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UCT notes anonymous SGBV claims on social media

The University of Cape Town (UCT) has noted with deep concern recent social media posts around an alleged sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV) incident in one of our faculties.

The posts were made by an anonymous user. While fully acknowledging and understanding that SGBV survivors may opt to remain anonymous, this has made it difficult for UCT to establish the veracity of the claims in this particular instance.

The university has had a case reported to the Office for Inclusivity and Change (OIC) in which some of the details correspond with what was shared on social media by the anonymous complainant. This case was alleged to have occurred in May 2023, and in the faculty in question.

Based on this correlation of the details, and while emphasising that UCT upholds confidentiality around ongoing cases and can therefore not respond in detail, the university can state that the survivor UCT is aware of has received support from the OIC.

Since the case was reported in May 2023, the OIC has been in touch with the survivor, who understandably requested some space. The OIC reached out to the survivor twice this year – in January and May; while the Special Tribunal has been in touch with her representatives in May and July (twice).

The case is set for a pre-hearing this month.

UCT has noted a number of claims in the social media posts, which the university will not respond to publicly at this stage out of respect for due process as the case is ongoing.

The university remains committed to dealing with reported SGBV cases. In giving effect to this commitment, UCT has set up a dedicated Special Tribunal. **In the past year, 82% of the cases concluded by the Special Tribunal resulted in guilty verdicts.**

The university maintains a survivor-centered approach and has established the Special Tribunal as a formalised specialised structure to deal with sexual misconduct. **The aim of the Special Tribunal is to expedite sexual misconduct cases**; while its objectives are, among others, to ensure that the process is survivor-centred and streamlined. The Special Tribunal also aims to ensure that the entire process is compliant with internal policies and external legislation.

The university continues to urge any survivor to report SGBV incidents to the OIC, which offers survivor support and works with the relevant external legal authorities in responding to reported cases.

ENDS

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