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Basotho Face in South Africa What Palestinians Face in Israel — Mofomobe

By Seipati Matobo

Maseru

Hon. Macheset-
sa Mofomobe,
leader of the
Basotho National
Party (BNP) and a
long-standing figure in
Lesotho's political are-
na, delivered one of the
most uncompromising
speeches in recent par-
liamentary memory on
14 August 2025. Speak-
ing from the floor of
the National Assembly,
Mofomobe declared,
"Basotho face in South
Africa what Palestinians
face in Israel."

The remark drew im-
mediate attention for
its sharpness and the
weight of the com-
parison. In his view,
the way South African
authorities handle Ba-
sotho migrant workers,
traders, and travellers
mirrors the restrictive
and at times humiliat-
ing treatment Palestin-
ians encounter when
navigating Israeli-con-
trolled borders and
policies.

A Call for a Different Immigration Model

At the heart of Mo-
fomobe's speech was
a policy demand. He
urged the Government
of Lesotho to negoti-
ate a unique immigra-
tion arrangement with



South Africa, one that
reflects Lesotho's singu-
lar geographic situation.
Lesotho is not just a
neighbour to South
Africa. It is an enclave,
entirely surrounded by
its larger neighbour.
This means the move-
ment of Basotho across
the border is not occa-
sional but part of the
country's daily econom-
ic lifeline. Thousands
of Basotho cross into
South Africa every day
for work, trade, educa-

tion, and healthcare.
Currently, South Africa
issues a three-year spe-
cial permit to certain
neighbouring states.
Mofomobe argued that
this one-size-fits-all ap-
proach is inappropriate
for Lesotho.

"We are not Botswana,
we are not Namibia, we
are not Mozambique.
Our people live in a dif-
ferent reality. To subject
Basotho to the same re-
strictive permit regime
is unjust and unwork-

able," he told Lesotho
Tribune.

"South Africa cannot
continue to mistreat us
under a blanket policy
that disregards our real-
ity," he added.

Mofomobe called for
a permanent dispen-
sation that recognises
Lesotho's position. Such
a deal, he said, would
go beyond the tempo-
rary and cumbersome
permit processes and
instead allow for freer,

Continues in Page 4



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Lesotho Tribune
Information Liberates

Continued from Page 2

regulated movement that respects the deep historical, economic, and social integration of the two countries.

The Israel–Palestine Analogy

By comparing Basotho in South Africa to Palestinians under Israeli policy, Mofomobe was making more than a rhetorical flourish. He was highlighting the daily human impact of restrictive movement controls.

Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza face checkpoints, border controls, and permit requirements that often disrupt their ability to work, study, and access medical care. Mofomobe sees echoes of this in how South African immigration enforcement operates for Basotho, including the frequent deportations of those without the correct paperwork, the costs and bureaucracy of renewing permits, and the constant uncertainty for workers.

“This is not about exaggeration,” he said talking to Lesotho Tribune. “It is about naming a reality that has been normalised. If we are not careful, this will become a permanent state of subjugation for Basotho.”

Machesetsa Mofo-

mobe: A Political Profile

Machesetsa Mofo-mobe is no stranger to headline-making statements. Born in 1976, he emerged from the youth structures of the Basotho National Party in the late 1990s, quickly gaining a reputation for his outspoken style and direct language.

His political career has spanned both opposition and government roles. He served as Minister of Small Businesses, Deputy Minister of Home Affairs and Foreign Affairs, positions that placed him at the centre of migration policy, border security, and national identity issues. During his ministerial tenure, he clashed with South African officials over cross-border regulations, advocating consistently for Basotho workers' rights.

Critics have accused him of using populist tactics, but even they concede his political stamina and deep understanding of Lesotho's security and migration dynamics. Supporters see him as a fearless defender of Basotho dignity and sovereignty, a politician unafraid to confront Pretoria even when diplomatic convention advises caution. In Parliament, Mo-



fomobe is known for interventions that cut through long debates with blunt assessments. His choice of the Israel–Palestine analogy is in keeping with his record of framing domestic issues within broader global moral narratives.

Historical Context: Lesotho's Economic Dependence on South Africa

Lesotho's economic and social dependence on South Africa is rooted in history. The migrant labour system that developed in the late 19th and early 20th centuries drew tens of thousands of Basotho men into South African mines. These jobs became a central source of income for Lesotho's households.

While the mining sector has contracted in recent decades, the pattern of migration has persisted. Today, Basotho workers are found in South African farms, factories, retail stores,

and homes as domestic workers. Cross-border informal trade is also a significant survival strategy, especially for women traders.

For many Basotho, daily life is structured around this constant movement. This is why restrictive immigration rules, even if administratively routine for South Africa, can have profound consequences for Lesotho's economy and social stability.

South Africa's Stance Abroad Versus Its Policies at Home

Mofomobe's remarks also highlight a diplomatic irony. South Africa has positioned itself as a leading global voice for Palestinian rights. In 2023, it brought a case against Israel at the International Court of Justice, accusing it of violating the Genocide Convention. Pretoria's leaders have invoked South Africa's own history of apartheid to frame their moral and legal arguments.

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Four Years of Impactful Journalism

By Lesotho Tribune Deskteam

As the Lesotho Tribune marks its fourth anniversary, it is worth reflecting on the meaningful ways this news outlet has shaped public discourse, especially in a media environment where press freedom is often under pressure.

1. Unwavering Investigative Reporting

In early 2024, the Lesotho Tribune published a pivotal eight-part investigative series exposing how Mergence Investment Managers and Cadient Partners allegedly monopolized influence over the Public Officers Defined Contribution Fund. These reports triggered a legal battle when Mergence sought to gag further articles. The High Court ultimately dismissed the application, allowing the reporting to continue. This was a strong example of fearless journalism and a reminder of the Tribune's role in holding powerful actors to account.

Read Amnesty International's coverage

2. Defending Press Freedom Amid Intimidation
In April 2024, the newsroom of the Tribune became the target of harassment. Threatening notes were left on journalists' desks warning them to "stay away from pension fund issues." Amnesty International condemned these acts of intimidation, noting that such

tactics are designed to silence critical reporting. This incident showed the Tribune's commitment to reporting even when faced with direct threats.

Read Amnesty International's statement

3. Data Journalism and Analytical Perspective
The Tribune has built a reputation for its dedication to data journalism, prioritizing reporting driven by evidence rather than opinion. The publication has consistently examined policy and economic trends in a way that deepens public understanding. This

approach has positioned the Tribune as a leader in analytical reporting in Lesotho.

Visit Lesotho Tribune's data-focused stories

Why It Matters

- **Courageous Accountability:** The Tribune's reporting on the pension fund scandal highlights its watchdog role in society.

- **Defense of Press Freedom:** Resisting intimidation and continuing to publish shows resilience and commitment to truth.

- **Analytical Depth:** The use of da-

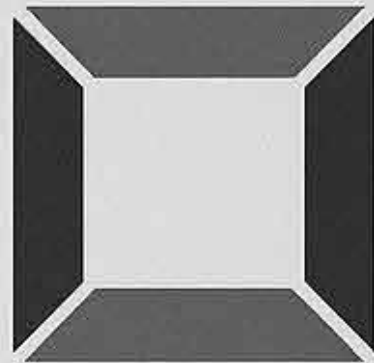
ta-driven journalism sets a higher standard for the media industry in Lesotho.

Looking Ahead

As the Lesotho Tribune celebrates four years of journalism, the challenges remain and so do the opportunities. The publication has the potential to expand its influence by fostering media literacy, amplifying marginalized voices, and using data insights to encourage reform. Its record so far suggests it will continue to be a critical player in Lesotho's democratic landscape.



