

More arrests expected in UKZN place-for-sale saga

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THE Hawks are **expected** to **arrest more** people who are believed to be part of the syndicate that sold places at the University of KwaZulu-Natal's (UKZN) medical school, the university confirmed yesterday.

Dr Albert van Jaarsveld, the vice-chancellor and principal of UKZN, said the university's forensic department was working closely with the Hawks in its investigation to identify accomplices and those who benefited from the syndicate which allegedly sold medical school admission places.

This comes after the **arrest** of a Durban business couple, Varsha and Hiteshkumar Bhatt, who are owners of the Little Gujarat restaurants and uMhlanga businesswoman, Preshni Hiramun.

The three were allegedly part of a syndicate that sold places at the medical school for up to R500 000 a placement.

They have appeared in court and have each been granted R40 000 bail.

The next **arrests** "will be made soon".

Van Jaarsveld said the university was prioritising the matter and had initiated the investigation and was committed to ensuring that everyone involved would face the full might of the law.

"It is anticipated that further **arrests** will be made soon. Any persons found to have participated or benefited from this illegal practice will face criminal prosecution," he said.

According to Van Jaarsveld, additional checks and balances in the admission process led to the detection of specific corruption practices and the matter was then referred to the Hawks for further investigation.

The ANC Youth League (ANCYL) gave the university an ultimatum to respond within 30 days by establishing an internal investigation to find those that are involved and make recommendations on how it was going to improve the system following the scandal.

Van Jaarsveld said the university was constantly engaging with the Hawks to ensure that the investigation proceeded as fast as possible.

"We should also be mindful that **expecting** the Hawks to take action without a thorough investigation will jeopardise the process and premature interventions may compromise all the progress that has been made thus far," he said.

The public is being encouraged to report fraud at the university which will be treated anonymously, by phoning the fraud hotline 0800 20 32 85.

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