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**MOHAHLAULA
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Fire Them or Face Us as RFP MPs Issue Ultimatum to Matekane

Backbenchers give the Prime Minister until Monday to remove ministers accused of corruption or face internal action

BY: Staff Reporter

Maseru

Revolution for Prosperity backbenchers have placed Prime Minister Sam Matekane under intense pressure, insisting he must respond to their demands to remove cabinet ministers accused of corruption by tomorrow.

According to several MPs who spoke to Lesotho Tribune, the group of nineteen legislators is no longer willing to tolerate what they view as a slow and protective approach toward ministers implicated in questionable conduct.

One MP said the group expects a firm commitment from Matekane by Monday, noting that failure to act will force the MPs to explore political alternatives. “We will be forced to weigh our options as MPs, because contrary to what people who are misleading Matekane think, we have options and we will exhaust them,” the MP told this



publication. Another MP was more blunt, warning that the credibility of the revolution itself is on the line. “We promised Basotho clean revolutionary government, it is clear that at this pace we are failing them. We need to course correct and that

will happen,” the MP said. Several MPs confirmed that while they remain committed to the party, they will not compromise on the principle of clean governance. They insist that Matekane must demonstrate decisive leadership by re-

moving ministers at the centre of repeated accusations, procurement disputes, and alleged ethical breaches. Lesotho Tribune reached out to Matekane’s spokesperson for comment, but no response was available at the time of publication.

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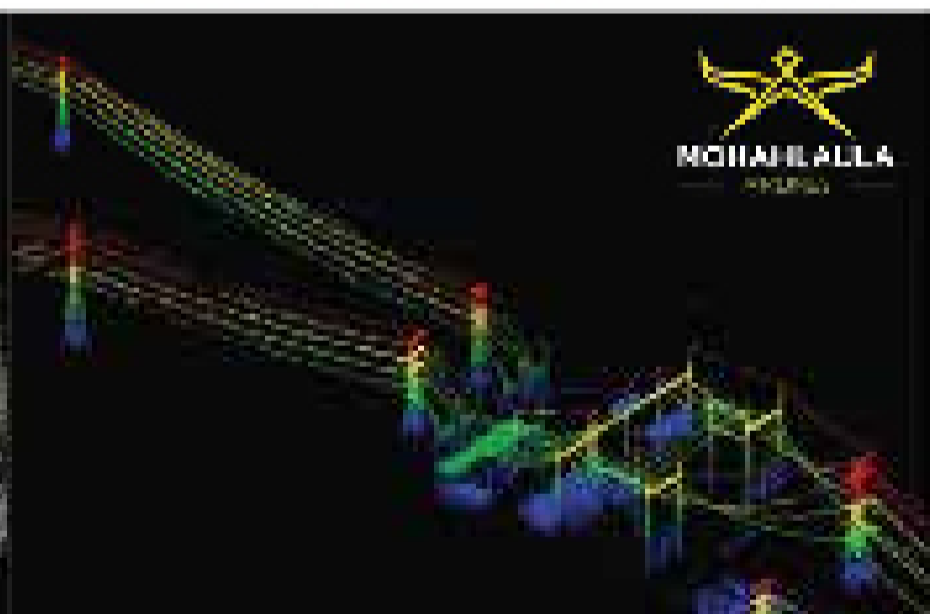
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Lesotho Steps Up, Fight Against HIV/AIDS

By: Lemohang Botsane

Maseru

The AIDS Healthcare Foundation (AHF) Lesotho organised a media breakfast session aimed at strengthening partnerships between journalists and health experts in the fight against HIV and AIDS in Maseru this week.

The event, themed “Strengthening Media Engagement in the Fight Against HIV and AIDS,” brought together key stakeholders to discuss ways to enhance awareness

and prevention efforts across the country. AHF Country Program Manager, Nthoeshe Shoeshoe-Letoao, emphasised the crucial role of the media in sustaining public awareness and amplifying HIV prevention messages, saying the media plays a vital role in shaping public perceptions and influencing behaviour change.

Letoao reaffirmed AHF Lesotho’s commitment to supporting the national HIV response through testing, treatment, advocacy and community outreach. He said the organisation works closely with the Ministry of Health and local partners to expand testing and



provide lifesaving antiretroviral therapy nationwide, a collaborative effort that has contributed to significant progress in Lesotho’s fight against HIV/AIDS. Ramaema Maema, a representative of the National AIDS Commission (NAC), commended Lesotho’s progress, noting that the country’s third-place ranking in Africa for HIV prevalence

represents a national improvement. He also celebrated Lesotho’s achievement of the UNAIDS 95-95-95 targets in 2024, a major milestone toward epidemic control.

The session concluded with a call for continued collaboration between media houses, health institutions and civil society to keep HIV and AIDS at the forefront of public conversation. Par-

ticipants agreed that sustained partnerships and responsible storytelling are essential to moving the nation closer to an AIDS-free generation. This initiative demonstrates the power of collaboration in tackling public health challenges. By working together, Lesotho can continue to make progress in its fight against HIV/AIDS and create a healthier future for all its citizens.

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Hope, dignity restored for vulnerable families

By: Lemohang Botsane

As part of the ongoing three-year partnership between World Vision Lesotho and Habitat for Humanity Lesotho, with financial support from StanLib Lesotho, five vulnerable families were handed newly constructed homes with sanitation facilities this week to address housing insecurity.

This modest, yet vital housing initiative, speaks to a much larger challenge facing the nation that is grappling with an acute housing crisis marked by a shortage of nearly 99,000 units nationwide and deteriorating living conditions for many, especially in rural areas.

This housing deficit is exacerbated by rapid urbanisation, limited affordable finance and high poverty rates, with over 34 per cent of Lesotho's population living below the poverty line. It was said at the handover that rural households suffer from poor-quality housing and lack of access to services such as electricity, with a lower percentage of these households having access to connections, water and sanitation, presenting profound impacts on health, education and economic stability.

