AfriForum

THE IMPACT OF FARM MURDERS:

A BRIEF ASSESSMENT



A report by AfriForum Research

April 2023

Content

Introduction 1

Farm attacks in the Gauteng province and the Hammanskraal area 1

Social impact 3

Psychological impact 4

Economic impact 5

Conclusion 6

Introduction

Farm attacks have a devastating effect on victims, and in the case of farm murders, these effects never fully heal for the deceased's family and friends. These attacks also have a detrimental psychological, social and economic impact on the community. The aim of this report is to provide a brief assessment of the key aspects of the impact of farm attacks and murders.

This report focuses on farm attacks and murders in Hammanskraal and surrounding areas and is intended to be used by AfriForum's expert witness and the state prosecutor during the judicial hearing in 2023 for Gauteng. In addition, this report also provides a general overview of the impact and consequences of farm attacks and murders. The reason for the general overview is that research on this phenomenon and its effect on specifically local communities in which the attacks occur is under-researched. As with all AfriForum reports on farm murders, the report uses the official South African Police Service (SAPS) definition for farm murders, which includes attacks and murders on smallholdings.

The AfriForum Community Safety database was used to analyse the statistics in this report.

Farm attacks in the Gauteng province and the Hammanskraal area

While all forms of violent crime have an impact on their victims, farm attacks and murders are distinct due to a few distinguishing characteristics:[1]

- the frequency of the attacks
- the extraordinary levels of brutality associated with these attacks
- the unique role of farmers (they are food producers and employers)
- the circumstances in which people on farms live, which include being geographically isolated

According to AfriForum's *Farm murders and attacks report for 2022*, Gauteng experienced the most attacks for the period 2019 to 2022 with a total of 464 attacks, compared to all other provinces. For example, this province presented with almost double the number of attacks than those executed in the North West (236) – the province with the second highest number of attacks.[2] The most recent information from AfriForum's Community Safety database indicate that there were 475 farm

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

2 AfriForum. 2023. *Farm murders and attacks in South Africa for 2022*. Available at https://stopdiemoorde.co.za/wp-content/uploads/2023/03/20230228-Johan-N-Farm-murders-and-attacks-in-SA-for-2022-ENG-GFdB-1.pdf. Accessed on 28 March 2023.

attacks in Gauteng during the calendar years 2019, 2020, 2021 and 2022, and from 1 January 2023 to 28 February 2023. Of these 475 attacks, 35 resulted in murders (see figure 1).

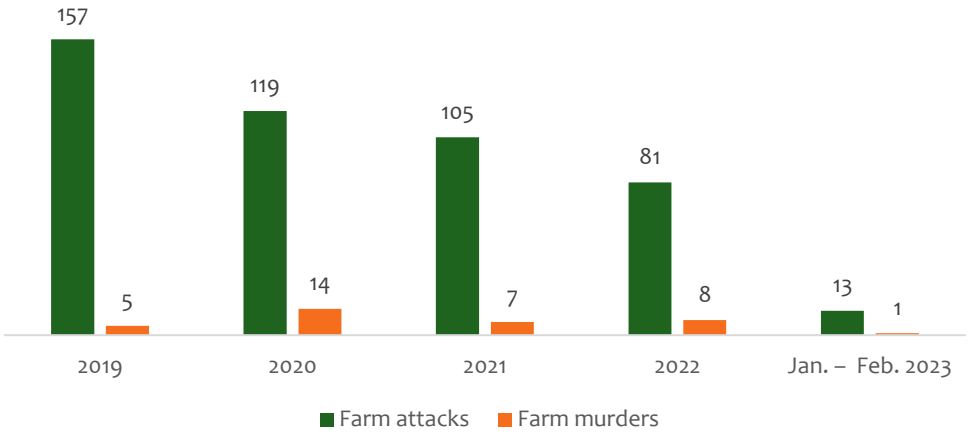


Figure 1: Farm attacks and farm murders in the Gauteng province from 2019 to February 2023 (source: AfriForum Community Safety)

The next section of the report focuses on attacks in Hammanskraal and surrounding areas. In terms of the analysis for this report, farm attacks reported to the Hammanskraal SAPS station were used as refence point. The town of Hammanskraal is situated in the northwestern part of the Tshwane Metropolitan Municipality. The town is situated just south of the North West Province border and west of the tourist region of Dinokeng.

34 attacks were committed in the Hammanskraal area for the period under review (January 2019 to February 2023), as showed in figure 2 below.

