

PART IV

CONCLUDING SECTION

CHAPTER 18

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

INTRODUCTION

In terms of its brief this Committee was to ‘determine the motives and factors behind these (farm) attacks and to make recommendations on their findings.’ The Minister’s decision that the Committee was to be appointed resulted from ‘the need to once and for all put to rest the rumours, differing opinions and perceptions as to what is behind farm attacks.’¹ In other words, the primary task of the committee has been to assess the validity of various theories and explanations, which have been advanced about why farm attacks occur, in the light of the available evidence.

Terminology

The literature² and the submissions³ summarised in the Report offer a number of likely explanations for farm attacks, often couched in terms of ‘motive’ or ‘cause’. A motive refers to the driving forces behind the behaviour of humans, and there are various psychological theories – which in turn relate to philosophical assumptions about human nature – concerned with explaining human motivation.⁴ An example of this type of theory as used to explain farm attacks would be that specific attacks were motivated by grudges arising out of the relationship between a farmers and employees.⁵

The term ‘causes’ is also commonly used when attempts are made to explain attacks. While in popular parlance the meaning is quite straightforward, ‘cause’ is a controversial term in the social sciences, because it tends to suggest that human behaviour can be explained in a mechanistic way, instead of recognising the complexity of factors which should be taken into account in reaching understanding about why people behave as they do.⁶ There is, however, broad consensus in the social sciences that the behaviour of individuals should be understood in the context of the norms, values and beliefs they share (culture) and the positions they occupy in that society (the structure), especially as these positions reflect the way in which power is distributed in society.

¹ Letter of appointment of member of the Committee dated 5 April 2001; Media statement by the Minister of Safety and Security, Pretoria, 5 April 2001.

² See Chapter 10

³ See Chapter 9

⁴ See, e.g. Krech D. and Crutchfield R. *Elements of Psychology* New York (in Knopf A. ‘Motivation and Emotion’, Part 4, New York 1969)

⁵ More than one motives may play a part in a crime as, e.g., with some of the political violence in KwaZulu-Natal, foot soldiers for a warlord may gain materially while at the same time removing a political enemy.

⁶ See, e.g. Pratt V. *The Philosophy of the Social Sciences* (Routledge, London 1978) p 65-67; Gerth H and Wright Mills C *From Max Weber* (Routledge and Kegan, London 1970) p 57

Adopting this broad approach in identifying causes of farm attacks allows explanations which take into account individual motivation (e.g. of perpetrators) but also social structures and networks⁷ in identifying the forces behind attacks and the way they are interlinked, in establishing why attacks occur.

THEORIES OF FARM ATTACKS

Prof Neels Moolman⁸, the criminologist, provides a useful summary of the type of explanations given for farm attacks, which, he says, fall into four broad categories:

- Attacks are motivated by criminal intent such as robbery.
- They are politically-motivated, specifically in relation to land issues, and aimed at driving (white) farmers off the land.
- They are related to labour disputes and grudges.
- There are a variety of factors, such as racism, perceptions of farmers as outlaws, and the failure of the criminal justice to deal with crime in South Africa through, for example, the arrest and conviction of perpetrators.

Robbery as the major motive for attacks

The most common explanation used, is that attacks are merely criminal acts of robbery, which may also leave in its wake crimes such as murder and rape. The findings of the Britz and Seyisi report⁹, that 99% of attacks are crime-driven, with robbery as the primary motive, is an example of this approach. While they vary in their assessments of the percentages of attacks which are purely criminal in motive (as opposed to, say, personal grudges), other reports by security agencies, summarised in the Report, also agree that the overwhelming majority of attacks are criminally-motivated. The same applies to the Mistry and Dhlamini report on perpetrators of farm attacks¹⁰ and the Schönteich and Steinberg monograph on farm attacks.¹¹

⁷ The term network is used in social science to describe informal (as opposed to formal) and continuing social relationships between individuals

⁸ Moolman C.J. *Farm attacks and the African renaissance: Opposite reactions to a devastating culture* er (2000) p 118.

⁹ NICOC *Attacks on farms and smallholdings* (compiled by Ass Comm S Britz and Dir E. Seyesi, 1998) p 18.

