



# THE WORLD MUST KNOW

2025

## **The continued persecution of minority communities in South Africa**

November 2025



*AfriForum is a South African non-profit organisation that focuses on human rights and community-based solutions. With around 300 000 active members, AfriForum is the largest civil rights organisation in Africa. AfriForum has a particular focus on the rights of minorities such as the Afrikaner cultural community and Afrikaans-speaking people, while also working continuously to protect the constitutional rights of all South Africans. AfriForum distances itself from white supremacist and extremist groups who attempt to hijack and distort the legitimate concerns of Afrikaners and South African farmers for their own political purposes.*

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## Increase in number and severity of racially discriminatory policies

According to the Institute of Race Relations' Race Laws Index,<sup>1</sup> the South African government currently has 145 operative race-based laws, many of which are explicitly discriminatory. Out of the 324 race-based acts passed by the South African Parliament since 1910, 122 (38%) were adopted since the ANC came to power in 1994.

The latest addition to the Race Laws Index came in January 2025 with the adoption of the Deeds Registries Amendment Act 20 of 2024. Through this Act, South African law now allows officials to record the race of property owners, introducing race into an area of law which has hitherto been non-racial.<sup>2</sup>

In January 2025, the chairperson of the Communications Committee emphasised that Elon Musk's Starlink has no choice but to comply with local race-based ownership criteria if it wants to operate in South Africa.<sup>3</sup>

In January 2025, legal papers were filed in the North Gauteng High Court against the Property Practitioners Regulatory Authority (PPRA), as well as the Minister of Human Settlements, the Minister of Water and Sanitation and the Minister of Trade, Industry and Competition over moves by the PPRA to no longer issue fidelity fund certificates to businesses that don't meet strict racial criteria. By law, property practitioners, including estate agents, need fidelity fund certificates to operate.<sup>4</sup>

In March 2025, a professional cricket team was kicked out of a tournament and fined for not meeting strict racial quota requirements.<sup>5</sup>

Also in March 2025, the Department of Trade, Industry and Competition published a draft concept document for a R100 billion racially discriminatory "transformation fund" which excludes white-owned businesses from funding, debt relief and grants.<sup>6</sup> South African companies will be mandated to allocate 3% of their annual net profit after tax towards this discriminatory fund.

In April 2025, the civil rights organisation AfriForum's fight against race-based water rights continued. The organisation's legal team filed an appeal against the Department of Water and Sanitation's rejection of an application for the transfer of a black farmer's water rights for irrigation to a white farmer, based on race.<sup>7</sup>

In April 2025, the South African Department of Labour promulgated two sets of employment equity regulations that impose mandatory race quotas for all employers (state and private) with more than 50 employees. The regulations set five-year numerical targets for racial representation across 18 economic sectors, including mining, manufacturing, and agriculture.<sup>8</sup>

In an interview published on 12 May 2025, ANC national spokesperson Mahlengi Bhengu stated that international investors who wish to invest in South Africa but want secure property rights and no racial criteria can take their money elsewhere, such as India.<sup>9</sup>

In June 2025, South African President Ramaphosa wrote in his weekly letter to the nation that private banks need to increase and intensify their racially discriminatory practices.<sup>10</sup>

In July 2025, President Ramaphosa celebrated the fact that the gap in household income between race groups had shrunk primarily due to a decline in white and Indian household income.<sup>11</sup>

In July 2025, it was revealed that the major South African company Bidvest's school bursary programme for its poorest employees excludes white children as it is only open to black, Indian and coloured<sup>12</sup> families.<sup>13</sup> It was later revealed that a company linked to South African President Ramaphosa was behind Bidvest's racially discriminatory school bursary programme.<sup>14</sup>

In August 2025, the South African government threatened South African businesses that they urgently need to get their racial discrimination mandates in order or face severe penalties.<sup>15</sup> In October, the South African Department of Employment and Labour issued the same threat, threatening steep fines and penalties for businesses that do not comply with the government's strict racially discriminatory employment targets it has set for 18 sectors.<sup>16</sup>

