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T H A R I

LEC "Shadow CEO" Exposed

By Staff Reporter

The parliamentary Public Accounts Committee (PAC) has once again turned its spotlight on the troubled Lesotho Electricity Company (LEC), where explosive allegations continue to expose what appears to be a pattern of overreach and power abuse at the top levels of the Ministry of Energy.

This week's hearing saw the suspended LEC Managing Director, Mr. Mohlomi Seitlheko, deliver bombshell testimony that directly implicates the Ministry's Principal Secretary, Mr. Tankiso Phapano, in illegal interference with the operations of the parastatal.

Seitlheko told the PAC that Phapano unilaterally attempted to dismiss the LREEAP (Lesotho Renewable Energy and Energy Access Project) Project Manager, Mr. Mokuoane, despite having no legal authority to do so.

"The PS is not the accounting officer of LEC. He cannot hire or fire staff. Yet he insisted on dismissing Mr. Mokuoane," Seitlheko testified.

Even more disturbing, according to Seitlheko, is that Phapano successfully blocked Mr. Mokuoane's salary from January this year to date, effectively starving the project lead of income for nearly six months,



LEC acting Managing Director, Nathaniel Maphathe

without any disciplinary hearing or due process. "We've Let a Non-Accounting Officer Run LEC"

Hon. Dr. Moroke, expressed dismay at the situation, saying it was tantamount to letting someone outside the structure of LEC run its affairs unchecked.

"You are telling us that someone who is not the accounting officer of LEC, Mr. Phapano, is calling the shots? We've effectively surrendered control of the utility to him," Dr. Moroke remarked.

In his defense, Seitlheko revealed that he sought intervention from several authorities, including the former LEC board chairman Mr. Nathanael Maphathe, Energy Minister Hon. Mohlomi Moleko, and the Ministry of Finance. However,

he said his concerns were met with silence.

This revelation has amplified public scrutiny of Mr. Phapano, who has already been linked to irregular conduct and governance breaches in the controversial Ha Belo Hydropower Project.

FLASHBACK: The Ha Belo Scandal

Earlier this year, the Lesotho Tribune exposed how Phapano's office bypassed procurement procedures and undermined project governance in the Ha Belo project, a strategic energy infrastructure initiative funded through public-private partnerships and foreign aid. In that case, insiders alleged that Phapano manipulated internal processes to favor certain contractors and blocked attempts to enforce accountability mechanisms. In one striking

instance, the PS allegedly instructed project officials to withhold technical reports from development partners, raising serious concerns about transparency and potential donor withdrawal. Critics at the time warned that Phapano's actions risked turning Ha Belo into a "white elephant"

Systemic Weakness or Deliberate Capture?

This week's revelations suggest that the Ha Belo episode was not an isolated incident but rather a symptom of a broader pattern of institutional capture at the Ministry of Energy. By blocking salaries, attempting dismissals, and undermining the chain of command, Phapano is accused of acting like a "shadow CEO" of LEC, without any statutory accountability.

Deafening Silence from the Ministry

So far, neither Phapano nor Minister Moleko has publicly responded to the claims. The Ministry of Energy did not return requests for comment. The Ministry of Finance, which Lesotho Tribune also quizzed, has also remained tight-lipped. With the PAC hearings ongoing, lawmakers have vowed to press for answers, with some suggesting that Phapano should be summoned before the committee to explain his role in both the LREEAP and Ha Belo controversies.



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SAPS forensic and ballistic expect testifies in Mahao's case

By: Tholoana Lesenya

MASERU

In the High Court of Lesotho this week, before Judge Justice Charles Hungwe, a serious atmosphere was felt as South African forensic and ballistic expert, Lieutenant-Colonel Christian Mangena, presented the clothes of murdered former army commander, Maaparankoe Mahao, as exhibits in his ongoing murder trial.

Lt-Col Mangena's alarming testimony baldly opposed the version given by the accused soldiers, additionally tightening the lasso around them. Mangena, a veteran officer with the South African Police Service (SAPS), told the court that Mahao was shot three times in the right arm at close range, with bullets tearing through his arm and upper body. "The wounds on the deceased's right arm make it impossible for him to have stretched the arm to aim or point a firearm," Mangena stated to the court. The accused have maintained they shot Mahao after he allegedly pointed a firearm at them while opposing arrest. But Mangena dismissed this story as scientifically

questionable based on ballistic and forensic evidence. He testified that all signs suggest Mahao was shot while still seated in his vehicle, and that the driver's side window was closed at the time of the shooting. Mangena further shown that Mahao was most likely shot with high-calibre rifles, possibly an AK-47 or a Galil, based on the nature of the gunshot wounds. He stated that the ballistic investigation was conducted at the SAPS forensic laboratory in Bloemfontein on the 8th day of July 2015, following an order from the Southern African Development Community (SADC). Mangena similarly demonstrated in court how the bullet holes in Mahao's clothes corresponded with the injuries noted in the post-mortem report, additionally emphasizing his conclusion that the deceased could not have posed any threat to the soldiers. In his evidence, Mangena was not able to explain how the bullets failed to hit the two passengers who were supposed to have been with the deceased during the time of shooting.

