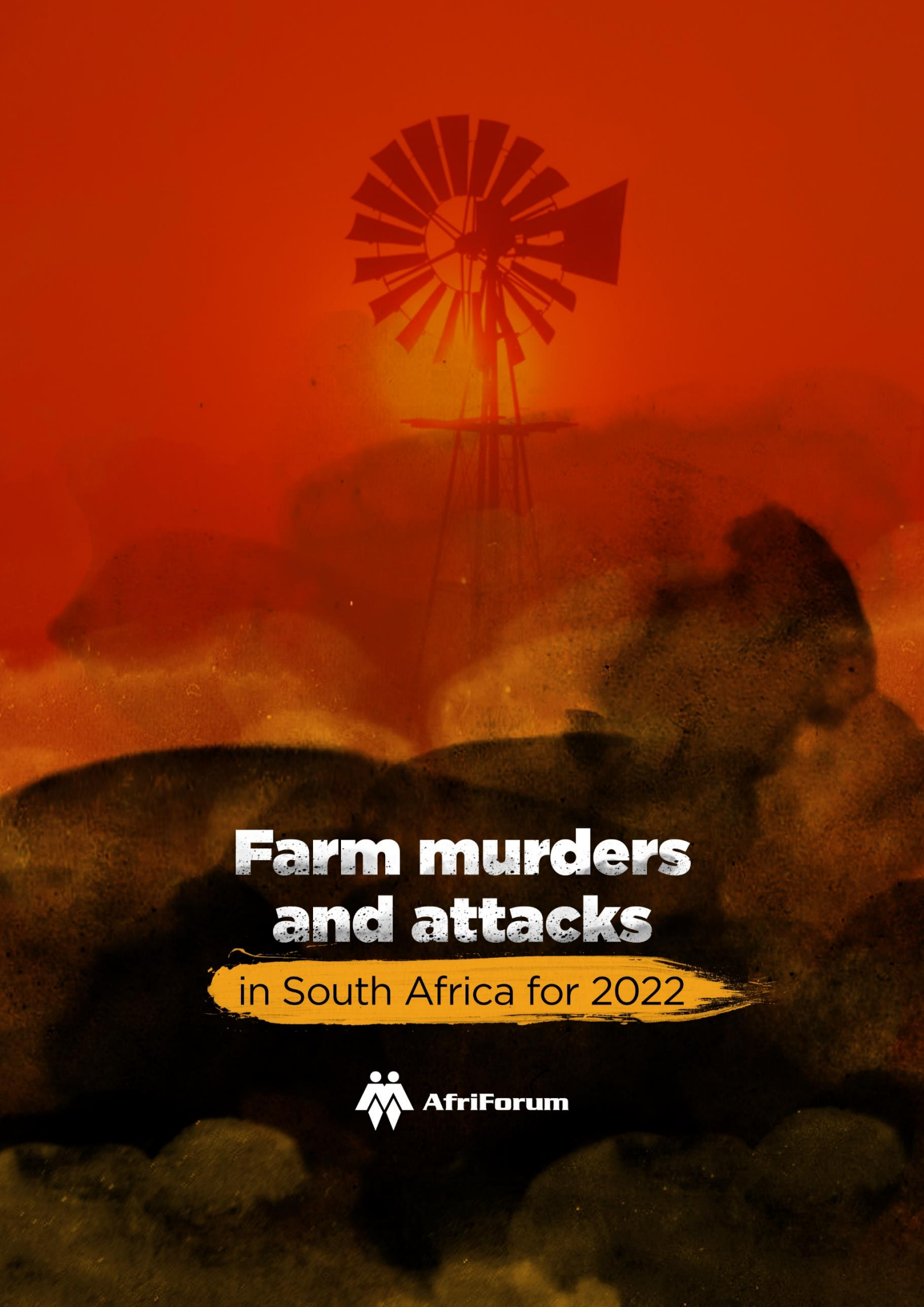

Farm murders
and attacks
in South Africa for 2022
AfriForum

This data used in this report was analysed and the report compiled by Johan Nortjé, a researcher at AfriForum Research, while Schalk de Beer, the Community Safety Data analyst at AfriForum, contributed.

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Introduction

In this report, attacks and murders on farms and smallholdings for the 2022 calendar year are analysed and described. This report forms part of a series of annual reports by AfriForum on the topic of farm attacks and murders. Since 2006, AfriForum has been raising awareness – locally as well as internationally – about farm murders. To achieve this, AfriForum addressed the United Nations about the plight of farmers and petitioned the South African Government to recognise farm murders as a priority crime. AfriForum also expanded the reach of its community safety network over the past few years by establishing new neighbourhood watches across the country as well as a trauma unit to support victims of farm attacks. In addition, AfriForum offered various training courses to farmers, which includes first-aid, firearms and radio communication training.

AfriForum considers farm attacks and the overall safety and security of the country as one of its main priorities. While all forms of crime have a detrimental effect on their victims and society as a whole, certain types of crimes – such as violent crime or hostage situations – require a unique response from agencies and role-players involved in crime detection and prevention. At the same time, there is a case to be made that South Africa will benefit from devolving more policing powers to provincial and metropolitan level rather than a national, uniform approach to the fight against crime, since each province differs in terms of resources, demographics, geography and levels of crime.[1]

It is AfriForum's belief that farm attacks present with four distinct features that necessitate a unique response from law enforcement agencies.[2] The first is the frequency of farm attacks, and the second is the levels of brutality associated with some of these attacks. The third is the unique role of farmers within their community, while the fourth is the fact that farms are geographically isolated, which makes responding to attacks challenging.

As with all AfriForum's reports on farm murders and attacks, this report is dedicated to the victims of murders and the victims' relatives and friends.

