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With no regulation and no corporate accountability, gamblers are left to drown alone.

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Sports Betting Is Bleeding Lesotho Dry

With no regulation and no corporate accountability, gamblers are left to drown alone.

By: Staff Reporter

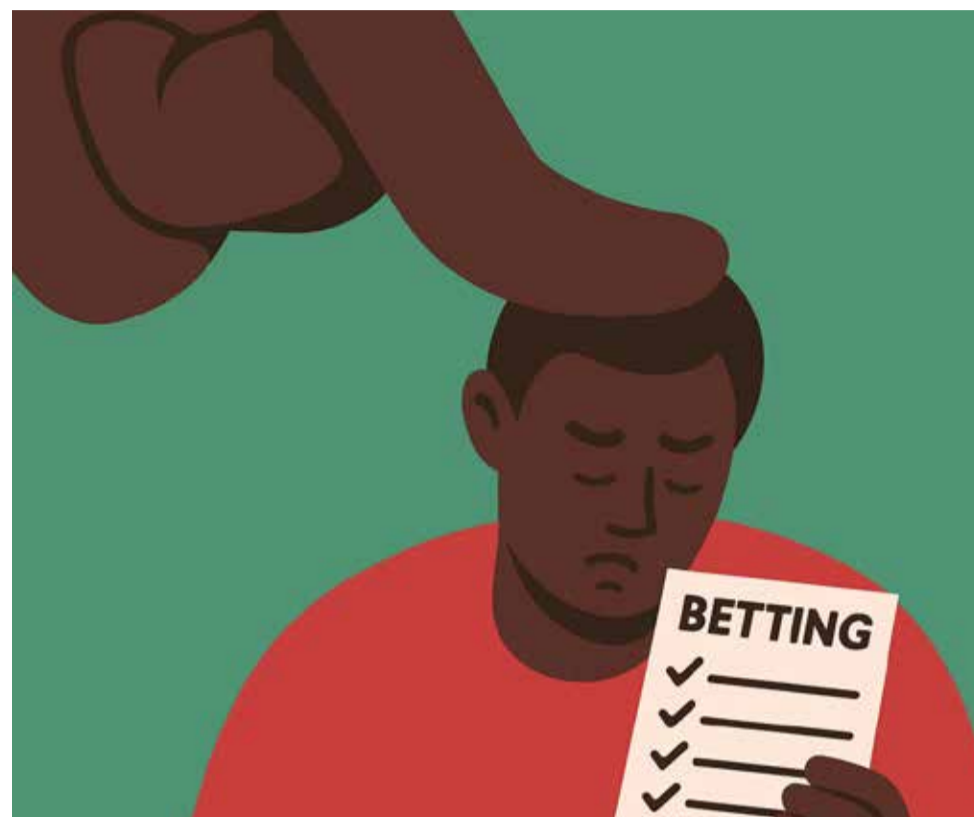
A Regional Crisis Hits Home

Sports and online betting have become a regional epidemic. In South Africa alone, gamblers staked R1.14 trillion in the year ending March 2024, up 40 percent from the year before. Two-thirds of that amount about R761 billion was spent on sports betting. Studies now show 31 percent of South African bettors are problem gamblers, up from just six percent in 2017. Disturbingly, almost half of sports bettors admit they are gambling to cover essentials like rent and school fees.

Lesotho is not insulated. Betting shops and mobile apps have multiplied, yet regulation remains toothless. The Lesotho Tribune reached out to all licensed sports betting companies in the country. Every one of them categorically refused to answer questions about what help they offer to gambling addicts. Their silence says everything. Against that backdrop, the Tribune sat down with a young Mosotho who has lived through the spiral of addiction. He requested anonymity. What follows is his story, in his own words.

Lesotho Tribune (LT): How did it start? How did betting affect your relationships and overall well-being?

Addict (A): My friend introduced me to betting, and honestly it looked interesting because the very first time I started, I won. I



would win 3,000 or 5,000, and I won a lot of times. Then suddenly I started losing a lot, but because I had seen that there is money in this thing, I encouraged myself and said I was investing, that it would come back.

I started by betting with my business money, then I risked my customers' money after they placed orders. I do not know what I was doing but I always told myself "E tlo khutla." Eventually this thing took every cent I had. I borrowed from mashonisa and owed a lot of them. I borrowed money from everyone I knew. My clients were fighting me, demanding their money or their orders, and I failed to deliver. I broke the trust my friends and customers had for me.

LT: What led you into gambling? Were there red flags you ignored?

A: I felt anxious and irritable when I could not gamble. I spent most of my time betting and I could not stop myself. I kept borrowing money from dif-

ferent people. I was hoping for financial gain because I am not working. I just wanted money.

LT: At what point did you realise you needed help? Did you receive any support?

A: I suffered severe headaches from debt and stress. I was emotionally tired. I started talking about it to the closest people around me and then I looked for professional help. They were supportive, and that was important for me.

LT: What did you do when you felt the urge to gamble?

A: I started reading a lot of books. I began going to church. I prayed a lot about it and I never turned back.

LT: Has recovery been helpful? What positive changes and new interests have you found?

A: Recovery has been very helpful. I have started paying my debts. I am working on myself and trying to fix the broken trust of the people who loved and believed in me.

My new interests include watching podcasts, and I

often come across gambling stories that are similar to mine. I am thankful that I acknowledged I had a problem and worked on myself. It could have been much worse.

LT: What is your advice to others who are struggling with gambling addiction?

A: They should seek professional help. That is the only way.

LT: How do you maintain your recovery today?

A: I maintain my recovery by tracking my progress and being accountable. I read a lot about gambling addiction.

The Bigger Picture

This testimony is not an isolated case. It is a warning. Lesotho's streets are filling with betting shops, its youth glued to mobile apps, and its households haunted by debt collectors. Regulations remain weak, public awareness is minimal, and the industry refuses even to acknowledge addicts exist.

As our anonymous source shows, recovery is possible. But it should not be left to luck, prayer, and personal willpower alone. The state must enforce strict oversight and betting companies must be compelled to provide meaningful support to those whose lives their business model destroys.

For now, their refusal to answer basic questions about responsibility tells its own story.

If nothing changes, the winners will remain the betting companies, and the losers will be the people of Lesotho.



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Murder-Accused Fugitive Extradited to Lesotho



Photo cred: Nail Talk

By: Seipati Matobo

A man who absconded while on bail after allegedly murdering one of Lesotho's most industrious young businessmen has been extradited to face justice.

