From the desk of the General Secretary, Rev Sipho Mkhize Mkhwanazi

SACC SUPPORTS AT MARIKANA HOSPITALIZED FOR HUMAN LIFE; CONDEMNS POLICE BRUTALITY

The South African Council of Churches (SACC) is horrified at the use of brutality by the South African Police Service (SAPS) as a means of dispersing citizens, as evidenced by the scenes in Bloemfontein and Kuruman Park in Johannesburg on Wednesday, 30 March 2011 in relation to the case of Tshepo Mo.

This is following the death of a 19-year-old man who was shot by the SAPS in Bloemfontein. The man is said to have been walking out of a clinic when the police arrived. The police shot at him, under the assumption that he was part of the alleged protesters.

"The SACC has been calling time advocate for comprehensive quality education, and has held a close eye on the developments in the higher education sector," said Rev Mkhize Mkhwanazi, General Secretary of the SACC. "As such, our concern at this time is twofold: we continue to question the relative benefits in relaxing the barriers of fees as students is adequate to make a meaningful change in order to remove the barriers to entry for students seeking a higher education. The issue of financial aid and the challenge of registration fees still has been left out for a long time, and it should come as a surprise that some the students are angry," he added. "We welcome the small budget allocation to the sector by Government to meet the growing needs of students, and agree for a long term solution to avoid the annual protests on something we have as the right to education." The SAPS has a legacy in education that goes back 300 of a legacy in schooling at both secondary and tertiary education periods.

"Secondly, we advocate for social justice, we cannot stand by and witness police brutality of this sort. Where gun violence is an issue, as we have all felt, the law enforcement is to be used with minimal violence in the crowd control situation. We will remembered that it was less than 20 days ago that we made a service call which also happened on a Tuesday morning in the Cape, were injured police officers, and Mapumulanga. Where has gone of the use of rubber bullets should be reviewed in the light of the human rights culture of our country through order?" he added. "We bless efforts the advocacy essential services of the SAPS, and trust in our nation's healthy relations that exist in our communities."