Thursday, 22 May 2025]

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PARLIAMENT

OF THE

REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

ANNOUNCEMENTS, TABLINGS AND COMMITTEE REPORTS

THURSDAY, 22 MAY 2025

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ANNOUNCEMENTS

National Council of Provinces

The Chairperson

1. Bills passed by Assembly and transmitted to Council for concurrence

(1) Bill passed by National Assembly and transmitted for concurrence on 22 May 2025:

(a) **Economic Regulation of Transport Amendment Bill** [B10–2025] (National Assembly – sec 75).

The Bill has been referred to the **Select Committee on Transport** of the National Council of Provinces.

2. Referral to Committees of papers tabled

(1) The following paper is referred to the **Select Committee on Security and Justice** for consideration and report:

(a) Report on the Provisional Suspension from office on the Ground of Misconduct of Ms TF Kekana, Additional Magistrate at Secunda, tabled in terms of section 13(3)*(b)* of the Magistrates Act, 1993 (Act No. 90 of 1993).

TABLINGS

National Assembly and National Council of Provinces

1. The Minister of Forestry, Fisheries and the Environment

(a) Government Notice No. R6037, published in Government Gazette No. 52380, dated 25 March 2025: Extension of Public commenting period for the Draft Regulations for the Environmental Management of Offshore Bunkering, in terms of the National Environmental Management: Integrated Coastal Management Act, 2008 (Act No. 24 of 2008).

(b) Government Notice No. R6040, published in Government Gazette No. 52387, dated 26 March 2025: Second-Generation Highveld Priority Area Air Quality Management Plan, in terms of the National Environmental Management: Air Quality Act, 2004 (Act No. 39 of 2004).

(c) Government Notice No. 6049, published in Government Gazette No. 52388, dated 28 March 2025: The Draft National Coastal Management Programme 2025, in terms of the National Environmental Management: Integrated Coastal Management Act, 2008 (Act No. 24 of 2008).

(d) Government Notice No. 6073, published in Government Gazette No. 52424, dated 31 March 2025: Regulations for the Management of Mercury in South Africa, in terms of the National Environmental Management Act, 1998 (Act No. 107 of 1998).

(e) Government Notice No. 6102, published in Government Gazette No. 52454, dated 04 April 2025: Regulations regarding the Exclusion from the definition of a Waste Stream for public comment, in terms of the National Environmental Management: Waste Act, 2008 (Act No. 59 of 2008)

(f) Government Notice No. 6114, published in Government Gazette No. 52495, dated 11 April 2025: Consultation on the Draft Strategy relating to the Design of Product Life Cycle, Re-Use, Controls, and Disposal of Absorbent Hygienic Products, in terms of the National Environmental Management: Waste Act, 2008 (Act No. 59 of 2008).

(g) Government Notice No. 6131, published in Government Gazette No. 52528, dated 17 April 2025: Call for proposals: Submission of potential sites for inclusion in the Inventory List of Sites (Tentative List) in terms of the World Heritage Convention Act, 1999 (Act No. 49 of 1999).

(h) Government Notice No. 6132, published in Government Gazette No. 52529, dated 17 April 2025: Amendments to the Regulations to Phase-out the Use, Production, Distribution, Sale, Import and Export of Persistent Organic Pollutants, in terms of the National Environmental Management Act, 1998 (Act No. 107 of 1998).

(i) Government Notice No. 6135, published in Government Gazette No. 52533, dated 17 April 2025: Amendments to the Regulations to prohibit the production, distribution, import, export, sale and use of persistent organic pollutants that are listed by the Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants, in terms of the National Environmental Management Act, 1998 (Act No. 107 of 1998).

2. The Minister of Justice and Constitutional Development

(a) Proclamation No R.258, published in Government Gazette No. 52688, dated 16 May 2025: Referral of Matters to Existing Special Investigating Unit: in respect of the affairs of the State Information Technology Agency (SOC) Limited, in terms of the Special Investigating Units and Special Tribunals Act, 1996 (Act No. 74 of 1996).