Sello Mabothe (45) of Teyateyaneng Ha-Ntjane was handed over to the Lesotho Mounted Police Service by South African authorities at the Maseru Bridge on Thursday. Following his return, Chief Magis-

trate Matankiso Nthunya ordered that he be remanded in custody while awaiting trial. For the past five years, Mabothe has been wanted in connection with a 2020 murder case. He is accused of killing a prominent Berea businessman who was widely respected for employing hundreds of Basotho. The killing was allegedly motivated by suspicions that the victim had a romantic relationship with Mabothe's wife, an accusation

that intensified the seriousness of the charges. In addition to the murder charge, Mabothe is facing allegations of fraud, theft and money laundering amounting to M50 million. The case stems from a 2022 scheme in which he is said to have acted in concert with 28-year-old Karabelo Makara of Butha-Buthe and their associate Lehlohonolo Selate. Selate is accused of creating and registering multiple South African

shell companies that were allegedly used as conduits for illicit activities. He and Makara, along with eight other accused persons, were charged in October 2021. Mabothe's extradition now brings the possibility of consolidating the criminal cases. He is scheduled to reappear before Chief Magistrate Nthunya on September 11 to answer to the charges of fraud, theft and money laundering alongside Selate and Makara.

Lesotho makes part of 14 African nations in the 22 nd ADU, Australia

By: Pheello Mosesi

Led by Prime Minister Sam Matekane, the Lesotho delegation to the Africa Down Under (ADU) held in Pan Pacific, Perth, Australia forms part of the 14 African nations to partake in this 22 nd edition of the summit.

Among some of the key focus areas which the delegation aims to reach include building new networks and strengthening the already existing, securing viable sales prospects as well as maximizing the country's brand exposure.

Africa Down Under is the leading forum for Australian-African business and government relations.

Originally launched to highlight Australia's interest in African mining and energy, the three-day event has grown into the largest African-focused mining gathering outside the continent. It draws high-profile participants each year, providing a platform for investment, partnerships and knowledge exchange according to the statement released on the Government of Lesotho's social media platforms, the delegation will take advantage of its presence at this summit to "promote the nation's developments, products and services while engaging with key resource buyers, procurement specialists and decision makers." From its founding which dates back to 2003, the ADU focuses on raising awareness of Australia's interests in Africa mining and energy, evolving into



the largest African focused mining event held outside the continent.

Furthermore this year's three day summit spanning from 3 rd to 5 th of September is primarily focused on highlighting the growing demand for resources inclusive of copper, lead, nickel, cobalt which are key minerals for batteries and electric vehicles.

Forming part of the delegation that represents Lesotho this year is the Minister of Foreign Affairs Lejone Mpotjoane and his Deputy Principal Secretary Limpho Masilo- Motsamai, Minister of Natural Resources Mohlomi Moleko, Lesotho National Development Corporation Acting Chief Executive Officer Molise Ramaili and the Ministry of Mining Deputy Principal Secretary Seboka Thamae.

The event also includes live presentation, networking opportunities, showcasing success stories of Australian companies working across Africa. It also forms central

part of "Africa week", a celebration of strong and growing ties between Australia and Africa, featuring various satellite events on research, education and infrastructure.

The three-day meeting has evolved to become the largest African-focused mining event held outside the continent which is reflected by the number of high-profile participants who attend each year.

As part of the delegation, reports show that Lejone Mpotjoane said Lesotho's delegation seeks to explore opportunities in the mining sector while aligning business and investment for optimal returns. If said he reiterated that since Lesotho is rich in diamonds, the delegation will be eyeing on leveraging on them to see the growth in the country's economy while strengthening partnerships with Australian counterparts.

Mpotjoane also highlighted opportunities beyond mining. He explained that Lesotho seeks investment

in renewable energy and is encouraging businesses to establish operations in the country, emphasizing Lesotho's advantages including reliable clean energy and a naturally cooler climate suitable for data centres.

In an interview with one of the news agencies, Ramaili outlined the LNDC's strategy.

He stated that the corporate's key responsibility is to position Lesotho as an investment destination with diverse opportunities. While the Ministry of Mining leads sector-specific discussions, LNDC will actively promote other sectors, especially renewable energy to attract investors.

Lesotho's participation signals the country's commitment to economic development, resource-based growth and international collaboration. The Prime Minister's engagement at ADU is expected to strengthen Lesotho's global presence and attract investment that supports national development goals.

When Suspension Feeds Corruption, Public Service Becomes a Farce

By Staff Reporter

Sometimes a scandal reveals not just the crime itself, but the moral rot lurking beneath the surface. Lesotho's public sector is, once again, reeling. Not merely from allegations of embezzlement, but from a toxic by-product of such investigations: prolonged suspensions and "acting" posts that leech public money while leaving honest employees in limbo.

An All Too Familiar Scam
The annals of our civil service are tainted with cases of HR managers and finance officers caught red-handed. Ghost workers on the payroll, deceased employees earning salaries long after death and duplicate payments made for personal gain.

In each scandal, the perpetrators are eventually exposed, tried and "fined". What receives far less scrutiny is the impact on the innocent. Public servants are suspended during investigations, their lives upended, yet they still draw salaries.

Meanwhile, "acting" officers step into the breach, drawing full compensation for the same roles. It is an outrage wrapped in administrative procedure.

LEC: A Cautionary Tale
The Lesotho Electricity Company (LEC) offers a painful illustration. Its forensic audit has dragged on for months, during which key executives have been suspended again and again without resolution. The board quietly approved salary hikes for acting officials, compounding the



public's sense of outrage. Think about that.

Legitimate employees, accused but not convicted, are sidelined indefinitely. At the same time, their substitutes are elevated, paid and left undisturbed. That abuse of public funds strikes at the core of accountability and fairness.

Legality Versus Moralit
Labour and administrative law in Lesotho and in comparable jurisdictions permits suspensions with full pay pending investigation. Courts have recognized these as interventions aimed at preserving investigation integrity, not punitive measures.

But lawfulness is not the same as justice. A suspension that drags on without foreseeable conclusion, especially when a replacement is earning the same salary, becomes less of a precaution and more of an affront to good governance. It undermines trust, depletes scarce resources and

treats public service as a playground for waste.

The Hidden Toll on Public Service
What are we teaching honest civil servants when they see this happen?

- That integrity comes with the risk of being pushed aside for months without good cause.

- That "acting" roles can become cash cows, while your own service counts for little.

- That the system protects everyone except the public and your own sense of duty is expendable. Such practices erode professionalism, poison morale, and fuel public cynicism.

Demands for Reform

This must stop. We demand:

1. Clear timelines for administrative suspensions. Investigations should conclude within a defined, reasonable period, such as 60 days, unless extraordinary circumstances justify delay.
2. Transparency in replace-

ments. Acting roles should be time-bound and publicly disclosed, with caps on remuneration.