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1 Bruce, D. 2022. *South Africa needs less nationally-focused policing responses.* ISS Today, 7 February. Available at https://issafrica.org/iss-today/south-africa-needs-less-nationally-focused-policing-responses. Accessed 25 January 2023.

2 Roets, E. 2018. *Kill the Boer*. Pretoria: Kraal Uitgewers, p. 27.

Definition of a farm attack

The South African Police Service (SAPS) formulated a definition for attacks on farms and smallholdings to determine what constitutes as a farm attack and maintain a level of consistency when recording crimes committed on farms and smallholdings.[3] The National Rural Safety Strategy (NRSS) provides the current definition of a farm attack, which is the definition that AfriForum Research uses for the purpose of this report:[4]

> …[a]cts of violence against person(s) living in rural areas, including farms and smallholdings, refer to acts aimed at person(s) residing in, working in, or visiting rural areas, whether with the intent to murder, rape, rob or inflict bodily harm.
>
> In addition, all acts of violence against the infrastructure and property in the rural community, which are aimed at disrupting farming activities or other commercial concerns, whether the motive(s) are related to the commission of other crime(s), ideology, land disputes, land issues, revenge, grievances, racist concerns or intimidation are included in this definition.

The definition excludes cases that are related to domestic violence or alcohol abuse, cases that result from commonplace social interaction between people, or any labour disputes.

Methodology and data collection

As of 2019, AfriForum's Community Safety division has created and developed its own system which tracks, records and analyses farm attacks and murders. The statistics that are presented in this report were collected, captured, and recorded by the AfriForum Community Safety database. In addition to this database, an AfriForum Research farm murder datasheet was used to supplement the farm murders data. This second datasheet was used also used as a tool to substantiate data integrity on farm murders for 2022.

The data on farm attacks and murders were collected from several sources, for example AfriForum's Community Safety team (which confers with police, private security companies and farm attack victims), the SAPS's rural safety meetings, and creditable media outlets. During the collection and processing phase, data is verified as to what is considered a farm attack according to the NRSS's definition.

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3 Human Rights Watch. 2001. *Unequal protection: State response to violent crime on South African farms*. Available at https://www.hrw.org/reports/2001/safrica2/Safarms7.htm#_1_33. Accessed on 25 January 2023.

4 South African Police Service. 2019. *The National Rural Safety Strategy*, p. 7. Available at https://www.saps.gov.za/resource_centre/publications/national_rural_safety_strategy_2019.pdf. Accessed on 25 January 2023.

This report is divided into five sections. In the first section an overview is provided of the frequency of farm attacks and murders from 2019 to 2022; the focus of the second section is on the characteristics of the 2022 attacks, including the time and location. The author describes the profiles of the victims in the third section, while in the fourth segment some of the attackers' characteristics are highlighted. Based on the information gathered from 2022, the final section is dedicated to recommendations on safety and security.

For this report, farm murders and farm attack incidents were differentiated, unless otherwise indicated. As a result, *incident* or *occurrence* refers to single events that took place. For example, a murder incident may comprise more than one murder victim or attacker, but as it occurred on a specific date and place, it is counted as one event.

For the section on arrests (p. 13), a desktop research media analysis approach (including SAPS media releases) was followed to track and determine the date of detention based on available information in the Community Safety database. However, it is important to note that media outlets may not cover all the arrests relating to farm murders. As a result, the statistics on the arrest rates for perpetrators of farm murders in this report must be interpreted with caution.

It is also important to note that the farm murder statistics used in this report are subject to change because information sometimes only becomes available long after the incident occurred or because of insufficient or conflicting information regarding a case. Notwithstanding, this report represents the most accurate picture of farm attacks and murders for the 2022 calendar year.

Frequency of farm murders and attacks from 2019 to 2022

In figure 1 an overview of farm attacks and murders is provided per calendar year (from 1 January 2019 to 31 December 2022). For 2022, AfriForum was able to verify 333 attacks (including 50 murders). It should be noted that the number of attacks could be much higher because of the underreporting of crime to the SAPD.[5]

[5] Doorewaard, C. 2014. The dark figure of crime and its impact on the criminal justice system. *Acta Criminologica: Southern African Journal of Criminology* 27(2): pp 1–13. (P1). Available at https://www.researchgate.net/publication/330440395_THE_DARK_FIGURE_OF_CRIME_AND_ITS_IMPACT_ON_THE_CRIMINAL_JUSTICE_SYSTEM/link/5c40217392851c22a37ae0a5/download. Accessed on 8 February 2023.

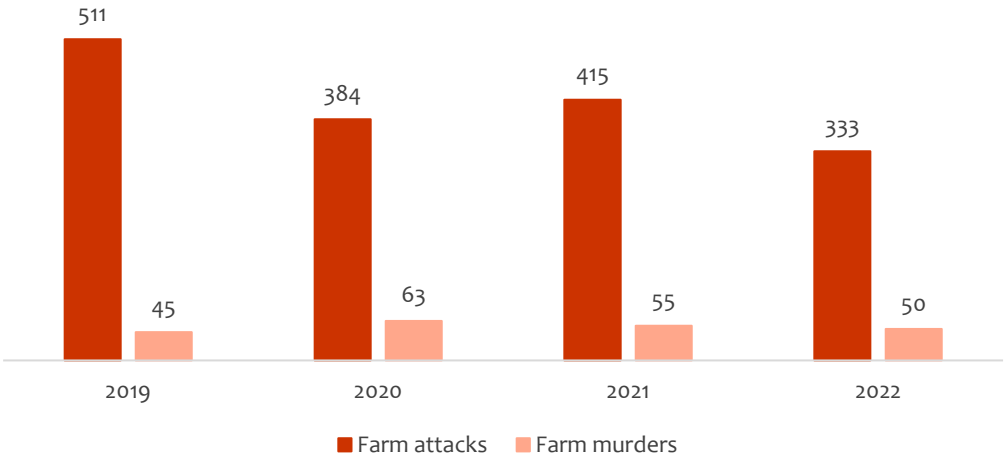


Figure 1: Number of farm attacks and murders from 2019 to the 2022 year[6]