However, the defense has aggressively disputed the

testimony of Lt-Col Mangena grasping on this gap, arguing it supported their allegation that the two supposed passengers were never in the car, an argument that, if accepted by the court could dwindle the crown's case, which is the center in part on their evidence of what came to light during the shooting. Cross-examination became a bit tense when Mangena was asked whether it was reasonable for the soldiers to shoot at a suspect supposedly refusing arrest and armed. He approved that it could be, depending on the circumstances. The defense upholds that Mahao, as a trained soldier armed with a firearm, posed a harmful threat and that disarming him was the

only possible route. Advocate Silas Ratau, one of the defence lawyers, put it to Lt-Col Mangena that the accused had no intention to kill Mahao, arguing that this was evident in their decision to shoot him only in the arm that was allegedly holding a firearm, rather than aiming vital organs such as the head or chest. Mangena also protected emergency responders who had cut Mahao's clothes with scissors, saying there was nothing unusual about the practice during trauma care. Conversely, he declined to comment on whether washing Mahao's clothes afterwards was principled or right in a forensic context. Cross-examination was conducted by Advocate Silas Ratau, Attorney Qhalehang Letsika, and Advocate Napo Mafaesa.





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Lesotho Tribune

By: Malefo Thinyane

Street vendors operating near the National University of Lesotho (NUL) in Roma have appealed to Prime Minister Sam Matekane to suspend their looming eviction, citing the government's recent declaration of a national state of emergency on youth unemployment.

The vendors, who are members of the Roma Street Vendors Association, say they have been ordered to vacate their operating area by the 30th of June 2025 to make way for planned road rehabilitation works.

However, in a press conference held in Roma this week, the association's chairperson Thabiso Mafoso urged the Prime Minister to intervene and delay the eviction, arguing that the timing is inconsistent with the government's own acknowledgement that youth unemployment is a national crisis.

"We are grateful that the

BUSINESS & ECONOMY

Roma Street Vendors Appeal to PM Matekane to Halt Eviction



government has recognised youth unemployment as a crisis and declared a state of emergency," Mr Mafoso said. "It is our understanding that during a state of emergency, certain decisions can be suspended. We therefore hope the government will reconsider the directive to remove us by the end of this month." According to Mr Mafoso, the eviction order was issued by the Ministry of Local Government, Chieftainship, Home Affairs and Police, but vendors have not been given an alternative site to relocate to. Instead, they were only informed that they would be moved to a new location "at a later stage."

"Immediate eviction without a clear relocation plan

will have severe economic consequences," he said.

"According to our records, there are 350 vendors operating along this stretch, supporting around 850 people including employees and their families. Most of these vendors are young people. Evicting them now would only worsen unemployment and deepen poverty."

Mr Mafoso also highlighted the positive economic and social impact of vendors' presence near the university. "Our businesses contribute to local economic growth and help improve safety around the university campus and the broader Roma community. We are not against development, and we support infrastructure upgrades, but we ask

that they be implemented with dignity and fairness." He added that removing vendors without a clear plan would not only disrupt livelihoods, but also undermine the spirit of the youth emergency declaration, which calls for inclusive and urgent responses to youth-related challenges. "We plead with you, Ntate Matekane, to act with compassion and delay the eviction until a suitable relocation plan is in place. If not, many families will face hunger and increased hardship."

Prime Minister Matekane declared the state of emergency on youth unemployment last week during the National Youth Dialogue held at Manthabiseng Convention Centre in Maseru. The announcement followed sustained pressure from youth organisations and political party youth leagues, who have long demanded urgent, meaningful action to address joblessness and economic exclusion.

The vendors now argue that any action that threatens youth livelihoods, such as mass evictions without alternatives, directly contradicts the goals of the emergency declaration.

As of Thursday, the Prime Minister's office had not issued a formal response to the Roma vendors' appeal.

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Desktop Analysis How Vodacom, Econet and Starlink Stack Up in Lesotho's Internet Battle

By: Staff Reporter

In a country where digital connectivity is becoming as essential as electricity and running water, the choice of internet provider matters more than ever. Lesotho's three main internet options; Vodacom Lesotho, Econet Telecom Lesotho and the newcomer Starlink, offer sharply different experiences when it comes to coverage, speed and cost. Here's how they compare.

Coverage: Who Reaches More People?

When it comes to physical reach, Vodacom and Econet dominate. Both offer mobile network coverage across Lesotho's urban and rural areas using 4G and, in some spots, 3G technology. Their networks are strongest in Maseru and other urban centres, but performance drops off in the mountains and deep rural zones.

That's where Starlink flips the script. Unlike cell towers, Starlink uses satellites, which means it provides internet access anywhere in Lesotho...even in areas where there's no cell service at all. It's an attractive option for rural schools [in theory], mines and remote clinics that have been "left behind" by traditional infrastructure.

Coverage Winner:

- Starlink for remote access
- Vodacom/Econet for mobile users in urban areas

Speed: Who's Fastest Online?

In terms of raw internet speed, Starlink easily leads the pack. Its satellite system delivers download speeds ranging from 50 to



200* Mbps, with upload speeds up to 40 Mbps. That's more than enough for HD streaming, video conferencing, or running an online business, even in a village.

Vodacom and Econet are no slouches either. On 4G connections, users can expect 10–35** Mbps download speeds, fine for browsing, social media and even YouTube. But their performance can vary depending on congestion, signal strength and network infrastructure.

