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THARI

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Sunday, 22 September 2024

Lesotho Tribune

www.lesothotribune.co.ls

Information Liberates

ISSN 2453-5419



9 772453 541003

VOL 4, ISSUE 03

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Matekane Launches Basotho's 200th Anniversary Celebrations



By: Mamello Mochesane

Maseru-
Lesotho is preparing for a grand celebration to mark 200 years of unity, strength, and growth. The Prime Minister, Samuel Ntsokoane Matekane, launched the 200 celebration on Thursday at Avani, Lesotho. He expressed gratitude to those involved and acknowledged the nation's achievements over the years.

In his speech, Matekane outlined the country's plans for the big day on October 4, 2024. He emphasized how this event is a chance for all Basotho to reflect on their history and work towards a brighter future. His speech was not just a celebration of the past but a call for action, urging everyone to play a role in shaping Lesotho's future.

One of the key points highlighted was the importance of the monarchy in providing stability throughout the country's history. Matekane ex-

pressed deep respect for King Letsie III, who has long been a symbol of unity and tradition for the Basotho people. The king is set to deliver a special address on the main day of celebration, where he will unveil projects aimed at propelling the nation forward.

The day itself will be filled with cultural performances by local artists, showing off the diversity and richness of Lesotho's traditions. According to Matekane, these performances are a way to showcase the talent and creativity of the nation, serving as a reminder of the importance of culture in defining national identity.

Furthermore, the Prime Minister spoke about legacy projects that will leave a lasting mark on the nation. These projects aim to blend the nation's rich heritage with the modern needs of society. By honouring the past and embracing the future, these initiatives will help create a stronger, more unified Lesotho. He also spoke passionately about the country's focus on inclusivity, ensuring that all Basotho have a part to play in the country's development.

Matekane's speech was not only a celebration but also a reminder of the responsibilities that come with this milestone. He urged all Basotho to take part in the transformation of their country by contributing to the projects that will shape the nation's future.

"As we celebrate 200 years as a nation and 58 years of independence, let us all take responsibility to build the Lesotho we all dream of," he said.

He called on every citizen to take pride in their culture and heritage, which sets them apart from other nations. Matekane highlighted the importance of nurturing young talent to ensure that future generations continue to honour the legacy of their ancestors while making meaningful contributions to society.

The Prime Minister's words carried a deep sense of pride in the Basotho nation, as well as a vision of inclusivity and progress. The government, in partnership with international friends, is working hard to ensure that the country's future is one of prosperity and unity.

As the nation moves closer to the 200th-anniversary celebrations, Matekane reminded everyone that this moment in history is about coming together as a people. He urged Basotho to recognize the significance of this milestone and to appreciate the role each person plays in building a strong nation.

He concluded his speech with an invitation for all Basotho, as well as international guests, to join in the celebrations. "Let's forge ahead together with confidence and determination towards a future where all Basotho thrive," he said.

The ceremony began with a traditional Basotho prayer, symbolizing the nation's deep roots in faith, unity, and forgiveness. This launch event is more than just a celebration but it is a reaffirmation of the oneness of the Basotho people and their commitment to building a better future for generations to come.

RSL Employees Faces charges in Corruption Probe

By: Mamello Mochesane

Maseru-
Lesotho is reeling from revelations of corruption within the Revenue Services Lesotho (RSL) following the discovery that R40 million has gone missing in the last few months. The scandal, which unfolded between August and September 2024, has brought to light severe lapses in financial management and security, sparking swift action from the RSL and the Directorate on Corruption and Economic Offences (DCEO).

RSL Commissioner General Mathabo Mokoko addressed the gravity of the situation, stating, "Corruption within the ranks of RSL does not only erode public trust but also hampers our capacity to generate the much-needed revenue to fund essential Government services."

She emphasized that this crisis threatens the integrity of the RSL's mission to foster a fair tax environment and enable vital government funding.

The missing millions, now under intense scrutiny, were discovered as part of a larger internal investigation spearheaded by the RSL in collaboration with the DCEO. Mokoko shared that investigations had led to the suspension and prosecution of several RSL employees implicated in the scheme. These developments are part of a broader anti-corruption strategy outlined in the organization's 'Lesokoana' Strategy 2024-2027, which was launched in December 2023 and implemented in April 2024.

According to Mokoko, this plan aims to combat systemic corruption within the RSL while fostering a transparent and accounta-



ble tax system.

She remarked, "The RSL cannot successfully fulfil its mandate of enabling government funding when some of its officials in collusion with corrupt taxpayers are diverting public resources for personal gain."

The Commissioner General revealed that over a dozen employees and former employees of the RSL had already been arrested and charged with corruption, bribery, and money laundering. Last week, six individuals were arraigned at the Leribe/Maputsoe Magistrate Court, namely, 'Mabareki Hlabathe, Tsélisho Mokhethi, Khalane Moletsane, Atang Leleka, Tlholohelo Ramajoe, and Likeleli Sebeko.

She further indicated that on Friday 20th September 2024, seven more appeared in the Maseru Magistrate Court earlier today, all facing charges of corruption and embezzlement, which are 'Mampe Thene, Thabo Matsinyane, Lebopa Monaheng, Majara Mapeshoane,

Molebatsi Motsamai, 'Makeketso Thulo, and Lebohlang Rant'seli.

The DCEO has also played a key role in this operation. Director General Knorx Molelle addressed the public's concerns by pointing out the extent of the corruption, which he described as 'trade-based money laundering.'

He explained that these criminal activities involved collusion between corporate entities, particularly in the textile and mining sectors, to siphon off substantial funds through cross-border schemes.

"There was a cross-border element that makes us aware that a fair amount of funds are being siphoned out of the country," Molelle said, warning that such activities were depriving Lesotho of vital resources needed for public services.

The state, which has been struggling to keep its financial footing in recent years, has been severely impacted by these losses. Molelle

emphasized the DCEO's commitment to tracking down all those involved in the scandal, asserting, "Any of those involved in corrupt practices, that has the effect of depriving our citizens of their entitled resources, we are soon going to catch up."