The National Housing Policy forecasts a continued increase in housing demand due to population growth and urban migration, which has stressed the critical need for innovative and scalable solutions to these insufficiencies.



Other rural challenges include ageing housing stock, limited infrastructure and land-use conflicts that complicate development. The formal housing market, therefore, remains inaccessible to most low-income families, forcing many to rely on informal, substandard shelters. Within this context, the handover ceremony represented more than the construction of five houses; it symbolised a beacon of change and hope. Tohlang Ngakana, Integrated Programs Director at World Vision, emphasised that a safe home is essential for a child's holistic development, further adding that the partnership between the two organisations will

ensure vulnerable children have more than just a roof over their heads but a dignified environment where they can grow and thrive. A representative of the Matsoso family, one of the house recipients, described the state of her previous home as unbelievable, saying she lived with her four grandchildren. She said she would struggle to sleep most nights in fear that the house would fall over them any moment, especially during rainy seasons, therefore expressing gratitude for the generous gift that will put her mind at ease and ensure the safety of her children. Despite the scale of Lesotho's housing crisis, initiatives like this provide pathways forward, demon-

strating the potential impact of coordinated efforts between organisations. STANLIB Managing Director, Mohlabinyane Mohapi, expressed his humility in being part of an initiative that aims to transform lives, particularly for vulnerable populations. He said he was deeply touched when he saw the state of the house these families used to live in, and he was happy that they had managed to build dignified homes for these families. With the testament of this handover, the country's urgent housing needs call for expanding investment, innovative financing and stronger policy frameworks to ensure decent, affordable housing reaches all who need it.

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DMA Presents Shocking Statistics in Food Security

By: Lemohang Botsane

The Disaster Management Authority (DMA) 2025 Vulnerability Assessment and Analysis (VAA) report, conducted to inform evidence-based policy and programming decisions aimed at improving food and nutrition security in Lesotho, has presented some shocking revelations. This report is an order from the Lesotho Vulnerability Assessment Committee (LVAC); a government-led multi-disciplinary committee in the office of the Prime Minister- DMA that was established in 2002 and has been mandated to carry out livelihood vulnerability analysis to provide timely analysis for emergency interventions as well as medium to long-term programming. Before this report, the IPC Acute Food Insecurity Analysis released a few weeks ago had projected that 258,300 people, compared to 293,000 (2024), in rural areas would be in crisis or worse from May to September 2025, increasing to 334,100 people from October 2025 to March 2026. In urban areas, the Economic Capacity of Households to Meet Essential Needs (ECMEN) revealed that 190,850 people compared to 296,049 people would be food insecure in the 2025/26 consumption year, contributing to a total food-insecure



population of 524,950 for the 2025/26 consumption year which is a decrease of 25% from last year (2024/25).

Therefore, notable findings from the DMA assessment report include: -A national crop production that has indicated an increase in all main cereal crops production, -maize production estimated at 45,780 mt in the year 2025 as compared to 56,472 mt total production in 2024, indicating a 19 percent decline in maize production, -a decline in sorghum production by 43 percent, with the current production estimated at 3,616mt compared to 6,300mt in 2024 and -wheat production that showed a 17 percent increase as compared

to the 2023/24 season; the current year production is estimated at 4,874 mt compared to 4,183 mt in 2024. The authority, therefore, recommends immediate humanitarian assistance for the food-insecure population. It also believes that it will be highly beneficial if the government also continues to design interventions intended to promote market opportunities for local farmers who have surplus from their own produce.

It calls on key stakeholders from governments, agencies and the private sector to collaborate in an effort to design and implement programmes that will improve food production and nutritional status in Lesotho. It also recommends im-

provement of rangelands, protection of water sources and the conduct of comprehensive vaccination campaigns to prevent livestock diseases, calling on the government to act on scaling up anticipatory actions, early warning systems, impact-based forecasts and investment in risk financing to mitigate and timely respond to impacts of hazards and disasters. Putting into action the National Strategic Resilience framework to diversify livelihoods and build resilience against future shocks is also highly important.

These measures, the authority says, aim to improve food and nutrition security and to reduce vulnerability in Lesotho.

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Assessment Report Presents Challenges in Socioeconomic Issues



By: Staff Reporter

To provide policymakers, government, and other stakeholders with information for decision-making and development programming, the Disaster Management Authority (DMA) has conducted a vulnerability assessment analysing food and nutrition security and vulnerability in Lesotho for the 2025/2026 consumption

year. With a population of 2,077 million people, a life expectancy of 61.6 years and a poverty rate of 49.7 percent, the DMA's report presents Lesotho's socioeconomic context, which is clouded by a few challenges. According to the report, the unemployment rate stands at 30.1 percent, with an inflation rate of 6.3 percent. This has raised the cost of living

and the survival minimum expenditure basket from M1220.00 to M1320.00 per month for four people in 2025. Other socioeconomic shocks presented in the report include loss of formal employment and price hikes that have significantly reduced total household incomes, further weakening their already fragile purchasing power. These price hikes have

affected at least 34 percent of households, making it difficult for them to afford both food and non-food essential needs. It had been found that most households spend most of their income on food, indicating an economic crisis. However, the persistently high food prices, as compared to the previous year, have significantly undermined

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Lesotho Tribune

By: Staff Reporter

Maseru

Sources close to the utility sector reveal that Peo Mputsoe, procurement manager at the Lesotho Electricity Company (LEC), was coerced into resigning after two rural-electrification contracts were allegedly pressured by the Ministry of Energy to be awarded to companies owned by MPs from the governing Revolution for Prosperity (RFP). The identities of the MPs are known to this publication but are being withheld for now.

According to sources, the

BUSINESS & ECONOMY

Shocking Details Why LEC Procurement Manager Resigned



Peo Mputsoe, former LEC Procurement Manager

The procurement manager at the Lesotho Electricity Company (LEC) resigned after being pressured by the Ministry of Energy to award contracts to companies owned by MPs from the governing Revolution for Prosperity (RFP).

