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Sunday, 10 August 2025

Lesotho Tribune

www.lesothotribune.co.ls

Information Liberates

ISSN 2453-5419



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Murder Accused Tlelase Denies Role in Killings of 'Leqhashasha' and Two Others

By Tholoana Lesenya

MASERU

One of the men accused in the high-profile killings of prominent radio personality Ralikone-lo "Leqhashasha" Joki, as well as Mothibe Mothibe and Thomello Ntsane, has taken the stand to deny any involvement in the murders.

On Tuesday, Mothusi Tlelase testified in his own defence after the High Court dismissed his joint application for discharge alongside his three co-accused. Speaking before Justice Tšeliso Mokoko, Tlelase insisted he was being wrongfully implicated by state witnesses seeking to protect themselves. Tlelase told the court that he only learned of the deaths of Mothibe and Ntsane the day after the killings, from a villager in Mokema. On the night of the fatal incident, he claimed, he had been drinking at Koro-Koro with two men, Sekhobe Maama and Rapelang Chaka, who have both testified for the prosecution. According to Tlelase, Maama and Chaka had earlier sold a firearm to his co-accused, Sootho Liphoto. He alleged that the pair implicated him

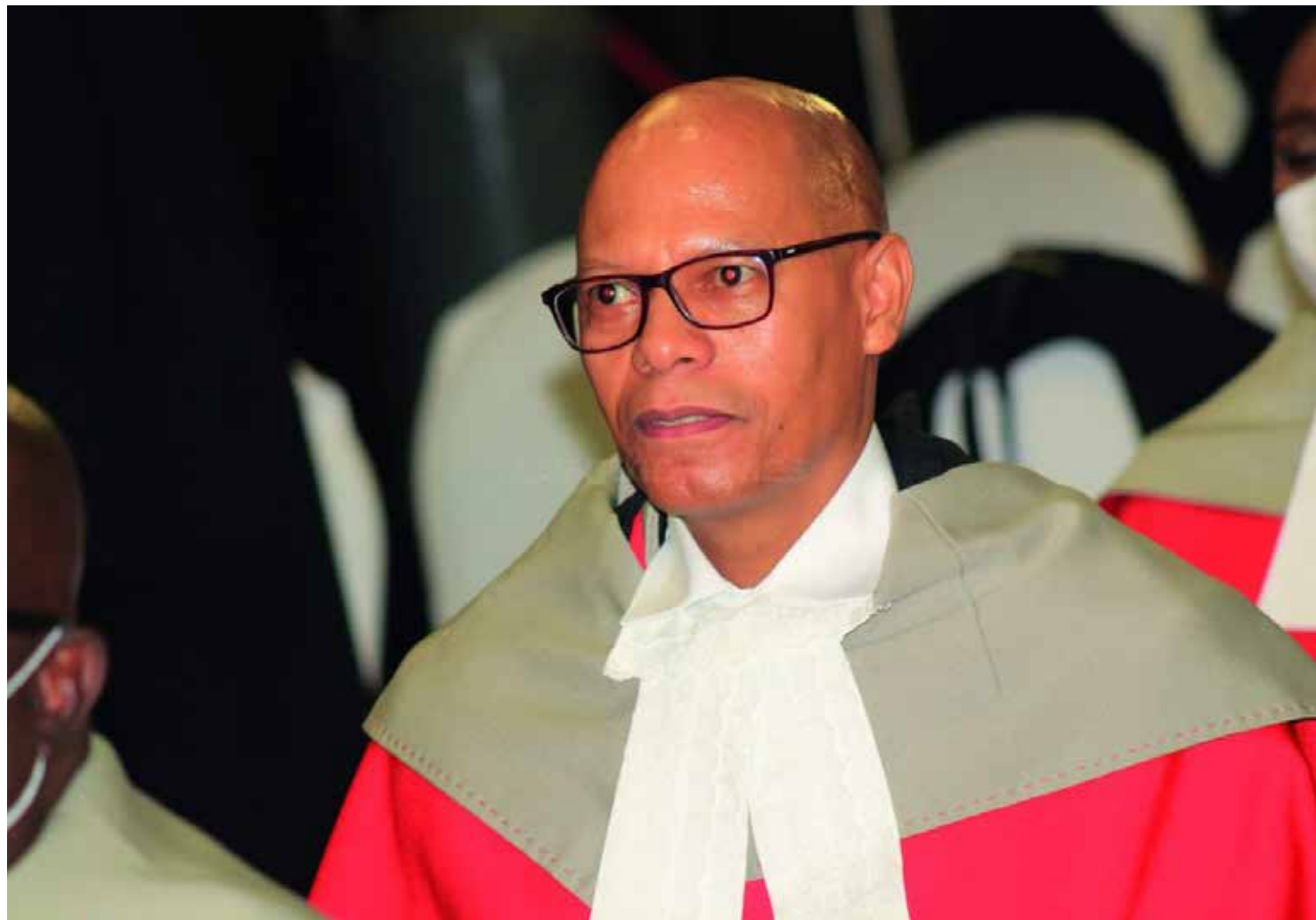
falsely to "impress the police" and distance themselves from blame. "They testified as accomplice witnesses and accepted liability for the killings of Mothibe and Ntsane," he said. He further accused another key witness, Teboho Kumi, of providing false evidence against him. Kumi testified that he had transported the alleged killers of Joki on the night of the radio personality's death. Tlelase argued that Kumi's testimony was motivated by self-interest, suggesting Kumi believed his impounded vehicle would be released if he cooperated with investigators.

Tlelase, Liphoto, and

their co-accused, Kamo Phakoe and Moabi Sesioana, face three counts of murder. Prosecutors allege that the men acted in concert to commit the killings, in violation of Section 40 (1) of the Penal Code Act No.6 of 2010, read together with Section 40 (2) and Section 26 (1) of the same Act.

The state contends that on May 14, 2023, the accused shot and killed Joki in Lower Thamae, Maseru. Six days later, on May 20, 2023, they allegedly murdered Mothibe and Ntsane in Mokema. Section 40 (1) of the Penal Code states that any person who performs an unlawful act with the intention of causing death is guilty of murder if death re-

sults from that act. Section 40 (2) prescribes the death penalty for those convicted. Section 26 (1) provides that when two or more people share a common purpose to commit an unlawful act, and in pursuing it an offence is committed, all are deemed to have committed that offence. The prosecution is led by Advocate Christopher Lephuthing, while the defence is headed by Advocate Lepeli Molapo. The case, which has gripped the nation due to Joki's prominence and the shocking nature of the killings, continues in the High Court. Further testimony from the accused and closing arguments are expected.





