



# NEHAWU Eastern Cape Calls For The Removal Of The Vice-Chancellor Of The University of Fort Hare

**SUNDAY , 08 DECEMBER 2024**

The National Education, Health and Allied Workers' Union [NEHAWU] in the Eastern Cape calls for the removal of the Vice-Chancellor [VC] of the University of Fort Hare, Professor Sakhela Buhlungu.

As NEHAWU, we have been involved in addressing the challenges facing workers in the institution which largely arise from the leadership style of the VC, Professor Buhlungu. Since his arrival in the institution it has turned into a mini war zone. The laws that govern the institution have been suspended and only his office is developing new laws as he goes. This has collapsed the corporate governance in the institution in such that nobody knows if he/she is still employed by the university. The only person that can respond on the future of each employee is the VC himself. It is against this background that the union has come to a conclusion that until the VC is put on special leave nothing will help the institution from going down. We therefore call on the Minister of Higher Education and Training to urgently put the VC on special leave to save this precious institution that has become a shadow of itself since the arrival of Professor Buhlungu.

Our call for his removal is informed by many allegations against the VC which include amongst others; the most recent one of utilising the university resources to absorb the legal bills of his wife. We have been reporting the allegations regarding his failure to adhere to the university recruitment procedures, where those loyal to him are appointed from contract to permanent positions. A case in point is his driver, who is now permanently employed on a positions that he does not even meet the minimum requirements.

Our members and the university community have been complaining throughout the years regarding the conduct of the VC. We have now reached a point as a union that the VC must be held accountable for the many challenges that he has created ever since he took over the reins at the university. The Minister is called to decisively act and place the VC on special leave with immediate effect. The previous University Council dismally failed to hold the VC accountable on numerous occasions despite having been presented with evidence about the conduct of the VC. Our members including other university stakeholders have used various platforms including the portfolio committee visits to express their frustrations against the VC.



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As NEHAWU, we have also observed that the VC and his little army are now embarking on a strategy to get rid of our union in the university. Our conclusion is clear that this is another effort to silence the voice of workers using underhand tactics. The union has observed how the VC has ran the institution as his fiefdom and this won't be accepted. Hence, we call on the Minister of Higher Education and Training to swiftly act and ensure that the new council will assume their duties on a clean slate and be allowed time to turn around the university in order to be refocused on its own academic mandate.

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