

# Wherever you go, we go

Get affordable comprehensive motor insurance in minutes. Get a free quote now

GroundFloor, Sekhametsi Building, Cnr Parliamentary & Kingsway Rd info@tharimutual.com **WhatsApp (+266) 57324425**



MASERU, LESOTHO

Sunday, 12 May 2024

# Lesotho Tribune

www.lesothotribune.co.ls

*Information Liberates*

ISSN 2453-5419



9 772453 541003 >

VOL 3, ISSUE 32

M 22. 50

Key Issues Impacting SADC Pension Funds

*...Page 6*

Forget Reforms...Make New Constitution - TRC

*...Page 8*

## M400 Million Tender Fuels RFP Factional Battle



**Page 2**

*- DPM Majara allegedly leads one faction  
- While Hon. Lephema leads the other*

### Highlands Travel Made Easy

**Book your next charter here**

[bookings@mohahlaulairlines.com](mailto:bookings@mohahlaulairlines.com)









# Naka La Mohlomi Happy With Reforms



Naka la Mohlomi Co-Founder Moorosi Moshoeshoe

By: Malebabo Majoro

Maseru-

ivil society organization held a press conference on Wednesday 8 May 2024, the focus of this conference was on two sections of the Omnibus Bill deposited in the parliament on Monday 6 May 2024 by the Minister of Justice and Law, Mr. Richard Ramoetsi. The two bills are Tenth Amendment to constitution bill, 2024 as well as the Eleventh Amendment to the constitution Bill, 2024 for the first reading. Mr. Moorosi Moshoeshoe from Naka La Mohlomi noted that they are making this press release for the second time this year regarding the Lesotho National Reforms.

“we focused our attention on advising our government against misleading advices, which caused previous Governments to fail to pass this legislate phase, today we appear here to congratulate his Excellency’s government when it succeeded in conscripting the reforms.” Moorosi Moshoeshoe explained.

shoeshoe explained.

This two bills need simple majority support as well as which require two third majority support will be referred to the relevant committee according to standing orders. The bills are making the way for the Nation Reforms Agendas which is a document enclosing the views and interests of Basotho across which was directed by the National Reforms (NRA).

“The Bills carry significant implications for our society, and it is imperative that their contents and potential impact are thoroughly understood and scrutinized,” Moshoeshoe emphasized.

Moshoeshoe stated that at this stage, they would like to remind the parliamentarians of the main pillars that have been set up to guide the work of the Reforms from the beginning to completion, and it will be the basis for moving forward with the affairs of this country. They are the following,

. Facilitative Role of Government

Basotho

- . Inclusivity and Participation
- . Transparency and Accountability
- . National Dialogue and Consensus-Building.

Moreover, the main reason for the failure of the Reforms in the tenth Parliament is the parliamentarians think they are above the people who have sent them to parliament to solve their issues.

The Government of Lesotho wishes to leave no one behind in the National Reforms process, however it is more likely to face a difficult job to persuade the opposition parties represented in the National Assembly.

. National Ownership by All



## JOB VACANCY - MANAGER CORPORATE SERVICES (Grade 1)

Responsible to **DIRECTOR OF ELECTIONS**  
**Department: Corporate Services**  
**No of Positions: 1**

### JOB SUMMARY

Monitor and ensure effective performance of co –functions(Procurement, Logistics, Administration, Security and Transport).  
 Enhance the Corporate Services function within the IEC by creating the strategic roadmap for the supported divisions.  
 Ensure the development and implementation of key policies and strategies for supported divisions.  
 Provides advice to management from time to time.  
 Prepares budgets and take ownership of the supported divisions.  
 Create a high performance culture of the Co – Divisions to enable individuals to work as effectively as possible to meet IEC goals.  
 Be a strategic partner to the IEC for the mobilization of resources and advising management how to build sustainability plan

### QUALIFICATION AND EXPERIENCE

Post graduate in Business Administration or related field plus 5 years’ relevant working experience in a senior management role.

### OTHER RELEVANT KNOWLEDGE OR SKILLS

Leadership and people management skills.  
 Strategy development and execution.  
 Planning and coordination skills.  
 Problem solving and analytical skills.  
 Excellent presentation, networking, oral and written communication skills.  
 Ability to make critical and timely decisions in a highly sensitive environment.

**ive districts head offices in a sealed envelope labelled;**

**The Director of Elections  
 Independent Electoral Commission  
 Corner Maluti and Caledon Road  
 Maseru West  
 P.O. Box 12698  
 Maseru 100**

Interested candidates must submit their applications accompanied by up-to-date Curriculum Vitae with three referees, copies of certified qualification certificates and transcripts, send via email to [recruitment@iec.org.ls](mailto:recruitment@iec.org.ls) under the subject line; **MANAGER CORPORATE SERVICES** OR **hand delivered to IEC Headquarters (Registry) or Respec-**

**Closing date: 17TH May 2024 at 16:30 p.m.**  
**Applicants must be registered as voters with IEC.**

**Only Short listed candidates will be contacted.**

# MOKHOSI TAKES A STAND AS WITNESS IN MAHAO CASE



## The late Maparankoe-Mahao

By Tholoana Lesenya

**L**abour and Employment Minister, Tseliso Mokhosi took a stand to give his evidence in Maaparankoe Mahao murder trial. Mokhosi said as the minister his duty was to see that the army receives funds food and other things they need. “We worked well together with the late Lt Gen Khoantle Motšomotšo. I would receive weekly verbal reports from the late Lt Gen Motšomotšo about the army activities”, said Mokhosi. He said even though he may not remember the dates well but Motšomotšo came to him and reported that there was mutiny in the army. He said investigations were started and a month before Mahao’s death, former Lesotho

Defence Force Commander Tlali Kamoli took over office. He stated that after the investigations were completed, a group of soldiers were arrested.