Peo Mputsoe, former LEC Procurement Manager, resigned after being pressured by the Ministry of Energy to award contracts to companies owned by MPs from the governing Revolution for Prosperity (RFP).

What was the nature of the investigation into the tender? Did procurement officials and how did the records align? Contact: Regenero, weight and status received.

When approached, PS Mputsoe did not provide a response to this question. The office of the Minister of Energy acknowledged receipt of the query but offered only that the ministry will respond in due course.

Mputsoe also declined to be interviewed, stating he was bound by LEC policy not to speak on media on personal matters.

Conclusion
If the allegations hold true, this incident would have significant implications for LEC and the Ministry of Energy as manufacturing Lesotho can afford to see its rural electrification drive hampered by political intervention. Results show that contracts awarded on merit, the quality is superior and the public sector who sees the same are protected, are guaranteed. The bigger question now: Will Parliament and oversight institutions step in to allow this to become a precedent that the state will follow?

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ing when the bill was sent to the National Assembly. The bill was passed by the National Assembly on 15 October 2024. The bill was then sent to the President for signature. The President signed the bill on 18 October 2024. The bill then became law.

Peo Mputsoe was strongly criticised by the PAC for not disclosing the names of the MPs who

and a full-page article in the Daily Sun. The article stated that Mputsoe was a former LEC employee who had worked for the company for over 10 years. It also stated that Mputsoe had been a member of the RFP since its formation in 2018. The article also stated that Mputsoe had been a member of the RFP since its formation in 2018.

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Soldier tells court failure to obey military commands is dangerous

By: Tholoana Lesenya

The High Court heard tense and unsettling testimony from Sergeant Tjekane Sebolai, one of the soldiers accused of murdering 23-year-old Lisebo Tang on May 9, 2014, near the home of former army commander Lieutenant General Tlali Kamoli.

Under sharp cross-examination, Sebolai insisted that ignoring military procedures and challenges can create deadly risks, claims he used to justify the shooting that left Tang dead and her companion, Tšepo Jane, seriously injured.

Sebolai, who is on trial alongside his co-accused Private Selone Ratšiu, took the stand as a defence witness, defending his actions on the night of the killing, repeatedly telling the court that the soldiers were operating under strict orders and responding to what they believed was an imminent threat.

Asked about military rules of engagement, Sebolai told the court that failure of a suspected enemy to respond to a challenge signalled danger.

"A challenge is not just a formality," he said. "When a threat refuses to comply, it puts everyone in danger. When an enemy shows signs of danger, it has to be eliminated." He added that on the night in question, he and Ratšiu acted according to the instructions they had been given earlier that evening. The order, he said, was direct and uncompromising; capture the suspected enemy and



if the enemy tries to flee or resist, eliminate them. The court had previously heard that on that night, the accused soldiers were stationed on night guard duty at the residence of Lt Gen Kamoli.

According to Sebolai, this was a high-tension period marked by fears of attacks and rumours of plots against senior army officials.

During his testimony, he reaffirmed that these fears shaped their decisions that night. He said he and his co-accused believed the occupants of a white double-cab vehicle that approached the Commander's home were potential assailants.

"It was the exact kind of vehicle we had been warned about," he said. "We were told it was linked to bomb attacks. We were told it might return. We were told to watch out for it."

Tang and Jane were travelling in a white double-cab when the soldiers opened fire. Jane survived with injuries while Tang died on the scene, leaving the vehicle in a very bad

shape.

Under questioning, Sebolai maintained that the two occupants did not respond to a military challenge, an instruction shouted at suspects to stop, identify themselves or surrender.

"When they did not respond, we understood that they were refusing the challenge," he said. "We then tried to capture them as we had been ordered. When they fled, we eliminated the danger." He insisted that their actions followed the exact order given to them earlier, capture first, eliminate if the suspect runs or refuses.

But Advocate Motene Rafoneke, representing the prosecution, directly challenged Sebolai's version of events.

He put it to the soldier that the so-called "enemy" in the white double-cab had shown no signs of aggression and posed no real danger to the soldiers. Rafoneke suggested that the soldiers had acted recklessly, misjudging innocent civilians as enemies and using exces-

sive, unjustified force. Sebolai disagreed, arguing that the soldiers reacted based on the information they had been given and the behaviour they observed.

"To us, at that moment, they were an enemy," he said. "They were not complying. They fled. At that point, it became dangerous." The testimony has raised difficult questions about the army's operational rules at the time and whether these rules blurred the line between legitimate defence and unlawful aggression.

The judge will have to consider whether the soldiers' strict reliance on orders absolves them or implicates them further. Tang's killing sparked public outrage in 2014 and has remained one of the most controversial cases linked to the Lesotho Defence Force. The trial has already heard conflicting accounts of the soldiers' instructions, the atmosphere within the army, and the events leading up to the shooting.

Correction and Apology

Lesotho Tribune regrets the publication of an article titled *Matlama Fans Land the Club in Trouble Again* on 9 November 2025, which incorrectly attributed statements to Mr. Ramafahla Thamae, Communications and Marketing Manager of Matlama Football Club.

Mr. Thamae was not interviewed or consulted for the story. We have since retracted the article and offer our unreserved apology to Mr. Thamae and Matlama FC for the error and any harm caused.

We remain committed to accuracy, fairness, and ethical journalism.

The News Editor, Lesotho Tribune



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SA Intensifies Efforts to Combat GBV

By: Mosotetsi Malelu

The Southern Africa region hosted a crucial two-day Strategic Dialogue and Stock-Take Joint Sub-Regional Initiative to address the scourge of Gender-Based Violence (GBV) against women and girls in Maseru this week.

The event brought together resident coordinators, donors and partners from Botswana, Eswatini, Lesotho, Namibia, South Africa and Zambia to accelerate progress towards achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), particularly SDG 5.