In response to the mounting public outrage, the RSL has pledged to continue rooting out corruption within its ranks. The Commissioner General reiterated the organization's zero-tolerance policy, stating, "Any employee found engaged in corrupt practices shall face the full might of the law."

The joint efforts between the RSL and the DCEO are expected to intensify in the coming months, with both institutions aiming to recover all misappropriated funds and redirect them back into the public coffers.

Mokoko also took the opportunity to commend the honest, hard-working employees of the RSL who have remained committed to their duties during this difficult time.

"We urge the taxpaying community and all members of the public to continue supporting our institutions by reporting suspicious activities. All reported allegations or suspicious conduct will be thoroughly investigated and acted upon without fear, favour, or prejudice," she said.

As the investigation unfolds, the RSL remains resolute in its mission to foster a fair and transparent tax system for all. The collaboration with the DCEO marks a significant step in restoring public trust and ensuring that Lesotho's public resources are safeguarded for the benefit of its citizens.



PRESS RELEASE

10 September 2024

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

International Political Expo 2025 Launches Groundbreaking Global Hackathon Innovators Worldwide Invited to Transform Political Campaigns Through Technology
CAPE TOWN, SOUTH AFRICA, 10 September 2024

The International Political Campaigns Expo (IPE) is thrilled to announce the launch of its inaugural **Hackathon at IPE25**, set to take place on **January 23-24, 2025**, in **Cape Town, South Africa**. This exciting new addition to the expo invites innovators, entrepreneurs, and tech visionaries from around the globe to submit cutting-edge political software solutions that have the potential to revolutionize campaign strategies, enhance voter engagement, and reshape the future of democracy.

The IPE, a premier global hub for political professionals, candidates, and technology providers, has established itself as the go-to event for advancing innovation in political campaigns. The theme for IPE25, **"Unlocking Voting Potential: The Art of Resourcing and Skilling for Winning Campaigns,"** sets the stage for this groundbreaking Hackathon. "We're excited to introduce this Hackathon as a pivotal part of IPE25," said Glen Mpani Host and Convenor for IPE25. "This contest represents a unique opportunity for innovators to showcase their ideas on a global stage, potentially reshaping the future of political campaigning and addressing critical challenges in voter engagement and democratic participation worldwide."

The Hackathon features an esteemed panel of international judges bringing together diverse expertise from across the global political and technological landscape, including **Dr. Rachel Sibande**, a renowned tech innovator from Africa known for establishing Malawi's first technology hub; **Christopher Schleifer**, CEO of CamBuildr from Europe, recognized for his pioneering work in user-centric digital campaign strategies; **Dana Cichon** and Sue Zoldak, Co-Founders of Wolfram Labs from North America, both award-winning strategists in political campaigns and public affairs; and **Dr. Pedro Valle Javier**, a distinguished political consultant and digital strategist from Latin America with extensive experience in international campaigns. This diverse panel reflects the global nature of the challenge and ensures that innovations will be evaluated from multiple cultural and technological perspectives.

Participants will compete for substantial prizes, including:

- Regional Awards of \$1,000 for winners from Africa, Europe, the United States, Latin America, and Asia
- A Grand Prize and Runner-Up Award with investment money to fuel further development and implementation of winning solutions
- One month of free consulting with a panel judge of choice (valued at approximately \$5,000), offering invaluable industry insights and guidance
- Complimentary exhibit space at IPE26, providing a platform for winners to showcase their innovations to a global audience of political professionals
- Extensive networking opportunities with key industry players, potential investors, and political campaign experts.

The Hackathon is open to innovators worldwide, with a special focus on solutions that leverage AI, big data, and youth participation. Submissions should address one of four themes: Data/Technology, Mobilization/Logistics, Business of Campaigns, or Communications/Campaigns.

Key dates for participants:

- Submission Deadline: November 8, 2024
- Notification of Selection: December 7, 2024
- Event Date: January 23-24, 2025

"This Hackathon is not just a contest; it's a launchpad for the next generation of political campaign technologies," emphasized Glen Mpani. "We're calling on innovators who are ready to disrupt the political marketplace, challenge conventional campaign strategies, and ultimately shape the future of democracy on a global scale."

To participate, innovators must submit a comprehensive proposal and pitch deck outlining their innovative solution, along with a participation fee of \$150. The proposal should clearly articulate the problem being addressed, the proposed solution, its potential impact, and how it leverages cutting-edge technology to transform political campaigns. Finalists will be invited to pitch their ideas live at IPE25 in Cape Town, with complimentary conference attendance, airfare, and accommodation provided by IPE.

The IPE25 Hackathon comes at a crucial time when political engagement and voter turnout face significant challenges worldwide. By fostering innovation in political campaign technology, the event aims to address these issues head-on, potentially revolutionizing how political parties and candidates connect with voters and reinvigorate democratic participation.

"We believe that by bringing together the brightest minds in technology and politics, we can create solutions that not only win campaigns but also strengthen the foundations of democracy worldwide," added Glen. "This Hackathon is about more than just politics – it's about shaping the future of civic engagement in the digital age."

For more information on how to participate in the Hackathon or to purchase tickets for IPE25, visit hackathon.internationalpolexpo.com.

Don't miss this chance to be at the forefront of political innovation and potentially secure investment and expert consulting for your groundbreaking ideas.

About IPE: The International Political Campaigns Expo is the leading global conference for political professionals, featuring panel discussions, networking opportunities, and showcases of the latest campaign technologies. IPE's mission is to promote innovation, knowledge sharing, and an interconnected network of services and skills across the political campaigns field on a global scale.

Contact:

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Lesotho: Authorities must promptly investigate allegations that army tortured and killed civilians



By: Amnesty International
Deputy Southern Africa

Responding to reports that Lesotho Defence Forces (LDF) soldiers tortured at least four people and killed at least two others during the ongoing Operation Hard Fist to confiscate illegal firearms from gang members, Amnesty International's Deputy Regional Director for East and Southern Africa, Khanyo Farise,

said: "These incidents are the latest in a series of grave allegations about the conduct of LDF soldiers. Torturing and unlawfully killing people can never be justified, even in the context of a crackdown on gangs."

