

TO ALL MEDIA/ NEWS EDITORS

JOHANNESBURG, GAUTENG

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## **NYDA CALLS FOR PEACEFUL ENGAGEMENT AND CONSTRUCTIVE DIALOGUE AT THE UNIVERSITY OF FORT HARE**

The National Youth Development Agency (NYDA) expresses deep concern over the recent violent protests at the University of Fort Hare, which have resulted in extensive damage to key university infrastructure and the suspension of academic activities.

The NYDA stands in solidarity with young people across South Africa in their right to raise grievances and demand accountability, representation, and transformation within higher education institutions. Equally, the Agency strongly condemns the burning of university property and any form of violence that undermines the very future for which students are fighting.

Public universities are not only centres of learning, but also custodians of our collective heritage. The destruction of facilities such as laboratories, administrative buildings, and student service centres represents a setback to thousands of young people who depend on these institutions for education, research, and opportunity.

The NYDA acknowledges the frustration that often arises when students feel unheard or marginalised in institutional decision-making processes. Such concerns must be addressed through inclusive dialogue, transparent governance, and effective student representation and not through violence or intimidation.

The Agency, therefore, calls for the immediate restoration of calm and order across all affected campuses, coupled with a renewed commitment to constructive engagement between student leadership, university management, and government to address the root causes of discontent, including issues of democratic representation, governance, and equitable access to resources.

The NYDA further urges all parties to safeguard the academic heritage and infrastructure of our universities, which stand as vital instruments for empowerment, knowledge production, and the advancement of future generations.

The NYDA Executive Chairperson, Dr. Sunshine Myende, has expressed her concerns, stating that “the anger of young people must be heard, not feared. But our power as a generation lies not in the burning of our institutions, but in building them into spaces that reflect justice, accountability, and hope. The struggle of today’s youth is not to destroy what exists, but it is to reimagine and transform it.

“South Africa’s universities must remain places of intellectual freedom, transformation, and social progress, not sites of destruction,” says Dr Myende.

As a statutory body mandated to champion youth development and empowerment, the NYDA reiterates its commitment to work with all stakeholders, including the Department of Higher Education and Training, student organisations, and university councils, to promote solutions that centre the voices of young people while safeguarding their futures.

**END**

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