“I cannot recall the dates well but I received a report that one of the soldiers who was going to be arrested was found in a car at his home. When he saw the Soldiers he ran into his house and locked himself inside”, said Mokhosi

He said he was told that the soldiers surrounded the house but the accused open the window and escaped and those soldiers let him go. Mokhosi said, “There was a day on which Kamoli called me and told me that soldiers went to arrest Mahao. He told me that those soldiers met Mahao along the way and they tried to stop and arrest him

but Mahao at one point pulled out his gun to cock it.”

Mokhosi said Kamoli told him that the soldiers then shot Mahao on the shoulder as to disable. He said the report stated that Mahao was taken to Hospital and was still alive when they arrived. He said Kamoli reported to him that Mahao was supported from the vehicle into the hospital but he was still alive. Mokhosi said Kamoli called him after an hour telling him that Mahao had lost his life. He said he never knew there was going to be an arrest and never knew of the operational plan from Motšomotšo as that is the army duty and does not involve the minister.

The accused lawyer Attorney Qhalehang Letsika and Advocate Napo Mafaesa put to

Mokhosi that he was convinced that there was mutiny in the army hence him signing certain documents to enable the establishment of the Court Marshal. Mokhosi was asked if he was informed of the involvement of certain politicians in mutiny. “I stopped those reports from on set, told them not to report about such, army issues should never be politicised,” said Mokhosi.

This case is before Judge Charles Hungwe. The crown Advocates are Advocate Rethabile Setlojoane and Advocate Lehlohonolo Phooko while the defence consists of Attorney Qhalehang Letsika, Advocate Letuka Molati, Advocate Silas Ratau, Advocate Napo Mafaesa and Advocate Kabelo Letuka.





# Mohahlaula Airlines

## Helicopter Charter



**Leisure Travel**



**Remote Area travel**



**VVIP Arrangement**

**Rent for an hour, weekly or periodically**

For charter customers, complementing the services Mohahlaula Airlines already provides with its business jets, Mohahlaula Helicopters offers the safest and fastest transfer solution from the airport to your remote destination.

**Talk to us for a tailor made solution.**

**M** [charters@mohahlaulairlines.com](mailto:charters@mohahlaulairlines.com)

**WhatsApp** **+266 62340025**



6

Lesotho Tribune

By: Tebello Kokome

On 10 May 2024, from 10:00am to 12:30pm, an intriguing symposium that was sponsored by Metropolitan Lesotho in collaboration with the National University of Lesotho and the National University of Limpopo took place in the form of a webinar. This virtual gathering was one of many that have been designed to address various issues pertaining to financial services and how they operate. The 7th discussion was themed: Pension Funds in the SADC region- Contemporary issues. Experts were invited to form part of the panel and to deliberate on these matters. On the panel was Professor Mtendeweka Mhango (moderator), Miss Dineo Makati-Mpho (Botswana representative), Mr. Naleen Jeram (South Africa representative) and Miss Relebohile Seshemane-Kalake (Lesotho representative).

The primary objective of the retirements funds from inception is to provide an individual with benefits upon retirement or in the unfortunate occurrence of death. Additively, Mr. Jeram contributed that of late, retirements can be accessed when members withdraw or when spouses divorce each other, and this is dependent on different countries' legislations. He suggested that the prime purpose of a retirement

# BUSINESS & ECONOMY

## Key Issues Impacting SADC Pension Funds



fund has been watered down and maintained that regardless of this, such deductions may be allowed according to each country's legislation.

In other countries, there are multiple instances in which the retirement fund can deduct, however, Lesotho is only confined to four (4) instances according to Section 33 of the Pension Funds Act which are:

- Maintenance order for dependents
- Housing loan by the pen-

sion fund

- Housing loan guarantee by the employer
- Compensation to employer for misconduct by employee (damages)

Should these instances be increased or decreased?

Miss Relebohile stated that careful consideration should be taken into the purpose of the fund when looking at deductions that should be permissible. She said that looking at the economy of Lesotho and its

financial constraints, she could advocate that they be decreased for instance, having to compensate an employer as an employee for misconduct. She says that deductions should always be aligned to the pension fund. Miss Dineo spoke on the matter to say legislation has changed in Botswana regarding a retiree having to spend their pension money on rent or mortgage. She stressed the importance of not losing sight of the purpose

*continues in page 7*




continued from page 6

SUBSCRIBE FOR JUST **M85.00** per month  
**Ecocash Payment Details** Name:  
**BMC Merchant Code: 81329**  
**M - Pesa** Name: **BMC Merchant Code: 03444**

Or Take annual subscription for **M740.00**  
**And help us continue to give you stories that matter**

**TENDER NOTICE**

**OPEN INTERNATIONAL COMPETITIVE TENDER**  
**LES/IEC/TEN/PAN/2024-2025/04**



The Independent Electoral Commission (IEC) invites tenders from interested companies for the Supply, Delivery, Installation, Configuration and Support of Hardware Server.

