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Media Release

For Immediate Release

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Forensic Investigation to be launched into Diepkloof Hostel Sale

The City of Johannesburg will conduct a forensic investigation to determine who authorised the sale of the Diepkloof Hostel without the knowledge of council and senior officials.

This was announced by the MMC for Human Settlements, Cllr Mlungisi Mabaso, on Monday during his visit to the Diepkloof Hostel in Soweto.

Mabaso's visit followed violent protests by residents, who blocked roads and burnt tyres in response to news that the hostel—where many have lived for years—had been transferred into private ownership without their knowledge or consent.

Tragically, two people lost their lives during the unrest.

“I have asked the Executive Mayor that we no longer discuss this matter internally with officials. We need to institute a full forensic investigation to determine who within the municipality authorised this deal,” said Mabaso.

He explained that municipal regulations requires council approval for any transfer of municipal land in Johannesburg.

“I have served as a councillor for nine years, and I have never seen a council resolution approving the transfer of the Diepkloof Hostel land. This suggests the transfer was unauthorised. Some names have been mentioned, but we want a formal investigation to determine exactly who was responsible,” he said.

Mabaso noted a troubling detail: “One of the signatories to this questionable transaction is not even a director, but a manager. I want to know who gave themselves the power to transfer municipal land while residents were still occupying it.”

The City's Department of Human Settlements only became aware of the land transfer when they attempted to demolish structures to pave the way for a new development project.

Despite the controversy, the department has developed a policy to guide the redevelopment of hostels, which was presented to izinduna earlier this year.

Mabaso reaffirmed that the illegal sale will not derail plans to redevelop the Diepkloof Hostel.

"In July this year, I'll return with Johannesburg Water to introduce a contractor to begin work. I've instructed that officials approach the courts to lift the interdict currently blocking the development," he said.

He made it clear that he would not engage in discussions with the alleged private owner.

"I will not sit down and discuss R18 million with individuals who claim to have bought this property. That money should be used to improve the hostel. I've told officials that we will deal with these individuals in court," Mabaso emphasised.

He also extended condolences to the families of the two people who died during the protest.

Ends

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