



CITY OF JOHANNESBURG

Councillor Mgcini Tshwaku

Member of the Mayoral Committee
Department of Public Safety

Media Statement

For Immediate Release

06 September 2023

City committed to fighting crime and lawlessness in aftermath of Marshalltown fire

In the aftermath of the horrific Marshalltown fire, the City of Johannesburg's Department of Public Safety has further committed itself to continue with thorough audits of all abandoned and hijacked buildings and the conditions they are in.

The Usindiso Building fire certainly brought to focus the quality of housing as well as the rampant lawlessness in the inner city.

While we note the establishment of yet another commission of inquiry, we are well aware of the root cause behind the tragic Marshalltown fire. The issue is not mysterious or unknown; it's the presence of hijacked buildings that serve as a tinderbox for such calamities. These structures are disasters waiting to happen.

The situation is aggravated by well-coordinated criminal syndicates that financially benefit from these hijacked buildings. They collect rent in cash, with no record or accountability, making these locations not just dangerous living environments but also fertile grounds for other financial crimes like money laundering and tax evasion.

As we forge forward with the fight against crime and lawlessness, we believe that the millions spent on the commission could be better allocated to urgently upgrade the skills and technology of our Metro Police. This would enable them to more effectively root out the criminals who are benefiting from these hazardous and illegally controlled buildings. Past experience has shown how oftentimes these commissions take months, if not years, to conclude, with many yielding no results and only masking inaction.

It's time for immediate action, not more endless talk. We will take the fight to the criminals, ensuring the safety and wellbeing of our residents. We call on the Gauteng

Government to join us and do the same. We are committed to facing this crisis head on.

Ends

For Media Inquiries:
Lelethu Ndyamboti
Office of the MMC Public Safety
083 637 0913