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Three Men in Berea Face Court over Shocking Grave Tampering Case

By Tholoana Lesenya

MASERU

Three men from Bela-Bela and Ha Letsoela in Berea appeared before the Berea Magistrate's Court on Monday, accused of disturbing a grave in what police describe as a deeply troubling incident that has unsettled the local community.

The accused, Tsietsi "Koleba" Mojakisane, 41, of Bela-Bela; Tumo Nyaka, 31; and Relutse Tefo, 24, both of Ha Letsoela, are charged with tampering with a grave. Mojakisane faces an additional charge of escaping from police custody. The trio is scheduled to return to court on August 19, 2025.

According to Inspector Thomas Chaotsane, the head of the Mapoteng Criminal Investigation Division, the case began when police received reports that a corpse had been stolen from a grave in Bela-Bela. Investigations led officers to Mojakisane's residence in Futhong, where they discovered a traditional trumpet often used in initiation schools. Inside, police allegedly found human remains, which Mojakisane admitted to exhuming from the Bela-Bela grave.

Inspector Chaotsane said police inquiries also linked Mojakisane to a hat found near the disturbed grave on the day of the incident. Following his arrest, Mojakisane allegedly led police to Nyaka and Tefo, who were also implicated in digging up the body.



Lebitla leo ho kena-kenanoeng le lona

itse Tefo Kopana Letsoela (24) oa Ha Letsoela Mapoteng, E

Tsietsi "Koleba" Mojakisane (41) oa Bela-Bela, Berea

Tumiso Nyaka (31) oa Ha Letsoela, Mapoteng, Berea

The inspector condemned the act, warning communities against cultural practices or beliefs that lead to criminal activity. "We urge people to stop digging up graves in the belief that human body parts will bring wealth," he said. "Families of the deceased should regularly inspect and maintain graves to detect and prevent such acts." Family members of the deceased expressed deep concern. Katleho Letsoela, a relative, called on the accused to reveal who sent them to carry out the act. "They must tell us the name of the so-called traditional healer who instructed them to take human remains," he said. Letsoela added that several

graves in the area had been tampered with, fueling suspicions that the accused may be involved in a broader pattern of grave desecration. Local chief, Morena Boshoane Peete, confirmed that grave tampering has been reported in Ha 'Matsoai, Moeaneng, and Bela-Bela. In one case, graves were dug up from the foot end rather than the head, and in another, suspects fled before completing the act after being chased off by dogs. Chief Peete expressed strong disapproval of the practice, particularly the involvement of some traditional healers in using human remains for rituals. "This causes great distress

to bereaved families and creates tension within the community," he said. "We expect justice to be served in this case." The matter is being prosecuted by Public Prosecutor Poka and is presided over by Magistrate Tlokotsi. The case has stirred outrage in Berea, where residents are calling for tighter security around cemeteries and harsher penalties for those who violate the sanctity of graves. As the accused await their next court appearance, community leaders and police alike are urging vigilance and an end to cultural practices that promote illegal and morally disturbing acts.



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Kamoli Testifies in Defence of Soldiers Accused of 2014 Murder

By Tholoana Lesenya

MASERU

The murder trial of two Lesotho Defence Force members accused of the 2014 killing of Lisebo Tang took a dramatic turn this week when Atlehang Kamoli, son of incarcerated Retired Army Commander Lieutenant General Tlali Kamoli, took the witness stand in their defence.

The charges stem from a shooting incident on May 9, 2014, at Ha Leqe, Maseru, in which Tang was fatally wounded and a man, Tšepo Jane, was injured. The accused, Private Selone Ratšiu and Lance Corporal Tjekane Sebolai, also face charges of attempted murder and malicious damage to property after bullets allegedly struck Jane's vehicle.

Testifying before Chief Justice Sakoane Sakoane, Kamoli recounted that on the night in question, he and his father were alerted to gunfire near their home by a neighbour, Captain Limo, who was also a member of the army. When they arrived at the scene, they found a vehicle riddled with bullet holes, splattered blood, scattered alcohol bottles, and two injured occupants, a man and a woman.

According to Kamoli,



his father instructed him to fetch a vehicle so the injured could be rushed to hospital. "The woman, who was complaining of hip pain, was helped into the back seat. The man managed to get in on his own," he said.

Accompanied by one of the accused, Private Ratšiu, Kamoli transported the injured to Makoanyane Military Hospital, leaving behind Sebolai and Corporal Kopano Matsoso, who were on duty at the scene. At the hospital, doctors immediately attended to the woman, whom Kamoli recognized as Tang, having grown up with her in Ha Leqe. He later learned that the injured man was Jane.

Kamoli told the court that during the hospital visit, Jane remarked that what had happened was "nonsensical" and expressed regret that it occurred at Kamoli's home. "I told him he should focus on getting help first," Kamoli recalled. He added that he never saw Jane again after the incident. Although he had wanted to reach out, he said he was told Jane was in Bloemfontein and feared his family's reaction given the high-profile nature of the incident and his father's military role.

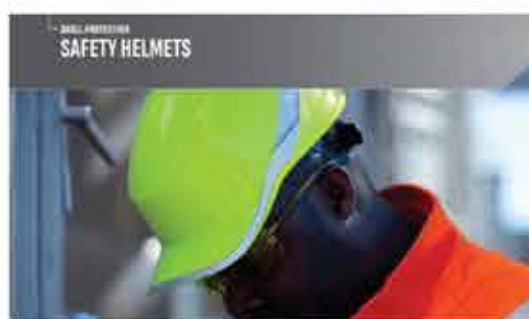
Following Kamoli's testimony, the defence called Corporal Matsoso, who was initially charged alongside the accused in 2014. Matsoso was acquitted in 2020 after the

court ruled there was no evidence linking him to the alleged offences.

The prosecution alleges that the accused soldiers fired shots at Tang and Jane, killing Tang and injuring Jane, before damaging Jane's vehicle by gunfire. The defence maintains that their actions on the night in question do not amount to criminal conduct. The case, now more than a decade in the making, continues to grip public attention due to its ties to senior military figures and the political climate at the time of the shooting.

