



MEDIA STATEMENT

07 May 2024

ENGINEERING COUNCIL OF SOUTH AFRICA (ECSA) RESPONDS TO THE GEORGE INCIDENT

The Engineering Council of South Africa (ECSA) expresses its deepest concern regarding the tragic incident involving the collapse of a five-storey building in George, Western Cape, our thoughts are with all those affected by this distressing event.

ECSA is actively engaged in investigating this matter, recognizing its paramount importance concerning, amongst others, public health, and safety. As the regulatory authority responsible for overseeing the engineering standards of Registered Persons and endowed with various powers pertaining to engineering-related activities, and as delineated in the Engineering Profession Act 46 of 2000, we are steadfast in our commitment to comprehensively assess all pertinent factors surrounding this calamity as it speaks to the Council's powers.

As reported by News 24, Timeslive, and various other news sources, a tragic incident unfolded in Victoria Street, George, Western Cape, on Monday, 06 May 2024 when a building under construction collapsed. A CCTV footage captured the harrowing moment of the collapse at approximately 14:09, with around 75 construction workers present during the collapse, a significant rescue operation ensued. Over 80 rescue personnel, including 53 emergency responders from the City of Cape Town and Worcester Disaster Services were deployed to the scene.

Assistance included heavy crane trucks, lifting equipment, and structural collapse vehicles. "So far, 25 people have been removed from the rubble, but 49 others are still unaccounted for. At least six people have lost their lives following the collapse of the apartment building" reported Mr. Gerhard Otto, Head of Disaster Management for the Garden Route District Municipality late afternoon.

Local Government MEC Mr. Anton Bredell's spokesperson, Mr. Wouter Kriel, detailed the support dispatched to the site, including essential equipment and vehicles. He assured that rescue efforts would be ongoing. Municipality representatives arranged for public support donations, urging contributions of drinking water and food for the service officials on-site. Family and friends of the affected construction workers were provided a space at the main municipal building for assistance.

Mr. Mario Ferreira, a representative from Gift of the Givers, reported their team's arrival two hours post-collapse, with ongoing rescue efforts underway. The Western Cape government, led by the Premier, Mr. Alan Winde monitored the situation closely, emphasizing the priority of saving lives.

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Despite uncertainties surrounding the cause of the collapse, law enforcement agencies and emergency responders are actively engaged in rescue operations. Premier Winde urged the public to refrain from visiting the site, to ensure that the emergency services officials conduct operations safely and efficiently.

Aligned with our third-party responsibilities enshrined in the Engineering Profession Act, we will be investigating the root-cause/s of this fatal incident to establish the extent of involvement of Registered Persons.

ENDS -

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