

Presidency receives memorandum from student activists

Presidency Director-General Dr Cassius Lubisi has received a memorandum from #FeesMustFall activists demanding blanket amnesty for activists who have been convicted of crimes arising from the #FeesMustFall protest in 2017.



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Activists arrived at the Union Buildings in Pretoria on Wednesday, 2 January following a march from KwaZulu-Natal to Leeukop correctional centre in Gauteng, where activist Kanya Cekeshe is serving a sentence arising from the #FeesMustFall protest.

Lubisi met the marching delegation at the Union Buildings and received the memorandum on behalf of President Cyril Ramaphosa. Lubisi told the delegation that government would respond to the memorandum, which also addresses unemployment and other issues affecting youth.

Lubisi drew the group's attention to the offer extended five months ago by Minister of Justice and Correctional Services, Michael Masutha, to help #FeesMustFall activists comply with the procedures required for amnesty applications.

At the time, Masutha pointed out to the #FeesMustFall movement that no blanket exemption from prosecution or presidential pardons would be granted for students linked to #FeesMustFall-related violence.

However, the Minister indicated his willingness to guide students in making applications to the National Prosecuting Authority (NPA) for a review of prosecutorial decisions in cases involving students who are already charged and whose matters are currently on trial.

“The Minister stated that President Cyril Ramaphosa could not interfere with judicial processes and said presidential pardons were granted in respect of convicted and sentenced persons only on the basis of the information they provide and in circumstances where applicants showed good cause. Furthermore, under no circumstances could presidential pardons be predetermined.

“Minister Masutha has proposed that students form a delegation to provide a list of all the students who have been arrested, charged, convicted or are still undergoing trial. He said where appropriate, he would guide the students on the process of making the applications for a presidential pardon.

“The Minister said the severity of the charges concerned and public interest in these cases were among the factors the President would need to take into account before deciding whether to grant amnesty,” said the Presidency.

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