



CITY OF JOHANNESBURG

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**STATEMENT BY THE MAYOR OF JOHANNESBURG ON LILLIAN NGOYI
STREET EXPLOSION AND INVESTIGATION OUTCOMES**

02 August 2023

The City Manager, Mr Floyd Brink

Members of the Media

Ladies and Gentleman

On the 19th of July 2023, as the City we experienced a devastating explosion to which we have been diligently working to respond and to recover.

From the onset, our focus was to ensure the safety of residents in the immediate area of the explosion, to secure the site of explosion; and thereafter to recover services to the area.

Our rapid response and emergency services were exceptional in their response and actions from the day of the explosion. They displayed great technical capability and preparedness to respond to emergencies and disasters. As a City we are grateful to the men and women who undertook this task and who did so excellently. Our experts and team

have expressed to us that the manner in which we responded was in line with international standards and protocols.

We are also humbled by the support received from the province and national governments.

We must also thank the Johannesburg Chamber of Commerce and Industry (JCCI) and the variety of other private security and emergency response service providers who offered their skills, resources and experience in response to the explosion and aftermath.

As the Executive Mayor, I established a Technical-Team, led by the City-Manager, to lead a detailed and advanced investigation into the explosion and the responses required from the City.

This team has included highly experienced engineers, gas specialists, technologists and academics who have worked tirelessly to ensure that we conduct a rigorous investigation into the possible causes of the explosion.

The team has also been inundated with a number of enquiries from Cities and Engineers across the globe who follow closely such incidents. There is international interest to understand the causes of the explosion and to build knowledge on such as they occur across globe.

This has placed us under pressure to ensure that the team that investigates is the best in the space and that the outcomes of our investigation are credible and backed by science and evidence.

Importantly, as the political leadership of the City we have also mandated the City Manager and Technical-Team to provide us assurance that such incidents will not occur again. The team is now fully engaged as part of our response and recovery process in devising means to test and monitor the presence of various gasses in our

underground tunnels. They will also provide us with plans to mitigate such incidents going into the future.

The creation of a smart city is a priority of the current administration and the mandate to the City Manager and team is that the rebuild and rehabilitation of Lillian Ngoyi Street must ensure that going forward we set the standard for the management of underground infrastructure and roads.

We have also had positive engagements with a variety of affected stakeholders including property owners along Lillian Ngoyi Street. Our intention is to ensure that as we push to rehabilitate and rebuild, we do so in a transparent and inclusive manner.

We are grateful for the cooperation and partnership.

Ladies and Gentleman, I wish to assure the residents that we are doing all in our power to ensure that we create a safe city.

I also wish to bring to the attention of residents the deliberate action we took in the management of this disaster in showcasing our administrative and technical skills. Through the establishment of the technical team, it was my intention to showcase to residents that the City functions primarily through its administrative and technical capacity.

In my State of the City address, I assured residents that the seeming political instability in the City at the time should not be a cause of great concern as our biggest asset, was having a functional and competent administration.

In this case, the City-Manager and Technical-Team have indeed displayed the best of Johannesburg and have proved that the City is stable and functional.

The City-Manager will share the report that we have now received and some of the technical details emerging from the report.

Thank you!