



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Neema Foundation Demands Action Against PCD College for Alleged Deaf Student Abuse ***Rights of the Deaf & Hard-of-Hearing Must Be Protected at All Costs***

Johannesburg, 1 July 2024 – The Neema Foundation for the Deaf has been approached by several Deaf students from PCD College in Pretoria, detailing how they were abused, had their rights infringed upon, and were treated derogatorily compared to their hearing peers.

"We were horrified when we were told about what is going on at the college. The situation is serious and requires immediate action by the relevant authorities," says Ms. Itumeleng Motaung, Chairperson of the Neema Foundation for the Deaf.

Ms. Motaung adds that while Neema was preparing to visit the college, the organisation fully supports the decision by the South African Human Rights Commission (SAHRC) to probe the matter.

"We have received additional complaints from students. We will share the information with the Commission and stand ready to assist the investigators in whatever way we can," explains Ms. Motaung.

Deaf activist Mr. Tshepo Maseko has strongly condemned the alleged acts, saying, "We call on the nation to unite and fight against these injustices. We will not rest until justice prevails for these students."

The Neema Foundation has brought the matter to the attention of the Department of Labour to review PCD College's labour practices, the Public Protector and the Department responsible for Women, Youth, and Persons with Disabilities in the Presidency. Institutions have a legal responsibility to operate within the law and to protect the rights of Deaf persons.

The abuses were also exposed on social media and in an article published by the **Diary Series of Deaf People** titled "*Deaf Students at a Pretoria College: 'We Eat Food with Ants'*" (www.thedeafdiary.com).

"We praise the students and their colleagues who sounded the alarm about these abuses, despite the huge risks to their safety and livelihoods. We encourage students and workers to report anonymously via WhatsApp on 083 702 0221," Motaung concludes.

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For inquiries, contact:

For Neema Foundation for the Deaf

Fatima Cele

078 457 5705 / fatima@foundationneema.org

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About Neema Foundation for the Deaf:

Neema Foundation for the Deaf is a Non-Profit Organisation formed in 2017. The Foundation is committed to creating awareness, advocating for, and empowering the Deaf and hard-of-hearing, particularly women, youth, and children. Women, youth and children are generally vulnerable across the world, this is significantly worse when they are Deaf or hard of hearing.

The Deaf community faces vast challenges ranging from maltreatment, attaining a quality education, starting a business or obtaining employment, remarkably preventing their economic and social independence. Moreover, they face challenges in accessing information and public services due to communication barriers and lack South African Sign Language (SASL) as a medium of communication within the country.

One of the key mandates of the Foundation is to advocate for the rights and inclusion of the Deaf Community through creating awareness, educating and empowerment.

www.foundationneema.org