

# AfriForum targets draft bill in fight against land expropriation

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AfriForum is eyeing the draft expropriation bill as its next target to fight the expropriation of land without compensation.

On Wednesday, the civil right organisation announced that it has launched a campaign to involve the public in taking a stand against the bill.

The campaign involves a specially-designed website where AfriForum states that it has identified various loopholes in the bill.

"Help AfriForum to prevent the new bill from becoming a reality by declaring your support for the campaign."

AfriForum then urges concerned people to "complete the form below to submit AfriForum's comments on your behalf".

This comes after Public Works Minister Thulas Nxesi published the draft bill in the government gazette on December 21 following Cabinet approval on December 5.

In his notice, Nxesi said: "Interested persons may submit written submissions on the draft expropriation bill 2019 not later than 60 days from the date of publication of this notice."

On Wednesday, AfriForum deputy CEO Ernst Roets said there was a series of fundamental flaws in the draft bill and that it was imperative that the public joined the fight to protect property rights.

"There is a series of flaws in the finer details of the draft bill, which we point out in our submission. One example is the vague definition of 'public interest', which makes it possible for the ANC to view its political agenda as in the public's interest," Roets said.

"However, we should not get entangled in the details of the draft bill, because the most significant problems are not in the detail, but in the ruling party's broad ideological points of departure, its racist agenda, and its advocacy of a twisted image of South Africa's history and healthy economic principles," he said.

Part of AfriForum's comment on the draft bill is that the proposed legislation was premature as there still was a process according to which the public could still give their input on expropriation without compensation.

"Although the public participation process has mostly been finalised, there remains a dispute over the manner in which the public's inputs were processed."

The civil rights organisation has been vocal in its objection of proposal to amend the constitution to allow expropriation of land without compensation.

It tried to interdict the adoption of the report of the constitutional review committee last year, but their application was dismissed.

It has since threatened to challenge the merits of the public participation followed by the committee.

The draft bill, which provides for just and equitable compensation, empowers the public works minister to expropriate property for a public purpose or in the public interest.

"A power to expropriate property may not be exercised unless the expropriating authority has without success attempted to reach an agreement with the owner or the holder of an unregistered right in property for the acquisition thereof on reasonable terms."

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