

MEMORANDUM
BY RURAL COMMUNITIES SEEKING RESTORATION OF THEIR LAND
TO THE MULTI-PARTY NEGOTIATING PROCESS

[17]

25/6/93

We the representatives of rural communities, who have born the brunt to the apartheid land policies, demand our right to the land.

Back to our land! Land for the landless!

We demand that the land of those who were forcibly removed by the apartheid government be returned immediately. This is not a demand for land reform, it is simply a demand for restoration -- for the undoing of one of the worst wrongs of apartheid, for a levelling of the playing field. We demand that we are allowed to return to the graves of our ancestors, as our traditions call us to do. No other land can be compensation for what we have lost.

We demand that the millions of our people who were left landless through the Land Acts and the economic ravages of apartheid be given real access to land. Apartheid has left most of our people without their own land -- in the homelands, on the white farms, as tenants and labour tenants. It is not enough to say that they can buy land -- apartheid has impoverished people, and we need to be given assistance, as the white farmers have been assisted for so many decades.

We need additional land. Our communities are growing. Even the few who were lucky enough to hang on to a piece of land find that they cannot survive any more, that plots are getting smaller. A new South Africa will not be truly free, unless people are able to purchase additional land. We demand that the services of the Land Bank, the marketing boards, the cooperatives and all other institutions be re-shaped to meet the needs of all South Africa's people, not only a small minority.

Farmworkers and labour tenants must have their rights

Farmworkers have a right to security of tenure, either through ownership or legislative recognition of their rights, on the land which they now occupy, and on which they work.

Provision must be made for farmworkers to have access to farming land on the farms on which they now work.

In the case of abandoned farms or absentee farmers, farmworkers have the right to remain and work these farms, and receive support to do this. One farm, one farmer! No farmer should be allowed to have more than one farm.

Farmworkers demand a right to be recognised as farmers themselves, and to have the opportunity to own and work land in a land reform process. We are the ones who actually till the land, who tend the crops, who herd the cattle -- we are farmers!

• Farmworkers that have been evicted from farms they have been living on and working for generations are given an opportunity to farm land of their own.

Many farmworkers were members of communities that were forcibly removed in the past. Our right to reclaim land as part of those communities must be recognised.

Women living on farms must have a right to all of the above.

Restoration of land a priority

We demand that the issues of restoration and land reform be addressed urgently. There can be no freedom without land. The multi-party forum needs to commit itself to restoration before a new constitution is drawn up. A land reform policy must be drawn up in consultation and involvement of affected communities and organisations. We call for the formation of a Land Forum in which these issues can be negotiated by the major role-players.

We call for a moratorium on the sale of state land -- End unilateral restructuring!

The De Klerk government must immediately stop all unilateral restructuring of land matters. We demand a moratorium on the sale of state land. We demand that the government cease setting up unrepresentative advisory structures to deal with land matters. We demand the immediate repeal of legislation allowing for the transfer of state land to the homelands. This legislation is being bulldozed through the tricameral parliament despite massive opposition from those affected.

We need a Land Claims Court, away with ACLA

The Advisory Commission on Land Allocation (ACLA) is slow, unrepresentative, and toothless. In more than a year of operating, it has given back land to only two rural communities. We need a Land Claims Court which is representative of the people who live on the land. We need a Court that can take decisions.

We need a speedy process -- when we were removed, no one came to us to negotiate the terms in lengthy legal processes -- why can't the process be reversed just as speedily? The government claims it has no money for land redistribution -- where did it get the money for forced removals?

Re-occupation is the alternative

The rural people of our land are known for their patience. However, our patience is not endless. If the negotiators do not address at least the minimum demand of restoration urgently, the only course of action left to our communities is to return to our land. Let them remove us again! We would rather die on our land, than to live away from it! The graves of our ancestors are our title deeds, and we will return.
MAYIBUYE!!