3. Accountability measures. Investigators must update the public on progress. Prolonged suspensions without action must trigger reviews by oversight bodies.

4. Restorative justice for the wrongly suspended. If allegations are dropped, employees should receive back pay, formal apologies and institutional support to reclaim their roles.

Conclusion

Suspension is meant to protect justice, not become a vehicle for abuse. When it

turns into a way to siphon taxpayer money and demoralize honest employees, it ceases to be administrative. It becomes criminal in spirit, if not in law. And if this practice continues, then the government itself becomes the biggest thief of all.

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“Government Only Acted After Pressure,” Mahao Widow

By: Tholoana Lesenya

The widow of the late Lesotho Defence Force (LDF) Commander, Lieutenant General ‘Maaparankoe Mahao, has told the High Court that the Government of Lesotho was forced to establish the Phumaphi Commission of Inquiry after mounting pressure from the family, civic groups, the international community and the Southern African Development Community (SADC).

Throughout the week, ‘Mamphanya Mahao was under cross-examination in the trial of nine soldiers, including Army Commander Lieutenant General Tlali Kamoli, who are charged with the murder of her husband. She said the Mahao family, devastated by the killing, refused to be silent and demanded accountability. Their calls were amplified by international voices, local civic organisations and SADC, which eventually compelled the government to act.

“The government never wanted the commission in the first place. They only established it because of the pressure we applied,” Mrs Mahao testified.

She told the court that even after the commis-



sion was established, the government of the time made every effort to frustrate its work.

“They resisted the inquiry at every turn,” she said.

She added that when the commission completed its report, the government went further by tampering with its contents.

“The report that was eventually presented was not the same as the original. Some of its contents were removed,” she revealed. Mrs Mahao also recalled that the government outright rejected the commission’s findings at the time. She said the then Prime Minister openly declared that the SADC decisions “would never see the

light of the day” because they were not compulsory.

For her, this was further proof that the authorities were determined to protect those implicated in her husband’s killing rather than deliver justice. Her testimony adds to a long-running narrative of mistrust between the Mahao family and the state.

Since 2015, the family has consistently accused the government and the military of covering up the circumstances of Lt Gen Mahao’s death. The SADC Commission’s first step is seen as a step towards accountability, but the Lesotho government’s refusal to fully embrace disappointed the family.

To this day, Mrs Mahao says the wounds remain open. During cross-examination, Advocate Letuka Molati, one of the defence lawyers, pressed Mrs Mahao about the family’s reliance on international support. She firmly responded that without the pressure from SADC and other groups, the government would never have investigated the killing. “They never acted out of goodwill. They only acted because they had no choice,” she

said. The trial of the nine soldiers, among them Lt Gen Kamoli, continues to unfold in the High Court. The accused face charges relating to the fatal shooting of Lt Gen Mahao who was considered a reformist and a potential leader within the army.

The case, which has dragged on for years remains one of the most closely watched in Lesotho’s history. It highlights not only the deep divisions within the country’s security forces but also the tension between the state and international bodies calling for accountability.

For the Mahao family, however, the fight is personal.

“We will not stop until justice is done,” Mrs Mahao told the court.

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ESG Lens



9

Lesotho Tribune

By: Lesotho Tribune Reporters

Key takeaways

- Access has expanded fast, largely via mobile money, but productive credit for MSMEs remains scarce.

- Youth and informal entrepreneurs are visible in the economy yet under-served by formal finance.

- Governance frameworks have strengthened on paper, now the test is transparent practice, measurable outcomes and board diversity disclosure.

I) Access vs. usage: inclusion's two-speed track Lesotho's new National Financial Inclusion Strategy II (2024–2028) confirms headline progress: overall financial inclusion rose to 91 percent by 2021, driven mainly by mobile money. The strat-

Banks Talk Inclusion, But Basotho Are Still Locked Out

Are banks reaching rural farmers, informal traders and youth entrepreneurs, or are inclusion wins still skimming the surface?



egy now pivots to harder problems such as MSME credit, smallholder insurance and usage that improves livelihoods. Fresh MSME data underline the gap between access and meaningful finance. Only 34 percent of MSME owners are “banked,” while 66 percent use mobile money. Most start or run their businesses with personal savings or family help, and 79 percent do not borrow at all. This is inclusion for transactions, not for growth.

II) Marginalized segments: who is still left behind?

Rural farmers

NFIS II makes farmers a priority and calls for targeted products, risk-sharing and climate-smart insurance. This is explicit recognition that rural producers remain under-served by bank credit. Lesotho PostBank has begun positioning products for agriculture, but system-level mechanisms such as guarantees and parametric cover are what the strategy says must scale between 2024 and 2028.

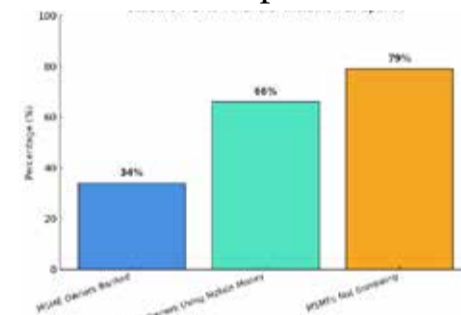
Informal traders

Informality is the norm for MSMEs. Most are micro or single-person businesses, many outside Maseru's formal ecosys-

tem. These firms rely on savings and mobile wallets, not bank overdrafts or working-capital lines, limiting resilience and growth potential.

Youth entrepreneurs

A full 33 percent of MSMEs are youth-owned, yet younger owners report thinner capital buffers and lower borrowing. NFIS II highlights youth inclusion as a policy priority, but delivery will hinge on simpler KYC, starter credit with risk-sharing, and financial education that is tied to actual products.



III) What banks are doing (and not yet doing)

- Low-cost accounts: Standard Lesotho Bank's Bothebelele M0.00 offers a no-minimum opening balance and entry-level features, signalling affordability moves in the mass market. The bank also markets a

Continues in Page 10

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Continued from page 9

suite of savings options for low-income clients.

- **Digital rails for traders:** SLB's Unayo platform targets micro-merchants and community payments, aiming to onboard the informal economy with simplified KYC and agent-led sign-ups. It is a promising bridge, but impact will depend on credit plug-ins, not payments alone.

- **Rural and agri focus:** Lesotho PostBank explicitly markets agriculture finance, aligning to NFIS II's farmer agenda and to its public-interest mandate. These are meaningful steps on the social pillar of ESG, yet none by themselves close the credit gap MSMEs and smallholders face.

