

Address by Ald. Tania Campbell, Executive Mayor of the City of Ekurhuleni: Memorial Service for the victims of the tanker explosion

30 December 2022

Programme Director, MEC Mbali Hlope

Honourable Premier of Gauteng, Panyaza Lesufi,

Honourable Minister of Health, Dr Joe Phala,

Honourable Members of Provincial and National Governments,

Leaders of Political Parties,

Speaker of Council, Raymond Dlamini,

Whip of Council, Ald. Kheta Shandu,

MMC's in attendance,

Councillors,

Heads of Departments,

All emergency personnel and first responders

All NGO's and organizations who have assisted during this tragedy

Residents of Ekurhuleni

Family members and loved ones of those impacted by this horrendous tragedy

Today we are gathered here to take stock of the disaster which unfurled in the early hours 24th of December.

Words cannot express the magnitude of this catastrophe.

A catastrophe that should have never taken place.

At this time of year families are gathered to celebrate and rejoice and give thanks.

For so many, they have been robbed of this pleasure.

They have had to contend with the destruction and chaos, the needless loss of life, the sorrow and despair that has ensued because of this traumatic tragedy.

The untold anguish felt by so many is deeply regrettable.

We have lost grandparents, mothers, fathers, sons, and daughters.

We have lost members of our community who add much value

We have lost critical healthcare professionals – those who play such a vital role in preserving the sanctity of life.

Today, the world is a sadder, emptier place for them not being in it.

On the visits to many of the families and affected loved ones, the pain is visible in their eyes.

It is a pain that is beyond words, a wound so deep that will never fully heal.

As I stand here today, I want to convey to each of you that no stone will be left unturned in the quest to get to the bottom of this disaster.

I pledge this to you: for you deserve nothing less than to find closure and peace that is needed in the wake of such an event.

It is important to be cognizant of the fact that this tragedy is still a raw wound for those who have been impacted and I want to appeal for families, caregivers, frontline responders, and all staff to be given the space to grieve with the level of privacy and compassion that they deserve.

Many have dedicated so much of themselves over this period, and I want to thank every single person. No matter how great or small your contribution has been – your efforts have made a world of difference to those who need it the most.

While we are reeling from the needless loss of life – it is crucial that we are mindful of those who are still fighting for their lives in healthcare facilities.

I wish you all a speedy recovery so that you can return to the embrace of your loved ones.

I want to convey my deepest, heartfelt condolences once again to every single person who is today without a loved one.

Your suffering is immeasurable, your loss deep and pain unfathomable.

We are with you in this.

I want to thank all spheres of government represented here for your cooperation, contribution, and involvement in working towards a common objective.

In closing, I would like to leave you with a passage from the Book of John, Chapter 16 Verse 33:

“I have told you these things, so that in Me you may have peace. In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world.”

I thank you.