



CITY OF JOHANNESBURG

Member of the Mayoral Committee

## **Councillor Mlungisi Mabaso**

### **Human Settlements**

#### **Media Statement**

#### **For Immediate Release**

**19 September 2024**

#### **MMC Mabaso outraged by vandalism at building intended for fire survivors**

The Member of the Mayoral Committee (MMC) for Human Settlements in the City of Johannesburg, Cllr Mlungisi Mabaso, has expressed outrage over the vandalism at the Phumlani building, which the City had earmarked to house survivors of a recent fire in Jeppestown.

In August, four people lost their lives and over 200 were displaced when a fire broke out at a building in Jeppestown, downtown Johannesburg. The survivors were temporarily housed in tents on a soccer field while the City sought suitable accommodation.

However, during a recent visit to Phumlani Court, where the City had planned to relocate them, MMC Mabaso was shocked by the state of the building. "I was concerned about the delay in moving people to the building, but I was informed that it had been vandalised. Some units had also been invaded. I couldn't fully comprehend the situation."

"We have a security company protecting the building 24 hours a day with access control in place. But when I arrived, the reality was worse than reported. Fewer than 30 units were vacant, and all were heavily vandalised. It looked like a construction site.

"Water pumps have been stolen, with each pump costing the City R100 000. Four have been removed. I've engaged with the executive director of the department and the security provider to initiate legal action, holding them accountable for the losses incurred by the City.

"We must also begin the process of evicting those who have illegally occupied the units. Reports suggest that current tenants invited others to move in, and some security personnel are implicated."

Mabaso condemned the situation, saying: "It's unacceptable for the City to lose valuable property like this when we pay security personnel to protect them. If we don't change how we address these issues, we risk losing more properties. The security companies guarding our assets must be held accountable for these failures as they are paid consistently."



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The City will now assess the damage to the property and undertake necessary refurbishments to make it ready for occupancy.

“We hope the legal process for evicting the illegal occupants proceeds smoothly. We also need to uncover who allowed these people into the units and who is collecting rent from them in a government-owned property. We must make an example of these criminals to show that we are serious about dealing with syndicates that take over our buildings,” Cllr Mabaso said.

**Ends**

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