

ANC dismisses youth league land grab claims

By: Mail & Guardian Online

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ANC secretary general Gwede Mantashe says the party won't engage with its youth wing.

"It will not be helpful to engage in violent polemics with the ANC Youth League in the run-up to the ANC policy conference. The conference will address land reform in detail," he said on Wednesday.

"It is not the ANC policy to expropriate land without compensation and personally I don't think it will work," he said.

Mantashe was talking at a meeting between the ANC and South African farmers in Morningside, Johannesburg.

He said the party was engaging with both established and emerging farmers to help create a successful agricultural environment in the country.

"Land distribution [to emerging farmers who claim land] must go together with things like food production and food security."

Farmer safety

Mantashe was joined at the meeting by Police Minister Nathi Mthethwa, who said the issue of farmer safety was "touched on" during the meeting.

AfriForum and the Transvaal Agriculture Union (TAU SA) announced on Wednesday that they were preparing to lay charges against ANC Youth League deputy president Ronald Lamola over comments he made about land reform.

On Tuesday, Lamola said the Constitution must be changed to allow for the expropriation of land without compensation.

He warned that if white South Africans did not hand land over to poor blacks, there could be land invasions like those which took place in Zimbabwe.

AfriForum legal representative Willie Spies said Lamola's comments amounted to hate speech and fell within the definitions of incitement to violence.

TAU SA said it was "disgusted" by Lamola's comments and would file a complaint with the South African Human Rights Commission.

Spies said Lamola specifically referred to, among others, "the Van Tonders and the Van der Merwes on farms" and warned that their safety cannot be guaranteed.

Ready for a fight

ANC spokesperson Magdalene Moonsamy said the groups needed to be "ready for the fight of their lives".

"We welcome this battle and we will not retreat. We are adamant that this issue of land cannot be negotiated and at no point will we back down," she said.

Mantashe said he chose not to watch a video made by AfriForum which called on South Africans to take a stand against certain ANC policies, specifically about land ownership.

“I have a problem with AfriForum, they are an offshoot of Mynwerkersunie – a racist organization. I have no desire to watch it. I will only get surprised if they [AfriForum] do something different.”

The video, entitled *ANC, the conmen* alleges that the ANC plans to make fundamental changes to the Constitution, which will remove the right to private land ownership.

The SABC has refused to flight the video as a paid advert. – Sapa

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