

UNITY FELLOWSHIP CHURCH UNDER PASTOR MUKHUBA, ACCEPTS GOVERNMENT' S APOLOGY REGARDING JMPD BRUTALITY & ATTEMPTED MASSACRE OF CONGREGANTS

On the 28th February 2022, Christians and Christian leaders, human rights activists as well as political leaders converged at Unity Fellowship Church in Midway, Soweto to commemorate the horrific incident of police brutality and attempted massacre of Pastor Mukhuba and the church members which happened on the 28th February 2021. The brutal attacks on the church were perpetrated by the City of Johannesburg Police Department (the JMPD) when they were ostensibly responding to a noise complaint.

Amongst those in attendance at the commemoration was a delegation from the Gauteng Provincial Legislature, led by MEC Nomantu Nkomo-Ralehoko. Ms Nkomo- Ralehoko was representing Gauteng Premier David Makhura. The Rev Kenneth Meshoe (President of the ACDP), Joburg City MMC Ronald Harris, Brigadier Shiburi of the South African Police Service (SAPS), MPL Dalton Adams, Councilor Colleen Makhubele and others were also in attendance.

Pastor Mukhuba and the church noted the statements made by the Gauteng provincial government, political parties as well as human rights activists, in their respective keynote addresses that the JMPD conduct and attacks on the church was unlawful and a gross violation of church members' constitutional rights.

In particular, the church and its leadership noted the keynote address by the MEC, Ms Nkomo-Ralehoko, condemning the barbaric and random shootings of the innocent church members as illegal and inappropriate use of force and abuse of power that requires stern punishment and an enquiry. The church is consoled by the assurance that the the Gauteng government takes responsibility for all actions committed by the JMPD on that day. As the church, we welcome this admission of liability on the part of our provincial government taking into account the gross violation of constitutional human rights of the church members. We accept the apologies. We hope and pray that those who sanctioned the attacks on the church and those who committed the atrocities of the 28th February 2021 are held accountable.

We hope that these commitments and undertakings made by the office of the Premier are not mere rhetoric speeches but that those JMPD members who have violated the constitutional rights of the innocent people are going to face the full might of the law. In our view, this is long overdue as it comes a year later after the incident had taken place. We would have hoped to see swift action being taken in this regard. Be that as it may, we suppose that it is never too late to do the right thing. We shall now follow through with the office of the Premier. We shall request the concrete plan and timeframes as well as other details on how this will be achieved. We implore our government to also compensate the innocent victims of the JMPD attacks.

The church further welcomes the keynote by Rev. Meshoe and trusts that through him, the atrocities committed at Pastor Mukhuba's church will reach parliament and that appropriate steps will be taken to ensure that the culprits are brought to book and that justice prevails.

Finally, the church welcomes the media statement released by the ANC, dated 28th February 2022 condemning the barbaric acts of the JMPD which happened while they were under their ANC-led local Government and calling for those JMPD members who committed illegal acts, to be brought before the courts without any further delays. This has also always been the call of the church that institutions such

as IPID, Human Rights Commission, Public Protector, CRL Rights Commission, and NPA who are dealing with our complaints and cases, expedite their efforts and ensure that justice is served.

Up until now the City of Johannesburg has avoided taking responsibility for the actions of the JMPD despite all evidence that its citizens were brutalized by its employees. We are waiting for the current Executive Mayor Cllr Dr. Mpho Phalatse to do what is right and to heed to the call of considering purchasing the infrastructure from the church when the church moves into its new premises. We hope that for once, the City of Johannesburg can accede to this call by the ANC and admit that at some point, the City erred by approving the building of a residential development approximately about meters from an industrial 2 zoned area, in clear disregard of the prevailing and acceptable standards of the town planning scheme.

In the interim, we shall await to see our government fulfilling its promises and undertakings made to the victims.

Hallelujah