In May 2025, President Ramaphosa insisted that the use of race-based terminology by the South African government will continue, despite many questioning the need in post-apartheid South Africa to divide citizens into categories such as black, coloured, Indian and white. Ramaphosa argued that these racial terms are necessary to guide race-based legislation.<sup>17</sup> Also in May, Ramaphosa expressed his firm support for race-based laws.<sup>18</sup> On 25 July, President Ramaphosa once again expressed his party and government's commitment to "Black Economic Empowerment" (racially discriminatory) policies.<sup>19</sup> In August, the ANC again doubled down on its support for racially discriminatory policies.<sup>20</sup> Also in August, Deputy President Paul Mashatile engaged in further denialism of the "Black Economic Empowerment" policies' explicitly discriminatory nature.<sup>21</sup>

A new study by the Free Market Foundation and the Solidarity Research Institute estimated that BEE (racially discriminatory policies) has already cost South Africa R5 trillion and led to the loss of 4 million jobs.<sup>22</sup> In 2025, Prof. William Gumede of the Wits School of Governance claimed that R1 trillion had moved between 100 politically connected individuals after decades of race-based policies by the South African government, such as BEE.<sup>23</sup>

Despite overwhelming evidence, the South African government continues to use official communication channels to deny that any racialised policies exist.<sup>24</sup>

## Private property rights under attack

In December 2024 (only announced in 2025), President Ramaphosa signed into law the Expropriation Act 13 of 2024, which enables the government to expropriate private property without compensation. To understand the real threat to private property rights this Act holds, some context is necessary.

In 2018, President Ramaphosa announced that the ANC had officially resolved to amend the Constitution to "explicitly allow for Land Expropriation without compensation."<sup>25</sup> In 2021, this amendment to Section 25 of the Constitution failed to pass in the National Assembly. The ANC failed to obtain the required two-thirds majority, mainly because the Economic Freedom Fighters (EFF) demanded full state custodianship of property, while the ANC only proposed that state custodianship apply to "certain land" within the context of expropriation. AfriForum warned at the time that the fight to defend property rights in South Africa is not over by a long shot, and that these rights will likely be threatened again in the future.

In December 2021, after the attempt to amend the Constitution failed, then Minister of Justice, Ronald Lamola, stated, "Changing the Constitution was just one instrument we could have used."

and “The matter is now ended. We will now use our simple majority to pass laws that will allow for expropriation without compensation.”<sup>26</sup> Lamola was referring to, among other things, the then Expropriation Bill. President Ramaphosa echoed these sentiments when he stated in a January 2022 address that, “[t]he ANC will implement its resolution on the expropriation of land without compensation despite the refusal of other parties in Parliament.”<sup>27</sup>

The Expropriation Bill, which President Ramaphosa signed into law in 2025, was published and gazetted in October 2020. This Bill, now an act, enables expropriation at “nil” compensation, which is simply another way of saying “no compensation”. The Act also empowers any state organ or department to expropriate any private property. This power to expropriate is not limited to land. In 2025, many legal experts and analysts tried to gaslight the public by arguing that “nil compensation” does not mean “no compensation”. The ANC, however, have been crystal clear about what they understand “nil” compensation to mean.

In 2024, Deputy President Paul Mashatile reaffirmed the government’s commitment to expropriation of land without compensation, specifically through the use of the Expropriation Act. On the matter of “without compensation” and “nil compensation” regarding the Expropriation Act, the Deputy President said that the intention was the same and the difference was wording: “It may well be that you have issues with the wording thereof, but the intention is to achieve exactly that ... that we need to expropriate land without compensation where applicable.” Mashatile continued, “We use the words in the act that ‘we should expropriate land if it’s in the public interest’. The issue of nil compensation, I will look at. But my sense is nil compensation is that you don’t pay.”<sup>28</sup>

In an address by President Ramaphosa to the ANC Manifesto Review Rally in 2023, the matter of the (then still) Expropriation Bill that enables expropriation without compensation was again emphasised: “We will pass the Expropriation Bill ... and will grant the state the authority to expropriate land for public purposes or interests and establish that nil or zero-rand compensation will be deemed just and equitable in accordance with the law.”<sup>29</sup>

The ANC has therefore not only made their desire and intentions to expropriate private property without compensation clear through their failed attempt to amend section 25 of the Constitution, but also through their own rhetoric. The same ANC cadres who, to this day, praise Robert Mugabe as a hero are now trying to convince the public that they would never violate private property rights.

