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MASERU, LESOTHO

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## US to "Extend" AGOA by a Year, Shelile Confirms After Washington Visit



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**MOHAHLAULA**  
AIRLINES

# US to “Extend” AGOA by a Year, Shelile Confirms After Washington Visit

By: Staff Reporter

Lesotho’s trade minister, Mokhehi Shelile, announced on Wednesday that the United States plans to extend the African Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA) by one year, a temporary reprieve for the textile-dependent economy. The news followed his return from a high-level visit to Washington. AGOA, which has given African countries preferential access to US markets for nearly 25 years, was on the brink of expiry. A barrage of tariffs imposed by former US President Donald Trump on April 4 had already rattled African exporters, with many describing the move as the death knell for AGOA.

Lesotho took the hardest hit when it was slapped with a 50% tariff on Trump’s so-called “Liberation Day.” The shock nearly crippled the mountain kingdom’s fragile export-led development model, which relies heavily on selling jeans and T-shirts to the American market. Though the tariff was later reduced to 15% in August, the damage underscored the vulnerability of the sector. Shelile, who led a trade delegation to Washington from September 15 to 19, said they met officials from the House Ways and Means Committee and the Senate Finance



Committee. “They all agreed that AGOA has to be extended and they promised us that by November or December at the latest, it will be extended by a year,” he told reporters. AGOA is due to expire on September 30. Local companies benefiting from it have warned that any delay could result in immediate job losses and factory closures. Lesotho currently qualifies for textile and apparel benefits under AGOA, according

to the US Trade Representative’s office. Trade between the two countries remains significant. US goods and services trade with Lesotho reached \$276 million in 2024, an increase of 4.6% from the previous year. Still, questions linger. A White House spokesperson declined to comment when approached. Meanwhile, Shelile warned that his ministry will be watching closely. “We will be monitoring that

the extension comes into force as promised, because if it does not, we are risking losing more jobs.” Not everyone in Washington is aligned. A ranking Democrat on the Senate Finance Committee told Reuters: “The Trump administration has not informed finance committee Democrats of its position on renewing AGOA. Ranking member Wyden continues to support renewing the programme.”



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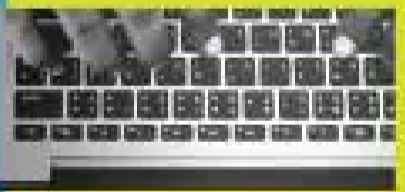
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# Defiance of Court Order as DPP Motinyane Denied Access to Office

By: Seipati Matobo

**D**irector of Public Prosecutions (DPP) Advocate Hlalefang Motinyane returned to work today after a bruising legal battle that culminated in a landmark Constitutional Court ruling. But her victory was quickly overshadowed by a disturbing development: the lock to her office had been tampered with, leaving her unable to gain access, this is according to sources close to the matter.

The unsettling incident comes less than 24 hours after the Constitutional Court ruled that Prime Minister Sam Matekane's suspension of Advocate Motinyane was unconstitutional. The tampering raised questions about whether resistance still lingers within state institutions to comply with the judgment.

### Court Rebuffs Prime Minister

On Thursday, the High Court sitting as the Constitutional Court delivered a judgment that struck at the heart of executive overreach. The bench ruled that the Prime Minister had no authority to suspend the DPP. By invoking allegations of misconduct without following the procedure set out in Section 141(7) of the Constitution, Matekane had acted outside the law.



The court went further, describing the cascading events that followed—her being locked out of her office, stripped of her security detail, and threatened with eviction from her residence—as consequences of an unlawful act. They were declared null and void. In its final order, the court reinstated Advocate Motinyane with immediate effect, issuing a sharp reminder that constitutional limits are binding even on the highest office.

### Law Society Reacts

Speaking to the Lesotho Tribune, Law Society President Advocate Lintle Tuke said his organisation would look into

today's incident.

“We’ll investigate and have all the facts to determine whether the Law Society has any role to play,” he noted. It was the Law Society itself that mounted the constitutional challenge after the suspension was imposed on 24 June. Their legal victory now sets a precedent on the independence of prosecutorial authority in Lesotho.

### Silence from Government

Lesotho Tribune attempted to reach Justice Minister Richard Ramoetsi for comment, but his phone went unanswered. The Ministry has not issued any statement

regarding the tampering of Advocate Motinyane's office or on how the ruling will be implemented in practice.

### A Serious Political Blow

The ruling represents one of the most serious judicial reversals for Prime Minister Matekane since assuming office. What began as a move to discipline the DPP has now been struck down as unconstitutional, exposing the government to accusations of undermining the rule of law.

Lesotho Tribune reached out to Advocate Motinyane but our questions remain unanswered at the time of publication of this article.

# Lesotho Highlights Its Commitment at the APRM Africa Leaders Symposium 2025

By Staff Reporter

The APRM Africa Leaders Symposium 2025, under the theme “Advancing Africa’s Digital Transformation: Inspiring Action. Accelerating Growth. Amplifying Impact,” recently took place at NASDAQ in New York.

This annual event, established in 2003 alongside the United Nations General Assembly, serves as a key platform for promoting and advancing Africa’s Digital Transformation Agenda. It focuses on achieving an integrated digital economy which is viewed as essential for fostering inclusive and sustainable growth through high-level discussions aimed at driving investments, building strategic partnerships and encouraging collaboration among various stakeholders, including both government and non-government entities.

During the symposium, Prime Minister Sam Matekane emphasised that digital transformation in Lesotho represents not only a pathway to economic growth but also a crucial tool for achieving inclusive development and building resilient communities. “Africa must harness digital transformation to close the digital divide between the developed and the developing countries and to empower our peoples and communities,” the prime minister added.

He proudly announced that Lesotho is currently leading the charge as the chair of the African Union’s Specialised Technical Committee on Communications and Information Technology. This remarkable position allows Lesotho



to play a pivotal role in amplifying Africa’s voice in global discussions about the digital economy. He also shared some exciting milestones that highlight Lesotho’s impressive journey in the digital realm. With enthusiasm, he mentioned the nation’s recent approval as a member of the Smart Africa Alliance, which underscores its commitment to digital advancement. Additionally, he revealed that Lesotho is gearing up to host an AU member state to validate the ground-breaking Digital Transformation Implementation Assessment Report, marking yet another significant step forward for the country’s digital initiatives. “These are just indicative milestones and platforms that reaffirm Lesotho’s commitment to collective action, alignment and innovation as the building blocks of Africa’s sustainable and inclusive digital future,” he emphasised. Matekane highlighted how Lesotho is positioning itself at the forefront of digital innovation by aligning

its policies with regional frameworks. A key initiative in this transformation is the rollout of a National Digital Framework, which includes pioneering projects like Digital Public Infrastructure and digital identity systems. Despite impressive coverage, with over 95 percent of the population connected through terrestrial networks, significant hurdles still exist. Matekane pointed out the pressing issues of affordability regarding digital devices and high data costs that place a strain on household budgets. As leaders gathered to celebrate the milestones achieved, Matekane stressed the importance of seizing the vast opportunities that lie ahead for African nations. He passionately urged leaders to prioritise investments in connectivity, energy infrastructure, digital skills and digital trade, reminding everyone that the future of Africa depends on these crucial developments. “As leaders, our commitment must be to ensure

that Africa’s digital transformation is both sustainable and inclusive. We must guarantee that no child, no community and no country is left behind,” he affirmed.

Before stepping down, Matekane spoke with passion about the vibrant future he envisions for Africa—one that is digital and driven by collaboration. He emphasised the profound belief that the continent thrives through unity, shared goals and innovative spirit. His words resonated, inspiring a collective commitment to building a stronger, more connected Africa.

