

Thursday, 22 October 2015

Faith leaders' statement on student fee crisis

National church leaders and other faith leaders gathering in Johannesburg from 21-22 October 2015 at OR Tambo, for their annual meeting, issued the following statement on the student fee crisis:

We the Church leaders of South Africa lament the student fee crisis engulfing the country. We believe this a national crisis.

We lament that we have not discerned the signs of the times. We have failed our students and not heard their voices.

We lament and strongly condemn the unnecessary use of violence and police brutality against our students and children. We call for the immediate release of all detained under these circumstances.

We further lament the exclusion of the poor from our spaces of higher education and learning because of unaffordability. We recognize that the majority of these students are black and this entrenches inequality in our nation and further disadvantages many students. Our sacred texts call us to identify with the poor and marginalised. The church and faith leaders therefore have an obligation to stand in solidarity with the students on campuses, their parents and university leadership in the country.

Consequently church and faith leaders have resolved to undertake a symbolic visit to the Wits campus to express our solidarity. We are committing ourselves to creating courageous spaces where South Africans are able to listen to one another and to the voice of God. We further encourage church and faith leaders to do the same on other campuses.

We call on university authorities, government and students to avoid further violent behaviour that shuts down dialogue. Only through deep dialogue, listening and courageous action will we be able to find lasting long-term solutions.

We especially call on the government to provide adequate resources immediately to stabilize the situation, to enable students to write their examinations, whilst lasting solutions are being explored with all stakeholders over the next 12 months.

As Church and faith leaders we commit to engage and journey with all stakeholders on this issue.

We also assure the students, their parents and university leadership and government in the country of our continued prayers in this time of crisis.

Participants:

- 1. Archbishop Dr. Thabo Makgoba – Anglican Church of Southern Africa, Chairperson of the NCLC*
- 2. Archbishop Dr. Zandisile Magxwalisa – Jerusalem Church in South Africa*
- 3. Archbishop Jabulani Nxumalo – Roman Catholic Church*
- 4. Rev. Mukondeleli Ramulondi – Uniting Presbyterian Church in Southern Africa*
- 5. The Most Revd Bishop Lunga ka Siboto – Ethiopian Episcopal Church*
- 6. Bishop Ziphozihle Siwa – Methodist Church of Southern Africa / SACC*
- 7. Bishop Nkosekhaya Dikana – Word of Life*
- 8. Bishop Sonwabo Dlula – Reformed Apostolic Mission of South Africa*
- 9. Prof. Jerry Pillay – World Communion of Reformed Churches*
- 10. Bishop Melumzi Norhushu – Ebenezer Christian Church*
- 11. Dr. Emmanuel Tshilenga – International Church of Pretoria*
- 12. Prof Mary-Anne Plaatzies Van Huffel – Uniting Reformed Church in Southern Africa*
- 13. Dr. David Phaladi Tswaedi – Lutheran Communion in Southern Africa*

14. Dr. Abraham Hanekom – Commission For Witness
15. Dr. Kobus Gerber - Dutch Reformed Church in South Africa
16. Rev. Lulama Sibeko – Reformed Apostolic Mission of South Africa
17. Rev. Garrett Möller – Volkskerk van Afrika
18. Dr. Frank Chikane – AFM International / SACC
19. Dr. Renier Koegelenberg – NRASD
20. Dr. Welile Mazamisa – NRASD
21. Rev. Lungile Mpetsheni – Uniting Presbyterian Church in Southern Africa
22. Rev. Bonisile Moses Ngcayisa – Presbyterian Church of Africa
23. Dr. Gustav Claassen – Dutch Reformed Church in South Africa
24. Dr. William Van Der Merwe – Dutch Reformed Church in South Africa
25. Rev. Charmaine Morgan – Methodist Church of Southern Africa
26. Rev. Moss Ntlha – The Evangelical Alliance of South Africa
27. Rev. Canon Desmond Lambrechts – Anglican Church of Southern Africa
28. Pastor. Hermy Damons – International Federation of Christian Churches
29. Rev. Senamo Molisiwa – Council of African Instituted Churches
30. Bishop. Horst Muller - Evangelical Lutheran Church in Southern Africa (N-T)
31. Pastor Xola Skosana – Way of Life
32. Mr. Marcus Van Wyk – SACLI
33. Mr. Miles Giljam – SACLI
34. Mr. Henry Jeffreys – Journalist and analyst
35. Rev. Loyiso Jonga – Baptist Church
36. Rev. Edwin Arrison – Kairos Southern Africa
37. Rev. Miranda Magxwalisa - Jerusalem Church in South Africa
38. Rev. Cornelis Janse van Rensburg - Dutch Reformed Church in South Africa
39. Rev. Cornelis Du Toit - Dutch Reformed Church in South Africa
40. Dr. Siph Mahokoto – NRASD
41. Dr. Garth Japhet – Heartlines
42. Sheikh Achmat Sedick – Muslim Judicial Council (SA)
43. Ms. Shirley Moulder – Anglican Church of Southern Africa

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