¹⁰ Mistry D. and Dhlamini J. *Perpetrators of farm attacks: An offender profile*. (Institute for Human Rights and Criminal Justice Studies, Technikon SA, 2001)

¹¹ Schönteich M. and Steinberg J. *The rural protection plan: Farms still under attack*. (Nedbank ISS Crime Index No 3/2000 p. 5)

Land related intimidation, racism, hatred, revenge and politics

This theoretical approach is favoured by Action Stop Farm Attacks¹² and by Moolman¹³, who argue that attacks should be seen in the context of historic interaction between black and white communities in South Africa, with their differing ‘mindsets’ concerning land, and the fact that the white farming community had been seen as a legitimate target during the struggle against apartheid. In the post-1994 period, statements by certain politicians and NGOs are seen as supporting the interpretation that attacks and murders are intended to intimidate commercial farmers to share or leave their land to appease the landless. Features of specific farm attacks culled from NICOC and other security agency reports, such as utterances by attackers, gratuitous violence and the fact that the attackers did not steal anything, are cited in support of this interpretation. There is also reference to perceived racial hatred stemming from the historic relationship between blacks and whites in South Africa, and a desire for retaliation for past injustices. A recent development is the emergence of a ‘genocide’ theory, applied specifically to farm attacks, which argues that the real reason for these attacks is being deliberately concealed.¹⁴

Labour related intimidation

According to this explanation, farmers may be targeted because of their being perceived as exploiting labour and refusing to transform the conditions of workers on their farms. Extracts from the Human Rights Watch report¹⁵ such as an interview with a trade unionist who claimed that one could not ‘divorce the farm attacks from our history....they (i.e. white farmers) still take it that they are the owners of the universe’, can be cited in support of this theory. Moolman refers to a report in *Beeld* newspaper, quoting ANC and PAC Free State politicians saying that the ‘(farm) murders also have to be seen against the background of willful and unasked for eviction of farm workers from farms, because the farmers are against the Extension of Security of Tenure Bill.¹⁶ In addition to perceptions of farmers as a category, individual farmers may be attacked in revenge after, for example, labour disputes or dismissals.

Multiple cause theory

Moolman¹⁷ points out that, important as the above three theories are, the dynamics of farm violence are extremely complicated, and he identifies a ‘multiplicity of causes’ which could be lead to attacks. A culture of violence had taken root in South Africa during the years of political struggle, and had become entrenched as a means of resolving conflict. The youth of

¹² Action Stop Farm Attacks *A memorandum on farm attacks and the implications thereof to commercial agriculture and food production in South Africa* (2000-11-07)

¹³ Moolman *op cit* p 162

¹⁴ Genocide is violence directed against people on the basis of their race, ethnicity or religion. There is an exposition of this theory at www.bugbear.com

¹⁵ See Chapter 10

¹⁶ Human Rights Watch *op cit* p150; *Beeld* 3 November 1997. The bill has since been enacted

¹⁷ Moolman *op cit* p118-139

offenders (in terms of the period in which they would have grown up), and the possibility that they had undergone some type of military training, are mentioned in this regard.

The apparent hostility of many role players, such as the National Land Committee, and politicians making statements to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, could fuel a culture of violence against farmers, as could historically entrenched racial discrimination, which would have given rise to distorted perceptions about white farmers or Afrikaners in general.

Another important contributing factor could be problems experienced with the criminal justice system. Not only were prisons overfull, but imprisonment itself had lost some of its deterrent value because during the apartheid years, when people were imprisoned for petty offences (such as contravening passbook laws) incarceration was not shameful, and did not lead to loss of community respect. Various surveys since 1994 had shown widespread dissatisfaction with the government's handling of crime, and perceptions that the government had lost control over it. That public opinion was not without foundation was born out by conviction rates for various types of crime.¹⁸ Moolman also points to factors inherent in the functioning of the criminal justice system during the latter 1990s which contributed to low conviction rates.