"Lesotho's authorities must urgently investigate all incidents of torture and unlawful killings by the army, bring to justice anyone suspected to be responsible in fair trials and adequately compensate the victims and

their families.

These incidents are the latest in a series of grave allegations about the conduct of LDF soldiers.

Khanyo Farise, Amnesty International Deputy Director for East and Southern Africa

"Lesotho's Prime Minister must publicly condemn cases of torture, arbitrary detention and unlawful killings by the army and affirm his commitment to ending alleged

army abuses."

Background

Lesotho's military launched Operation Hard Fist earlier this year. During an address to soldiers in early August, LDF Major General Matela Matobakele threatened lawyers and judges handling cases involving individuals arrested by the army.

Between 13 and 16 August, soldiers arbitrarily detained and allegedly tortured four men from the town of Leribe at the Mokotakoti army base and Ratjomose barracks. On 5 September, the victims wrote a letter to the Attorney General, Defence Minister and LDF commander demanding 10 million MaLoti (USD 565,800) in compensation for the abuse. On 12 September, video emerged online appearing to show soldiers whipping the men.

Torturing and killing people in custody can never be justified, even in the context of a crackdown on gangs.

Khanyo Farise, Amnesty International Deputy Director for East and Southern Africa

The same day, soldiers allegedly killed in custody two herdsmen, Nete Makhabane and Lejone Mopoko, and assaulted local leader Chief Lesoana Masupha of Khokhoba, who remains in critical condition.

These incidents follow multiple previous allegations of LDF soldiers torturing at least eleven people in April and July 2024.

African Development Bank invest in Artisan Skills in Lesotho

By: Selloane Nyakane

Maseru- The Ministry of Natural Resources, in partnership with the Ministry of Education signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) this Wednesday to provide training, testing, and certification in artisan and masonry skills for the communities in Botha-Bothe and Leribe.

This initiative is part of the Lesotho Lowlands Water Development and Sanitation Project (LLWDSP III) through the Ministry of Natural Resource aimed at providing water and sanitation services to the communities of Botha-Bothe and Leribe.

During the signing ceremony, the Principal Secretary of Natural Resources, Ms. Relbohile Lebete highlighted that the agreement between two ministries represents a major step forward in a joint efforts to empower communities through skills development, particularly in the field of artisan and masonry trades.

Lebete emphasised that the Ministry of Education is responsible for setting standards and certifying vocational skills in the country, adding that their involvement in the program ensures that the training and testing in masonry and artisan skills will be officially recognized, with participants receiving accredited certificates upon completion.

"Through this partnership, the aim is to provide Basotho with the recognition they deserve for their skills and hard work through certification, this will not only en-



hance the value of the skills acquired by the trainees but also improve their employability, entrepreneurship and livelihoods," she stated

She also extended her gratitude to the African Development Bank for its unwavering support in financing the initiative, she noted that the bank's commitment to the socio economic development of Lesotho is evident through this partnership, which will un-

doubtedly uplift the lives of people in Leribe and Botha-Bothe.

Lebete, nominated persons are youth, women and people living with disability, of which they will be equipped with skills necessary to compete with increasingly challenging economy.

She reiterated that the MoU is not merely a document but a firm commitment to the economic development of Lesotho, she as-

sured that the success of the LLWDSP will not only meet its immediate objectives but will leave a lasting impact on the people of Lesotho.

She said the LLWDSP is more than just an infrastructural project, it serves as a catalyst for sustainable development, creating opportunities for skill development that will benefit the communities long after the project completion.

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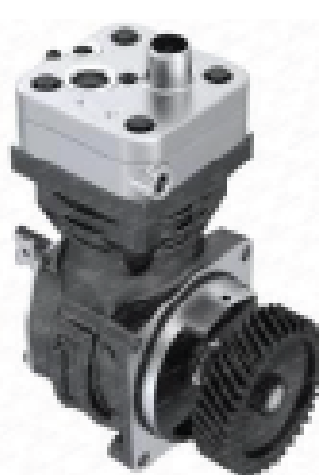


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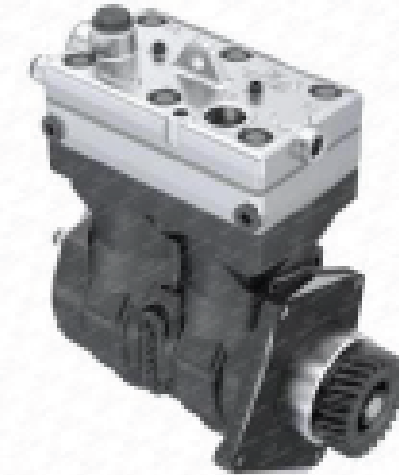


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Lesotho Tribune

By Staff Reporter

Over the past two years, Lesotho Tribune has conducted a deep investigation into a complex web of corruption, negligence, and environmental degradation within Lesotho's most valuable industry—diamond mining.

In an explosive five-part investigative series, we reveal how the government of Lesotho has been missing out on over a billion Maloti annually, resulting in a devastating loss of national wealth.

At the heart of this issue is the illegal renewal of Letšeng Diamonds' lease. This maneuver not only bypasses regulatory frameworks but has also caused significant harm to the Moloraneng stream and the surrounding environment.

Our investigation goes further, exposing how successive Ministers of Mines have blatantly violated the Mines and Minerals Act, disregarding legislation intended to protect Lesotho's natural resources. Additionally, we uncover how diamond mining corporations have exploited depreciation laws that do not exist, costing the country billions in lost tax revenue.

This series delves into the tangled relationship between power, policy, and profit, bringing to light stories that have remained hidden—until now.

