



For immediate release:

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## CHE Statement on the racially motivated attack on a Black student which occurred at Stellenbosch University

The Council on Higher Education (CHE) has today learnt of the horrific racially motivated attack on a Black student which occurred at Stellenbosch University over the weekend. The barbaric act of urinating in another student's room and on his possessions is grossly demeaning and goes far beyond a physical attack on personal property. The intention was clearly to completely demean and dehumanize a Black student and to question his legitimate right to study at this public university. By its very nature it is a clear demonstration of the racism that is still very prevalent in our society.

The CHE condemns this incident in the strongest terms. Both the individual incident and the individual perpetrator are condemned, but also the culture that, even in a democratic South Africa, still enables the beliefs and values that underpin these behaviors and allow them to continue and even to thrive. Sadly, racist events such as these are not isolated cases.

The human rights of this student have been grossly violated and the effect of this may negatively impact his well-being in the longer term as well as impact on his academic performance especially with examinations around the corner.

Racism, and all other forms of oppression and violence, must be completely rooted out and eradicated in our higher education system and in our society.

The CHE calls on the University to take the strongest possible action against the perpetrator and co-responsible instigators if there are others, and to avail support to the victim and all students, irrespective of race, who are affected by this inhumane act.

This is also a time for strong introspection at the University. To what extent is the transformation project fully underway and making progress at the university, or is this a sign of an institution and an institutional culture that remains largely untransformed? Like all universities in our country, Stellenbosch University is a national asset, and for that reason, among others, it should ensure that its reputation and legitimacy is not sullied by acts of racism by some within its community.



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