

Press Release

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AgriSA accusations against Crouse an unwarranted and unacceptable smear – IRR

AgriSA has reported Institute of Race Relations (IRR) Fellow, Gabriel Crouse, to the Press Ombud, based on the allegation that he “grossly misquoted” the organisation’s president, Dan Kriek. This is according to a message under the Twitter handle @AgriSAOfficial. In addition, the IRR has access to a Whatsapp message (which has apparently been shared by Dan Kriek with AgriSA’s members), which accuses Crouse of spreading “FAKE news”. Much of this message has also been shared by Kwanalu (KwaZulu-Natal Agricultural Union).

On 4 February 2019, at the University of the Western Cape, Kriek and Crouse both attended a conference on land reform where a number of people suggested that land reform should focus primarily on smaller farms, bypassing the biggest commercial producers. Against this background, Kriek, who was one of the last to speak at an afternoon breakaway session, said: “80% [of farmers] make 20% of food, so with that

then we can do drastic things. No, not drastic things – but we can make faster progress.”

When Crouse approached him to ask follow-up questions, Kriek explained that he had meant to make the opposite impression – that he wanted to protect the small farmer, too. Crouse made sure to note this in his report on the conference.

On 23 February 2019, at St George’s Hotel in Pretoria, Kriek and Crouse both attended another conference on land reform. In the afternoon, Crouse attended a breakaway session aimed at discussing which land should be targeted for expropriation. This was chaired by Kriek.

Here, Kriek said that “exemptions” from expropriation should be offered to agriculture enterprises that “employ more than 100”; “invest more than R10 million”; and “do skills development”. He also said (presumably, of non-exempted farmers): “either stay where you are and you will come under all sorts of pressure or...”

The IRR stands by Crouse’s articles, which accurately capture what Kriek said. It regards the accusations made against Crouse as an unwarranted and unacceptable smear.

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