

## Whites suffer abuse and racism in South Africa, says liberal institute.

Written by Admin

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*The liberal South African Institute of Race Relations has released the following statement about conditions in South Africa, after the brutal murder on Eugene Terre'Blanche of the Afrikanerweerstandsbeweging (Afrikaner Resistance Movement):*

**The Institute desisted from issuing a formal statement in the immediate aftermath of the killing of Mr Terre'Blanche in order to first gauge the broader social, political, and international reaction to the killing. The Institute is now in a position to make the following points.**

Racial tensions in the country appear to have increased significantly in recent weeks. This appears to be chiefly as a result of incitement by the ruling African National Congress to 'shoot and kill' the Afrikaner ethnic minority in the country. The anxiety around this incitement may well have influenced opinions across the broader white community. What appears to be the case is that much of the racial rapprochement that characterised the first 15 years of South Africa's democracy is being undone. This rapprochement saw both black and white South Africans come to occupy a middle ground on race relations upon which the maintenance of future stable race relations depends.

Since 1994 the number of white farmers and their families murdered in South Africa is conservatively put at around 1 000. It may very well be much higher. There are currently an estimated 40 000 commercial farmers in the country. Over this same period in the region 250 000 South Africans out of a total current population of approximately 47 million have been murdered. Criminal violence can therefore be described as 'rampant' and has done considerable damage to the social fabric of the country. However, this is not to say that all murders in the country are a function of simple criminal banditry. In an environment where law and order has largely collapsed the consequences of incitement by political leaders to commit murder must be taken seriously.

Over the same period the policy measures put in place by the Government to raise the living standards of the black majority have failed to meet expectations. The key interventions of affirmative action and black economic empowerment have been exploited by the African National Congress to build a network of patronage that has made elements of its leadership extremely wealthy. The party also appears to have been so overwhelmed by corrupt tendencies that it is no longer able to act decisively against corrupt behaviour.

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It has also through incompetence and poor policy been unable to address failures in the education system which are now the primary factor retarding the economic advancement of black South Africans.

At the same time the party is acutely aware that its support base of poor black South Africans has begun to turn against it. Violent protest action against the ruling party is now commonplace around the country.

In order to shore up support in the black community the ANC increasingly appears to be seeking to shift the blame for its delivery failures onto the small white ethnic minority, which today comprises well under 10% of the total population of South Africa. Here parallels may be read to the behaviour of Zanu-PF in Zimbabwe when that party realised that its political future was in peril. The ANC Youth League's recent visit to Zanu-PF which saw it endorse that party's ruinous policies are pertinent here.

In such an environment it is plausible to consider that the ANC's exhortations to violence may be a contributing factor to the killing of Mr **Terre'Blanche**. Certainly the ANC's protestations to the contrary seem ridiculous as the party is in effect saying that its followers pay no attention to what it says - this from a party that routinely claims that it is the manifestation of the will of all black South Africans. This is not to say that a labour dispute or some other matter could not have inflamed tensions on the **Terre'Blanche** farm. Rather it is to say that a number of different matters should be considered in determining the motivation for the crime.

Certainly the ANC's exhortations to violence have created a context where the killings of white people will see a degree of suspicion falling around the party and its supporters.

It is of concern therefore that the police's senior management are on record as saying that they will not consider a political motive or partial motive for the killing of Mr **Terre'Blanche**. This suggests an early effort to cover up the ANC's possible culpability for inciting the crime.

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Should any allegations of a political cover-up arise in the pending murder trial of the two young men accused of the **Terre'Blanche** murder the political consequences could be significant. Should evidence be led that the two young men acted with what they understood to be the tacit backing of the ANC, and a causal link between their actions and incitement by the ANC be established, then the possibility of charging the ANC's senior leadership in connection to the murder arises. Equally plausible is that the **Terre'Blanche** family and the Afrikaner Weerstandsbeweging could bring a civil suit against the ANC and the Government.

It is possible that the killing of Mr **Terre'Blanche** will greatly strengthen the hand of a new hardened right wing in South Africa. In life Mr

**erre'Blanche**

attracted a small, uninfluential, and extremist following. He will not be mourned for what he stood for. However, in death he may come to represent the experiences of scores of minority groups in the country who perceive themselves as being on the receiving end of racist and now also violent abuse from the ANC. In effect therefore Mr

**Terre'Blanche**

may be seen as having been martyred for a minority cause in the country.

The implications of a resurgent right wing will be numerous. It is most unlikely that this right wing will take the form of camouflage clad henchmen on horses in shows of force. The ANC has also often, wrongly, identified groups including the political opposition, Afriforum, agricultural unions, and even this Institute as 'the right wing'. This silly 'red under every bed' attitude in the ANC saw it lose the trust of many civil society and political groups. These groups could all be defined first and foremost by the common belief that they had to act within the bounds of what the Constitution prescribed.

But the ANC belittled and undermined them. It also undermined parliament, the national prosecution service, and the various human rights and other organisations that were established under the Constitution. It may yet usurp the independence of the courts and the judiciary. The result was a shutting down of many of the democratic channels that were created for citizens in the country to make the Government aware of their concerns and circumstances.

The resurgence of a new political consciousness among minorities could drive an altogether different political force. Such a movement will draw its strength chiefly from a hardening attitudes in the white community but perhaps also in the Indian and coloured communities. These will be views that in the main have come to subscribe to some or all of the following points:

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1.

That the Government has corrupted and debilitated many of the country's internal democratic processes for political or civil expression that were established under the Constitution

2.

That cooperation with the current Government of South Africa is therefore fundamentally unfeasible and therefore futile

3.

That the Government is unable to restore law and order in the country

4.

That the Government is therefore unable protect its citizens

5.

That the Government has a hostile agenda against minority groups

However it is equally, if not most likely, that many minorities who subscribe to the five points above may simply get so fed up that those who can will pack up and go. Here they may take the advice of President Zuma to remain calm as they pack up their businesses and their families and calmly board aircraft for Australia, New Zealand, Canada, the United States, and Great Britain. With the exodus will leave much of the tax and expertise base of the country.

Should the ANC, however, find itself facing increased political resistance it will in many respects have a tiger by the tail. Firstly, the ANC depends greatly on the tax income paid by white South Africans to balance South Africa's books. Secondly, it depends entirely on the food produced by a small number of white farmers to feed the country. Thirdly, white South Africans still dominate the skills base of the country. Finally, and most importantly, much white opinion since the early 1990s has been moderate. White South Africa has been willing and often eager to cooperate with the Government in building an open, non-racial, and prosperous South Africa. Losing that

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cooperation will to an extent put an end to any serious chance that the ANC has of leading South Africa to become a successful and prosperous democracy.

While the ANC will be inclined to blame whites for this, and may even take drastic action to confiscate white commercial interests as they are currently doing in agriculture, these actions will be ruinous for the economy. The result of such ruin will be to drive a deeper wedge between the ANC and its traditional support base and thereby hasten the political decay of the party.

When General Constand Viljoen decided to throw his lot in with democracy in the early 1990s the right wing in South Africa was a spent force. So it should and could have remained. The ANC could have taken advantage of white expertise and tax revenue to realise their own vision of a better life for all. Things have however gone badly wrong for the party. Corruption has destroyed its ability to meet the demands of its constituents while racial bigotry has now seen it defending its image against what should have been an insignificant and dying neo-Nazi faction in the country.

The failure of sensible South Africans to take back the racial middle ground in the country will be serious. Polarisation will beget further racial conflict and a hardening of attitudes on all sides. This is perhaps the greatest leadership test that the current Government has faced and it is one that they cannot afford to fail."