IV) Governance: frameworks up, disclosures patchy

Consumer protection architecture

Lesotho enacted the Financial Consumer Protection Act, 2022, giving the Central Bank of Lesotho clear powers on market conduct, data protection duties for providers, and disclosure rules. The Financial Consumer Protection (Disclosure of Credit Information) Regulations, 2023, followed, tightening credit-disclosure standards. The Central Bank also runs a formal complaints channel through its Financial Consumer Protection Division. On practice, SLB's 2023 ESG report details com-

plaint handling, anti-fraud, AML/CFT, whistleblowing and conflict-of-interest policies aligned to the Mohlomi Corporate Governance Code, the national soft-law benchmark launched in 2021. That is encouraging, but customer-outcome data and independent redress statistics remain limited in the public domain.

Board diversity and transparency

Public profiles show Lesotho PostBank chaired by Adv. Mampe Mabela-Mphana, with a visibly mixed board. FNB Lesotho publicly lists its directors. What is still uncommon across banks is consistent, quantified disclosure on board gender mix, independence, tenure and succession pipelines, the kind of metrics investors now expect under the governance pillar of ESG.

V) Are banks serving the marginalized or are gains still exclusive?

Progress:

- Transactional access is broad and affordable options exist, especially via mobile money and low-fee accounts. Complaints channels and market-conduct rules are in place.

Gaps:

- Credit for productivity is the missing piece. MSMEs and farmers largely finance themselves, formal borrowing is the exception not the rule. Youth-owned firms enter but struggle to scale.

Board-level ESG reporting is improving but uneven, especially on diversity and consumer-outcome metrics.

Bottom line: Lesotho's inclusion story has moved from "can people transact?" to "can enterprises grow?" Banks have laid rails and improved governance frameworks. The next ESG test is whether those rails carry risk-sharing credit and fit-for-purpose insurance to the last mile, youth, rural farmers and informal traders, with transparent results.

VI) What to watch (2024–2028)

- **NFIS II delivery:** New credit-guarantee tools, agri-insurance pilots and MSME scoring models that reduce collateral barriers.

- **Bank disclosures:** Annual, comparable board-diversity and complaint-resolution metrics, published alongside ESG reports and pricing schedules.

- **Product evolution:** Low-cost accounts like Bothebelele and digital wallets like Unayo linked to micro-working-capital with transparent pricing and fair-use safeguards.



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Government lied about Mahao's Death

By: Tholoana Lesenya

MASERU

The widow of the late Lesotho Defence Force (LDF) Commander, Lieutenant General Maaparankoe Mahao told the High Court during her cross-examination that her family completely lost trust in the government of the time because it lied about how he died. On Tuesday, Mrs 'Mamphanya Mahao testified in the ongoing trial where nine LDF members face charges of murdering Lt Gen Mahao.

She recalled how, soon after the killing, the then Defence Minister Tšeliso Mokhosi went on national radio to claim that an "accident" had taken place and that "an officer had died."

For the family, she said, this was nothing but a cover-up. Mrs Mahao told the court that her husband had even approached Mokhosi for help when his security detail was withdrawn, but the minister failed to assist him. This, she said, added to the family's pain and betrayal.

She added that the government's actions after the killing made matters worse. The army, she testified, refused to release Mahao's body, leaving the family deeply suspicious of the official story. Shattered by lies and denial, the family went public.

"We stood up, we spoke to the media and we told the nation what really happened," Mrs Mahao said.



They also reached out to the Southern African Development Community (SADC) and other international bodies to demand justice. As a result, SADC set up a Commission of Inquiry led by Retired Justice Mpaphi Phumaphi. The commission investigated the death and produced a report with strong recommendations.

According to Mrs Mahao, the original report mentioned names of those implicated in the killing and called for accountability. However, when the government later released its version, those names had been deliberately removed. "I managed to get hold of the original report," she told the court.

"It had names, unlike the one the government presented. That is when we knew they were hiding the truth."

Her testimony painted a picture of a family that was not only grieving but also battling a state determined to

silence them.

For Mrs Mahao, the lies, the refusal to release the body and the editing of the SADC report proved

that the government had betrayed them.

"We had no confidence in them anymore," she said firmly.

An advertisement for Mohahlaula Airlines' cargo services. At the top is the airline's logo, a stylized yellow bird, with the text "MOHAHLAULA AIRLINES" below it. The main heading is "Flight Operations - Cargo -" in large, bold, blue and yellow letters. Below this are three bullet points in white text on a blue background: "Aircraft can be configured for time sensitive cargo", "Cargo service can include certification to transport dangerous goods as per IATA standards", and "Cargo will be assessed for suitability of aircrafts Centre of gravity loading parameters". At the bottom of the ad is a photograph of a white cargo aircraft on a tarmac with its cargo door open and stairs extended. The email address "bookings@mohahlaulairlines.com" is displayed at the very bottom.



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Lesotho Tribune

By: Staff Reporter

The preliminary forecast from Lesotho Meteorological Services for the 2025/26 season carries some encouraging news. Rainfall between October and February is expected to be normal to above normal, with the heaviest rains most likely during the peak summer months of December, January and February. Temperatures, meanwhile, are projected to remain close to their long-term averages. For farmers, this outlook is more than just a weather note. It is a signal to begin planning carefully, taking advantage of expected rains while also guarding against the risks that come with wetter conditions. Field preparation This is the time to make sure soils are ready. Deep ploughing, timely ridging, and applying organic matter or compost will improve moisture retention and fertility. In areas prone to waterlogging, drainage must be addressed early to prevent crop losses once heavy rains arrive. Timing the planting With rainfall expected to start within the normal range in October, farmers

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Rains on the Horizon

Preparing for the 2025/26 Planting Season



can begin sowing early maturing crops in the OND period. Leafy greens, beans, and short-season maize varieties will benefit from this window. The expected increase in rainfall from December onwards favours planting of main-season maize, sorghum, and root crops that need steady moisture to thrive. Staggering planting dates remains a wise practice, ensuring that not all crops face the same weather risks. Managing risks in wetter conditions Above-normal rainfall during mid-summer can also mean higher chances of fungal diseases and pests.

Farmers are encouraged to monitor crops closely, remove diseased plants quickly, and use preventative sprays where possible. Proper spacing between plants will help with air circulation, reducing the spread of disease. Horticultural opportunities For those in horticulture, this season presents an opening for expanding vegetable production. Tomatoes, cabbages, carrots, and beetroot can all perform well under these rainfall conditions if supported by mulching and timely weeding. Farmers with access to irrigation

should use it to even out dry spells in early summer, ensuring steady growth. A word to farmers The forecast is not a guarantee, but it is a strong guide. As you prepare your fields, remember that agriculture has always been about working with the possible, not the perfect. This season, nature seems prepared to meet us halfway. The rest depends on careful choices, patient observation, and a willingness to adapt. The soil is waiting, and with it, the promise of another harvest. (Meteorological information from Lesotho Meteorological Services.)

