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A Tale of Power, Mismanagement at mothers2mothers

...Country Director runs the org like her personal fiefdom, sidelining the board she dismissively claims inactive, non-existent

BY: Staff Reporter

A storm of questionable, unjust and unprofessional restructuring and staff manipulations has engulfed one of Lesotho's largest NGOs, mothers2mothers. At the epicentre of these allegations is none other than the organisation's own Country Director (CD), Mpolokeng Mohloai. Whistleblowers have



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Under the RFP, Looting Is Routine and Accountability Is Dead - Mahlala

By: Staff Reporter

Basotho Development Front leader Bothata Mahlala has opened his political campaign with a pointed call for privately funded prosecutions against those accused of looting public funds. He says Lesotho will never rebuild itself unless corruption is confronted without fear or favour.

At his first press briefing at the Transformation Resource Centre, Mahlala said the country needs comprehensive and independent forensic audits into every major allegation that has surfaced over the years. He argued that prosecutions should not be left to politically aligned actors. He said they should be handled by independent experts, preferably foreign professionals, since local institutions are too compromised and too entangled in the very networks they are expected to investigate.

Mahlala said the Revolution for Prosperity administration rose to power on promises of reform, discipline, merit, and a new economic direction. He said Basotho instead found themselves watching a wave of scandals that show a government overwhelmed by corruption and mismanagement.

He called on the Directorate on Corruption and Economic Offences, the police, and the judiciary to act with urgency. If these institutions lack capacity or the political courage to act, he said Basotho must organise and take the fight forward themselves.

According to him, there is no other path. Citizens must be ready to fund private prosecutions if the



state refuses to prosecute those who have looted public resources. In his words, Lesotho cannot rebuild without facing corruption directly. He repeated that government must commission independent audits across all ministries and state entities where allegations exist.

Mahlala outlined the BDF plan to work with civic groups to rebuild accountability and restore clean governance. He said the public service has collapsed because it is filled with people appointed through political favours rather than competence. He argued that government needs to redeploy staff properly, strengthen internal control systems, and confront corruption within law enforcement agencies. He said the DCEO must either be disbanded or rebuilt into an institution that can actually do its job. He added that the Office of the Accountant General and the Auditor General need proper support and a stronger mandate.

He summarised the BDF pillars. Constitutional democracy where every citizen is equal before the law. Unity and social justice where political and economic divisions are rejected. A productive economy where the country produces what it consumes. Clean governance and anti corruption policies that

guide administration and employment. Skills based deployment that ensures public institutions are run by professionals and not by political patrons.

Turning back to the RFP government, Mahlala said the administration that took office in 2022 has allowed corruption and criminal behaviour to grow at the heart of the state.

He urged voters to reject corruption with the same unity they once used to elevate the RFP into office. He said corruption has become ordinary under the current administration. What was once scandalous is now routine. What used to shock the public is now treated as normal.

Mahlala said the BDF is speaking from a place of concern for the country and for the ordinary Mosotho who works hard and hopes for honest leadership. He said Lesotho has just marked fifty nine years of independence, yet the nation remains stuck because of misrule, corruption, and a political class that has failed its people for generations. He said the country can no longer blame colonial history. The stagnation is the result of decades of patronage, weak law enforcement, and leaders who protect their networks instead of the public interest.

He listed corruption cases that have undermined public trust. The controversial one hundred and eighty six million maloti airport refurbishment contract allegedly linked to Public Works Minister Matjato Moteane through his former company. The two hundred and fifty million maloti LNDC

loan extension scandal.

The Ministry of Education incident where PT Reliance Construction won an evaluation but was overruled by a ministerial panel that installed another contractor.

He highlighted the Ramarothole Solar Project where costs dropped from three hundred and fifty million dollars to one hundred and fifty million dollars after inflated pricing and bribery allegations were exposed.

The government refunded twenty two million maloti to the World Bank because it failed to account for funds intended for a Ha Belo electricity substation.