In figure 2 the number of farm attacks and murders is provided for each province from 2019 to 2022. The Gauteng province experienced the most attacks for the period under review – almost double the number of attacks compared to the North West, which had the second highest number of attacks. The reason for this variance between Gauteng and the rest of the provinces is unclear. For example, in Gauteng only 6,4% of households are involved in agricultural activities in South Africa, compared to other provinces such as Limpopo (37,9%), the Eastern Cape (33,4%) and Mpumalanga (32,2%).[7]

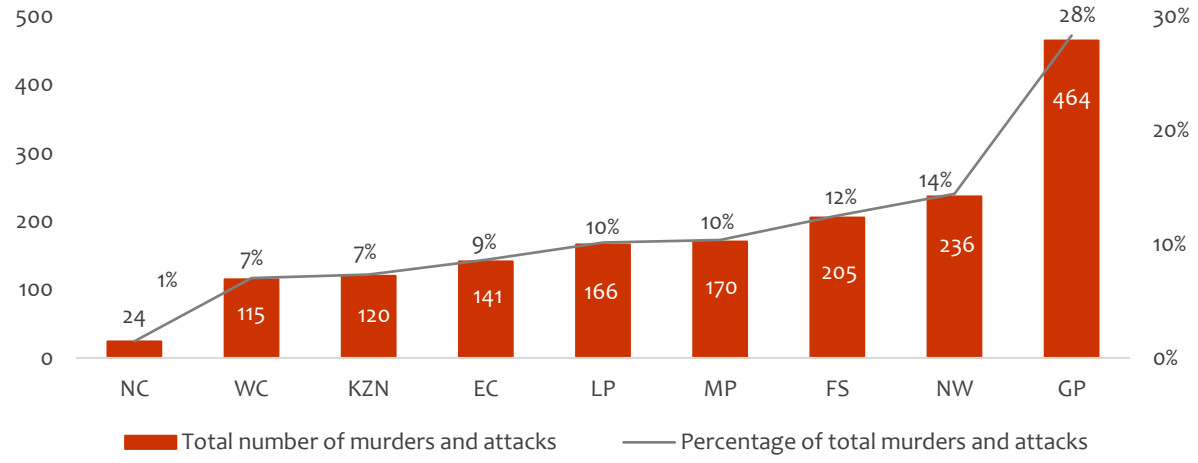


Figure 2: Farm attacks and murders per province (2019–2022)[8]

6 Please note: The murder numbers are also represented in the number of attacks.

7 Statista. 2021. *Share of households involved in agricultural activities in South Africa in 2021, by province*. Available at https://www.statista.com/statistics/1116075/share-of-agricultural-households-in-south-africa-by-province/. Accessed 28 January 2022.

8 The total percentages in the graph do not add up to 100% because figures have been rounded off. In two instances it is unknown in which province the attack(s) or murder(s) occurred.

Farm murders and attacks (2022)

Overview of farm murders and attacks per month

According to figure 3, farm attacks occurred throughout 2022, with not a single month free from farm attacks. April had the most attacks (45), while July had the most murders (10). If the rate of attacks *and* murders is calculated for 2022, there was an average of 0,91 attacks per day. If murder is calculated separately from attacks, an average of 0,96 farm murders were committed almost every week.

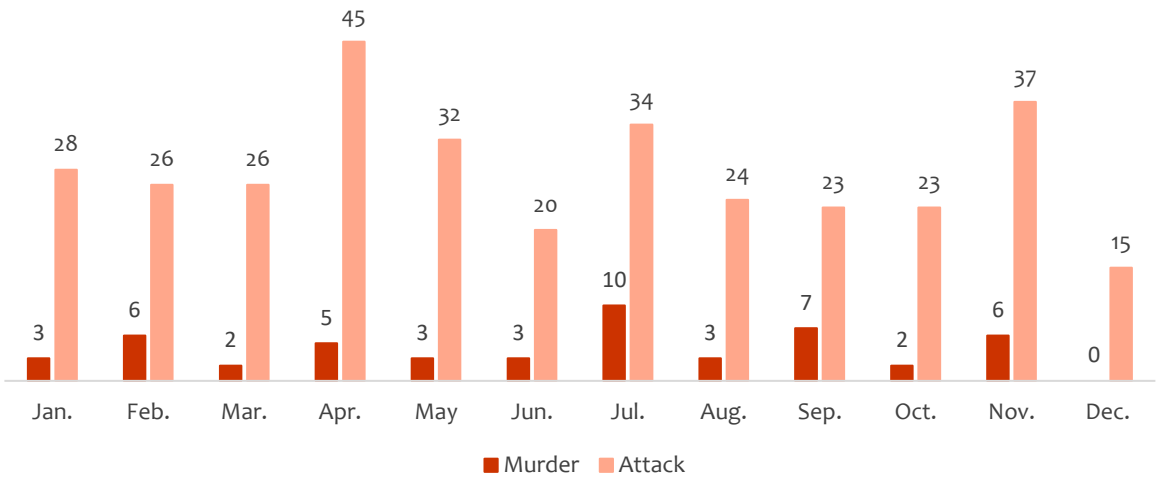


Figure 3: Farm murders and attacks per month (2022)