In August 2025, President Cyril Ramaphosa once again praised the Zimbabwean Mugabe regime’s “ambitious land reform policies”<sup>30</sup> and said he “believes South Africa and the entire region should take a leaf from Zimbabwe’s agriculture model.”<sup>31, 32</sup> The Mugabe regime’s land reform policies of the early 2000s being referred to involved chaotic and often violent land seizures. Private property rights were severely violated when these policies resulted in thousands of white farmers being chased off their land, attacked, and some even being murdered. Mugabe’s Fast Track Land Reform Programme resulted in the collapse of the Zimbabwean agricultural sector and economy, and mass human rights violations.<sup>33, 34, 35</sup>

In August 2025, Mzwanele Manyi of the MK Party, the third-largest party in South Africa, submitted a private member’s bill for public comment proposing to abolish private land ownership in South Africa. The bill seeks to amend section 25 of the Constitution to designate the state as the sole custodian of all land and natural resources, effectively transferring all land ownership from individuals to the state.<sup>36</sup> The draft legislation also proposes extending the land restitution cut-off

date to 6 April 1652, the day on which Jan van Riebeeck set foot on land in the Cape to establish a halfway stop between Europe and the East. There is a strong argument to be made that this framing targets specifically Afrikaners as a distinct cultural community, as they attach particular weight to this date in their historical and cultural identity.<sup>37</sup>

In October 2025, it was reported that President Ramaphosa conceded under oath that sections 19(2), (3) and (4) of the new Expropriation Act are unconstitutional because they “in error” had provided that expropriation can take place before the landowner can challenge the matter in court. According to President Ramaphosa, these sections may “render the provisions void for vagueness” and contradict other sections of the Act. The source of this admission is Ramaphosa’s answering affidavit in a court case about the Expropriation Act.<sup>38</sup> The court case is set to commence in 2026.

In November 2025, during a parliamentary question-and-answer session, Deputy President Paul Mashatile stressed that the ANC did not abandoned its resolution on land expropriation without compensation, which the party adopted at its conference in 2017, and that the party still supports expropriation without compensation. In response to a question, he replied: “The ANC is pro-expropriation of land without compensation, we have never deviated from that.” When asked whether the ANC had changed its position on land expropriation without compensation, Mashatile replied: “When we came to Parliament to pursue this resolution, we had to talk to all the other parties. When it came to amending section 25 [of the Constitution], we failed to pass it in Parliament. We went further to ensure that we have a way in which we can proceed with land expropriation.” Mashatile further confirmed that the Expropriation Act was signed by President Cyril Ramaphosa precisely to ensure that the Government could proceed with expropriation without compensation of land, after the ANC failed in their attempt to have section 25 of the Constitution amended. “We are pushing much faster to expropriate land,” Mashatile said.<sup>39</sup>

## Deterioration of the human rights situation

In August 2025, the US State Department’s Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights and Labor released a detailed report, which found that the human rights situation in South Africa has deteriorated significantly. Some of the areas of particular concern include the said Expropriation Act, policies that discriminate based on race, farm murders, violent rhetoric against minorities and the “Kill the Boer” chant.<sup>40</sup>

The report reads:

The [South African] government did not take credible steps to investigate, prosecute, and punish officials who committed human rights abuses, including inflammatory racial rhetoric against Afrikaners and other racial minorities, or violence against racial minorities.

Under its section “Torture and Cruel, Inhuman, or Degrading Treatment or Punishment”, the report finds that

[a]lthough the constitution and law prohibited such practices, there were reports of police use of torture and physical abuse, some of which resulted in deaths, and there was potential for the exacerbation of these practices with the signing of the Expropriation Bill (B23-2020) by the president on December 20. This bill was first introduced to the National Assembly in October 2020.

On this serious threat to private property rights, the report continues:

The Expropriation Bill (B23-2020), enacted by the president as Expropriation Act 13 of 2024, was signed after nearly 20 years of debate, legal challenges, and discussions around land reform, primarily because the act would permit the government to expropriate land without compensation under certain conditions. This act could enable the government to seize ethnic minority Afrikaners' agricultural property without compensation, following countless government policies designed to dismantle equal opportunity in employment, education, and business, and extreme rhetoric and government actions fuelling disproportionate violence against racially disfavored landowners.

