

Vice Chancellor's Message to all students regarding protest campaign on 25.05.2022

The Inter University Students Federation (IUSF) is planning to conduct a protest campaign against the administration of the UOR on 25.5.2022 in Matara where the location could be either main road in front of UOR and or Matara town. The exact place cannot be stated as the plans are changed frequently. I understand it is against punishing the 18 students caught for ragging in the FHSS in 2018 who were remanded for nearly six months. This is an issue that was highlighted nationally and the entire country is watching UOR on the action taken in this case. In this case one student named Mr Darsha Udayanga complained to police about the severe inhuman ragging he had to undergo in UOR. The police took action and the judiciary remanded the accused. There is a legal basis for this in the Act No. 20 of 1998 on prevention of violence and ragging in universities and other higher educational institutes.

University administration has nothing to do with the police complaint. Then the student also complained to UOR on this and UOR conducted internal disciplinary inquires and the students were suspended following judiciary action. Preliminary and formal inquiries are now completed. The findings were tabled at the last Council meeting on the 19.5.2022 and certain decisions were made. The current protest is against the implementation of these legal decisions made at the Council of the UOR. Therefore, this protest is morally and ethically unjustifiable. Worse is that all the protests are for prevention of proper legal / disciplinary action for law breakers in the university community which is against the civil society and social justice.

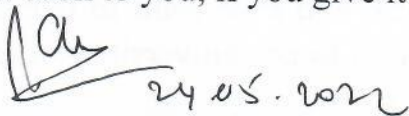
The current protest is organized by IUSF which is not a registered student union in any university, UGC or Ministry of higher education. Therefore, it is an illegal organization. It is also the student arm of the Frontline Socialist Party which obtained 8200 votes at the last Presidential election (Mr. Duminda Nagamuwa was the candidate) and a total of 42000 votes at the Parliament election of 2020 in the entire country. With this limited support base IUSF and FSP want to decide the national policy on everything in this country and want to use university students as pawns in their political game.

It is possible for these organizations to become violent, invade UOR and damage UOR property. I want to prevent this happening and also prevent UOR students getting into legal problems and disciplinary action losing valuable educational opportunities in this protest. The UOR is well covered with CCTV and all perpetrators of violence would be ultimately caught. Although, the behavior is collective, individuals would be made accountable in the legal system and by the police. This has happened many a times in our country and the universities. You are already seeing this in the country following the incidents on 09.05.2022.

There are registered student unions in our university in each faculty. There is also RUSU which is to be formed yet as two faculties have not elected the faculty student unions. There is nothing MAHASHISHYA SANGAMAYA (MSS) of UOR. Hence one Mr. Prasanna Madusanka Bandara who calls himself the President of this MSS is misleading the genuine students of the UOR. He is no longer a student of UOR as he is suspended. He organizes some protests for which genuine and innocent student participate without knowing facts. These students engage in national politics and collect numbers for their political survival from university students. If anybody wishes to do politics, he/she may do so without disrupting others education.

All these protests are ultimately aimed to disrupt the education system of Sri Lanka both at school and university level. Please remember that even in the height of the war, LTTE did not disrupt the education of children and youth in North and East except for forced conscription of selected youth. In fact, LTTE supported the conduct national examinations and running of schools during the 30 year of war. Unlike LTTE, IUSF disrupted education in every protest using force in 1987 to 1989 and thereafter.

Hence, I wish to request all the UOR students to think carefully the freedom in life you are enjoying today and never to sacrifice that freedom for someone else's political game. This freedom was brought into UOR under my leadership with the support of entire community of UOR which has witnessed all the ragging and violence in the forty-year history of the University. No one will be able to get that freedom back to you, if you give it up today.



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