In her welcoming remarks, United Nations Resident Coordinator in Lesotho, Amanda Khozi Mukwashi, highlighted the alarming prevalence of GBV in the Southern African region which undermines women and girls' rights to safety, education and economic empowerment.

"GBV remains the most widespread human rights violation across Southern Africa", she said, emphasising that ending GBV is key to realising SDG 5 and progress on other goals such as health, education and poverty reduction.

Despite progress made, agencies continue to face persistent challenges, including funding gaps, access to justice



and weak enforcement of laws and policies. These barriers hinder collective efforts to create safe and equal societies for women and girls. The dialogue, therefore, aimed to address these challenges and explore sustainable strategies for GBV prevention and response.

On the second day of the event, participants focused on partnerships, financing and charting the way forward for ending GBV across Southern Africa.

A roundtable with donors and partners discussed financing GBV interventions, identifying opportunities for joint action, co-financing and innovative resource mobilisation

across the region.

This event was part of regional efforts to accelerate progress towards achieving the SDGs. The spotlight initiative, a global effort to eliminate violence against women and girls, supported this critical dialogue.

The outcome of this dialogue is expected to inform a comprehensive regional strategy to address GBV, strengthen partnerships and mobilise resources to support GBV prevention and response initiatives. As Mukwashi emphasised, working together creates a Southern Africa where women and girls can live free from violence, fear and discrimination.

The dialogue also brought together diverse stakeholders, including governments, civil society organisations, donors and UN agencies, to deepen collaboration and commitment to ending GBV.

The collective efforts of these partners will be crucial in driving progress towards a GBV-free Southern Africa.

As the region reflects on progress made and challenges remaining, the focus now shifts to implementation and action. The Maseru dialogue has set the stage for a renewed commitment to eliminating GBV and promoting gender equality across Southern Africa.

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EDITORIAL

Firing Engineers Will Crash LEC and Basotho Will Pay the Price



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Lesotho Tribune

By: Editorial

Something deeply unsettling is happening inside the Lesotho Electricity Company. Three of the company's top engineers are suspended, and sources insist the administration wants all of them gone on what look like flimsy and politically motivated charges. If that is true, then the board of directors is dragging the country into a crisis they do not appear to understand.

LEC is not an ordinary state entity where political appointees can bluff their way through decisions. It is an engineering company. It runs on technical knowledge, lived experience and competence that cannot be replaced by slogans about reform or quick staff reshuffles. Removing engineers who carry decades of specialised skills is not only short sighted. It is negligence that borders on self sabotage.



An engineering company behaving like a political playground

If these suspensions are an attempt to purge people rather than solve problems, then the board is showing that it does not appreciate what actually keeps the lights on. The people now being pushed aside are the same ones who understand which feeders fail in winter, which substations need constant balancing, which transformers misbehave after storms and which regional power partners respond fastest during emergencies. Not everything in a utility is written in neat policy documents. Much of it lives in the heads of the engineers who have held LEC together under difficult conditions. Treating such people as disposable is the clearest sign of incompetence at governance level.

Institutional memory is walking out the door. Corporate governance principles emphasise the value of institutional memory. When long serving technical staff leave, the company loses more than workers. It loses intelligence accumulated over years. It loses insights that

guide planning, troubleshooting and crisis response. It loses consistency in decision making.

New recruits may arrive with fresh qualifications, but they will not have the instinctive understanding of LEC's grid that comes from living through faults, cable theft, transformer failures, wet season overloads or emergency imports from Eskom and EDM. That kind of understanding cannot be replaced quickly. Sometimes it takes years to build and sometimes it never returns once lost.

Relationships with Eskom and EDM will suffer. The public often forgets that LEC does not operate alone. The utility relies heavily on its relationships with Eskom in South Africa and Mozambique's EDM. These relationships depend on trust and familiarity. They depend on knowing who picks up the phone, who can speak confidently about system stability and who has the authority to negotiate emergency supply or grid adjustments.

When senior engineers who hold these relationships are removed suddenly, it raises questions. It makes foreign partners wonder whether LEC is stable or whether it has been captured by internal politics. LEC has already been criticised for questionable procurement decisions and weak over-

sight. This is not the time to send another signal of instability.

What this means for Basotho

Electricity is not a political game. It is felt in homes, in businesses, in clinics and in farms. When engineers are fired on weak grounds, the risk of system instability rises. Outages last longer. Repairs take more time. Businesses lose stock. Pumps stop working. Emergency calls take longer to resolve.

A responsible board would understand this. A responsible minister would step in before the situation spirals into full crisis.

What should happen now? The board should stop this reckless path and commission an independent technical review. The engineers facing suspension deserve due process. Their knowledge should be protected rather than purged. External partners like Eskom and EDM should be reassured, in clear and honest terms, that LEC remains guided by expertise and not by factional motives. If this does not happen, then the country must prepare for a darker and more expensive future. An electricity utility does not survive long when competence is sacrificed for politics. And Basotho will carry the cost for decisions made by people who refuse to listen to those who actually understand the system.

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Lesotho Tribune

By: Young Basotho Professionals Forum (YBPF)

Dating back to 1960, the Year of Africa, marked by the independence of 17 African nations, culminated African independence movements. As Independent Lesotho turns sixty years next year, more than half of Africa's 54 countries have sixty years and counting since they gained independence, but Africa has a very bleak 60-plus years' record to show because the vestiges of colonialism have now more than ever accentuated themselves like permanent scars. Culprits of underdevelopment like poverty, high unemployment rate, high infant mortality rate, low life expectancy, corruption, poor access to health care are common phenomena, which want to entrench themselves permanently, rendering Africa as a failed continent.

In retrospect, the democratic model that Lesotho and most African countries have been pursuing for decades after independence needs to be re-examined. It has largely been a copy-and-paste caricature of Western democracy with

OPINION

Whose system is it? A secret formula to success



little adaptation to each nation's unique circumstances.

