

For the records

IT is high time that I try to put the records straight and clear up some misunderstanding. Since the school crisis started in June, our school has been the focal point of boycotters and it was in the lime light of newspapers.

Strangely enough, no news editor attempted to interview me for first hand information. I must admit that whenever you are under constant pressure from both sides, you tend to blunder.

The Namibian must not fall into a trap of distorted reporting, because it is internationally credited for its objective reporting.

It was reported in The Namibian how the principal of Secondary School Katutura called in the police to arrest the pupils. It was further reported that the pupils were disappointed by their principal's actions.

In the first place, the principal did

not call in the police. What he did was contact the Department to tell them how the situation at school was. This is how it is done at all schools under these situations. According to your report, pupils were disappointed at my actions. Those were not my actions. But I was very much disappointed at the behaviour of my pupils, because they did not ask the "foreign" pupils not to use abusive language towards me.

I did not and do not deserve that treatment from pupils, and the honest pupils of my school can testify this. I wanted to address the crowd but seemingly the only response pupils know is "Down, down and once again down", clapping hands and dance-running. To my shock and surprise, "foreign" pupils took the fire brigade hoses and pipers chased me away with water and stones. Even my pupils who participated in these actions did not even try to stop the others from doing it.

The police are on patrol all over Katutura and more especially around our school because you made it a soft target in order to either discredit me or to put members of my staff under scrutiny, and they can see for themselves what is going on at the school. Why don't you give all schools as tough a time as you do with us; why do you concentrate on two or three schools only? Do you have some motives or are you bribed to discredit some schools?

As president of NAMTA (Namibia Teachers Association), I want to reiterate my organization's point viz. that we do have understanding with most demands, but we can't condone endless boycotts. We admire those who continue with it but salute the others who want to continue their studies.

To come to these "foreign" pupils on our soil - it is unfair that they leave their schools in peace and come now and again to harass us. Those who say I gave away the children have to reason realistically because I read the names of my school pupils, and those who remained were not of my school. And how can these "foreign" pupils expect me to "protect" them when they gave me such rough treatment by shouting me "down", by wetting me, throwing stones, and insulting me for things I did not deserve or commit.

Let us have a direction, let us listen to one another and let us respect adults. We agree to differ.

It is healthy when we differ but it is civil war when we want to hurt those who disagree with us. We need to talk and solve problems, but when you shout and accuse me of things I have never done, then it is a pity.

There are accusations that pupils are expelled from this school. These allegations are untrue. The fact is that