**DESCRIPTION**

| NUMBER | DESCRIPTION  | QUANTITY |
|--------|--|----------|
| 1      | Supply, installation, configuration & support of hardware server | 1        |

**BIDDING DOCUMENT**

Tender document is obtainable from Election House Procurement Unit 2nd Floor, Corner Maluti and Caledon Road, Maseru West during working hours from 09:00am to 16:00 hours. Bidders must purchase a copy of tender document at a **NON-Refundable fee of M4 000.00 (Four Thousand Maloti only)**. The procedure for obtaining the Tender document is as follows: Payment of bid document must be made at 2nd Floor Election House, Finance Department. The receipt issued must be taken to the office of Procurement where document will be issued.

**EVALUATION CRITERIA**

|   |   |
|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Lead time.</li> <li>Price.</li> <li>Specifications. IEC is not bound to lowest price.</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Financial capabilities: - Current bank statement for three months and a letter from the bank as an assurance that the supplier will be financed for incapable suppliers. OR - Tenderers own current financial statements together with an audit opinion from a qualified independent Auditor.</li> </ul> |
|---|---|

**MANDATORY REQUIREMENTS**

|  |  |
|--|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The price should be VAT inclusive for suppliers who qualify to collect VAT (attach VAT registration certificate).</li> <li>Price should be quoted in Maloti currency.</li> <li>Attach valid and relevant Traders License/ Business Identity Card.</li> <li>Attach valid copy of Tax Clearance certificate.</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Attach Share Certificate of shareholders from Registrar of companies (Not company extract).</li> <li>The bonafide certificate should be filled and the total cost should be written on the certificate.</li> <li>The specifications should be written in full on the quotation</li> </ul> |
|--|--|

**N.B**

|  |   |
|--|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Bidders are informed that 5% and 10% source tax will be deducted from payments for local and foreign companies respectively.</li> <li>Electronic bidding shall not be permitted.</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Payment will be done after delivery of goods / provision of service.</li> <li>Unavailability of mandatory documents will lead to disqualification of the bid.</li> </ul> |
|--|---|

Sealed bids bearing no identification of the suppliers should be deposited in the tender box at the Election House Ground Floor near security office **On or before 12:30pm Thursday 20th June 2024** and will be opened on the same date at 14:30hours at 1st Floor Boardroom. Envelopes should be clearly marked: "Supply of hardware server".

For further information, relating to the above information please contact.

The Procurement Unit  
 Independent Electoral Commission  
 Election House Maseru West  
 Maseru, Lesotho

Tel: +266 - 22 314991/22323362  
 Fax: +266 - 22 310398  
 E-mail: [tenders@iec.org.ls](mailto:tenders@iec.org.ls)

The Independent Electoral Commission of Lesotho reserves the right to accept or reject any or all tenders.



# Forget Reforms... Make New Constitution - TRC



Tsikoane Peshoane TRC Director

By: Malebabo Majoro

## Maseru-

**T**ransformation Resource Center (TRC) says that the government is tempering with original constitution design rendering mega constitutional amendments into complete division. This comes after the minister of Justice and Law, Mr. Richard Ramoetsi tabled two sections of Omnibus Bills on 6 May 2024. In a bid to “Safeguard the Constitutional Reforms from Continuous Litigation and Political Zero Sum Games,” the TRC organized a Symposium on November 30, 2023. This event aimed to steer constitutional reforms back on track, highlighting factors that could expose the process to repeated litigation due to flawed procedures intrinsic to democratic governance.

Despite this, TRC lambasted government of Lesotho for disregarding sound counsel on engaging in constitutionally legitimate reforms. “These missteps have led to numerous litigated cases and structural pushbacks. The Kingdom of Lesotho

has faced scrutiny whenever it attempted reforms, with the process often ending up in legal challenges,” part of TRC statement said.

**TRC**, advocates for thorough constitutional reforms rather than incremental changes, issued a position on the **10th and 11th Amendment Bills to the Constitution**. It argues that these bills, tabled in the National Assembly on 6 May 2024, are not true amendments but rather dismemberments of the constitution’s original design.

**TRC** is concerned that the amendments severally and as a whole constitute and amount to constitutional dismemberments that undermine the basic structure doctrine, basic features doctrine and the text of the constitution.

**TRC** further explained that the proposed constitution changes exceed the boundaries prescribed under **section 85 of the constitution** such that they do not just amend but dismember fundamentally the structure of the constitution.

“We find it appropriate to distinguish between primary

constituent and secondary constituted amendment powers, alterations to the constitution that amount to dismemberment because they alter the basic structure and the basic features or even amount to constitutional replacement can only be done through the use of the constituent powers,” said TRC. The proposed amendments, according to the TRC, exceed the boundaries prescribed by the constitution, fundamentally altering its structure. They exploit the rules of constitutional amendment, testing legal constraints to create a revised constitution under the guise of ordinary amendments.