“Together let us inspire action, accelerate growth and amplify Africa’s impact on the global stage.” Present at the symposium were several distinguished Captains of FinTech and Tech Industries, AU Deputy Chairperson and commissioners of the AUC, the CEO of the APRM, the Deputy Mayor of New York and other dignitaries in advancing Africa’s digital and governance agenda.

# Lesotho Joins DRC, Timor-Leste and Others as UN Vice Presidents

By: Staff Reporter

Lesotho has been elected among 21 countries to serve as Vice President of the 80th Session of the United Nations General Assembly, joining fellow newcomers such as the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Timor-Leste. The election took place in New York this week as the UN prepares to open its latest annual session. For Lesotho, a small mountain kingdom with limited global influence, the seat provides an important window to international diplomacy and decision-making.

The position of Vice President at the General Assembly is not ceremonial alone. The Assembly elects 21 Vice Presidents at the start of each new session. Five seats are automatically taken up by the permanent members of the UN Security Council; China, France, Russia, the United Kingdom, and the United States. The remaining positions are distributed among regional groups to ensure balanced geographic representation. Vice Presidents preside over plenary meetings when the President of the General Assembly is absent. They also participate in procedural deci-

sions, ensuring that the Assembly's work continues without interruption. The role therefore provides smaller nations like Lesotho with visibility in the complex machinery of multilateral diplomacy.

Vice Presidents are chosen through a straightforward process of nomination by regional blocs, followed by confirmation by the Assembly. African states nominate a set of candidates, as do Asia-Pacific, Eastern Europe, Latin America and the Caribbean, and Western Europe and others. Once nominated, the entire Assembly adopts the list without controversy, as the outcome is usually settled

by consensus well in advance. This method of appointment dates back to the early years of the UN, designed to balance influence among global powers while keeping space for smaller states to occupy leadership positions. While the General Assembly Presidency rotates each year between regional groups, the Vice Presidencies offer broader participation and a chance for countries of varying size to play a formal role in the conduct of global debate.

For Lesotho, this election does not translate into veto power or a decisive voice over substantive resolutions. But it is a recognition of the country's standing with-

in the African group and an opportunity to be seen on the world stage. In moments of procedural importance, such as managing debates, steering contentious agenda items, or ensuring order during plenary sessions. Lesotho will share the dais with some of the world's largest powers. In addition to Lesotho, the list of Vice Presidents for the 80th session includes Andorra, Argentina, Bangladesh, Cabo Verde, Kenya, Lebanon, Maldives, Montenegro, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saudi Arabia, Tunisia, Venezuela, and others. Together with the five permanent Security Council members, these countries will form the 21-member Vice Presidency team supporting the General Assembly President throughout the year.

The practice of electing Vice Presidents underlines one of the UN's core principles: the sovereign equality of all member states. By rotating such positions, the Assembly ensures that both powerful and small nations share responsibility for the smooth running of its work. Lesotho's election continues that tradition, situating the country within the highest procedural tier of the UN's main deliberative body.

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# Russia's "Scholarships" and Lesotho's Vulnerable Youth

By: Tholoana Lesenya

MASERU

**B**ehind the polished promises of free education and high-paying jobs abroad, one of the most dangerous human trafficking syndicates in recent years is spreading its reach. What first appears as a golden ticket to Russia is now being unmasked as a baited hook for vulnerable Basotho youth.

For many families, a scholarship abroad is the dream that justifies sacrifice. It is the hope that a child will return home transformed, degree in hand, to lift others with them. Yet disturbing revelations suggest that some opportunities on offer are little more than pathways into forced labor and exploitation.

Former Minister of Education and youth advocate Dr. Mahali Phamotse has long championed access to international scholarships. In an interview with Lesotho Tribune, she stressed that her programme for Russia is both genuine and closely monitored.

"Every scholarship we arrange goes through a vetting process. Agreements are signed with universities, institutions, and host families. The safety of our children is paramount," she said.

But Dr. Phamotse's careful oversight stands in stark contrast to another scheme



gaining ground, known as Alabuga. Operating under the guise of scholarships and overseas jobs, Alabuga is increasingly being exposed as a trafficking network masquerading as an education pipeline. Victims describe how they were enticed by glossy advertisements promising free tuition, travel, accommodation, and even lucrative work. Social media influencers, trusted faces with thousands of followers, were paid to amplify the message, giving the operation a thin sheen of credibility.

In South Africa, this tactic has already ensnared dozens of young men and women. Several influencers have since admitted that they unknowingly promoted the network, only realizing later that they had helped funnel peers into the hands of traffickers. The same threat now hangs over Lesotho.

Those who follow Alabuga's

call discover too late that nothing is as advertised. Survivors speak of passports confiscated on arrival, confinement in abusive conditions, threats of violence, and a life reduced to unpaid labor. It is modern slavery polished with the language of opportunity. Dr. Phamotse warns parents to be vigilant. "If someone says they will take your child abroad, demand written agreements. Ask which universities are involved. Consult the Ministry of Education or Labour. Real scholarships are never rushed and never secretive." The silence of official channels only deepens the unease. Attempts by Lesotho Tribune to secure comment from the Minister of Labour, Hon. Tšeliso Mokhosi, were unsuccessful. Whether government is aware of Alabuga's operations, or how many Basotho may already have been entrapped, remains unanswered.

Human trafficking thrives on precisely this kind of vacuum: secrecy, silence, and neglect. Without urgent awareness campaigns and swift state intervention, the next group of victims may already be in line.

What makes this story even darker is the information now reaching Lesotho Tribune. Sources close to government have alleged that between seven and nine young Basotho girls from Northern Lesotho were recently shipped to Russia through the involvement of two Members of Parliament aligned to the current government. Whether these MPs acted knowingly or were themselves manipulated remains to be established.

Adding weight to these concerns, a former MP who requested anonymity confirmed to this paper that she herself was once approached with a scholarship offer from the same programme. She declined after seeing the "requirements," which she described as deeply troubling. For now, the picture is incomplete. What is certain is that traffickers are adapting their tactics to exploit the dreams of the young and the trust of communities. And what is equally certain is that Lesotho Tribune will continue to investigate, to separate legitimate opportunity from the glittering chains of deception.

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# PAC Orders Nigerian Surveyor to Leave Gov House after 34 Years

By: Tholoana Lesenya

MASERU

A Nigerian national who has lived in a government house for more than three decades has been ordered to vacate the property with immediate effect. The Public Accounts Committee (PAC) on Thursday instructed Faruk Idris, a land surveyor who first came to Lesotho in 1991, to leave the Hills View government house, saying he had been staying there illegally since his employment contract expired.