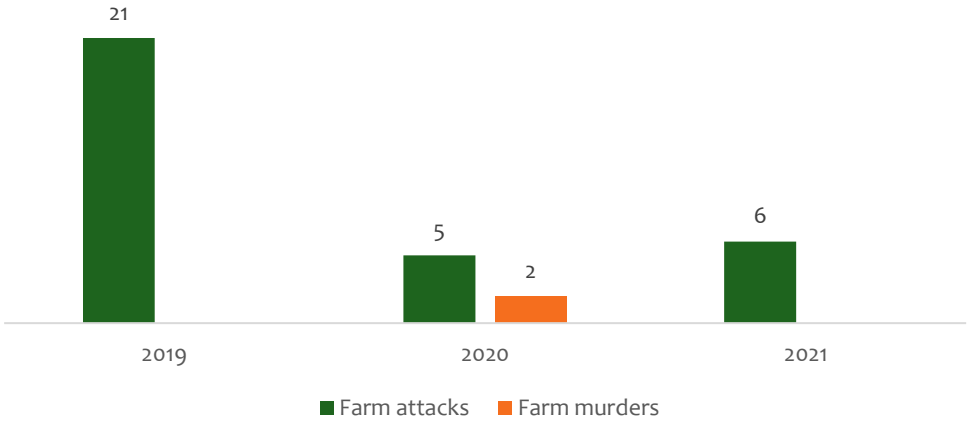


Figure 2: Farm attacks and murders that were reported to the Hammanskraal SAPS station (source: AfriForum Community Safety)

AfriForum verified two murders that had occurred. The first murder occurred on 5 July 2020. Marthie Rademeyer (44) and Allan Wolmarans (54) were attacked on a smallholding between Pyramid and Hammanskraal. Allan Wolmarans was severely assaulted with an attacker's pistol, while Marthie Rademeyer was shot. Rademeyer died in Wolmarans' arms. The suspects fled the scene with cell phones and R1 000 in cash.[3] According to AfriForum Research's database and based on a media analysis, no suspects have been arrested to date in connection with Rademeyer's murder.

The second murder occurred on 21 December 2020. Andries Nieuwoudt (75) and his wife Mariaan (69) were attacked on their smallholding in the Dinokeng area. According to media reports, Mariaan was assaulted and tied up. Andries was overpowered when he returned to their home. He died on 23 December from injuries that he sustained during the attack.[4] Three suspects were arrested after the incident and are currently facing trial.

In addition, AfriForum's Community Safety database indicate that an estimated total of 84 attackers were involved in attacks in the Hammanskraal area and most of these attackers used some sort of firearm.

Social impact

AfriForum published a report in 2022 titled *Trends in farm murders and an analysis of arrest and prosecution from 2016–2020*that focused on the arrest and conviction rates of farm murders. It was indicated in the report that the Northern Cape had an arrest rate of 75% but a conviction rate of 11% for the period under review.[5] Because of the sieve effect, the arrest rate will likely always be higher than the conviction rate. The sieve effect is a process in which the criminal justice system acts like a sieve, with most recorded crimes failing to result in convictions because weak cases are filtered out at various levels during the investigation and prosecution.[6] However, a

3 Van Eeden, I. 2020. *Lewensmaat sterf in sy arms na rooftog*. Netwerk24. 6 July. Available at https://www.netwerk24.com/netwerk24/nuus/misdaad/lewensmaat-sterf-in-sy-arms-na-rooftog-20200706. Accessed on 28 March 2023.

4 Otto, H. 2023. *Nieuwoudt-moord: Hof hoor van motor tydens aandklokreël*. Netwerk24, 1 March. Available at https://www.netwerk24.com/netwerk24/nuus/hof/nieuwoudt-moord-hof-hoor-van-motor-tydens-aandklokreel-20230301. Accessed on 28 March 2023.

5 AfriForum. 2022. *Trends in farm murders and an analysis of arrests and prosecutions*. Available at https://afriforum.co.za/wp-content/uploads/2022/03/20220301-Johan-N-Plaasmoordverslag-2022-ENG-GFdB.pdf. Accessed on 28 March 2023, p. 21.

6 Legget, T. 2003. The sieve effect: South Africa's conviction rates in perspective. In *South African Crime Quarterly* 5, pp. 11–14. DOI: https://doi.org/10.17159/2413-3108/2003/v0i5a1060.

moderate to low arrest and conviction rate may have a negative effect on the public's trust in the criminal justice system. Strydom and Schutte explains that[7]

> farm attacks have a strong emotional impact on society. Anger against the system's inability to curb or avoid farm attacks is often voiced by farmers. The inability to eradicate farm attacks results in farmers losing faith in the security services and even blaming them for taking part in these attacks, while they also threaten to take the law into their own hands, arm themselves and build structures in and around their farms to protect themselves.

They also argue that, in terms of the political consequences, the high incidence of farm attacks in South Africa that has high media coverage creates an impression of political instability to the outside world. This in turn has a negative effect on the country's economy regarding local and international investment trust, job creation and tourism.

Psychological impact

In a study into the psychological consequences for victims of farm attacks, Van Zyl groups the victims of farm attacks into two categories, namely primary and secondary victims.[8] Primary victims can be defined as the direct victims of a farm attack who suffered detrimental psychological consequences or, in the case of murder, died because of the farm attack.[8, 9] Secondary victims can be defined as victims who witnessed violent acts against their family members, friends or farm workers during farm attacks.[9] Exposure to these violent acts can trigger significant physical and mental reactions, such as panic, dread, rage, horror or helplessness.