**TRC** distinguishes between primary constituent and secondary constituted amendment powers, arguing that alterations amounting to dismemberment should only be done through constituent powers, not the powers contained within the constitution.

Regarding the National Reforms Authority (NRA), TRC clarified that it was never established as a Constituent Assembly or Constitu-

tional Reform Commission. The NRA, established by the **NRA Act No. 4 of 2019**, was tasked with coordinating the implementation of reforms under seven thematic areas but lacked a mandate for constitutional revision. There is also contention around the misrepresentation of the Court of Appeal’s judgment concerning the amendments. “The Minister of Law’s assertion that the Court ordered the Government to re-table the amendments is seen as a misrepresentation, potentially dragging the judiciary into political manoeuvring,” added TRC.

In terms of the act, the Authority had to implement reforms under seven (7) thematic areas: constitution, Parliamentary, Justice Sector, Security sector, Public sector, Economic and Media. “There is a popular but highly misleading rhetoric that is favored by the Minister of Law that the Court of Appeal has ordered the Government to re-table the mega constitutional amendments in the National Assembly,” **TRC stated.**

Lesotho Tribune sought comment from government of Lesotho, but no comment was received until publishing of this article.

**TRC** argues that the proposed amendments fundamentally alter the constitution’s structure and values. It recommends that to effect these changes, including those not captured in the Omnibus Bill, a new constitution should be drafted.

## Have your say.

The proposed amendments have sparked a debate over the integrity of Lesotho’s constitutional process, with calls for transparency, caution, and adherence to constitutional principles.

Do you agree with TRC’s position and why? Write to us, [editor@lesothotribune.co.ls](mailto:editor@lesothotribune.co.ls)



# Mixup At Lerotholi Polytechnic



By: 'Mamello Mochesane

Maseru-

**F**irst-year students at Lerotholi Polytechnic find themselves in a precarious position as they await sponsorship for their degree programs. What was meant to be a promising start to their academic journey has turned into a tale of uncertainty.

Students who were supposed to start their degree programmes are left stranded, some discovered they were enrolled in degree programs

without prior notification.

This discrepancy arose from using outdated prospectuses, which listed diploma programs instead of the degrees they were placed into.

The net effect of this is that these students are unable to secure sponsorship from National Manpower Development Secretariat (NMDS). According to Registrar and Council board Secretary, Maleshoane Lepota - Mosakeng, the school submitted a proposal to the NMDS requesting sponsorship for

the affected students, contingent upon including this year's tuition fees. However, months have passed without a definitive response, leaving students and their families in distress.

The consequences of this delay are stark. Many students have been forced to drop out due to the financial strain, unable to afford the required materials and living expenses.

The lack of sponsorship has created a domino effect, jeopardizing the academic aspirations of those eager to

pursue higher education. While the Ministry of Finance works on resolving the sponsorship issue, students are left in limbo. Despite assurances from the school authorities, clarity on the matter remains elusive. Some students express frustration at the lack of transparency and support during this challenging time.

The dropped out students have been assured that they will be given priority consideration if they choose to re-enrol.

MOHAHLAULA  
AIRLINES

## Flight Operations - Cargo -

Aircraft can be configured for time sensitive cargo

Cargo service can include certification to transport dangerous goods as per IATA standards

Cargo will be assessed for suitability of aircrafts  
Centre of gravity loading parameters



[bookings@mohahlaulairlines.com](mailto:bookings@mohahlaulairlines.com)

**Lesotho Tribune**  
Information Liberates

LNDC CENTER, 2ND FLOOR  
P.O. BOX 14688, MASERU 100,  
LESOTHO

News Tips  
Managing Editor  
[editor@lesothotribune.co.ls](mailto:editor@lesothotribune.co.ls)

Subscription  
(+266)56365968

Circulation

[distribution@lesothotribune.co.ls](mailto:distribution@lesothotribune.co.ls)

Advertising  
Tel: 22324660  
Email: [ads@lesothotribune.co.ls](mailto:ads@lesothotribune.co.ls)  
[sales@lesothotribune.co.ls](mailto:sales@lesothotribune.co.ls)

Website: [www.lesothotribune.co.ls](http://www.lesothotribune.co.ls)

Lesotho Tribune

All materials in this Newspaper are copyrighted and may not be used or reproduced without the Editor's consent whereupon the appropriate accreditation should be made.





10

Lesotho Tribune

# EDITORIAL

## Lesotho Too Divided For Implementation of Reforms



By: Editorial

The recent focus on constitutional reforms in Lesotho has sparked debates and discussions across the nation. While some, like Naka La Mohlomi, commend the government's efforts in tabling the Tenth and Eleventh Amendment Bills, others, like the Transformation Resource Center (TRC), advocate for a more drastic approach—a new constitution.

Naka La Mohlomi's recent press conference highlighted the importance of the reform process and emphasized key pillars that should guide it, including national ownership, inclusivity, and transparency. The organization praised the government's success in advancing the reform agenda, despite past failures in previous parliaments. On the other hand, TRC has raised concerns about the government's approach, accusing it of dismembering the original

constitution through the proposed amendments. TRC argues that these changes go beyond mere amendments and fundamentally alter the constitution's structure and values. TRC's call for a new constitution stems from a desire to safeguard the reform process from continuous litigation and political gamesmanship. The organization believes that the current amendments do not address the root causes of past challenges and may lead

to further division and legal challenges in the future. It is evident that Lesotho is at a crossroads. While some believe that incremental reforms are sufficient, others argue that a new constitution is necessary to address the deep-seated issues that plague the nation. While constitutional reforms may offer immediate solutions, a new constitution could provide a fresh start and a chance to build a more inclusive and equitable society.