PAC chairperson 'Machabana Lemphane-Letsie told Idris that he was no longer employed by government and had failed to provide proof of a valid contract. "You are no longer employed by the government, or at least you failed to provide your employment contract before this committee. As a result, we are instructing you to vacate that government house immediately," Lemphane-Letsie said. Idris arrived in Lesotho in 1991 under a two-sided agreement between the two countries and joined the Ministry of Local Government. As part of the deal, the government provided him with accommodation. Although his initial contract ended in



1993, he was recalled by the Ministry of Public Service under a special arrangement. In 2016, Idris joined the Maseru City Council (MCC) as a land surveyor and later became Principal Surveyor, a senior post he held until his contract expired in March this year. The PAC, however, heard that his contract had already expired in 2022 and that an extension given by then-Principal Secretary Neo Liphoto was irregular because the PS had no authority to hire or extend contracts. The Prime Minister's Government Assets Recovery Task Team (GASARTT) told the committee that Idris had ignored repeated requests to vacate the house. Advocate Seeng Matšosa, who leads the task team, said Idris had also defied a 2017 court order that directed him to leave the property and pay M12, 920 in rental arrears. "I would like to bring to

the attention of this committee that there is a court order directing Mr. Idris to vacate the house but he never obeyed it," Matšosa said. The recovery team, established in 2023, is tasked with investigating and reclaiming state assets that have been Mismanaged or fraudulently occupied. Idris admitted before the PAC that he did not have a residence permit, explaining that without a valid employment contract he could not apply for one. He pleaded with the committee to allow him to stay until December, saying he had nowhere else to go. "With these 34 years I have committed to this country, I never intended to break the law. I only ask for more time to prepare myself," he said. But the committee refused, saying he had been given ample time over the years. Idris also claimed that MCC owed him salaries from April 2023 to March

this year, saying he was verbally instructed to continue working under the terms of his previous contract. The committee dismissed his claims, saying he had been working illegally since 2022 and that he might in fact owe the MCC for salaries he received after his contract expired. The case has highlighted broader concerns about the poor management of government houses and assets. Auditor General Mathabo Makenete has repeatedly warned that many government ministries do not keep proper asset registers, leading to mismanagement and abuse. PAC members said Idris' long stay in a government house without authority showed how state property was being misused. The committee instructed the recovery team to take over the house and ensure it is handed to the rightful beneficiaries.

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# ESG Lens

## When Transparency Becomes a Punishable Offense



# 9

Lesotho Tribune

By: Lesotho Tribune  
Reporters

**D**eputy Commissioner of Police (DCP) Paseka Mokete has been issued a show-cause letter, accused of tarnishing the reputation of the Lesotho Mounted Police Service (LMPS). His offense? Answering a question honestly to the Lesotho Tribune. According to the post, Mokete admitted he was not privy to the details of a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) signed between the police and investment firm Mergence, despite being listed as a witness. For this candour, he now faces the threat of suspension. At first glance, this appears to be an internal disciplinary matter. But step back, and it becomes a textbook case of what ESG frameworks describe as governance failure. It demonstrates how institutions corrode when image is valued above integrity, when secrecy is prized above accountability, and when transparency itself becomes a punishable offense. The Governance Pillar of ESG is not only a corporate tool; it is increasingly a measure of how public



institutions perform under the pressure of accountability. The “G”; governance demands transparency, ethical leadership, and responsiveness to stakeholders. In the case of the police, the stakeholders are not shareholders but the public whose taxes fund the service and whose rights depend on its credibility. By penalising Mokete for admitting his lack of knowledge, the LMPS leadership has inverted this principle. Instead of encouraging honesty, it punishes it. Instead of promoting accountability, it signals that silence is safer than truth. And instead of aligning with ESG standards that attract trust and investment, it undermines them.

Secrecy as Institutional Culture  
This episode exposes a

broader pathology: secrecy has become institutionalised in Lesotho’s governance structures. The police commissioner’s fury at Mokete was not about operational failure. It was about optics — the fear that a senior officer admitting ignorance would embarrass the institution. But embarrassment is not a crime. What corrodes institutions is the attempt to airbrush reality. ESG thinking is clear on this: resilience comes not from suppressing flaws, but from confronting them. Companies that bury bad data eventually lose investor confidence. Governments that punish truth-telling officials lose legitimacy. In Lesotho, however, the reflex is to shoot the messenger. It is the official who speaks plainly — not the architect of questiona-

ble deals — who ends up defending themselves in disciplinary hearings. [Link to Pension Fund Governance](#)  
This case cannot be divorced from the wider scandals swirling around Lesotho’s public funds. The MOU with Mergence, which sparked Lesotho Tribune’s questions, is itself part of a larger story of opaque financial arrangements and conflicts of interest in the pension industry. At the centre of this are unresolved questions about governance: Who benefits? Who approves? Who scrutinises? The Central Bank of Lesotho has faced criticism for its failure to enforce proper oversight. Pension funds have allowed themselves to be captured by conflicted

*Continues in Page 12*



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Lesotho Tribune

By: Staff Reporter

The Revenue Services Lesotho (RSL) 2nd Annual Taxpayers Appreciation Day brought a vibrant atmosphere to Maseru on Friday as the people came together to honour those making a significant impact on the nation through their tax contributions.

In this ceremony, five strategic partners and six outstanding compliant taxpayers were recognised for their exemplary commitment to tax compliance. The strategic partners, praised for their invaluable contributions such as expert advice, information sharing and developmental support, exemplified how collaboration can lead to a thriving revenue system. The RSL's public appreciation serves not just as a pat on the back but as a clarion call to continue these essential partnerships that bolster Lesotho's

# BUSINESS & ECONOMY

## RSL 2nd Annual Appreciation Day



Photo Ced: RSL

economic resilience. This year's awards for compliant taxpayers celebrated those who have diligently adhered to tax and customs laws over the past three years, starting in 2023. Though the selection criteria were tough, it was fair—only those who filed and paid their taxes on time and demonstrated exceptional revenue growth were honoured. The Commissioner General of the RSL, Mathabo Mokoko, articulated the purpose of the celebration, emphasising that every tax contribution, no matter how small, is a vital building block for Lesotho's progress. "Every contribution, no matter how small, is a brick in the foundation of Lesotho's development," she remarked, highlighting the critical role taxes play in funding education, healthcare, infrastructure and social empowerment programs.

Mokoko urged taxpayers to uphold their responsibilities, noting that the synergy between government and citizens is more crucial than ever. She asserted that as Lesotho looks to the future, it should work on reducing its reliance on foreign aid and focus on mobilising its own resources, pointing to the importance of tax collection as a measure of economic health and an engine for growth and investment.

Adding to the day's motivation, Minister of Public Service Mputi Mputi echoed these sentiments, reminding attendees that the prosperity of Lesotho hinges on the collective efforts of its people. He stressed that taxes paid are the lifeblood of the nation, allowing the government to invest in vital areas that foster a prosperous and equitable society. Attendees were encouraged to view tax compliance as a shared respon-

sibility, a partnership that drives progress rather than a punitive obligation. The message was clear: Together, they can build a brighter future for all. The day was enriched by the recognition of strategic partners, including the Lesotho Defence Force (LDF), Lesotho Mounted Police Service (LMPS), African Tax Administration Forum (ATAF), United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), and the American Embassy, each honoured for their unique contributions to fostering a culture of compliance. Congratulations also went out to this year's compliant taxpayers, representing a range of industries, including Industrial and Mining Solutions (PTY) LTD, BME Lesotho (PTY) LTD, Zurary (PTY) LTD, Goldrush Lesotho (PTY) LTD, Moores Roland (PTY) LTD, and Mascon Freight (PTY) LTD. Teboho Ralikhomo also received recognition for excellence in Simplified Business Taxation. With a spirit of unity and celebration, the Taxpayers Appreciation Day served as a powerful reminder of the critical role that every taxpayer plays in shaping the future of Lesotho.

# RSL and FAFF Seal Pact to Curb Corruption and Spur Jobs



By Malefo Thinyane

**L**esotho Revenue Services (RSL) has signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the Federation of Agents of Foreign Firms (FAFF), pledging to strengthen compliance, foster transparency, and unlock new jobs. The agreement was concluded in Maseru this week.

RSL Commissioner-General Advocate Mathabo Mokoko described the partnership as more than a formal accord.

“This is a commitment to building a fair, transparent, and accountable economic system that benefits every Mosotho,” she said. “Through this collaboration, we want to create an enabling environment for local businesses while ensuring every cent is accounted for.”

