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Misdaad op plase: Wat maak Suid-Afrika uniek?

Crime on farms: what makes South Africa unique?

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Boere loop wêreldwyd deur onder dieselfde misdaadprobleme, soos die diefstal van vee, landbouprodukte, plaasinfrastruktuur, voertuie en implemente, asook onwettige betreding en –jagbedrywighede. Maar Suid-Afrikaanse boere het boonop te make met uiters gewelddadige plaasaanvalle en dít is wat Suid-Afrika anders maak.

“Boere kan nooit alleen verantwoordelik gehou word om misdaad te bekamp nie,” sê Johannes Möller, president van Agri SA. “Dit bly steeds die regering se verantwoordelikheid. Boere se primêre taak is om voldoende voedsel te produseer; ‘n taak wat baie tyd van boere en plaaswerkers verg.”

Ons boere doen reeds baie om na hul eie veiligheid en dié van hul plaaswerkers en geliefdes om te sien. Hulle is betrokke by boereverenigings om die Landelike Beveiligingstrategie te help implementeer en plaaswagte te vorm. Hulle help ook met die implementering van beveiligingsinisiatiewe deur tegnologie te gebruik.

Möller sê Agri SA het verlede jaar die kwessie van plaasaanvalle en -geweld onder die Wêreld Boere-organisasie (WFO) se aandag gebring. “Die WFO het ‘n beroep op regerings wêreldwyd gedoen het om toepaslike beskerming aan boerderygemeenskappe te bied,” sê Möller.

Die klem het verlede week by die eerste Internasionale Landelike Misdaadkonferensie geval op die belangrike rol van landbou-organisasies se skakeling met die regering. Landbou-organisasies moet voortdurend met beleidmakers oor landelike misdaad skakel en moet probeer om hulle te beïnvloed sodat werkbare oplossings in beleid neergelê word.

Sonder goeie misdaadintelligensie kan misdaad eenvoudig nie voorkom word nie. Die neiging wêreldwyd is dat misdaad nie by wetstoepassers aangemeld word nie. Laasgenoemde is ook in Suid-Afrika die neiging en dit belemmer die toekenning van die polisie se hulpbronne. As die polisie byvoorbeeld nie misdaad-saaknommers het om te kan vasstel watter soorte misdaad in watter gebiede aangemeld word nie, kan daar nie planne beraam word om voorsiening te maak vir meer voertuie en polisielede op grondvlak nie.

Agri SA se gesprek met Fikile Mbalula, die polisieminister, is ‘n bewys dat dié organisasie nie sal ophou om plaasaanvalle en -misdaad onder die regering se aandag te bring en oplossings daarvoor te soek nie. Die minister het bevestig boere en plaaswerkers is uiters belangrik en het onderneem om saam met landbou-organisasies te werk om hulle te beskerm. ‘n Taakspan, wat bestaan uit lede van Agri SA en die polisie se topbestuur, gaan die verdere implementering van die Landelike Beveiligingstrategie ondersoek en aanbevelings oor moontlike verbeterings aan die minister maak. Plaasaanvalle as ‘n strategiese fokus in die polisie se hoogste veiligheidstruktuur sal ook deur die taakspan ondersoek word.

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CRIME ON FARMS: WHAT MAKES SOUTH AFRICA UNIQUE?

Farmers worldwide are subjected to crime such as theft of livestock, farm products, farm infrastructure, vehicles and implements, as well as trespassing and illegal hunting. In addition, South African farmers must contend with extremely brutal farm attacks – this is what makes South Africa different.

“Farmers alone can never be held responsible for combating crime,” said Agri SA president Johannes Möller. “This remains the government’s responsibility. Farmers’ primary task is to produce enough food, a task which requires considerable time from farmers and farmworkers.”

Our farmers are already doing a great deal to ensure their own safety and that of their farm workers and loved ones. They are involved with farmer associations to help implement the Rural Safety Strategy and to form farm guards. They also assist with the implementation of security initiatives by using technology.

Möller said Agri SA last year raised the issue of farm attacks and violence with the World Farmers’ Organisation (WFO). “The WFO called on governments worldwide to offer appropriate protection to farming communities,” said Möller.

During the first International Rural Crime Conference last week, the emphasis was on liaison between agricultural organisations and the government. Agricultural organisations must liaise constantly with policy makers regarding rural crime and must try to influence them to incorporate workable solutions into policy.

Without sound crime intelligence, it will be impossible to prevent crime. The worldwide trend is that crime is not reported to law enforcers. This is also the trend in South Africa, which hampers the police in allocating resources. For example, if the police do not have crime case numbers to determine what types of crime are committed in specific areas, they are unable to devise plans to make provision for more vehicles and police officers at grassroots level.

Agri SA’s discussion with Police minister Fikile Mbalula serves as proof that the organisation will continue to draw government’s attention to farm attacks and crime and to search for solutions in this regard. The minister confirmed the importance of farmers and farm workers and undertook to work with agricultural organisations to protect them. A task team consisting of members of Agri SA and top management of the police will investigate the further implementation of the Rural Safety Strategy and make recommendations to the minister regarding possible improvements. The task team will also look into farm attacks as a strategic focus within the highest security structure of the police.

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