(b) Proclamation No R.259, published in Government Gazette No. 52688, dated 16 May 2025: Referral of Matters to Existing Special Investigating Unit: in respect of the affairs of the Bushbuckridge Local Municipality, situated in Mpumalanga Province, in terms of the Special Investigating Units and Special Tribunals Act, 1996 (Act No. 74 of 1996).

COMMITTEE REPORTS

National Assembly

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REPORT OF THE PORTFOLIO COMMITTEES ON POLICE AND AGRICULTURE ON REFERRED PETITION RELATED TO FARM MURDERS, DATED 21 MAY 2025.

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1. INTRODUCTION

A petition submitted by *PPS STOP Farm Killings (NPC)* and *Agri-Alert SA*, through Mr P. Sitho, was referred by the Speaker of the National Assembly to the Portfolio Committee on Police and the Portfolio Committee on Agriculture for consideration and report (ATC No 64-2024, dated 21 October 2024). The petition called on the National Assembly to investigate ongoing attacks on farming communities, highlighting concerns over rural safety, farm murders, and the impact of crime on food security and the agricultural economy.

In response, the two Committees convened two joint meetings on 19 March 2025 and 13 May 2025 to consider the contents of the petition, deliberate on the issues raised, and engage relevant stakeholders. These engagements formed part of the Committees' oversight mandate and aimed to assess both the policy response and operational effectiveness of the South African Police Service (SAPS) and the Department of Agriculture in addressing rural safety challenges.

2. PRESENTATIONS BY THE DEPARTMENTS AND PETITIONER

2.1. South African Police Service (SAPS)

The South African Police Service (SAPS) presentation on the Implementation of the National Rural Safety Strategy was led by Major General Pienaar, the Divisional Commissioner of Visible Policing and Operations. The presentation covered key aspects of rural safety, focusing on the strategy's implementation, operational challenges, and crime statistics in rural areas. The presentation covered the following key topics:

- **National Rural Safety Strategy (NRSS)**
  - Initiatives to enhance implementation – Steps taken to improve the effectiveness of the strategy.
  - Coordinating mechanisms – Structures in place to ensure collaboration among stakeholders.
  - Stakeholders in rural safety – Key role players, including law enforcement, the agricultural sector, and community organizations.
  - Challenges – Issues affecting the successful execution of the strategy.
  - Budget allocation – Financial resources dedicated to rural safety initiatives.
  - Vehicle allocation in rural areas – Distribution of police vehicles, with a focus on their suitability for rural terrain.
  - Capacity of Mounted Units – The availability and operational strength of horse-mounted policing units in rural areas.
- **Stock Theft and Endangered Species Units (ST&ESUs)**
  - Location of ST&ESUs – A mapped-out view of unit locations across the country.
  - Organogram – Structural breakdown of the units.
  - Personnel, including vacancies – Staffing levels and unfilled positions.
  - Vehicles – Availability and adequacy of transportation for unit operations.
  - Successes – Notable achievements in combating stock theft and protecting endangered species.
  - Challenges – Key obstacles faced by these specialized units.
- **Rural Crime Statistics – 3rd Quarter of 2024/25**

- Measures in place to validate incidents – Processes for verifying rural crime reports.
- Victims on farms and smallholdings – Data on those affected by rural crime.

2.2. Department of Agriculture

The presentation of the Department of Agriculture on key challenges affecting the Department's ability to execute its functions and deliver services effectively in relation to stock theft was led by Mr Mamabolo, the Director for Animal Production, covered the following topics:

- Livestock sector contribution to the economy
- Stock Theft
- South African Police Service legislation on stock theft
- Department of Agriculture legislation of stock theft
- Key challenges on enforcement of stock theft legislation
- Individual animal identification
- Draft regulations on Animal Identification
- Animal Identification methods
- Research and development
- Inter- Ministerial Committee (IMC) on Agriculture and Land Reform Initiatives on Rural Safety Strategy
- Ongoing farmers engagements
- Conclusion

2.3. Civilian Secretary for Police Service (CSPS)

The presentation of the CSPS on the status of Stock Theft Amendment Bill, 2025 was led by Mr Ntwana, the Director of Legislation, covered the following aspects:

