

Chapter 1 Attacks on farms and smallholdings

The police's Crime Information Analysis Centre (CIAC) has collected statistics on farm and smallholding attacks since January 1997. Over the three-year period between 1997 and 1999, the number of attacks have increased substantially. During 1997, some 433 attacks were recorded. This increased to 809 attacks in 1999.¹ The number of people murdered as a result of the attacks also increased significantly from 84 in 1997, to 136 in 1999.² The increase in the number of attacks between 1998 and 1999 (5.5%), however, was considerably lower than the increase in the number of attacks between 1997 and 1998 (77%). Moreover, the number of murders committed during the attacks in 1999 was slightly lower than the number of murders committed in 1998. Nevertheless, the murder rate in relation to the number of attacks on farms and smallholdings is high. In 1999, almost 17% of the attacks on farms and smallholdings resulted in a murder (figure 1).

Between 1997 and 1999, the number of attacks perpetrated monthly on farms and smallholdings varied considerably. Through the use of a six-month moving average (which plots the average number of attacks over the previous six months), it is apparent that the number of attacks increased consistently between mid-1997 and mid-1998, whereafter the number of attacks stabilised and even declined slightly during the latter part of 1999 (figure 2).

The incidence of attacks on farms and smallholdings is not uniform throughout the country. During 1999, most attacks on farms and smallholdings occurred in Gauteng (224 attacks), followed by Mpumalanga (169 attacks), and KwaZulu-Natal (141 attacks). The province with the fewest attacks in 1999 was the Northern Cape with 11 attacks (figure 3). The rate of increase in the number of attacks on farms and smallholdings between 1997 and 1999 also varied from province to province. Thus, Gauteng experienced a massive 579% increase in the number of attacks over this period. This was followed by the Western Cape (333%) and Mpumalanga (67%). The Free State and the Northern Province experienced no change in the number of attacks over this period (figure 4).

Figure 1: Number of attacks on farms and smallholdings, and the number of murders committed during attacks, 1997-1999

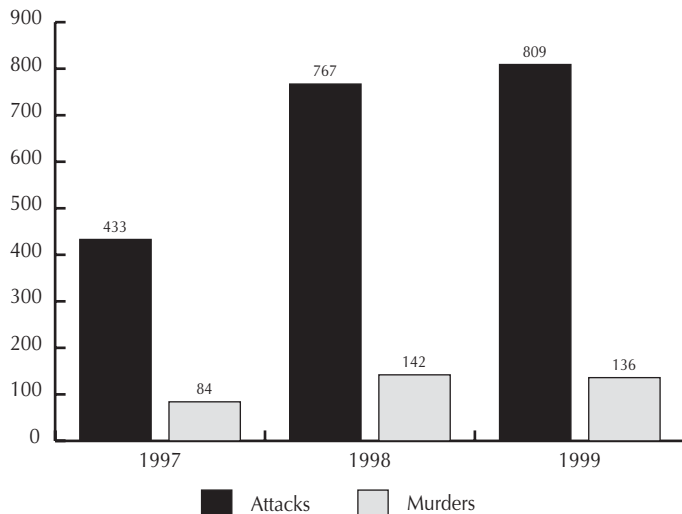


Figure 2: Number of attacks committed monthly on farms and smallholdings, 1997-1999

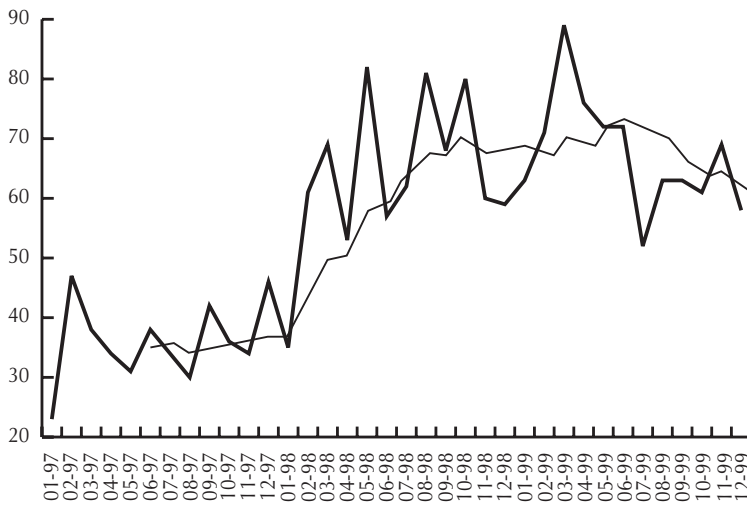


Figure 3: Number of attacks annually on farms and smallholdings per province, 1997-1999

