

## BRACKENFELL STATEMENT: WCED PRELIMINARY FINDINGS

The FW de Klerk Foundation welcomes the Western Cape Education Department's finding that it could find no evidence of racism at Brackenfell High School's recent matric function.

The now well-known incident and subsequent events at the school descended into violence with the Economic Freedom Fighters (EFF) protesting at 'racism' at the high school which allegedly surfaced during a private matric party on 17 October 2020.

The events were characterized by violent clashes between EFF members, parents, community members and the South African Police Services (SAPS) and were particularly aggravated by actions of the EFF and its' members, who caused serious damage to the Brackenfell Post Office, traffic lights, roads as well as a car dealership. They set alight a fire engine, burned grass during the protests, and, according to other reports, looted a number of local shops.

The events culminated with EFF protesters throwing rocks at SAPS members, with the police in turn responding with tear gas, stun grenades, water cannons and rubber bullets and arresting eight protesters for public violence. EFF leader, Julius Malema, responded by saying that the EFF would treat the police "the same way we treated them in the 80's. We will not only fight them at the picket lines, we will go to their homes and fight them in their own houses with their own families." The Pan African Congress (PAC) also protested, according to its' spokesperson, "to confront racist settlers" and used the "one settler, one bullet" slogan.

Indications are that the preliminary report, compiled by the Department and following its' investigation into the incident, has cleared the school of racism for the event and Western Cape MEC for Education, Debbie Schafer, says the report will be released soon.<sup>i</sup>

Schafer said that "all indications are exactly what the Department said before - it was a private event organised by a private individual who was disappointed that their child couldn't get their matric function, which was cancelled by the school". **She stated** that "it has obviously raised a lot of issues that will be dealt with, but on that particular event, there is no evidence of discrimination on the basis of race."

Schafer also noted that "the fact that people from other schools attended, shows that it was not a "school event". It was not held on school property, as has been widely reported, despite repeated corrections".

The SAHRC has announced that it will take the PAC to court for chanting "one settler, one bullet" and twelve complaints were laid against EFF supporters for allegedly singing "shoot the farmer/Boer" outside the school. It will also investigate why some EFF protesters were allegedly carrying golf clubs, axes and stones as well as Julius Malema's statements regarding attacking members of the SAPS.

As previously stated<sup>ii</sup> the Foundation remains deeply concerned that throughout the events the main focus of media, institutional and government attention was not on the EFF (and, subsequently, the PAC's) inciteful racist behaviour and intimidation - but rather on the school, the Western Cape Education Department, the private matric party and unsubstantiated allegations of racism at the school.



It is crucial that racist or hurtful non-inclusive behaviour anywhere in South Africa should be dealt with firmly and effectively. What is, however, equally critical is unified and unambiguous condemnation by all South Africans of the EFF's openly racist threats and instigation of violence. Such actions have the potential of provoking racial conflict that would cause immense harm to South Africa.

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<sup>i</sup> [Brackenfell: No evidence of racism, WC Education Dept finds \(thesouthafrican.com\)](https://thesouthafrican.com)

<sup>ii</sup> [FW de Klerk Foundation - ARTICLE: BRACKENFELL: THE AFTERMATH](#)