Other important factors to be taken into account when explaining farm attacks included the abundance of illegal firearms circulating in South Africa, and the poverty, underdevelopment and unemployment which contributed to crime in general. Crime carried out with a view to acquiring property, including firearms, was undoubtedly a factor in farm attacks, especially as farmers, living in isolation and working outdoors, were perceived as 'soft targets'. However, these crimes took place in a political climate and the 'feeling of empowerment after a lifetime of oppression had been a strong motivation for some who could not handle this new-found freedom, inciting them to start claiming what they perceived to belong to them and was promised to them during the election campaigns'.¹⁹

THE COMMITTEE'S TASK

Taking into account the literature referred to above, and the circumstances which led to the establishment of the Committee - especially as they related to the perceptions of, and explanations put forward by, the farming community - the debate about farm attacks is essentially about two issues.

Firstly, are the overwhelming majority of farm attacks indeed merely criminal in terms of the motives of perpetrators (which begs the question whether the criminals are locally based, small time operators, or whether they are part of more widely-based criminal networks, linking rural and urban areas)? Steinberg²⁰ refers to 'the theory that farm attacks are a symptom of displacement of urban crime - more specifically, that organised crime in

¹⁸ Moolman *op cit* p 130-132

¹⁹ *ibid* p 138-139

²⁰ Steinberg J. *An assessment of the Rural Protection Plan in the Letaba and Mooi River areas*. (Centre for the Study of Violence and Reconciliation, 2000) p 19

metropolitan areas makes calculated forays into the soft-target zones of rural South Africa', noting that patterns of crime in the Letaba area do not support this theory. In the Mooi River area, however, perpetrators had come from an East Rand township in one of the cases Steinberg refers to, and some of the literature summarised above refers to apparent links between urban and rural crime. Positing crime as an explanation invites an examination of why crime levels are so high in South Africa, which in turn is linked to a variety of types of explanations, especially as they relate to the culture of violence and shortcomings in the criminal justice system, referred to in Moolman's fourth category above.

Secondly, to what extent are farm attacks driven by what are fundamentally political issues (in that they relate to power structures and dynamics in pre- and post-1994 South Africa), *specifically as they relate to land*, and the imperative to return white-held land to the indigenous people posited as the original owners of the land? There are therefore also clear racial overtones to this type of theory, in that the overwhelming majority of people dispossessed of land were black, indigenous Africans, who now constitute the vast majority of claimants, especially in rural areas. Again, aspects of Moolman's fourth category ('farmers as outlaws') may fit into this type of explanation, and the culture of violence aspect cannot be divorced from the political climate of the 1970s and 1980s, during which time most of the perpetrators would have grown up. Although an attack on a farmer could result from individual motivation (e.g., a former occupant or owner of the land seeking to displace the farmer and acquire the land him- or herself), land-related theories tend to posit organised structures (a network of people occupying certain roles or positions in society), such as political parties or politically-motivated bodies or organisations as ultimately responsible for orchestrating attacks, or for fuelling them through rhetoric. Those supporting such explanations cite utterances of politicians and NGO's, for example, and some have inferred that there may be international conspiracies, such as socialist forces, at work.²¹

It is clear from research cited above²² that many members of the farming community link farm attacks to land issues. For example, Steinberg notes that, in the Letaba area, a number of farmers believed that there was a causal connection between farm attacks and restitution claims in the area.²³ At the time of his research in that area he could find no links between land hunger and farm attacks, but he notes that while there had only been a 'handful of restitution claims' lodged in that area, his interviews with the Department of Land Affairs and with traditional leaders suggested that 'vast tracts of land in the area' would be claimed in the near future.²⁴

In his book *Midlands*, Steinberg, while acknowledging that the motive in the majority of farm attacks appears to be robbery, supports the theory that the imperative to reclaim land lost through colonial dispossession is a key factor in some of the post-1994 attacks, which 'tamper with the boundary between acquisitive crime and racial hatred'.²⁵ He talks of 'a racial frontier' and claims that the perpetrators of a farm attack did so 'to push the boundary back, a

²¹ Van de Graaf H. and Jordaan Dr C.L. *Property rights in South Africa*. (1999) p 91 *et seq.*

²² Chapter 10

²³ Steinberg *op cit* p 10.

²⁴ *Ibid.* It is not clear how this would be possible since the cut-off date for lodging claims had already passed at the time Steinberg's report was published.