Overview of farm murders and attacks per province

Considering the numbers per province, the Gauteng province recorded the highest number of attacks, while the Northern Cape experienced the lowest number of attacks, as shown in figure 4. These figures mirrors those in figure 2, where Gauteng recorded the highest and the Northern Cape the lowest number of attacks. The Eastern Cape had the second-highest number of attacks, but only one murder incident was recorded. The high number for the Eastern Cape can be attributed to events that occurred in Kirkwood at the end of April, when a violent protest erupted and resulted in extensive damage to agricultural property and the death of one person.[9]

9 White, C. 2022. Chaos in Kirkwood: Damage estimated at hundreds of millions. *TimesLive*, 29 April. Available at https://www.timeslive.co.za/multimedia/2022-04-29-watch-chaos-in-kirkwood-damage-estimated-at-hundreds-of-millions/ Accessed on 20 February 2023.

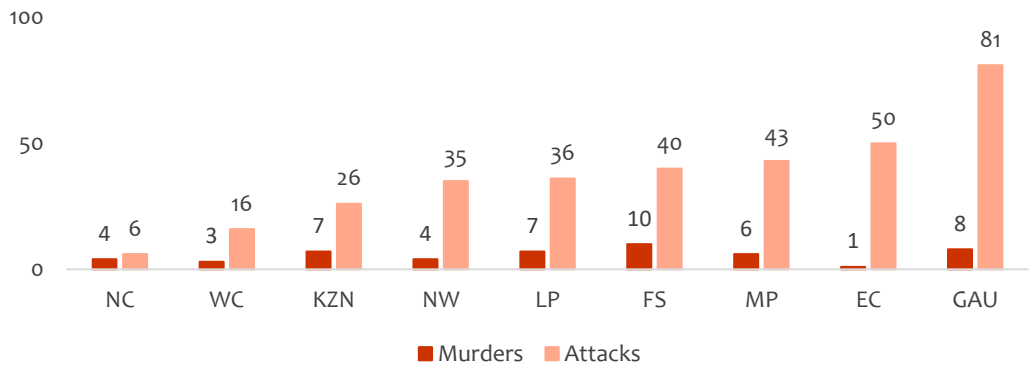


Figure 4: Farm attacks and murders per province (2022)

Type of premises where murders were committed

Most murders in 2022 occurred on farms. 82% of murders in 2022 were committed on farms and 18% on smallholdings. When compared to the figures from 2021 (according to AfriForum Community Safety's database), 76% of murders in 2021 were committed on farms, and 24% of murders were committed on smallholdings.[10] The reason for the increase in murders on farms and the decrease in murders on smallholdings for 2022 remains unclear at this stage.

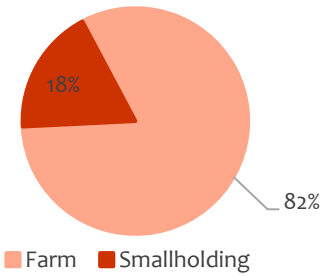


Figure 5: Percentage of murders that took place on farms and smallholdings (2022)[11]

Day of the week on which farm murders occurred

In figure 6 the day of the week is highlighted on which farm murders were committed. Only incidents on which the exact day could be confirmed are included in figure 6. There were four murder incidents for which the exact day could not be determined accurately. In one case, for example, the victim was seen last on a Monday, although the victim's body was discovered only the following day.

[10] One murder incident for 2021 was committed on lodges. This incident was counted with smallholdings.
[11] Two murder incidents were committed on lodges. These two incidents were counted with smallholdings.

Most murders were committed during the week, mostly on Wednesdays and Thursdays, which accounts for 24% of incidents. What is notable is that according to 2021 statistics for farm murders, Saturdays accounted for 20% and Sundays for 27% of murder incidents (i.e., over weekends).[12] Conversely, in 2022 most murders (69%) occurred during the week.

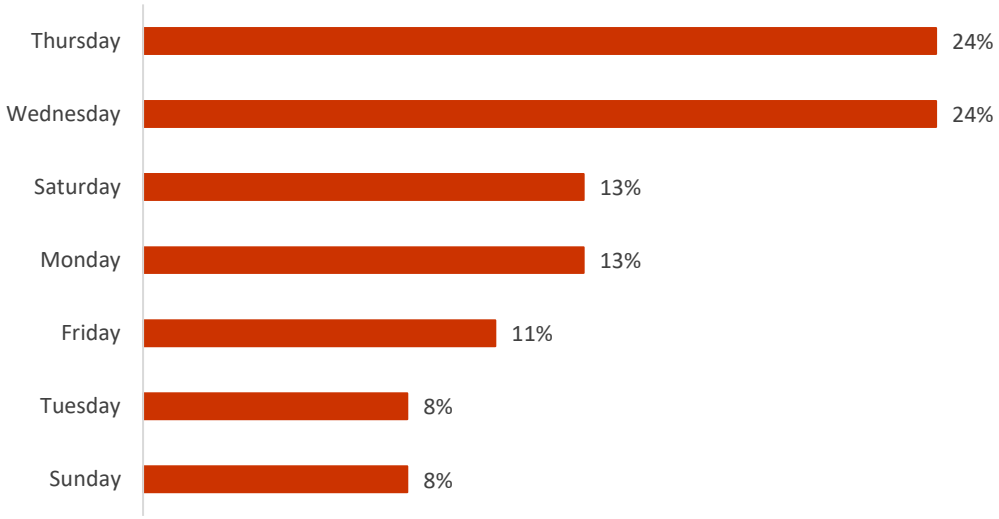


Figure 6: Percentage of murder incidents per day of the week (2022)[13]

Time of day when farm murders were committed

The time slots for this report are based on the same time slots used by the SAPS, as detailed in their 2019/2020 annual report.[14] Most murders were committed between 18:00 and 20:29 (21%), and 21:00 and 23:59 (21%). These two timeslots are comparable to the SAPS's time slots for 2019/2020, in that for 2019/2020 the 18:00–20:59 and 21:00–23:59 timeslots were also the most prominent time of day when criminals committed farm murders. However, it is unclear if these two timeslots are also the most prominent for 2020/2021.

