

Pupils go on the rampage

LOOTING: FOUR END UP IN HOSPITAL

» Youths from packed march steal from hawker stalls during a Cosas protest.

Phindile Chauke

Four pupils were rushed to hospital yesterday after a Congress of SA Students (Cosas) march turned violent and hawkers turned on pupils who were looting their stalls in the Johannesburg city centre.

Johannesburg metro police spokesperson Wayne Minnaar said about 2 000 pupils from various public schools were in the city centre for a march with the theme Learn Without Fear at midday, but some of them began looting and breaking hawkers' stalls along Rissik Street.

He said the four pupils were injured when a few of the hawkers retaliated. Minnaar could not confirm if there were any arrests.

Cosas spokesperson Khulekani Skosana said the march was meant to go from Park Station to

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Cosas demands:

- Stop publication of matric results
- Intensify fight against nyaope and other drugs in schools
- End corporal punishment
- Replace mobile schools with brick ones
- Prohibit teachers from smoking on school premises
- End gangs, cults and bullying
- End school property theft and violence
- Address sexual abuse of pupils by teachers

the Gauteng Department of Education's offices on Commissioner Street to hand over a memorandum of demands to education MEC Panyaza Lesufi. He denied pupils were responsible for looting and blamed external "criminal elements".

"We are working closely with the police to establish if our members were involved (in the looting) and we will take full responsibility if they were," he said. "We will be registering an apology to all those who were affected, the vic-



LISTEN UP. A Cosas leader addresses thousands of pupils in the Joburg CBD yesterday. They came to deliver a memorandum to the education department but began looting vendor stalls. Picture: Valentina Nicol

tims and our parents, first thing tomorrow morning."

Lesufi personally accepted the Cosas memorandum giving the Gauteng government 14 days to indicate how it was going to address their demands. He condemned the pupils' violent conduct and told them they owed Gauteng residents an apology.

Education department spokes-

person Phumla Sekhonyane said: "Some of the issues Cosas raised are valid and we are already dealing with them, such as corporal punishment and sexual harassment. The other issues are matters we can refer to various levels, such as the demand related to the publication of matric results, which is dealt with by the national education department."