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Bias Allegations Rock High Court: Recusal Bid in High-Profile Corruption Trial

By: Tholoana Lesenya

MASERU

The High Court is set for a tense hearing on August 25, 2025, when Justice 'Mabatsoeneng Hlaele will preside over an application seeking her own recusal from a high-profile corruption case. The matter involves accused persons Mophapi Khofu, Thelingoane Liotlo and Refela Holdings (Pty) Ltd, who face serious corruption charges. The application, lodged by the defence, stems from allegations of judicial bias. The accused claims that a remark allegedly made by Justice Hlaele at the outset of proceedings suggests she has already prejudged the case. According to the defence, when the matter



was called and their lawyer had introduced himself, the judge reportedly said: "Khofu and Liotlo are the ones going to prison." The defence argues that this statement goes beyond casual courtroom banter and reveals a predisposition towards a guilty verdict, even before all evidence has been presented. They contend that such a remark affirms their long-standing suspicion of partiality, which

they say has shadowed the case from the very beginning. "The statement confirms that the verdict of guilt and conviction of the accused is at the forefront of the judge's mind," the defence asserted in its application. "It demonstrates that she cannot be persuaded by the innocence of the accused or by facts that might emerge during the trial." The corruption charges at the heart of the case have drawn public attention, not only because of the accused's prominence in the business and political arenas, but also due to the wider implications for governance and the integrity of Lesotho's justice system. Allegations of bias at this level threaten to undermine public confidence in judicial proceedings, especially

in matters involving public trust and accountability. The recusal application will force the court to weigh two critical principles: the right of the accused to a fair trial before an impartial judge and the judiciary's obligation to maintain its independence in the face of allegations that may or may not be substantiated. Legal analysts note that while recusal applications are not uncommon, they are often fraught with high stakes. Granting a recusal could delay proceedings, potentially affecting witnesses, evidence presentation and the broader public interest in the swift resolution of corruption cases. Denying it, on the other hand, could open the door for appeals and claims of mistrial should the accused be convicted.

Ruling on Army Members' Discharge Application Postponed Amid Record Transcription Setback

By: Tholoana Lesenya

The much-anticipated ruling on an application for the discharge of five members of the Lesotho Defence Force (LDF) accused of killing three men in Mafeteng in 2012 has been postponed after the High Court revealed that the necessary court records are still incomplete. Presiding over the matter this week, Justice Polo Banyane informed the court that the ruling, originally scheduled for delivery on August 11, was not ready due to delays in the transcription of trial proceedings. The judge noted that she had reserved judgment in the hope that the full record would have been transcribed and compiled in time for her deliberations. However, she was informed last week that the transcrip-



tion work was less than halfway complete. "It is not possible to proceed without the complete record of proceedings," Justice Banyane said, underscoring the importance of a fully compiled transcription delivering a reasoned and accurate judgment. As a result, the court postponed the matter to September 23, 2025, expressing optimism that the record will be finalised by August 29, 2025, giving the bench sufficient time to prepare and deliver the long-awaited ruling. The five accused army

members face allegations of involvement in the fatal shooting of three men in Mafeteng in 2012. The case has been marred by lengthy delays over the years, with proceedings slowed by procedural challenges, legal arguments and the practical difficulties of managing high-profile military trials in Lesotho's justice system. The current stage of proceedings involves an application for discharge brought in terms of Section 175 of the Criminal Procedure and Evidence Act, which allows an accused to be acquitted if, at the close of the prosecution's case, the evidence is deemed insufficient to justify a conviction. If granted, the discharge would effectively bring the trial to an abrupt end for the five soldiers, sparing them from having to mount a defence. However, if denied, the case would

proceed to the next stage, with the accused called upon to testify or present their version of events. Court records and transcriptions are central to the judicial process, especially in criminal cases where the stakes are high and the facts heavily contested. Legal experts note that a judge must have a complete and accurate record to assess the credibility of witnesses, review the flow of the trial, and evaluate the legal arguments presented. For the families of the three men killed, as well as the accused soldiers, the postponement adds another chapter of waiting to an already protracted legal battle. All eyes will now be on the August 29 deadline for record completion, as it will determine whether the ruling will finally be delivered in September or pushed even further into the future.

ESG Lens

Who Builds, Who Benefits? The Case for Local Content in Construction



By: Lesotho Tribune
Reporters

Lesotho's second phase of the Lesotho Highlands Water Project (LHDA Phase II) is the largest infrastructure undertaking in the country's history. The project is expected to boost water security for South Africa while generating royalties for Lesotho. Yet, a closer look at the contracts awarded reveals a familiar pattern: Chinese state-owned enterprises and other foreign firms dominate the construction space, leaving local contractors with limited opportunities. This reality raises an important question. Are mega-projects like LHDA Phase II truly empowering Lesotho's construction sector, or are they reinforcing dependency on foreign expertise and capital?

Social Impact: Jobs and Skills Transfer

Under the ESG social lens, major projects should create tangible benefits for local communities. This means more than just temporary jobs. It requires structured skills transfer and capacity building for

Basotho workers and professionals.

In LHDA Phase II, foreign firms do employ Basotho workers, especially for unskilled and semi-skilled labour. However, the most lucrative roles remain concentrated among expatriate engineers, project managers, and specialists. This limits the development of local expertise and reduces the potential for Basotho professionals to gain high-value experience.

Local subcontracting opportunities are also scarce. Many foreign contractors prefer to bring in their own suppliers rather than integrate local companies into the value chain. As a result, local participation is often peripheral rather than central to the project. Without deliberate policies and enforcement, these projects risk becoming short-term job providers instead of engines for long-term industrial growth.

Governance: Procurement and Local Content

From a governance per-

spective, ESG requires transparent and fair procurement processes. Lesotho's public procurement rules demand competitive bidding, but critics argue that criteria often favour large foreign firms with extensive international portfolios and deep financial resources.

The absence of clear local content requirements for major projects undermines domestic industry growth. Without minimum quotas for local contractors, materials, and services, foreign firms have little incentive to engage local players beyond compliance on paper.

Contract award processes are also not always fully transparent. While legal frameworks exist, the lack of published bid evaluations fuels perceptions of bias. In some cases, foreign contractors are accused of partnering with local firms only in name, with real control and profits remaining offshore.

Economic Leakage

Economic leakage occurs when most of the money

spent on a project flows out of the country rather than circulating locally. In the context of LHDA Phase II, leakage happens when foreign firms import both skilled labour and construction materials. This deprives local suppliers of revenue and limits the multiplier effect that major public projects should have on the domestic economy. Over time, such patterns entrench dependency on foreign expertise and weaken the competitiveness of Lesotho's own construction sector.

Recommendations for Change

To align LHDA Phase II and other large projects with ESG principles, several reforms are necessary: Independent ESG Audits – Monitor contractor performance against local content and ESG commitments.

Conclusion: Building for Shared Prosperity
Foreign contractors bring valuable expertise and financing. However, without strong governance measures, the benefits to Lesotho's construction sector will remain limited. The case for local content is not about excluding foreign partners. It is about ensuring that infrastructure investment strengthens domestic capabilities. A fair balance between foreign expertise and local participation is essential if projects like LHDA Phase II are to deliver sustainable development for Lesotho.