[12] AfriForum. 2022. *Trends in farm murders and an analysis of arrests and prosecutions 2016–2021*. Available at https://afriforum.co.za/wp-content/uploads/2022/03/20220301-Johan-N-Plaasmoordverslag-2022-ENG-GFdB.pdf. Accessed on 25 January 2023.

[13] The day of the incident is unknown for 10% of the total number of murder incidents. The total percentages in the graph do not add up to 100%, because figures have been rounded off.

[14] SAPS. 2019/2020 *Annual Crime Report*, p. 30. Available at https://www.saps.gov.za/about/stratframework/annual_report/2019_2020/annual_crime_report_2019_2020.pdf. Accessed on 28 January 2023.

Table 1: Time of day for farm murder incidents[15]

Time of day for farm murders	Percentage of murder incidents
00:00–02:59	11%
03:00–05:59	11%
06:00–08:59	7%
09:00–11:59	18%
12:00–14:59	7%
15:00–17:59	4%
18:00–20:59	21%
21:00–23:59	21%

Time of day that farm attacks were carried out (excluding murder incidents)

As shown in table 2, most attacks occurred between 18:00 and 02:59, peaking between 00:00 and 02:59. Although the 2019/2020 SAPS annual report refers to murder victims, and not attacks *per se*, the report mentions that victims are more vulnerable "during the dead of the night."

Table 2: Time of farm attack incidents[16]

Time of day for farm attacks	Percentage of farm attacks
00:00–02:59	22%
03:00–05:59	8%
06:00–08:59	7%
09:00–11:59	10%
12:00–14:59	9%
15:00–17:59	5%
18:00–20:59	16%
21:00–23:59	19%

Profile of victims of farm murders and attacks (2022)

In this section, the victims' demographics such as age, gender and occupation are analysed. Victims of farm attacks comprise two group, namely primary and secondary victims. Primary victims are defined as direct victims of a farm attack who had negative psychological effects or died because

[15] The time of incident is unknown for 33% of the total number of murder incidents.
[16] For 29% of the total number of attack incidents, the time of the incident is unknown.

of the farm attack.[17,18] Secondary victims are people who observed acts of violence that had been committed against their relatives or people working on farms. Exposure to these violent acts can induce considerable psychological responses, such as terror, dread, fury and helplessness.

Age and gender of murder victims

In 2022, 62% of murder victims were male, compared to 28% of female victims. In most cases, female victims were either family members of farmers or farmworkers.

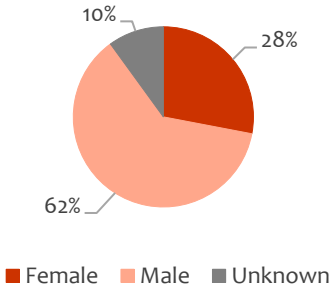


Figure 7: Gender of murder victims

Most victims (52%) are over 60, which supports the belief that victims of farm murders are more physically vulnerable. The oldest murder victim was an 89-year-old woman, Elizabeth Lee from the farm Breeland, who was bludgeoned to death with a chair by a 15-year-old suspect, according to the SAPS.[19] The youngest victim was 17-year-old Rhudie Binta, who, together with his mother and five other female victims, was "brutally shot and killed," according to the SAPS.[20]

17 Van Zyl, L. 2008. Victims of farm attacks: Psychological consequences. In *Acta Criminologica: African Journal of Criminology & Victimology* 32(1): p. 134–149. Available at https://journals.co.za/doi/abs/10.10520/EJC28606. Accessed on 29 January 2023.

18 Geldenhuys, K. 2020. The trauma from which victims of farm attacks suffer. In *Servamus Community-based Safety and Security Magazine* 113(3): p. 30–33. Available at https://journals.co.za/doi/abs/10.10520/EJC-1bb4daed11. Accessed on 28 January 2023.

19 Petersen. T. *Rawsonville farm murder: Teen found hiding in cupboard after 89-year-old woman beaten to death*. News24, 26 January. Available at https://www.news24.com/news24/southafrica/news/rawsonville-farm-murder-teen-found-hiding-in-cupboard-after-89-year-old-woman-beaten-to-death-20220126.

20 *The Citizen*. 2022. Seven people 'brutally' murdered on Free State farm. 15 July. Available at https://www.citizen.co.za/news/south-africa/crime/seven-people-brutally-murdered-on-free-state-farm/ Accessed on 28 January 2023.

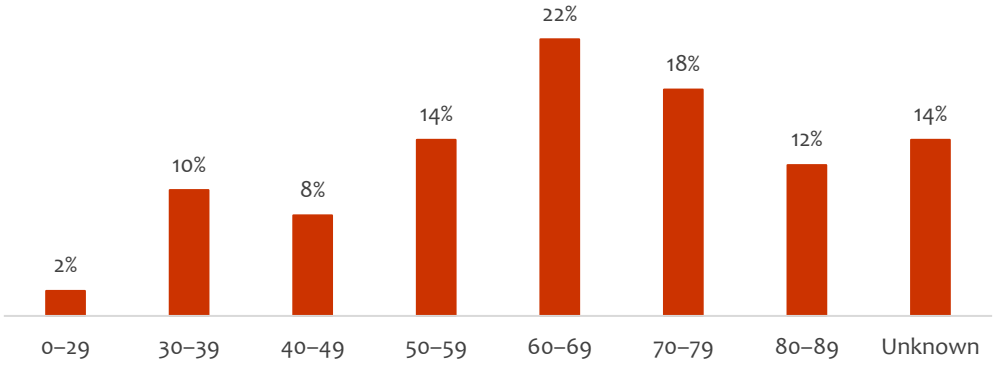


Figure 8: Percentage of murder victims per age group

Occupation of murder victims

38% of murder victims can be classified as farmers since they either followed this vocation or were retired while still living on their farms. Farmworkers comprised 20% (n=10) of all murder victims. Owners made up 8% of all cases.[21] In 8% of cases, the occupation or profession of the murder victim could not be confirmed.

