



CITY OF JOHANNESBURG

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City of Johannesburg Speech by
Executive Mayor, Cllr Herman Mashaba

Memorial Service in honour of Inspector Ayanda Zulu

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I wish this occasion was a happier one.

Sadly, we are gathered once again in remembrance of a dedicated law enforcement officer who was brutally murdered by criminals whose thirst for mayhem seemingly knows no bounds.

I have been mayor of the City of Johannesburg for 20 months now and, in that time, nothing has hurt me more than having to say goodbye to our men and women in uniform.

They were not merely officers tasked with enforcing the law. To their families, they were so much more. They were brothers, sisters, fathers, mothers, aunts and uncles. They were friends and confidants.

They were upstanding members of the community who chose a career that entailed spending long hours away from their loved ones in order to keep the rest of us safe.

Many were breadwinners.

Their untimely departures are a tragic reminder that somewhere in the City of Johannesburg, and elsewhere in our province and country, there are families who are staring hunger and uncertainty in the face as a result of the actions of a few criminal elements.

It is not lost on me that many of our officials throughout the City, and especially our JMPD officers, sometimes have to conduct their work in the most dangerous of situations.

Therefore, I would like to take this moment to not only share my sincere condolences with the family of Inspector Zulu, but to also thank you for having allowed her the space and freedom to serve the people of this City so diligently and passionately.

I am angry that we have lost such a young and courageous wife, mother and officer of the law.

Coupled with my anger is the sadness of knowing that the families left behind will carry the passing of their loved ones with them for a long time. There are no words to express my sincere regret for the pain you all feel.

I hope that you will embrace the support of the City and your loved ones during this difficult time.

The untimely passing of Inspector Zulu is a personal loss to me as it is to you because I am responsible for this government and its thousands of employees.

When tragedies like this happen, I am often forced to reflect on the environment we work in. What kind of society have we become where those who would enforce our laws and keep our communities safe, are killed in such a manner?

What kind of society have we become to tolerate such terrible crimes without so much as an ounce of outrage? Across South Africa, reports of officers losing their lives whilst protecting residents are common place.

The reality of our situation, both in South Africa, and this City, is that we have become numb; we have become numb and tolerant of the lawlessness we witness daily throughout our City and the rest of South Africa.

So far this year, five of our colleagues in the JMPD have been slaughtered without so much as a word of outrage.

I ask myself, where are the protests on the streets? Where are the angry callers to the many morning radio talk shows? Where are the threats of court action, the calls for commissions of inquiry as well as the parliamentary probes we have become so accustomed to?

It is sad that the tragic death of Inspector Zulu, as well as those of her fellow JMPD officers who died early this year, was met with complete silence.

One could be mistaken for thinking that South Africans no longer recognise the sanctity of human life.

I am concerned for my country. I am very concerned about the complete, and possibly irreparable, breakdown of the rule of law in South Africa.

Experts in matters of statehood and their continued success frequently warn that one of the best indicators of a state's ongoing viability is the maintenance of the rule of law. These experts tell us that if you want to destroy a country and render it completely unviable and set it on a path to the ranks of a failed state, destroy the rule of law.

While South Africa is far from being a failed state, it is not entirely impossible that we could one day find ourselves fitting the description of such a state, particularly at the rate at which we are going.

It may seem alarmist and overly dramatic to suggest this but what conclusion is one expected to arrive at when men can walk up to an officer of the law, not under the cover of darkness but in broad morning light, and brazenly snatch away her life in so violent a manner?

These are the signs of a nation that is fast being overrun with people that have lost appreciation for the value of life and the African value of uBuntu-Botho.

Forgive me but I must drive this point home. I have read extensively on this matter and every bit of literature on this subject instructs us that if we are to avoid falling into the ranks of failed states, the rule of law must prevail.

The rule of law is the difference between prosperous nations and those that frequently teeter on the brink of collapse. These are the countries where every democratic institution has been run down to serve the interests of corrupt politicians.

We must not be that country. Such developments have implications for the City of Johannesburg. This City, which we hope to transform into a city of golden opportunities, carries the burden of driving South Africa's economy.

If the City of Johannesburg fails, South Africa will surely fail. Where there is chaos, as was illustrated with the fatal shooting of Inspector Zulu, the economy will surely suffer.

Our country, which is already the most unequal society in the world, will see the already sizeable gap between the haves and the have-nots widen even further.

A very recent World Bank report has shown that inequality in South Africa has gotten worse since 1994. This is really disappointing since democratic breakthrough of 1994 was meant to usher in prosperity which had been deliberately denied to the majority black people.

The reality also is that most of our people are poor because of the breakdown of the rule of law. Corruption has reached frightening heights and resources that are meant for the poor are misused.

It is for this reason that the rule of law must be restored. Once this happens, we will no longer read or hear of murderers casually walking up to an officer of the law in full view of neighbours and killing them in cold blood.

There will be respect for our men and women in uniform.

The reality, however, is that we have a crime problem in the City. This evidenced by the hundreds of hi-jacked buildings in the Inner City, which give rise to criminality. Alcohol and drugs are sold to innocent children out of these buildings and this only serves to further accelerate the decay of our Inner City.

This week, we lost three children as a result of this lawlessness that I speak of.

Criminal syndicates have carved up large parts of our Inner City, forcing desperate men and women and their children to live in despicable conditions.

It is this lawlessness that seeks to interrupt our working towards a vision of an Inner City that will once again be a place to work, live and play. Had this lawlessness been addressed head-on, as we are trying to do with initiatives such as *Operation Buya Mthetho*, we could have easily prevented the loss of three young lives this week in Doornfontein.

We could have identified dangerous buildings and turned them into safe, happy homes for our people. The revival of the Inner City, and the restoration of the rule of law, is further complicated by the unknown number of undocumented immigrants who find themselves across our porous borders.

I do recognise that undocumented immigrants come to South Africa for various reasons. Many come in search of economic opportunities; others are escaping political persecution and yes, there are indeed those who come to our country to advance their lives through criminality.

Undocumented immigrants are especially vulnerable to criminality because of their illegal status, which is why I have been calling for effective border control and for the Department of Home Affairs to document immigrants as and when they enter our borders.

More so, it is important to stop the proliferation of drugs and drug-lords from taking advantage of weaknesses in our border security in order to spread crime, which has become a lucrative business that people are willing to kill for.

We must protect our borders in order to keep documented migrants and local citizens safe from criminal elements who seek to do us harm.

As we prepare to say good-bye to Inspector Zulu, I urge you to remember her work.

Remember the many days you laughed together and remember her dedication to the cause of ensuring a safe Johannesburg.

Her passing must not be in vain. Her example and commitment lives on in each and every one of us.

May her soul rest in peace.

Cllr Herman Mashaba
Executive Mayor
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