- Introduction
- Review of the Stock Theft Act, 1959
- Challenges with the current Act
- Objects of the Bill to address challenges

- Current legislative status of the bill

2.4. Petition from PPS STOP Farm Killing (NPC) and AGRI-ALERT

The presentation on the petition of PPS STOP Farm Killing (NPC) and AGRI-ALERT calling National Assembly to investigate attacks on farming communities was led by Mr P Sitho- Director and President of the Rural Safe Guard Alliance and covered the following aspects:

- Constitutional framework
- Introduction
- Problem Statement
- Rural Safety Crisis
- Crime and Rural Crime in RSA
- Status: NRSS
- Challenges: Rural Safety
- Previous high-level meetings
- Recommendations

The presentations are available from the Committee Secretaries on request.

3. DELIBERATIONS BY THE COMMITTEES

During its deliberations, the Portfolio Committees on Police and Agriculture engaged with Mr. Sitho and relevant stakeholders of the petition, the Department of Agriculture and SAPS. The following key concerns were raised:

1) Members emphasised that all citizens are equal before the law, and no perception should be created that farm murders constitute a special class of crime. However, it was stated that the unique nature of farm murders must be recognised as these attacks are frequently characterised by extreme brutality and excessive, disproportionate violence. Unlike gang-related violence, which may be impulsive or retaliatory, farm attacks are often premeditated and calculated. In some instances, these crimes are even celebrated or shared on social media. Despite the severity of these incidents, adequate support

from the SAPS in rural areas is sometimes lacking. This has left many rural communities vulnerable and exposed to ongoing threats of violence, with insufficient protection, delayed responses, and limited investigative capacity.

2) It was emphasised that farm attacks impact not only farmers but also farm workers and farm dwellers. Violence in rural areas is not exclusively perpetrated against farmers; many workers and residents living on farms are also victims of intimidation, assault, and other forms of harm. Responses to farm attacks must therefore adopt a holistic and inclusive approach that addresses the safety and rights of all individuals living and working in farming communities.
3) Rural violence and farm attacks affect people of all races. Farmers, regardless of race, are victims of serious crimes such as murder, assault, and stock theft. While the severity and nature of farm attacks warrant urgent attention, the narrative of a genocide against white farmers is not supported by evidence and should be firmly dispelled.
4) Research conducted by Prof. Zinn (UNISA) has shown that farm attacks are not primarily politically motivated, but are instead driven by economic factors, such as the perceived availability of cash, valuables, and firearms. One of the key motivations identified is the high probability of obtaining firearms during these attacks, which may then be used or sold in the commission of further crimes. The research also highlights the need to consider the involvement of illegal or undocumented foreign nationals, particularly in syndicated operations linked to stock theft and rural crime. These findings underscore the importance of evidence-based responses, rather than politically charged narratives, to ensure that interventions are targeted, effective, and aligned with the actual drivers of rural violence.
5) It is important to adopt a balanced and fact-based approach that acknowledges the brutality of these crimes without resorting to inflammatory or divisive rhetoric. This will enable effective, inclusive, and rights-based responses to rural safety challenges.
6) While urban areas record higher overall levels of violent crime in absolute terms, incidents in rural areas, particularly farm attacks, are often marked by premeditation, extreme brutality, and isolation, which amplify their impact on victims and communities. When assessed per capita, the incidence of violence in some rural communities can be disproportionately high, with far-reaching consequences for personal safety, food security, and social cohesion. It is therefore critical to adopt a

differentiated yet balanced approach to violence prevention, one that recognises the scale and complexity of urban crime, while also addressing the unique nature and impact of rural attacks, including farm-related violence.