10

Lesotho Tribune

By: Staff Reporter

To address the persistently high unemployment rate in Lesotho, the Minister of Trade and Industry implemented significant regulatory changes that effectively made business registrations nearly free. This initiative follows a bold declaration by Deputy Prime Minister Justice Nthomeng Maja-ra, who, in her capacity as acting Prime Minister, declared youth unemployment a state of emergency. Our request for information from the Ministry revealed that by July 31, almost one month post-implementation of the new licensing procedures, an impressive 3,505 businesses had been registered. This surge represents a dramatic increase compared to the typical figures the Ministry usually records. Notably, many of these newly registered enterprises fall within the supplies sector and the informal business category. Despite the impressive number of formal registrations, there is growing concern about the tangible impact of this initiative

BUSINESS & ECONOMY

Massive business registrations in Lesotho...could this translate to Lesotho's economic growth?



on the national economy. Many individuals capitalising on the opportunity for free registration, the Ministry said, are already engaged in business activities but are taking steps to formalise their operations. This brings into question whether the influx of registered businesses will genuinely contribute to sustainable economic growth and job creation. In this new landscape aimed at revitalising the business environment, the Maseru district has emerged as a leader in business registrations, amassing 2,535 of the total new businesses. Following Maseru is Leribe, with 352 registrations. This data reflects a strong commitment among Basotho to combat unemployment by creating job opportunities for themselves and their communities. However, amid these positive developments, several critical questions remain unanswered: Do these newly registered businesses possess adequate startup capital? Do the entrepreneurs have

the necessary formal business training? Are there grants or funding opportunities available to assist these businesses in overcoming the challenges posed by high unemployment rates? In response to these inquiries, the Ministry highlighted the role of the Business Enterprises Development Corporation (BEDCO), which was established to provide support for Basotho-owned businesses through formal business training. BEDCO, the Ministry stated, is prepared to fulfil its mandate of assisting both new and existing businesses. Additionally, the Ministry mentioned the Competitiveness and Financial Inclusion (CAFI) project which includes the Lesotho Enterprises Assistant Programme (LEAP). This initiative aims to support established businesses by providing essential training to business owners and aiding in the purchase of necessary supplies such as machinery needed for operation. The Ministry also has

under its programmes the Entrepreneurship Hub and Start Financing Facility designed to assist newly established businesses or active enterprises seeking to grow. This facility provides seed funding that can be used as initial capital for startups or as expansion financing for businesses already in operation.

The Ministry reassured the populace that comprehensive measures have been put in place to assist both new traders and existing business owners who are looking to formalise their businesses and expand their operations.

In a conversation with The Lesotho Tribune, one beneficiary of these newly implemented business registration processes shared their positive experience with the Ministry.

As a founder and director of his business, the beneficiary described the visit to the Ministry's offices, which were bustling with individuals waiting to formalise their businesses. Remarkably, he said he completed the registration process in about 30 minutes, experiencing no hidden costs throughout the procedure.

This anecdote highlights not only the efficiency of the new registration process but also the hopeful atmosphere surrounding the business landscape in Lesotho as entrepreneurs like this one embrace the opportunity to formalise their operations and contribute to economic growth.

Focus turned to harnessing the demographic dividend for development in Lesotho

By: Pheello Mosesi

Under the theme “Harnessing the demographic dividend in Lesotho – youth inclusion factor” the Youth Dialogue Initiative (YDI) and UNESCO commemorated the International Youth Day with some of the youth representation and members of parliament in Maseru this Tuesday.

Mope Khati, a young member of parliament, shared the difficulties of being a young parliamentarian and the obstacles they face to bring about change.

He expressed that Lesotho is currently in an era where it cannot afford to see the youth effecting change to change the scope of its development in all aspects, especially economically.

“Many countries have turned around their economic statuses during the period when they had a demographic dividend, like we do in the country. This is a period where our population has a lot of young and energetic people. We therefore have to harness this and take advantage,” said Khati.

As part of the organising committee, Tumelo Moteuli of the YDI expressed his disappointment to some of the expected guests, who he said had hoped that their presence would benefit the youth in different ways.

He said one of the objectives of the summit was to enlighten the youth on the basic issues that affect them, which



are discussed to effect change in their lives, including the breakdown of the lingo used in the parliament.

He indicated that his belief is that Basotho youth will show more interest in issues that affect them once they are enlightened and understand clearly what is discussed.

“We hope to be part of the enforcers of seeing that the SDGs are met. We are the source of change; the better the production and development of the youth in the country, the better the development of the country. I had hoped to have some of the representations from some organisations and more members of the parliament in these deliberations,” Moteuli uttered.

“Due to unemployment, which is reigning in the country, a lot of young people tend to seek answers from the use of drugs or even resort to crime to make ends meet. However, this can

be solved by clarifying to the youth that there are open platforms for them, which could help them be independent without waiting to be employed by the government, which a lot of young people have pinned their hopes on,” he added.

In the deliberations, Molefi Ntšonyane hammered and emphasised ways that the youth can tackle unemployment, which is at an alarming rate in Lesotho.

“We tend to complain about not seeing results from the government and those in leadership whereas there is such a low number of us that even vote to help effect who gets to sit in those seats of leadership,”

Ntšonyane said, adding that these are the very people that hate politics, stripping themselves off their right to vote and be part of the change makers.

A member of parliament, the Chair of Chairs and leader of the

Education, Youth and Health Cluster Committee, Mokhothu Makhalanyane, quoted that studies reveal that 65 per cent of the African continent’s population is the youth.

He said in Lesotho, the current studies found that 48.9 per cent of the population of Basotho is the youth.

“In this youth, 38 per cent form the working class while 24 per cent is unemployed. The youth need a mind-shift influence to make them aware that the change relies on them. The spirit of patriotism will help them be effective in making changes. We need more representation of the youth in parliament, if they appear in numbers, probably they will help pass bills that really speak for their interests rather than having them discussed and passed by those that are not of their class,” Makhalanyane said.

He expressed how impressed he was by the ideas he heard from young people in the country and their zeal to add value and help in the development of the country.

“Some of the young people have shared their perspectives that they are hoping to see a Lesotho where the minister of youth is someone young, befitting by merit of age and leadership attributes. They said in the same ministry they hope to see the Principal Secretary as a young person who will have to leave office as soon as they exit the young class age,” he remarked.

2023 Inmates' Escape Exposes Weaknesses in LCS System



By: Staff Reporter

Maseru

A commission of inquiry into the December 2023 escape of six inmates from the Maseru Central Correctional Institution (MCCI) has revealed a deeply troubling culture of brutality, negligence and systemic failures within the Lesotho Correctional Service (LCS). The commission's report, signed in May 2025 and released in August, details the inhumane treatment of recaptured prisoners, security lapses that facilitated the escape and leadership deficiencies that perpetuate a climate of impunity.

The report, initiated following public outcry over the escape and subsequent death of Bokang Tsoako, paints a grim picture of the Maseru prison.

When the escapees were recaptured, they faced severe beatings, with officers allegedly having attacked defenceless inmates. When the inmates sought medical help, this was either delayed or denied.

The commission also revealed unmanned towers, broken security cameras and non-existent communication systems, all of what is suspected of having created a security threat where personnel in the control room were not well trained, the key

post behind the Maximum facility was not manned, the gate was not manned and routine inspections were ignored. The commission further highlighted political appointments within the LCS, impacting staff morale and undermining meritocratic practices. Disturbingly, recruits in training also allegedly assaulted inmates during the search operation of the escapees, with over 600 inmates having reported the assaults.

This report comes at a time when the correctional system in Lesotho is under increased scrutiny. It mentions that inmates were not allowed to have what is required of them as it relates to

appropriate clothing, echoing concerns raised this week following a similar incident involving juvenile prisoners escaping, one of whom was apprehended by community members. The remaining escapees are still being sought. The community of Lesotho captured some of them but other community members are helping the escapees to run.

While the future of Lesotho's correctional system hangs in the balance, the commission recommended, among others, investigations and evaluations of identified officers in the torture of inmates, an action that will serve as a call for accountability and systemic reform.



13

Lesotho Tribune

By: Lemohang Botsane

The Ministry of Agriculture, Food Security and Nutrition ran an Agricultural Trade Fair in Maseru this week.

The Minister responsible for Agriculture, Thabo Mofosi, said the fair would serve as a crucial forum for key players in the agricultural field to come together and discover chances for expansion and development in the industry.

“The event exhibits the nation’s agricultural expertise and dedication to safeguarding food security while also underscoring the obstacles that the industry faces,” Mofosi said, adding that the fair is expected to assist alliance, creativity and partnerships among farmers, industry experts and policymakers, ultimately contributing to the pioneering of the agricultural sector.