One issue with Starlink, though, is latency. While Starlink's 20–50ms latency is impressive for satellite internet, it's still slightly higher than Vodacom and Econet's typical 30–60ms on 4G networks, something gamers and real-time streamers may notice.

Speed Winner:

- Starlink overall
- Vodacom/Econet for mobile speed on the go

Cost: Who's Easiest on the Wallet?

This is where things get interesting and where Starlink's biggest downside lies [see our flash poll on

X and Facebook]. Unlike Vodacom and Econet, which let users buy small data bundles starting from LSL 20*** for 1GB, Starlink charges a flat monthly fee of LSL 1,200. On top of that, users need to pay around LSL 7,000 for the Starlink kit, which includes the satellite dish and router.

In contrast, Vodacom and Econet offer flexible plans, including 10GB for about LSL 300 and unlimited for LSL 850–900. That's much more affordable for casual users, students and anyone using internet on their phone.

So while Starlink offers unlimited high-speed access, it's best suited to users who really need it, like small businesses, institutions, or households that rely on the internet heavily.

Cost Winner:

- Vodacom & Econet for budget users
- Starlink for high-data users willing to pay

So, Which Provider Should You Choose?

Need
Best Option
Reliable urban internet

Vodacom or Econet
Remote location access
Starlink
High-speed and unlimited use
Starlink
Budget-friendly mobile data
Vodacom/Econet
In short, Vodacom and Econet are still the go-to options for most Basotho, especially those living in towns or using mobile data casually. They offer affordable packages, reliable performance and easy top-up options.

But if you're in the mountains, run a business from a rural area, or need constant, unlimited access to fast internet, Starlink is worth the upfront cost.

The Bigger Picture

As Lesotho looks to bridge its digital divide, the competition between these providers could be a turning point. Vodacom and Econet need to invest more in rural infrastructure and expand fiber networks. Starlink, meanwhile, must find ways to make its service more affordable if it wants to move beyond niche adoption.

For now, it's a question of priorities, cost, speed, or coverage. Each provider brings something different to the table. The real winner? That depends on what you need the internet for. We will test out Starlink internet in July at our own cost and will provide a fair comparison.

*based on data from Botswana users

**author established

***average price for weekly bundles on both Vodacom and Econet

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Send tips or corrections to editor@lesothotribune.co.ls



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Lesotho Tribune

By: Staff Reporter

A shocking new report by the World Health Organization (WHO) has exposed how the global tobacco industry has spent decades deceiving the public, distorting science, and interfering in life-saving policy efforts, while millions have died from tobacco-related illnesses.

The WHO Report on the Global Tobacco Epidemic, 2025 is a damning indictment of the tobacco industry's tactics, old and new, and reveals how companies have aggressively fought regulation, misled consumers, and hijacked public health language to maintain profits at the expense of human lives.

ESG Lens

WHO Report Reveals Decades of Deception and Interference by Tobacco Companies



A History of Lies, Now Repackaged
According to the WHO report, the industry's methods haven't changed much in over 50 years. What has changed is the packaging, literally and figuratively.

While the public health world has long battled the spread of combustible tobacco products, the new front in the fight includes e-cigarettes, vapes, and heated tobacco products (HTPs). These newer devices are now being

marketed as "harm reduction tools" but health experts say that claim is largely a smoke-screen.

The Lies They Told
The WHO report outlines five major falsehoods that have shaped

Continues in page 10

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public perception and delayed effective regulation:

1. “Smoking Isn’t Addictive”

- In the 1990s, tobacco CEOs testified before the U.S. Congress denying nicotine’s addictiveness, even as internal documents confirmed they knew the opposite.

2. “Light and Mild Cigarettes Are Safer”

- Brands like Marlboro Light and Benson & Hedges Mild were marketed as “less harmful,” despite the fact that smokers inhaled more deeply or smoked more to compensate.

3. “Second-hand Smoke Isn’t Dangerous”

- Through front groups like the Center for Indoor Air Research, the industry worked to discredit findings that passive smoking causes cancer and heart disease.

4. “Plain Packaging Encourages Smuggling”

- Tobacco companies lobbied hard against plain packaging laws, claiming they would fuel illicit trade. However, courts and researchers, including the WHO, found that plain packaging actually aids enforcement.

5. “E-Cigarettes Are Harmless”

- Promoted as reduced-risk products, e-cigarettes and HTPs have become a gateway for youth nicotine addiction, with flavours like mango, bubblegum, and strawberry directly appealing to minors.

Delay, Deny, Distort
The WHO report describes a coordinated, global campaign by tobacco multinationals to disrupt and discredit tobacco control measures. Their tactics include:

- Funding biased research: Industry-sponsored studies are often used to challenge peer-reviewed science. Ayo-Yusuf points to paid articles, such as one published on TimesLIVE in November 2024 and another on News24 in January 2025, which promoted industry-funded findings claiming electronic nicotine devices are safe.

- Media manipulation: Sponsored content, disguised as legitimate journalism, is increasingly used to shape public opinion.

- Illicit trade myths: The report says the industry exaggerates the size of the illicit market to push against tax hikes and plain packaging. In South Africa, research in the South African Crime Quarterly (2023) re-

vealed that much of the illicit trade is domestic, driven by local manufacturers evading tax, not foreign smugglers.