Proceedings are set to continue before Chief Justice Sakoane, with further defense witnesses expected to testify in the coming days.

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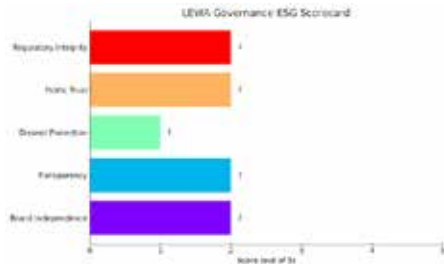


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ESG Lens

LEWA Board Firings Raise Alarms Over Governance and Independence



Masheane said, “Boards of failed companies are often full of agreeable professionals who nod along just to keep the peace.” Although he did not name anyone or refer to LEWA directly, the Minister viewed the statement as a veiled criticism of recent decisions made at the board level, particularly the earlier dismissal of chairperson Makotoko Makotoko. Moleko described Masheane’s comments as damaging to the integrity of the institution and incompatible with the standards required of those in regulatory governance. Masheane’s firing has triggered widespread debate in Lesotho. Some see it as an example of government silencing critical voices within oversight institutions. Others argue that board members must maintain discipline and unity, especially when speaking publicly about internal affairs. Regardless of where one stands, the events unfolding at LEWA have exposed several underlying issues that reflect poorly on the governance landscape. The first concern is the lack of board independence. The removal of two senior members in such a short time suggests that the board may not be free to exercise its duties without political interference. If boards are subject to swift reshuffling based on individual opinions or public statements, their ability to provide oversight is severely



weakened. Second, the incident reveals a worrying intolerance for internal dissent. Masheane did not disclose confidential information or target anyone personally. His remarks were general reflections on governance and leadership culture. Removing him from the board over such commentary sends a message that constructive criticism will not be tolerated, even when delivered respectfully and without naming anyone. Third, the absence of transparency around these decisions is damaging public trust. There has been no formal public explanation from the Ministry beyond the letters of termination. LEWA is a key regulatory body in charge of vital public utilities. The way its board is managed should meet the highest standards of openness and accountability. Fourth, there is growing concern that the boundary between ministerial oversight and overreach is becoming increasingly blurred. The Energy Minister claims to be protecting institutional integrity, but many observers see these actions as punitive and heavy-handed. A regulatory board should be a space for debate, independent

thinking, and robust decision-making, not a rubber stamp for executive preferences. Finally, the reputational risk is considerable. Public confidence in institutions like LEWA depends on the perception that decisions are made in the public interest and not under political pressure. When that confidence is lost, it becomes harder to attract capable professionals to serve on boards, and even harder to implement reforms that require trust and buy-in from multiple stakeholders. The LEWA situation speaks to a broader problem in Lesotho’s public sector governance. It raises uncomfortable questions about how appointments are made, whether integrity is truly valued, and how dissent is handled in spaces that should be grounded in transparency and collective accountability. For those applying an ESG lens, this case highlights serious deficiencies in the governance pillar. There are questions about institutional independence, freedom of expression for board members, and the overall culture of oversight within state-owned entities. These weaknesses pose long-term risks to effective regulation and investor confidence. Unless structural reforms are introduced to insulate boards from political pressure and encourage transparency, Lesotho’s efforts to build resilient, accountable public institutions will remain stalled. The events at LEWA are not isolated. They reflect a systemic fragility that needs urgent attention from both government and civil society.

By: Staff Reporter

The Lesotho Electricity and Water Authority is facing a governance crisis that is once again testing the credibility of regulatory institutions in Lesotho. In a matter of weeks, two senior board members have been dismissed by the Acting Minister of Energy, Hon. Mhloimi Moleko. The latest to be fired is board member Khotso Masheane, whose social media post was cited as the reason for his removal. On 4 August 2025, Moleko issued a termination letter to Masheane, accusing him of undermining the collective responsibility expected of board members. The letter referred specifically to a Facebook post in which Masheane reflected on why some boards succeed while others fail. He wrote that many boards have the same structures and systems, but their outcomes differ due to the people who serve on them. According to Masheane, success often depends on the courage and moral character of board members, not just their academic qualifications. In one part of the post,



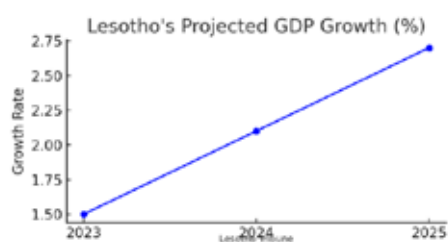
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Lesotho Tribune

By: Lesotho Tribune
Economics Desk

Maseru

August 2025
The Central Bank and Ministry of Finance say Lesotho is on the path to economic recovery. GDP is expected to grow by 2.7% in 2025. SACU revenues are up. Inflation is slowing. On paper, this looks promising. But on the streets of Ha Thetsane, Roma, and Maputsoe, many Basotho are asking the same question: where is this growth we keep hearing about?



Lesotho's economy is projected to grow, but slow GDP growth does not always translate into better living standards.

Growth vs Reality
GDP growth reflects how much the country is producing overall, not how income or jobs are distributed. For most people, the real economy is measured by the cost of

BUSINESS & ECONOMY

They Say We're Growing. But Can You Feel It?



bread, school fees, or the ability to find work. A textile worker in Maputsoe still earns the same wage while food prices climb. A taxi driver in Maseru still pays more for fuel, even when inflation is said to be 'under control'. SACU – Our Golden Crutch
Lesotho's largest source of income remains SACU receipts. In 2025, these will make up over half of all government revenue. But SACU is not guaranteed. It is like relying on a generous uncle who might not send money next month. The country is too dependent on external transfers, and every dip in SACU earnings causes panic in budget planning.

Government Revenue Composition (2025 Projection)

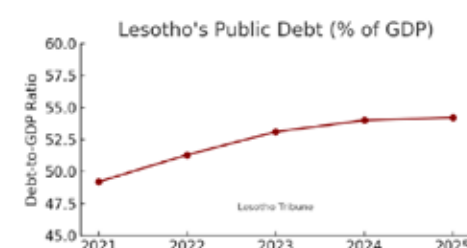


More than half of Lesotho's government revenue comes from SACU transfers.

Debt and Deficit – Quiet Killers

Lesotho's debt-to-GDP ratio is projected at 54.2% in 2025. That means for every hundred maloti the country produces, 54 maloti are owed to lenders. If this were a household, it would be like spending half your income repaying loans, leaving less for food, school, or emergencies. This is not sustainable.

