

Press Release



**South African
Institute of
Race Relations**

South Africa's Leading Research and Policy Organisation

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Race Relations Institute backs AfriForum on racism charge

The South African Institute of Race Relations has noted with concern the attack by the chairman of the South African Communist Party (SACP), Mr Gwede Mantashe, on the civil rights organisation AfriForum. Speaking at an SACP congress this week Mr Mantashe described AfriForum as a group that fights for a 'racist cause'.

This morning the Institute's deputy CEO, Frans Cronje, said that, "AfriForum's mandate to halt the withdrawal of minority groups from public life in South Africa is very important. The withdrawal of minority groups from public deliberation and interaction in South Africa could easily occur in a society dominated by large and well funded and supported political movements such as the ANC. Standing up for minority rights under such circumstances requires real determination and courage which has time and again been demonstrated by AfriForum's leadership."

Cronje added that, "On its recent track record of legal and public interventions AfriForum has probably established itself as the leading civil rights organisation in South Africa. While it acts on behalf of minority groups the precedents and examples it sets serve to strengthen the civil liberties of all South Africans."

Cronje said that he would encourage Gwede Mantashe not to make the same mistakes as Thabo Mbeki in alienating and making enemies of civil society groups who had the best interests of the country at heart, "a more positive engagement from Mr Mantashe with civil rights groups including AfriForum could pay significant dividends for all of South Africa's people."