

Media Statement



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TO: ALL MEDIA

DATE: 28 October 2015

RE: THE DPP WITHDRAWS CHARGES AGAINST TWENTY THREE STUDENTS

On 19 October 2015, the University of Cape Town obtained a court order interdicting and restraining student movements and any other persons from:

1. Disrupting or otherwise interfering in any way with the normal activities of the University;
2. Barricading entrances to all the campuses of the Applicant;
3. Committing arson, vandalising, damaging or occupying any buildings on all campuses;
4. Intimidating, threatening, harassing or causing harm;
5. Inciting persons to enter or be upon the property of the university for the purpose of unlawfully occupying or invading the property or threatening or preventing those persons lawfully entitled to occupy the property; and
6. Preventing Francis Petersen, Danie Visser, Russel Ali and Anwar Mall from returning to work.

On 20 October 2015 the South African Police Service was called to the University of Cape Town because some students were allegedly barricading the entrances to the university. The university security presented the said interdict to the police. The police informed the students that their actions were in contravention of the said interdict and that they must move away from the entrances. The students refused to move whereupon 23 persons were arrested.

The 23 persons were arrested for contravening the court interdict and contravention of Section 12 of the Regulation of the Gatherings Act 2005. The students were released from police custody on 12 October 2015 and were to appear at the Wynberg Magistrates Court on 28 October 2015.

On 26 October 2015 the Director of Public Prosecutions (DPP), Advocate Rodney de Kock, received representations from the Registrar of the University of Cape Town

requesting the DPP to withdraw all the charges against those charged on 20 and 21 October 2015.

The University submitted that any prosecution of the students and others would be bad policy, result in criminalisation of protests and would be contrary to the university's work. The university proposed lifting the interdict and as an act of good faith on an understanding that the protests would remain peaceful, lawful and respectful of the rights of all and within acceptable limits.

The DPP has duly considered representations from the university and the content of the criminal docket relating to the contravention of the interdict incident on 20 October 2015, and has decided to withdraw the charges against the 23 persons arrested on and in the vicinity of the university's premises.

The investigation in the other matter relating to the arrests in the vicinity of Parliament on 21 October 2015 must be finalised before a final decision in respect of that matter is made.

Kind Regards,

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