UNDP, MICSTI, MOET TOURS COMMUNITY DIGITAL CENTRES

By: Lemohang Botsane

Mafeteng

The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the Ministry of Information, Communications, Science, Technology and Innovation (MICSTI) and the Ministry of Education and Training (MoET) collaborated on the Community Digital Inclusion Model (CDIM), touring the three centres built in Mafeteng this week. This initiative was set to capacitate marginalised communities by evolving school computer labs into Community Digital Learning Centres (CDLCs).

The key objectives in this initiative were to equip communities with essential digital skills, e-government services, and to empower societies and promote diversity.

This tour was led by the UNDP Resident Representative, Dr Jacqueline Olweya, alongside Honourable Nthathi Moorosi and Professor Ntoi Rapapa. The Kolo High School Board Secretary, Matsebo Shalo, congratulated everyone who has benefited from the initiative. She expressed her gratitude to the UNDP and the ministries.

"We are here to celebrate this success of a journey of learning about the internet and computers. As the school, we are very much appreciative of this being held at our school,



it is indeed a milestone for our school," Shalo said. The CDLC beneficiaries from the three centres, Kolo, Makao-ta and Tsakholo High Schools, engaged with authorities and the Digital Ambassadors. On this momentous event, they received their certificates of attendance following a two-week training.

On behalf of the graduates, Thato Mejaela, an elderly woman who was also part of the beneficiaries, thanked the UNDP and the ministries, saying, "We are very happy to have been given this opportunity to learn about the internet through computers. It will surely come in handy in the future. By the time we're to receive our pension funds, we will be able to navigate through our phones ourselves." She concluded by commending their digital ambassador who has been so patient with them, claiming he has really helped them.

Dr Jacqueline Olweya, the Resident Representative of the UNDP, said she is proud of the work they have done with the ministries.

"Through this initiative, even the elderly will be able to use their own gadgets for themselves

and not be cheated out of their resources and money," she said. She continued to test the primary and high school students to find out just how much they know about technology and they turned out to know a few things, proving progress in their learning journey.

"Technology knows no age, and it's diverse. One can be a lot of things including being a photographer. All the people who received training can now apply the skills they obtained during the training to carry out their businesses. As UNDP, MICSTI, MoET and Econet Telecom Lesotho and Lesotho Communications Authority, we thought it was wise to come together on this to help schools as well as the communities," concluded Olweya.

Honourable Nthathi Moorosi expressed her heartfelt gratitude to the UNDP for inviting her to this momentous tour. "The internet is one thing that's difficult to navigate but can be very easy if one allows themselves to understand and use it wisely. As the government of Lesotho, our main objective is to see the whole country have access to the internet, and all that is achieved by building towers," said Moorosi. We also give thanks to the telecommunications company, Econet, for supplying the centres with a three-month internet contract. We

urge students and all the external beneficiaries to utilise these computers wisely. To curb the long queues at government services, the government is also planning to go digital on every service," she exclaimed.

Furthermore, she stressed the importance of the internet saying, "learners can work on their assignments and learn on their own with the internet," Professor Ntoi Rapapa commended the school authorities and the communities for having accepted this step of working together.

In our times, communication was not easy; it had to be done face-to-face or through letters, which took time to be delivered, but thanks to technology, today we can communicate through our cellphones and get an immediate response. This says we must adapt to these technologies and learn how to effectively use them." "The internet is very important because when a student fails to understand in class, he or she can go through the internet and research about the topic they did not understand, at their convenience. By the look of things, I think very soon every school in Lesotho will have a computer lab and access to the internet," continued Rapapa.

Rapapa said he wishes the schools and the society nothing but success going forward, further suggesting that there be competitions to see progress.

EDITORIAL

A Call to Unite, Claim Journalistic Rights

...we are not impersonating anyone, ours is to expose those impersonating good citizens



By: Staff Reporter

The recent arrest of a Lesotho Times newspaper editor has profoundly impacted the media landscape of Lesotho, shining a light on the significant challenges journalists face in our country issues that many, including our government and media institutions, often hesitate to address. The editor was detained under the questionable charge of “impersonating an investigator”, and this raises an important question: What do our institutions truly understand about the essence of investigative journalism? Was this arrest a deliberate tactic to hide corruption, shield a powerful individual from accountability or an indication of a systemic failure to uphold investigative integrity? Understanding investigative journalism is crucial, especially at this point and time.

It is a vital form of reporting that demands thorough examination of topics that matter; a pursuit of truth that often uncovers serious crimes, political corruption and corporate misdeeds. Journalists seek out sources



Photo Cred: Redbubble

or are often approached by individuals eager to reveal hidden information, allowing them to bring to light facts that might otherwise remain obscured. Yet, too many, including our institutions, fail to recognise that the core mission of investigative journalism is to hold those in power accountable, expose hidden truths and ensure citizens are informed, not merely to sensationalise for attention. Journalists dedicated to this vital work operate with courage and independence, fully aware that their revelations may provoke backlash from influential entities.

Sadly, the recent arrest represents a misunderstanding of the responsibilities being carried out. The editor was doing his job, equipped with critical information on potential corruption within our system. The authorities, feeling threatened, chose to twist the narrative, leading to the wrongful arrest of a profes-

sional merely doing what he was meant to.

The truth is our journalists understand the ethical standards that govern their work and would never misrepresent themselves. This arrest highlights a harsh reality; that repression frequently emerges when those in power feel challenged, stifling the vital work of journalists striving to uncover the truth.

This incident serves as both a wake-up call and a rallying cry for our community to stand firm in support of press freedom. Investigative journalism is the beacon that illuminates hidden truths and without our protection and support, the essential work we do risks being undermined.

The arrests and threats faced by journalists create an environment that chills press freedom and deters the bold pursuit of truth. Yet these challenges also underscore the necessity for investigative journalism as

a powerful tool for transparency and accountability. At Lesotho Tribune, we are passionate advocates for investigative journalism. However, our voice alone is not enough. We must come together, media houses and journalists alike, to push for laws that protect our work and ensure the safety of our sources. Our reporters must be equipped with the skills and resources needed to investigate effectively and safely. However, there is a pressing need for education on the critical importance of press freedom among the public and government as many overlook its vital existence. The recent events compel us to recognise the fundamental role of investigative journalists in strengthening democracy and civic society by uncovering truths and challenging power structures.

