

TITLE: Joburg City's neglect allows slumlords retake building

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## Article Summary

The City of Johannesburg's neglect has allowed slumlords to retake a derelict building that was previously taken from their control four years ago. The building, Vannin Court, was supposed to be turned into low-cost housing units, but the city failed to secure it and its occupants moved back in. The city has been cracking down on hijacked properties in the wake of a deadly fire in a similar building. The project to redevelop hijacked and dilapidated buildings stalled due to a lack of funds and the property being hijacked. The residents of Vannin Court continue to live in squalid and hazardous conditions. The city has been conducting inspections and raids on properties, but non-governmental organizations claim they are violating the law.

## Article Analysis

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

Based on the provided information, it does not appear that the article provides a political economy contextual analysis of the event. The article primarily focuses on the failure of city officials to secure the building and the history of attempts to redevelop hijacked and dilapidated buildings in the city.

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 is the failure of city officials to secure the derelict building that had previously been wrestled from the control of hijackers. This allowed the syndicate to retake control of the building. Additionally, it is mentioned that the lack of funds for the redevelopment project and the presence of slumlords who took over many buildings in the CBD are contributing factors.

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 explicit evidence of complicity between Johannesburg councillor representatives and the organised criminal syndicates that took over the control of the building. It primarily focuses on the failure of city officials to secure the building, but does not delve into specific evidence of collaboration.

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 the organised criminal syndicates that took over the control of the building. There is no mention of any NGO involvement in relation to the criminal syndicates or the interests 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 explicitly present potential solutions to the occupation by tenants of the hijacked building. However, it does mention efforts by the city to crackdown on hijacked properties and inspections on rundown properties. The mention of the failed redevelopment project suggests a potential solution of providing alternative accommodation through low-cost housing units.

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 a conflictual relationship between city officials and the NGO SERI or other NGOs regarding different interpretations of tenant rights. It primarily focuses on the failure of city officials and the presence of slumlords, without specifically addressing conflicts over tenant rights interpretation.

## Critical Analysis

The article titled "Joburg City's neglect allows slumlords retake building" by Mpho Sibanyoni appears to be written in a relatively unbiased manner, although there are some potential biases and subjective language used throughout.

One potential bias is the use of the term "slumlords" in the title. While it accurately describes the individuals who have taken control of the building, it could be seen as a subjective term that may carry negative connotations.

The author also uses the term "hijackers" to describe those who took control of the building. While this is a factual term, it may also carry some subjective and negative connotations that could influence readers' perceptions.

Additionally, the article includes quotes from a ward councillor and an architect who express frustration with the city's handling of the building. These individuals provide their perspectives on the situation, but the article does not include any opposing views or perspectives from city officials or representatives.

This could potentially create a biased or one-sided portrayal of the situation.

Furthermore, the article includes statements from the Joburg Property Company (JPC) spokesperson, which provide an explanation for the failure of the project. However, the article does not include any independent verification or investigation into the claims made by the spokesperson. This lack of independent verification could potentially introduce biases into the reporting.

Overall, while the article appears to present the facts of the situation, there are some potential biases and subjective language used that could influence readers' perceptions of the events described.

## Contradiction Analysis

1. The city officials failed to secure a derelict building they had previously taken control of from hijackers.
2. The city had plans to turn Vannin Court into low-cost housing units, but the project stalled due to lack of funds.
3. The city carried out evictions of the building's occupants in 2019, but they moved back in within days.
4. The architect and subcontractors completed planning and design work for the building's redevelopment but faced challenges due to the city's inability to manage buildings and provide suitable alternative accommodation options.
5. The Joburg Property Company stated that the development of Vannin Court failed because it was hijacked and the developers lacked funds.
6. The residents of Vannin Court paid rent to slumlords who had taken over many buildings in the CBD.
7. Despite promises from the MMC for public safety, the residents had not been evicted and taken to shelters by the time of the article's publication.
8. Non-governmental organizations accused the city of conducting raids on properties, which the city characterized as inspections. The NGOs requested information pertaining to the warrants used for these raids.