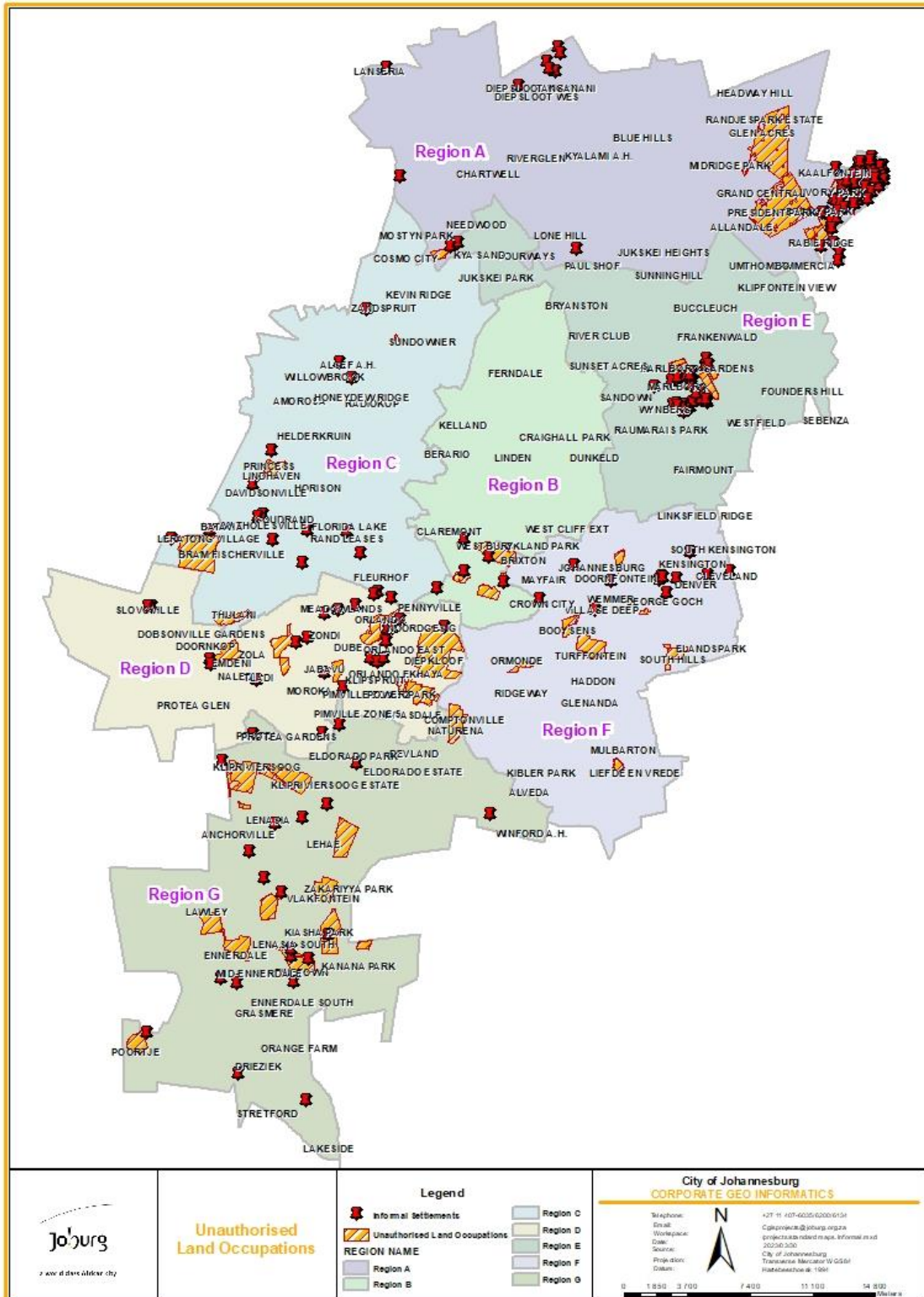


# Map of the month

## Unauthorised occupation of land and informal settlements in the City of Johannesburg



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## 1. Introduction

Unauthorised occupation of land is an ongoing challenge in the City of Johannesburg where many people are faced with limited access to affordable housing because of the immense housing demand as a result of constant in-migration. In a report on *Managing and Curbing Unauthorised Land Occupation* the Housing Development Agency (2016) defines unauthorised land occupation as when a person undertakes the following:

- occupies an 'empty' piece of land and erects some form of shelter
- occupies an existing building, that could either be a derelict building or empty building such as an unoccupied RDP house); or
- overstays a lease agreement

In the context of this piece unauthorised land occupation is characterised by the occupation of land with the intention of erecting a physical structure or establishing a settlement on it. Unauthorised land occupation has been occurring frequently across metropolitan areas and cities throughout the country. Once land is occupied, basic services must be delivered or in certain instances temporary emergency accommodation needs to be provided, placing additional obligations and burden on municipalities as resources need to be diverted to areas that have not been planned for.

There is a relationship that exists between unauthorised land occupation and the proliferation of informal settlements in that the land occupation will often result in the development and growth of informal settlements.

## **2. Unauthorised Land Occupation in the City of Johannesburg**

The attached map shows unauthorised land occupation that occurred throughout the 7 regions in the City of Johannesburg in 2019. The nature of the unauthorised land occupation seems to be more outspread in Region D, Region G and Region F and more concentrated in Region A and Region E.

## **3. The Distribution of Informal Settlements in the City of Johannesburg**

The map illustrates the distribution of informal settlements across the 7 regions in the City of Johannesburg. As of 19 September 2022, the number of these informal settlements stood at 312. As pointed out in the map, the largest number of informal settlements are located in Region A, followed by Region E. Region B has the smallest number of informal settlements in the City of Johannesburg.

## **4. Conclusion**

From this map there seems to be a very strong correlation between the unauthorised occupation of land which occurred in 2019 and the increase of informal settlements in these same areas in the City of Johannesburg. Several of the unauthorised occupation of land that took place in 2019 has in fact resulted in the growth and development of informal settlements in these areas. This is more conspicuous in the Kaalfontein and Ivory Park areas in Region A and the Alexandra and surrounding areas in Region E.

The City of Johannesburg and the Province at large has made attempts to address the issue of unauthorised occupation of land through a variety of measures, including the provision of RDP/BNG housing, social housing and the eviction of unauthorised occupants. However, these efforts have been met with resistance from those who argue that the government has not done enough to address the root of the causes of unauthorised occupation of land such as poverty and inequality.

## **5. References**

Housing Development Agency, 2016. *Managing and Curbing Unauthorised Land Occupation: Main Report*. Retrieved 2 June 2023 from [http://thehda.co.za/pdf/uploads/multimedia/Land\\_Occupations - Main\\_Report -  
\\_Final\\_report\\_b.pdf](http://thehda.co.za/pdf/uploads/multimedia/Land_Occupations_-_Main_Report_-_Final_report_b.pdf)

## **6. Note on methods**

This analysis is based on data on the number of unauthorised occupation of land recorded as of 28 February 2019 by the City of Johannesburg Metro Police Department as well as data on the number of informal settlements in the City of Johannesburg captured and enumerated by the Department of Human Settlements as of 19 September 2022. The distribution of these informal settlements across the regions is illustrated in point form on the map.