# Conflicting Calendars Spark Campus Unrest



Registrar Mateboho Moorosi and Vice Chancellor Tefo Macheli, at Limkokwing

By: Mamello mochesane

## Maseru-

Limkokwing University students, administration and National Manpower Development Secretariat (NMDS) are at odds over conflicting academic calendars and financial agreements.

The dispute escalated this where students protested on campus and Lesotho Mounted Police Services (LMPS) were called to deal with the skirmish.

At the centre of the turmoil is a disagreement over the duration of the academic year. Vice Chancellor Tefo Macheli asserts that the university accurately crafted an academic calendar encompassing all school activities. Macheli showed that they have one academic calendar-which was issued in August 2023, which indicated that the last day of examinations will be the 21 May. However, there was a delay in an associated academic processes that caused academic boards which did not anyway affect the duration

of teaching and learning of the students.

“The issues of the 7th of June had to come in play because there was a confusion prevailing of a fake calendar intimating that students will be on campus until the 14th June and that had to be clarified. We factored in an adjustment into the August calendar that was already sent to NMDS to factor and show what will be its implications if they were to go to the extension but the bottom line is...there will not be an extension,” said Macheli. The examination time table has already been issued, it indicated that student will write the examination for a period of seven days, and will write on weekends. Nevertheless, Macheli indicated that it is a norm for examinations to be conducted in this manner.

However, the Students Representation Council (SRC), President Tšeliso Kheleli claims that during a meeting with school management, a startling revelation emerged: an extension of the academic year to June 7th,

not previously disclosed in the distributed calendar. This revelation, Kheleli argues, directly contradicts the sponsorship agreements between students and the NMDS, which specify a 10-month period from August to May. Kheleli disclosed that in all this year and as per stated in the academic calendar, examinations are written for a duration of two weeks not one. The recently issued time table is already violating students’ rights and there is no way a student is expected to write six modules in seven days.

“There are queries around-examination timetable, to start with the first day of examination is on a pub-

lic holiday,” Kheleli stated. He concluded by showing that the calendar sent to NMDS stated the first day of examination as the 20th May not 25th as displayed in the time table.

The implications of this discrepancy are profound. Students relying on NMDS sponsorship face uncertainty regarding their financial allowances, as the extension of the academic calendar has not been communicated to NMDS.

This breakdown in communication has sparked protests on campus, resulting in property damage and injuries to student, university worker, and law enforcement officer. On their part, NMDS Public Relations Office, Mpho Mosili emphasized their reliance on academic calendars submitted by institutions two months in advance to allocate funds. Any deviations from these calendars could disrupt budget allocations and jeopardize student allowances.

The organisation portrayed that all academic activities should be involved in the academic calendar, so that they can allocate for such since they work strictly on budget. “I cannot deny or agree that Limkokwing SRC approached the organisation with a different academic calendar from the one we know, because such did not pass through my office,” said Mosili.

She urged students not to hope for any positive response regarding this matter from NMDS.

**Lesotho Tribune**  
Information Liberates

LNDC CENTER, 2ND FLOOR  
P.O. BOX 14688, MASERU 100,  
LESOTHO

News Tips  
Managing Editor  
editor@lesothotribune.co.ls

Subscription  
(+266)56365968

Circulation

distribution@lesothotribune.co.ls

Advertising  
Tel: 22324660  
Email: ads@lesothotribune.co.ls  
sales@lesothotribune.co.ls

Website: www.lesothotribune.co.ls

Lesotho Tribune  
Information Liberates  
All materials in this Newspaper are copyrighted and may not be used or reproduced without the Editor's consent whereupon the appropriate accreditation should be made.





12

Lesotho Tribune

## SCIENCE &amp; TECHNOLOGY



UC San Diego research identifies critical metabolic pathways in early autism development, offering new avenues for early detection and pharmacological treatments.

By UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA - SAN DIEGO

## Unlocking Autism: New Insights Into Early Metabolic Changes

Findings suggest new possibilities for early autism detection.

Researchers at the University of California San Diego School of Medicine have shed new light on the changes in metabolism that occur between birth and the presentation of autism spectrum disorder (ASD) later in childhood. The researchers discovered that a small number of biochemical pathways are responsible for the majority of these changes, which could help inform new early detection and prevention strategies for autism. "At birth, the physical appearance and behavior of a child who will develop autism over the next few years are indistinguishable from that of a neurotypical child. Indeed, in most cases the fate of the child with regard to autism is not set at birth," said Robert Naviaux, M.D., Ph.D., professor in the Departments of Medicine, Pediatrics and Pathology at UC San Diego School of Medicine. "We're starting to learn about the governing dynamics that regulate the transition from risk to the actual appearance of the first symptoms of ASD. Early diagnosis opens the possibility of early intervention and optimal outcomes."

