

Follow Dutton's call and get out now, white South African farmers told



Home Affairs Minister Peter Dutton sparked diplomatic tensions with South Africa last week.

Picture: Richard Dobson

- The Australian, 12:00AM March 23, 2018, EAN HIGGINS, Reporter, RACHEL BAXENDALE, Reporter

A prominent South African political leader has said white farmers should take up the “racist” call of Home Affairs Minister Peter Dutton to migrate to Australia, but “leave everything” for the black majority.

Julius Malema, a member of parliament who heads the Economic Freedom Fighters party and is a former senior figure in the ruling African National Congress, told a rally: “A racist country like Australia says ‘EFF wants to kill white farmers — they must come to Australia’.

“If they want to go, they must go. They must leave the keys of the tractors because we want to work the land. They must leave the keys of the houses, because we want to live in those houses.”

Mr Malema's remarks to a roaring crowd in Mpumalanga in the east of the country came as more Australian politicians entered the debate over Mr Dutton's call last week to fast-track the migration of white South African farmers escaping violence, torture, rape and murder.

Mr Dutton sparked controversy and diplomatic tensions when he argued the “persecuted” white farmers needed help from a “civilised country”.

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Nationals MP Andrew Broad, a former president of the Victorian Farmers Federation who travelled to South Africa several years ago, warned: “If we take away the farmers from South Africa, we rob them of the capacity to farm that ground.

“The black South African farmers certainly have not proved themselves. They need the skillset of the white South African farmers if they’re going to have any chance of feeding the population they’ve got.”

Joy van Dijk moved from South Africa to a farm at Hargraves in central west NSW with her family in 2009, eight years after her father was murdered on the Mpumalanga cattle farm they ran and lived on.

“In the morning he went out to milk the cows with his workers,” Ms van Dijk said. “When he got there, there were three guys, they shot him, and when he didn’t die they threw stones at him.”

At the time of the murder, Ms van Dijk said, her father had recently signed a contract to sell the farm to the South African government, to pass on to local blacks who were able to prove an ancestral claim to the land.

When she and other members of her family visited the farm several months after the transfer to the new owners, Ms van Dijk said, “they didn’t live in the house, it was falling apart”, adding that this could have been due to local - superstitions about ghosts.

“They didn’t farm the land, the orange trees. They didn’t really do anything. They just wanted to live on their little plots,” she said.

Liberal Democrats leader David Leyonhjelm slammed comments from Greens senator Nick McKim, who claimed that the Liberal Party “still has a White Australia policy” and accused Mr Dutton of being “racist”, “fascist” and “regurgitating speaking points from neo-Nazis”.

Senator McKim was “living in the past”, Senator Leyonhjelm said.

“Here we have a group of people who are being persecuted, murdered, chucked off their farms because they are white. That is plain and simple racism. The fact that the racism used to work the other way 20-odd years ago does not justify racism in the opposite direction today.”