

TITLE: The desperate search for the bodies of my sisters

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PUBLISHED DATE: 1 September 2023

SOURCE: BBC News

URL: <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-66682871>

Article Summary

This news article discusses the aftermath of a devastating building fire in Johannesburg, South Africa. The fire claimed the lives of at least 76 people, including 12 children, and left many families searching for their missing loved ones. The article follows the story of Grif, a Malawian man who found one of his missing sisters among the bodies in the morgue. However, authorities say that only 12 of the victims can be identified by sight.

The building where the fire occurred was condemned and overcrowded, and many of the victims are believed to be undocumented migrants living on the fringes of society. The cause of the fire is still unknown, and forensic investigators are working at the scene. The government has promised assistance to the victims, but many are hesitant to come forward due to their immigration status.

The article highlights the poor housing conditions in the inner city, with many properties being deemed unfit for habitation. These buildings often serve as homes for families, including undocumented migrants, who pay rent to criminal gangs. The conditions inside these buildings are often inadequate, resembling shanty towns with limited access to water and electricity.

The tragedy has prompted President Cyril Ramaphosa to call for action on the housing situation in the inner city. The building where the fire occurred used to be a shelter for abused women and children but was taken over once the lease expired. The article concludes by noting that the fire may have been caused by a candle, paraffin stove, or faulty electricity connection.

Article Analysis

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

The article does not explicitly provide a political economy contextual analysis of the event. However, it does mention that the building was "hijacked" by criminal gangs who collect rent from the occupants, suggesting a possible connection to economic factors and criminal activity.

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 the building by criminal gangs who collect rent from the occupants. The article also mentions that the building used to be a home for abused women and children before it was hijacked.

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 provide evidence of complicity between Johannesburg councillor representatives and organised criminal syndicates.

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 provide evidence of NGOs like SERI engaging with organised criminal syndicates 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 of the hijacked building. However, President Cyril Ramaphosa called the tragedy a "wake-up call" to address the situation of housing in the inner city, suggesting a broader need for housing solutions. The article also mentions the poor conditions in the building, including lack of access to running water and power, which could potentially be addressed through infrastructure development.

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.

Critical Analysis

This news article titled "The desperate search for the bodies of my sisters" focuses on the aftermath of a building fire in Johannesburg, South Africa. Upon analysing the article for potential biases or subjective language, the following observations can be made:

1. Use of subjective language: There is minimal use of subjective language in the article, as most of the information provided is factual and based on personal accounts from individuals affected by the fire.

2. Human interest perspective: The article adopts a human interest perspective by sharing the personal story of Grif, a man searching for his missing sisters. This helps to create an emotional connection with the reader and elicit empathy.
3. Inclusion of multiple perspectives: The article quotes individuals from different countries affected by the fire, including Malawians and Tanzanians, providing a broader perspective on the impact of the incident.
4. Mention of undocumented migrants: The article highlights that many victims of the fire are thought to be undocumented migrants living on the margins of South African society. This inclusion may help shed light on the vulnerabilities faced by this group but could also evoke bias or stereotypes if not handled carefully.
5. Government response: The article includes a statement from President Cyril Ramaphosa, addressing the situation and acknowledging the need to address housing issues in the inner city. This provides a balanced view by showcasing the government's response to the tragedy.

Overall, the article appears to be written in a factual and impartial manner, with limited use of subjective language or biases. The inclusion of personal stories gives the article a human element while presenting the broader context of the incident.

Contradiction Analysis

One possible contradiction in the news article is the discrepancy between the number of bodies that are identifiable by sight. The article states that only 12 out of the more than 70 bodies are identifiable by sight, which suggests that the majority of the bodies are burned beyond recognition. However, later in the article, it mentions that Grif was able to identify one of his sisters among the bodies. This implies that at least one body was recognizable, contradicting the earlier statement.

Another possible contradiction is the mention of the building being "hijacked" and the conditions inside resembling shanty towns. The article explains that the building used to be a home for abused women and children but was taken over once the lease expired. It also describes the conditions inside as resembling shanty towns with flimsy partitions and little access to basic amenities. However, it is unclear how or why the building was "hijacked" and who exactly is responsible for the poor conditions. This lack of clarity creates a contradiction between the description of the building's previous purpose and its current state.