The African proverb says, "even the smallest drum can one day call the entire village to attention." At only 37, Ibrahim Traore of Burkina Faso has risen to popularity because he represents an unequivocal departure from the traditional way of governing that has come to be expected from post-colonial African leaders. His way of doing things seems to be working for his country so far and provides at least to some degree, a rudimentary model of the teachings of Franz Fanon.

Frantz Fanon viewed the colonial legacy as a violent and psychological imposition that distorted the identity of the colonized. He argued that liberation requires a cultural and psychological "de-alienation" through the reclamation of national identity. He contended that true decolonization requires not just political independence, but the "revolutionary dismantling of the colonial state" and governing structures that guarantee the removal of the permanent scars on the psyche of the colonised peoples.

But for the most part, the majority of African states use the Western democrat-

ic model, which tends to follow 4- or 5-year cycles and, when an incumbent government loses power, a fresh regime takes over and abandons the previous government's development trajectory. Sadly, in most cases, the new governments tend to throw away "the baby with the bath water" and start afresh, a cycle which is repeated all the time, condemning Africa to permanent stasis.

Chinese Experience—the Development Path Suited to its National Conditions Lesotho, along with other nations on the African continent, could take a leaf from the just-ended recommendations of 15th Five-Year Plan by the People's Republic of China, which they can adapt to their own unique circumstances to chart home-grown, organic development trajectories.

Now officially the second-largest economy on the globe, the People's Republic of China and the Communist Party of China's "whole process people's democracy" is a tried and tested development model that has proven effective and efficient, which puts the people front and centre.

By contrast, the colonial education system is one of the most potent weapons that has ensured the imperial system continues under the neo-colonial era in a very subtle but effective way. Their understanding of "development" revolves around Western models, which have proven to be

largely inappropriate or unsuitable for the needs of African communities, especially because they are rigidly prescriptive in nature with little or no room for adaptation. This is particularly apparent in the IMF and World Bank's one-size-fits-all prescriptions for austerity, a solution which has repeatedly failed, and there are plenty of examples of its failures in Africa, Latin America and Asia.

China's approach to Africa's development is that each country has unique characteristics around which it can develop a governance model that will lift its people out of poverty. China has proven itself consistently in breaking and surmounting barriers and frontiers which were said to be impenetrable, including successfully lifting and extricating hundreds of millions

of its citizens out of poverty in just a few decades, a fact which even those in the global north acknowledge all the time. 15th Five-Year Plan—A Vivid Example of the Whole Process People's Democracy Here is why looking up to China's historical experience could help. The Asian giant's success is clear for all nations to see. Coincidentally, the Five-Year Plans started way back in 1953, the same year President Xi was born, which embodies unswerving determination. The fact that China judiciously pursues continuity and consistent

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planning is clear from the outset. The recommendations for formulating the 15th Five-Year Plan, with high-quality development as the main focus, emphasises domestic technological innovation and indigenizing critical technologies to reduce dependence on foreign suppliers, particularly in key areas such as aerospace, quantum computing and artificial intelligence.

Xi Jinping, general secretary of the CPC Central Committee, headed the drafting group and played a decisive role in formulating the recommendations. The drafting of the recommendations was marked by openness and inclusiveness. Six research teams were dispatched to 12 provincial-level regions and met with local officials and visited 66 primary-level organizations, including enterprises, communities and schools. Around the same time, public opinions were solicited on the new plan during a month-long online consultation campaign.

The initiative drew over 3.11 million valid submissions, yielding more than 1,500 constructive suggestions across 27 topics. A total of 2,112 suggestions had been collected from various regions, departments and sectors, resulting in 218 revisions to the document. During the fourth plenary session of the 20th CPC Central Committee, 168 members and 147 alternate members of the CPC Central Committee discussed the draft recommendations and proposed further refinements.

“It is fair to say that the drafting work for this document is yet another vivid example of Intra-Party Democracy and Whole Process People’s

Democracy in action”, President Xi said, clearly showing that this inclusive process demonstrates that China’s planning is not an exercise in bureaucracy, but a living example of consultative governance in practice—an embodiment of the “whole-process people’s democracy” that aligns national vision with grassroots participation.

Every organisation has a secret formula to success. I think the active ingredient and catalyst for the secret formula to success for CPC is the party’s uncompromising people’s ownership, people-centeredness, Intra-party democracy and the whole process people’s democracy.

High-standard Opening Up and Pursuing Common Development with Countries Around the World The recommendations of the 15th Five-Year Plan also seek to continue expanding high-standard opening up. China seeks to build a community with a shared future for humanity that is better prepared for external shocks while continuing to expand high-level global engagement on the basis of genuine multilateralism.

President Xi Jinping said, “Countries cannot thrive without an international environment of open cooperation, and no country can afford to retreat to self-imposed isolation,” “Multilateralism is the shared aspiration of the people and the overarching trend of our time. It provides an important underpinning for world peace and development.” during the Virtual BRICS Summit held on September 8, 2025.

The great leadership that the People’s Republic of China exemplifies beyond its borders anchors and strengthens many international organizations of

which China is a member state, like the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO), BRICS, FOCAC, APEC, Asian Development Bank (ADB), etc. Through FOCAC (Forum on China-Africa Cooperation) and BRI Belt and Road Initiative, Africa has experienced the mushrooming and crisscrossing of edificial and infrastructural landmarks of ports, airports, bridges, schools, roads, and myriad development projects in agriculture, health, energy, etc. that blanket the continent of Africa. Even more interesting for China’s partners, like Lesotho, is the fact that China always presents its Five-Year Plans with the rest of the global economy in mind, rightly so, bearing in mind the world is a complex web of interdependence and China now plays a key role in different sectors globally. Therefore, a stable and prosperous China inevitably spurs global growth and helps stabilise a world facing growing uncertainty, especially in the post-COVID era.