Under the deal, FAFF will provide data and technical support to RSL, enabling quicker detection of irregularities and tighter oversight of foreign firms. Several ministries, including Trade, Labour, and Lo-

cal Government, are also on board.

“Corruption and mediocrity do not serve this nation,” Adv Mokoko added. “By working together, we can build a system rooted in trust, sustainability, and self-reliance.”

She stressed that the ultimate goal is to protect resources for education, healthcare, and vulnerable groups, while stimulating job creation through fair regulation of foreign businesses and cross-border trade. FAFF’s General Secretary, Advocate Lehloka

Maphatsoe, reaffirmed the federation’s role in promoting ethical conduct among its members. Public Relations Officer Thabo Qhesi urged entrepreneurs to seize opportunities under the Business Licensing and Registration Act of 2019, which reserves space for agents of foreign firms.

RSL closed with a call for cultural change: building a mindset of integrity and excellence, particularly among the youth, as the foundation for lasting growth.

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service providers. And time and again, public officials tasked with asking questions are either silenced, sidelined, or punished. Mokete's show-cause letter is not an isolated event; it is a symptom of systemic resistance to transparency. The ESG Lens on Policing Globally, police services are not immune from ESG scrutiny. Social responsibility includes how law enforcement treats dissent, how it manages public trust, and how it uses power. Governance, in turn, covers the internal accountability structures that prevent abuse and ensure credibility.

Lesotho's police service has often found itself in headlines for the wrong reasons: excessive use of force, politicised operations, and weak internal accountability. Adding to that list the punishment of a senior officer for speaking to the press only deepens concerns that governance is treated as a nuisance rather than a necessity.

When ESG analysts look at countries for investment risk, these institutional signals matter. Weak governance in one part of the state bleeds into perceptions of the entire investment climate. If the police punish transparency, what faith can investors have in regulatory agencies, procurement processes, or state-owned enterprises? **The Risk of Normalising Retaliation**

The governance failure here is not just institutional but cultural. Every show-cause letter like Mokete's sends a message down the ranks: loyalty to leadership

trumps loyalty to truth. Over time, this corrodes morale, entrenches fear, and breeds compliance rather than courage. It also normalises retaliation. Today it is a police officer being silenced for answering a journalist. Tomorrow it could be a procurement officer questioning a tender, or a regulator probing a financial deal. Once the culture of punishing openness is entrenched, it spreads across institutions. And ESG investors notice. Socially responsible funds, development financiers, and international partners increasingly demand proof that countries respect governance standards. Where there is retaliation against transparency, funding dries up, and reputational damage lingers.

**Why This Matters Beyond Policing**

The Mokete affair resonates beyond the police barracks. It touches on a national dilemma: Lesotho struggles with the basic building blocks of governance. Institutions too often protect themselves rather than the public, shield elites rather than serve citizens, and enforce silence rather than encourage disclosure.

This is not merely a police story. It is the same story told through the collapse of trust in pension fund governance, through opaque deals in mining and energy, and through politicised decision-making in agriculture. The names and faces change, but the mechanics are the same. **The Lesson for ESG in Lesotho**

ESG is not just a check-

list. It is a lens that reveals whether institutions can survive the shocks of scrutiny, crisis, and change. In Lesotho's case, the lens keeps catching the same flaw: governance is brittle because it is allergic to transparency. DCP Mokete's fate will tell us whether the LMPS is willing to embrace governance principles or whether it will double down on its culture of opacity. If he is punished, the message will be clear: honesty has no place in the institution. If the case is dropped, it may mark a small but important step toward aligning police culture with the governance standards that

Lesotho desperately needs. **Closing Warning** A show-cause letter may look like a small administrative act. But in the ESG framework, it is a flashing red light. It warns that governance is being inverted, that truth is being criminalised, and that institutions are mistaking image management for accountability. The real danger is not the embarrassment of one honest comment. The real danger is the institutional culture that punishes candour and rewards silence. In ESG terms, that is not just poor governance, it is the beginning of collapse.

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Lesotho Tribune

By Staff Reporter

This week, the Kingdom of Lesotho made significant strides on the international stage as Prime Minister Sam Matekane led a high-level delegation to the opening of the 80th session of the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA). Hosted in the IN Headquarters in New York, this year's session carried the important theme, "An Empowered Global South for a Sustainable Future," reflecting a focus on collaboration and development among nations in the Global South.

Prime Minister Matekane was accompanied by several influential cabinet ministers including Honourables Mohlomi Moleko, Lesaoana Pitso, Selibe Mochoboroane, Lejone Mpotjoane and Dr Retelisitsoe Matlanyane. Each minister holds a portfolio

# AFRICA

## Lesotho Elevates its Status as one of the Vice Presidents of UNGA 80th Session



deemed crucial to the discussions surrounding the assembly's agenda and objectives. Lesotho's active participation in this 80th session underscored the country's commitment to multilateralism and its rising influence in global discussions. By stepping into a role with heightened visibility, Lesotho is well-positioned to advocate for its national interests as well as the needs of other developing countries that face similar challenges. Key discussions during the meeting focused on pressing global issues, including the urgent need for reform in international financial institutions, strategies for mobilising resources to facilitate sustainable development and tackling critical challenges such as climate

change, debt sustainability and equitable access to emerging technologies. Mpotjoane, the Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Relations, articulated the necessity of transcending traditional dependencies characteristic of North-South cooperation. While recognising the historical significance of these relationships, he argued that they alone cannot adequately address the extensive financing and capacity gaps that hinder efforts to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Instead, he emphasised the importance of fostering strong partnerships among nations in the Global South, enabling them to pool resources and support one another effectively from the grassroots level. Mpotjoane took pride in showcasing Lesotho's abundant water resources

and significant potential for renewable energy generation. He painted a compelling vision of Lesotho as a future hub for renewable energy which could attract targeted investments from other Global South nations eager to collaborate. He furthermore reported to the UN Department of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs on the landmark progress of Lesotho's national reforms, particularly highlighting the successful passage of the 10th Amendment to the Constitution. This achievement, Mpotjoane informed, signifies a critical step in strengthening the democratic framework within the country. He underscored the vital importance of reinforcing the relationship between Lesotho and the United Nations, aiming to ensure the successful completion of ongoing reforms that encompass the 11th and 12th Amendments to the Constitution. As Lesotho assumes its role as Vice President of UNGA 80, it stands at the forefront of advocating for a shared vision of sustainable development and cooperative progress among developing nations, thus reinforcing its commitment to a more equitable global landscape.

# Another group of soldiers walk free

By: Tholoana Lesenya

The High Court has once again set free members of the Lesotho Defence Force (LDF) who were facing serious murder charges, sending mixed emotions across the country.

Barely a month has passed since eight soldiers charged in the Mophale Dam murder case were acquitted. Now, another group of five soldiers has been discharged from

standing trial over a separate killing incident in Mafeteng more than a decade ago.

The latest acquittal was delivered on Tuesday by Justice Polo Banyane, who cleared the men of all charges after ruling that there was no evidence linking them to the crime.

The five freed soldiers are Litekanyo Nyakane, Khauhelo Makoa, Sebilo Sebilo, Tšepo Tlhakeli, and Thebe Tšepe. They had been accused of killing Thabang Mosole, Monyane Matsie, and Pakiso Letabe during a violent incident at Ha Motanyane in Mafeteng on April 7, 2012.

According to the prosecution, the killings followed a heated altercation at a local bar.

It was alleged that the dispute escalated and ended with soldiers opening fire, fatally wounding the three men.