Public debt has steadily grown and now exceeds 54% of national output. The Cost of Living Para-



dox

Even though inflation has slowed, it does not mean things are cheaper. Prices are just rising less rapidly. For the average household, M50 no longer buys what it did last year. Electricity costs, taxi fares, and basic gro-

ceries continue to strain pockets. Meanwhile, salaries have remained stagnant. What Should Be Done
The government must invest SACU windfalls in projects that build long-term value—roads, irrigation, technology in schools, and SME support. Spending should be transparent, audited, and measurable. Policies should empower local business, not just consultants and contractors.

A Broader View: According to the African Development Bank's 2024 Country Report, Lesotho's macroeconomic framework remains fragile but stable. The report acknowledges fiscal improvements and stronger regional trade, while cautioning about climate risks, limited job creation, and the urgent need for structural reforms. The AFDB sees opportunity in better public investment management and private sector development.

Conclusion

Lesotho may be growing on paper, but until that growth translates into jobs, public services, and better living conditions, the people will remain unconvinced. Growth must be felt, not just forecasted.

Source: Lesotho Macroeconomic Outlook – June 2025

Source: Lesotho Macroeconomic Outlook – June 2025

Source: Lesotho Macroeconomic Outlook – June 2025

114th MPC Forum: Perceptions Into Economic Reliability And Evolution

By Lemohang Botsane

The Central Bank of Lesotho (CBL) this week held the 114th Monetary Policy Committee meeting in Maseru where the Governor of the bank, Dr Maluke Letete, emphasized an uncertain global economic forecast. Dr Letete acknowledged that regardless of lingering doubts due to trade disruptions and geopolitical risks, the International Monetary Fund (IMF) has revised its global growth forecast upward to 3.0 percent for 2025, saying this modification reflects stronger-than expected trade performance and fiscal backing actions. However, he warned that inflation patterns remain uneven, with mature economies facing cost strains from housing, food and fuel while some up-and coming markets are experiencing relief on inflation, his remarks reinforcing the complicated nature of the global economic recovery and the need for careful policy management. “South African’s Economy is showing signs of resurgence. It is anticipated to accelerate in the second quarter of 2025, following a slow 0.1 percent progress in the first quarter. This boost is supplemented by a positive inflation expectation, with rates remaining within the South African Reserve Bank (SARB)’s projected range, which has allowed a policy cut rate,” he said. “Moreover, Lesotho’s economy also gained signs of recovery;



ery; it is facing a humble recovery, driven by enhanced private usage and a strong manufacturing sector, especially in textile exports to South Africa. But the recovery remains weak and defenceless to numerous threats. Key drivers of the recovery are private consumption and manufacturing sector. Weakening external demand, higher trade costs, withdrawal of donor-funded programmes and mining sector challenges serve as downside risks in Lesotho,” he added. He continued to reveal that Lesotho’s inflation rate also lost steam to 4.3 percent in June 2025, fuelled by a drop in international oil prices. “The reduction of oil prices globally contributed to decrease in inflation, enhancing the Loti against US dollar. This mitigation of inflationary pressures provides some relief to customers and businesses.” He however said while inflation is expected to

stay limited in the near term, there are still related threats associated with imported inflation, specifically from South Africa, adding that policy makers will need to closely keep an eye on these developments to ensure that inflation continues under supervision. Dr Letete’s address touched on Lesotho’s fiscal landscape, announcing that the government of Lesotho reported a fiscal loss of 4.4 percent of GDP in May 2025, a remarkable development in the country’s fiscal landscape. “Amidst steady revenue flows excluding SACU receipts, cost containment contraction played an important part in influencing the shortfall. This reduction in spending was largely driven by lowered grants to off budget agencies and lower capital investment. Net International Reserves (NIR) boosted by \$50.95 million to \$1,120.16 million as of 22 July, 2025,” he

remarked. The CBL has decided to cut the policy rate by 25 basis points to 6.75 percent per year, effective immediately. This step, the bank said, is aligned with the latest relaxation of the SARB’s policy rate and contained internal inflation. The cut is envisioned to aid economic growth by reducing interest rates while the increased NIR target will help maintain the stability of the loti-rand peg. The CBL’s adherence to wise monetary reserve management will remain vital in the need for a sovereign exchange rate policy. Dr Letete said the CLB would persist to closely supervise internal and external developments including inflation patterns, fiscal dynamics, SACU revenues and South Africa’s policy direction while the MPC will remain set to modify approach should risks to the link or price security amplify.

Passport Crisis Grips Lesotho: Senate Committee Uncovers Delays and Systemic Issues

By: Staff Reporter

Lesotho continues to grapple with a passport issuance crisis, marked by public frustration and anger. This is according to a September 2024 report by the Senate Committee on Government Assurances.

Despite assurances from the Minister of Local Government, Chieftainship, Home Affairs and Police (Home Affairs) in August 2024 that passport processing issues had been resolved, the Committee's investigation reveals a starkly different reality from what it was told.

In September 2024, the Committee visited Home Affairs to assess the situation firsthand. It expressed concern that senior Ministry officials were not present to welcome them. The Deputy Director of Home Affairs had admitted that the Ministry was still facing many challenges when issuing passports to the nation on time. Some of the key findings by the committee included the issue of insufficient funds, delays in accessing funds, a large backlog, an influx of applications and non-collection of printed passports.

Insufficient Funds

The committee found that the Home Affairs operates with inadequate budget allocations. In the 2024/25 financial year, the Ministry requested M100,000 for passport paper procurement but



received only M47,000 which it said was insufficient to address the backlog.

Delays in Accessing Funds
The Ministry continues to experience delays in accessing funds due to the late issuance of letters of credit, hindering their ability to pay suppliers and process passports.

Large Backlog
Passport processing backlogs can be dated back to 2023, with 2024 applications largely unprocessed. The Committee found that the Ministry has only 12 officers processing applications manually across the country.

Influx of Applicants
It has been identified that the Maseru District receives approximately 100 applications daily, surpassing the department's capacity to issue 50 passports per day. In 2024, the Maseru District had 13,000 passport applications.

Non-collection of Printed Passports

It was found that many citizens fail to collect their processed passports, thus exacerbating the backlog. Contributing factors to non-collection of passports, the report found, include lost mobile phones (used for notification) and citizens applying for new passports after misplacing old ones without collecting the processed ones.