Building Systems That Reflect the People’s Rhythm There is a hymn that says “once to every man and nation, comes the moment to decide. In the strife of the truth with falsehood. For the good and evil side”. This time, the lessons should be thoughtfully adapted to Lesotho or any other African country’s unique culture, circumstances, and needs after thorough consultations among communities.

The contemporary history of the People’s Republic of China has a miracle that embodies principles of critical and thorough planning, opening up, a socialist market economy, and an objective & forward-looking ideology. Deng Xiaoping, chief architect of China’s social-

ist reform and opening up and modernization, is indeed a name to conjure with in the subject of the practicability of governance systems. In one of his thoughts, he made an analogy that “it does not matter whether the cat is black or white; as long as it catches mice,” an economic philosophy which states that the effectiveness and efficiency of a system or method justifies its deployment and existence than its mere colour or look or common belief.

An ancient African proverb says, “All monkeys cannot hang on the same branch.” There are limits to a single resource, whether it’s wisdom, a system, or a natural resource. Everyone’s life situation is different, so there is a need for diversity, balance and individual paths for progression, growth and success to be realized.

It is therefore incumbent upon those in the global south especially sub-Saharan Africa, whether through BRI, FOCAC or BRICS to deftly choose and create smart areas of cooperation and linkages with China, that will benefit them and repatriate sound development and capacity building as the People’s Republic of China traverses the 2026 to 2030 15th Five-Year Plan period. Surely through the Global Civilization Initiative, which is currently in high cultural exchange throttle, Africa can seek to hold China’s hand in exchanging its best practices as it implements key 15th Five-Year Plan areas spanning High-Quality development, technological self-reliance, industrial modernization, indigenization of aerospace, quantum computing, AI, as well as deepening economic reforms that promote high-standard opening up.



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Lesotho Tribune

By: Kian Vesteinsson and Grant Baker

The internet is more controlled and more manipulated today than ever before. Global internet freedom declined for the 15th consecutive year in 2025, as authoritarian governments employed censorship and offline repression to quash protests that were organized online, and people in democracies faced an escalation in constraints on digital expression.

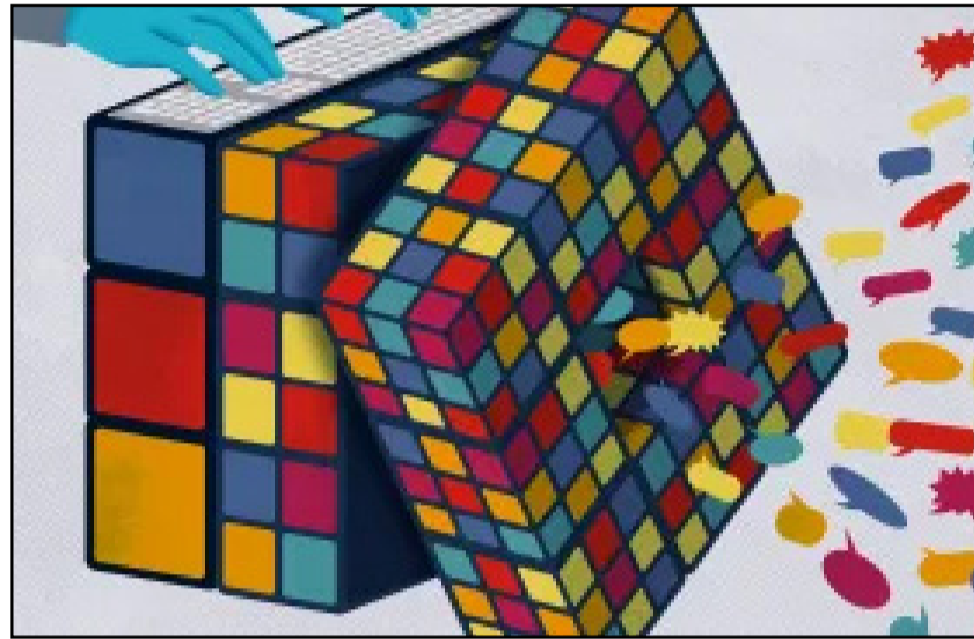
When the Freedom on the Net project was launched in 2011, following a 2009 pilot, there was widespread optimism about the power of information technology to support prodemocracy movements and drive progress for human rights.

These hopes were buoyed by the prominent role played by online platforms in Iran's Green Movement and the Arab Spring that followed. From the outset, however, it was apparent that governments could use the same digital technologies to smother dissent and shape online narratives in their favor.

During this report's coverage period, from June 2024 to May 2025, conditions deteriorated in 27

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Freedom on the Net 2025: An Uncertain Future for the Global Internet



of the 72 countries assessed, while 17 countries registered overall gains. The year's largest decline occurred in Kenya, followed by Venezuela and Georgia. China and Myanmar remained the world's worst environments for internet freedom.

Bangladesh earned the largest improvement, while Iceland retained its status as the freest online environment, followed by Estonia. Fifteen years of Freedom on the Net analysis shows that the internet has transformed the ways in which state authorities and other powerful actors assert control over information.

Authoritarian rulers have deployed tools of digital repression to strengthen their hold on power, particularly in response to protests or elections that challenge their rule, driving the most precipitous cumulative score declines recorded by the report.

And in countries across the democratic spectrum, from the worst autocracies to some of the world's freest societies, political leaders have sought to manipulate online narratives through

increasingly sophisticated methods, often attempting to shape the information space without overt censorship.

The immediate future of internet freedom will depend on how governments deploy incentives for and controls over the next wave of technological innovation. Governments around the world are already ramping up their development of AI ecosystems, pouring huge investments into cloud computing infrastructure and natural-language and reasoning models.

Innovations in satellite-based connectivity will change how people access the internet, while the rise of technical measures to verify the age and identity of people using the internet will dramatically alter the online experience.

Freedom of expression, access to information, and privacy should be among the values that guide both regulation and innovation.