With its target on tackling major hurdles, Mofosi said the event was set to play an important role in shaping the future of agriculture in Lesotho.

FARMERS CORNER

Mofosi continues to uplift the farming spirit in Basotho



The fair considered critical concerns facing the industry, including climate change, unstable global markets and dynamic consumer demands.

This year’s fair theme, “Strengthening Market Systems and Value Chain Linkages for Inclusive Agricultural Growth”, displayed the Ministry’s core strategies.

Mofosi said their target areas cover investing in research and progress, boosting eco-friendly agriculture technologies, improving finance and market access, and strengthening value chains.

“This fair intends to push diverse market systems, in the long run, contributing to a more sustainable and resilient agriculture sector,” Mofosi emphasised.

The event spotlighted the important shift ongoing in the agricultural industry,

driven by technological improvements and creative tactics. The government has restated its commitment to backing farmers through projects that amplify livelihoods, access to credit and markets and modern farming techniques. The focus will mainly include empowering women and youth in agriculture through skills training, mentorship and entrepreneurial support, nurturing alliances and knowledge sharing

among a wide array of parties, including government agencies, research institutions, private sector companies and international organisations.

Mofosi announced that “The event benefits as a critical stage for fuelling growth, innovation and diversity in the agricultural sector. By promoting modern farming practices and supporting essential stakeholders, the government aims to upgrade the sector’s efficiency and durability.”

He concluded by saying the fair aspires to drive evolution in food security and renewable agriculture by promoting creativity and a resilient, diverse and sustainable agricultural system.

“By celebrating the industry’s potential and encouraging stakeholder engagement, the function seeks to enable the way for a flourishing and food-secure future.”



Strong Demand Lifts Lesotho Mohair Prices to R233.79/kg



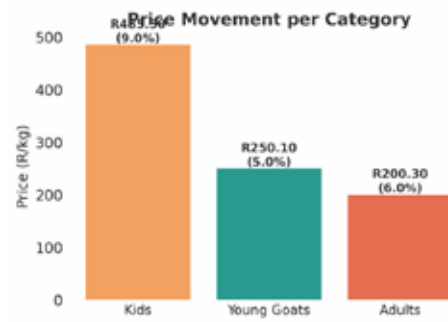
By Pheello Mosesi

Lesotho Mohair Market Report – 05 August 2025
The first Lesotho mohair sale of the 2025/26 season delivered strong results, with the market indicator rising to R233.79/kg, marking a 20% increase compared to the previous sale. The event achieved 100% clear-

ance, signalling robust demand from both local and international buyers. Market Highlights
Highest Prices Achieved:
- Solane WGA: R550.00/kg (BKL, micron 23.3)
- BKBSA: R550.00/kg
- Maqhaka MG: R543.00/kg
The Rand/US dollar exchange rate was 8% stronger year-on-year, supporting competitive export pricing. Strong buying interest was recorded from China and Europe, reflecting solid international demand.

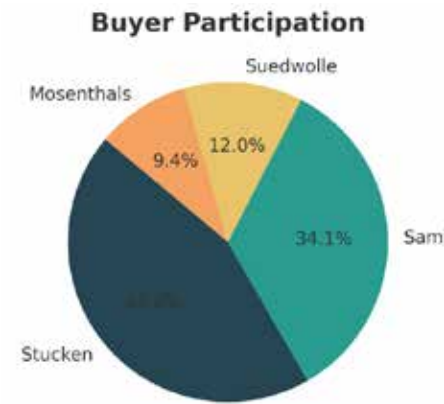
Highest Prices Achieved
Solane WGA: R550.00/kg
BKBSA: R550.00/kg
Maqhaka MG: R543.00/kg

Price Movement by Category
- Kids: R485.50/kg (+9.0%)
- Young Goats: R250.10/kg (+5.0%)
- Adults: R200.30/kg (+6.0%)
- Overall Average: R233.79/kg (+20.0%)



Top Buyer Participation
1. Stucken – 44.3%
2. Samil – 34.0%
3. Suedwolle – 12.0%

4. Mosenthals – 9.4%



Broker Participation
- BKB: 80.0%
- OVK: 20.0%
Outlook
The next Lesotho sale is expected to feature a larger offering with equally high quality, supported by sustained demand from key markets. With the season starting on such a positive note, both producers and brokers anticipate continued firmness in prices.

Winter Price Movements: Lesotho Vegetable Market Update (18 Jul – 14 Aug 2025)

Vegetable prices in Lesotho have shifted notably over the past month, reflecting movements in South African wholesale markets, where most of the Kingdom's fresh produce is sourced. This report tracks key commodities from 18 July to 14 August 2025, estimating landed retail prices in Lesotho based on prevailing wholesale benchmarks and typical cost

structures. The price trends mirror mid-winter supply and demand patterns: tomatoes dropped sharply in late July before stabilising; potatoes remained under pressure from high supply; green peppers showed firmness on tight quality supply; while onions, cabbage, and carrots moved within narrow bands. **Commodity 18 Jul SA**

Commodity	18 Jul SA Wholesale (R/kg)	14 Aug SA Wholesale (R/kg)	18 Jul Lesotho Retail incl VAT (R/kg)	14 Aug Lesotho Retail incl VAT (R/kg)	% Change
Tomatoes	6.00	5.75	18.48	14.07	-23.20
Potatoes	6.50	6.00	11.72	11.06	-5.63
Onions	15.50	14.00	19.93	19.04	-4.46
Green Peppers	12.00	12.10	25.24	21.04	-16.64
Cabbage	4.70	4.10	9.63	8.32	-13.60
Carrots	7.20	6.10	9.55	9.37	-1.87

Estimates are calculated using a landed cost model incorporating transport, handling, levies, packaging, overhead, and markup assumptions typical for Lesotho retailers. Actual retail prices may vary by vendor, location, and supply chain arrangements.

Outlook
With winter conditions persisting into late August, tomato and potato prices are likely to remain soft unless supply tightens or demand rebounds. Green peppers and leafy vegetables could hold firm if volumes stay constrained. Retailers should monitor wholesale markets closely to adjust pricing strategies.



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Lesotho Tribune

By: Editorial

The world's worst humanitarian crisis. That's how we keep referring to the violence, starvation, and genocide happening in Sudan, repeating it again and again to a world that has become both overwhelmed by and numb to the images of human suffering. As you read this, people are being starved to death in North Darfur, a region in West Sudan that has a centuries-old history and, according to the creator of The Sudanese Kitchen Cookbook, the best food. This is not news. The World Food Programme flagged the risk of severe hunger and malnutrition in March 2024, caused by the ongoing war between the Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF) and the Rapid Support Forces (RSF), formerly known as Janjaweed (Devils on Horseback). The people of Darfur have been targeted by both the Sudanese government and the Janjaweed, who collectively committed genocide against Darfur's Fur, Masalit, and Zaghawa ethnic groups in 2003. In 2023, they turned on

EDITORIAL

The World Is Watching as Starvation in El Fasher Accelerates in Darfur Genocide

The humanitarian crisis in North Darfur has reached the worst stage of famine, with people wasting away under the siege of the Rapid Support Forces.