Applicants' Views
The Committee engaged with Basotho applicants who expressed economic disruptions, as many are migrant labourers in South Africa, whose job opportunities are threatened by the lack of passports. Applicants also voiced frustration over the inability to obtain passports for their children and disruptions to travel plans, including education, family matters and tourism. Allegations of corruption have also surfaced due to

the difficulties in obtaining passports.

Committee Observations
The Committee observed that thousands of Basotho are being denied their rights to passports and identity documents. Logistical challenges and internal process issues further contribute to the backlog. The current production threshold of 50 passports per day is insufficient to meet demand. In addition, many passports that were produced are not being collected.

The non-issuance of identity documents compounds the passport crisis. As of 2024, the report states, the National Identity Department had a backlog of 110,000 IDs, escalating from approximately 30,000 in 2013. **Recommendations** To address the crisis, the Committee recommended:

1. Dispatching passports to community councils and Principal Chiefs' offices to ease collection.
2. Deploying police officers at various stations to curb corruption attempts.
3. Issuing lifetime Identity Documents to avoid frequent renewals and alleviate funding pressures (though the department indicated that identity changes with age, and after every 10 years, the identity is never the same for every individual).

This report underscores the urgent need for systemic reforms and increased resources to resolve the passport issuance crisis in Lesotho. The Committee therefore hope the House will adopt the report so that it can be solved.



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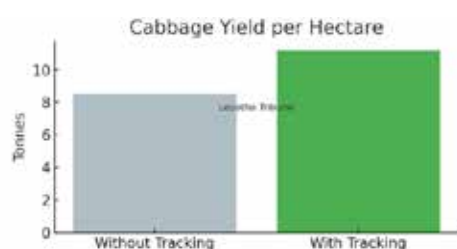
Lesotho Tribune

By Motsamai Tjakata,
Agricultural Economist

Lesotho has fertile land, strong hands, and flowing water. What it lacks is data. In 2025, farming without facts is no longer an option. Whether you grow cabbage in Mahobong or raise chickens in Mafeteng, you need data to survive. Without it, every season is a gamble. Why Data Matters to a Small Farmer

Data does not mean technology you cannot afford. It means writing things down. A cabbage farmer who records planting dates, seed numbers, and harvest volumes can tell what works.

A poultry farmer who tracks feed usage and egg output knows when something is wrong. In Kenya, farmers who kept simple records improved yields by 30 percent.



FARMERS CORNER

Farming Without Facts Is Just Guesswork: Why Lesotho Needs a Data Revolution on the Land

The High Cost of Guesswork

Many Basotho farmers plant what their neighbors plant. They do not know how much profit they make, or what their break-even price is. So they sell below cost and do not even realise it. Without data, even a good harvest can bring a loss.



Where Lesotho Stands Now
There is no real-time national crop database. Districts do not share production figures. The Ministry of Agriculture operates with delayed stats. Meanwhile, farmers make decisions based on hope, not facts.

What Needs to Happen
Every farmer should start with a notebook or phone log. Track planting dates, how much you spent, how much you harvested, and what you earned. The government should give SMS-based weather updates and link subsidies to productivity. Input programs must reward good data, not political lists.

Farmers Must Lead the Change
This is not just about government. Farmers must take control. You would not run a shop without knowing your sales and stock. Farming is no different. When you know your numbers, you make better choices. And you are more

likely to get a loan, a market, or support.

Conclusion

Data is not a luxury. It is the difference between survival and success. Lesotho cannot keep farming like it is 1980. The time to act is now. Record. Track. Plan. Grow with facts.

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WVL Continues a Fight against Child labour

By: Mamello Mochesane

Maseru

Thato Toeba has been announced as the winner of the 2025 FNB Art Prize, an accolade that recognizes exceptional contemporary artists across the African continent. Born in 1990 in Maseru, Toeba is an artist, lawyer, and social sciences researcher whose work with mixed-media photomontage and assemblage has gained increasing critical acclaim.

The jury praised Toeba for their distinctive approach, describing their artistic practice as a “quiet force” that stood out among a strong field of nominees. “Thato Toeba’s practice holds a quiet force. Their use of collage and assemblage is both deliberate and layered, allowing for a visual language that is conceptually clear and materially rich,” the jury said. “There is a distinct sense of



control in how they handle composition, texture and text, revealing a commitment to process as much as to meaning. What set Toeba apart was the clarity of vision, the formal maturity of the work and the considered pace of their trajectory. In a field of strong nominees, theirs emerged as the most resolved and coherent.”

Toeba’s artwork brings together photographs, textures, and physical materials to tell com-

plex, layered stories about identity, power, and history. Rather than presenting a single viewpoint, their work invites multiple interpretations. The images ask viewers to

slow down, look closely, and reflect more deeply.

Known for balancing their creative pursuits with a professional background in law and social sciences, Toeba embodies a multidisciplinary approach that resonates across fields. Their work is not only visually compelling but intellectually engaging, offering a nuanced examination of contemporary life through fragmented yet connected imagery. The FNB Art Prize win marks a major milestone in Toeba’s artistic journey, further solidifying their role as one of the most thoughtful and promising visual artists emerging from Southern Africa today.



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Lesotho Tribune

By: Pieter-Louis Myburgh,
investigative journalist

And one journalist risking his safety to meet two corrupt officials on a wine farm. This isn't a script for a thriller. It's what actually happened. Earlier this year, Daily Maverick's investigative team got wind of a high-level scheme involving the Independent Development Trust – a state-owned entity that spends R4-billion annually on schools and clinics. Our work showed that this budget is being wasted through dodgy tenders and skimming, resulting in the suspension of the CEO, Tebogo Malaka. When it became clear that our investigation into Malaka's illicitly acquired property portfolio was still ongoing, WhatsApp messages to chief muckraker Pieter-Louis Myburgh arrived, asking to meet and discuss "sensitive matters" of "mutual interests". These "mutual interests" came in the form of bound R200 notes in a Dior shopping bag. R60,000 in cash. And the

EDITORIAL

What's the cost of exposing a bribe? R212,000 and counting.