The State argued that the accused were part of an army unit stationed in Mafeteng at the time. However, the court found that none of the witnesses could directly place them at the scene as the ones who pulled the trigger. In her ruling, Justice Banyane accepted an application for discharge filed by the defence. She pointed out that although there was indeed an army base in the district, the accused soldiers were never identified as the shooters.

“The evidence before this court does not connect the accused to the offence they are charged with,” Justice Banyane stated. She added that convicting them without clear identification would amount to injustice. The ruling was met with mixed emotions. Relatives of the accused

expressed deep relief after years of waiting for judgment.

For them, the long court

battle has finally come to an end, allowing their loved ones to move on with their lives.

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# EDITORIAL

## The Timeless Mechanics of Manipulation



# 15

Lesotho Tribune

By: Staff Reporter

**M**anipulation is never new. It only changes its costume. Yesterday it wore robes of religion, today it parades in the language of policy and reform. The method, however, is constant: flood the public with absurdities until exhaustion sets in, then retreat to a half-truth and present it as salvation.

The first step is always disorientation. Promise what cannot be delivered. Announce subsidies that will end hunger, budgets that will balance themselves, reforms that will be painless. The absurdity is not an accident; it is a weapon. It creates confusion, blurs judgment, and leaves people desperate for relief. Then comes the retreat.

A smaller promise, modest and almost believable, is offered. Citizens grasp it eagerly. Compared to the storm of nonsense, it feels like truth. In that moment, they do not notice that the promise is still empty. They are just grateful it is not as grotesque as yesterday's lie. This cycle is as old as power itself. Plato accused the sophists of dazzling with contradictions, then slipping in falsehoods disguised as

reason. Hannah Arendt warned that totalitarian systems overwhelm with wild claims before selling small lies as tolerable compromises. Orwell showed that once language itself is corrupted, people mistake crumbs of clarity for a feast of truth.

Our tragedy is that we fall for it again and again. We sigh in relief at the lesser falsehood. We comfort ourselves with moderation, forgetting

that moderation built on a lie is still a lie. That sigh of relief is the manipulator's victory. It is the moment when belief is bought, cheaply, like silence on the market. The mechanics are timeless because we, the audience, have not learned to resist them. We measure lies against lies, instead of demanding truth. And as long as we settle for crumbs, we will always be sold belief at a discount.



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Lesotho Tribune

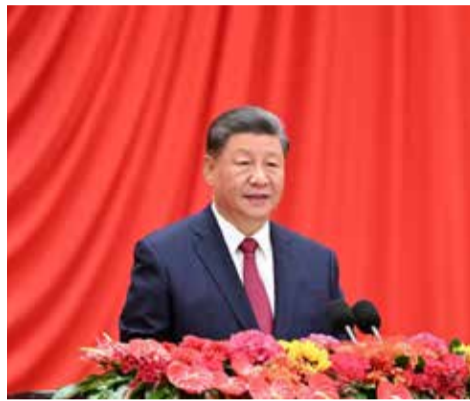
by: Silence Charumbira

As China celebrates the 76th anniversary of the founding of the People's Republic of China (PRC), the significance of this milestone extends far beyond Chinese borders, offering profound inspirations for developing nations like Lesotho. The remarkable transformation of China from a war-torn, impoverished nation into the world's second-largest economy represents one of history's most extraordinary development stories—one that provides particular inspiration for Lesotho as it navigates its own developmental challenges. Strategic planning China's success fundamentally rests on its unwavering commitment to long-term strategic planning. Since 1953, China has implemented 14 five-year plans, each building upon the previous one's achievements while adapting to new circumstances. This culture of systematic planning has enabled China to rally its 1.4 billion people around clear, measurable goals—a lesson that resonates deeply with Lesotho's own need for systematic plan-

# OPINION

## China's National Day: Inspirations for strategic development in

### Lesotho



ning. The effectiveness of China's planning approach lies not merely in setting ambitious targets but in ensuring they are achievable and measurable. This methodical approach has enabled China to lift more than 800 million people out of poverty since 1978, according to World Bank data. For Lesotho, which continues to grapple with poverty alleviation among its 2.3 million citizens, China's systematic approach to development planning offers compelling inspiration. What makes China's planning particularly instructive is its ability to adapt strategies based on results and changing global conditions. The targeted stimulus measures implemented during various economic cycles demonstrate how strategic flexibility can be maintained within a structured planning framework. This adaptability has been crucial in helping China maintain economic momentum even during global downturns, achieving an average GDP growth of over 9% annually since 1978.

Economic transformation, global impact and leadership in technology China's economic transformation is perhaps

most dramatically illustrated by its contribution to global economic growth. The nation now contributes approximately 30% of annual global economic expansion, making it not just a regional power but a fundamental driver of the world economy. This achievement is particularly remarkable when considering that China was predominantly an agricultural economy just four decades ago.

China's digital industry generated a revenue of 8.5 trillion yuan (about \$1.18 trillion) in the first quarter of 2025, up 9.4% from the same period last year according to the Ministry of Industry and Information Technology (MIIT). The growth rate was 4.4 percentage points higher than the same period last year, MIIT data showed. The country's digital industry alone reported revenue of 35 trillion yuan (approximately \$4.9 trillion) in 2024, representing a 5.5% year-on-year increase. The added value of major manufacturers of computers, communication devices, and electronic equipment grew by 11.8%, demonstrating the country's successful pivot toward high-value manufacturing and technology sectors. Strategic emerging industries now account for 13% of China's GDP, according to MIIT data, highlighting the successful transition from traditional manufacturing to advanced industrial sectors. This transformation from being primarily a producer of low-cost goods to a leader in advanced manufacturing

and technology offers valuable insights for Lesotho's own industrial development aspirations. The country's emergence as a global technology leader represents perhaps its most significant achievement in recent years. The MIIT has announced plans to accelerate development in cutting-edge industries including humanoid robots, quantum information technology, and 6G networks. The ministry's focus on artificial intelligence-led industrial transformation reflects China's commitment to positioning itself at the forefront of the Fourth Industrial Revolution.

The statistics are compelling: strategic emerging industries now represent a substantial portion of China's economy, with AI in manufacturing expected to grow at a compound annual growth rate of 14.8%. Chinese companies like Tencent and Alibaba are developing sophisticated AI systems for predictive analytics, quality control, and operational efficiency, demonstrating how technology can drive industrial advancement. For Lesotho, this trajectory offers both inspiration and practical guidance. The systematic approach to building technological capabilities—from basic infrastructure to advanced research and development—provides a roadmap for countries seeking to leapfrog traditional and often skewed development stages. China's success in quantum technology and

Continues on page 18

# Life sentences handed down in Ha-Lebentlele massacre

By: Tholoana Lesenya

The High Court of Lesotho has handed down heavy sentences in one of the most brutal cases to ever come before the bench, a crime that left the Makhetha family shocked and the entire Ha-Lebentlele community traumatised. Delivering judgment this week, Justice 'Mafelile Ralebese convicted the accused persons for what she described as an "act of the highest level of cruelty." The court found the group guilty of murder, attempted murder, assault, arson and malicious damage to property following the horrific events of October 29, 2016, when the Makhetha family home was attacked after a church service. According to court papers, the accused intentionally caused the deaths of Tumane Makhetha, 'Malethole Makhetha and 'Majane Makhetha. Survivors were left with life-altering injuries, including Limakatso, Lethole, 'Matšepiso and Tšepiso Makhetha, who were assaulted and set on fire. Another victim, Thabang Motseko, was brutally beaten, while 'Marelebohile Mashoai suffered serious bodily harm. The accused persons also torched Tumane Makhetha's vehicle and smashed windows of the family's main house, leaving behind a scene of ruin.



