

TITLE: Johannesburg fire 'wake-up call', President Ramaphosa says  
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## Article Summary

President Cyril Ramaphosa has described the deadly fire in Johannesburg's inner city as a "wake-up call" for South Africa. The fire in a five-storey building, which was occupied by homeless people, resulted in the deaths of 74 individuals including 12 children, with over 50 others injured. The cause of the fire remains unclear. The city of Johannesburg confirmed that it owned the building but stated that it had been taken over by cartels. The president called for an investigation into the incident and for lessons to be learned to prevent future tragedies. South Africa faces a chronic housing shortage, with an estimated 15,000 people homeless in Johannesburg. The government plans to relocate people living in similar "hijacked" buildings and convert them into social housing. Online xenophobic attacks against the victims and survivors of the fire have been condemned on social media.

## Article Analysis

1. Does the article give a political economy contextual analysis of the event?

The article does not provide a political economy contextual analysis of the event. It focuses more on the immediate aftermath of the fire and the response from government officials.

2. What according to the article, is/are the root cause/s of the event?

According to the article, the root cause of the event was the occupation of the building by homeless people. The building, which was owned by the city of Johannesburg, had been taken over by cartels and was being used as makeshift housing.

3. Does the article present evidence of complicity between Johannesburg councillor representatives and organised criminal syndicates that took over the control of the building?

The article does not present evidence of complicity between Johannesburg councillor representatives and organised criminal syndicates that took over the control of the building.

4. Does the article present evidence of NGOs (like SERI) engaging with organised criminal syndicates that took over the control of the building, on behalf of and in the interests of their clients (i.e. the tenants)?

The article does not present evidence of NGOs like SERI engaging with organised criminal syndicates that took over the control of the building on behalf of the tenants.

5. Does the article present potential solutions to the occupation by tenants of a hijacked building that has degenerated into a slum?

The article does not present potential solutions to the occupation by tenants of a hijacked building that has degenerated into a slum in respect of law enforcement, economic development/social upliftment, provision of alternative accommodation, and the tenants' right to the city.

6. Does the article emphasise the conflictual relationship between city officials and the NGO SERI (and other NGOs) regarding different interpretations of the rights of tenants in terms of the law and specifically in terms of the PIE Act?

The article does not emphasize the conflictual relationship between city officials and the NGO SERI regarding different interpretations of the rights of tenants in terms of the law and specifically in terms of the PIE Act.

## Critical Analysis

The article "Johannesburg fire 'wake-up call', President Ramaphosa says" appears to have a relatively neutral tone and minimal subjective language. However, there are a few potential biases and subjective elements to consider.

Firstly, there is a focus on the president's perspective throughout the article. President Cyril Ramaphosa's quotes and statements are given significant attention and are presented positively. For example, the article states, "In a news conference at the site of the fire, Mr Ramaphosa said the incident needed to be investigated and lessons learned to prevent future tragedies " This could potentially create a bias in favour of the president's viewpoint.

Additionally, there is an emphasis on the issue of housing and homelessness in Johannesburg. The article highlights the chronic housing shortage and the challenges faced by homeless people living in unfit buildings. While this is an important aspect of the story, it could be seen as presenting the issue in a sympathetic light and thereby creating a bias in favour of addressing the housing crisis.

Furthermore, the article mentions the problem of "cartels hijacking buildings" and refers to some of the occupants as "undocumented migrants, mostly from other African countries." This language could potentially contribute to a negative portrayal of these individuals and perpetuate stereotypes or biases surrounding migrants.

Overall, the article does not contain significant instances of subjective language or clear biases. However, the focus on the president's perspective, the sympathetic portrayal of the housing crisis, and the mention of undocumented migrants could be considered potential areas where subjective language or biases may appear.

## Contradiction Analysis

1. Contradiction: The article mentions that the cause of the deadly fire is unclear, but also states that the building was not properly looked after and had makeshift structures and debris, making it hard to search for and rescue people. These details indicate a lack of proper maintenance and safety measures.
2. Contradiction: The article states that the city of Johannesburg confirmed it owned the building, but also claims that cartels had taken it over. These statements present conflicting information about who is responsible for the building.
3. Contradiction: The article mentions that the building used to be a home for abused women and children, but later describes it as an abandoned building full of families who pay rent to criminal gangs. These descriptions contradict each other and create confusion about the history and current use of the building.
4. Contradiction: The article states that President Ramaphosa commended the emergency services for their quick response, but also mentions that the building was gutted and made it hard to search for and rescue people. These statements suggest a lack of effectiveness in the emergency response.
5. Contradiction: The article quotes Johannesburg mayor Kabelo Gwamanda saying they would relocate people living in similar "hijacked" buildings and turn them into social housing, but also mentions that the government is dealing with the issue of cartels hijacking buildings across the city. This raises questions about the effectiveness of the proposed solution and whether it will address the underlying problem of building hijacking.