To effect meaningful change, we must unite to advocate for robust legal protections.

Last week's events serve as a vital reminder that we are engaged in a fight for our rights and freedoms. Often perceived as adversaries, the true enemy lies with those who fear the exposure of the truth.

Fellow journalists and media personnel, we have received a call to action and it is in our hands to respond. Will we allow this moment to pass unnoticed or will we unite to claim our rights and stand boldly against injustice?



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Lesotho Tribune

by: Hlalele 'Neko

For years, we have been told to be patient with Likuena. That one day the results will come. That building takes time. Patience has been given, but the scoreboard does not lie. In the past twenty years the national team has lurched from one disappointment to another, with only the occasional spark. The pattern is too familiar to ignore. It is not just about players having an off day. It speaks to an administration that has lost direction...or is it something else?

Look at the COSAFA Cup. In 2023 Likuena stunned everyone by reaching the final. It felt like a turning point. Then came 2025, a four nil hammering by Angola followed by three nil against Namibia. You cannot sell hope one year and deliver humiliation the next. That is not growth. That is roulette.

World Cup qualifiers have been no kinder. Since the cycle began, Likuena has

OPINION

Change at LEFA Is No Longer a Question It Is a Necessity



managed only two wins, two draws, and six losses. Just three goals scored, twenty conceded. A minus seventeen goal difference is not simply a statistic. It is an indictment. It says Lesotho is showing up not as a competitor but as a filler of fixtures. In March this year, the team lost two nil to South Africa and scraped a one all draw with Rwanda, on Friday hammered three nil by South Africa. That leaves Lesotho at the bottom of the group. If this does not alarm the leadership at LEFA, nothing will.

Then came the seven nil humiliation against Morocco in late 2024. One of the heaviest defeats in recent memory. Yes, there was a one nil win over the Central African Republic

soon after. But does one result erase the embarrassment of conceding seven? No. It is part of the larger story of a team without a system, without a plan, and without leadership strong enough to demand accountability.

Off the pitch the picture is just as bleak. Setsoto Stadium, the symbol of national football pride, remains half renovated and half abandoned. Construction was halted because the money ran out. What does that say about priorities? A stadium in disrepair is not only a physical failure. It is a reflection of football administration that cannot manage its own house, let alone lift the game to continental standards.

Some will argue that Lesotho is small, that resources

are thin, and expectations should be modest. That excuse has been used for decades. The truth is that size has never stopped other nations from punching above their weight. Iceland did it. Cape Verde is doing it. What they have is leadership, vision, and structure. These are the missing ingredients in Lesotho.

The players are not the problem. They run, they fight, they put their bodies on the line. But no amount of sweat can make up for poor planning. Winning culture cannot be built on disorganisation. That responsibility lies at the feet of LEFA's leadership.

There is no polite way to put this. The game is stagnant. Results are humiliating. Infrastructure is crumbling. Leadership has failed to turn potential into progress. Unless there is real change, not token reshuffling, we will be sitting in the same place in another three years while the rest of Africa continues to move forward.

It is time to end the illusion that patience will solve everything. Football thrives on accountability. Accountability begins at the top. LEFA has had its chance. It has squandered it. Kapo kea pota?

SOLICIT RAPE OF THE MEDIA

By: Gabashane Masupha - Political Scholar & Policy Analyst

When a constitution is shredded like pork chops in practice, when institutions meant to protect instead persecute, when the guardians of the law become its violators, what remains is tyranny cloaked in legality.

In Lesotho today, the grotesque abuse of power has taken a new shape. Young people would say this abuse has gone to private school: The solicited rape of the media.

That phrase is not an exaggeration. It captures the ugly reality that our institutions, police, security agencies, even the judiciary at times are no longer neutral custodians of justice but blunt instruments wielded to silence journalists. The arbitrary arrest of Phakela is not just an "incident." It is a constitutional crime, a disgraceful mockery of the freedoms we pretend to cherish.

His arrest was unconstitutional. The right to free expression, the right to inform and the right to hold leaders accountable are protected under the Constitution of Lesotho. Yet those rights mean nothing if institutions twist the law into a weapon against the very people tasked with truth-telling.



To arrest a journalist for doing his job is not only unlawful, but also barbaric an assault on democracy itself. Institutions that should safeguard the Constitution now behave like hired thugs for political elites; they are the guardians of the capital. Instead of shielding journalists from intimidation, they facilitate it. Instead of respecting the rule of law, they trample on it to please their masters. This is not governance. It is gangsterism dressed up in suits. These institutions need boot camps, they seem to play this nombolo (number) at the highest level. Lesotho's leadership

must be told, without fear or favour: you cannot build democracy and cy while raping the media. You cannot chant about reforms while suffocating the very voices that hold you accountable. You cannot quote the Constitution by day and violate it by night. Either we are a country ruled by laws or we are a cartoon republic ruled by whims.

The arrest of Phakela is not just about one man. It is about every journalist who now lives in fear, every citizen denied the truth, and every institution corrupted into an accomplice of oppression.

If this continues, Leso-

tho will have no media, no democracy, no Constitution only a hollow shell where power mocks the powerless.

The institutions of Lesotho must be reminded: they do not own the Constitution. They are subject to it and when they rape the media, they are raping the people's right to know, the people's right to speak, the people's right to be free. History is unkind to regimes that strangle the press if our institutions continue down this road, they will be remembered not as protectors of justice, but as violators perpetrators of the solicited rape of the media.



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Lesotho Tribune

By: Al Jazeera and news agencies

A live broadcast has captured Russian President Vladimir Putin and Chinese President Xi Jinping discussing organ transplants and the possibility of humans living 150 years as the two leaders walked together in Beijing alongside North Korea's Kim Jong Un.

The exchange was recorded on Wednesday as the three leaders led a delegation of more than two dozen foreign officials to a military parade marking 80 years since the end of World War II.

China's state broadcaster CCTV, which live-streamed the event to global media outlets, including The Associated Press and Reuters news agencies, reported that its coverage drew 1.9 billion views online and more than 400 million on television.

SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY

Putin and Xi caught on hot mic talking about living to 150

"Putin confirms the conversation, saying modern medicine gives hope for longer, healthier lives"



As Putin and Xi approached Tiananmen Square's rostrum, Putin's interpreter was heard in Chinese saying: "Biotechnology is continuously developing. Human organs can be continuously transplanted. The longer you live, the younger you become, and [you can] even achieve immortality."

