



Basotho National Party

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The Secretary General
African National Congress
Luthuli House,
54 Pixley, Ka Isaka Seme street
Johannesburg 2001
The Republic of South Africa

Dear Sir,

Re: The Passing Away of Comrade Tito Mboweni.

The Basotho National Party (BNP) has learned with great sadness of the untimely passing away after a short illness this Sunday 13th October 2024 of South Africa's first democratic republic's labor minister and later first black central bank governor and minister of finance Mr Tito Mboweni. Our party first made intimate acquaintance of the late minister in the 1980s, at the height of the so-called Total Strategy of the white supremacist apartheid regime of destabilization of the subcontinent's black independent progressive governments, in pursuit of anti-apartheid activists and members and operatives of the liberation movements. Despite its unenviable geographic position of being totally encircled by this South Africa with its "colonialism of a special type", and often described as being "in the belly of the apartheid monster"; Lesotho under BNP rule boldly bore the brunt of this destabilization for outrightly condemning the draconic actions of a regime declared "a crime against humanity" by the United Nations, on international fora like the Southern Africa Development Coordinating Conference (forerunner of current SADC) the Non-Alignment Movement, the Organization Of African Unity (forerunner of current AU) and the UN; but also hosting apartheid refugees and assimilating them into its community and affording them "citizenship" and government-funded education, passport, as well as enjoyment of all the benefits due to an average citizen.

It was during those days that the young Tito, having "skipped the Country" which was on fire, enrolled for basic degree in political science and economics at our proud National University of Lesotho, which he later fondly recalled as "not just normal university but also a political school par excellence", at a time when it was one of the eminent centers of excellence of progressive scholarship hosting a galaxy of cosmopolitan faculty and studentry; graduating in 1985. As a student activist, he was at the very forefront of highlighting the excesses of the apartheid regime, and its place in the constellation of the vestiges of colonialism and imperialism, in the region and in Lesotho in particular; whose regional destabilization cocktail included economic sanctions, border blockades, mass expulsion of migrant workers, manipulation and violation of

long-standing regional economic compacts like SACU, surreptitious bombing of activists, use of surrogate armies like the LLA in Lesotho and RENAMO in Mozambique, and full-blown military raids like those on Maseru in December 1982 and December 1985. Such was his own level of involvement that he was the flag bearer at the mass burial of the 30 South Africans killed in the 1982 South African Defence Force raid on Maseru, which also killed some 12 Basotho.

In these days of rapid effluxion of alignment of forces and profound challenge to a sense of national identity as Lesotho itself was undergoing the strain of prolonged testing of government legitimacy including “guerilla” onslaught; Tito was also keenly engrossed in appreciation of the fabric of Basotho as a community of unique values. His bachelor's dissertation research took him into the depth of the highlands where he lived at the grassroots of our culture for weeks, and his attachment to Lesotho saw him united in holy matrimony to his Lesotho beauty, the broadcaster ‘Mamokotlana Molise, of Roma.

Tito was one of the rare species of liberation struggle cadres who even in his student days made a deliberate effort to internalize the intertwined evolution of Lesotho and South African, the strengthening of their bonds in the trenches of the struggles for liberation from British imperialism and apartheid colonialism, and therefore the ideal of a shared common future of prosperity. Even as a student he spent huge amounts of time at the office of the BNP prime minister the late Morena Leabua Jonathan with the then Prime Minister personal secretary and later BNP secretary-general Morena Ranthomeng Matete; which was critical in strengthening the relations between the BNP and the African National Congress (ANC) which remain strong to this day. This kind of intimacy with the genetics of the compact between Lesotho and the South African struggle certainly went a long way towards construction of a positive tapestry of post-apartheid Lesotho and South Africa relations whose ideal harvest we are yet to fully realize.

Tito will be massively missed in our milieu for his abiding love for our country and its people and his Alma mater the NUL, always sharing fond memories in biographic interviews and social media in a quintessentially ambassadorial fashion. Whereas his undying view of Lesotho as a second home and of Basotho as deserving to be given a human, humane and even grateful treatment by the bearers of state power within the Republic, was arguably never exploited by successive governments in Maseru to craft symbiotic diplomacy since demise of apartheid and onset of constitutional democracy in our context; his untimely departure still leaves a gigantic void where for most of his ruling compatriots who once passed through this patch of land in difficult times, in dealing with us the memories of the old are often dispatched to oblivion. Somehow as he soared to ever greater heights in journeying through the expanses of life, from construction of a world class workplace relations equity in legislation and lasting institution that have to the test of seasons in his homeland, to peace building at the continental level where he met his end while serving as chairperson of the Africa Peace Fund; we also felt proud to have partaken of his cultivation, and shared in his feats. We join the family, friends, colleagues, comrades and proteges of this legend in celebrating his exemplary life the way we see ourselves in his humble demeanor and integrity of his exertions. May his soul rest in eternal peace. Hamba khahle, Qhawe. Robala ka khotso mokhoenyan'a Manonyane.



Hon. Machesetsa Mofomobe (MP)
Basotho National Party Leader