...“Yes, I knew it could be dangerous. But if I hadn't sat down at that table, we'd never have captured the truth on camera.”



promise of more to come. Not done in a clandestine or dark corner. Handed brazenly to our journalist in broad daylight to kill an ongoing story and to start publishing favourable stories about the IDT and its leadership. And what did we do? We didn't just walk into that trap. We consulted lawyers and advocates to ensure our work was procedurally sound. We briefed security to ensure the safety of Pieter-Louis. We planned surveillance. We rehearsed safety protocols. We prepared affidavits. We recorded everything. The operation cost us more than R200,000. Not including the adrenaline. And the worry that one of our team may be physically assaulted, or worse, if this went badly. The result? A sting operation. With

videographic evidence and a story that pulled back the velvet curtain on how far corruption goes to silence journalism. Here's the truth: Good journalism isn't free. It doesn't just happen behind a keyboard and screen. It costs time. It takes many resources. Sometimes it costs safety. But what does it give us? A fighting chance to protect our institutions that are supposed to be serving our people – our schools. Our future. News Source: Daily Mav-

erick Aside Comment In Lesotho's media landscape, there have been unsettling rumors about journalists and media houses being bribed to silence important stories that would reveal questionable deals. It's disheartening to think that some among us have accepted bribes to defend corruption. Yet, the urgency of holding people accountable remains. Too often, these crucial issues are left unspoken, drifting away as if they do not matter. The Daily Maverick has already set a powerful example. To enhance our media landscape, regain the public's trust in journalism, and affirm our commitment to accountability, we must draw inspiration from this story. Let us boldly say no to being used as instruments of corruption and embrace our role in championing truth and integrity.





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Lesotho Tribune

By Gabashane Masupha

In a world striving for equity and dignity, leadership must reflect the full spectrum of human experience including disability. While Lesotho has had decades of governance by able-bodied individuals, the time has come to embrace a new possibility: a Prime Minister living with a disability. This is not merely a symbolic gesture; it is a transformative act that can reshape national consciousness, strengthen policy and affirm that leadership knows no physical or sensory bounds.

History reminds us that disability is not a disqualifier for greatness. Winston Churchill, one of the most renowned leaders of the 20th century, lived with multiple impairments. He battled what he referred to as the “black dog” of depression likely a form of bipolar disorder and faced a speech impediment. Yet, Churchill steered Britain through World War II with unmatched resolve, his disability not an obstacle, but a testament to the strength that

diverse experiences bring to leadership. Churchill’s story is a compelling reminder: ability is not confined to the body; it is rooted in resilience, intellect and vision. A Prime Minister living with a disability in Lesotho would bring precisely those attributes into the Kingdom’s highest office. We have tried, over and over, to entrust the future of this country to leaders with no lived experience of disability.

Yet, social equity remains elusive for the approximately 46 000 Basotho living with disabilities. Why not give a new kind of leadership a chance one that understands, through lived experience, what it means to navigate systems that exclude, marginalize or patronize? Lesotho has the chance to be a continental leader by establishing policies that embrace diversity at every level of governance, starting at the top. One innovative approach would be the introduction of

“Impairment Corners” in public institutions, schools, parliament and community spaces. These would be physical and programmatic corners where disability-related information, tools and support services are available designed by and for persons with disabilities. Any Mosotho living with disability can direct such programmes, professionally and excitingly so.

Each impairment corner could offer sign language interpretation and teaching materials Provide Braille documents and assistive technology. Host monthly public awareness talks by people with various impairments. Serve as a channel for disability-inclusive policy dialogue Such corners would be a bold affirmation that accessibility is not charity it is a constitutional right. It is also time to consider mandatory sign language education in schools, government offices, and the media. Imagine having to be just convert means of



communication to body language as policy would direct. Not as an add-on, but as part of core national identity.

Disability is not a marginal experience it is a human reality, and communication must be inclusive. Lesotho must legislate sign language as one of its official languages, following the

example of countries like South Africa and Kenya. Policies must use updated, inclusive terminology such as: Persons with psychosocial disabilities, persons with visual/sensory impairments.

Remember how strong former Employment and Labour Minister, Mr Refiloe Masemene was, who everyone still praise for rising above his disability. Maybe living with disability is living with ability to be better than the abled. Mr Masemene, who was visually impaired, left his cabinet position in 2010 and was involved in charity work for communities living with disability before he passed on.

Honourable Masemene was a strong believer in the congress political ideology which he stood by from a very early point of his life. “He understood the ideology and stood by it throughout his life,” Dr Mosisili once said, adding the congress political ideology was “very different to the nationalist ideology”. Honourable Mosemene had unique abilities which if he was a Prime Minister of Lesotho, maybe Lesotho will now be a real “Har’a mafats’e le letle ke lona”.



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Lesotho Tribune

By Pheello Mosesi

The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), alongside a couple of Lesotho Ministries, launched the 2025 Human Development Report in Maseru this week. The first ever UNDP HDR was launched in 1990 and this year's phase is a continuation of the May 6th Brussel.

Themed "A matter of choice: people and possibilities on the age of artificial intelligence", the report focuses on people and developments around them and how these developments affect them in all aspects of life. The Minister of Finance and Development Planning, Dr Retselisitsoe Matlanyane, noted at the event that since the inaugural Global Human Development Re-

SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY

Moorosi Encourages Use of AI in Everyday Life



port of 1990, "Lesotho has released three Human Reports."

"The reports focus on human security, poverty and food security and the third one focuses on leveraging the power of the youth," Dr Matlanyane said.

She continued to say in 2024, the country evaluated human progress and identified technology and innovation to provide solutions for the country's way to development.

The 2024 report, Dr Matlanyane said, provides innovative, groundbreaking analysis on a wide range of critical development issues and

serves as an advocacy platform for all development stakeholders in national development processes to ensure sustainable development outcomes.

With the launch's focus pinned on engagement and inclusion on the use of Artificial Intelligence (AI), speeches and panel discussions were centred on breaking down how Basotho could be more active in the use of AI. "The 2025 Global HDR takes a people-centered approach that considers how ideas, knowledge and information are central to human development. The knowledge or information

environment is being reshaped by innovative technologies, creating new challenges, opportunities and the societal transformation driven by digitalization, including more powerful and far-reaching AI applications," Dr Matlanyane continued.

She told the attendees that the 2025 report will therefore use a human rights lens to shed light on tensions that may emerge around preserving freedom of expression or association with a fundamentally reshaped information environment, adding

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that it will also examine the implications of lack of diversity in the data used in AI algorithms. Honourable Nthathi Moorosi, the Minister Information, Communication, Science, Technology, and Innovation (MICSTI), admired the 2025 report for being a reminder that human development is fundamentally about enabling people to live a life of value.