Those working to safeguard internet freedom face new headwinds, however. The US government's decision

to dismantle its foreign aid institutions resulted in the termination of its support for internet freedom programming, a long-standing priority across multiple Republican Party and Democratic Party administrations. The cuts entailed the cessation of funding to experts developing anticensorship technology and encrypted communication tools, to people working on human rights issues in the world's least free environments and to organizations that assisted journalists, activists and others under threat for the content they posted online. (Freedom House was among the organizations that were materially affected by the freeze in US foreign assistance, which included the removal of funding for Freedom on the Net and our broader emergency support programs.)

The United States has long served as a leading advocate of global internet freedom, and its withdrawal from the vanguard leaves a significant gap. Fifteen consecutive years of decline should stir alarm among supporters of internet freedom and galvanize remedial efforts in the years to come. Halting and reversing the negative trend will require coordinated action by likeminded allies from government, the private sector, and civil society.

As emerging technologies begin to affect the exercise of human rights online, these partners must establish safeguards for free expression and privacy to ensure that any technical innovation leads to improvements for global internet freedom.

“We were following orders”- Soldier tells court in Tang murder trial

By: Tholoana Lesenya

The High Court this week heard testimony from Sergeant Tjekane Sebolai, one of the soldiers accused of murdering 23-year-old Lisebo Tang in May 2014 near the home of former Army Commander, Lieutenant General Tlali Kamoli. Taking the stand as the seventh defence witness, Sebolai told the Court that everything he and his co-accused did on the night of Tang’s death was done under military orders, not personal intentions. Sebolai and his co-accused, Private Selone Ratšiu, are facing charges arising from the shooting that shocked the country more than a decade ago. They have long maintained that they only acted under command authority, a claim that was repeated and expanded upon in court.

In his testimony, Sebolai explained that on the night of May 9, 2014, he, Ratšiu and one Private Kopano Matsoso were deployed for night guard duty at the residence of Lt Gen Kamoli, who was Commander of the Lesotho Defence Force (LDF) at the time. He told the court that their immediate superior on that assignment was then-Lieutenant Moletsane who issued them operational instructions for the night. According to him, they followed every order under Moletsane’s direction. “Our duty was simple. We followed what we were told by our Platoon Commander,” Sebolai testified. “We did not act on our own. We acted on orders.” One of the key instructions given to them that night, Sebolai said, was to remain alert for a specific vehicle believed to be involved in



a series of bombings targeting high-profile individuals. He testified that they were told the car had been used to throw explosive devices at the homes of former First Lady Liabiloe Ramoholi and the then Commissioner of Police, Khothatso Tšooana. According to him, intelligence suggested the attackers might strike again, this time at the army commander’s residence. “We were told the vehicle was wanted by the police, wanted by the army, wanted everywhere,” Sebolai said. “Our job was to watch, protect and make sure the Commander was safe”. He explained that the soldiers were on high alert, believing a deadly attack could take place at any moment. Adding to the tense atmosphere surrounding their deployment, Sebolai testified that there was information

circulating within the army that the police were also planning to arrest Lieutenant General Kamoli. He said the soldiers had been warned that the arrest would not be peaceful and could escalate into a violent confrontation. “There was intelligence that the police were coming for the Commander,” he said. “And we were told it would not be a good arrest, it was expected to be hostile.” This claim, made under oath, paints a picture of a night charged with fear, suspicion and military paranoia conditions which, according to Sebolai, shaped how the soldiers responded to events that unfolded near the Commander’s gate. While Sebolai gave details of the orders and intelligence they allegedly received, he did not go into the full sequence of events that led directly to Lisebo Tang’s death. The court had previously

heard that Tang was shot near the Commander’s home on the night of the suspected events by guards who were on duty. The prosecution argued that the soldiers acted unlawfully and used excessive force. However, the defence maintains that the soldiers believed they were confronting a serious threat, influenced by the briefings and warnings they had received earlier that evening. Sebolai’s testimony forms a critical piece of the defence’s narrative that the accused soldiers were acting within a chain of command during a period of extreme security tension in the country. By emphasising that they were following orders from Lt Moletsane and responding to intelligence provided by their superiors, the defence aims to show the court that the soldiers did not harbour personal intent to kill or harm anyone.

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Soldier tells court failure to obey military commands is dangerous

By: Tholoana Lesenya

The High Court heard tense and unsettling testimony from Sergeant Tjekane Sebolai, one of the soldiers accused of murdering 23-year-old Lisebo Tang on May 9, 2014, near the home of former army commander Lieutenant General Tlali Kamoli.

Under sharp cross-examination, Sebolai insisted that ignoring military procedures and challenges can create deadly risks, claims he used to justify the shooting that left Tang dead and her companion, Tšepo Jane, seriously injured.

Sebolai, who is on trial alongside his co-accused Private Selone Ratšiu, took the stand as a defence witness, defending his actions on the night of the killing, repeatedly telling the court that the soldiers were operating under strict orders and responding to what they believed was an imminent threat.

Asked about military rules of engagement, Sebolai told the court that failure of a suspected enemy to respond to a challenge signalled danger.

“A challenge is not just a formality,” he said.

“When a threat refuses to comply, it puts everyone in danger. When an enemy shows signs of danger, it has to be eliminated.”

He added that on the night in question, he and Ratšiu acted according to



the instructions they had been given earlier that evening. The order, he said, was direct and uncompromising; capture the suspected enemy and if the enemy tries to flee or resist, eliminate them. The court had previously heard that on that night, the accused soldiers were stationed on night guard duty at the residence of Lt Gen Kamoli.

According to Sebolai, this was a high-tension period marked by fears of attacks and rumours of plots against senior army officials.

During his testimony, he reaffirmed that these fears shaped their decisions that night. He said he and his co-accused believed the occupants of a white double-cab vehicle that approached the Commander's home were potential assailants.