Justice Ralebese noted that the violence was sparked by superstition and unfounded accusations of witchcraft. She said the accused carried out the crime with shocking cruelty, even as 'Mathato Mafeisi was heard uttering disturbing words while sprinkling petrol on one of the victims. "The saddest part," the judge remarked, "is that this family was attacked for no reason, in their own home, after a church service. The woman they claimed to be looking for, 'Mabongi, was not even there. She may have gone elsewhere for her own reasons." The judge stressed that the survivors not only lost their loved ones but were left without a house and vehicle, while the wider community of Ha-Lebentlele was left traumatised by the attack. In her sentencing, Justice

Ralebese said punishment should serve both as a warning and a tool for rehabilitation. On counts one, two and three (murder charges), 'Mathato Mafeisi was sentenced to life imprisonment without parole. The rest of the accused were each handed 45 years' imprisonment for each count. On counts four to seven (attempted murder), all the accused received 25 years each, except Ramakula Fusi and Jeremane Fusi, who were acquitted. On count eight (arson of the vehicle), all were sentenced to eight years. On count nine (assault of 'Marelebohile Mashoai), all were sentenced to two years, except Nthabiseng Moeti and Ramakula Fusi, who were acquitted. On count ten (damage to the house), all were sentenced to five years, except Ramakula Fusi and Jeremane

Fusi. On count eleven (another arson charge), all were sentenced to 10 years, except the two Fusi brothers. The court ruled that all sentences will run concurrently. Justice Ralebese said the case should serve as a lesson to those who resort to violence and superstition. She condemned the belief in witchcraft that led to such a savage attack and said the law must protect innocent people from such baseless accusations. "This incident has had a devastating impact on the Makhetha family and their community," she said. "It shows the danger of superstition and the cruelty that can result when people take the law into their own hands." The judgment brings to a close nearly a decade of waiting for justice, but the scars left on the victims and their community will remain for years to come.

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biomanufacturing, areas prioritized by MIIT for 2025, showing how strategic focus on emerging technologies can create competitive advantages.

Tangible development achieved through planning. The Asian giant's consistent five-year plans demonstrate a commitment to systematic development planning. However, the scale and consistency of results achieved by China offer important inspirations for enhancing the effectiveness of Lesotho's planning processes.

First, the importance of maintaining long-term vision while adapting implementation strategies cannot be overstated. China's ability to maintain developmental momentum across multiple decades, despite changing leadership and global circumstances, demonstrates the power of institutional continuity in development planning. This suggests that Lesotho's planning processes might benefit from stronger institutional frameworks that ensure continuity across political transitions.

Second, China's focus on measurable outcomes and regular assessment of progress provides a model for evidence-based policy making. The detailed statistics regularly published by institutions like MIIT demonstrate how systematic data collection and analysis can inform policy adjustments and ensure accountability in development planning.

Third, China's emphasis on building domestic capabilities while engaging with global markets offers insights for small economies like Lesotho. The country's success in developing competitive advantages in specific sectors—from manufacturing to technology—shows how strategic focus can enable smaller nations to find their niche

in the global economy. Transformation founded in infrastructure development. China's infrastructure development represents perhaps the most visible symbol of its transformation. As of 2022, China's highway network exceeded 177,000 kilometers, while its high-speed railway network expanded to 45,000 kilometers. In 2024 alone, China's national railway system handled a record 4.08 billion passenger trips, with the network moving 3.99 billion metric tons of cargo.

The scale of China's infrastructure investment extends beyond transportation.

Current development plans include 2,500 kilometers of additional high-speed rail and expansion to 461,000 kilometers of highways.

These massive infrastructure projects have been critical for enhancing connectivity and supporting sustained economic growth across China's vast territory.

For Lesotho, with its mountainous terrain and dispersed rural populations, China's approach to infrastructure development provides valuable inspiration. The systematic investment in connecting even remote areas demonstrates how infrastructure can serve as an equalizer, bringing development opportunities to previously isolated communities. China's success in building extensive transport networks despite challenging geographical conditions offers a template for addressing similar challenges in Lesotho.

The digital infrastructure component is equally impressive. More than 80% of China's administrative villages now have 5G access, according to MIIT data, demonstrating how systematic investment in connectivity can bridge urban-rural divides. This comprehensive approach to both physical and digital

infrastructure has been fundamental to China's ability to maintain economic growth across diverse geographical regions.

Achievements in social security and public safety. China's development model extends beyond economic growth to encompass comprehensive social security systems and public safety improvements. In 2024, China witnessed a remarkable 25.7% decline in criminal cases compared to the previous year, while maintaining stable public safety conditions nationwide.

The Chinese government attaches great importance to combating all types of criminal cases. In 2024, the authorities solved 22,000 cases related to firearms and explosives, representing a 37.5% year-on-year decline. These statistics demonstrate the effectiveness of China's comprehensive approach to public safety, combining prevention, enforcement, and community engagement.

The success in crime reduction provides inspiration for Lesotho, which faces its own security challenges. China's systematic approach to public safety—combining technology, community policing, and preventive measures—offers insights into how developing nations can address security concerns while building social cohesion. China's National Day celebrations represent more than historical commemoration—they mark the ongoing success of a development model that has transformed the lives of 1.4 billion people. The journey from poverty to prosperity, from agricultural economy to technological powerhouse, demonstrates that with focused leadership, strategic planning, and consistent implementation, dramatic transformation is possible.

For Lesotho, China's experience offers both inspiration and practical

guidance. The systematic approach to development planning, emphasis on measurable outcomes, strategic focus on emerging technologies, and commitment to infrastructure development provide a framework that could enhance the effectiveness of Lesotho's own development efforts.

As China continues its development journey, with MIIT projecting continued growth in advanced manufacturing and emerging technologies, the experiences from its 76-year transformation remain relevant for developing nations worldwide. The story of China's rise from poverty to prosperity serves as a powerful reminder that with strategic vision, institutional commitment, and adaptive implementation, no development challenge is insurmountable.

The significance of China's National Day for Lesotho lies not in celebrating another nation's achievements, but in recognizing that successful development is possible with the right approach, sustained commitment, and strategic focus on long-term goals. In this context, China's 76th anniversary becomes not just a celebration of

Chinese success, but an affirmation of the potential for transformative development that exists within all nations committed to strategic planning and systematic implementation.

Silence Charumbira is an international journalist based in Maseru, Lesotho. He is former Deputy Editor of the Lesotho Times and Sunday Express. He has also worked with multiple reputable organisations like China Daily, Guangming, Associated Press (AP) The Guardian and CNN, among others. He writes on diverse topics including China-Africa relations. Views expressed in this article are his own and do not necessarily represent those of the publication.

# PAC Demands Action in Site Lease Scandal



By: Tholoana Lesenya

Parliament's Public Accounts Committee (PAC) has ordered the Government Assets Search and Recovery Task Team (GASARTT) to speed up legal action against individuals who were compensated for their land but refused to hand over their original site leases.

The directive follows shocking revelations made by GASARTT during a hearing before the PAC this week. The task team disclosed that some people whose land was taken for the construction of the Maseru Bus Stop, and who received new sites in return, have still not surrendered their old leases as required by law. PAC chairperson Machabana Lemphane-Letsie told GASARTT that the time for excuses had run out. She demanded that the task team give a clear deadline on when the cases would finally be presented before the courts. "This committee insists on seeing progress. The task team must state exactly when these matters will be taken to court.