“In a world increasingly shaped by AI, the freedom to choose comes not only as a core component for development but also as a pathway to advancing it,” Moorosi said, expressing her appreciation towards the convenience of the report which she said came at a time when AI usage is rising rapidly globally, reshaping societies and the whole world.

The Minister quoted part of the report, revealing that it says “one in every five people in the world are ready to use AI”. She said it further states that two thirds of lower developed countries expect to use AI in education, health or work within the next year.

“For us as the government of Lesotho, our call is to ensure that we get the climate ready for all citizens to access internet and services provided by it,” she asserted, indicating that the proper way to go about this is bridging



electricity and internet gaps in communities to urgently give Basotho a chance at an advanced way of doing things. “But access alone is not enough, the real divide will be in how effectively AI complements what people do.” She said.

Honourable Moorosi said the report has brought to light two sobering realities; slow progress in human development and the ever expanding inequality gap between rich and poor countries. However, she noted that the report suggest ways in which countries can take to come into play to revert these challenges. “It brings hope as it proposes four key actions among which we must

built an economy where people collaborate with AI rather than compete against it and shift from technology-driven to people-centered approaches in AI development,” she remarked. The report also advises countries and individuals to harness AI to accelerate Science and Innovation, not by replacing creativity but by improving it. Honourable Moorosi therefore encouraged responsible stakeholders to “modernise education and health systems to equip people with capabilities to thrive in an AI driven world.” The MICSTI has led the development of AI policy supported by the UNDP and other collaborating partners. In the governance pol-

icy, talent development and infrastructure are said to be emphasized while also addressing risks such as bias, data privacy, ethics and job displacement. But to manage the risks, the ministry has adopted a decentralized market driven approach to AI regulation.

The 2025 Human Development Report lays foundation for building a human institutional and regulatory capacity needed to ensure AI empowers individuals, strengthens communities and drive sustainable progress. It includes a logical framework and implementation plan that will guide Lesotho until 2030 when it will be refreshed to remain relevant.”



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Lesotho Tribune

By Staff Reporter

Maseru – Lesotho's largest private sector employer, the textile industry, continues to face sharp declines in orders and jobs despite the recent decision by the United States to impose a reduced tariff of 15% instead of the previously threatened 50%.

According to Reuters, the economic damage had already taken root before the revised tariff was announced. Several factories had suspended operations and laid off workers due to cancelled orders. The sector, which exports heavily to the U.S. under the African Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA), relies on policy certainty to attract buyers and maintain production cycles.

Lesotho's government has called for long-term trade stability and is exploring relief measures for affected workers.

Lesotho Eyes 10% Tariff as It Pushes for Better Trade Terms with U.S.

Maseru – Lesotho is lobbying the United States to further reduce tariffs on its exports to just 10%, following economic strain caused by the recent shift

in U.S. trade policy. The move comes as government officials acknowledge that even a 15% tariff remains unsustainable for Lesotho's fragile export-driven economy. Talks are ongoing, with the Ministry of Trade and Industry leading diplomatic engagements with U.S. counterparts.

According to Lesotho Tribune, Lesotho aims to position itself as a reliable supplier within the U.S. market by leveraging its political stability, production capacity and labour force. Lesotho to Host Bafana Bafana World Cup Qualifier in Bloemfontein

Bloemfontein – The national football team of Lesotho will host South Africa's Bafana Bafana at the Toyota Stadium in Bloemfontein on 5 September 2025 in a 2026 World Cup qualifying match.

This unusual arrangement follows the Confederation of African Football (CAF)'s ongoing ban on Lesotho's home stadiums, which do not meet international standards. Lesotho Football Association (LEFA) confirmed the venue change, citing logistical cooperation with South African author-

ities.

As OneFootball reports, the fixture will be crucial for both sides, as group stage points are up for grabs. Lesotho supporters in South Africa are expected to attend in large numbers. Sentebele Charity Faces Leadership Crisis as Prince Harry and Prince Seeiso Exit

London – Sentebele, the high-profile charity co-founded by Prince Harry and Prince Seeiso of Lesotho, is undergoing a period of leadership turmoil following internal conflict and a formal charity inquiry in the UK. Dr. Chandauka alleged that she was asked to step down after she "dared to blow the whistle about issues of poor governance, weak executive management, abuse of power, bullying, harassment, misogyny, misogynoir."

The Charity Commission for England and Wales started investigating Sentebele in April 2025 and concluded four months later that it found no evidence of "widespread or systemic bullying, harassment, misogyny or misogynoir." The Commission also found no



"overreach" by Prince Harry or Dr. Chandauka. Sentebele's former trustees said in a statement that they were "disheartened" by the findings and "gravely concerned for the future of the charity." The current board accepted the Commission's recommendations to improve how it handles internal disputes and defines organizational roles. Although the UK Charity Commission found no financial misconduct, several former trustees have raised concerns about the charity's governance. Prince Harry and Prince Seeiso stepped down as patrons earlier this year, leaving uncertainty about Sentebele's future in Lesotho and Botswana. The charity, known for its work supporting youth affected by HIV/AIDS, had operated in Lesotho since 2006.

Polihali Dam Project Gains Momentum in Water and Energy Development

Polihali, Mokhotlong – Construction of the Polihali Dam, part of the Lesotho Highlands Water Project Phase II, is progressing rapidly with major infrastructure already underway. The multibillion-rand project is a joint effort between Lesotho and South Africa to transfer water to the Gauteng region and boost Lesotho's energy independence through increased hydropower capacity. According to LHDA, the dam will also facilitate road, bridge and power line development in the mountainous Mokhotlong district, stimulating local economic growth and job creation.

UNDP Launches Community Digital Inclusion Model

By: Pheello Mosesi

To bridge the digital divide in Lesotho, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) has launched a Community Digital Inclusion Model by transforming school computer labs into Community Digital Learning Centres. This initiative, launched in collaboration with the Ministry of Education and Training (MoET) and the Ministry of Information, Communication, Science, Technology and Innovation (MICSTI) in Maseru this week, aims to empower underserved communities with access to digital tools, skills training and e-government services. Digital literacy is recognised as a cornerstone for building stronger economies and unified communities in today's world. Supported by the UNDP, this project aspires to position Lesotho as one of the technologically advanced countries. With the help of 40 trained community members acting as digital ambassadors, the UNDP is committed to enhancing the understanding of technological devices among Basotho and demonstrating how these tools can be beneficial. Lineo Ramabele, the Deputy Principal Secretary of MICSTI, emphasised that the primary goal of the initiative is to ensure that no Mosotho is left behind during this dig-



ital transformation era. The handover was not merely an act of charity; it symbolised the UNDP's commitment to including all Basotho, regardless of gender orientation or economic class.

