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Media Statement

For Immediate Release

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The City of Johannesburg Reaffirms Zero Tolerance Following Arrests During Lawful Enforcement Operations

The City of Johannesburg reaffirms its zero-tolerance stance toward any interference with municipal operations, including the intimidation of officials and the incitement of violence against City employees.

Earlier today, a suspect was arrested during a City Power–led electricity and water disconnection operation in Nancefield, Lenasia, after allegedly threatening City officials and encouraging residents to obstruct lawful enforcement actions.

The operation focused on 10 business customers with outstanding municipal accounts totalling approximately R20 million. Overall, Lenasia’s municipal debt is estimated at R870 million, encompassing residential, business and government accounts. Business customers alone accounts for approximately R250 million of the outstanding rates.

The City alleges that, during enforcement operations earlier this week, the suspect:

- Interfered with municipal operations
- Encouraged residents to chase away and reject City officials
- Instigated hostility and, in some instances, violence against officials
- Mobilised private security to obstruct lawful service delivery actions

On Wednesday, City officials were forced to suspend operations after groups were allegedly rallied against them. As a result, the City returned today with reinforcement from the Johannesburg Metropolitan Police Department (JMPD) to ensure the safety of officials and the continuation of lawful enforcement.

The City further clarifies that today’s arrest relates to a separate individual and is not connected to the suspect arrested last week in Bryanston.

The individual arrested last week was taken into custody in connection with the hijacking and illegal occupation of a property on Grosvenor Road, Bryanston, following a multi-disciplinary operation led by the City Manager. That case involved illegal occupation, unlawful structures,

illegal utility connections and the illicit collection of rent. The suspect was released on bail today through criminal justice processes, which remain independent of today's arrest.

The City wishes to state unequivocally:

- The arrest or release of any suspect does not weaken the City's resolve.
- Attempts to intimidate officials, obstruct lawful operations or incite violence will be met with firm and decisive action.

The City remains committed to:

- Protecting municipal and law-enforcement officials
- Enforcing compliance with municipal by-laws and payment obligations
- Intensifying operations against illegal connections, property hijacking and organised resistance to lawful enforcement
- No individual, business or interest group is above the law.

Ends

Issued by the City of Johannesburg

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