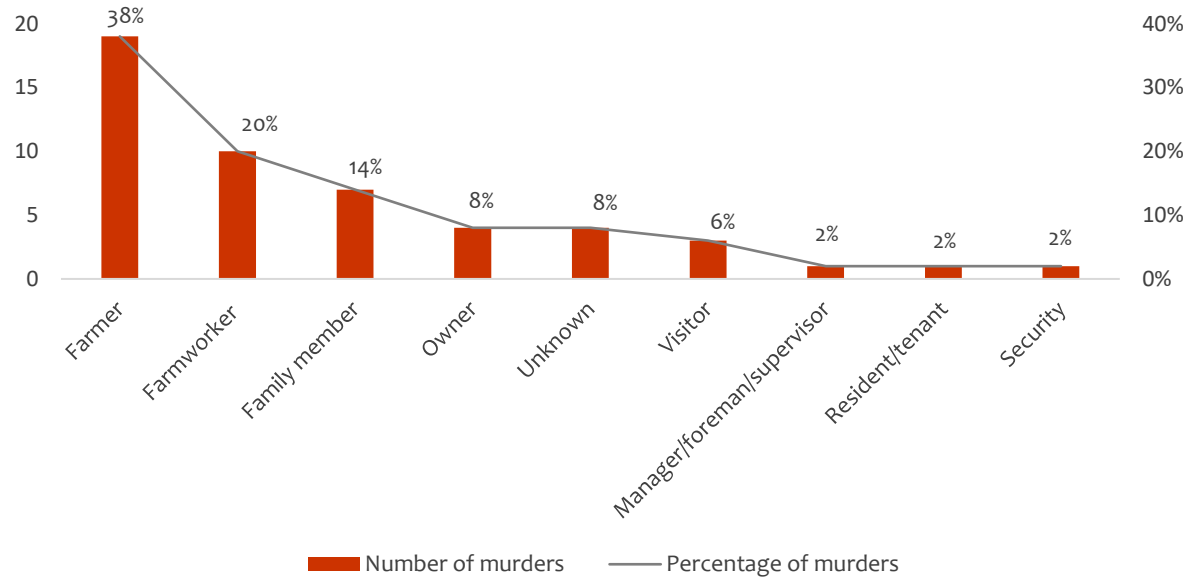


Figure 9: Occupations or relations of farm murder victims

[21] The classification of ownership was used where the report indicated that the person in question owned the property, but not expressively mentioned or suggested that he or she was farmer.

Number of victims

As seen in figure 10, 40% of incidents involved only one victim, whereas 43% involved two victims and 12 % of incidents three victims. Only 2% of incidents involved six and more victims.

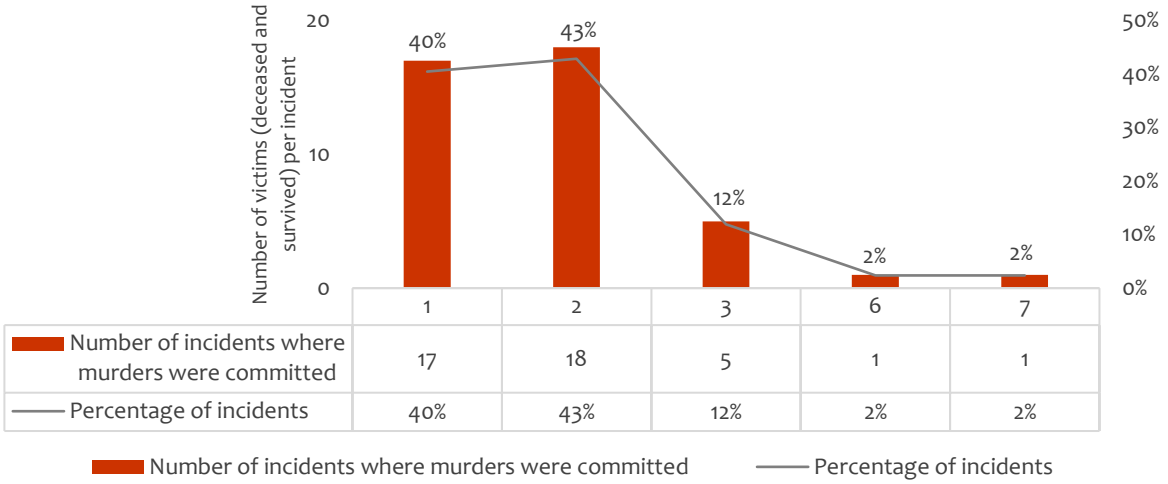


Figure 10: Number of incidents where there were one or more victims (deceased and survived)

Causes of death

Some instances of brutality associated with farm murders for 2022 are briefly highlighted below:

- 40% of victims were shot. In four incidents, either the victim or the victims' relatives had been tied up before they were executed.
- In three separate incidents where victims were either assaulted or bludgeoned to death, they were also tied up. Cases where victims were assaulted or bludgeoned include being so severely assaulted that the victims either died at the scene or later in hospital.[22]
- Stabbing accounted for 14% of deaths and hacking 4%. In one case, a foreman who had come to the aid of his employer was hacked to death in front of his owner.[23]

Another cause of death included victims being suffocated to death. In one incident, both husband and wife died after the attackers had set the couple's house on fire with both victims still inside. [24]

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[22] Nanni, M. 2022. *Familie groet blommeboer maande ná wrede aanval*. Maroela Media, 11 October. Available at https://maroelamedia.co.za/nuus/sa-nuus/familie-groet-blommeboer-maande-na-wrede-aanval/. Accessed on 29 January 2022.