Understanding the Difference Between Sales Tax and Royalty in Lesotho's Diamond Industry

In Lesotho's diamond sector, two important financial obligations ex-

BUSINESS & ECONOMY

Revenue Services Lesotho Costs the Nation Over M1 Billion by Failing to Collect From Diamond Mines - Part II



ist: the statutory Diamond Export Sales Tax and the statutory Royalty. Though they might appear similar, they have distinct purposes and applications.

Sales Tax (Precious Stone Order of 1970):

The Sales Tax, defined in the Precious Stone Order of 1970, imposes a 15% levy on the value of rough diamonds exported from Lesotho. Its main goals are:

- **Regulatory Purpose:** Ensuring an adequate supply of rough diamonds to Lesotho's local polishing and cutting industry.
- **Encouraging Local Beneficiation:** Producers who choose to export rough diamonds incur this 15% tax. However, if they sell the diamonds locally for processing, they are

exempt from this tax.

- **Trigger Point:** The tax applies specifically when rough diamonds found in Lesotho are exported. No export means no Sales Tax is due.

This tax was designed to promote in-country processing of diamonds, fostering local industry growth and employment.

Royalty (Mines and Minerals Act of 2005):

The Royalty, as established by the Mines and Minerals Act of 2005, is a charge on the gross market value of minerals obtained. Key features include:

- **Rates:** 10% for precious stones like diamonds and 3% for other minerals.
- **Basis of Calculation:** It's based on the gross sale value receivable at the mine gate.

- **Purpose:** Providing the nation with a share of the revenue from the extraction of its natural resources.
- **Trigger Point:** The royalty is due upon the sale of the mineral, whether it's exported or sold locally.

This Royalty ensures that the Basotho Nation benefits financially from the depletion of its mineral wealth.

Why Are They Different?

Though both involve payments related to diamond extraction, their differences are significant:

- **Objective:** The Sales Tax is an export levy aimed at regulating the industry and promoting local processing by

making it more costly to export unprocessed diamonds. The Royalty is a general revenue measure intended to compensate the nation for the extraction of its natural resources.

- **Application:** The Sales Tax only applies when rough diamonds are exported. If diamonds are sold and processed within Lesotho, this tax doesn't apply. The Royalty is charged on all diamonds extracted and sold, regardless of their destination.
- **Economic Impact:** The Sales Tax encourages companies to invest in local processing facilities, boosting the domestic economy. The Royalty provides the government with funds from all mineral sales to support public services and national development.

Understanding these distinctions is crucial for grasping how Lesotho manages its diamond resources. The Sales Tax functions as a tool to develop local industry and retain value within the country, while the Royalty ensures that the nation receives rightful compensation for its mineral assets.

The Role of Tax Sovereignty in Regulation

Tax sovereignty is a critical part of governance, empowering a state to collect revenue and regulate economic activities through fiscal policies. It goes beyond merely raising funds—taxation is a tool to shape societal behavior, foster industrial growth, support transitioning sectors, and promote social justice.

Around the world, tax policy is used to influence economic and social outcomes by encouraging or discouraging certain behaviors among taxpayers. For example, governments incentivize specific industries or promote social equity through different tax regimes.

In Lesotho, the Precious Stones Order of 1970 provides an example of tax sovereignty used for regulatory purposes. Section 17 imposes a 15% tax on the export of rough diamonds, aimed at encouraging local diamond processing, supporting the domestic economy, and ensuring that more of the diamond wealth stays within the country. This is a key assertion of Lesotho's sovereignty over its natural resources, ensuring that their exploitation benefits the entire nation.

The Diamond Sales Tax is designed to incentivize local processing, boost industrial development, generate employment, and retain value within Lesotho. This strategy mirrors policies from other diamond-producing countries, such as South Africa, which imposes export taxes to stimulate local industry.

The broader framework of the Precious Stones Order further regulates the diamond sector, creating a Diamond Cutting Industry Board to ensure a steady supply of diamonds for local processing. This reinforces the importance of keeping diamond wealth within the country and encourages local beneficiation to avoid the 15% export levy.

The Mines and Minerals Act of 2005 and Royalties

The Mines and Minerals Act of 2005 outlines that holders of mineral concessions must pay royalties to the government on any minerals extracted. Royalties for precious stones are set at 10% of the gross market value.

However, these payments, when classified as royalties, fail to reflect the true nature of the diamond industry's impact. Unlike intellectual property royalties—where the asset remains intact—mining royalties compensate for the permanent depletion of a finite resource. Diamonds, once extracted, are gone forever.

The current treatment of royalties, which allows them to be de-

ducted as business expenses, introduces a deep inequity. Essentially, the Basotho people end up subsidizing the depletion of their own resources. This contradicts the Constitution of Lesotho, which affirms that all land and its wealth belong to the Basotho people, and requires that such resources be managed in their best interest.

The Mines and Minerals Act (MMA) also emphasizes that all ownership rights in minerals are vested in the Basotho nation. It is the government's responsibility to manage these resources for the nation's long-term benefit. The Minister of Natural Resources is charged with negotiating mining leases that ensure the greatest benefit to the Basotho people.

Fiduciary Responsibility and Constitutional Obligations

The Constitution of Lesotho establishes the supremacy of law and reinforces that the nation's wealth belongs to its people. Section 107, which declares all land and resources as the collective property of the Basotho, aligns with international principles of Permanent Sovereignty over Natural Resources, such as those articulated by the United Nations.

Mining royalties must be treated as compensation for the depletion of national wealth, not merely as business expenses. The Mines and Minerals Act requires the Minister to ensure that mining agreements benefit the nation, particularly by adhering to the 10% royalty rate. Any attempt to reduce this rate without legislative approval violates both the law and the Constitution.

The King, as head of state, holds these resources in trust for the nation. This is not a symbolic responsibility but a constitutional duty. Any reduction in royalty rates below the legal minimum undermines this trust and breaches the fiduciary obligation to protect the nation's

wealth.

Moreover, the Constitution mandates that all national revenues, including royalties, be paid into the Consolidated Fund. Lowering royalties without proper oversight reduces the financial resources available for essential public services and infrastructure.

