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### **Minority women murdered in attacks on South African farms**

Hardly a week goes by in South Africa without a violent attack on a farm taking place in some part of the country. The vast majority of the victims are members of the South African minority known as Afrikaners. Afrikaner women are amongst the victims in the majority of these farm attacks.

The specific statistics of these attacks are not known, as the South African authorities refuse to make statistics regarding farm attacks known. The book, *Land of Sorrow, 20 Years of Farm Attacks in South Africa*, is the result of a private initiative that endeavours to keep record of the farm attacks on which the media reports. Even though all farm attacks therefore are not included in this publication, the book still presents a shocking account of 2617 farm attacks that took place between 1990 and 2010.

It reveals the chilling details of scores of women having been raped during farm attacks, A further alarming truth related in *Land of Sorrow*, is the element of torture that often accompanies farm attacks. Women are not spared when it comes to such torture, Cases of farm attacks that follow this pattern have not been uncommon in the 20 years dealt with in the book.

The South African Government tries to sweep the murders of Afrikaners on farms under the carpet by claiming that farm attacks are occurrences of crime no different to other forms of crime in South Africa. This ignores the fact that farmers are 7 times more likely to be murdered than any other group of South Africans. •

Despite the crisis dimensions of farm attacks, the South African Government disbanded its rural protection initiative known as the commando system. As a result, the stark reality is that the farming community is largely dependent on themselves and the rest of the community for their own safety and security. They also get no financial aid from the state to fund the safety measures they have to provide themselves.

The situation is being worsened by the fact that the youth leader of the South African ruling party, the African National Congress (ANC), Mr Julius Malema, regularly chants a song entitled "Kill the Afrikaner/farmer" in public, Judging from the content of *Land of Sorrow*, Malema's call is being heeded — with frightening results. The governing party vehemently defends Malema's use of this slogan. By doing this, the governing party is betraying the legacy of former South African President Nelson Mandela.

You are requested to bring pressure to bear on the South African Government to take action to stop the use of repulsive slogans that propagate that Afrikaners should be shot and for the Government to demonstrate the political will to stop farm murders.