This, however, does not justify the allegation that all land in South Africa was subject to dispossession, that all black people would have owned land had it not been for historic discrimination and that all white people who own land have acquired their land through illegitimate means. The fact that equality of outcome hasn’t been achieved is regarded as evidence that the injustices

have not yet been corrected, leading to the conclusion that inequality of outcome is the more significant “injustice” in South Africa.⁸⁰

3.4. Patterns of land ownership

A wide variety of fabricated statistics on land ownership have been thrown around in the debate on land reform in South Africa. This includes the claims that white people own 70% (or even 80%) of the land.⁸¹ In truth, only one credible study has been done in recent years with regard to patterns of landownership, broken down by race. According to this study, “Previously Disadvantaged Individuals” (PDIs) own 29,1% of the land in terms of value and 46,5% in terms of land potential.⁸² Note that this excludes land owned by trusts and companies.

A government study has also been done on this issue. The study is, however, teeming with methodological errors and flawed calculations. According to the government study, white people own 72% of the 30,4% of land which equates to farms and agricultural holdings by individual owners.⁸³ The finding is thus that white individuals own 21,9% of South Africa’s surface, whereas the “of the 30,4% held by individual owners” caveat is usually ignored by the South African government and the media when discussing land ownership in South Africa. They frequently (and falsely) report that white people own 72% of all farming land or even of all of South Africa’s surface. This false claim has been repeated in Bloomberg,⁸⁴ *The Washington Post*,⁸⁵ the *Los Angeles Times*,⁸⁶ *The Guardian*⁸⁷ and many others.⁸⁸

On the other hand, the South African government owns and controls about 24,3% of all land in South Africa – much more than white people.⁸⁹ It should also be pointed out that much of the land that had been expropriated by the former South African government in the pursuit of apartheid still belongs to the state and is consequentially in the control of the ruling ANC.

3.5. The alleged “hunger for land”

President Ramaphosa frequently speaks about the “hunger for land” and has even described it as a “great, great push and agitation to address the land question.”⁹⁰ The truth is that all the available evidence indicates that there is no significant hunger for land – particularly not for rural land as is alleged.

Of all the land claims that have been filed, 82% were for urban land, as opposed to rural land.⁹¹ Furthermore, what came as a source of frustration to the government was

the fact that 93% of those who had instituted land claims indicated that they did not really have an interest in owning agricultural land and that they would prefer to receive money as compensation.⁹² The number of South Africans that want the South African government to speed up land reform as a top priority is in fact a mere 2%.⁹³ This is also evident from the rapid pace at which urbanisation among black South Africans is taking place. Black South Africans, more than any other group, seem to want to live in cities, rather than in rural areas.⁹⁴

The problem for the South African government (and the media supporting its narrative) is thus that it is dedicated to reducing the amount of land owned by white people, while this is not regarded as a priority by the majority of particularly black South Africans. Fabricated and distorted statistics are employed in the pursuit of this goal, as is pointed out above.

3.6. Economic impact

It has been argued repeatedly – and especially by the President – that expropriation of private property by the state has to be done as a method of boosting economic growth. The policy of government-driven land reform has, however, already failed dismally to the extent that it has been tried. Furthermore, the mere debate about expropriation of private property is already having a negative impact on the economy.

According to the South African government, more than 90% of farms distributed by the state to black African communities failed and usually reverted very quickly either to subsistence farming or to squatter camps.⁹⁵

A study by the Land Bank found that approximately 4 000 farms had been acquired by the state since 1994 at a cost of R10 billion (about \$700 million), only 10% of which were productive.⁹⁶ While the South African government had already spent more than R45 billion (about \$3,2 billion) on land reform, only 6,3% of the land that had been acquired by the state had been transferred to private owners.⁹⁷ The talk of expropriation of private property without compensation has also contributed largely to the 32% drop in land value within less than a year after the South African parliament adopted a motion to this effect.⁹⁸

The civil rights group AfriForum has pointed out that alleging that expropriation of private property would be done in a way that would boost economic growth is like alleging that the fast food franchise KFC would be expanded aggressively, but that no chickens would be harmed in the process.⁹⁹