Half of the besieged population in El Fasher is children. In the first six months of this year, 239 children in el-Fasher died of hunger, according to the Sudanese Doctors' Network. Photo by Dan Kitwood/Getty Images

each other, but the reality for the people in Darfur remains the same: they are once again being attacked, their villages burned, their women and girls raped, and entire communities starved. Since 2003, thousands of people have lived in Zam-zam and Abu Shouk IDP camps, close to El Fasher, North Darfur's capital. Now, those camps have been bombed, raided, and deliberately starved, killing unknown numbers of people. El Fasher, which the RSF has besieged since April 2024, is awaiting the same fate. Food is rapidly running out, clean water is no longer available, hospitals have collapsed, and humanitarian aid continues to be blocked from entering the city. A spokesperson for the Displacement & Health Relief Network (DHRN) tells OkayAfrica that

El Fasher's few remaining markets are often nearly empty. DHRN crowd-sources donations that are sent to volunteers inside El Fasher who risk their lives trying to find food for community kitchens, many of which have stopped functioning. "What is happening in Gaza is horrific and deserves all the attention it's getting and more. But the scale of suffering in Sudan eclipses Gaza, as if anyone thought that was possible," says Nathaniel Raymond, Executive Director at the Yale Humanitarian Research Lab. The lab has been monitoring the war since May 2023, initially for the US Department of State. Using remote sensing data, primarily very high-resolution satellite imagery combined with open-source information available from the ground, their initial mission was to document

violations of international humanitarian law by both RSF and SAF as part of the Jeddah process negotiations organized by the United States and Saudi Arabia. In February 2024, the lab opted to work independently, primarily focusing on North Darfur, and stopped accepting funding support from the US Department of State.

"We watch from space with satellites and provide information to humanitarian organizations," Raymond explains. "We have been assisting organizations dealing with cholera and contributed to the IPC 5 declaration by the Famine Review Committee last summer for El Fasher, parts of Abu Shouk, and Zam-zam."

IPC Phase 5 indicates the highest level of famine. A famine is characterised by severe food shortages, widespread acute malnutrition, and tens of thousands of deaths; once it is declared, many people have already died of starvation, and it's hard to slow it down.

The results of famine in the body include a breakdown of muscle and tissue, followed by a slowed metabolism, loss of the ability to regulate temperature, impaired kidney function, and a faltering immune system; essential organs lose their efficiency, and the body eventually succumbs.



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Lesotho Tribune

By Hlalele 'Neko

Captain Ibrahim Traoré, Burkina Faso's young military leader, has captured the imagination of many across Africa. To his supporters, he is the embodiment of defiance against neocolonial influence, a man unafraid to challenge France and the West, and a leader promising to reclaim his country's dignity. Images of him in fatigues, speaking with conviction, have become symbols of "African liberation" in certain corners of the continent.

But history urges caution. Across Africa's post-independence history, charismatic military rulers have often arrived as saviors, only to morph into authoritarians. From Ghana's Jerry Rawlings to Uganda's Yoweri Museveni, the pattern is familiar: the young, idealistic soldier who promises renewal and an end to corruption eventually consolidates power, weakens institutions, and overstays.

Traoré is only 36. His rise to power in 2022 was sud-

OPINION

Ibrahim Traoré Is Not Africa's Messiah



den, propelled by the deep frustrations of a nation ravaged by jihadist violence, political instability, and public disillusionment with civilian leadership. That very context, the yearning for a strong hand, makes it easy to overlook the dangers of investing too much hope in one man.

Traoré was not elected. He seized power through a coup, toppling another military ruler who himself had overthrown an elected president. While coups are sometimes romanticized as "resets," they fundamentally bypass the people's will. Without a democratic mandate, any claim to legitimacy rests on performance and on whether he will eventually return the country to civilian rule. So far, the roadmap to elections remains vague. Coups in Africa rarely end with a swift handover to civilians, more often military governments delay transitions under the pre-

text of security or reform. In Burkina Faso's case, the worsening security situation provides a ready-made excuse for extended military rule.

If Traoré is serious about national renewal, he must strengthen institutions, not personalize power. A nation cannot hinge its future on the charisma or decisiveness of a single figure. It must be grounded in the rule of law, checks and balances, and the ability to change leaders without bloodshed.

Traoré's government has adopted a hardline, military-first approach to the insurgency, while also pivoting toward non-Western allies such as Russia. But the security crisis is deep and complex, rooted in governance failures, poverty, and ethnic tensions. There is little evidence yet that the insurgents are on the back foot.

Militarizing the state without parallel political and socio-economic reforms

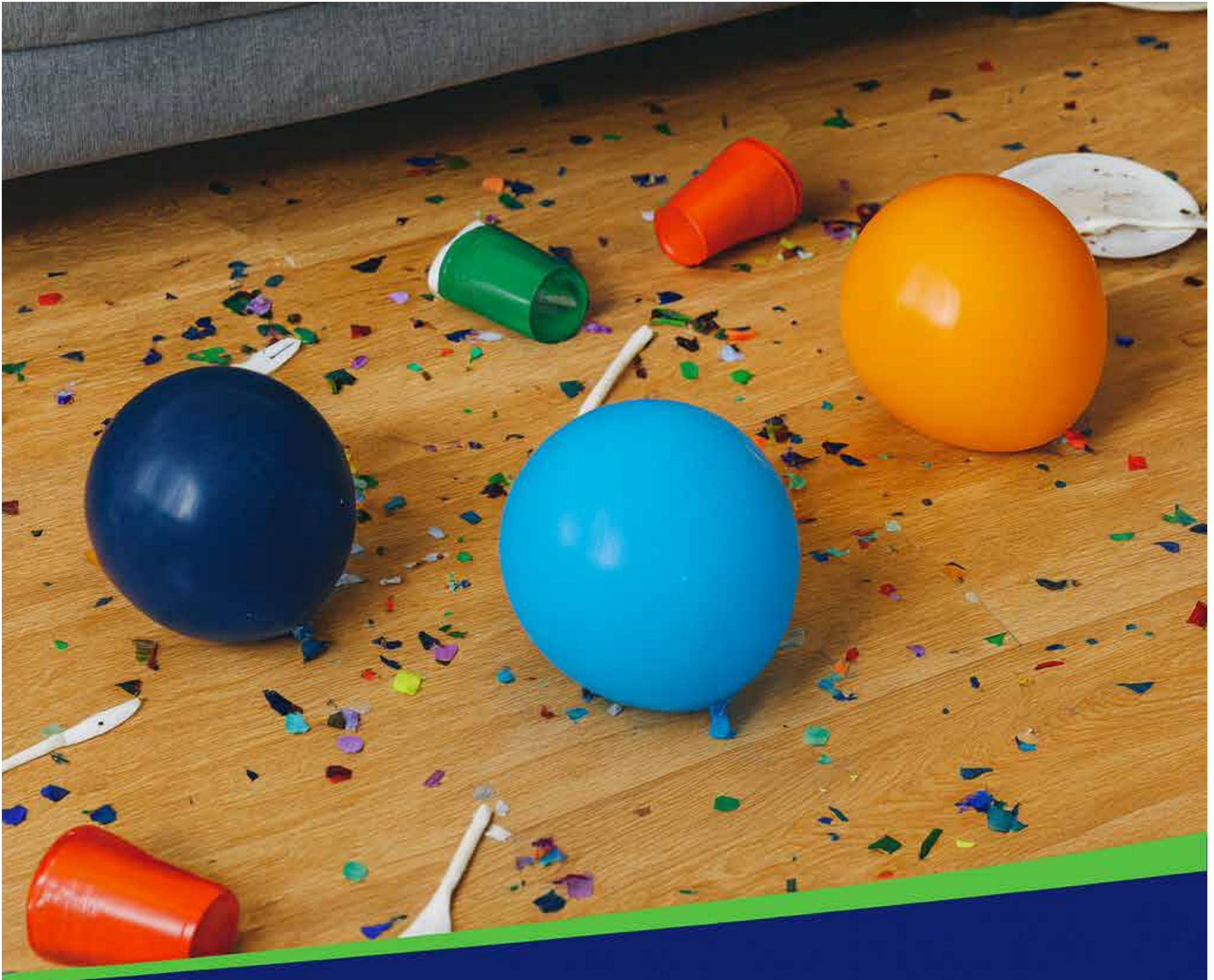
risks fueling the very instability Traoré seeks to end. An insurgency cannot be defeated purely by force. It requires legitimacy in the eyes of all citizens, including those in marginalized rural areas.