- Legal intimidation: Multinationals have repeatedly threatened low- and middle-income countries with costly lawsuits to block regulation.

- Exploiting legal loopholes: For example, classifying heated tobacco as “smokeless” to dodge regulatory frameworks intended for traditional cigarettes.

Where There’s Smoke: New Products, Same Old Harm

While some e-cigarette liquids do not contain nicotine, many do, and often at high concentrations. The South African government’s draft tobacco bill already includes these products under “electronic delivery systems” and “tobacco devices.” Despite this, the industry continues to claim they’re harmless.

But the evidence says otherwise. E-cigarettes still contain addictive substances, and the added chemicals, especially in flavoured products, pose real risks, particularly for children and adolescents.

A Call for Accountability

Dr. Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, WHO Director-General, didn’t

mince words:

“The tobacco industry profits from addiction and death. Countries must reject partnerships with these companies and implement proven measures like plain packaging and higher taxes.”

The WHO urges governments to ramp up enforcement of its MPOWER strategy, which includes:

- Monitoring tobacco use
- Protecting people from smoke
- Offering help to quit
- Warning about the dangers
- Enforcing bans on advertising
- Raising taxes

What’s Next for Lesotho and the Region?

As more African countries consider stricter tobacco legislation, the region may become a new battleground for industry influence.

With smoking rates declining in high-income countries, Africa is increasingly seen as the “next frontier” by tobacco multinationals. Bottom line?

Tobacco giants are not adapting for public good, they’re pivoting to protect profits. And unless governments act boldly, it’s ordinary people, especially young people, who will pay the price.

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Standard Lesotho Bank Partners with XPORT to Open China Trade Gateway for Basotho Businesses

By: Staff Reporter

Standard Lesotho Bank (SLB) has announced a strategic partnership with local trade advisory firm XPORT, signaling a concerted effort to integrate Basotho enterprises into global supply chains, with a particular focus on China's vast manufacturing ecosystem.

At the heart of this collaboration is the recently concluded China Sourcing & Global Trade Symposium, an initiative aimed at demystifying global procurement for local entrepreneurs and positioning them to source directly from Chinese manufacturers. Organised in partnership with XPORT, the symposium is designed to cut through the traditional barriers that hinder small businesses from participating meaningfully in international trade—chief among them high import costs and limited access to suppliers.

The initiative reflects a broader ambition by SLB to expand Lesotho's economic horizons and cultivate a new generation of globally competitive business leaders. "We



are not just connecting Basotho to markets—we are equipping them to compete and thrive," said Manyathela Kheleli, Brand and Marketing Manager for Communications and Sponsorships at Standard Lesotho Bank. "By opening the door to direct sourcing from the world's manufacturing powerhouse, we are helping businesses reduce costs, build resilience, and realise their full potential."

The move is underpinned by Standard Lesotho Bank's deep linkages within the Standard Bank Group, Africa's largest banking group by assets, and its relationship with the Industrial and Commercial Bank of China (ICBC)—a major shareholder in Standard Bank and the world's largest bank by total assets. This strategic positioning allows SLB to provide an integrat-

ed suite of China Trade Solutions, including tailored trade finance instruments that mitigate cross-border transaction risks and unlock working capital for importers.

In practical terms, these offerings enable Basotho businesses—many of which are traditionally underserved—to engage in international trade with the same sophistication as regional counterparts. From Letters of Credit and Supplier Finance to advisory services and procurement facilitation, SLB is positioning itself as a critical node in Lesotho's trade infrastructure.

"Our role is to lead with purpose—to break down barriers and build bridges for Basotho entrepreneurs," Kheleli noted. "With the right tools and support, there is no limit to what they can achieve. We turn possibility into oppor-

tunity for the businesses that power Lesotho's economy."

This effort comes at a time when Lesotho faces the dual challenge of diversifying its economy and fostering self-reliant enterprise development. In that context, the bank's collaboration with XPORT represents more than a conventional sponsorship. It is a signal of intent—one aimed at structurally transforming how the private sector engages with global markets.

Standard Lesotho Bank's positioning as an enabler of trade-led growth aligns with its broader mandate of inclusive finance and sustainable economic development. By anchoring local entrepreneurship in global trade flows, SLB hopes to spur job creation, innovation, and long-term economic resilience.

As the symposium concluded, the message was clear: the global market is no longer out of reach for Basotho businesses. With the right partners, tools, and ambition, Lesotho can move from the periphery of global trade to a more connected, competitive, and confident position.

Kamoli's lawyer accuses prosecution of lying

By: Tholoana Lesenya

MASERU-Advocate Letuka Molati, representing Retired Army Commander Lieutenant General Tlali Kamoli states it is not true that his client approved an operation to arrest the late Lieutenant General (Lt-Gen) Maaparankoe Mahao on the 25 th day of June 2015, rather the prosecution is using false evidence in an attempt to secure a death sentence against his client. He said this during cross-examination of Lance Corporal (L/Cpl) Ntai Mosaku who was the driver of the late Lt-Gen Mahao in an ongoing trial



against nine members of the army who are charged with the murder of Mahao. "The prosecution has submitted their Exhibit A, which alleges that that Kamoli planned Mahao's death and if found guilty, he must be sentenced to death. This they are going to prove using ten witnesses, both members of the LDF and civilians," declared Adv.

