

TITLE: Marshalltown fire inquiry postponed indefinitely

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## Article Summary

The Commission of Inquiry into the Usindiso Building fire in Marshalltown, Johannesburg has been postponed indefinitely due to safety concerns. The City of Johannesburg Emergency Management Services determined that the venue being used did not comply with the city's by-laws, specifically the requirement for multiple fire exits.

As a result, the organizers must find a larger and more suitable venue for the public hearings. The deadly fire, which occurred on August 31, claimed 76 lives and left many injured and homeless. The commission has been given a six-month timeline to investigate the cause of the fire and the issue of illegally occupied buildings in the city.

## Article Analysis

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

No, the article does not provide a political economy contextual analysis of the event. It primarily focuses on the safety concerns and the postponement of the Commission of Inquiry.

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 fire that gutted the Usindiso Building, which claimed 76 lives, left dozens injured, and hundreds homeless. The article does not delve into further details about the specific cause of the fire.

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

No, the article does not present evidence of complicity between Johannesburg councillor representatives and organized 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)?

No, the article does not present evidence of NGOs engaging with organized criminal syndicates that took over the control of the building on behalf of 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 provide potential solutions to the occupation by tenants of a hijacked building that has degenerated into a slum. It solely focuses on the postponement of the Commission of Inquiry due to safety concerns.

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 relationship between city officials and the NGO SERI regarding different interpretations of the rights of tenants in terms of the law and the PIE Act. It solely focuses on the safety concerns and the postponement of the Commission of Inquiry.

## Critical Analysis

Overall, the news article appears to provide a relatively unbiased account of the postponement of the Commission of Inquiry into the Marshalltown fire. However, there are a few instances where the author may introduce potential biases or subjective language.

1. The opening sentence includes the phrase "inferno," which can be seen as a subjective and emotive term. Instead, a more neutral term like "fire" could be used.
2. The author mentions that "major media houses were denied access to the venue," implying potential frustration or dissatisfaction. This may introduce a bias, as it suggests that media houses should have been given access.
3. The use of the phrase "our clients" when quoting Tshiamo Sedumedi, Director at MNS Attorneys, suggests that the author may have a personal connection to the individuals involved in the commission. This could potentially introduce a bias in favor of their perspective.
4. The phrase "illegally occupied buildings better known as hijacked buildings" introduces a subjective term ("hijacked buildings") to describe illegally occupied buildings. The author's choice of words may influence readers' perception of the issue.

Overall, while the article provides mostly objective information, there are a few instances where the author's language or word choice may introduce some biases.

## Contradiction Analysis

1. The article states that the Commission of Inquiry into the Marshalltown fire has been postponed indefinitely due to safety concerns. However, later in the article, it is mentioned that the commission has been given six months to investigate the cause of the fire.
2. The article states that the venue did not comply with the City of Johannesburg's by-laws, specifically regarding fire exits. However, it is also mentioned that all emergency exits were blocked during the fire, suggesting that the building itself did not comply with safety standards.
3. The article mentions that major media houses were denied access to the venue on the first day of the commission due to capacity constraints and insufficient emergency exits. However, earlier in the article, it is stated that the venue could accommodate 25 people.