²⁵ Steinberg J. *Midlands* (2001) p vii-ix

campaign their forebears had begun in the closing years of the nineteenth century and which their great-grandchildren believed was their destiny, as the generation to witness apartheid's demise, to finish'. Steinberg has long been highly critical of the Government's insistence that farm attacks were motivated only by 'normal criminality'. In an earlier newspaper article²⁶, Steinberg refers to the 1998 police report (presumably the Britz and Seyisi report) cited in support of this interpretation, as 'not so much an investigative report as a rushed and tacky political intervention'. In a similar manner to Action Stop Farm Attacks, he draws on material in NICOC reports about gratuitous violence, torture and rape, etc., to suggest it was 'abundantly obvious' that 'these acts are the work of a starkly political consciousness'.

Also pertinent in making an assessment about why farm attacks occur is the third category cited by Moolman, i.e. that they arise from labour disputes or grudges. Again, an individual might engage in such an attack because of his or her personal experience (a grudge or labour dispute), but this type of theory also allows for organised structures to orchestrate attacks on farmers because of negative stereotypes that farmers, as a category, treat workers badly and deserve to be punished.

In actual fact, as Moolman points out, it would be unrealistic to expect that any of these three types of explanation could possibly account for *all* attacks on farmers, and the empirical material cited – in, for example, CIAC reports²⁷ - attempts to provide rough quantitative breakdowns of different types of reasons for attacks based on docket analysis and research, allowing for the fact that, in some few instances, there *may* be political overtones to attacks.

Ultimately, the primary task of this committee is to assess whether there is, from the body of material it has amassed during its research, any factual basis on which to conclude that there is substance to theories that claim that farm attacks are politically motivated, especially insofar as land issues are concerned.

FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Before providing details of the Committee's findings about the motives of farm attacks, it is necessary to start with an evaluation of the statistical base relied upon for the explanations of these attacks. Of central import too, in interpretations of this phenomenon, are the issues of gratuitous violence reportedly associated with these attacks, and what are believed to be racial overtones. The Committee spent a great deal of time researching these aspects, and on the role of the criminal justice system and security in farm attacks. The findings also draw attention to the trauma suffered by victims. Recommendations are included in these findings. The major topics considered by the Committee are as follows:

The incidence of farm attacks

²⁶ Steinberg J. 'Still programmed to kill.' (in the *Natal Witness*, 1998-08-20)

²⁷ Chapter 10

Prior to 1991 crime on South African farms was not unknown, although the term farm attack was not used. In the early 1990s organized agriculture began to take notice of the apparent increase of these incidents and the then South African Agricultural Union started to keep statistics in 1991. In that year they registered 327 farm attacks and 66 killings. In 1997 the CIMC (later the CIAC) also started to collect statistics on the phenomenon. The statistics indicate an increase in incidents and by 2001 reached a figure of 1011 farm attacks and 147 killings. This increase may not have been as dramatic as it would seem because the Committee established that especially in the initial stages of compiling statistics there was a serious under-reporting. All the organizations collecting statistics agree that the data are incomplete, especially for the earlier years. Although the collection and processing of the data have improved since 1991 the Committee is of the opinion that there is still a degree of under reporting, especially in some provinces. The Committee itself came across examples where farm attacks had not been reported.

Although the statistics generally follow a steady upward trend between 1991 and 2001 they also show an inexplicable drop in incidents for 1996 and 1997 followed by a sharp increase in 1998. The Committee is satisfied that the extraordinary decrease in 1996 and 1997 was the result of under reporting and that the sharp increase in 1998 could be ascribed to the special instructions issued by the then Minister of Safety and Security that farm attacks should be closely monitored. Nothing sinister can be read into these deviations.

The general increase can also be partly attributed to the fact that more attacks on smallholdings were being registered and, furthermore that attacks on black farm residents were also being registered to a greater extent. With these remarks the Committee does not wish to imply that farm attacks did not increase markedly during the period under discussion, but merely that it is impossible to determine the actual extent of the increase.

The provisional figures for 2002 made available to the Committee by the CIAC indicate that exactly 1 000 farm attacks and 112 killings. Indications are that farm attacks during the first months of 2003 have decreased further. It may therefore be that farm attacks have not only stabilized but may in fact be decreasing. The incidence of murder relative to the number of farm attacks actually declined between 1998 and 2001 while the provisional figure for 2002 of 112 show a decrease of 23.8% in absolute terms.