7) While rural safety is critical, disproportionate levels of violence against women and children must not be overshadowed. Members cautioned against misleading narratives, such as claims of genocide on farms, and called for inclusive engagement with vulnerable groups, including farm dwellers, farm workers, and small-scale farmers. SAPS was asked to disaggregate crime data to better reflect the demographics of both victims and perpetrators.
8) Members reiterated the urgent need for a robust individual animal identification system to proactively combat stock theft. Current tagging practices were criticized as easily removed and ineffective.
9) The Department of Agriculture was criticised for playing a minimal role in combating stock theft, with Members urging it to move beyond tagging and contribute meaningfully to animal traceability. SAPS was also asked to explain why stop-and-search procedures are not compulsory for vehicles transporting livestock. Additionally, clarity was requested on the breakdown of unidentified livestock in pounds, and the ownership status of these facilities (public vs. private).
10) Concerns were raised about poor resourcing in rural areas, especially regarding Stock Theft Units, mounted units, and canine units (e.g., only four horses in Amalia, North West, and none in Limpopo). Only 40% of SAPS vehicles in rural areas were deemed suitable for their terrain.
11) Members questioned how SAPS prioritises resource allocation between rural and urban stations and requested a full breakdown of the capacitation status of stock theft units, including the number of SAPS members charged for involvement in stock theft. Members also criticised reckless vehicle use, which leads to long repair downtimes, and reiterated the need for discipline in the handling of state assets.
12) Police response times in rural areas were reported as significantly delayed compared to urban centres, often due to poor road infrastructure and inadequate vehicle suitability.
13) Members criticised the Department of Transport for failing to maintain equipment necessary for rural road upkeep. They emphasized the importance of police visibility in

farm areas where vehicles cannot reach and proposed the deployment of specialised rural safety units.

14) It was noted that stock theft is often syndicated and organised, especially in border areas such as Lesotho. SAPS was urged to strengthen crime intelligence capabilities and enhance cross-border cooperation, including engagements with the Department of International Relations and Cooperation (DIRCO) and neighbouring countries (Lesotho, Mozambique, Zimbabwe).
15) In 2023, only 35% of stock theft arrests led to successful prosecutions, highlighting issues of poor case prioritisation, under-resourcing, and declining public trust. SAPS was requested to explain these low conviction rates and detail strategies to improve reporting, investigations, and court readiness.
16) Members questioned the implementation and review of the 2019 National Rural Safety Strategy, with goals due by August 2024. SAPS was asked to report on progress across its pillars and responsibilities, including when the updated version would be tabled. The strategy was criticised for failing to empower communities, relying too heavily on formal police presence. Members proposed that rural communities be trained as first responders, and that SAPS leverage technology (e.g. drones, GPS satellites, surveillance tools) as a force multiplier.
17) Concerns were raised about Community Policing Forums (CPFs), including unclear use of the CPF budget, lack of stipends for CPF members, and limited police reliance on community intelligence.
18) SAPS was also asked to report on cooperation with traditional leaders and what measures are in place to support small-scale farmers, especially those lacking private security.
19) The murder of David Netsalapala, a 62-year-old Limpopo farmer killed while searching for stolen livestock, was cited as a failure of SAPS rural response. Members called for stronger preventative measures and more effective protection strategies, especially in known hotspots.
20) Members sought clarity on the status of the 2013 Draft National Animal Pounds Bill, which never reached Parliament beyond public comment, considering that dysfunctional pounds were highlighted by the Department of Agriculture as a contributor to stock theft. They also called on the Civilian Secretariat for Police to

clarify the definition and conditions surrounding illegal cattle impounding and proposed greater oversight of abattoirs and auctions to prevent criminal activity being laundered through legal channels.

21) Questions were raised about why well-resourced farms are not compelled to invest in their own security (e.g. fencing, cameras), and why state support is not focused on emerging and disadvantaged farmers instead.

4. RESOLUTIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The Portfolio Committee on Police and Portfolio Committee on Agriculture recommend the following:

1) SAPS should conduct a comprehensive national audit of rural policing capacity, with specific focus on Stock Theft Units, Mounted Units, and Canine Units. The audit should assess human resources, operational readiness, vehicle suitability, and the geographical spread of specialised units. Particular attention must be given to ensuring that vehicles are fit for rural terrain and that there is accountability in the use and maintenance of state assets. The establishment and resourcing of dedicated rural safety units at both station and district levels should be formalised as part of SAPS' operational structure.
2) SAPS must clarify how it prioritises rural versus urban resource distribution and submit a detailed breakdown of stock theft unit staffing, equipment, and arrest/prosecution outcomes. This should include the number of officers implicated in stock theft-related corruption.
3) SAPS must strengthen its crime intelligence capability specific to syndicated stock theft and farm attacks (on farmers and farm workers) and build structured cooperation mechanisms with DIRCO, Justice System, Home Affairs and neighbouring states to combat cross-border criminal networks.
4) SAPS and the National Prosecuting Authority (NPA) must jointly address the low conviction rate for stock theft and farm attacks. This includes improving case investigation quality, ensuring better docket management, and developing guidelines for community-based reporting and evidence collection.

5) SAPS and the Department of Agriculture should develop joint outreach programmes with traditional leaders/Amakhosi and rural communities to increase protection measures for small-scale and vulnerable farmers without private security.
6) The Department of Agriculture should fast-track the finalisation of the Regulations for the development of the Individual Animal Identification System to strengthen animal identification and traceability and to assist SAPS and NPA in effectively handling cases of stock theft.
7) SAPS should ensure regular police visibility at livestock auctions to verify animal identification and branding. No livestock should be permitted to be auctioned without proper individual identification and traceability, in order to prevent the sale of stolen animals and strengthen stock theft prevention efforts.
8) The Committees further recommend that within two months after the adoption of this report by the National Assembly, the respective Ministers should submit to Parliament, updates and responses to the above recommendations.
9) SAPS should provide formal support and coordination for community safety units, such as Farm Watch, Farm Guard, and other localised rural safety structures. This includes integrating these initiatives into local policing plans, offering training, and ensuring proper communication channels to enhance community-led crime prevention efforts in rural areas.
10) Quarterly joint meetings should be convened between the Portfolio Committees on Police and Agriculture to ensure ongoing collaboration on rural safety and stock theft. The petition report should serve as a starting point, with the aim of developing a shared understanding of challenges and coordinated oversight to drive sustained, cross-sectoral responses.
11) Parliament should take an active role in countering misinformation and disinformation related to violence on farms and in rural communities. Efforts should be made to ensure that accurate, up-to-date information, not outdated or misleading historical narratives, is disseminated. The public discourse must be grounded in facts, not emotion, to promote informed decision-making and constructive engagement on rural safety.
12) The Committees recommend that targeted oversight visits to farming areas be scheduled to facilitate direct engagement with farm workers and rural communities. These visits should focus on understanding the nature and extent of violence against

workers, including alleged human rights violations such as intimidation, humiliation, and abuse by farm owners. The aim is to ensure that all dimensions of rural safety, including labour rights and dignity, are adequately addressed in oversight processes.

13) SAPS should continue to include crime incidents affecting farming communities in its quarterly crime statistics reports. These statistics should be disaggregated by victims and perpetrators, to support evidence-based oversight, identify trends, and inform targeted interventions in rural safety and policing.

14) SAPS should adopt a more balanced and targeted approach to violence prevention, recognising the high volume of urban crime, while also addressing the unique, premeditated, and often disproportionately severe nature of rural violence. Strategies must consider the specific vulnerabilities of rural communities and their broader impact on food security and social cohesion. Interventions must reflect the reality that victims include not only farmers but also farm workers and dwellers of all races, and that farm violence is economically rather than politically motivated, often linked to the theft of cash, valuables, and firearms. Responses should be grounded in research, avoid inflammatory narratives, and focus on the actual drivers of rural crime, including the role of syndicates and undocumented foreign nationals, to ensure effective, rights-based protection for all who live and work in farming communities.

5. CONCLUSION

The Committees appreciate the active participation of the public in parliamentary processes, as enshrined in the Constitution. They underscore the importance of concerns raised by citizens regarding service delivery challenges at the grassroots level, as such engagement enables Parliament to play a more effective role in holding Departments accountable and driving improvements in service delivery.

The Committees thank Mr Sitho, and the representatives from PPS STOP Farm Killings (NPC) and Agri-Alert SA.

Report to be considered.