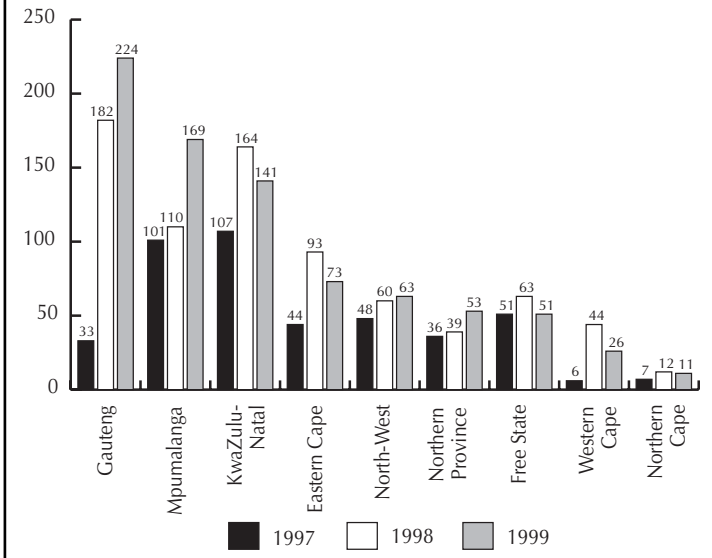
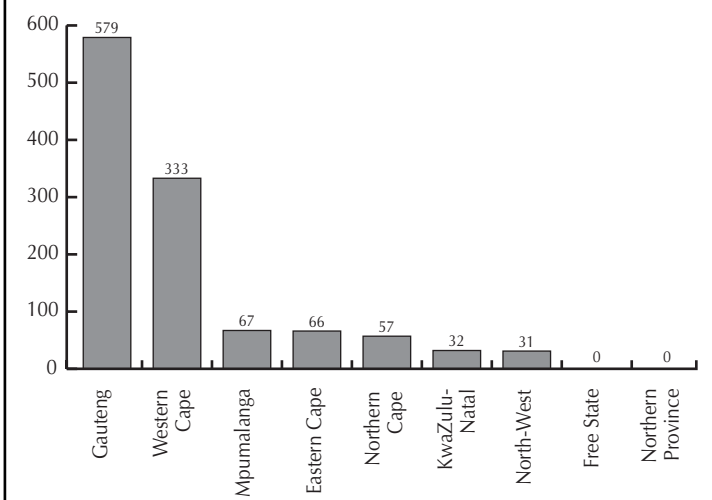
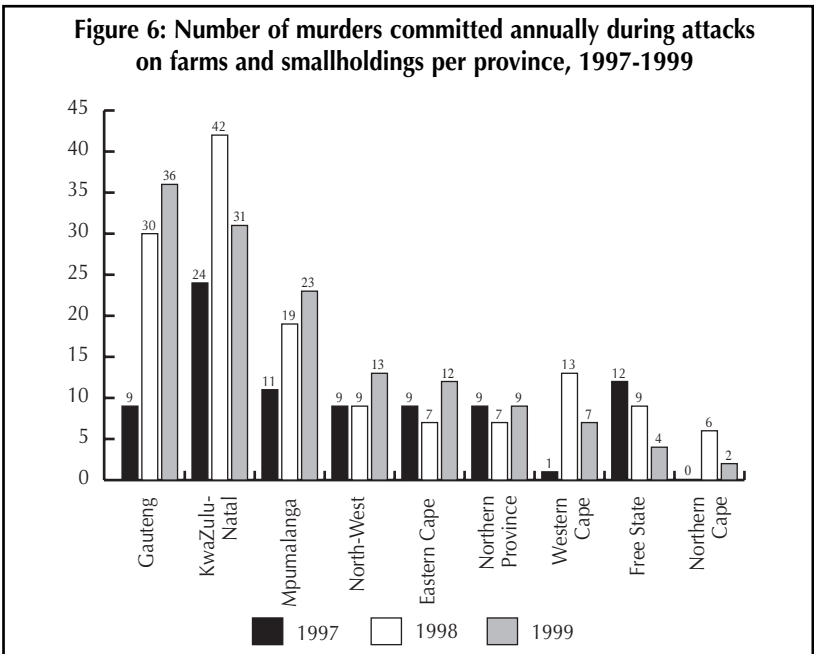
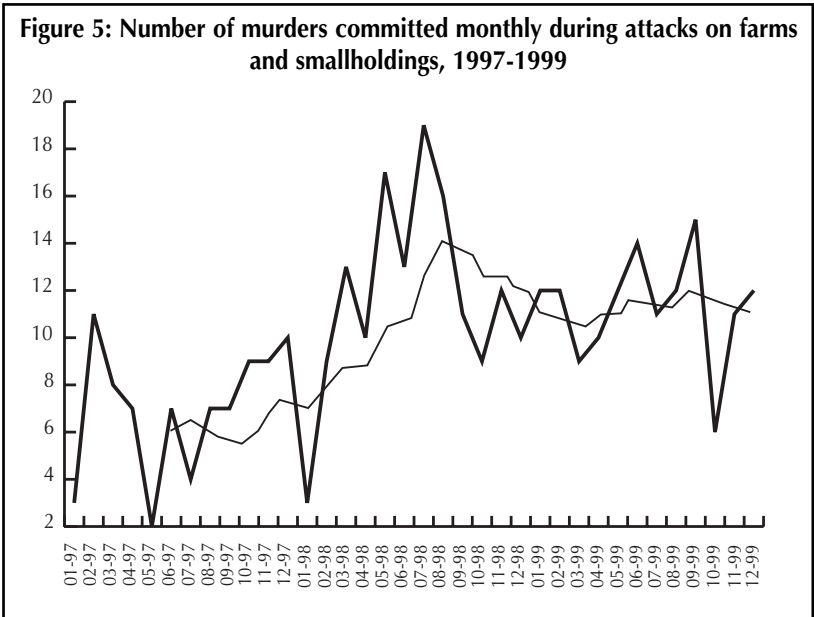
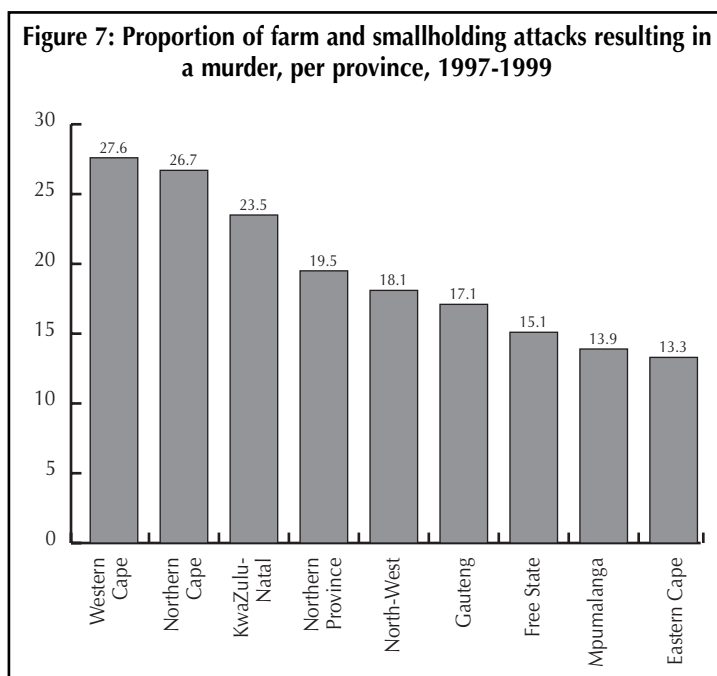


