

TITLE: Joburg fire sparked by inaction on buildings hijackings

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## Article Summary

A fire in a hijacked building in Johannesburg has resulted in the deaths of 74 people. The City of Johannesburg last inspected the building in 2019, the same year it was hijacked, and no further inspections were conducted due to the hostile environment created by the hijackers. Building hijackings, where properties are taken from legitimate owners and populated with tenants who are forced to pay rent without basic services, have been a rampant problem in the city since 2008.

Despite promises from various mayors to address the issue, little has been done to tackle the problem in the past 15 years. The mayors include Amos Masondo, Parks Tau, Herman Mashaba, Jolidee Matongo, Mpho Moerane, Mpho Phalatse, and Thapelo Amad. The injured victims of the fire have been admitted to several hospitals, and efforts are being made to provide social and psychological support to the affected families.

## 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 historical context and the promises made by mayors to address the issue of building hijackings.

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 hijacking of buildings by criminal syndicates, who take control of the buildings and demand rent from tenants without providing basic services.

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 the 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 terms of law enforcement, economic development/social upliftment, the 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 or other NGOs regarding different interpretations of the rights of tenants in terms of the law and specifically in terms of the PIE Act.

## Critical Analysis

Based on the information provided, it does not appear that the author, Mpho Sibanyoni, has included any subjective language or explicit biases in the article. The article presents factual information about the fire in a building in Johannesburg and the history of building hijackings in the city. The author includes quotes from various officials and past mayors to provide context and background information on the issue.

However, it is worth noting that the article focuses on the failures of past mayors and authorities to address the problem of building hijackings in Johannesburg. This may suggest a bias against the officials who have been in power and their handling of the issue. The article could have also included more perspectives or explanations for the challenges faced by authorities in addressing the problem of hijacked buildings.

Overall, the article presents the information in a straightforward manner without any explicit subjective language, but there may be a bias in the selection of information and focus on past failures of authorities.

## Contradiction Analysis

One contradiction in the news article is the inconsistency in the information provided about when the building that caught fire was last inspected. Acting chief of Joburg emergency medical services Rapulane Monageng states that the building was last inspected in 2019, the

year it was hijacked. However, later in the article, Monageng says that the building was inspected in June 2019 and there have been no inspections since then. This discrepancy raises questions about the accuracy of the information and the timeline of events.

Another contradiction is seen in the statements made by different mayors regarding their efforts to address the problem of building hijackings. The article mentions that various mayors, including Amos Masondo, Parks Tau, Herman Mashaba, Jolidee Matongo, Mpho Moerane, Mpho Phalatse, and Thapelo Amad, have made promises to deal with the issue over the past 15 years. However, it is then stated that authorities have done little to address the problem. This contradiction suggests that the promises made by the mayors may not have been followed through with effective action.

Furthermore, there is a contradiction between the city manager Clint Brink's statement that the building was previously leased to the provincial department of social development and later invaded and hijacked, and the earlier statement that the building once housed vulnerable women and children. This discrepancy raises questions about the accuracy of the information and the timeline of events surrounding the building.

These contradictions in the news article raise concerns about the reliability and accuracy of the information presented. It is important for news outlets to provide accurate and consistent information in order to maintain their credibility and fulfil their obligation to impartiality.