



CITY OF JOHANNESBURG

Councillor Mgcini Tshwaku

Member of the Mayoral Committee
Department of Public Safety

Media Statement

07 September 2023

Public Safety MMC Cllr Tshwaku issues stern warning against unlawfulness

In an operation led by the Executive Mayor, myself, city officials and officers from the Johannesburg Metropolitan Police Department (JMPD) we arrested 23 individuals at a vacant City of Johannesburg property in Denver yesterday.

The site had been earmarked by the city to serve as temporary accommodation for the victims of the recent Marshalltown fire.

During the inspection, construction workers were found erecting walls on this City-owned property. Included among the arrested individuals was a councillor. All those arrested have been detained at Johannesburg Central SAPS, where a case has been formally opened against them on charges of malicious damage to council property, building hijacking, and trespassing.

Notably, absent during the operation was a businessman who claims to own the premises. He is currently reported to be out of town. Proactive efforts are being initiated to bring him into the investigation and establish his accountability for this illicit activity.

Recent developments indicate the potential involvement of an additional businessperson, a police officer, and local community representatives in this illicit activity. Investigations into their roles are actively ongoing.

Despite initial reluctance from Cleveland Police Station, a case has been successfully opened at Johannesburg Central SAPS and allocated a case number. Intriguingly, this case has since been transferred to Cleveland Police Station, the same station that initially refused to open the case.

It is alleged that local business owners unlawfully claimed the property following its invasion and subsequent vandalism by residents of a nearby informal settlement. Such flagrant disregard for lawfulness poses a severe risk to the safety and well-being of our community.

Various items of building equipment, including a forklift and a TLB, were seized during the operation and have been moved to the JMPD pound. This serves as a stern warning against any future unlawful activities.

Let it be clear, the time for anarchy is over. Those who engage in illegal acts will face the full extent of the law. Our commitment to upholding public safety is unyielding, and this operation serves as a strong testament to that pledge. We will continue to work tirelessly to protect public assets and to ensure that the rule of law prevails in every corner of our jurisdiction.

As the MMC for Public Safety, I will continue to mobilise all necessary resources to ensure that our communities are safe, and that public property is secure. I am resolute that JMPD will execute its duties with the utmost integrity and diligence, and I urge all residents to respect and uphold the laws that are in place to protect us all.

Issued by:

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