



The Student Division of the Psychology Society of South Africa (PsySSA) would like to express its concern over the events of racial tension that transpired at some of our universities.

We strongly condemn the racial division, violence and persistent human rights transgressions prevalent in these situations. We call for constructive dialogue between the groups of students and for calm and tolerance in their approach to mediation. We urge the student leaders to seek a constructive way forward not only for the Universities but for the future of our country.

The events at these Universities have served to expose the underlying racial tensions that have not been adequately addressed within our nation. It is for this reason that we strongly condemn the hate speech and violent outbursts that have now become an unfortunate distractor to a much needed conversation around race, language, and student development within higher education. We urge political groups to express their frustrations and concerns in constructive ways, instead of resorting to destructive methods of expressing their feelings. Students who have been previously disadvantaged have a right to seek equality and improvements in their life circumstances, and similarly student groups who want to hold on to their heritage have a right to do so. A fundamental principle of our democracy is the right of each individual and community to exercise their own language, religious and cultural practices without fear or domination by others. We are reminded here of the theme of the 2015 PsySSA Congress "Strength in Unity", because the divisions that are created by hate, prejudice and violence serve only to weaken our nation.

A greater wisdom is necessary in this time, and we urge all involved to seek wise counsel on constructive ways forward. We also urge students to use discretion when participating in protests and to ensure that they fully understand the positions they are supporting and the consequences of their actions. We call on all involved to resolve these issues as soon as possible to enable a speedy return to the learning environment. Our country is in dire need of young graduates who can operationalise the dream of a united and prosperous South Africa.