In his speech, UNDP Resident Representative Taye Amssalu described the event as more than just a formality; he viewed it as a promise of inclusion. "We are handing over 55 computers and 100 tablets to enable this initiative," he stated.

He highlighted the potential changes this initiative could bring to the services that Basotho require.

"Imagine a future where Basotho can apply for Identification Cards, Death Certificates, passports and police clearances online. Consider the convenience this would offer to those living in mountainous regions," he exclaimed.

Nizam Goolam, Chief

Executive Officer of the Lesotho Communications Authority (LCA), discussed the regulatory perspective on digital inclusion. He noted that key factors include ensuring universal access to ICT infrastructure for both urban and rural communities, as well as the affordability of services and devices. Goolam confirmed that these aspects have been carefully addressed in the new project. "Expanding network coverage is vital for enhancing digital inclusion," he asserted.

The LCA has established 124 base stations across the country as part of this effort. Goolam mentioned that millions of Maloti have been spent repairing infrastructure in remote areas vulnerable to vandalism. However, he pointed out that investing in infrastructure would have been a more beneficial use of that money.

"We are setting up

computer labs in high schools and establishing Wi-Fi networks for tertiary campuses to meet the Ministry of Education halfway in fulfilling its requirements," he explained, adding that this initiative aligns perfectly with the LCA's mandate. He also highlighted that efforts are being made to convert post offices into internet hubs for rural communities.

"There was a time when letters were an efficient mode of communication, but that is no longer the case. The infrastructure of post offices can now serve as internet hubs for those communities," said Goolam. As regulators in the communications sector, the LCA has not overlooked consumer protection issues. Goolam noted that the authority has conducted campaigns aimed at raising awareness about cybersecurity and the potential risks associated with being active online.

Lesotho's Young Boxers Shine with Bronze at Inaugural African School Games



By: Litšitso Letsunyane

A warm and celebratory welcome awaited young boxers Mvukelelo Snyman and Sentsane Mokhehle on their return from Algeria after clinching bronze medals at the inaugural 2025 African School Games. The event, held from late July to early August across several Algerian cities, brought together the continent's top school-age athletes in a variety of sports, including the highly competitive discipline of boxing.

Organised under the Association of National Olympic Committees of Africa (ANOCA) and the International School

Sport Federation (ISF), the Games aimed to showcase Africa's young talent. Boxing, one of Algeria's high-profile sports, saw the host nation dominate the podium, with their men's team claiming multiple golds. Other countries like Ghana, The Gambia, Namibia, and Nigeria also made strong showings. Lesotho, however, proved that quality can outweigh quantity. Due to financial constraints, the nation's boxing delegation was limited to just two athletes Sentsane Mokhehle in the girls' 48 kg category and Mvukelelo Snyman in the boys' 57 kg category. Both fighters battled their way into the semifinals, guar-

anteeing bronze medals for the Mountain Kingdom before their campaigns came to an end. On Saturday, 8 August, the Lesotho National Olympic Committee hosted a welcome ceremony in Maseru to honour the young champions. LSRC President Baba Malephane praised the duo for keeping their promise to bring home medals, urging them to remain committed to both their sporting careers and education. LNOC President Letsatsi Ntsibolani thanked the parents for their support and encouraged the athletes to begin preparations for the Africa Youth Games 2026 in Senegal. He also announced Ni-

geria and Kenya as the hosts for the 2027 and 2029 School Games respectively.

Reflecting on her performance, Mokhehle told the media, "It is time", signalling the start of her boxing journey. Snyman expressed pride in his progress, despite sustaining an injury to his right hand during his semifinal bout.

Team coach Daemane Lengola described the trip as a valuable experience, though not without its challenges. The extreme Algerian heat, long travel distances, and first-time exposure to such conditions affected the boxers' weight. He commended chief de mission Mabokang Mdandalaza for her parental role and tireless support throughout the competition. Lengola added that Snyman's match against a Tunisian opponent was particularly satisfying, as it provided a clear benchmark of the young boxer's capabilities against top-tier competition.

For Lesotho, the two bronze medals mark a promising start on the continental stage and a strong sign that, with continued support and preparation, the nation's young athletes can punch well above their weight.



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Lesotho Tribune

By Litšitso Letsunyane

Maseru

Thato Toeba has been announced as the winner of the 2025 FNB Art Prize, an accolade that recognizes exceptional contemporary artists across the African continent. Born in 1990 in Maseru, Toeba is an artist, lawyer, and social sciences researcher whose work with mixed-media photomontage and assemblage has gained increasing critical acclaim.

The jury praised Toeba for their distinctive approach, describing their artistic practice as a “quiet force” that stood out among a strong field of nominees. “Thato Toeba’s practice holds a quiet force. Their use of collage and assemblage is both deliberate and layered, allowing for a visual language that is conceptually clear and materially rich,” the jury said. “There is a distinct sense of

ARTS & SPORTS

Thato Toeba Named 2025 FNB Art Prize Winner



control in how they handle composition, texture and text, revealing a commitment to process as much as to meaning. What set Toeba apart was the clarity of vision, the formal maturity of the work and the considered pace of their trajectory. In a field of strong nominees, theirs emerged as the most resolved and coherent.”

Toeba’s artwork brings together photographs, textures, and physical materials to tell complex, layered stories about identity, power, and history. Rather than presenting a single viewpoint, their work invites multiple interpretations. The images ask viewers to slow down, look closely,

and reflect more deeply. Known for balancing their creative pursuits with a professional background in law and social sciences, Toeba embodies a multi-disciplinary approach that resonates across fields. Their work is not only visually compelling but intellectually engaging, offering a nuanced examination of

contemporary life through fragmented yet connected imagery.

The FNB Art Prize win marks a major milestone in Toeba’s artistic journey, further solidifying their role as one of the most thoughtful and promising visual artists emerging from Southern Africa today.



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