

# AFRA



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## Land restoration: first step to heal apartheid's scars

**W**hen the government scrapped the racist land laws, communities who lost their land through these Acts had no doubt that this land would be returned to them. Instead the government set up the Advisory Commission on Land Allocation (ACLA). ACLA came in response to severe criticism of the government's White Paper On Land Reform.

An attempt to channel demands for land justice, ACLA falls short of community demands for land restoration. ACLA does not accept the principle of restoration. Instead, its brief is limited to advising the state president about allocation of undeveloped state land, set aside in terms of the scrapped racist laws. In advising the state president, ACLA will take account of the needs of people who were disadvantaged through apartheid laws regarding land.

Despite its limitations, communities who are

part of the National Land Restoration campaign recently decided to test its ability to restore land. They have, nevertheless, placed certain conditions on their cooperation with ACLA. These are dealt with elsewhere in this newsletter.

But the establishment of ACLA is only one of the ways in which the government is trying to unilaterally "solve" the land question in South Africa.

Communities seeking land restoration will also have to confront government attempts to sell off state land which was acquired through the forced removals policy.

The sale of such land to individuals or companies is likely to complicate land restoration claims.

Although the government has given assurances that the sale of state land would be frozen, they twice tried to sell off land which forms part of the AmaHlubi's land restoration claim. The latest attempt to sell off this land came in February 1992. The

attempted sale was stopped through public protest. The chairperson of ACLA later called for a freeze on the sale of land to be reviewed by ACLA.

Another disturbing trend is the transfer of such state land to other agencies. Towards the beginning of April 1992, the government transferred 3 million hectares of this land to homeland governments and gave these the power to dispose of this land.

In the light of these developments, the struggle for land restitution to apartheid's victims becomes even more urgent.

### *In this issue:*

- overview of the National Land Restoration Campaign
- ACLA
- profiles of Natal communities in the national campaign