The law cannot continue to be ignored," Lemphane-Letsie said firmly. The committee was told that when the government built the new bus stop in Maseru, it compensated affected residents by allocating them new sites elsewhere. These were mainly in Maseru West and the Stadium Area, locations considered of high value. Major Tankiso Lelosa, representing GASARTT, confirmed that the process had been legal, by proper evaluations conducted before new sites were handed over. But he admitted the recovery of old site leases had become a major stumbling block. "Some of the beneficiaries have kept their old leases instead of surrendering them. We are now working tirelessly to trace them and ensure they comply. If they refuse, the only option left will be to take them to court," he explained. The PAC warned that failure to surrender the leases meant individuals were unfairly holding onto government property that no longer belonged to them. This, the committee stressed, was a

direct loss to the state and a clear case of abuse of public resources. Committee members expressed concern that the delay could also encourage others to disregard government agreements in future land transactions. "The government cannot compensate people with valuable land and still allow them to keep their old leases. This is double-dipping at the expense of taxpayers," one PAC member remarked during the heated session. The task team was urged to act with speed, as the issue has dragged on for years. PAC members argued that clear deadlines and visible progress would restore public trust in how government assets are managed. Lemphane-Letsie told the hearing that allowing such practices to continue unchecked would only weaken confidence in the government's ability to protect national resources. "This is not only about sites in Maseru, but about sending a strong message that misuse of state property will not be tolerated. If the courts are involved,

let it happen quickly so the law can take its course," she said. GASARTT, an 11-member team set up in 2023, has a wide mandate to recover state property misused or fraudulently acquired. Its members are drawn from the Lesotho Defence Force (LDF), Lesotho Mounted Police Service (LMPS), National Security Service (NSS), the Prime Minister's Office, and several key ministries. The task team has already uncovered cases involving illegally occupied government houses, fraudulent land allocations, and abuse of state vehicles. The Maseru bus stop leases now add another major case to its growing list. Major Lelosa assured the committee that the task team would continue tracking the individuals who have failed to surrender their leases. He said they were prepared to push the matter to court if voluntary compliance could not be secured. "We are committed to ensuring that every single site lease that must be returned is handed back. We cannot allow state resources to remain in private hands unlawfully," he said. For now, the PAC has made it clear: GASARTT must set a date and fast-track the matter to court. Anything less, the committee warned, would amount to failure to protect public property. As the government intensifies its efforts to clean up misuse of assets, all eyes are now on whether this case will finally move from endless negotiations to firm action in the courts.



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Lesotho Tribune

By Staff Reporter

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# LUCT LAUNCHES FORTINET NSE PROGRAMME

BY: Lemohang Botsane

**L**imkokwing University of Creative Technology this week launched a Fortinet Network Security Expert (NSE) Program tailored for registered Limkokwing students and the university alumni. This NSE programme is a pathway certification that is recognised globally. It will produce cybersecurity experts through progressive eight levels.

The university Registrar, 'Mateboho Moorosi, appreciated the programme, saying it marked a commitment by the LUCT to ensure graduates are not just academically accomplished but also industry-ready.

The Representative of the programme, Sihle Mdlalose, bestowed his appreciation on the university for having partnered with Fortinet on this journey. "This is Limkokwing's direct contribution to the achievement of the country's aim in digital transformation," the Vice Chancellor of the LUCT, Advocate Tefo Macheli,



emphasised the significance of the programme to the university, explaining that it is a big initiative.

The Principal Secretary of the Ministry of Information, Communications, Technology, Science and Innovation (MICTSI), Kanono Ramashamole, expressed his respect to the university and partners of this beautiful union, saying as far as

the ministry is concerned, Fortinet will help to implement digital policies and cybersecurity.

"Today as Limkokwing joins hands with Fortinet, we witness the power of collaboration in shaping a secure and skilled Digital future. The government of Lesotho has placed digital transformation at the centre of its development agenda, guided

by our national digital transformation strategy, a document that we are very proud of." – MICTSI Minister Nthathi Moorosi affirmed. She commended the university and Fortinet for this vision, assuring them of the ministry's support. The NSE programme is free for registered Limkokwing students and payable for the university Alumni.

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# Question of Gov International Trips

By: Staff Reporter

This week in Lesotho, two hot topics took centre stage: the IMF Article IV Consultation Report and a spirited debate about the government's international trips. First up, the 2025 IMF report highlighted some impressive figures: Lesotho achieved a remarkable 9 percent fiscal surplus relative to GDP for the financial year 2024/25. However, there's a catch—the report forecasts a modest growth of just 1.4 percent for 2025/26. This raises flags about potential structural weaknesses and the threat of political gridlock ahead.

But that's not all. The report unveiled some sobering statistics—37 percent of Basotho still live below the poverty line, despite last year's renegotiation of water royalties leading to a windfall in Southern African Customs Union (SACU) transfers, which now account for nearly 40 percent of national revenue. Meanwhile, public debt has ballooned to an alarming 56.8 percent of GDP, with a staggering 80 percent owed externally, yet the government continues to accumulate more debt. In the midst of these shocking revelations, Members of Parliament (MPs) seized the moment to question the government's spending on international trips, probing whether these jaunts truly deliver value for taxpayers' money. Some MPs demanded transparency, comparing last year's foreign trip expenditures to funding allocated for youth job creation. What everyone really wanted to know was the tangi-



ble benefits of these trips. The debate revealed that a jaw-dropping M145 million had been earmarked for international travels last year, with an additional M13 million set aside. In contrast, M300 million was allocated for the Youth Apprenticeship Programme. The Deputy Prime Minister defended these international ventures, claiming they offer Lesotho opportunities to participate in global discussions and foster international cooperation. But the pressing questions linger: Do these trips create jobs back home? Do they help close the poverty gap, or do they simply enrich those flying between borders? The DPM insisted that the value of these trips lies in the partnerships Lesotho fosters with global organisations, allegedly unlocking access to financial support. But one has to wonder: in a time where the country is heavily reliant on loans and foreign aid, how sustainable is this approach? It feels like the

DPM's arguments pivot on promises of future benefits while the country digs itself deeper into debt. The response to inquiries about youth unemployment seemed to reveal a harsher reality—the DPM struggled to articulate any coherent strategy to tackle the staggering unemployment rate, confessing a lack of effective plans despite years in office. What are our leaders actually doing? Does this government genuinely care about its youth? Are we led by individuals of true integrity or merely influencers basking in the glow of social media, showcasing their travels while their constituents suffer in silence? It seems our leaders prioritise their appearances on the global stage, delivering polished speeches while their people grapple with hunger and hardship. What's the point of sending the entire cabinet on every international trip if the goal is merely to negotiate loans and then re-

turn with hollow boasts? How long will we depend on handouts that accrue interest instead of seeking fruitful exchange deals that create real jobs and meaningful change? What about the number of international trips left for this year? How much funding is still set aside to cater to the egos of those chasing planes? And what about the promised creation of 6,200 jobs while the government is busy flying around? What if we trimmed the travel budget and reduced the number of delegates accompanying the Prime Minister or ministers on trips? The reality is that the millions spent on these excursions could be put to much better use. We can't survive merely by participating in global dialogues—we need to focus on improving life right here at home. Our presence in international conference halls means little if we fail to uplift our own people. It's time to turn our attention toward tangible solutions that can help our country thrive.

# CBL Maintains Policy Rates Amidst Mixed Economic Signals

By: Staff Reporter

The Central Bank of Lesotho's Monetary Policy Committee held its 115th meeting this week, outlining its assessment of global and domestic conditions and policy decisions. Since the 114th MPC meeting, the CBL announced that global growth projections have been maintained, signalling resilient economic prospects despite ongoing policy uncertainty. The Governor of the CBL, Dr Maluke Letete, affirmed that the projections are attributed to front-loading of production and exports in anticipation of higher US tariffs and improved financial conditions due to a weaker US dollar.