Molati. He stated that the prosecution alleges that his client used to command the army even when he was no longer LDF Commander and was based in South Africa. Adv. Molati added that it is also not true that a team that was responsible for the investigations and arrests on mutiny suspects reported to this client. Adv. Molati further added that it is also not true that Hashatsi, Sechele and Phaila regularly reported to Kamoli and took instructions from him. He put it to the witness that it is not true that Kamoli continued to command the army after his term expired.

L/Cpl Mosaku was asked about these allegation but he said he had no comment. Adv. Molati continued to argue that the operation to arrest mutiny suspects had already been introduced by then late LDF Commander Lt-Gen Khoantle Motšomotšo on the 27 th day of May 2015, before his client's return from special leave in South Africa. "Upon his arrival, Kamoli decided he was not going to interfere with the operation that General Motšomotšo had initiated," stated Adv. Molati. L/Cpl Mosaku again stated to the court that he had no knowledge of this.

LEC Announces Staggered 3% Salary Adjustment

By: Staff Reporter

MASERU

The Lesotho Electricity Corporation (LEC) has approved a 3% salary adjustment for all employees for the 2025/26 financial year, following a resolution by the Board of Directors.

In an internal memo dated 23rd June 2025, signed by Acting Managing Director Nathaniel Maphathe, staff were informed that the increase will be implemented using a staggered approach across different salary grades. The move is intended to address existing



pay disparities and ensure an equitable distribution of the adjustment. "The approved 3% increase has been distributed amongst different grades using a staggered

approach," the memo stated. "This method was adopted temporarily to manage the prevailing gaps amongst salary grades and also to ensure a fair and equitable distri-

bution of the adjustment rate."

Employees seeking further clarification on how the adjustment applies to their specific grade have been advised to contact their supervisors or the Human Resources office. Management extended gratitude to staff for their patience during the deliberation process.

This salary adjustment comes amid broader economic challenges in Lesotho, including rising living costs and stagnant wage growth in some sectors. While the increase falls below inflation expectations, LEC's staggered approach aims to balance fiscal responsibility with employee welfare.



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Lesotho Tribune

By Malefo Thinyane

The government has unveiled a new initiative aimed at strengthening Lesotho's agriculture sector and protecting smallholder farmers from climate-related shocks through the introduction of weather index-based insurance.

This effort, aligned with the goals of the second phase of the Smallholder Agriculture Development Project (SADP II), is intended to promote food security, build resilience among rural communities, and offer farmers formal tools to manage risk in the face of increasing climate variability. The initiative follows the launch of a comprehensive feasibility study, commissioned by the Ministry of Agriculture, Food Security and Nutrition in partnership with the World Food Programme (WFP). The

FARMERS CORNER

Government Unveils Plans to Introduce Agricultural Insurance for Smallholder Farmers



study was presented this week at Avani Lesotho Hotel.

According to the findings, a significant number of farmers in the districts of Mafeteng, Maseru, and Berea are willing to pay for weather index insurance to protect their crops from climate risks such as droughts and floods. These regions have experienced worsening agricultural conditions in recent years, highlighting the urgent need for practical risk management tools.

Presenting the study, Dr Moipone Letsie-Ndlovu stressed the potential of agricultural insurance, especially weather index-based products, as a game-changer in managing the impacts of climate shocks. She said the scheme would help farm-

ers absorb losses, recover quicker, and cope better with crop failures and erratic weather patterns. Dr Letsie-Ndlovu explained that while insurance offers a valuable tool, successful implementation will require overcoming several challenges, including low awareness of insurance among farmers, infrastructure gaps, and weak institutional capacity to manage such schemes. She added that broader adaptation strategies—such as improved farming practices, infrastructure development, and digital literacy—must complement insurance to make it effective.

The study assessed the feasibility of rolling out insurance and electronic voucher systems in rural communities, with a special focus on inclusion,

particularly for women and youth. It also analyzed funding models, potential partnerships, and the readiness of local institutions to scale and sustain the program. Dr Letsie-Ndlovu emphasized that farmers must be fully informed and involved in the design of these insurance products to ensure they are tailored to the specific needs and conditions of different districts. The findings reflect Lesotho's commitment to transitioning from reactive disaster relief to proactive risk management. With support from international partners and an eye on long-term sustainability, the government is optimistic that weather-based insurance will become a key pillar of its strategy to protect farmers and boost food production. As climate variability continues to threaten food systems across the country, the agricultural insurance initiative marks a promising step toward building more resilient farming communities and safeguarding rural livelihoods.

PAC Warns LEC Over Audit Obstruction

By: Seipati Matobo

Maseru

The Lesotho Electricity Company (LEC) is once again at the centre of a deepening governance crisis after revelations of unlawful procurement worth over M13 million, and fresh warnings from the Public Accounts Committee (PAC) over suspected obstruction of an ongoing forensic audit.

This week, PAC Chairperson Hon. Machabana Lemphane-Letsie cautioned LEC management against sabotaging the forensic audit by withholding key documents and information. The audit was ordered after mounting concerns over financial mismanagement and alleged irregular interference in LEC's operations.

"LEC must not sabotage the forensic audit by withholding critical information. This process is essential for uncovering the truth about how this utility has been managed," Lemphane-Letsie said during this week's proceedings.

