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MEDIA STATEMENT

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City of Johannesburg Intensifies Compliance Enforcement at Maharaj Centre in Lenasia South

The City of Johannesburg continues to strengthen its multi-disciplinary compliance and enforcement operations aimed at protecting residents, ensuring adherence to municipal by-laws and improving public safety across communities.

A coordinated joint inspection operation was conducted at Maharaj Centre, located on Peacock Avenue in Lenasia South, following ongoing compliance concerns and complaints that were escalated to the Office of the City Manager.

The inspection was led through a collective approach involving several City departments and entities, including Johannesburg Metropolitan Police Department (JMPD), Johannesburg Emergency Management Services (EMS), City Power, Johannesburg Water (JW), Development Planning, Planning Control and Law Enforcement, Housing, CRUM Region G, SAPS and City Power Security.

The operation formed part of the City's ongoing efforts to address persistent non-compliance at the property, which has experienced various regulatory and compliance challenges dating back to 2018. This was the third inspection conducted at the site.

During the inspection, officials identified several serious contraventions relating to fire safety, building compliance, electricity connections and land-use violations. Among the findings were illegal electricity connections, unapproved structural alterations, non-compliant fire safety measures and the occupation of the building without the necessary approvals and certification.

Authorities discovered that parts of the basement, originally approved for parking purposes, were instead being used for business operations, including mechanical work involving vehicles. Inspectors further identified a thatch roof structure within the building, which was found not to comply with approved plans and fire safety requirements.

EMS and Fire Safety officials also raised concerns regarding outstanding fire compliance matters. The City confirmed that the building remains occupied without an occupancy certificate, which constitutes a contravention of municipal regulations.

Development Planning officials further indicated that all statutory approvals and supporting compliance documentation must be in place before an occupancy certificate can be issued. Officials also noted that previously submitted building plans did not correspond with the actual conditions on site, resulting in plans being resubmitted for further assessment.

As part of the operation, JW officials inspected the property's water connection and existing borehole infrastructure, while City Power confirmed that illegal electricity connections were identified and removed. Investigations revealed that certain tenants had been receiving electricity through unlawful connections without purchasing electricity for several months. The City is also pursuing the issuing of a Section 56 notice due to the outstanding certification requirements.

The owner indicated that certain matters relating to the electricity meter remain subject to legal dispute in the High Court. It was noted that power to the property had previously been disconnected in April 2023, with a penalty fee of R50 000 later paid for reconnection while the matter remained under dispute.

The City of Johannesburg has emphasised that coordinated inspections involving all relevant departments are critical in ensuring accountability and preventing property owners from shifting responsibility between departments or exploiting regulatory gaps.

Each participating department and entity will now compile detailed reports outlining the identified contraventions, required corrective measures and recommendations for further enforcement action. These reports will be consolidated and submitted to the Office of the City Manager for further processing and monitoring.

Ends

Issued by the City of Johannesburg

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