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Chairperson of the Portfolio Committee on Higher Education
Mr Walter Tebogo Letsie
Parliament of the Republic of South Africa
Per email: wletsie@parliament.gov.za akabingesi@parliament.gov.za

RE: Request for an Emergency Meeting of the Portfolio Committee on Higher Education on the Crisis at the University of Fort Hare

Dear Chairperson,

I write to request that the Portfolio Committee convene an urgent, special meeting to address the escalating crisis at the University of Fort Hare (UFH) following violent unrest, large-scale arson, intimidation of staff and students, and the subsequent immediate shutdown of university operations at both the Alice and East London campuses.

According to public reports and official university statements, at least six major campus buildings have been destroyed, including administrative and academic facilities, with preliminary damage estimates ranging between R250 million and R500 million. This represents one of the most severe campus crises in recent years and has left thousands of students displaced just weeks before final examinations.

The Committee must urgently exercise its oversight mandate to ensure coordinated intervention by the Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET), university management, and law enforcement agencies to:

- Restore safety and order on campus;
- Secure the immediate protection of students, staff, and university property;
- Ensure continuity of teaching and examinations through a credible academic recovery plan;
- Oversee the establishment of an independent forensic investigation into the destruction of property and the reported "sponsored violence and criminality"; and
- Facilitate independent mediation to resolve the dispute over student representation and the SRC constitution, which appears to have triggered the unrest.

Given the urgency of the situation, I propose that the Committee summon both the Minister of Higher Education and Training and UFH management to brief Parliament within the coming days on the interventions underway and the measures planned to stabilise the institution.

The University of Fort Hare stands as a cornerstone of South Africa's intellectual and liberation heritage. The ongoing violence and destruction threaten not only its future but the stability of the broader higher education system.

The Committee's immediate attention is therefore critical to prevent further escalation and to uphold Parliament's duty of oversight and accountability.

I thank you for your consideration and urge that this request be prioritised as a matter of national importance.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Delmaine Christians', written in a cursive style.

Honourable Dr Delmaine Christians

Member of Parliament: National Assembly