Shocking Procurement Exposed During "Surprise" Inspection

The PAC's frustration escalated after a surprise inspection of LEC store-rooms, where members discovered 3,000 incompatible meters and keypads worth M6 million and nine transformers val-



ued at over M7 million, all allegedly procured without following proper tender procedures.

The committee heard that the meters and keypads, purchased from Landis+Gyr on June 5, 2025, and the transformers, supplied by Power Link Holdings in May, are not compatible with LEC's existing systems, and remain unused in storage.

LEC's board commitment to transparency and accountability

On May 06, LEC board of directors reaffirmed commitment to transparency and

accountability through Forensic Audit and Internal Investigation.

The statement read;

The Lesotho Electricity Company (LEC) wishes to inform the public and all stakeholders that the office of the Auditor General will lead the process of implementing forensic audit into the company.

This follows the advice of the Board of Directors to have a credible audit in line with the principles of transparency, accountability, and sound corporate governance.

On 7 March 2025, the Board of Directors of LEC passed a resolution to commission an independent forensic audit into the affairs of the Company. This decision followed growing concerns related to procurement processes, financial management, governance structures, and operational inefficiencies. The Board viewed this action as necessary and aligned its fiduciary duty to safeguard the integrity and sustainability of the Company. To facilitate an objective, independent, and transparent forensic audit process, the Board resolved to place the Managing Director and the entire executive management team on temporary suspension for a period of

three (3) months, effective from 12 March 2025. This temporary measure was adopted to ensure that the forensic process would be free of interference and would proceed with the full cooperation of all relevant stakeholders.

In parallel, and in fulfilment of its own governance obligations, the Board is undertaking a complementary internal investigation. This internal process will focus on strengthening internal accountability and is being managed within existing governance structures. The LEC Board of Directors assures all stakeholders, customers, employees, development partners, and the public that it remains firmly committed to the principles of transparency, clean governance, and institutional reform. Work in-progress will be shared periodically on both forensic audit and internal review initiatives.



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Lesotho Tribune

By NUL Innovation Hub

Khatlako Mareka, an Electronics Engineering student at the National University of Lesotho (NUL), is doing what many thought only big hospitals in rich countries could do—design a small machine to see inside the human body. His work? A low-cost Electrical Impedance Tomography (EIT) system that can make 3D images of what's hidden under your skin!

“Forget the expensive CT scans or MRI machines,” Khatlako, the student supervised by Dr Naleli Matjelo, says with a grin. “What we're building here at NUL can fit on a small space, costs less than your phone, and uses simple tools.” It works more like an X-ray machine but it's not.

So what exactly is this EIT thing?

Let's take a short science adventure.

Imagine you want to see inside an apple without cutting it open. How could you do that? Easy—you gently zap it with electricity and listen to how the signals change. Different parts of the apple—like its

SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY

NUL Student is Building a Machine That Sees Inside Your Body!



seeds, core, or skin—will affect the electricity in different ways. If you collect enough of these signals, you can figure out where the seeds are hiding—without slicing the fruit.

That, our friends, is what Electrical Impedance Tomography does. Only instead of apples, Khatlako is aiming at bodies, muscles, lungs—even babies' chests in hospitals.

But here's where it gets even cooler.

Most EIT systems you'll hear about are huge, power-hungry, expensive machines found in rich labs in Europe or America. Khatlako built his in a Lesotho lab—with an Arduino Uno, some MOSFETs, jumper wires, and tiny voltage sensors.

And wait—it gets better. Usually, medical imaging needs big heavy equipment that stays in one place. But Khatlako's design is portable. “I wanted something that can work in rural clinics where people can't afford to rush to Maseru and worse, Bloemfontein for a CT scan,” he explains. “Something you can carry, power with a small battery, and use right there in the village.” And the secret to this magic? Simplicity.

Instead of the 32 or 64 fancy electrodes used by

fancy hospitals, Khatlako used just four simple electrodes, arranged in a circle inside a tank of salty water. He sends a tiny, safe electric current into the tank through one pair of electrodes. Then the other two electrodes listen carefully for how the current changes. That tells the system what's inside the tank—maybe a plastic object simulating a tumour, or maybe just water.

Next comes the brain of the machine—the little blue Arduino board, the kind you can buy for less than M200 at any electronics shop. It reads the tiny voltages from the electrodes and sends them to a computer. The computer runs clever maths equations (using a tool called EIDORS in MATLAB) to make a 3D image of what's hiding in the tank.

And the results? Surprisingly good!

When the tank was empty, the system recorded steady, predictable voltages—what scientists call homogeneous data. But when Khatlako secretly dropped a resistive object (something that blocks electricity) into the tank, the numbers suddenly changed—what scientists call anomaly data. From this, his system could figure out where the object was, how big it was, and how much it resisted the flow of electricity.

Even better, when Khatlako reconstructed these signals into an image, it showed up on screen like a simple 3D map—the empty parts gray, the strange object darker or black depending on its properties. “We could actually see the

‘tumour’ sitting inside the tank!” he smiles.

But hold on—is this machine perfect? Not yet.

Because it only uses four electrodes and direct current (DC), the images are still blurry—not as crisp as an expensive CT scan. “To get hospital-quality images,” Khatlako admits, “you'd need more electrodes, AC currents, and better shielding from noise.” But for a prototype built on a student budget? It's astonishing.