No specific reasons for this reported decrease have been given to the Committee. It may be that reporting is beginning to reach a saturation point, that the efforts of the Rural Protection Plan are showing results, and that the drive for farmers to increase their security is paying off. The period of the decrease is far too short to draw any meaningful conclusions about trends, however.

Regular use of unreliable statistics results in unscientific conclusions being drawn about farm attacks. It should be mentioned however that both the CIAC and NOCOC are now making a special effort to make the statistics as reliable as possible. The system at that level seems to be efficient, but at ground level there appear to be problems.

Some processing at intermediate level, i.e. area and provincial, also seems problematic.

Recommendations

- The committee disagrees with the suggestion by Human Rights Watch that small holdings should be excluded from the category of farm attacks. However, the statistics should clearly differentiate between the two categories.
- Special attention should be given to collecting and processing of statistics at local and provincial level, and proper auditing procedures should be introduced

Motives for farm attacks

As indicated above, the brief of the Committee was to establish the motives behind farm attacks, including whether these attacks are politically motivated. To achieve this end, the Committee used all possible sources at its disposal to research the motives behind these attacks. The perception that farm attacks are politically-inspired seems to be based on the facts of a few serious and highly publicised cases, which do not reflect the general pattern of farm attacks.

The committee interviewed about fifty investigating officers. In addition, telephonic interviews were conducted with about a further thirty six investigating officers in relation to specific cases. All the investigating officers were of the view that the primary motive in the greater majority of cases was to rob. In their view very few cases were politically or racially inspired. About fifteen state advocates from the offices of the Directorate of Public Prosecution were interviewed and they held exactly the same views. None of the perpetrators interviewed by the Committee itself, or perpetrators interviewed in earlier research, admitted to political motives. The Committee regards it as very unlikely that the perpetrators themselves would have lied about such a political motive, since that would have provided some moral justification for their crimes.

Organised agriculture provided the committee with a list of cases that they thought merited further investigation because they were possibly of a political nature, or because of unnecessary and excessive violence. The committee also identified a number of cases from other sources, including the NOCOC data base and newspaper reports. Altogether over a hundred cases were closely scrutinized, and forty five were the subject of full-scale case studies.

The Committee analysed the NOCOC database of farm attacks from 1998 to 2001 where the motive was clearly robbery, intimidation, political, or labour-related. In 2 631 cases where such clear motive could be established, 89.3% was clearly robbery, 7.1% intimidation, 2% political or racial, and 1.6% labour-related.

In very few cases were there indications of a political motive. The Committee accepts that there is a small minority of cases where there are racial or political overtones such as the utterances of attackers, but despite a close scrutiny of these cases no connections could be found between them and political groupings. Nor was there any evidence to support the theory that farm attacks, with the exception of relatively few cases, are related to labour disputes or grudges.

Allegations have also been made that farm attacks are generally carried out with military precision and on an organized basis. Farm attacks are often well planned and preceded by reconnaissance. That does not mean that an organized structure, such as a political grouping, is responsible for orchestrating these attacks. Generally, unlike cash-in-transit heists, farm attacks are not carried out by professional criminal gangs, but rather by amateurs who are often inexperienced.

The only exceptions in which there is evidence of a degree of organisation behind incidents falling into the farm attack category, are to be found in some cases land invasions.

Land invasions and farm attacks

After its inception the attention of the committee was drawn to the phenomenon of land invasions and its relationship with farm attacks. Not only are these invasions generally linked to incidents of intimidation and arson, but they also lead to farm attacks in the narrow sense of the word where robberies, and even rape and murder may follow. Invasions also threaten the viability of commercial farming activities, and may even destroy it.

It seems to the committee that land invasions fall into two categories. The first involves squatting as a result of continuing encroachment from nearby settlements, as in Daveyton, but which appears spontaneous. Such encroachment may or may not be organised. In other areas there is evidence of a degree of organization behind the invasions. Especially in KwaZulu-Natal there are indications that traditional leaders are involved in organising these illegal invasions, seemingly to extend their spheres of influence.

This matter is of great concern to the Committee because of its impact on rural safety and security, and livelihoods of farmers. Some organizations have openly declared their intention to facilitate land invasions, and all indications are that these invasions are going to increase, with all the attendant consequences. Furthermore, the Committee has come across examples of incompetence, lack of capacity, and cases in which the Land Claims Commission itself does not adhere to constitutional principles or the relevant legislation, which behaviour has impacted very negatively on farmers. The Committee has also been given specific examples of the failure of the SAPS to assist farmers in implementing the law, despite appeals to them to do so.