The distinction between administrative and executive powers is vital here. The Minister's role in negotiating mining leases is administrative and must adhere to existing laws. Any reduction in royalty rates must be pursued through legislative channels, not through unilateral decisions by the Minister. To do otherwise undermines the rule of law and jeopardizes the nation's wealth.

The Public Interest and Transparency

Any decision to lower royalties must be justified as being in the public interest. The statutory 10% royalty rate is designed to ensure that the wealth generated from mining benefits the entire nation, not just foreign mining companies. Reducing this rate, without clear justification, privileges private interests over the national good.

Transparent and accountable decision-making is essential to maintaining public trust and protecting the nation's resources. Any attempt to lower royalty rates without proper scrutiny compromises the government's ability to manage Lesotho's resources effectively and equitably.

The payment of royalties is not merely a transaction—it is a constitutional responsibility. The Minister of Natural Resources has no legal authority to reduce royalties below 10% without legislative approval. Any such action violates the Mines and Minerals Act of 2005 and the Constitution of Lesotho, and undermines the nation's sovereignty over its natural resources.

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Lesotho Tribune
Information Liberator

Inaugural Lesotho's Investment Challenge - Youth edition launched on Saturday 14 September at Limkokwing University of Creative Technology in Maseru



STANLIB





10

Lesotho Tribune

By: Editorial

As the saying goes, nothing is new under the sun. For those who are willing to learn let us have a look at Thomas E. Ricks: A Pulitzer Prize-winning journalist, Ricks has deeply covered the military aspects of the Iraq War in his books like “Fiasco: The American Military Adventure in Iraq” and “The Gamble: General David Petraeus and the American Military Adventure in Iraq, 2006–2008.” His work provides a critical perspective on the military strategy and its execution.

Our focus today will be on, *Fiasco: The American Military Adventure in Iraq*, a historical non-fiction book by Thomas E. Ricks, Published in 2006, follows the path of the Iraq War from planning to combat, arguing that the endeavor was poorly planned and badly mismanaged by both the George W. Bush administration and the US Army. It was one of the finalists for the 2007 Pulitzer Prize for General Non-Fiction. Ricks, a senior Pentagon correspondent for *The Washington Post*, in 2009, published a sequel, *The Gamble: General David Petraeus and the American Military Adventure in Iraq, 2006–2008*.

After more than twenty-five years of reporting on the US Military, a career that includes hundreds of interviews and the review of more than 37,000 documents, journalist Thomas E. Ricks makes his feelings on the Iraq War clear with the title of his book: *Fiasco*. He writes, “President George W. Bush’s decision to invade Iraq in 2003 ultimately may come to be seen as one of the most profligate actions in the history of American foreign policy.” At the time of the book’s publication in 2006, the Iraq War was still ongoing (it officially ended in 2011), but more-recent editions now include a postscript that briefly explores the years after the war.

After the events of 9/11, the Bush Administration spins a narrative around the presence of supposed “weapons of mass

EDITORIAL

LDF’s Intelligence will End Matekane’s Political Career



destruction” linking Saddam Hussein’s regime in Iraq with the Islamic terrorist group al-Qaeda, which was responsible for the attacks. Using his sources within the US Military, Ricks discovers that there is virtually no evidence to back up these claims. Despite this, however, these events “laid the shaky foundation for the derelict occupation that followed” when the United States invaded Iraq.

Many Middle East experts and military veterans do their best to warn of the difficulty of such an operation. In 2002, a meeting of seventy national security experts and Mideast scholars concludes that invading Iraq will “be the most daunting and complex task the U.S. and the international community will have undertaken since the end of World War II.”

The U.S. invades Iraq in 2003; the effort is not well planned. The US Military has little understanding of the culture or the situation in Iraq. It sends far too few soldiers, and those that are sent are drastically unprepared for what they encounter. Furthermore, no real plan is put in place for what the soldiers are to accomplish during their occupation. “There was no guidance for restoring order in Baghdad, creating an interim government, hiring government and essential services employees, and ensuring that the judicial system was operational,” Ricks writes. The US Military is “pasting feathers together, hoping for a duck.”

To make matters worse, infighting plagues the highest offices of those captaining the invasion: between Colin Powell, Paul Wolfowitz, Donald Rumsfeld, and the Bush White House; between the State and Defense Departments; between the civilian employees of the Pentagon and the military. Expert advice is routinely ignored, and the lack of adequate troops means that areas secured are almost impossible to maintain.

In addition, the growing Iraqi insurgency that springs up after the fall of Saddam Hussein means that the US Military must change and adapt its ground strategy—something Secretary Rumsfeld is reluctant to do. Ricks asserts that, instead of remembering the counterinsurgency lessons of the Vietnam War, the US Military emphasizes force and retaliation in the name of protecting American troops. However, this only strengthens the insurgency’s resolve. Many troops, who have not been adequately “trained or mentally prepared for the mission,” respond harshly and often violently to local citizens. This leads to occurrences such as the scandal at the Abu Ghraib prison, where the US Army and the CIA committed human rights violations against prisoners.

Following the occupation of Baghdad in the early stages of the invasion, the US Military makes two crucial mistakes. The first is not sending additional troops to help secure the city. The second is prohibiting thousands of Iraqis from returning

to their government jobs, including the Iraqi army. These actions help to fuel the young insurgency, ensuring that it has the manpower to be a real threat to the U.S.’s efforts in the country. In addition, American soldiers routinely conduct cordon and search operations, invading tens of thousands of Iraqi homes to detain innocent civilians; the ill-will created by such actions lends sympathy and support to the insurgency.

As the war drags on, the costs mount. Wolfowitz originally claims that the invasion will pay for itself through the oil revenue that the U.S. will gain from the occupation. But the reality is somewhat different: American taxpayers are forced to fund \$5 billion per month in costs during 2004 and 2005. By funneling resources away from the U.S., the Iraq War leaves the American homeland vulnerable to additional threats by terrorists—which, ironically, are being created in ever-greater numbers thanks precisely to the botched attempts by the U.S. to contain them.