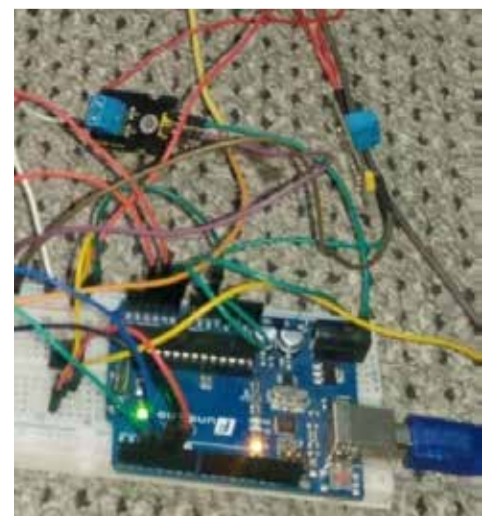
And here's the exciting part—this is just the beginning.

With funding, this could be scaled up to 16 or even 32 electrodes. It could switch to safer and clearer alternating current. The images could get sharper, detailed enough to detect lung problems, brain injuries—even monitor newborn babies breathing in hospitals.

In fact, this technology could save lives in Lesotho's far-flung clinics, where big machines are too costly or impossible to maintain.

And there's more.

Khatlako's system shows that Lesotho's own young scientists can build world-class technology in local labs. “I hope this inspires other students,” he says. “If you can dream it, you can build it—even here.”





LESOTHO
COMMUNICATIONS
AUTHORITY

TENDER- INVITATION FOR THE SUPPLY AND DELIVERY BUSINESS LAPTOPS

The Lesotho Communications Authority invites tenders from local ICT companies for supply and delivery of Business Laptops.

1. The sealed tender envelopes marked "TENDER FOR SUPPLY AND DELIVERY OF BUSINESS LAPTOPS" must be submitted on or before the 21st July 2025 at 11hr00 at the LCA Offices in the tender box located on the first floor. Late submissions shall not be accepted.
2. Opening of bid documents will be on the 21st July 2025 at 11hr15 at LCA premises. Interested bidders are invited for the bid opening. Only one representative from a bidder may attend.
3. Tender document detailing requirements of the tender is available at <http://www.lca.org.ls>
4. The tender submission should be addressed to:
The Chief Financial Officer

Lesotho Communications Authority
30 Princess Margaret Road,
Old Europa
MASERU.

For enquiries:



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LESOTHO
COMMUNICATIONS
AUTHORITY

Consultancy Services for Review of the Lesotho Communications Policy 2008 and Communications Act 2012

The Government of Lesotho approved the Lesotho Digital Transformation Strategy – Agenda 2030 in 2024 and has started implementing it. Among the priorities for the Ministry of Information, Communications, Science, Technology and Innovation (MICSTI) is the review of the Lesotho Communications Policy (2008) and the Communications Act of (2012) to align with the requirements of the digital era. The Ministry will review the Policy and the Act in collaboration with the Lesotho Communications Authority.

In this context, MICSTI requires the services of suitably qualified consultants for the "Consultancy Services for the Review of the Lesotho Communications Policy (2008) and Communications Act (2012)". The key objectives of the assignment are: a) to and review and evaluate the implementation of the Lesotho Communications Policy 2008, b) to draft Lesotho Communications Policy (2025) so that it adequately addresses the requirement of a digitally transforming market and society, c) to review the Communications Act and align it with the new Policy, and d) to prepare a draft Communications Amendment Bill.

1. The sealed tender envelopes marked "TENDER FOR CONSULTANCY SERVICES FOR THE REVIEW OF THE LESOTHO COMMUNICATIONS POLICY 2008 AND COMMUNICATIONS ACT 2012" must be submitted on or before the 21 July 2025 at 1100hrs at the LCA Offices in the tender box located on the first floor. Late submissions shall not be accepted.
2. Opening of bid documents will be on the 21 July 2025 at 1115hrs at LCA premises. Interested bidders are invited for the bid opening. Only one representative from a bidder may attend.

3. Tender document detailing requirements of the tender is available at <http://www.lca.org.ls>

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22

Lesotho Tribune

By Staff Reporter

NAIROBI,

June 25 (Reuters) - Sixteen people died during nationwide anti-government protests in Kenya on Wednesday, most of them killed by police, the head of Amnesty Kenya said, a year after deadly demonstrations against a tax bill culminated in the storming of parliament. Thousands of Kenyans took to the streets to commemorate last year's demonstrations, in which more than 60 people died, with police firing tear gas and water cannons to disperse them in the capital Nairobi, according to local media and a Reuters witness. Some protesters clashed with police, and 16 people were "verified dead as of 8:30", Amnesty Kenya's executive director Irungu Houghton told Reuters, adding

AFRICA

Sixteen deaths recorded in Kenya protests, most killed by police, Amnesty Kenya says



that the figures were verified by the global rights watchdog and the Kenya National Commission on Human Rights (KNCHR). "Most were killed by police," Houghton said, adding that at least five of the victims had been shot dead. The government-funded KNCHR earlier said eight deaths had been reported across the country, all "allegedly from gunshot wounds". "Over 400 casualties have been reported,

including demonstrators, police officers and journalists," KNCHR said in a statement shared on its official X account. The watchdog noted heavy police deployment and "allegations of excessive use of force, including rubber bullets, live ammunition and water cannons, resulting in numerous injuries". Kenyan police spokesperson Muchiri Nyaga declined to comment on the statements by Amnesty Kenya or KNCHR.

