

# 50 held as police storm Vista campus

Star 27/08/91

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Education Reporter

More than 50 students at Vista University's Soweto campus were arrested by police yesterday on their first day of the planned week-long class boycott to force the administration to meet certain demands.

Heavily-armed riot police invaded the campus shortly after 2 pm as the students gathered next to the lecture halls to plan further action.

A senior university official, who identified himself to The Star as a Mr Lubbe, the registrar, gave orders to the police to arrest the students.

He told The Star the university had been closed yesterday and no students were allowed to be on campus.

As the contingent of police moved on to the campus, the students scattered in all directions with baton-wielding policemen in hot pursuit.

Pogisho Monchusi (26), a second year law student at the university, was bleeding from the nose and mouth after he was allegedly baton-charged by the police.

"I tried to jump the fence as the police chased us around the campus, but I fell to the ground," Mr Monchusi said.

He said after he was beaten by the police he was ordered to leave the campus, but decided to approach a police colonel to lay a charge of assault.

"The colonel told me to go to the nearest police station," he said.

Mr Monchusi laid a charge of assault at the Orlando Police Station.

An elderly female student, who said she was suffering from asthma, pleaded with the police while at the back of a congested police van to open the door to give her air.

Lost shoes and broken spectacles left a grim picture in the wake of the police action.

Spokesman for Soweto police Lieutenant Govindsamy Mariemuthoo said the students were arrested after the university management had laid a charge of trespassing.

He said the management from Pretoria had come to sort out matters at the university and ordered the students to leave the campus, but they refused.

The students had earlier erected shacks on the campus and toyi-toyed around the university grounds.

Students on all the university's campuses countrywide decided to embark on mass action this week, which would include class boycotts, the erection of a squatter camp on university grounds and the occupation of offices and lecture halls to force the administration to meet their demands.

Their demands include:

- The rearrangement of the examination time-table, which they allege is congested.
- Provision of Students' residences.
- Provision of facilities such as libraries and sports fields.
- A review of admissions and exclusions policies and the meaningful representation of parents and students on the university council.

The university management was not available for comment.

Other Vista campuses such as Sebokeng and Mamelodi were reported to be normal.