[23] Van der Merwe, A. 2022.*Plaasvoorman grusaam vermoor*. Maroela Media, 15 June. Available at https://maroelamedia.co.za/nuus/sa-nuus/plaasvoorman-grusaam-vermoor/?fbclid=IwAR0j8LRjzBh7DjUn_HbdEYV1cZU--HoB9MtYJcwuxNE2bz0422SMRDZ7zkU&fs=e&s=cl. Accessed on 29 January 2023.

[24] Masilela, B. 2022. *Limpopo police arrest two suspects after farmer and wife perish in fire*. IOL, 22 April. Available at https://www.iol.co.za/news/south-africa/limpopo/limpopo-police-arrest-two-suspects-after-farmer-and-wife-perish-in-fire-87e95967-b159-4aa2-933d-de42dfb9a9ce. Accessed on 29 January 2023.

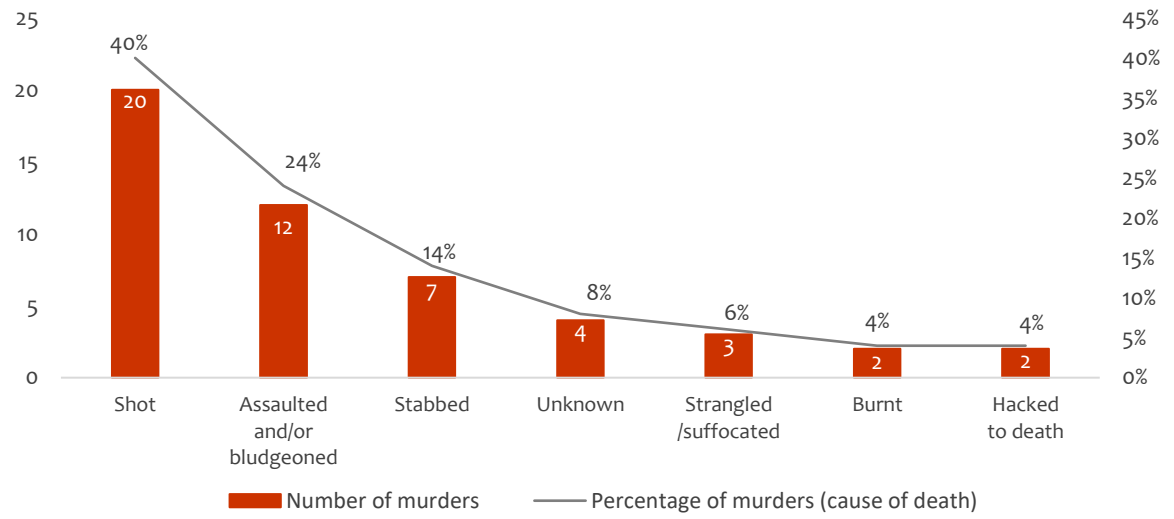


Figure 11: Cause of death of farm murder victims

Modus operandi and the apprehension of suspects (2022)

This section of the report is devoted to the modus operandi of the attackers as well as the arrest rate of suspects whom authorities had apprehended, and the timelines involved.

The number of attackers (excluding murder incidents) for the period under review is illustrated in figure 12. As can be seen, most attacks involved more than two attackers. One incident comprised 11 attackers, but this was a case of stock theft.

Number of attacks

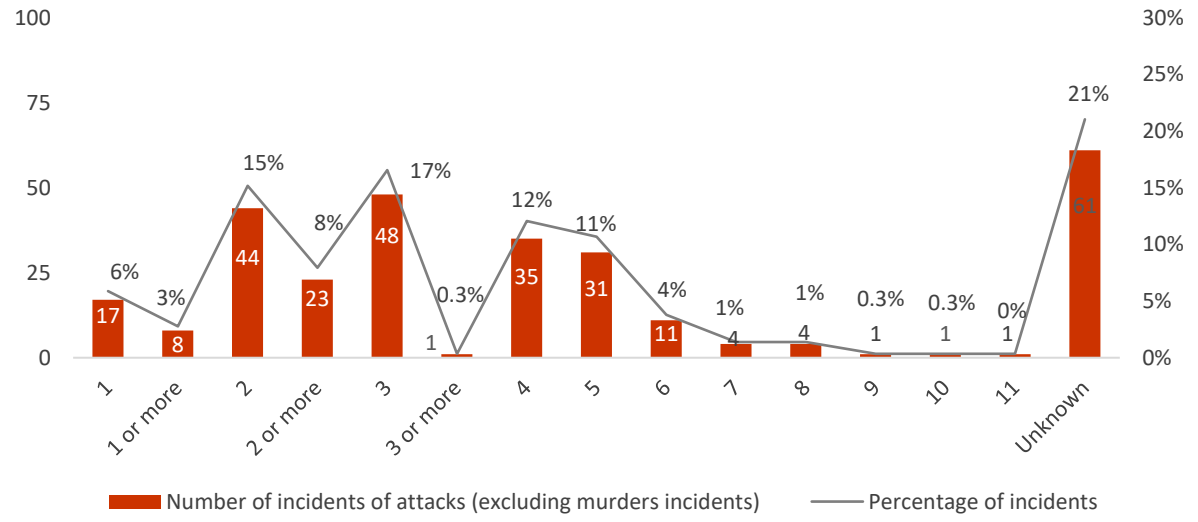


Figure 12: Number of incidents (excluding murder incidents) in which one or more attackers were involved

Items stolen and weapons used

Most cases that involved murder also resulted in the robbery of their victims' property. The most prominent properties stolen include electronic goods (40%) and firearms (26%). In 19% of cases, vehicles were also stolen.