Autism: A Complex Interplay of Factors

ASD is a developmental disorder characterized by difficulties in socializing and communication, as well as repetitive and/

or restrictive behaviors. For the majority of people with ASD, the condition is a significant disability, with only 10-20 percent of children diagnosed before 5 years of age able to live independently as adults.

While autism is known to have strong genetic risk factors, there are also environmental risk factors that play a role in the development and severity of ASD. Naviaux and other researchers are discovering that the development of autism is governed by the real-time interaction of these varied factors. By studying the developmental biology of metabolism and how it differs in autism, new insights are emerging in ASD and other complex developmental disorders.

"Behavior and metabolism are linked – you cannot separate them," added Naviaux.

To learn more about the early metabolic changes that occur in children with autism, researchers studied two cohorts of children. One cohort consisted of newborn children, in whom autism can't be detected. The second cohort consisted of 5-year-old children, some of whom had been diagnosed with autism.

When comparing the metabolic profiles of children in the cohort who were eventually diagnosed with autism to those

who developed neurotypically, they found striking differences. Of the 50 different biochemical pathways the researchers investigated, just 14 were responsible for 80 percent of the metabolic impact of autism.

New Insights Into Autism's Biochemical Processes

The pathways that were most changed are related to the cell danger response, a natural and universal cellular reaction to injury or metabolic stress. The body has biochemical safeguards in place that can shut down the cell danger response once the threat has passed, and Naviaux hypothesizes that autism occurs when these safeguards fail to develop normally. The result is heightened sensitivity to environmental stimuli, and this effect contributes to sensory sensitivities and other symptoms associated with autism.

"Metabolism is the language that the brain, gut, and immune system use to communicate, and autism occurs when the communication between these systems is changed," added Naviaux.

The cell danger response is primarily regulated by adenosine triphosphate (ATP) the body's chemical energy currency. While these ATP-signaling pathways do not develop normally in autism, they may be partially restorable with existing pharma-

ceutical drugs. In 2017, Naviaux and his team completed early clinical testing for suramin, the only drug approved in humans that can target ATP signaling and which is normally used to treat African sleeping sickness. Now, the researchers hope that by revealing the specific ATP-related pathways that are altered in autism, their work will help scientists develop more drugs that target these pathways to manage the symptoms of ASD. "Suramin is just one drug that targets the cell danger response," he said. "Now that we're closely interrogating how metabolism changes in ASD, we could be at the beginning of a drug renaissance that will create new options for treatment that never existed before."

Reference: 10 May 2024, Communications Biology. DOI: /s42003-024-06102-y

Co-authors on the study include: Sai Sachin Lingampelly, Jane C. Naviaux, Jonathan M. Monk, Kefeng Li and Lin Wang at UC San Diego School of Medicine and Luke S. Heuer, Lori Haapanen, Chelsea A. Kelland and Judy Van de Water at University of California Davis This work was funded, in part, by Autism Speaks (grant 7274), the National Center for Research Resources (grant UL1TR001442), and through various philanthropic gifts.





13

Lesotho Tribune

## AFRICA



NEW YORK, NEW YORK – MAY 02: President of Botswana Mokgweetsi Masisi speaks onstage during Global Citizen NOW 2024 at Spring Studios on May 02, 2024 in New York City. (Photo by Noam Galai/Getty Images)

# Botswana says it will protect its diamond interests as BHP Bids for Anglo American

- \* **Botswana says it's watching BHP Billiton bid to buy Anglo American**
- \* **Botswana and Anglo jointly own world's largest diamond producer**
- \* **BHP wants Anglo's copper assets excluding its South African platinum group & iron ore assets**

By Staff Reporter

**B**otswana, the world's largest diamond producer, says it's closely following BHP Billiton's battle to buy Anglo American, which controls their diamond venture through De Beers. President Mokgweetsi Masisi told CNBC Africa at the U.S.-Africa Business Summit in Dallas, Texas that while no-one had approached Botswana about the matter, the government would defend its interests in De Beers, in which it owns 15 percent. De Beers and the Botswana government jointly co-own Debswana Diamond, the largest diamond producer in the world by val-

ue. "The value of De Beers is fundamentally created by Botswana. Without Botswana De Beers doesn't exist," he said in an interview with Fifi Peters. Australian company BHP Billiton, the world's largest miner, has offered about \$39 billion for London-based Anglo American's copper mines, minus its Botswana and South African assets in Debswana, Kumba Iron Ore and Anglo American Platinum. Anglo has rejected the overture arguing it undervalues its initiatives to unlock value for shareholders. Analysts say BHP might be mulling a second bid and could face competition from commodities producer Glen-

core. South African Mines Minister Gwede Mantashe, who has met with Anglo executives, has said he is watching developments.

"Well, we remain laser focused on the developments because we clearly are an interested party," he said. "I also want to state for the record that the value of De Beers is funda-

mentally created by Botswana. Because without Botswana, De Beers doesn't exist."

BHP has proposed that Anglo sell its shares in units Anglo Platinum and Kumba Iron Ore as an option to exit the South African assets it does not want included in the deal. It hasn't pronounced on De Beers.