Part of Traoré's appeal lies in the broader wave of military takeovers in West Africa, from Mali to Niger. These regimes speak the language of anti-imperialism, and in doing so, they tap into genuine public anger at the failures of both domestic elites and international partners. Yet there is a difference between ending dependency and isolating oneself. Breaking with France may play well politically, but it does not automatically translate into good governance, economic growth, or improved security.

Admiration for Traoré's boldness should not cloud sober judgment. Leaders must be assessed on delivery, not on symbolism alone. And when a country's fate is concentrated in one man's hands, the risk of disappointment and disaster is high.

Burkina Faso's people deserve stability, prosperity, and freedom. Those outcomes depend less on the charisma of a revolutionary leader and more on building strong, accountable institutions that outlast him.

For those cheering from afar, hope is not a strategy, and history is not on the side of unchecked military power.



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NUL AND THE UNIVERSITY OF LIVERPOOL LAUNCH HISTORIC DEAL

By: Lemohang Botsane

Roma

In a significant milestone for academic collaboration, the National University of Lesotho (NUL) and the University of Liverpool (UL) signed a memorandum of understanding to foster mutual academic and research cooperation between the two institutions this week.

This partnership is expected to open new avenues for joint research projects, academic exchanges and capacity building initiatives. Merging their resources and expertise, NUL and UL seek to enhance the quality of education and research in different industries.

It also marks the start of a fruitful alliance that will interest students, university faculty members and researchers from both universities.

"Today we are here witnessing the signing of the MoU between the two institutions separated by geography but combined by ambition, purpose and shared belief in transformative power in education," the NUL Vice Chancellor, Professor Isaac Fajana, said in his remarks, adding that the agreement is far more than ink on paper but a bridge linking academic partnerships built on mu-



tual respect.

"Through this collaboration, we envision joint research projects, faculty and students exchange, as well as shared curriculum", VC Fajana continued. He further acknowledged all the parties involved in the alliance, highlighting that their efforts are recognised.

Deputy Vice Chancellor from the University of Liverpool, Professor Richard Black, expressed gratitude to the NUL team for the beautiful collaboration, saying they work with many universities globally and have several existing activities happening currently because they believe collaboration can help shape the world.

Mr Harry McDonald, the High Commissioner of the United Kingdom to Lesotho, added on to the conversation, saying the ceremony was an exciting experience for him,

celebrating the alliance between the NUL and the UK, emphasising that it's a championship alliance.

"This partnership will be fruitful because of the people working on it," he said with confidence, highlighting that this is the 4th agreement the NUL has signed with UK-based institutions in the past 3 years.

He said they in the UK keep coming to forge partnerships with Lesotho because they believe in its future and it is a capable nation.

"This partnership would not have been possible without the work and the drive of the team. And I wish the alliance of these two nations grow for the better," McDonald exclaimed.

The NUL Librarian, Dr Buhle Mbambo-Thata also weighed in by thanking the NUL management team for allowing this collabora-

tion.

"We thank the vice chancellor and the marketing team for supporting this collaboration. This is going to help build good relations between the two institutions."

Professor Kananelo Mosito, the Pro Vice Chancellor of the NUL closed the ceremony by expressing gratitude to all and the attention granted.

His words echoed pride and joy as he said, "This MoU is far more than a ceremonial act, it is a solemn affirmation of our shared vision, a vision that binds our two institutions in the noble pursuit of scholarships."

He said that while the day marked the official and formal signing of the partnership, the journey towards it began months ago when they had the honour of hosting guests from the University of Liverpool at the Roma campus.

"Dialogues have just matured in partnerships. I'd also like to acknowledge the vital role played by the British High Commissioner; his commitments to fostering academic and cultural linkages between our two nations have been a fruitful element," he said. The NUL was established in 1945 as Pius XII University College and was later renamed the National University of Lesotho in 1975. The University currently has 7 faculties and among its notable alumni is the university's Chancellor, His Majesty King Letsie III.

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Health Unveils Triple Elimination Plan

BY: Staff Reporter

The Ministry of Health, in partnership with the Elizabeth Glaser Pediatric AIDS Foundation (EGPAF) and a coalition of active stakeholders in the healthcare sector has launched the ambitious Dissemination of the Triple Elimination of HIV, Syphilis, and Hepatitis B Strategic Plan for the years 2025-2029. With the ever rising statistics of infections, not just in Lesotho but globally, this initiative aims to significantly enhance public understanding and engagement regarding vertical transmission of these diseases, striving to meet global health targets. This plan is therefore heralded as a significant milestone in Lesotho's ongoing health journey. "As we implement all our strategies and interventions for the elimination of HIV, this marks a milestone in the social health journey and as we disseminate this critical document, which is the National Triple Elimination Plan," said 'Masebeo Koto, a representative from the Ministry of Health. Koto emphasised the Ministry's unwavering



commitment not only to achieve the 95:95:95 target for HIV but also to successfully fulfil the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Furthermore, the Ministry aspire to showcase Lesotho's efforts in eliminating stigma around these diseases on a global scale. The comprehensive triple elimination strategy is grounded in evidence-based decisions, corroborated by encouraging results, as according to studies, there has been a notable increase in the percentage of HIV-positive men and women receiving the Essential Antiretroviral Therapy (ERT) alongside a decrease in the rate of infants born HIV-positive.

The Ministry, therefore, expressed its readiness to further integrate and fortify services addressing Syphilis and Hepatitis B, ensuring that children can have a safe and healthy start to life, free from infections. "It is our shared mission and a co-projection that reflects an integrated approach to tackle these three diseases, focusing on the lifelong ERT and care for HIV-positive mothers and our commitment to protecting maternal health and eliminating all presentable infections in our mothers. In a personal testimony, 23-year-old Thato Gladys Khampepe shared her experience with Prevention of Mother-to-Child Trans-

mission (PMTCT). Upon discovering her HIV-positive status, she said she was physically healthy and asymptomatic, which compelled her to adhere strictly to her prescribed treatment. Thanks to her dedication to following medical advice and attending antenatal clinic classes consistently, she celebrated the birth of her HIV-negative baby in 2023. Gladys passionately urged all expectant mothers to prioritise their children's health by seeking necessary treatment. She encouraged them to safeguard their babies' futures by ensuring they emerge into the world unaffected by these diseases.



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Lesotho Tribune

By Staff Reporter

Southern Africa's business landscape saw significant developments this week, spanning retail exits, healthcare innovation, trade disputes, corporate shake-ups, and green transitions. These moves signal both challenges and opportunities for businesses operating in the region.

Shoprite Pulls Out of Ghana and Malawi

South Africa's largest grocery retailer, Shoprite Holdings, announced plans to exit Ghana and Malawi. The move comes as the company refocuses on its domestic market amid currency volatility, high inflation, and rising operational costs in some African territories. Despite an anticipated 8.9% rise in group sales, Shoprite's share price dipped 2.6% following the news. Analysts say this decision highlights the need for regional retailers to balance expansion ambitions with profitability concerns.

Novo Nordisk Debuts Wegovy in South Africa

Danish pharmaceutical giant Novo Nordisk has launched its weight-loss drug Wegovy in South Africa, its first African

market for the obesity treatment. The drug enters a space dominated by Eli Lilly's Mounjaro, tapping into South Africa's high rates of obesity and diabetes. The entry could spur further competition and innovation in the region's healthcare sector, while also raising questions about accessibility and affordability.

Wine Industry Faces 30% U.S. Tariff

South African wine producers are bracing for heavy losses after the U.S. imposed a 30% tariff on their exports, significantly higher than tariffs faced by European rivals. The wine sector, which employs over 270,000 people, is heavily reliant on exports to the U.S. Government officials are exploring relief measures, but industry insiders warn the long-term impact could force some producers out of business.

Bain & Co Shuts Local Consulting Arm

Bain & Co is winding down its South African consulting operations in the wake of a corruption scandal tied to the state capture era. The company is under a 10-year ban from public sector contracts and will shift focus to its services hub, retaining some jobs but closing its direct consulting presence. The move underscores the reputational and operational risks multinational firms face in politically sensitive environments.