The report warns of “significant human rights issues” such as the repression of racial minorities, as well as “intimidation or harassment” of civil society groups for expressing opinions critical of the government. The latter is likely referring to the high treason investigation that was launched into AfriForum, Solidarity and the Solidarity Movement for their delegation’s visit to Washington that was critical of the government.<sup>41, 42</sup> In addition, several threatening statements have been made by government officials directed at AfriForum.<sup>43, 44</sup> The report further mentions explicit acts of intimidation, harassment and threats of violence against journalists by the ANC and EFF. In November 2025 in a clear act of government censorship, the South African government removed a legal banner next to the road that was put up by the trade union Solidarity in protest of the government’s racially discriminatory laws.<sup>45</sup>

The US State Department’s report also mentions the EFF, which it correctly classified as an extremist political party that encourages attacks on farmers and Afrikaners (Boers). The report highlights farm murders as a legitimate, serious issue. The report notes: “In recent years, extremist political party the Economic Freedom Fighters (EFF) encouraged attacks on Afrikaner farmers, reviving the use of the song ‘Kill the Boer [Farmer]’ at its rallies and otherwise inciting violence.”<sup>40</sup>

## The “Kill the Boer, kill the farmer” chant and anti-minority rhetoric

On 21 March 2025, which is Human Rights Day, EFF leader Julius Malema and a crowd of EFF supporters chanted “Kill the Boer, kill the farmer”. Malema also said that his party did not recognise Human Rights Day.<sup>46</sup> Following this incident, the civil rights organisation AfriForum wrote to President Cyril Ramaphosa, urging him to condemn this violent chant. Vincent Magwenya, spokesperson for the Presidency, responded to the letter by stating that the president will not condemn the “Kill the Boer” chant.<sup>46, 47, 48</sup>

In June 2025, the same chant calling for the killing of farmers and the white minority was sung on the campus of the Northwest University (NWU).<sup>49</sup> The University has refused to condemn this hateful chant, even after thousands had signed a petition urging the university to take a stand.<sup>50</sup> In September, the “Kill the Boer, kill the farmer” chant was once again chanted on the NWU campus by members of the extremist EFF youth wing.<sup>51</sup>

In August 2025, during a media conference at Luthuli House in Johannesburg on the outcomes of the ANC’s recent National Executive Committee meeting, Fikile Mbalula, Secretary General of the ANC, lashed out at white South Africans and Afrikaner refugees to the US. During his speech, he attacked and smeared the white refugees to the US as “car guards”<sup>52</sup> and “murderers”.<sup>53</sup> Mbalula’s stereotyping of white South Africans as bloodthirsty murderers who target each other and black South Africans is a blatant example of racism. His racist allegations that white Afrikaner refugees to the United States “started killing each other” as soon as they arrived also have no basis and are, in fact, only prejudice.<sup>54</sup>



In the same speech, Mbalula reaffirmed the ANC's commitment to discriminatory race laws – laws that even discriminate against children, as demonstrated in the Bidvest saga.<sup>55</sup> He also challenged the US to impose sanctions on ANC leaders for their defence of the country's race laws.<sup>56</sup>

In October, moments after being criminally convicted of unlawfully firing a firearm at a rally, EFF leader Julius Malema joined his supporters in calling for the killing of the white minority and farmers by chanting “Kill the Boer, kill the farmer” outside the East London Magistrate's Court.<sup>57</sup> This chant contains a direct call to shoot farmers and kill white people using guns: “shoot to kill!”

## Minority language of Afrikaans under attack (the Bela Act)

In 2017, the first draft of a bill aimed at amending the South African Schools Act was published. It is known as the Basic Education Laws Amendment Bill (the Bela Bill).<sup>58</sup> The public responded with more than 5 000 public comments submitted against the Bill, the vast majority overwhelmingly critical.<sup>59</sup> Some of the most contentious issues included the clear threat the Bill posed for the future of single-medium Afrikaans schools, a minority language in South Africa, and also a language often attacked and targeted by populist politicians.

The Bill's main threat to Afrikaans education comes through the significant changes it pushes to admissions and language policies of public schools, and the powers of democratically elected school governing bodies (SGBs) in determining these policies.<sup>58</sup> Not only did the Bill centralise decision-making powers regarding these issues in the hands of provincial education heads – officials who are political appointments – instead of the SGBs who are members of the schools' communities, but senior government officials and members of the ruling ANC have made no secret of the fact that one of their aims with the Bill was to eradicate single-medium Afrikaans schools.<sup>60, 61</sup>

Panyaza Lesufi, for example, who served as the Gauteng Province's Member of the Executive Council for Education, and who is a major proponent of the Bela Bill, once remarked that he was “disgusted” to find that the medium of instruction was Afrikaans at a school he visited.<sup>62</sup> It is in the hands of anti-Afrikaans radicals like Lesufi that legislation like the Bela Act (which was partially signed into law on 13 September 2024) will be used to attack and marginalise Afrikaans education.