Xi, who was not on camera, responded: "Some predict that in this century humans may live to 150 years old." Putin later confirmed the conversation when asked by reporters in Beijing. "I think when we went to the parade, the chairman

talked about it," he said. "Modern means of health improvement, medical means, even surgical ones related to organ replacement, they allow humanity to hope that active life will continue differently than it does today."

CCTV footage briefly cut away to a wide shot of Tiananmen Square as Xi began speaking with the audio fading out. The leaders reappeared moments later, walking up the steps to the viewing platform.

Xi, addressing a crowd of more than 50,000 spectators, warned that the world faced a stark choice between "peace

or war". He inspected troops and showcased advanced military technology, including hypersonic missiles and unmanned naval systems.

Putin arrived in Beijing on Sunday for a summit hosted by China with global leaders who included Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi. The Russian and Chinese leaders signed more than 20 agreements covering energy, artificial intelligence and infrastructure projects while confirming plans for a major gas pipeline. China's Ministry of Foreign Affairs and CCTV have yet to comment on the leaked audio

US judge orders Google to share search data with competitors

...Google has said previously it plans to file an appeal to the ruling



BY: Reuters

Alphabet's Google must share data with competitors to open up competition in online search, a judge in Washington has ruled.

The decision handed down on Tuesday also rejects prosecutors' bid to make the internet giant sell off its popular Chrome browser. Google CEO Sundar Pichai had expressed concerns at a trial in April that the data-sharing measures sought by the United States Department of Justice could enable Google's rivals to reverse-engineer its technology.

Google has said previously that it plans to file an appeal, which means it could take years before the company is required to act on US

District Judge Amit Mehta's ruling.

Mehta has also barred Google from entering into exclusive agreements that would prohibit device makers from preinstalling rival products on new devices.

Google had argue that loosening its agreements with device makers, browser developers and mobile network operators was the only appropriate remedy in the case. Its most recent deals with device makers Samsung Electronics and Motorola and wireless carriers AT&T and Verizon allow them to load rival search offerings, according to documents shown at trial.

The ruling results from a five-year legal battle between one of the world's most profitable companies and its home coun-

try, the US, where Mehta ruled last year that the company holds an illegal monopoly in online search and related advertising.

At the trial in April, prosecutors argued for far-reaching remedies to restore competition and prevent Google from extending its dominance in search to artificial intelligence.

Google said the proposals go far beyond what is legally justified and would give away its technology to competitors.

In addition to the case over search, Google is embroiled in litigation over its dominance in other markets.

The company recently said it will continue to fight a ruling requiring it to revamp its app store in a lawsuit won by "Fort-

nite" maker Epic Games.

And Google is scheduled to go to trial in September to determine remedies in a separate case brought by the Justice Department, where a judge found the company holds illegal monopolies in online advertising technology.

The Justice Department's two cases against Google are part of a larger bipartisan crack-down by the US on Big Tech firms, which began during President Donald Trump's first term and includes cases against Meta Platforms, Amazon, and Apple.

Alphabet's stock finished down 0.7 percent for the day but shot up in after-hours trading by 6 percent as of 4:30pm in New York (20:30 GMT).

Source: Reuters



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Lesotho Tribune

By Kennedy Gondwe

Zambia's former Foreign Minister Joseph Malanji has been sentenced to four years in prison with hard labour after being convicted of corruption. Malanji was found guilty on seven counts of acquiring properties and helicopters suspected to be the proceeds of crime, the state broadcaster reports. His co-accused, former treasury secretary Fredson Yamba, received a three-year jail term for approving the transfer of more than \$8m (£6m) to Zambia's diplomatic mission in Turkey without justifying the expense. Several ministers in former President Edgar Lungu's government have been convicted of various offences, but Malanji is the most high-profile of them.

President Hakainde Hichilema promised to root out corruption when he swept to power four years ago after defeating Lungu in elections. Lungu and his party, the Patriotic Front (PF), have accused him of waging a

AFRICA

Former foreign minister sentenced to hard labour for corruption in Zambia



political vendetta. The former president died of natural causes in South Africa in June, but has not yet been buried because of a long drawn-out dispute between his family and the government over his funeral arrangements.

Malanji was close to Lungu, and served as his foreign minister from 2018 to 2021.

He earned the nickname "Bonanza" because he was known for his generosity and for mingling with the public.

Handing down the sentence, Magistrate Ireen Wishimanga said she had shown "leniency" towards Malanji and Yamba because they were first-time offenders, and she had heard "spirited mitigation" arguments by their legal team. Hichilema's critics say corruption is also widespread in his government, but none of his ministers have been sacked or prosecuted.

In May, the US government pulled the plug on

\$50m of health sector funding to Zambia after saying there was "systematic theft" of medical donations, and it was "no longer willing to underwrite the personal enrichment of fraudsters".

Zambia's government promised to carry out an investigation, but there have been no prosecutions as yet.

Transparency International ranks Zambia as being among the world's most corrupt countries. News Source: BBC News

“Army Handed Over Mahao Murder Suspects Two Years Later” says witness

By: Tholoana Lesenya

MASERU

The High Court has heard shocking testimony that suspects linked to the killing of Lesotho Defence Force (LDF) Commander, Lieutenant General Maaparankoe Mahao, were only released to the police two years after his death. On Thursday, Retired Inspector Lebohang Motanya took the stand in the ongoing trial of nine soldiers accused of murdering General Mahao.

He told the court that police investigations identified the suspects as early as June 2015, but the army kept them out of reach until late 2017. Motanya explained that shortly after Mahao's death in June 2015, he was part of a police team tasked with investigating the case. Their work quickly uncovered information pointing to eight members of the LDF as being directly involved in the killing.

The police then requested that their superiors write formally to the army, asking that the suspects be handed over to face questioning. But for more than two years, there was no cooperation



from the LDF. According to Motanya, it was only on November 27, 2017, that a breakthrough finally came. On that day, Captain Maanela of the Military Police escorted four soldiers to the police. The soldiers were identified as Captain Haleeo Makara, Sergeant Motsamai Fako, Corporal Marasi 'Moleli and Corporal Tšitso Ramoholi.

The retired inspector told the court that after proper introductions and cautioning, the suspects were interviewed and later charged with murder. Motanya further testified that four other soldiers, Captain Litekanyo Nyakane, Sergeant Lekhooa Moepi, Corporal Motšoane Machae and Corporal Mohlalefi Seitlheko were already behind bars in the custo-

dy of the Lesotho Correctional Service (LCS) on unrelated cases. They too were charged with Mahao's murder directly from prison on November 29, 2017.

The trial, which involves nine accused soldiers including Army Commander Lieutenant General Tlali Kamoli, is still ongoing. All accused face charges related to Mahao's death.

