



## CITY OF JOHANNESBURG

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### **City of Johannesburg Media Statement**

#### **For Immediate Release**

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#### **Mayor Gwamanda leads sting operation in Downtown Joburg**

The Executive Mayor of Johannesburg, Cllr Kabelo Gwamanda, yesterday led a sting operation together with the Johannesburg Metropolitan Police Department (JMPD) against suspected syndicates illegally occupying and vandalising City Property.

The property in question belongs to the City and was purchased in 2019 for an amount of R 40 million and was intended for use as a pound for the JMPD.

Following last week's fire at Usindiso House, the site had been identified as a possible site for temporary accommodation of victims.

Following an inspection on site it was established that there was a team of persons on site claiming to be contracted by the owner of the site to undertake construction work.

"Yesterday operation has resulted in the arrest of 23 suspects amongst whom is a Councillor of the City. The suspects face charges of malicious damage to property and City infrastructure, theft and Vandalism."

"According to the preliminary investigation by the JMPD, there are allegations that a senior member of the South African Police Services (SAPS) may be involved in the ongoing invasion of the property" said Mayor Gwamanda.

The 23 suspects arrested have been detained at Johannesburg Central Police Station. The JMPD has also seized a TLB, forklifted and building equipment found on the site in the possession of the suspects.

"Our approach to illegality is now driven with greater urgency and firmness. It's our intention to ensure that we prevent any further loss of life and disasters in the City as a result of illegally occupied and hijacked buildings."

"We are adopting a zero-tolerance approach and will be extending our operations to target those buildings belonging to the City that are currently in the hands of criminal syndicates" added Mayor Gwamanda.

The Executive Mayor has since mandated the City Manager and the City administration to urgently take the necessary steps to protect and secure the pound and to prevent any

further damage to its facilities.

“We will formally communicate to the Speaker the about the arrest of the Councillor and our disappointment that such allegations have arose against the very person we would expect to be the custodian of City properties and a proponent of law and order” concluded Mayor Gwamanda

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