

## Team established to investigate Fort Hare murders

Police Minister Bheki Cele has assured the management of Fort Hare University that police are intensifying their response to the recent violent and fatal attacks at the institution.



Image source: John Roman – [123RF.com](https://www.123RF.com)

Cele on Wednesday welcomed the heightened policing interventions by the South African Police Service (SAPS) to find those responsible for a series of attacks on university staff, which have claimed two lives.

The latest was the murder of Fort Hare University (FHU) Vice Chancellor, Professor Sakhela Buhlungu's protector Mboneni Vesele, who was shot and killed over the weekend.

The ministerial visit comprised Cele, Higher Education and Science and Innovation Minister Blade Nzimande, Minister in the Presidency Mondli Gungubele as well as State Security Deputy Minister Zizi Kodwa.

National Police Commissioner General Fannie Masemola has established a multi-disciplinary team to investigate the pattern of threats on the lives of the staff members of the institution.

Police Ministry spokesperson Lirandzu Themba said the team, which will report directly to the office of the National Commissioner, was expected to commence its investigations into the murder of Vesele.

“Mr Vesele was a close protector and driver of Fort Hare University Vice Chancellor, Professor Sakhela Buhlungu, he was killed while inside the Professor’s vehicle. The scope of the investigative team will also include other alleged attempted hits on university staff, including the murder of Fort Hare University fleet manager, Petrus Roets, who was fatally shot last year [in] March,” said Themba.

Minister Cele says the high-level intervention was necessary and “must produce results”.

“It is quite clear that the local police are just not working fast enough in making arrests and this newly established National Team through its work, must send a strong message to criminals that this government will not be threatened or shaken and will certainly not back down or co-govern with criminals,” said Cele.

The multi-disciplinary team will include detectives, forensic analysts, crime intelligence, members of organised crime and the Directorate for Priority Crime Investigation (DPCI).

“As we start the academic year, we can’t afford to have anyone, be it a student, a lecturer and even a groundsman or cleaner of this institution feel uneasy about their safety. This is why the team must work closely with university staff and the intelligence community to crack the cases that will see the culprits go to jail.

“This, I am sure will guarantee that this respected institution is not turned into a killing field,” said the Minister.

The high-level team of Security Cluster ministers and the SAPS management on Wednesday paid a visit to Vesele’s family.

“The delegation also met with the Vice Chancellor of Fort Hare University, Professor Sakhela Buhlungu, who expressed his appreciation for ramped up police response from the National office, to prevent combat and investigate crime within the institution,” said the Police Ministry.

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