

## South African Firebrand Party Leader Calls For Xenophobic Anger To Be Directed At Wealthy Whites

David Brennan

September 4, 2019

A leftist leader in South Africa has called for the anger fueling a recent wave of xenophobic violence against African foreigners to be redirected toward the country's wealthy white population.

The violence, which has mainly targeted Africans from other countries and their businesses, has been condemned by South African President Cyril Ramaphosa and drawn protests from other African leaders, the [BBC](#) reported. Ramaphosa said Tuesday that the violence is "totally unacceptable, something that we cannot allow to happen in South Africa... I want to stop it immediately."

At least five people have been killed in the unrest, with dozens arrested in Johannesburg—the country's largest city. South African Police have used tear gas, rubber bullets and stun grenades to try and disperse angry crowds.

But the leader of the far-left Economic Freedom Fighters (EFF) political party—[Julius Malema](#)—said that while the anger was legitimate, it was not focused on the right target.

"Our anger is directed at wrong people," Malema wrote on Twitter. "Like all of us, our African brothers & sisters are selling their cheap labour for survival. The owners of our wealth is white monopoly capital; they are refusing to share it with us & the ruling party [#ANC](#) protects them."

Malema later followed up with a second tweet, suggesting "these whites must for a second keep quiet because we are dealing with a mess created by them. They are the ones who created this situation by telling us that we are poor & unemployed because 'foreigners' took our jobs. We are fighting for cramps."

Malema once belonged to the dominant African National Congress party, which has won every general election in post-apartheid South Africa. Malema was the party's Youth League president until he was expelled in 2012 for his divisive rhetoric.

He founded the EFF in 2013 and under his leadership, the party has taken a host of controversial policy positions. These include the suggestion that the government should take land from white farmers without paying compensation, and redistribute it to black South Africans.

The "white monopoly capital" referenced in Malema's tweet has long been a salient issue in South African politics. It generally refers to the unequal distribution of national wealth, which

benefits white citizens and has its roots in the racist white minority apartheid rule of South Africa which ended in 1994.

Steven Friedman, a political science professor at the University of Johannesburg, told *Newsweek* that the apartheid-era white population "used the law and severe restrictions on black business activity to ensure that they monopolized wealth and economic power."

Those who use the term, including Malema, have been dismissed by opponents as far-left ideologues or manipulative populists, seeking to exploit the racial divisions that scar the country.

But despite 25 years of democracy, this racialized economic inequality remains. "The term 'white capital' refers to this reality," Friedman explained, "that blacks might control politics but whites still dominate the economy. This reality is exploited by some politicians and is clearly not a reason to threaten violence. But it is the reality which is divisive, not the fact that people draw attention to it."

AfriForum, an NGO that focuses on the civil rights issues affecting the minority white Afrikaner community, was quick to condemn Malema's assertions on Twitter, *The Citizen* reported.

The group's Deputy CEO Ernst Roets said the tweet was "nothing other than a racist incitement of violence against minorities. Violence against any community has to stop. It should not be directed at anyone else. The world should take notice of the persecution of minorities in South Africa."

AfriForum has credited itself with pulling President Donald Trump into the debate over land appropriation in South Africa. In August 2018, the president tweeted that he had asked Secretary of State Mike Pompeo to "closely study the South Africa land and farm seizures and expropriations and the large scale killing of farmers."

Following the tweet, Roets said that the group's lobbying "has certainly had an impact." He continued: "We have spoken with a lot of people who have had contact with President Trump and we have spoken with many think tanks, one of them for example the Cato Institute, which has taken a very strong stance shortly before this statement now by President Trump."