Toyota to Enter South Africa's EV Market

Toyota announced plans to launch three fully electric vehicle models in South Africa by early 2026, marking a significant expansion into the local EV market. While European brands have led the segment so far, Toyota's entry could accelerate

adoption...if infrastructure and tariff barriers can be addressed.

Court Blocks TotalEnergies' Offshore Oil Project

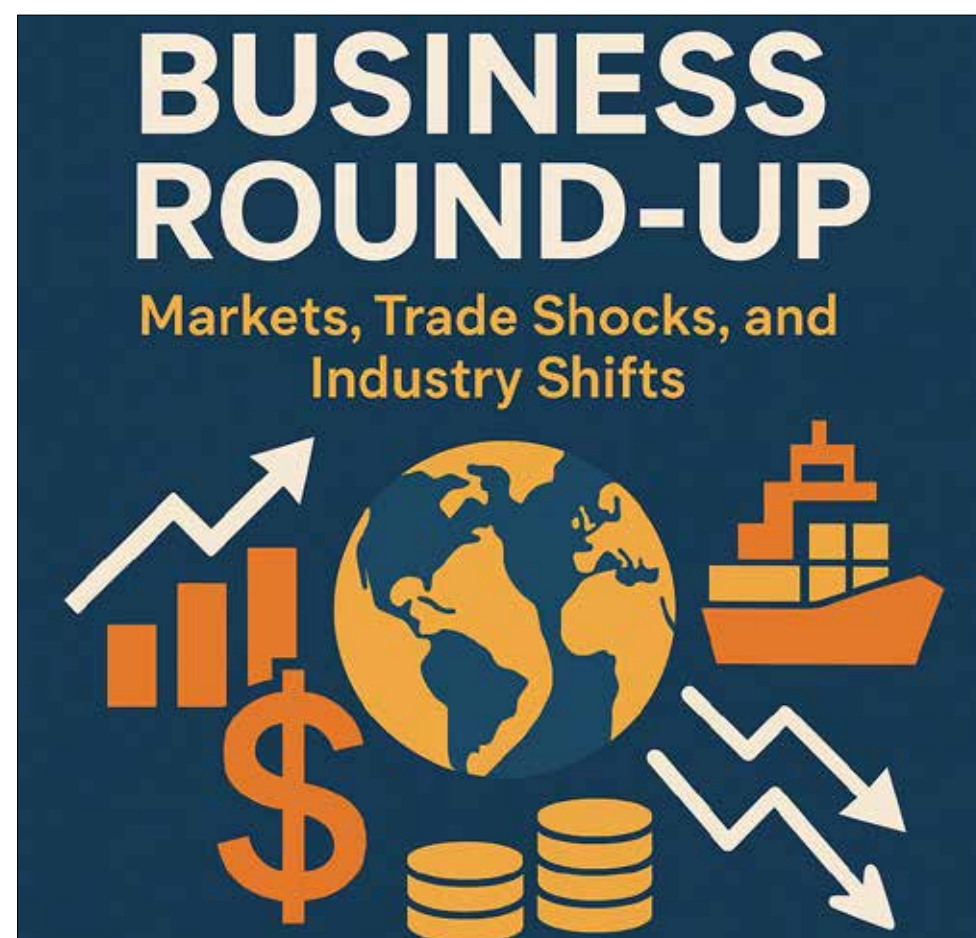
In a major environmental ruling, a South African court has overturned an environmental permit granted to TotalEnergies and Shell for offshore oil drilling between Cape Town and Cape Agulhas. Judges cited inadequate environmental assessment and insufficient consideration of socio-economic and climate risks. The decision reflects growing judicial scrutiny of fossil fuel projects in the region.

South Africa Launches National Dialogue

President Cyril Ramaphosa has convened a two-day "national dialogue" in Pretoria to address pressing socio-economic issues, including poverty, inequality, and unemployment, currently above 30%. While the initiative aims to build consensus across sectors, critics have questioned the R700 million (\$40 million) price tag and whether it will yield tangible outcomes.

Our Takeaway:

The week's developments show Southern Africa navigating a volatile mix of global market pressures, domestic policy shifts, and evolving consumer demands. For businesses, the message is clear; adaptability, regional focus, and a strong ESG (environmental, social, and governance) strategy are becoming non-negotiable for survival and growth.



ETL Revives the Hope of 439 Students

By: Pheello Mosesi

Econet Telecom Lesotho (ETL) and Higherlife Foundation have injected M1 248 840 into the Ministry of Education and Training (MOET) to meet 439 students halfway with examination and school fees. This generous handover was gifted to the ministry on Tuesday. After the revised tariffs on Lesotho exports by the Trump administration and USAID funds withdrawals, 439 students who were sponsored by Mothers to Mothers suffered the consequences, being left helpless and hopeless. These students, it was announced, are enrolled in 167 schools countrywide and were faced with the devastating possibility of not being able to sit for exams as a result of being behind with their fees.

To ensure the students' right to education was not violated, the ministry took an initiative to seek help on the students' behalf from Econet and its partners. The Chief Executive Officer of Econet, Dennis Plaatjies, expressed his view on education, saying they at Econet believe in the saying that the right to education is one of the basic human rights, saying every child should be able to go to school.

"This payment to the Examination Council of Lesotho (ECOL) is a declaration of our belief

in the potential of each of these learners. It is also a commitment to access equity and dignity in education. It is an act of hope that we have for these learners," Plaatjies said.

He emphasised that the payment coincides with the plans that ETL and Higherlife had already set in place to give back to the community, noting that Higherlife Foundation is soon to unveil 10 new recipients of the Moshoeshe I scholarship, forming part of the fourth cohort and tallying the number to 40 since its 2022 inception.

"In the past financial year, ETL, through Higherlife Foundation,

has invested over M8 million towards education corporate social investment initiatives. This is because we firmly believe that when we empower learners, we empower the nation," Plaatjies said.

He emphasised the company's gratitude to Basotho for continuously supporting ETL, stating that in every purchase of the company's products and services, a certain portion goes into the Higherlife Foundation to enable the possibility of initiatives of the same nature to take place. Ntoi Rapapa, the Minister of Education and Training, expressed his pride in the synergy between government

ministries and privately owned companies in helping Basotho in all development aspects. "ETL did not help only MOET and the Ministry of Youth and Social Development, but it has also brought hope to the lives of the vulnerable and marginalised individuals. It is touching to restore someone's hope. Initiatives pushed by private sectors go a long way in helping students reach their dreams as I am one of the people who would not be where I am in life if it was not of helps like this one," Rapapa echoed, further requesting ECOL staff to help students who come short of paying their fees rather than opting for expulsion.

He said when a student fails to sit for their exams, the failure is a chain reaction that could have repercussions hitting them, their families and generations to follow, hence they need to receive all the help they can get.



100 Basotho to be trained for airport jobs

By: Pheello Mosesi

The Ministry of Education and Training (MOET) launched an online course for 100 Basotho men that will run for a month starting 18 August.

The training will be conducted by the ministry in partnership with Digital School and the Skilled Academics and Mohammed Bin Rashid Al Maktoum Global initiatives from the United Arab Emirates (UAE) and monitored by the Technical Vocational Education (TVE) department.

"The training will offer four courses: Reception and Access Control Management, CCTV monitoring and Patrol duties, Incident reporting, crowd control, emergency response and fire safety," Ntoi Rapapa, the Minister of MoET, announced.

He said they had prepared to undergo these courses with LOIKI, Thaba-Tseka Technical Institute, CCCC Leribe, and Ntlatfatsi located in Maseru's Hoek.

"After discussions and considerations, the first training phase will intake 100 trainees. The selected beneficiaries should have at least a COSC or LGCSE certificate and should be between the ages of 21 and 40. The purpose of the certificate stands as proof that there won't be any language barrier as the courses will be delivered in English," the minister said.