Rather than make the world a safer place to be, the Iraq War “stressed the U.S. Army to the breaking point,” creating a situation that will have far-reaching consequences for years to come.

Now we wonder...How bad could the LDF intelligence be? Two deaths later and tens of brutality cases, the LDF has failed to recover a single gun from those killed and tortured?

By: Selloane Nyakane

Maseru-

Vodacom Lesotho e hlalositse leano le lecha la “Mohala ka Mokitlane” ka Labobeli la beke ena.

Hlooho ea Phethahatso ea Thekiso le Phahamiso, Mofumahali Palesa Kaloli o bonts'itse ha leano Lena le tla nolofalletsa Basotho ho fumana mehala ekang Smart Kicka 6 Mobicel, Sechocha, Samsung Galaxy AO4 le tse ling ka mokitlane ntle le ho patala kontane.

O supile ha Vodacom ese ntse e rekisa mehala ka theko e tlase empa leha hole joalo ho ntse ho ena le Basotho ba sa khoneng ho reka kontane ka hoo ba ikeletse ho etsa leano la mokitlane ka mohala ho bebofalletsa Basotho.

A tsoela Pele hore leano Lena le tla thusa bahoebi ba banyane hore batsebe ho bapatsa likhoebo le lihlaioa tsa bona marang-rang. Ba shebelle litaba tsa lehae le tsa machabeng.

Ha tlatselisa a re Sena se tla thusa le ho ntlafatsa tsebelisano le phapanyetsano ea thliso-leseling hara sechaba.

Kaloli o supile ha motho a tlameha hore ebe ebile mosebelisi oa Mpesa oa Nako e telele, a sebelisa litsebetso tsa moea khafetsa hape a Sena mekoloto e meng hore a be monyetleng oa ho reka mohala ka sekoloto.

Ha a tsoela Pele o bonts'itse ha ketso eo Vodacom e tla Sheba ts'ebeliso ea lits'ebetso tsa mohala le tsa Mpesa ho etsa qeto ea hore naa motho o ts'oaneleha ho fumana mohala ka mokitlane.

O bonts'itse hape hore haeba motho a batla ho hlaloha hore na a ka fumana mohala ka mokitlane aka tobetsa *111#

Vodacom Lesotho e thakhola leano la mohala ka mokitlane



ebe o khetha khetho ea 8.

Ka ho etsa seo se mofa monyetla oa ho bona linthla tse amanang le boemo ba Hae ba ho ts'oaneleha bakeng sa mokitlane.

“Motho o tlameha ho lefa 30% ea theko ea mohala ele tefo ea pele, Pele a ka fumana mohala ‘me kamora tefo motho ka mong o ikhethela hore naa o tla patala

mokitlane oa hae kamora Nako e kae,” a rialo

Kaloli o bonts'itse ha Sena se nolofalletsa bareki ho etsa liqeto tse lumellanang le matla a bona a ho patala linako tse telele Kapa tse khuts'oane.

O boetse a hlalosa hore motho ea nkang mokitlane, o na le monyetla oa ho

fua metsotso, data le li sms letsatsi le letsatsi ele ho sebelisa lits'ebetso tsa mohala ha bonolo.

Leha ho le joalo, haeba motho a hloleha ho patala mohala ka Nako e lumellanang, Vodacom e koala mohala ho fihlella tefo e etsoa ‘me ha hona tefo ea letho e tla etsoa ha motho ase a buleloa mohala hape.

“Ha motho a nkileng mokitlane a hloka hlahla, Mojalefa oa hae ke ena ea tla ikarabella ho lefa,” a toboketsa

Ha phethela litaba tsa hae, Kaloli o bonts'itse ha ho Sena motho ea tla kena pooneng ka mohala oa Vodacom. A tlatselisa hore ba tla mo batla kaha a ngolisitse le Vodacom a sebelisa nomoro ea Boitsibiso.

Ea ikarabellang litabeng tsa Baji, Monghali Thabisi Khatapane o itse Basotho ba tlameha ho ba fihlella thekenoloji.

Ka hoo Vodacom e etsa hore e fumanehe ha bobebe le ka theko e tlase kaha e sebelisoa bakeng sa puisano, mesebetsi, ho reka thepa le lintho tse ling tsa Bohlokoa bophelong ba bona ba letsatsi le letsatsi.

A re vodacom e entse mosebetsi o motle, ho be bofalletsa Basotho ba sitoang ho reka mohala ka kontane.

RSL equips journalists with effective business and economic skills

By Tholoana Lesenya

Maseru-

Revenue Services Lesotho (RSL) held a two day capacity building workshop for journalists on effective business, economic, financial and development reporting in Maseru on Thursday and Friday.

While officially opening this workshop on behalf of the Commissioner General of RSL, Pheello Mphana said this workshop is intended to improve reporting knowledge and skills to reporters on issues related to finances, economics as well as taxation.

He stated that it is also to empower journalists with the right skills to help them ask the right question in relation to the aforementioned beat which will also enable them to hold related institutions accountable.

Mphana stated that media practitioners are a bridge between complex financial information and the public. He said, “your ability to distill intricate financial reports into clear, accessible narrative is crucial.” In Addition he said the training is not only about understanding numbers and regulations but it is also about em-



Pheello Mphana

powering media practitioners to communicate effectively, ask relevant and be able to hold institutions accountable.

Moreover, Mphana said it is media pro-

professionals' responsibility to ensure that citizens are well informed and educated and that the key institutions and businesses are held according and that policy makers are guided by the truth.

Moving on, Mphana said in recent years, they have witnessed significant changes in policies, some of which are yet to be finalised and operationalized. He stated that media practitioners should remember the importance of ethical reporting.

“In a world where misinformation can spread like wild fire, our commitment to truth and accuracy is paramount. We must strive not to be just reporters of facts but also educators who help our audiences understand the implications of those factors that we are reporting on,” said Mphana.

