

#FeesMustFall crescendo

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A SHUTDOWN of universities across the country was expected from today as students vowed to "carry on for as long as we need to" in protests over fee hikes.

Even the inflation-related adjustment to fees announced by Higher Education Minister Blade Nzimande would not halt nationwide protests.

"It is zero percent increment or nothing," student leaders said this morning, declaring today "a day of mass action".

"We don't have a choice here. Higher education has become unaffordable and we will continue to protest until our demands are met... we will carry on as long as we need to."

"Today will be a day of mass action... there will be marches all over. In Cape Town we are marching to Parliament and in Gauteng universities like the University of Pretoria and Wits will be holding marches as well," said SA Students' Congress (Sasco) national secretary-general Luzuko Buku this morning.

So determined are the students that even a woman who was hit by a car when she blocked a gate at Wits University on Friday sat undeterred on the stairs of the university's Great Hall this morning as struggle songs played softly from speakers.

Several students were seen cleaning up the Senate House building, which they have occupied as part of the protest since the university council refused to meet them there on Monday.

A few students were still sleeping at about 7am after spending the night in the Great Hall.

The students held a study session as part of their occupation of the hall last night.

After the announcement that there would be a 6 percent cap on fee increases yesterday, Wits vice-chancellor Adam Habib reportedly said he would try to negotiate with the students today but some students said they didn't trust the council.

"The council is negotiating in bad faith."

"They don't have our best interests at heart," said Ontirese Phetlu, a second-year education



Students vow to continue their protest action

BURNING ISSUE: Students at UCT protest as part of a countrywide demonstration against proposed fee hikes.

PICTURE: MICHAEL WALKER

student. He didn't trust Habib and wanted him gone.

Thandeka Nene, a law student in her final year, said the council was arrogant and that they didn't understand that fee increases were contributing to the cycle of poverty.

Today Sasco president Ntuthuko Makhombo said Sasco noted with caution the 6 percent fee cap announcement made by the government and Universities South Africa.

"We have noted the principled

reached of an inflation-related adjustment to the fees. We, however, remain resolute that there ought to be a zero percent fee increment in all institutions and we welcome the fact that there is at least movement from the 10 or more percent proposed earlier.

"This announcement does not change our stance on no fee increment and we will continue to push forward until this call is realised."

"We call for the bailout of the higher education system by the gov-

ernment and the declaration of a state of emergency on education in the land," Makhombo said.

"We call for the end of austerity in relation to education spending by the ANC-led government."

At North-West University's Potchefstroom campus, some students stood together in front of the statue of Afrikaans poet Jakob Daniel du Toit, known as Totius, in a bid to stop protesting students from defacing it.

Yesterday The Star witnessed a

motorist attempting to run over students protesting outside Wits Medical School.

On Monday, a man's vehicle was overturned and the occupant beaten after he attempted to drive through a group of protesting Wits students on Empire Road.

According to Gauteng police spokesman Lieutenant-Colonel Lungelo Dlamini, no arrests had been made.

"No one has been arrested or charged yet but we are continuing



TAKING A STAND: Pupils from St James Preparatory School in Jeppestown protest against the lack of policing in parks.

PICTURE: NOKUTHULA MBATHA

Pupils protest after teacher killed in park

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THE HEARTACHE caused by the murder of Joburg teacher Zukisa Kela at Rhodes Park in Kensington at the weekend has prompted pupils to take a stand against crime.

The Westbury Secondary School teacher, his fiancée and another couple were attacked by 12 men at the park on Saturday. The men were tied up and thrown in the lake, where they drowned. One woman was raped while the other woman escaped unharmed.

When news of the attack reached St James Preparatory

School in neighbouring Jeppestown, they decided to take action.

As a form of protest, a group of children in Grade R, as well as Grade 7 pupils, stood on the pavement outside the school yesterday and held up placards with anti-crime messages.

"Rhodes Park attack - where is it really safe?" and "Where will the children play?" read the pupils' posters, which attracted the attention of passers-by and commuters.

Pupil Wande Nduna said the incident had made her angry.

"It has hurt us and affected the entire community. As youngsters, we don't feel safe in our own neigh-

bourhoods any more."

Meanwhile, Kela's relatives are making funeral arrangements and are waiting for his mother to arrive from the Eastern Cape.

His aunt Babalwa told The Star that they wanted those responsible for his death to be brought to book.

"It is sad because we have lost a son."

"The law must now take its course and find those who killed him," she said.

Joburg mayor Parks Tau said: "A partnership among safety and security stakeholders will be initiated immediately to root out criminal elements."

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