

Another initiation video surfaces at University of the Free State

Written by Sapa

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A second initiation video has surfaced at the University of the Free State, this time with white students as the "victims". It shows four white students at the predominantly black Villa Bravado men's residence having water thrown at them. They are made to stand on one leg and later crawl around in the water on the floor as other students look on.

Students brought the video to the university management's attention earlier this year, and it took note of the initiation "with great dismay", it said in a statement on Monday. The video was made in October 2009.

Dean of student affairs Rudi Buys suspended the student head of the hostel Chris Nthakeni. Disciplinary measures were also started against the residence head for his alleged involvement.

The UFS said it was convinced the event was not a case of black students acting against white students, as black members of the residence committee underwent the same initiation.

The Freedom Front Plus Youth at the UFS condemned the university's handling of the matter, given its "extreme" reactions in the past to such cases.

"[It] shows double standards," FF+ Youth spokesperson Wouter Wessels said in a statement.

He said UFS rector Jonathan Jansen had warned that action would be taken against students who took part in initiations, and wanted to know why steps were "secretly" taken against Nthakeni.

Nthakeni was not, as in other cases, suspended from the university or the hostel.

"This does not show transparency," said Wessels.

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In the case of the Reitz video, the students were immediately expelled and the hostel closed.

The four former UFS students, who made a humiliating video involving four black university workers at the Reitz men's hostel, were each fined R20 000 last week after being found guilty of crimen injuria by the Bloemfontein Magistrate's Court.

Wessels said in 2009 Armentum hostel's entire residence committee was expelled following initiations. In the same year a student in the Karee residence was expelled.

In the statement Jansen said he hoped the Villa Bravado case was the last of initiations.

"The UFS clearly and regularly communicates to students that initiation is strictly forbidden."