**Lesotho Tribune**  
Information Liberates

LNDC CENTER, 2ND FLOOR  
P.O. BOX 14688, MASERU 100,  
LESOTHO

News Tips  
Managing Editor  
editor@lesothotribune.co.ls

Subscription  
(+266)56365968

Circulation

distribution@lesothotribune.co.ls

Advertising  
Tel: 22324660  
Email: ads@lesothotribune.co.ls  
sales@lesothotribune.co.ls

Website: www.lesothotribune.co.ls

Information Liberates  
**Lesotho Tribune**

All materials in this Newspaper are copyrighted and may not be used or reproduced without the Editor's consent whereupon the appropriate accreditation should be made.



# Setlojoane escapes joining client as an accomplice in fraud case



By: Tholoana Lesenya

## MASERU

The Appeal Court has supported appeal by Advocate Rethabile Setlojoane, this is after the police threatened to link him to a fraud case of his client for refusing to reveal information about his client. The ConCourt is ordered to hear Setlojoane and police reprimanded.

This is after the noticeable lawyer, Setlojoane fired his last shot towards saving himself from the fraud and money laundering charges he has been struck with for receiving a M100, 000.00 payment from his alleged troublemaker client, Lehlohonolo Selate.

Setlojoane's lawyer Advocate Salemane Phafane KC, in the Court of Appeal argued that the Constitutional Court was wrong to have layed off Setlojoane's application challenging the police's decision to charge him together with Selate. Setlojoane ended up in trouble with the police in October 2021 after he was paid M100, 000.00 by Selate, allegedly for legal services. The money was supposed-

ly paid through the latter's company, Sunny Penny, which he had allegedly used to fiddle over M50 million from the government. Phafane KC claimed that his client was given an ultimatum by the police during the October 2021 interrogation to either submit Selate's file or pay back the M100, 000.00 which was

paid into his FNB account, or be joined as co-accused. Setlojoane is said to have declined the offer.

Phafane argued that the ultimatum for the client's file is unlawful and they wanted the court to make a declaration on that. "The court a quo also declined power to deal with whether it was right for police to want my

client to return the money saying that will be dealt with at the criminal trial", said Phafane.

He said, "The court should have exercised its power to declare that the police conduct was wrong. That really should be an investigation and the decision that the appellant must go and face a criminal trial should be put aside".

Phafane said Setlojoane could only be linked to the M50 million fraud trial if there was other evidence linking him to the corruption, and not based on his refusal to discover his client's file and returning the M100, 000.00.

Commissioner of Police, Mahlape Morai, Minister of Law and Justice, Richard Ramoetsi, Attorney General, Rapelang Motsieloa are cited as first to third respondents in the appeal.

## Lesotho Tribune

Our focus is on data journalism and analysis over original reporting, on both criticism and acclaim.

Our political alignment is Economic liberalism.

Our reporting is not bias and we have in place rigorous fact-checking and editing

**"Advertise with us"**

Contacts: Telephone: 22324660 Email: [ads@lesothotribune.co.ls](mailto:ads@lesothotribune.co.ls)



# COURT OF APPEAL DISMISSES THE MOHALE CHILDREN

By: Tholoana Lesenya

## MASERU

The Court of Appeal has dismissed Mako Mohale, Ntsubise Mohale, Mankhahle Mohale and Mantolo Mohale after they approach the same court seeking to establish their legitimacy within the Mohale family. Their legitimacy was questioned after the marriage between their grandmother Mamopeli Mohale and the late Chief Nkhahle Mohale was reportedly declared null and void. Reports show that in 1982, the High Court found that their father, the late Mopeli Mohale was not a legitimate son of the late Chief Nkhahle Mohale, it was also declared that Mopeli Mohale was, in law, an illegitimate descendant of the late Chief Nkhahle Mohale and Mamopeli Mohale.



Through their legal representative, Advocate Teele (KC), they had argued before the Court of Appeal that they are no longer pursuing chieftainship but want the issue of legitimacy resolved.

He said Thato Mohale, who is one of the respondents in the appeal, can continue to enjoy

the chieftainship adding that his children will become successors.

Teele argued that if a declaratory of legitimacy is made there will not be any prejudice suffered by the respondents, he stated that a question of belonging to a father and an extended family is crucial for a

Mosotho child.

He pointed out that the issue of status of a person can arise at any time, adding that status cannot be waived.

Regardless of their argument and pointing out that they no longer have interest in chieftainship, the Court of Appeal dismissed the Mohales