He, however, noted that candidates don't need to have passed this level of

education, but the certificate will offer evidence that the candidate has sat for their examinations.

"Post negotiations, the first training cohort has been designated to be undergone by only males. Candidates should be no less than 173cm tall as per the requests by Mohammed Bin Rashid Al Maktoum Global Initiatives. The reason behind this, in their experience, is that places that offer jobs related to these courses like airports, tend to be highly strict with meeting height requirements," Rapapa said, adding that the ministry will monitor performance and search for opportunities in and outside the country but within the SADC region.

In the next cohort, the ministry is optimistic to include the lecturers of the four selected institutes to pass the skills to the learners.

To further improve the course, talks between the Ministry and the UAE to introduce 5 extra courses as time progresses are

still ongoing, and the extension promises to include females as beneficiaries too.

These courses will also be available for countries including Malawi, Zambia and Zimbabwe.



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High Court Delivers Stern Blow to GBV with Life Sentence for Triple Murderer

By: Tholoana Lesenya

MASERU

In a landmark judgment underscoring the judiciary's firm stance against Gender-Based Violence (GBV), the High Court has sentenced Lehlohono Masoleng of Braamfontein, Mohale's Hoek, to a lifetime in prison for the brutal murder of three women he lured through social media.

Masoleng, convicted on Monday, was found guilty of killing 'Matšepo Likotsi, 'Maletsema Foka and Kefuoe Moretlo (also known as 'Matokelo Mahlo). The court heard how the victims, believing Masoleng to be a romantic partner, agreed to meet him in person after online interactions.

In each case, he allegedly had sexual relations with the women before taking their lives in what the presiding judge described as "senseless and merciless killings."

Delivering the sentence, Justice Tšeliso Mokoko did not mince words in expressing the judiciary's resolve to protect women from violent partners and predatory men who exploit their vulnerability. "The judiciary must safeguard the rights of women, particularly in situations involving intimate partners, whether they are husbands or lovers," Justice Mokoko said.

"To fulfil this protective role, the courts must impose stringent penalties on perpetrators."



He stressed that such decisive action serves a dual purpose, punishing offenders while sending a resounding message to society that GBV will not be tolerated. The judge noted that public outrage over the rising tide of femicide and domestic violence has reached critical levels, making it imperative for the justice system to respond firmly.

According to Justice Mokoko, public places immense trust in the courts to address "reckless" acts of violence that rob families of mothers, daughters and sisters. He called these murders "a stain on our society" and emphasised the constitutional duty of the judiciary to shield women from harm.

Beyond punishment, the judge issued a sobering warning to women, particularly those active on social media platforms. He urged extreme caution when communicating with strangers online, noting that such spaces are increasingly being used by predators to identify and trap their victims.

"This case should be an eye-opener to women," he said.

"Do not visit strangers who claim to love you on social media. By doing so, you may be putting your life in danger."

The conviction and sentencing mark a significant moment in Lesotho's fight against GBV which continues to claim the lives of women across the nation. Advocacy groups have

long called for stronger legal consequences for offenders, arguing that only robust sentencing can deter would-be perpetrators. As Masoleng begins his life term behind bars, the High Court's judgment stands as both a punishment for his crimes and a stark warning to those who might contemplate similar acts. It is also a call for vigilance among women and a reminder that the battle against GBV is as much about societal awareness and prevention as it is about judicial action.

In the words of Justice Mokoko, "The safety and dignity of women must never be negotiable. The courts will continue to stand firm in defence of that principle."



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Lesotho Tribune

By Litšitso Letsunyane

The President of the Lesotho Football Association (LeFA), Advocate Salemane Phafane, is on course to make history as one of the longest-serving football association presidents on the African continent in the modern era. Having first assumed office in 2004, Phafane is set to surpass Malawi's Walter Nyamilandu, who served for 19 years before being voted out in 2023. Both men began their presidencies in 2004, but while Nyamilandu's tenure brought Malawi two Africa Cup of Nations qualifications (2010 and 2021), Lesotho has yet to qualify for any major continental or global tournament under Phafane's leadership. Phafane rose to the presidency following the tragic death of then-president Thabo Makakole in 2004 and has since been re-elected for five consecutive terms, most recently during LeFA's sixth Congress in November 2024. His longevity has been marked by both significant achievements and persistent challenges within Lesotho's football landscape.

ARTS & SPORTS

Phafane Makes History



Across the world, presidents of football federations carry core responsibilities that shape the sport's trajectory. These include:

- * **Governance & Strategy:** Setting the vision, overseeing long-term plans such as LeFA's 2023–2026 Strategic Plan, and aligning policies with CAF and FIFA standards.
- * **Administration & Compliance:** Ensuring financial integrity and good governance, with Phafane himself holding a high-profile seat on FIFA's Governance, Audit, and Compliance Committee.
- * **Representation & Advocacy:** Serving as the association's face in CAF, COSAFA, and FIFA, lobbying for opportunities and resources.
- * **Development & Infrastructure:** Overseeing grassroots initiatives, youth academies, and nationwide equipment distribution.
- * **Liaising & Fundraising:** Negotiating with government, private sponsors, and international partners to sustain leagues and national teams.
- Phafane's leadership has faced recurring systemic obstacles, many of which reflect Lesotho's broader socio-economic context:
- * **Economic Constraints:** Limited sponsorship opportunities and a small talent pool restrict football's professional growth.
- * **Infrastructure Gaps:** FIFA-supported training

centers began in Maseru, Leribe, and Mphahle's Hoek, but Lesotho's unapproved stadiums have often forced national teams to play "home" games abroad. This even led to suspensions of FIFA funding.

* **Government Neglect:** Phafane has repeatedly criticized the Ministry of Sports for failing to fund national teams like Likuena, Mehalalito, and youth squads, branding the situation "an embarrassment."

* **Political Exploitation of Football:** He has condemned politicians for leveraging football in election campaigns only to abandon it afterward.

* **Coaching Standards:** Concerns have been raised about clubs using borrowed licenses to appear compliant, while unqualified coaches actually handle teams, damaging long-term player development.

* **Absence of a U-23 National Team:** Efforts to establish an Olympic-qualifying squad have been stunted without backing from the National Olympic Committee.

Despite these hurdles, Phafane's administration has recorded notable milestones that have strengthened LeFA's governance and grassroots programs:

* **Global Recognition:** His election to multiple FIFA committees, initially the Disciplinary Committee and now the Governance, Audit & Compliance Committee, has elevated Lesotho's presence in international football administration.

* **Youth Development:** LeFA launched its first football academy, enrolling 33 Under-13 boys at Sacred Heart High School in Leribe, combining academic

and sporting development.

* **Regional Progress:** While Lesotho has yet to achieve a major qualification, the senior men's team reached the COSAFA Cup final in 2023, and the women's U-17 side achieved the same in 2024.

* **Grassroots Support:** Through the LeFA Assistance Programme (LAP), more than 4,000 footballs and equipment were distributed to lower-league clubs for the 2024/25 season.

* **Inclusivity in National Teams:** In January 2025, LeFA unveiled its third edition of national kits, ensuring gender inclusivity by providing additional women's team kits at no extra cost.

* **Academy Success:** In April 2025, Phafane personally visited the national academy in Maputsoe, underlining his commitment to balancing education with athletic development. Advocate Salemane Phafane's leadership encapsulates the paradox of Lesotho's football journey: a federation making strides in governance, inclusivity, and grassroots empowerment while still awaiting its breakthrough on the continental stage. His unprecedented tenure underscores both the resilience needed to lead in a challenging environment and the promise of long-term planning in shaping football's future. As he enters what could soon be the longest presidency in African football's modern history, Phafane's legacy will likely hinge on whether these structural foundations can eventually carry Lesotho onto the grand stages of the Africa Cup of Nations or the FIFA World Cup.