State-funded body Independent Policing Oversight Authority (IPOA) said in a statement at least 61 people were arrested during the protests. An official at the capital's main Kenyatta National Hospital said the facility had received dozens of wounded people "107 admitted, most with gunshot injuries," the source said, referring to rubber bullets and live rounds. He added that no deaths had been reported at KNH.



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Lesotho Tribune

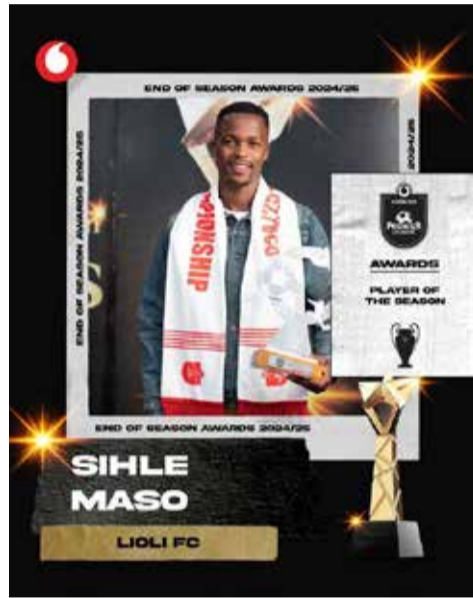
By Litšitso Letsunyane

Victory Hall, Maseru – 27 June 2025

The glitz and glamour of the Vodacom Premier League Awards returned in full force on Friday night, Lesotho's most anticipated football honours ceremony. The event celebrated the brightest stars, rising talents, and key figures who shaped the 2024/2025 Premier League season. Leading the night in dominant fashion were Lioli Football Club, the reigning champions who have now claimed back-to-back league titles. Lioli FC Lead the Way with Multiple Wins. the champions' presence was felt in nearly every major category, with Lioli being nominated in all but three categories: Top Goal Scorer, Assistant Referee of the season, and Referee of the season. At the heart of their success stood midfield maestro Sihle Maso, who walked away with two major individual accolades: Player of the Season with a cash prize of M15,000,

ARTS & SPORTS

Lioli FC Dominate 2025 Vodacom Premier League Awards



and Players' Player of the Season with a cash prize of M12,000, a total cash prize of M27,000. Maso's performances throughout the campaign were nothing short of extraordinary. He set a record by scoring in eight consecutive matches, netting 10 goals in that stretch and finishing the season with 12 goals overall. Lioli's dominance wasn't limited to the midfield. Their backline and goalkeeper also received deserved recognition: Goalkeeper of the Season went to William Huni, who outshone Matlama FC's Leluma Mofoka and LMPS FC's Nthebe Majoro, earning him M9,000. On the other hand, Defender of the Season was awarded to Mphale Mphalaole, who triumphed over Mokhele Molise (LDF FC) and Mohlomi Makhetha (Lijabatho FC) also securing a cash prize of M9,000

Mphale was also nominated for Players' Player of the Season, ultimately edged out by Maso. While Lioli dominated, Matlama FC also left their mark. Midfielder of the Season was awarded to Charlie Hlalele whose journey from the South African Premier Division (Orlando Pirates, Polokwane City, Amazulu) to Lesotho has been a remarkable story. Hlalele, who joined the league a few years ago to create a legacy at home, bagged M9,000 for his standout performances. Young Player of the Season went to 18 year old goalkeeper Leluma Mofoka, a prodigy who has already cemented his spot as Matlama's and the national team Likuen's first-choice keeper. Mofoka, who was also notably a nominee for Goalkeeper of the Season, continues to show immense promise for the future. Makara Ntatsane, captain of the national team and forward for LCS FC, clinched the Golden Boot after a phenomenal season where he scored a total of 20 goals. He received M13,500 for finishing as Top Goal Scorer, and was also among the nominees for Player of the Season, underlining his influence and consistency at the top level. Coach of the Season was

awarded to Motheo Mohapi, who guided Lioli to yet another league title. It marks Mohapi's second consecutive Coach of the Season win, earning him M12,000. However, in a surprising twist, Mohapi has since signed a two-year deal with rivals Bantu FC, signaling a massive coup for the Mafeteng giants. With a CAF A license and a proven record, Mohapi is regarded as one of Lesotho's finest tacticians. The awards night also acknowledged the contributions of the match officials: Referee of the Season went to Moeketsi Ntoa, who was also nominated last season, a testament to his consistent officiating and professionalism. Assistant Referee of the Season was awarded to Tšepo Majara, whose sharp eye and decisions on the sidelines have not gone unnoticed. The 2025 Vodacom Premier League Awards not only celebrated the champions and standout players but also highlighted the depth of talent and professionalism in Lesotho's football landscape. With emerging stars like Leluma Mofoka, seasoned campaigners like Sihle Maso and Makara Ntatsane, and elite coaches like Motheo Mohapi, the league continues to reach new heights.