However, he said risks persist due to geopolitical tensions, potential tariff increases and fiscal vulnerabilities in key economies. "In the second quarter of 2025, economic growth remained generally stable across major economies, driven by a robust export performance, increased manufacturing activity and targeted fiscal stimulus measures particularly in China," Dr Letete said. He highlighted the South African economic growth that picked up in mid-2025, driven by a rebound in manufacturing and mining. However, inflation eased last month but is expected to rise due to administered price pressures.

As a result, the South African Reserve Bank has decided to keep its policy rate unchanged to maintain balanced growth support



with inflation monitoring. "Coming to Lesotho, the preliminary indicator of economic activity showed a slight growth in July 2025, reflecting expansion in transport and construction categories," the Governor announced, adding that weak domestic demand and a fall in manufacturing, driven by lower US textile exports have nonetheless constrained growth. But despite the constraints, Dr Letete said there is hope that medium-term growth is expected to moderate due to external shocks. According to the CBL, inflation rose slightly to 4.6 percent in August 2025 due to rising food prices while July indicators revealed an overall fiscal balance improvement, shifting to a surplus of 11.4 percent of

the GDP driven by SACU receipts.

Meanwhile, the public debt-to-GDP ratio increased to 56.0 percent in July 2025 from 55.8 percent in June 2025 due to project disbursements."

Dr Letete continued to inform that the current account of the CBL recorded a deficit of 4.8 percent of GDP in mid-2025 as a result of high import demand, and the Net International Reserves (NIR) remain above the target floor of US\$840 million.

The Committee reviewed risks to growth and inflation alongside regional monetary policy conditions, underscoring the importance of maintaining the credibility of the loti-rand peg.

It therefore decided to maintain the NIR target

floor at US\$840 million and keep the CBL rate at 6.75 percent per annum. The CBL is navigating a complex economic landscape with mixed signals. While global growth prospects remain resilient, Lesotho faces challenges including weak domestic demand and external shocks.

The Committee's decision to maintain the policy rate reflects a cautious approach, balancing the need to support growth with the importance of maintaining price stability and the credibility of the loti-rand peg. The bank said it was committed to continuing to monitor domestic and external developments closely and is ready to take appropriate policy action if risks to the peg or price stability escalate.



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Lesotho Tribune

By: Staff Reporter

Lesotho's strength has always been in its soil. Beneath the mountain slopes and valley fields lies a quiet wealth waiting to be tapped. Every day more Basotho are rediscovering this truth, turning to farming not just as survival but as a business, a career, and a way to shape the country's economic future.

Across the lowlands, farmers are experimenting with modern irrigation, from drip systems that save water to sprinklers that stretch across hectares. In Mokema, in Thaba-Tseka, and in Butha-Buthe, stories are emerging of cabbage fields, leafy greens, herbs, and potatoes growing not only for the village market but for supermarkets and even export. These are not isolated successes. They are signals that farming can be professional, data-driven, and competitive.

Lesotho imports more food than it should. Yet when farmers organise,

# FARMERS CORNER

## Farming as the Country's Hidden Wealth

plan, and invest, the results are striking. A single hectare of potatoes under irrigation can yield enough to supply a small district. A few tunnels of herbs can connect a farmer to export markets. And with the right cold storage, packaging, and logistics, what is grown in the valleys can find its way to shelves in Maseru, Bloemfontein, and beyond.

The opportunity is clear: agriculture is not a relic of the past but a cornerstone of the future. It can create jobs for youth, stabilize prices for households, and even reduce the country's trade deficit. With climate shifts, farming will not be easy, but with technology and organisation, it can be resilient.

What is needed now is partnership. Farmers bringing the skill, government providing infrastructure, and the private sector opening markets. Together, they can turn small plots into an engine of national growth. Lesotho's hidden wealth is not in mines or dams alone. It is in the quiet rows of crops, the drip lines across a field, the greenhouses standing against the wind. Farming, done right, is not charity. It is enterprise. And it is waiting to carry the country forward.



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# Tieho Delivers Pride and Rhythm in Mohuli



By: Staff Reporter

**T**ieho's latest single *Mohuli* is a confident step forward in Lesotho's contemporary music scene. Built on Afrobeat rhythms but rooted in Basotho expression, the song strikes a balance between global polish and local authenticity. The production is sharp. Percussion carries the pulse with energy while synth layers add a modern sheen. Nothing overwhelms the mix. Instead, the arrangement

leaves space for Tieho's vocals, which sit at the center with clarity and conviction. His tone is textured, not overly refined, giving the track a human presence that listeners can connect with.

Lyricaly, *Mohuli* draws on themes of pride and identity. It is both celebration and testimony. Tieho's delivery is not boastful, but it affirms selfhood and community. The chorus in particular has a sticky quality. It repeats in the mind

long after the track has ended, a mark of a well-crafted hook.

What the song achieves is a sound that works in two spaces. It is radio-friendly and accessible, yet it also feels at home in dance venues. It invites movement, but it also communicates a message that resonates with listeners who care to hear beyond the beat. If there is a critique, it is that the track plays within familiar lines. Tieho could take more risks by experimenting

with bridges, unexpected shifts, or moments of silence. That might elevate future work to another level. But within its frame, *Mohuli* delivers fully on its promise. For Lesotho's growing music industry, Tieho's song shows that quality production and strong writing can place local artists firmly on the continental stage. *Mohuli* is proof that Basotho musicians are not only participating in today's Afrobeat wave but adding their own imprint.

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Lesotho Tribune

By Litšitso Letsunyane

**L**ioli FC's continental campaign ended in brutal fashion as they were swept aside by Orlando Pirates in the CAF Champions League preliminary round. The South African giants sealed a 7-0 aggregate win, exposing once again the gulf that separates Lesotho's champions from the elite of African football.

After a 3-0 defeat in Bloemfontein (Read Maseru), Lioli travelled to Soweto needing a miracle. Instead, they were dealt another heavy loss, this time 4-0, against a Pirates side that dictated the game from start to finish. The contest was lopsided from the opening whistle, and the final score only confirmed what was clear on the pitch.

Tshepang Moremi, the winger in irresistible form, tormented Lioli's defence. He struck just before half-

# ARTS & SPORTS

## Pirates Humiliate Lioli in 7-0 Aggregate Champions League Defeat



time with a free kick that caught goalkeeper William Huni off guard. Minutes after the restart, he doubled his tally with a powerful strike from distance that extinguished any faint hopes Lioli might have had. Moremi's brace adds to a sparkling season in which he has already scored five goals and assisted twice across competitions, further underlining his growing reputation after his decisive performance in the MTN8 final earlier this month. Pirates added further punishment through substitute Yanela Mbuthuma, who netted twice in the space of two minutes late in the sec-

ond half. Those goals closed a night where the Buccaneers' speed, discipline, and ruthless execution left Lioli helpless.

The result pushes Pirates into the next round, where they will meet either Saint-Eloi Lupopo of DR Congo or Sudanese side Al-Merreich, with a coveted group-stage spot at stake. For Lioli, the elimination is a sobering reminder of the unforgiving demands of continental football. Dominance at home in the Vodacom Premier League has not translated into competitiveness abroad. The two matches laid bare the gap in preparation, tactical

awareness, and technical sharpness. Pirates' superiority was undeniable, and Lioli could only endure the lesson.

This exit should serve as more than a statistic. It highlights the urgent need for serious investment in Lesotho's football structures. Without improved infrastructure, youth development, and exposure to higher levels of competition, Basotho clubs will continue to struggle against Africa's powerhouses. The gulf is wide, and Lioli's defeat is a painful reminder of just how much work remains to be done.

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