Recommendations

- Since farmers are not being given the assistance to which they are constitutionally-entitled by representatives of the Ministry of Land Affairs and Agriculture, and the South African Police Services, urgent attention should be given to rectifying the situation. It is essential that existing laws governing illegal land invasions be implemented by those responsible for doing so. In terms of a landmark decision in the High Court in November 2002, the government has a positive duty to protect the constitutional rights of land owners.

- Members of the SAPS at local station level appear to lack knowledge about the implementation of existing legislation, and management should address this deficiency as a priority.
- The process of land restitution should be speeded up in line with existing legislation, including through the government identifying land which can be used for residential purposes by landless people

The violence during farm attacks

It is clear that many farm attacks are extremely violent, often leading to serious injury and death. This has been proffered as proof that there is an intimidatory process at work to force farmers off land. The type of cases which receive the most prominence are the more serious cases, leading to the perception that those are typical of the majority of farm attacks. The reality of the situation is that in 2001 about ten percent of the victims were killed, and according to the provisional figures for 2002 this proportion is considerably less. About one third of farm attack victims sustained injuries during 2001.

Most farm attacks are armed robberies. The committee found it difficult to find a suitable basis for comparison with other comparable manifestations of armed robbery. In the end the committee compared farm attack robberies with cash-in-transit robberies, which are reputedly also extremely violent. It was discovered that, compared to the ten per cent chance that a victim of farm attacks had, in 2001, of being killed, the victims of cash-in-transit robberies, only ran a risk of 3.5%. There are various explanations for this discrepancy, but the difference would suggest that, in general, farm attacks are more violent.

The committee also compared house robberies on farms (i.e. where the victims were attacked inside the house) in the Eastern Cape with house robberies in urban areas of the same province. (For technical reasons all murder cases were ignored in this comparison.) Some 29,4% of the victims of farm attacks were injured whereas only 16% of the victims of urban house robberies sustained injuries. The committee made the same comparison in four other provinces collectively. Although this difference was not as pronounced as in the case of the Eastern Cape farm attack victims were still at a significantly higher risk of sustaining injuries. There are a variety of possible reasons to explain this phenomenon, but the fact remains that these examples support the notion that farm attacks are more violent than other comparable (i.e. robberies) crimes.

Although certain criticisms can be leveled against the validity of the comparisons, they do seem to indicate that farmers run a relatively higher risk of being seriously injured and killed. Some heads of SAPS Serious and Violent Crimes Units informed the Committee that farmers ran a greater risk of being murdered than their white counterparts in towns or villages.

Recommendation

- The Committee was unable to obtain sufficient statistical data for a proper analysis, and it is recommended that the CIAC conducts further research into this matter.

Racial issues in farm attacks

There is a perception that farm attacks are almost exclusively aimed at white farmers. In 2001, white persons only constituted 61.6% of the victims of farm attacks. From analysis that the Committee made of previous statistics it would seem that the proportion of black victims is increasing. This apparent trend may be at least partly the result of improved reporting of attacks on black people. At the same time, it must be mentioned that there is a considerably higher risk of a white victim of farm attacks being killed or injured than a black victim. In December 2001, for example, 19.6% of the white victims of farm attacks were killed and 46.4% injured. Of the black victims, 4.4% were killed and 25% were injured. This phenomenon has also been observed in the other case studies.

The obvious explanation for this phenomenon is that it is a reflection of an underlying racial hatred towards white farmers. Except for individual cases, the Committee could find no general underlying racial motive. However, there may be a variety of other factors involved, such as the fact that the attacker expects the farmer to offer more resistance and to summon help.

It must also be pointed out that half of the cases of land invasions linked to farm attacks brought to the Committee's attention, affected Coloured and Indian farmers.