In conclusion Mphana said he acknowledges and appreciates dedication of media and to their work. He said their presence and participation in the workshop shows he is eager they are to learn and to give accurate information to their audiences. He stated that as RSL they did not expect such a large number of media professionals to attend the workshop especially because business and economic issues are regarded to be boring. Mphana said he hopes that thus workshop will help media practitioners to give their audience more clarity on economical issues and also create a platform for audiences to raise the view and opinions in business and economic related issues.



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Lesotho Tribune

SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY

Concerning Study Reveals 32% of Eating Disorder Patients Have Dangerous Electrolyte Imbalances

BY: INSTITUTE FOR CLINICAL EVALUATIVE SCIENCES

A study linked electrolyte abnormalities in individuals with eating disorders to a higher risk of death and serious health issues. Researchers recommend electrolyte testing to improve patient outcomes.

A recent study published in *The Lancet Psychiatry* revealed that 32% of people with eating disorders had abnormal electrolyte levels, which were linked to an increased risk of death from all causes.

The study, led by researchers at ICES and The Ottawa Hospital, found that electrolyte abnormalities were also linked to the development of other serious health conditions, including chronic kidney disease, bone fracture, bowel obstruction, and acute kidney injury.

This is one of the first large, population-based studies to identify an important risk factor for mortality and poor health outcomes in individuals suffering from eating disorders. Electrolytes, such as potassium and sodium, can affect how the body functions. It's common to find that people with eating disorders have electrolyte abnormalities due to symptoms such as purging, the use of laxatives, and dehydration.

"These findings might inform explicit mention of electrolyte abnormalities in the criteria we use to assess the severity of eating disorders," says lead author Dr. Marco Solmi, Medical Director of the Regional Eating Disorder Program at The Ottawa Hospital, and Director of research at the University of Ottawa's Psychiatry Department.

The researchers included over 6,000 individu-

Abnormal electrolyte levels in people with eating disorders may increase risk of death

Key Findings

- 32% of people with an eating disorder were found to have an electrolyte abnormality.
- 16% of those with an electrolyte disorder died compared to 6% of those without an electrolyte abnormality.
- Findings suggest that testing for electrolyte abnormalities and treating these conditions may help to reduce the risk of death in people with eating disorders.

Study Description:
This was a population-based study of over 6,000 individuals 13 years of age and older and living in Ontario, Canada (from 2008-2019) who were diagnosed with an eating disorder and had an electrolyte level test within one year of their diagnosis.

Citation: Solmi et al, *Lancet Psychiatry*, 2024.

ICES | Data Discovery Better Health | The Ottawa Hospital | L'Hôpital d'Ottawa | uOttawa



A study revealed that 32% of individuals with eating disorders had electrolyte abnormalities linked to higher death rates. The findings suggest electrolyte testing could enhance treatment and reduce severe outcomes.

2019, the researchers found that:

Most people included in the study were diagnosed with an eating disorder not otherwise specified—disordered eating that falls

There is also a role for patient education and awareness. "Eating disorders are conditions that patients may often deny the existence of, or patients fail to appreciate the implications to their health. This study now shows that eating disorders which are severe enough to cause electrolyte disturbances have major ramifications in regard to long-term patient health outcomes," says senior author Dr. Gregory Hundemer, an adjunct scientist at ICES, nephrologist and Lorna Jocelyn Wood Chair for Kidney Research at The Ottawa Hospital, and assistant professor at the University of Ottawa.

als 13 years of age and older who were diagnosed with an eating disorder and had an electrolyte level test within one year of their diagnosis, as recorded on a hospitalization or emergency department record in the province of Ontario, Canada.

Health outcomes and mortality

Analyzing health records between 2008 and

outside the criteria for anorexia, bulimia, and binge eating (59%) — followed by anorexia nervosa (22%) and bulimia nervosa (15%).

The mean age was 27 years, and 89% were female.

1,987 individuals (32%) had an electrolyte abnormality, and many had co-occurring health conditions.

Among those with an electrolyte disorder, 16% died compared to 6% in those without an electrolyte abnormality.

Electrolyte abnormalities were also associated with a higher risk of hospitalization and other serious health conditions, but not with a risk of infection or heart disease event.

"These findings underscore the importance of testing for electrolyte levels in people suffering from eating disorders, and then acting on those results to potentially reduce the risk of death or other severe outcomes," says co-lead author Dr. Nicholas Fabiano, a psychiatry resident at The Ottawa Hospital and the University of Ottawa.

Finally, the researchers suggest that the findings can help to redefine how clinicians score the severity of eating disorders, which is currently based on a patient's body mass index and the frequency of behaviors like binge episodes. Electrolyte abnormalities may be found in patients who do not fit more typical eating disorder presentations and could ultimately help improve care for these patients and reduce their risk of death or other negative outcomes.

Reference: "Adverse outcomes and mortality in individuals with eating disorder-related electrolyte abnormalities in Ontario, Canada: a population-based cohort study" by Marco Solmi, Nicholas Fabiano, Anna E Clarke, Stephen G Fung, Peter Tanuseputro, Greg Knoll, Daniel T Myran, Ann Bugeja, Manish M Sood and Gregory L Hundemer, 17 September 2024, *The Lancet Psychiatry*.

DOI: 10.1016/S2215-0366(24)00244-X

Lesotho Tribune
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AFRICA



13

Lesotho Tribune

By Staff Reporter

The Bagammangwato Royal Uncles are welcoming back the former Botswana President, Ian Khama. Khama has arrived in Botswana

Former Botswana President arrives back home

after nearly three years out of the country.

The Royal uncles have also invited Botswana incumbent President, Mokgweetsi Masisi but he's in New York attending the Un General Assembly.

The Bagammangwato Royal Uncles say in the spirit of peace and reconciliation they invited

Botswana President Mokgweetsi Masisi in welcoming back Khama.

They say they were motivated by a public declaration that Masisi made in recent months that he do not wish any persecution or harassment on the former President.