Mental and emotional reactions because of a traumatic event include some of the following:[8]

- hyper vigilance
- disrupted or intrusive thoughts
- feelings of being disconnected from the self
- shame and self-hate
- a weakened self-esteem
- experiencing an inability to feel safe

---

7 Strydom, H. & Schutte, S.C. 2005. An empirical investigation into the experience of farm attacks in the South African farming community. In *Acta Criminologica: African Journal of Criminology & Victimology* 18(2): pp. 115–123. Available at https://journals.co.za/doi/epdf/10.10520/EJC28869. Accessed on 28 March 2023.

8 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 23 March 2023.

9 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 23 March 2023.

These traumatic experiences may lead to post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), unhealthy coping mechanisms such as alcohol abuse or substance abuse, as well as profound personality changes.[8]

According to the *Diagnostic and statistical manual of mental disorders* (DSM-5), diagnostic criterium C2 for PTSD include:[10]

> Persistent avoidance of stimuli associated with the traumatic event(s), beginning after the traumatic event(s) occurred, as evidenced by one or both of the following:
>
> 1) Avoidance of or efforts to avoid distressing memories, thoughts, or feelings about or closely associated with the traumatic event(s).
> 2) Avoidance of or efforts to avoid external reminders (people, places, conversations, activities, objects, situations) that arouse distressing memories, thoughts, or feelings about or closely associated with the traumatic event(s).

After a traumatic experience, individuals may experience profound behavioural changes and will inevitably experience a disruption in their daily activities. Another study by Strydom and Schutte on farm attacks also highlighted various relationship problems, including increased levels of aggressive behaviour, miscommunication between couples and intercommunity relationships.[11]

The observation of daily activities is of particular importance since an impairment of a farm's daily activities – namely to produce food – will negatively impact agricultural production and output. Because of this impact, it is necessary to briefly highlight the economic consequences of farm attacks.

Economic impact

While the direct fiscal impact on the South African economy in terms of the loss of agricultural and food output due to farm attacks is under-researched, some broad conclusions can nevertheless be drawn regarding the negative economic impact of farm attacks. For example, according to a 2017 survey conducted on commercial farmers by the University of South Africa's Bureau of Market Research in collaboration with Agri SA, the total direct cost of agricultural

[10] American Psychiatric Association. 2013. *Diagnostic and statistical manual of mental disorders*. Fifth edition. Available at https://cdn.website-editor.net/30f11123991548a0af708722d458e476/files/uploaded/DSM%2520V.pdf. Accessed on 22 June 2022, p. 271. Accessed on 28 March 2023.

[11] Strydom, H. & Schutte, S.C. 2005. An empirical investigation into the experience of farm attacks in the South African farming community. In *Acta Criminologica: African Journal of Criminology & Victimology* 18(2): pp. 92–95. Available at https://0-journals-co-za.innopac.wits.ac.za/doi/10.10520/EJC28869. Accessed on 28 March 2023.

crime (which includes farm attacks) was R5,45 billion, with an additional R2,28 billion in replacement expenses.[12]

Dr Heinrich Matthee, an internationally recognised authority on political risk, identified various themes concerning the economic consequences of farm attacks:[13]

1. Farm murders diminish agriculture's potential to boost both the national and the rural economies of South Africa and act as a multiplier on an already struggling economy.
2. Farm murders result in significant employment losses because the agricultural sector is one of the largest employers in the country.
3. In certain parts of South Africa, particularly in underdeveloped and stagnant small-town communities, farm murders severely disrupt the already fragile rural social economic order.
4. In broad terms, food security is defined "as having reliable access to a sufficient quantity of affordable, nutritious food", and farm murders worsen the onset of food insecurity.

The South African government has also confirmed the fourth theme. In 2020 Jackson Mthembu, Minister in the Presidency, stated that[14]

> the farming community is an integral part of our economy, and crime on farms poses a threat not only to the personal safety of farmers and farmworkers but also to the country's food security.

Conclusion

Although there is a lack of empirical research on the impact of farm attacks on specific communities, farm attacks and murders indeed have a detrimental psychological effect on the survivors of these attacks. At the same time, it can be expected that this may have a ripple effect on victims' families and their communities. Moreover, because of the unique circumstances of farm murders pointed out on page 1 of this report, the prevention of these crimes will be greatly beneficial to and is in fact essential for the survival of the communities in which farmers live.

---

12 Politicsweb. 2018. *25% of commercial farmers experienced robbery in 2017 – Agri SA*. 7 October. Available at https://www.politicsweb.co.za/documents/25-of-commercial-farmers-experienced-robbery-in-20. Accessed on 28 March 2023.

13 Matthee, H. 2019. *The ANC's "toxic legacy", factional struggles and a renewed hybrid regime*. South African Monitor, p. 30–33.

14 Mahlakoana, T. 2020. *Cabinet: Farm attacks pose a threat to SA's food security*. EWC. Available at https://ewn.co.za/2020/10/23/cabinet-crime-on-farms-poses-a-threat-to-sa-s-food-security. Accessed on 28 March 2022.