

TITLE: Our duty remains to journey survivors out of despair into hope

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Article Summary

The article discusses the aftermath of a deadly fire that occurred in Johannesburg, South Africa, on August 31. The author notes that at a recent memorial service for the victims, many things were absent, such as identification of the bodies and support for survivors. Over 300 people were still displaced, with some afraid to seek help outside of government relief efforts.

Additionally, there were reports of orphaned or missing children and people losing their identity documents. The author criticizes the false narrative that the victims were only migrants, which has caused the news cycle to move on quickly. Government officials were notably absent from the memorial service, despite their role in organizing shelters for survivors. The article also highlights the lack of counselling and support available for survivors and the government's eviction of people from buildings near the site of the fire without providing alternative housing.

The author emphasizes the importance of community activists who have stepped in to support survivors and calls for continued efforts to help survivors find hope and rebuild their lives.

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 mainly focuses on the response and actions of the government, community activists, and volunteers in the aftermath of the fire.

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

According to the article, the root causes of the event are the fire itself and the government's lack of coordination and response in providing relief and support to the survivors.

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 specifically present potential solutions to the occupation by tenants of a hijacked building that has degenerated into a slum. It does highlight the need for proper coordination and support from the government, as well as the commendable efforts of community activists and volunteers in providing relief and assistance to the survivors.

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

Overall, this news article titled "Our duty remains to journey survivors out of despair into hope" by Tessa Dooms discusses the aftermath of a fire that occurred in Johannesburg and highlights the negligence and lack of response by government officials. The article primarily focuses on the challenges faced by survivors and the support provided by community activists.

Regarding potential biases or subjective language used by the author, there are a few instances worth noting. First, in the opening paragraph, the author states that they were "struck by many things that were absent", suggesting a negative sentiment towards the memorial service and its organization. The description of the government officials as lacking care and politicians dismissing the tragedy as "mere victims rather than future voters" also indicates a bias against them. Additionally, the author portrays the government response as incompetent and uncaring, using phrases like "the veneer of a competent and caring government" and "evicted people should go to shelters, already overflowing".

Furthermore, the author praises the community activists as "unseen and unsung heroes" who have taken up the responsibilities that the state has neglected. This positive portrayal of activists and negative portrayal of government officials may suggest a bias in favour of activists and against the government.

In terms of language, the author uses emotive language and vivid descriptions to highlight the severity of the situation. For example, the author describes the survivors with burns and broken limbs as being "outnumbered by a rapid increase in public order police wielding rifles". The use of phrases like "tragedy loomed larger than compassion" and "journey survivors out of despair into hope" also adds an emotional tone to the article.

Overall, the article may have a bias against government officials and a positive bias in favour of community activists. The language used by the author adds an emotional aspect to the article, potentially influencing readers' perceptions of the events and individuals involved.

Contradiction Analysis

1. Contradiction: The article states that over 60 bodies remained unidentified and over 300 people were displaced, but also mentions that less than 100 people were transported from shelters to the memorial service. If over 300 people were displaced, it is contradictory that less than 100 attended the memorial service.
2. Contradiction: The author claims that government officials were absent from the event, but also states that the shelters organized by the state bussed survivors to the event. If the shelters were organized by the state, it is contradictory that government officials were absent.
3. Contradiction: The article mentions that government officials conducted three raids on buildings around the site of the fire, evicting people without a plan on where they should go. However, it is also mentioned that officials evicted people citing safety concerns, contradicting the lack of a plan for where these families should go.
4. Contradiction: The author states that public order police were seemingly protecting ward councillors from the victims rather than serving them, outnumbering a crowd of survivors requesting assistance. This contradicts the idea that the crowd posed a threat to the ward councillors.
5. Contradiction: The article describes the commitment of community activists who have shown up for survivors, organizing food, blankets, medical care, etc. However, the author also mentions that the state's response was fragmented and that community activists had to act as a bridge. This suggests a contradiction between the effectiveness of the state's response and the role of community activists.