

University boycotters face dismissal

By **NATION** Reporter

NAIROBI University Students, who boycotted classes all day yesterday, went home last night undecided on whether or not to end their boycott. They face expulsion unless they report for lectures this morning.

The ultimatum for an immediate return to lectures was issued last night by University authorities.

A University spokesman said the University authorities had watched with great concern the behaviour of students over the last two days.

"Due to the irresponsible behaviour by some in their midst a large group of them are now facing a court of law. A lot of damage has been caused to University property and the reputation of the University as an institution of learning subjected to ridicule in the eyes of the Kenya public and the international community," he added.

"For excuses, the instigators of this deplorable behaviour have played up small issues which have already been subjected to rigorous examination by the University authorities and the student representatives themselves with a genuine desire to obtain satisfactory solutions."

The flash point was the

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question of safety on State House Road, which runs through the Halls of Residence. "We have already stated that this matter was under consideration by the City Council, the Police and ourselves, and that patience and tolerance was necessary on the part of the motorists and the students themselves until a lasting solution is found," the spokesman said.

"There is no truth whatsoever in the claim that services in the University are deteriorating. The University administration has worked relentlessly to improve the services that we provide to students. It is therefore a great surprise and disappointment to us that when the solutions to those problems that must be faced in an institution like this, are in sight, the student body should embark on violence.

"We are now faced with a situation where innocent students are now being made to suffer because of the activities of a small element among the student body.

"We who are charged with the responsibility of leading this University cannot condone destruction of property. The law of the land will be allowed to take its course. The University is going to take the appropriate disciplinary action against those students who have brought about this unnecessary demonstration. Boycott of lectures, or any other form of disruption of normal University activities will not be tolerated. Classes must resume at once and reasonable behaviour adopted by all."

The spokesman said the University had done its best, within the limits of its resources, to provide for the students the conditions conducive to the pursuit of a useful academic career.

It was up to the students themselves then to decide whether they will take up this challenge or whether they were going to pursue a career of

violence and demonstrations, which could only lead to failure and disillusionment.

"I am certain that the majority of the students themselves regret the activities of the last two days," the spokesman said.

At the campus, lecture rooms were empty all day yesterday as students boycotted work in sympathy with their colleagues who had been arrested and charged following Monday's incidents.

Police kept watch on students' movements, but there were no incidents.

The secretary-general of the Kenya Students' Union, Mr. Murungi Murithi, issued a statement appealing for calm and calling on the students to resume classes as "boycotting lectures and demonstrations would amount to interfering with the administration of justice and in no way help our detained comrades".

A few hours later, another open memorandum to the Chancellor of the University was issued by the Students' Union of Nairobi University (Sunu), calling on the Chancellor, President Kenyatta, to "initiate a Commission of Inquiry to look into the problems facing the University such as the issue of the present education system . . . and the question of State House Road", among other grievances.

The students assured President Kenyatta that they are fully committed to all efforts of nation-building, but called for the creation of "an atmosphere of understanding and co-operation".

Later in the afternoon students gathered on the campus and heard their leaders announce one after another that "we are not resuming lectures until justice is done".

Amid shouts of "resign" and "go home", students later heard Sunu vice-president, Mr. V. C. Mugambo, declare that "unless you heed my advice, I shall resign". He had urged them to resume lectures.