They further added that this

ceremony will be an opportunity for the two leaders to meet and greet and to begin a new chapter of peaceful resolution of differences.

Khama also appeared in court in Gaborone last week where he is facing several charges.

ChannelAfrica



Former Botswana president Ian Khama sits



14

Lesotho Tribune

By: Hon. Machesetsa Mofomobe,
Leader of the Basotho National
Party (BNP)

The recent killings and torture of Basotho by the Lesotho Defence Force (LDF) in the name of combating organized crime are deeply troubling. As Basotho, we have long prided ourselves on a nation that respects the rule of law and upholds the dignity of its people. Yet, what we are witnessing now is the gradual erosion of those principles. The justification of these heinous acts under the guise of national security is not only unacceptable, but it also suggests that something far more dangerous is at play: the creeping establishment of authoritarian rule in Lesotho.

We have seen these warning signs before, not just in distant lands, but throughout history. A government that uses the military to suppress its own people, one that tolerates or even encourages unlawful killings and torture, is a government that seeks to tighten its grip on power. When the LDF can act with impunity—detaining, torturing, and even killing our fellow citizens—without consequences or accountability, the message is clear: we are sliding towards a dictatorship where dissent is met with violence, and the people are ruled by fear.

Look no further than the recent tragedy that unfolded in Leribe, where four men were arbitrarily detained and subjected to horrific abuse. The soldiers involved in this operation did not stop at torture—they murdered two of our herdsmen, Nete Makhabane and Lejone Mopoko. Their blood cries out for justice, yet there is deafening silence from those in power. The army, instead of being an institution that protects the people, has become one that brutalizes them. The army is meant to safeguard our sovereignty, not violate the rights of its citizens.

The true horror of these incidents is not only the violence that has been unleashed but the chilling effect it has on society. When those in power allow—or even encourage—

OPINION

The Torture and Killings Under the Guise of Fighting Crime: A Dangerous Path to Authoritarianism in Lesotho



violence against supposed criminals can quickly spiral into the suppression of political opponents, civil society, and anyone who dares to challenge the regime.

The silence of the Prime Minister in the face of these human rights violations speaks volumes. His refusal to condemn the actions of the LDF is not just a failure of leadership—it is complicity. It is the first step toward creating an environment where the military can operate without oversight, where soldiers can kill and torture with no fear of punishment. The fact that this is happening while Major General Matela Matobakele is openly threatening judges and lawyers handling cases against the army should concern every Basotho.

What we are seeing is the weaponization of fear. The state is telling us that in order to maintain peace, we must submit to the rule of the gun. But peace built on violence is no peace at all. It is submission. And submission is what authoritarian regimes thrive on. We must not allow ourselves to be deceived into thinking that these actions are a necessary evil in the fight against crime. This is not about gangs or guns—it is about consolidating power.

Lesotho is at a crossroads. If we do not stand up against these abuses now, we will soon find that we no longer live in a democracy. We will find that our freedoms have been stripped away, one by one, until there is nothing left. Today it is gang members and herdsmen; tomorrow, it could be political activists, journalists, or ordinary Basotho who dare to speak out against the government.

The Basotho National Party stands firm in its opposition to these atrocities. We demand that those responsible for the torture and killings be brought to justice. We call on the Prime Minister to publicly denounce these actions and affirm his commitment to the rule of law. Our nation cannot afford to be led by fear. We cannot afford to let violence be normalized as a tool of governance.

This is not just about the victims of torture and killings—it is about the future of Lesotho. Will we be a nation that upholds the dig-

nity of every citizen, or will we descend into a dark era of authoritarian rule? The choice is ours, and we must choose wisely.

Let us remember: silence in the face of injustice is complicity. And today, more than ever, we must raise our voices, not just for the victims of Operation Hard Fist, but for all Basotho. We must resist the creeping tide of authoritarianism before it is too late. We must stand firm in our commitment to democracy, human rights, and the rule of law.

If we do not, the torture and killings we see today will be just the beginning.

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Mr. Apichart Sudswang, Honorary Consul General of Lesotho to Thailand, and Dr. Avasada Pocmontri, Chairman of the Thai Youth Khon Project to Africa, have announced an exciting cultural collaboration. The Consulate of the Kingdom of Lesotho in Thailand, along with the Thai Children Love Khon group, will join in the celebration of the Kingdom of Lesotho's 200th anniversary in Maseru next month.

In honor of this milestone and to strengthen cultural ties between the two nations, the Consulate is proud to present a special Thai Youth Khon cultural performance. Khon, considered the crown jewel of Thai performing arts, is a prestigious masked dance and Thailand's highest form of theatrical expression.

Renowned Khon masters Ajarn Somchai Kulkerd and Ajarn Sasasorn Plengpanich will travel to Maseru with 11 talented Thai children, aged between 11 and 16, to perform the "Royal Battle" episode from the Ramayana. Known in Thai as "Phra Ram Racha Thap Saprayut Thotsakan," the story showcases the epic battle between Phra Ram, Phra Lakshmana, and their army of monkeys against Thotsakan, the giant lord of Lanka. The performance is celebrated for its intricate dance and combat movements, with vibrant costumes that symbolize the prosperity and unity of the kingdom.

Thai Youth Performers Bring Royal Khon Dance to Lesotho for 200th Anniversary Celebration



Key roles include Marco Sila Wattanakul as Thotsakan and Miss Praepim Piphatsawat, the U14 Women's Wakeboard World Champion, as Hanuman. Lucky Yosapatara Sudswang, a former children's TV presenter, will portray Chaiyampawan Khanthongling, the flag bearer who leads Phra Ram's army to victory.

This historic performance is made possible with the support of the Tourism Authority of Thailand, the Department of South Asia, Middle East and Africa, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Thailand, the Electricity Generating Authority of Thailand, and Lesotho's Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Relations.

The Khon performance will be held at the Setsoto Stadium in Maseru on the morning of October 4, 2024. All Basotho are warmly invited to witness and be part of this remarkable cultural exchange.



