

ET Buried on farm

Written by SAPA

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AWB leader and farmer Eugene Terre'Blanche was buried on his farm in Ventersdorp on Friday after a week of flared tempers sparked by his violent death. Terre'Blanche was hacked and beaten to death in his bed on his farm on Easter Saturday at the age of 69.

The murder of the white supremacist movement's leader sent shockwaves through sections of the Afrikaner and farming community, which fear they are being targeted. They have rejected reports that he died in a wage dispute with the two farm workers arrested. This has prompted National Police Commissioner Bheki Cele to urge people to be "colourblind" when coming to terms with crime. As negative publicity about the country's safety built ahead of the 2010 Soccer World Cup, Cele emerged from a brief meeting with AWB leaders to announce that "everyone" was confident there would be no crime during the international sporting spectacle.

Intense debate has dominated headlines since Terre'Blanche's murder over whether the singing of the lyrics "shoot the boer" by ANC Youth League president Julius Malema was to blame. This belief heightened the anger and fear apparent among the thousands of people who gathered at Ventersdorp's Protestant Church for the funeral. Malema has now agreed to sing the words only while outside the country. "That black group from Julius, it doesn't matter to them who you are, if your skin is white, they are going to kill you," shouted one woman during an impromptu meeting outside the church. Potchefstroom residents Dirk and Rita Venter said recent events had left them fearful. "It is scary. I feel as if the world is coming to an end. It makes my heart beat faster from fear," said Rita. Dirk said the only thing the Afrikaners needed was "a strong leader to take the cause forward".

After Terre'Blanche's coffin was carried into the church by pallbearers -- including his successor Steyn van Ronge -- Dominee Ferdie Devenier told mourners that at least 30,000 messages of condolence to his family had been received by an unnamed website. Entertainer Steve Hofmeyr said the eyes of the world were on the Afrikaner, and that "bloodhound" journalists were waiting for a backlash. Addressing mourners, he spoke of the "genocide" of the Afrikaner. He had gone through Afrikaner cultural archives and could not find any songs that insulted other nations, he said. Mourners sang "Die Stem", which was South Africa's national anthem during the apartheid era and is considered by many to be as offensive as the singing of "shoot the boer". They wore army uniforms, khaki clothes, and their "Sunday best" to the funeral, among them a few gothic teenagers with pink hair and a woman in Afrikaner cultural dress and bonnet. They waved apartheid-era flags and flags bearing the AWB's swastika-like insignia as they listened to the church service on the lawns of the 700-seater church, which was packed. About

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50 motorcyclists roared around the small town. Traditional Afrikaans music (Boeremusiek) blared from bakkies and from cellphone ringtones. Black residents watched impassively. Guarded by gun-toting policemen and explosives specialists, Agriculture Minister Tina Joemat-Pettersson slipped into the church through a side entrance.

Later, Terre'Blanche's body made its final journey to his farm in a white hearse, led by a posse of young white girls on stallions. His family sobbed and embraced one another as they threw petals onto his coffin as it was lowered into the ground.

The racial clashes predicted by some did not materialise. The North West town's black residents, who mostly live in the suburb of Tshing, largely ignored the event. In an attempt to avoid confrontation, the Congress of SA Trade Unions' provincial structure arranged a meeting at the same time as the noon funeral. "He inflicted pain on us, calling us names. He enjoyed it, now it's for us to rejoice," Sibongile Links said about Terre'Blanche. "I am happy that he is dead, laat hy gaan [let him go]," said 48-year-old Gert Booie. "I thought the funeral was on Sunday, may his soul rest in peace. We are free at last," said another resident Thabea Mkomoti. The AWB leader served time in prison for severely beating a petrol attendant.

His movement, formed in a garage in Heidelberg, led a charge through the doors of a centre hosting negotiations for a non-racial South African government. It also attempted a coup on a neighbouring apartheid "homeland".