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Parliament committee chair disappointed with report on George building collapse

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Parliament's portfolio committee for public works and infrastructure chair, Carol Phiri, has expressed disappointment regarding investigation into the fatal George building collapse.

This follows the presentation of the findings from an investigation by the Council for the Built Environment (CBE) presented yesterday by chief executive Msizi Myeni at the Protea Hotel in George.

The investigation confirmed that critical safety concerns raised months before the catastrophic building collapse at 75 Victoria Street were ignored despite visible signs of structural failure.

The collapse on May 6 2024 led to the death of 34 people and left 28 injured.

Phiri said the only information they had received from the document was that there was outstanding information that still needed to be investigated.

She said all the stakeholders involved in the investigation



GEORGE TRAGEDY: Rescuers at work after the George building collapse on May 6 last year Picture: WERNER HILLS

needed to conduct a joint meeting.

"We need to call human settlements as well because they are responsible.

"What we found out is that the main constructor is registered at the National Home Builders Registration Council

(NHBRC), which reports directly to human settlements, not to CBE.

"CBE reports to us, and it needs a lot of questions."

Phiri said several aspects still needed to be addressed.

"There's an issue of the legalities in their report, in the

foreign civil court.

"It's very sensitive. It cannot be discussed now.

"It will need us in-camera first, and the resolution is offset to our committee.

"We need a joint sit-down with the different portfolio committees and the stakeholders to seek and try to find the resolutions."

Phiri said despite workers reporting the condition of the site to authorities, no action was taken to inspect the site.

"What was so disappointing is that the foundation in the first place, it was for a four-storey building.

"There were no proper processes that were followed.

"We have found out that people who were working there [reported that] the building was shaking, and they were not taken into consideration."

Phiri said the committee would make arrangements to go to George for an oversight and conduct a public meeting to speak to all the stakeholders.