“It was the exact kind of vehicle we had been warned about,” he said.

“We were told it was linked to bomb attacks.

We were told it might return. We were told to watch out for it.”

Tang and Jane were travelling in a white double-cab when the soldiers opened fire. Jane survived with injuries while Tang died on the scene, leaving the vehicle in a very bad shape.

Under questioning, Sebolai maintained that the two occupants did not respond to a military challenge, an instruction shouted at suspects to stop, identify themselves or surrender.

“When they did not respond, we understood that they were refusing the challenge,” he said. “We then tried to capture them as we had been ordered. When they fled, we eliminated the danger.” He insisted that their actions followed the exact order given to them earlier, capture first, eliminate if the suspect runs or refuses.

But Advocate Motene Rafoneke, representing

the prosecution, directly challenged Sebolai's version of events.

He put it to the soldier that the so-called “enemy” in the white double-cab had shown no signs of aggression and posed no real danger to the soldiers.

Rafoneke suggested that the soldiers had acted recklessly, misjudging innocent civilians as enemies and using excessive, unjustified force.

Sebolai disagreed, arguing that the soldiers reacted based on the information they had been given and the behaviour they observed.

“To us, at that moment, they were an enemy,” he said. “They were not complying. They fled. At that point, it became dangerous.” The testimony has raised difficult questions about the army's operational rules at the time and whether these rules blurred the line between legitimate defence and unlawful aggression.

The judge will have to consider whether the soldiers' strict reliance on orders absolves them or implicates them further. Tang's killing sparked public outrage in 2014 and has remained one of the most controversial cases linked to the Lesotho Defence Force. The trial has already heard conflicting accounts of the soldiers' instructions, the atmosphere within the army, and the events leading up to the shooting.

Corruption trial stalled, Judge slams “unready” case

BY: Tholoana Lesenya

The long-running corruption case involving Matlakeng Member of Parliament Dr Mahali Phamotse has once again hit a standstill after the High Court sharply ruled

that the matter is far from ready to proceed this week.

Presiding Judge, Justice Molefi Makara, made it clear that he would not set a hearing date until every document required for the trial had been properly handed to the defence. The judge stressed that the court cannot allow a trial of this magnitude to begin when critical paperwork is either missing or unreadable.

The case, which also involves co-accused 'Mapaseka Kolotsane and Ratšiu Majara, was expected to make procedural progress. Instead, the court was met with a fresh

wave of disputes over incomplete discovery, the crucial process where the prosecution must provide the defence with all documents, witness statements and evidence intended for use at trial. During the brief appear-

ance, Advocate Peleha Joala, representing the prosecution, informed the court that the defence had raised serious concerns.

According to him, the defence teams had discovered that some witness statements were never handed over.

Worse still, some of the documents already submitted were so faint or unclear that the defence could not properly read or use them.

He acknowledged the seriousness of the issue

and agreed that it could not be ignored or downplayed. Joala then committed himself before the court to follow up urgently with the defence. He promised to ensure that all missing documents are delivered and that the illegible papers are replaced with clear, readable versions.

Justice Makara did not mince his words. After hearing both sides, he stated firmly that the matter is simply not ready for hearing. He explained that it would

be unfair and procedurally improper to push forward when the defence has not been given all the material they need to prepare. He went on to emphasise that discovery is not a mere formality; it is a cornerstone of a fair trial. Without it, the defence would be left in the dark, unable to challenge the State's evidence or understand the case fully. Because of this, the court refused to assign a trial date and ordered that all discovery disputes must be resolved first.



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Lesotho Tribune

By Litšitso Letsunyane

The Lesotho Off Road Association (LoRA) is gearing up to deliver a world-class edition of the iconic Roof of Africa. This edition is set to make history and place the Mountain Kingdom firmly on the global motorsport stage.

Widely celebrated as “The Mother of Hard Enduro,” the country’s oldest and most prestigious off-road motorcycle race will take place from 19 to 22 November 2025. More than 400 riders from around the world are expected to tackle Lesotho’s unforgiving terrain. The event will roar to life in Maseru on the opening day before shifting to Ha-Lebamang, Roma, where riders will battle the mountains over the remaining three days.

This year’s edition is particularly monumental. For the first time ever, the Roof of Africa has been officially recognised by

the International Motorcycling Federation (FIM) as part of the Hard Enduro World Championship (HEWC). This means the Roof of Africa 2025 will serve as the final and decisive round of the 2025 championship, the race where the new Hard Enduro World Champion will be crowned, right here in Lesotho.

This breakthrough elevates our country onto the global motorsport map like never before. It is a proud moment for the nation, offering an opportunity to showcase its rugged landscapes, rich culture, and world-class riding terrain to international audiences, teams, and media.

While the 2024 edition attracted 506 competitors from 12 countries, the

2025 event will feature just over 400 riders from an estimated 15 nations, a more compact but even more competitive lineup. Among them will be 20 local riders eager to challenge some of the world’s best.

The international field is expected to be exceptionally strong, with top HEWC stars confirmed to compete. These include Billy Bolt, reigning giants like Manuel Lettenbichler, and Teodor Kabakchiev, as well as Lesotho’s own dominant force, Wade Young, who boasts an incredible nine Roof of Africa victories to his name. The Roof of Africa is more than a sporting event, it is a major economic engine for the country. In 2024, the race injected an estimated M5 million into the local economy through spending

on accommodation, food, transportation, and services.

With the 2025 edition now an official stop on the Hard Enduro World Championship calendar, Lesotho is set to welcome even more visitors, larger teams, and greater international exposure. The resulting financial boost is expected to surpass previous years, offering immense benefits to tourism operators, small businesses, and local communities across the race zones.

As anticipation builds, one thing is clear; Roof of Africa 2025 will be unlike any edition before it. Bigger, tougher, globally significant, and proudly Basotho. The world will be watching as Lesotho shows once again why it remains the true home of hard enduro.



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