The criminal justice system

The fact that the criminal justice system in South Africa is not performing optimally impacts on farm attacks in various ways. In some cases of farm attacks, perpetrators had not been arrested and prosecuted for crimes they had committed elsewhere before the attack. Other perpetrators had previous convictions, but sentences imposed had not acted as a sufficient deterrent. Although the conviction rate for farm attacks is higher than for other similar crimes, this seems linked to the investigations being handled by specialised units. In some of the cases perused by the Committee, only some of the suspects had been apprehended, and some had escaped from custody. It is a cause of some concern that insufficient effort appeared to have been made to apprehend them or re-arrest them.

The specialized units regard farm attacks as a priority crime. Nevertheless, there were generally high levels of dissatisfaction among farmers with the service delivery of local police stations. There were allegations of police failing to respond to concerns of farmers, and even incidents of attack, in a prompt and professional manner. It also became clear to the committee that there is a lack of resources (personnel, vehicles) in rural areas. The shortage of police personnel in rural areas is being addressed through the recruitment of an additional 30 000 entry level police constables by early 2006, many of whom will presumably be deployed to rural areas.

In some of the cases followed up by the Committee farmers had called the commandos rather than the police because they were more accessible, because of the distance of the police station from the farm and reaction time. The committee supports the intention of the SAPS to replace

the Commandos with Area Crime Combating Units and sector policing. The initiatives may be able to overcome some of the police's problems in respect of policing rural communities. Although it may be difficult initially, the SAPS should strive towards a consistent visible police presence in the form of sector policing.

Recommendations

- The efficiency of the police service in rural areas is hampered by a lack of resources to work effectively. Although money is short in supply, the Committee recommends that existing resources be allocated in a more productive way. Head office-based police officers could, for instance, be reallocated to police stations in high crime areas, and more police officers could be put on duty during times when most crimes occur.
- The detective and investigation capacities of rural police stations need to be enhanced. Proactive functions of the police stations should include a focus on improved intelligence work which would guide the operational deployment of station personnel and specialized units.
- A proactive approach should also be used to ensure the involvement of all rural residents in structures such as community policing forums.

Security on farms and smallholdings

There is little doubt that security on many farms is inadequate or non-existent. This fact was stressed during the interviews with investigating officers and prosecutors, and was further confirmed by several objective studies referred to in the report. Urban South Africans, and especially business and more affluent sectors, have responded to the crime wave by greatly improving security. It is therefore to be expected that there would be a large measure of crime displacement to softer targets, including vulnerable rural areas. That partly explains the phenomenon that crime on farms seemed to be increasing at the very time when crime in general was declining. Furthermore, the blossoming of informal settlements, in which criminals are well represented, has increased the risk of attacks on nearby farms and smallholdings. Even although many of them are not well off, farmers are seen as wealthy, and a source of especially money and firearms.

Recommendations

- It is essential that security—both for safeguarding property and personal safety - be stepped up. Some measures that are relatively inexpensive may avert a farm attack, as may simply exercising greater alertness.
- The Committee is also so the view that many potential victims – both farmers and workers – do not know how to handle farm attacks once they do occur. This applies especially to the older generation. Many fatalities and injuries could possibly be avoided if victims were to react in a way suitable to the situation. In some of the cases investigated by the Committee victims had remained calm and this reaction appears to have had a positive impact on the behaviour of the perpetrators. This is an aspect which both the police and organised agriculture should give attention to, through facilitating the training of members of the farming community on how to react during an attack.

- Security companies operating in farming communities should be registered with the Private Security Industry Regulatory Authority (PSIRA) and conduct themselves in a professional manner in order to maintain the confidence of the whole rural community
- Case studies and interviews with victims revealed that farm attacks may strain relationships between farmworkers and their employers, and white farmers and members of the black community generally. Ways need to be found of re-establishing trust among different sectors of rural communities.

The trauma of farm attacks

The impact of trauma on the victims of farm attacks has not been given sufficient attention. Many of the victims interviewed by the Committee had not received any counseling at all. Trauma results in mental scarring of the victims, which may take much longer to overcome than any physical injuries or financial setbacks suffered. Trauma may also result in distorted perceptions of farm attacks on the part of the victims. The effects of trauma on farm victims are similar to the effects of trauma on victims of crime in general.

Recommendations

- The necessary infrastructure to deal with trauma should be created and should be available and accessible to the whole rural community.
- On the proactive level workshops for farmers, farm workers and their families should be held to bring the importance of this matter to their attention.