Figure 4: Percentage change in the number of attacks on farms and smallholdings, 1997-1999







Between 1997 and 1999, the number of murders committed monthly during attacks on farms and smallholdings also varied considerably from one month to the next. The six-month moving average shows a clear increase in the number of murders from mid-1997 to mid-1998. There is a decline in the number of murders in the latter half of 1998, after which the level of murders stabilises (figure 5).

During 1999, Gauteng experienced the highest number of murders (36) committed during attacks on farms and smallholdings, followed by KwaZulu-Natal (31), and Mpumalanga (23). During 1998, KwaZulu-Natal experienced the highest number of murders committed during attacks on farms and smallholdings, followed by Gauteng and Mpumalanga (figure 6).

Between 1997 and 1999, the Western Cape experienced the highest level of murders measured as a proportion of the number of attacks on farms and smallholdings over this period. Thus, between 1997 and 1999, 27.6% of all recorded attacks on farms and smallholdings in the Western Cape resulted in a murder. In the Northern Cape, it was 26.7%, and in KwaZulu-Natal, 23.5%. Lowest was the Eastern Cape and

Mpumalanga where less than 14% of all recorded attacks on farms and smallholdings between 1997 and 1999 resulted in a murder.

Appendix II provides information on the number of attacks perpetrated monthly on farms and smallholdings, and the number of murders committed during the attacks, per province for the period January 1997 to December 1999.

Notes

- 1 See endnote 1, chapter 1.
- 2 The South African Agricultural Union (now Agri South Africa) started collecting statistics on farm attacks, and the number of people murdered during the attacks, from 1991. Their figures, however, are not strictly comparable to those of the CIAC. The CIAC, for example, includes attacks on smallholdings in its statistics. According to Agri South Africa, the number of farm attacks (with the number of people murdered during the attacks in brackets) between 1991 and 1996 were as follows:
1991: 327 attacks (66 murders);
1992: 365 attacks (63);
1993: 442 attacks (84);
1994: 442 attacks (92);
1995: 551 attacks (121);
1996: 468 attacks (109).