

Universities shut despite fee agreement

South African campuses closed on Monday, 26 October 2015, many for a second week, as students refused to end protests despite a government decision to scrap the tuition fee hikes that triggered nationwide demonstrations.



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Student leaders have vowed further action to push for other demands, including universal free education.

Police last week fired rubber bullets and tear gas at tens of thousands of students gathered outside government headquarters in Pretoria as protests over the proposed fee hikes turned violent.

Max Price, the University of Cape Town (UCT) vice-chancellor, said the campus would be closed all week, as students had not committed to ending protests and the disruption of lectures. "I believe no purpose will be served by attempting to keep the university open," he said in a statement.

Price added there had been "diminishing investments by government in higher education over the past five years" as he praised "the courage and tenacity" of the student protesters.

The University of the Witwatersrand (Wits) in Johannesburg, the centre of recent protests, was also shut on Monday.

Wits Vice-Chancellor Adam Habib criticised the students' decision to continue protesting.

Habib said disruption of lectures and exams would "only further entrench and deepen the inequalities in our society."

Public universities in South Africa, although funded by the state, are independent and have the power to determine their own fees. The students argue that higher fees would force poorer students out of the education system.

The University of Pretoria, Fort Hare and University of the Western Cape were also shut Monday.

Source: *AFP via I-Net Bridge*

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