**BOHLOKOA**  **MERCHANTS**

*Disposable wear*

**CNR Kingsway & Pioneer Rd LNDC Centre  
2nd Floor Tel: +266 22 324 660**





16

Lesotho Tribune

By Litsitso Letsunyane

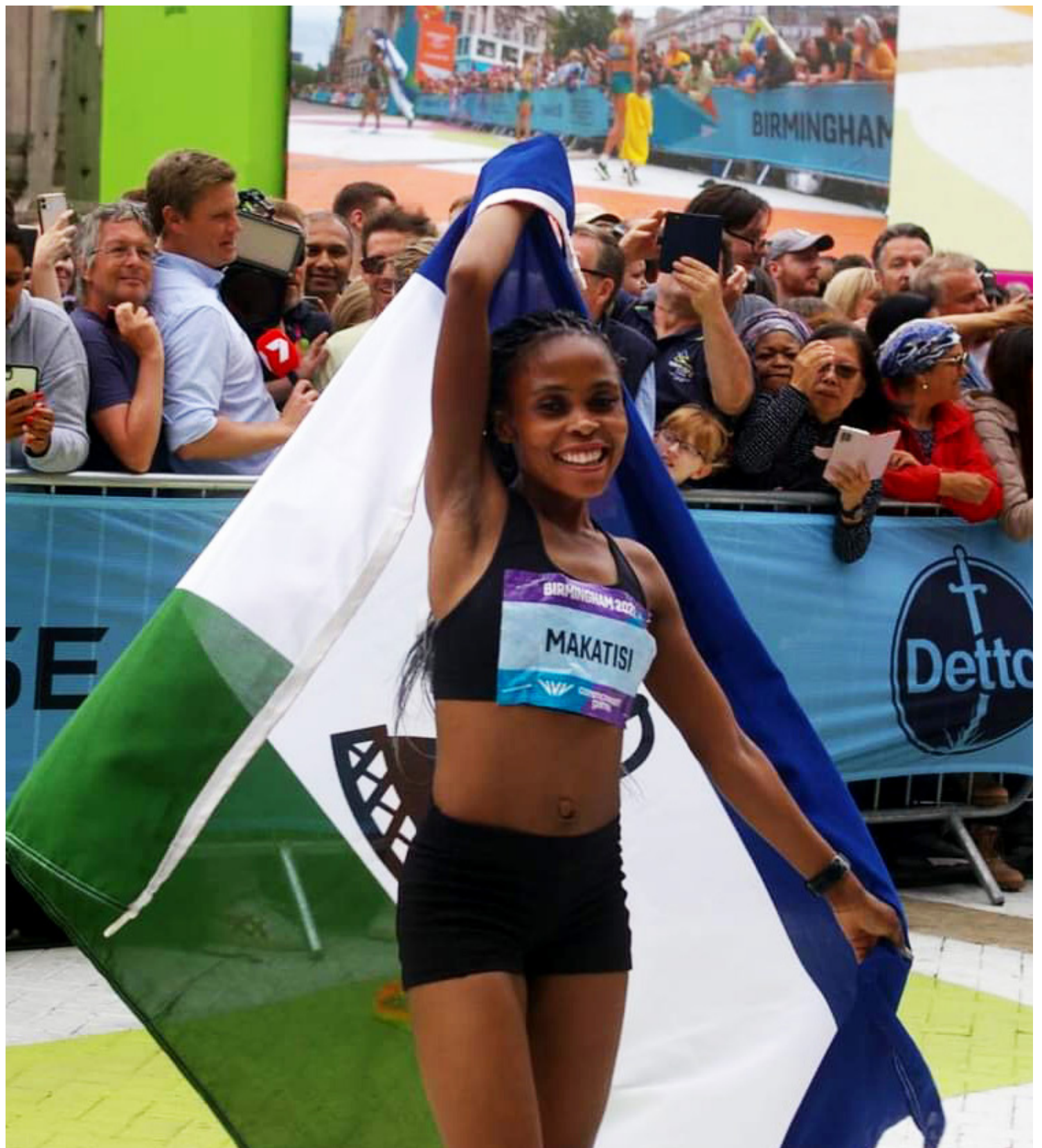
Lesotho's athletic prowess is once again in the spotlight as Mokulubete Makatisi secures her place at the Paris 2024 Olympic Games. The Lesotho National Olympic Committee proudly announced her selection, making her the third athlete from the country to receive a Universality Invitation to the prestigious event. Makatisi's journey to Paris has been marked by remarkable achievements and outstanding performances. Over the past year, she has set National Records in both the half-marathon and 10km events. Her talent and dedication were evident as she clinched two silver medals at the African Beach Games in Tunisia and finished 5th in the African Games in Accra, Ghana.

Notably, Makatisi was the sole female athlete from Lesotho to qualify and compete in the 2023 World Athletics Championships in Budapest, Hungary. Her recent triumphs include a victory at the Two Oceans half marathon and a commendable 9th-place finish at the Vienna City Marathon in Austria.

This invitation is a testament to Makatisi's unwavering commitment to her sport and her country. Despite personal ambitions, she has always prioritized representing

# ARTS & SPORTS

## Lesotho's Running Star Headed to Paris 2024 Olympics



Mokulubete Makatisi

Lesotho on the international stage, delivering stellar performances and making her nation proud.

Universality invitations in athletics are reserved for National Olympic Committees that have not qualified a male or female athlete, making Makatisi's selection a significant achievement for Lesotho.

**Lesotho Tribune**  
Information Liberates

LNDC CENTER, 2ND FLOOR  
P.O. BOX 14688, MASERU 100,  
LESOTHO

News Tips  
Managing Editor  
editor@lesothotribune.co.ls

Subscription  
(+266)56365968

Circulation

distribution@lesothotribune.co.ls

Advertising  
Tel: 22324660  
Email: ads@lesothotribune.co.ls  
sales@lesothotribune.co.ls

Website: www.lesothotribune.co.ls

Lesotho Tribune

All materials in this Newspaper are copyrighted and may not be used or reproduced without the Editor's consent whereupon the appropriate accreditation should be made.