

## **VANDALISM OF THE BILLBOARDS SEEKING JUSTICE AND DEMANDING INQUIRY INTO THE POLICE BRUTALITY PERPETUATED BY THE JMPD ON 28 FEBRUARY 2021 AT UNTIY FELLOWSHIP CHURCH**

On the morning of 8 February 2022, the Unity Fellowship Church ("the church") woke up to some horrible and disturbing news where some of its billboards advertising the commemoration service of the 28<sup>th</sup> of February 2021. The billboards seek to commemorate a year pursuant to an incident where the JMPD attacked the church unprovoked and randomly shot congregants leaving 40 members some with almost fatal wounds. They manhandled pepper-sprayed women and children and brutally beat up at least one person. They also confiscated church property without a court order because they are a law unto themselves.

They violated many constitutional rights of peaceful worshippers in a barbaric manner that was only seen in South Africa during apartheid.

In the course of displaying power abuse, the JMPD also arrested Pasto Mukhuba and 6 more other members of the church using the same modus operandi of portraying victims as violators of the law to justify their own criminality

This follows the threat issued on the media statement by the JMPD spokesperson Wayne Minnaar on 4 February 2022, wherein he misleadingly stated that the JMPD actions to commit the atrocities and gross violation of human rights at the church were favoured by the court order. He also stated that the JMPD would be approaching the courts to have the church billboards and/or messages thereon, removed.

*It must be noted that there is nowhere in Wayne Minnaar's statement or JMPD statements where they dispute that the messages on the billboard they consider offensive to them are untrue. In other words, they agree with the message because it cannot be disputed, they just want the billboards to be removed because they expose them and their criminality.*

We are living in a country where those responsible for the protection of the vulnerable and the weak are now becoming the law unto themselves. They use all means possible and circumvent even the due legal process to desperately protect and cover up their horrendous perpetual mistreatment and gross violation of the rights of the Christians in South Africa.

It does not take a genius to connect the dots nor to read between the lines here. What else can one think of when last week Friday, the threat is issued to remove the same billboards, and the following Monday, instead of going the legal route to remove the billboards, at least with the court order, our adverts are now vandalized.

It is worth mentioning that the vandalized billboard is pointing out to the lack of inquiry into the appalling actions of the JMPD, which to this day, those in power are conveniently quiet and have turned a blind eye to the issue as if the lives of those who were injured, violated and affected at the mercy of the JMPD, do not matter. We strongly suspect that the JMPD themselves vandalized the billboard.

In times like these, where are the Chapter 9 institutions charged to protect the constitutional rights of South Africans, including Christians, why is the government, almost a year later, still silent on this matter which is in any event still in the public domain, are they perhaps a party to this persecution, why is there no inquiry by the government and/or the City of Johannesburg into the vicious actions of the JMPD, how long will these unlawful acts of gross constitutional

rights violation such as; the shooting of unarmed people in a church, intimidation, harassment, and brutality continue before the rest of South Africa realizes that our protectors are actually our oppressors and persecutors, have we forgotten Marikana, have we forgotten the Sebokeng church incident, have we forgotten the brutality against Wits student and unlawful killing of **Mthokozisi Ntumba**, have we forgotten the many churches that have been demolished by the JMPD without any court order? Why are the media houses not probing this matter with the City of Johannesburg? How long will these acts of intimidation, harassment, and hate of the church continue before someone takes an action against the perpetrators (the JMPD)?

The church continues to see history repeating itself in this regard. In 2015, and in an attempt to silence the church from speaking out against police brutality and harassment, the JMPD attended at the church without justification or the court order and removed over 2000 chairs on a Monday when there was no church service claiming that they were responding to a noise complaint (one cannot claim that there was a noise emanating from the church on Monday when there was no church service and only workers were in the church premises). On that day, the JMPD forced their entry into the church premises by breaking the gate while other JMPD officers jumped over the fence at the back and trespassed onto the church premises, harassed, assaulted, and pepper-sprayed the church security and other staff members who were on duty.

*The church has video footage depicting the shameful and unlawful actions of the JMPD in this regard. Please note, the JMPD did not have the court order on that day or any good excuse because they are a law unto themselves. Please ask Wayne Minnaar why did they trespass into the privately-owned property.*

After the JMPD realized that what they did was against the law, they later returned some of the chairs on their own accord. However, to this present moment, over 700 chairs have not been returned to the church or accounted for by the JMPD. These unlawful actions were committed by the JMPD at the time when the legal battles between the church and the JMPD were pending before the court. Subsequently, the church obtained an urgent court interdict that restrains the JMPD from vandalizing the church property, harassing and victimizing the church and its member. This same court order is still binding and the JMPD continually acts in contempt of the same court order. *Why? Because they are a law unto themselves and they have no respect for the court decision and legal processes of this country. Even the incident of 28 February 2021 was in contempt of court interdict as granted by Judge Tsoka in 2015.*

Strangely, we are now threatened with court action to remove the billboards by the same JMPD that do not respect or abide by the decisions of the same court. Strangely, one of our billboards is now vandalized. No prizes for guessing by who. The modus operandi here is the same, since the JMPD is so obviously above the law they will do everything to maintain the mafia-style operation. So, this begs a question to be asked, who vandalized the billboards? Certainly, South Africans can see for themselves the brutality and lawlessness of the JMPD as per the video links below.

**We, therefore, implore the President and our government to institute an urgent inquiry into the actions of the JMPD before they go too far with their illegal actions.**

We trust that someone out there who still have a sense of respect for law and democracy, and who values the human rights of Christians, will hear the cry of the church and be persuaded

to do the right thing and put these shameful acts of police brutality, intimidation and harassment to an end.

**To all Christians, please hold the government accountable for church persecution, oppression, and violation of constitutional rights. Christians have a right to worship their God without fear. `**

UNITY FELLOWSHIP CHURCH

For media inquiries please contact

**Advocate MoAfrica Maila**

**Cell: +27823690198**