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“Evidence Aims to Destroy Kamoli’s Reputation,” lawyer says in court

By: Tholoana Lesenya

MASERU

A defence lawyer in the high-profile trial of nine army members accused of murdering former Lesotho Defence Force (LDF) Commander, Lieutenant General Maaparankoe Mahao, says testimony given in court is not about justice but about damaging the name of his client. Advocate Letuka Molati told the High Court that evidence by Retired Commissioner of Police (COMPOL) Kizito Mhlakaza was nothing more than an attempt to “assassinate the character” of Army Commander Lieutenant General Tlali Kamoli, one of the accused in the case.

Retired COMPOL Mhlakaza, testifying as a state witness, painted a picture of years of hostility and lack of cooperation between the police and the



army during the time when he led the Lesotho Mounted Police Service (LMPS) and Kamoli commanded the LDF. He recalled an incident at Ha-Motanyane, Mafeteng, in April 2012 involving five soldiers and three civilians. According to Mhlakaza, the police needed cooperation from the army so that the firearms used in the matter could be released for investigations. But the army, under Lt Gen Kamoli, never responded. Mhlakaza said he later wrote to the army again, asking for assistance in ensuring that the implicated soldiers appear before

the Mafeteng Magistrate’s Court for remand. Once more, he said, there was no response and the soldiers never

appeared in court. Even when the court issued a summons, Mhlakaza told the judges that the army, through its Military Police, refused to accept them, arguing that they had no instruction to do so. The retired police chief added that the standoff dragged on for years, with even senior political leaders unable to resolve it. Former Prime Minister Motsoahae Thabane and the then Minister of Law and Constitutional Affairs, Mophato Monyake, both attempted to intervene, but their efforts were unsuccessful.

“When I retired in 2014, that case was still unresolved,” Mhlakaza testified.

But for Advocate Molati, all this has nothing to do with the matter before the

court which is the killing of Lieutenant General Mahao in June 2015.

“The evidence is irrelevant. It does not speak to any of the charges in the indictment,” he told the court.

“General Kamoli is not even charged for the conduct being alleged through this evidence.”

Molati insisted that bringing up past clashes between the police and the army was only meant to taint his client’s image in the eyes of the court and the public.

“It is an attempt to assassinate his character,” he said firmly. He asked the court to strike the testimony off the record, arguing that it would be unfair to allow evidence that is both unrelated and damaging to the accused.

For the defence, not every piece of history belongs in the courtroom. “This trial must deal with the charges in the indictment, nothing more,” Molati stressed.

Prosecution Ends, Defence Seeks Discharge

By: Tholoana Lesenya

The prosecution has officially closed its case in the high-profile trial of nine former army members, including Army Commander Lieutenant General Tlali Kamoli, who are charged with the murder of former Lesotho Defence Force (LDF) Commander Lieutenant General Maaparankoe Mahao. This week, prosecutors announced they had completed their case after



calling 40 witnesses to the stand since the trial began. The final witness was Inspector Lebohang Motanya, a police officer who formed part of the team that investigated the 2015 killing of Mahao.

He testified after the emotional appearance of Mahao’s widow, Mamphanya Mahao, who told the court that her family lost trust in the government following the death of her husband. With the state now done presenting its evidence, the focus shifts to the defence. Lawyers of the nine accused immediately applied for their clients to be discharged, arguing that the prosecution has failed to prove its case.

The court has set timelines for both sides to file and exchange written arguments on the discharge application before a ruling is

made. The trial, which has lasted years, stems from the June 2015 shooting of General Mahao, a killing that shocked the nation and drew international condemnation.

His death led to a regional inquiry by the Southern African Development Community (SADC) which recommended action against those involved.

Now, nearly a decade later, the High Court is moving closer to deciding whether the case will proceed to the defence stage or if some, or all, of the accused will be discharged.

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Lesotho Tribune

By Litšitso Letsunyane

The footballing rivalry between Lesotho's Likuena and South Africa's Bafana Bafana has tilted heavily in South Africa's favour in recent years. In their last six encounters, South Africa has claimed four victories, Lesotho has managed a single win, and the two sides have shared one draw. Lesotho's last triumph over their neighbors dates back to 28 July 2019, when Likuena stunned Bafana Bafana with a 3–2 victory in Maseru during the African Nations Championship qualifiers. That celebration was short-lived, however, as South Africa struck back just days later, cruising to a 3–0 victory on 4 August 2019.

A turning point came in 2021, when both CAF and FIFA banned the Set-

ARTS & SPORTS

Bafana Bafana Continue Dominance as Likuena Wait for Setsoto's Revival



soto Stadium from hosting international fixtures, citing its failure to meet essential infrastructure standards. This decision forced Lesotho to host "home" games across the border in South Africa, a costly arrangement that drained the Lesotho Football Association (LeFA) and stripped local fans of the opportunity to cheer on their team at home. The effects were immediate. On 13 July 2021, Lesotho suffered a 4–0 defeat to South Africa at Nelson Mandela Bay Stadium, underlining the challenge of competing without a true home advantage.

The two nations next met in a friendly match at Lucas Masterpieces Moripe Stadium, another fixture hosted in South Africa.

This time, Likuena held their own, grinding out a 0–0 stalemate, yet their struggles to convert such resilience into victories remained clear. In 2025, the rivalry intensified with two FIFA World Cup qualifying clashes. On 21 March 2025, South Africa prevailed 2–0 at Peter Mokaba Stadium, and their most recent meeting came just this week, on 5 September 2025, at the Free State Stadium in Bloemfontein, where Bafana Bafana once again proved too strong, winning 3–0 thanks to goals from Mohau Nkota, Lyle Foster, and Oswin Appollis.

Since being forced to play all their fixtures away from home starting in 2021, Lesotho has never beaten South Africa. With South

Africa enjoying a home advantage in every encounter, Likuena's chances have been continually hampered, not only by the quality of the opposition but also by the lack of a proper stadium at home and the lack of home fans to support them.

The prolonged closure of Setsoto Stadium has become a symbol of frustration for Lesotho's football community. On 16 April 2025, the Minister of Tourism, Sports, Arts and Culture, Motlatsi Mapelepo, announced that refurbishment work is targeted for completion before October 2026. Until then, fans will have to endure another year of watching their national team play "home" games away from home, while the players themselves continue to suffer from the absence of true home support.

For Lesotho, the rivalry with South Africa has become more than just a battle on the pitch, it is now a reflection of the country's broader infrastructural struggles. Until Setsoto Stadium is rebuilt, refurbished and reopened, Likuena will remain disadvantaged, both competitively and emotionally, in one of Southern Africa's most passionate football rivalries.

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