On 5 November 2024, an estimated 10 000 people joined a mass protest march against the Bela Act – especially the sections threatening Afrikaans education. This protest was primarily led by Afrikaans-speaking South Africans, and included representatives of AfriForum, Solidarity, political parties and numerous other civil society and education organisations.<sup>63, 64</sup> Despite this continued vocal opposition, in December 2024, President Ramaphosa ignored the concerns of the Afrikaans-speaking community in his country. He pushed ahead and signed a Presidential Proclamation to give effect to the controversial Act in its totality.<sup>58</sup>

Afrikaans schools play a central role in the cultural life of Afrikaans-speaking communities. It is a means of transferring culture to the next generation. Government efforts to destroy Afrikaans schools are thus a direct attack on the cultural survival of the minority Afrikaans-speaking cultural communities.

In 2025, the Minister of Basic Education confirmed that the Bela Act was being implemented.<sup>65</sup>

## Minority heritage, monuments and statues under attack

In April 2025, the statue of Afrikaner folk hero General de la Rey in Lichtenburg was vandalised.<sup>66</sup> In the same month, barely a week after the famous equestrian statue of De La Rey was vandalised, the bust on De la Rey's grave was decapitated in the Lichtenburg cemetery. This occurred after the grave was restored following the first incident of vandalism in 2021.<sup>67</sup>

In September, the Paul Kruger statue group on Church Square in the city centre of Pretoria was attacked and seriously damaged. A gun barrel and a boot from two of the Boer warrior statues that flank the Kruger statue were broken off. The security fence surrounding the statues was also damaged.<sup>68</sup> This attack on the Kruger statue group followed exactly one week after the EFF called in Parliament for the destruction of Afrikaner as well as white minority monuments, including the statue of Paul Kruger in the Pretoria city centre, the Voortrekker Monument, the statues of Louis Botha, Jan van Riebeeck, Queen Victoria and Cecil John Rhodes.<sup>69</sup> During this debate, specific reference was made to the removal of the Kruger statue group on Church Square. One week before the Kruger statue group was attacked, Nontando Nolutshungu, the Chief Whip of the EFF in the National Assembly, called as part of their tabled motion to remove Afrikaner monuments for the destruction of, among others, the statue of Paul Kruger: "Therefore, let us finish the unfinished business of liberation. Let us tear down these monuments of humiliation and replace them with monuments of our own heroes."<sup>70</sup>

Shortly after the statue was damaged, EFF national spokesperson Sinawo Thambo celebrated the attack in his reaction on social media, describing it as "great news".<sup>71</sup> This vandalism of Afrikaner heritage happened in the week that Heritage Day was celebrated nationwide in South Africa. The Paul Kruger statue group has been attacked and vandalised in the past as well, also after EFF incitement.<sup>72</sup>

The EFF also tabled a motion in the Mpumalanga Provincial Legislature in September, demanding the renaming of the Kruger National Park. This park is named after Afrikaner hero Paul Kruger, who was instrumental in the establishment of the park.<sup>73</sup>

In October 2025, it was reported that the monument of Anglo-Boer War hero Danie Theron had been vandalised as well. R70 000 will be needed to repair the damage.<sup>74</sup>

## Conclusion

As demonstrated by this report, the human rights situation in South Africa, especially regarding minority rights, has continued to deteriorate in 2025. The South African government's racially discriminatory policies are increasing in number and severity, private property rights are increasingly under attack, incitement of violence and hatred against minority groups from powerful politicians is escalating, critics of the government are subject to intimidation and investigation, and minority heritage and education are being targeted, attacked and marginalised. It has become imperative that all countries, organisations and institutions that stand for human rights – in particular minority rights – take a firm stand against the South African government for its discriminatory policies, attacks on private property rights and for the hateful, violent rhetoric against minorities that is flourishing under its watch: incitement of violence that the President refuses to condemn.

## End notes

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