



City of Johannesburg
Johannesburg Roads Agency

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MEDIA RELEASE

Vandalism, Theft and Illegal Mining – A Threat to Roads Infrastructure and Public Safety

City of Johannesburg Executive Mayor, Herman Mashaba has called for immediate intervention by City officials, stakeholders, entities and public-sector policing due to increased reports of theft and vandalism of road related infrastructure, and illegal mining with the use of explosives near highways, Transnet bulk fuel supply and SASOL gas pipelines travelling across the City.

MMC for Transport Councillor Nonhlanhla Makhuba said, “With only five months into the 2017/2018 financial year, theft and vandalism has cost the City R12.3 million in repairs and replacement due to missing man-hole covers, traffic signal poles and copper cables, road signage, guardrails, traffic signal poles, and bridge railings. Of the 31 CCTV cameras installed, only 3 remain, and 31 of 427 uninterrupted power supply (UPS) units to run traffic signals have been stolen this year. Insurance claims have risen to R4.4 million due to accident damage arising from stolen road infrastructure and people falling into open manholes.”

Executive Mayor, Herman Mashaba said: “The economic impact of theft and vandalism on our roads has far wider implications for the City. We are embarking on progressive interventions to address the rampant and brazen acts of criminality. We are calling on our stakeholders to collaborate with us in putting an end to this direct sabotage of our operations and our mandate in delivering services. The safety of our residents and all roads users is paramount, scrap dealers aiding and abetting in the sale and purchase of stolen road related infrastructure will be prosecuted. We are appealing to City of Johannesburg residents to support our efforts in combatting crime by reporting acts of theft and vandalism to the City’s Crime Hotline and Johannesburg Road Agency’s (JRA) Infrastructure Protection Unit (IPU).”

Chairman: S Tshabalala,
Executive Directors: Managing Director - Vacant, G Mbatha - Chief Financial Officer
Non-Executive Directors: L Mashamaite, Q Buthelezi, S Thunzi, P Govender, T Magerman, K Sihlali, A Torres
Company Secretary: K Mills

Registration No. 2000/028993/07

The City is equally concerned about the impending threat posed by illegal mining syndicates, with activity reported at decommissioned mines across the city, including mining activities along the M2 highway, M1 Double Decker bridge, Main Reef and Nasrec roads including FNB Stadium where the bulk Transnet fuel supply and SASOL gas pipelines traverse. The use of explosives has now compromised public safety, with increased reports of tremors and illegal mining activity reported in close proximity to pipelines carrying gas and fuel.

High Risk Areas due to Illegal Mining Activity:

- Main Reef Road and Nasrec Road remain vulnerable due to the erosion of underground supporting pillars.
- M1 North Double Decker section, integrity possibly compromised due to illegal blasting activities.
- Randfontein Road at Matholessville, illegal mining operations taking place next to the fuel pipelines servitude. Risk of damage is very high.
- FNB stadium, mining next to pipelines could have a devastating impact if ignited.
- Zami Impilo informal settlement at high risk due exposed pipes in the inspection hole.
- Bravo Group remain vulnerable with recurrence of sinkholes within their property due to repeated tremors experienced during blasting. The risk of damage is high.
- Various spots have been identified, with tunnelling visible on the surface along the M2 East off ramp.

Mayor Mashaba said: “The use of explosives near pipelines carrying gas and fuel creates increased risk for neighbouring communities, puts services at risk and is an impending threat to the safety of city employees working along the pipelines and other services within the servitudes. Illegal mining also risks contamination of the City’s water supply. The explosives have also resulted in tremors, which risks the structural integrity of our roads, adjacent residential

communities and businesses. Illegal blasting can create a spark that can ignite a fire capable of incinerating a large radius of up to 300m². The illegal nature of the mining has compromised the pillars that support the decommissioned mines, placing additional risk on the physical structure upon which the pipelines rests and the imminent collapse of the mine. We can confirm that both Transnet Pipelines and Sasol gas pipes have been compromised.”

Mayor Mashaba has called for a collaborative crackdown operation with the Department of Mineral Resources, Department of Home Affairs, Department of Roads and Transport, JMPD, SAPS and Hawks to halt illegal mining activities. Perpetrators caught will be charged and can serve up to 30 years imprisonment for vandalising sensitive city infrastructure. The City of Johannesburg is exploring additional measures to fast-track persecution of criminals and engagement is underway with rolling out of more municipal courts.

ENDS

About the Johannesburg Roads Agency (JRA)

The JRA is a City-owned agency responsible for the maintenance, repair and development of Johannesburg’s road network and storm water infrastructure, including bridges and culverts, traffic lights and signage. The organisation is committed to providing quality roads that are accessible, safe and liveable for our communities.

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