Arrests per province

The number of arrests of perpetrators for murder incidents is displayed in figure 13. The Western Cape had a 100% arrest rate, with suspects apprehended in two incidents. The Northern Cape had an arrest rate of 60%, while KwaZulu-Natal, the Free State, and the North-West all had a below-average (50%) arrest rate. What is troublesome is that no farm murder suspects were arrested in the Eastern Cape, Gauteng and Mpumalanga.

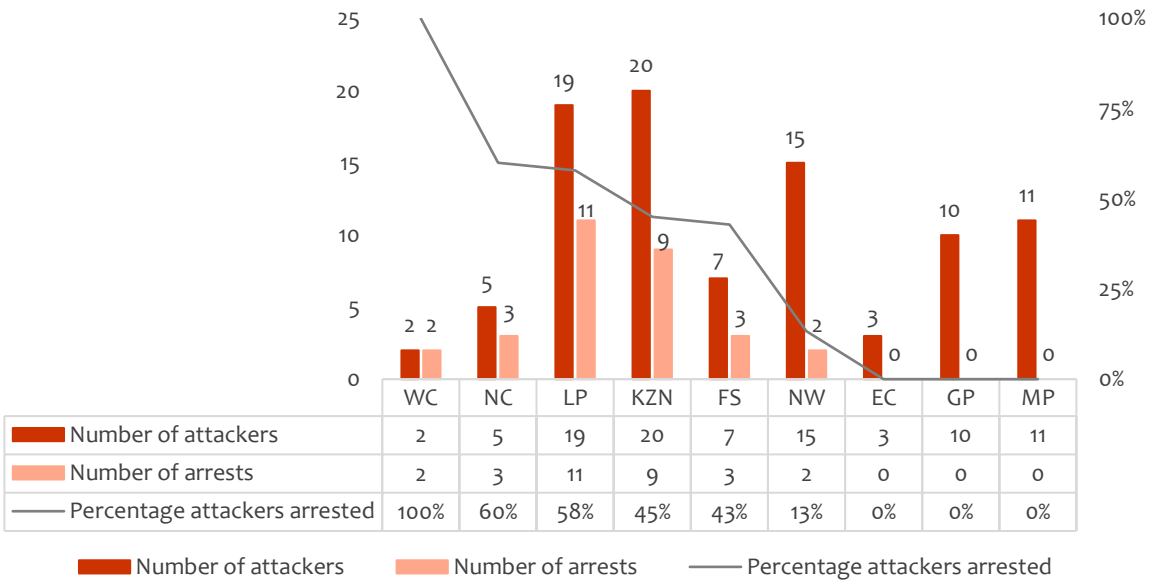


Figure 13: Number of attackers and arrests, and percentage of attackers arrested.

Timeline of date of murder incident and date of arrest

The overall arrest rate for murders in 2022 is 33%. Of the arrests that were made, most were carried out in less than 48 hours after the murder incident took place or when the victims' body was discovered. The longest timeline between the date of the murder and time of arrest was 17 weeks. In this particular case, the body of the victim was found on a sugar cane plantation in May

2022 and the KZN Provincial Organised Crime Unit made a breakthrough in September with the arrest of three suspects. [25]

Table 3: Timeline for 2022

The month of the first arrest (2022)	Murder count	The interval between murder and arrest
January	1	Same day
February	1	Less than one week
April	1	Same day
April	2	Less than 48 hours
April	1	Same day
May	1	17 weeks
June	1	Same day
July	7	Less than 48 hours
September	1	Less than 48 hours
September	1	Less than 48 hours
September	1	Same day
October	1	Less than 48 hours
November	1	Less than two weeks

Conclusion and recommendations

It is clear from this analysis that farm attacks and murders continue to be a significant issue. The frequency with which these attacks and murders occur warrants these to be declared priority crimes. Similarly, the levels of brutality and the cruel treatment of the victims remain prominent features of farm murders.

Based on the information contained in the report, the following recommendations are made:

1. AfriForum must lobby for farm murders to become a provincial priority since those provinces that experience a high number of attacks, such as Gauteng, could acquire more resources. However, this lobbying at a provincial level should not come at the expense of campaigning against farm murders at a national level.
2. In some cases where the suspect(s) was arrested very soon after the crime was committed, the community was actively involved. Thus, role-players involved in combating farm attacks should continue to reach out to one another to maintain a good working dynamic. In addition, the possibility of establishing a central database for sharing information between role-players, should be explored.

[25] Marriah-Maharaj, J. 2022. Three people arrested for murder of former Verulam Mayor Manna Naidoo. *IOL*, 28 September. Available at https://www.iol.co.za/news/crime-and-courts/three-people-arrested-for-murder-of-former-verulam-mayor-manna-naidoo-35fa0c4f-79f2-4962-af8e-cc8a49639454 Accessed on 21 February 2023.

3. A detailed study of the modus operandi of farm attackers should be undertaken.
4. People in the agricultural community must receive safety or security awareness training. Furthermore, trauma counselling awareness efforts for victims should be increased.