

Reitz race trial postponed

Written by Sapa and Praag

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The Bloemfontein Magistrate's Court on Wednesday postponed the crimen injuria case of four former University of the Free State (UFS) students to July for trial.

The four white Afrikaner students -- RC Malherbe, Johnny Roberts, Schalk van der Merwe and Danie Grobler -- are facing charges for humiliating five black workers at the university.

The students made a video of an initiation-type ceremony in 2007 while living at the university's now-closed Reitz men's residence.

The four women cleaners and a man, who participated voluntarily in the making of the video, are seen on their hands and knees eating food that had apparently been urinated on by a white student.

The students also express opposition to the university's integration policy in the video.

The video surfaced in 2008 and caused an international outcry, landing the UFS in a racial storm.

During the short court session, the state informed the court that representations made by the accused to the provincial office of the public prosecutor in Bloemfontein failed. It gave no reasons.

This was confirmed by the students' lawyer, Christo Dippenaar.

The matter was postponed to July 27 for a trial that is expected to take three days.

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In contrast to protests during previous court appearances by the students, Wednesday's appearance went quietly without any protesters.