3.7. What happens next?

After the adoption of the parliamentary motion for expropriation of private property without compensation, a parliamentary committee was established with the task of receiving public input on the matter.¹⁰⁰ After holding public hearings across the country, receiving several hundred thousand written submissions and listening to oral presentations by experts and representatives of civil society, the committee discovered that the majority of people who participated were opposed to amending the Constitution to empower the state to expropriate private property. The committee, however, discarded hundreds of thousands of written submissions that opposed amending the Constitution and recommended nonetheless that the Constitution be amended. The civil rights group AfriForum filed a court application against the process, based on the fact that the recommendation to parliament was irrational.¹⁰¹ The court, however, decided that the matter was not urgent and that it would have to be heard at a later stage.¹⁰²

Meanwhile, President Ramaphosa initiated a Presidential Advisory Panel on Land Reform, but mostly included people who agreed with his views. However, once the panel's report had been finalised, even some of the President's supporters representing commercial farmers were unable to agree with the content of the report. Consequentially a minority report has been filed.¹⁰³ The final report has not yet been published, but it was reported that the minority report was rejected.¹⁰⁴

Three important steps to follow are:

1. The court case against the recommendations by the parliamentary committee;
2. Publication of the report presented by the Presidential Advisory Panel; and
3. Drafting of the text according to which Section 25 of the Constitution (the property rights clause) should be amended.



4. THE ROLE OF CHINA

After the collapse of the Zimbabwean economy as a result of expropriation of private property, the Chinese government became the single biggest investor in Zimbabwe and Chinese farmers took over former white-owned farms.¹⁰⁵

Meanwhile, in South Africa, the Chinese government has been playing an increasingly important role in land reform and economic policy, and political strategy in South Africa in general. During Ramaphosa's 2019 election campaign, the Secretary-General of the ANC, Ace Magashule, announced that the party was bringing officials from the Communist Party in China (CPC) into South Africa to advise the ANC on "propaganda and discipline."

In the month before the announcement, the ANC sent a massive delegation, led by Magashule himself, to meet with the CPC. The party announced that it would be sending 300 of its cadres to the CPC's training academy for training.¹⁰⁶ During his State of the Nation Address in June 2019, President Ramaphosa stated that his dreams of economic growth for South Africa has been fueled by his conversations with the Chinese President, Xi Jinping.¹⁰⁷

Chinese investors have announced a \$10 billion plan to build a metallurgical complex in South Africa. Agreements to this effect were signed during a state visit by Chinese President Xi Jinping to South Africa in 2018. Other than that, the Chinese government has committed to invest \$14,7 billion in South Africa.¹⁰⁸

The involvement of the Chinese government in South Africa should be seen within the context of the strong anti-Western sentiment expressed by the South African government.

In 2008, the ANC pushed to have the street in Pretoria in which the US Embassy is situated renamed after former Cuban President Fidel Castro.¹⁰⁹ In 2014, it was formally proposed that one of the main streets of the capital city be renamed after the communist dictator Mao Zedong. The ANC argued that this had to be done because Chairman Mao, as he was known, was a revolutionary who should be credited for South Africa's relationship with China and that "he was never found guilty."¹¹⁰ In 2016, the former ANC Secretary-General Gwede Mantashe accused the USA of holding regular meetings at the US embassy to plot a regime change in South Africa. He was, however, unable to provide any evidence for this claim.¹¹¹ Finally, in 2018, it became known that the USA was considering cutting funding to South Africa after an analysis of South Africa's voting record at the UN found that South Africa was among the top ten countries that most frequently opposed the USA at the UN.¹¹²

After returning from a nine-day visit to Venezuela in March 2019 to state "solidarity" with the government of Nicolás Maduro and to pay respect to former Venezuelan President Hugo Chaves, the ANC stated that they saw 100 000 people "relaxing" on the beach, but also that Venezuela's problems are to be blamed on the "imperialism" of the United States.¹¹³



5. THE WAY FORWARD

The expropriation of private property by the state is a serious threat in South Africa. The rate at which South African farmers are attacked, tortured and murdered is also extremely high. The problems connected to these crises are, however, substantially downplayed by the mainstream media in South Africa as well as international media reporting on South Africa.

Having been the poster child of the struggle for freedom for several decades, the ANC is not used to international criticism. AfriForum has learnt that international pressure can play a significant role in pushing the South African

government into reverse mode regarding its more aggressive socialist policies. As a result, international criticism of the behavior of the South African government is crucial, now more than ever.

Furthermore, the US should realize that it is in the US's interest not only to take note of what is happening in South Africa and learn the necessary economic and political lessons, but also to prevent a disaster in South Africa, which would certainly be followed by increased Chinese control over the African continent.



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