



Media release

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Comment by Minister Bheki Cele inappropriate!

The remark 'Who do you think you are?' by Minister Bheki Cele, Minister of Police, to Roland Collyer, a farmer from Normandien in KwaZulu-Natal, is derogatory and inappropriate. There is no justification for such outbursts of anger or derogatory remarks. What was supposed to be a constructive dialogue between the agricultural community and the Minister of Police has now turned into a public spat.

It is the duty of the government to protect its citizens and it is the right of any citizen to enter into discussions with the government on this matter. Government officials must always maintain the necessary respect and show empathy. If they fail to do so, it is contrary to the Constitution.

This type of angry outburst undermines the government's positive attitude towards farmers and workers.

For this reason, Agri SA will raise the incident with President Ramaphosa so that he can intervene by investigating the matter and assist in finding solutions for constructive co-operation and consensus. The generalisation of a single incident cannot be put forward as the norm but is in fact the exception to the rule.

"Agri SA has always strived to be part of the solution and provide the necessary support regarding problems we experience with rural safety", said Tommie Esterhuysen, chairman of Agri SA's Centre of Excellence: Rural Safety.

He added: "It is unfortunate that rural security has degenerated into a political debate during an imbizo and has not received the necessary attention".

It is the duty of the Minister of Police and the South African Police Service (SAPS) to carry out their task without fear and favour and to show the necessary patience and tact to work with all law-abiding citizens to solve crime in the country. These duties are set out in our Constitution.

The Constitution forms the cornerstone of our democracy and enshrines the rights of all people in our country. Agri SA therefore remains committed to working with the Minister to help establish and promote a culture of mutual respect and co-operation. It is in the national interest that we all join forces to fight crime of any nature whatsoever – now more than ever before.

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