

Media Statement



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TO: ALL MEDIA

DATE: 13 JUNE 2016

**RE: NPA WITHDRAWS CHARGES AGAINST SEVEN UFS STUDENTS
AFTER SUCCESSFUL MEDIATION**

On 10 June 2016, the National Prosecuting Authority in the Free State withdrew the charges against seven of the nine students from the University of the Free State who were arrested on 24 February 2016 for public violence and contravention of the court order.

The students were arrested on the evening of February 24 when they were protesting on campus after the University had obtained a court order interdicting them from engaging in further illegal demonstrations. The arrests were effected by the police after the students had damaged property of the University.

Out of about 200 students that were involved in the protests, the police were able to arrest 21 students. The NPA withdrew charges against 12 of the 21 students due to insufficient evidence linking them to the offences on their first appearance.

The Director of Public Prosecutions, Advocate Xolisile Khanyile and the Chief Prosecutor, Sello Matlhoko, had several separate meetings with the University, the South African Police Service, the Human Rights Commission and the lawyers from Legal Aid South Africa representing the students with a view to address the matter.

As a result of such engagements a decision was taken by the NPA to finalise the matter through mediation. Today seven out nine students agreed to the terms and conditions of the mediation agreement. The mediation agreement is confidential as the University's internal processes are still underway.

Amongst the people involved in the mediation process were four pastors from the Free State. Advocate Khanyile is thankful to all the people that played a role in the mediation agreement.

Mediation is one of the processes aimed at trying to maintain stability and order in the University and allow the students to focus on their studies.

One student was not at court and a warrant was issued for his arrest. Another student refused to agree to the terms of the mediation agreement. The case was postponed to 04 July 2016 for the outstanding student to be traced.

Kind Regards,

Phaladi Shuping

Regional Spokesperson: DPP Free State

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