Mahlala cited more ongoing scandals. The five hundred and sixty eight million maloti irregularities at LEC. The six million maloti incompatible meters. The three hundred and ten thousand maloti used to wash the Deputy Prime Minister Nthomeng Majara's curtains. The five hundred and twenty eight million maloti drawn from the contingency fund this financial year. And now more than one million maloti for Majara's trip to Brazil. He reminded the public that the contingency fund is meant for genuine emergencies. He said the government has also spent fifty four million maloti on foreign trips since the start of the year.

Mahlala said these numbers tell the real story of governance today. The state is bleeding resources while citizens struggle. He said Lesotho can only turn the tide if corruption is fought with the same intensity that corruption itself has shown in capturing public institutions

Continued in page 2

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Forensic doctor reveals gruesome details of mother's killing in court

By: Tholoana Lesenya

The High Court of Lesotho was shaken on Wednesday afternoon when a well-known forensic pathologist, Dr Lefatle Phakoana, delivered a chilling account of what killed Martha 'Masechache Rasekoai, whose daughters, Nthei and 'Mamphoka Rasekoai, stand accused of murdering her.

Before Justice 'Maliepollo Makhetha and Prosecutor Lehlohonolo Phooko, Dr Phakoana gave a detailed, graphic reconstruction of the injuries the Masowe 4 woman suffered before her death, describing a violent attack carried out with both blunt and sharp objects.

Dr Phakoana told the court he has five years of experience in examining bodies of people who died from both natural and unnatural causes and that he has handled many difficult cases during this time. But the condition of the deceased, examined on 1 August 2nd, left a lasting impression. He said he examined the body after it was brought in and identified by Nthei Rasekoai as that of Martha Rasekoai. He was informed that the deceased had disappeared on 25 July 2022 but was believed to have died on 27 July 2022. However, he clarified that according to forensic procedure, experts only record the date of death as the day the body is found, not the day the person reportedly went



missing.

The doctor revealed that the deceased died from a combination of severe head injuries and strangulation. His findings painted a picture of a vicious, prolonged and merciless attack.

According to his testimony, the deceased suffered massive bleeding in the brain. The doctor found extensive bleeding in the brain caused by a strong blow from a heavy blunt object. The skull was fractured both at the forehead and the back of the head. He stated clearly that no sharp object caused this injury, only a forceful strike from something heavy and blunt could have done it.

He said the deceased also suffered strangulation with barbed wire while still alive. In what became one of the most disturbing details, Dr Phakoana testified that the deceased had been strangled with barbed wire. The mark around her neck was deep brown, which he

explained could only occur if the person was alive at the time of the strangulation.

Had the wire been tied around her neck after death, the mark would not have taken that colour. "This shows she was still breathing when the wire cut into her skin," he said. The deceased is also said to have a stab-like wound on the right side of the chest. The doctor identified a wound shaped like the opening made by a spear or a similar sharp, pointed object.

The injury was significant and consistent with a violent stabbing. There were three sharp-object wounds on the back- three stab wounds- each inflicted with a sharp object and deep enough to indicate forceful penetration.

The pathologist said there was another blunt-force injury behind the head- a second blow from a heavy object- further confirming repeated assault

with blunt instruments.

There was also a wound behind the right ear, consistent with either a sharp or blunt strike.

Multiple scratch marks and abrasions were visible behind the neck and upper back, possibly caused during the strangling or by the barbed wire used in the strangulation.

The courtroom was filled with silence as Dr Phakoana calmly listed injury after injury, a catalogue of brutality that left no doubt about the violent nature of the killing.

His testimony suggested that the deceased was attacked with more than one weapon, struck repeatedly, stabbed several times and ultimately strangled while still alive.

His report is expected to play a crucial role in the trial of the deceased's daughters who have maintained their innocence and accused their uncle of being responsible for the murder.

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“Rasekoai had complained about her daughters behaviour”- Deceased Sister Told the Court

By: Tholoana Lesenya

The High Court sitting in Maseru this week heard emotional and troubling testimony about a family torn apart long before the tragic death of Martha 'Masechache Rasekoai, whose two daughters, Nthei and 'Mamphoka Rasekoai, are now standing trial for her murder.

Presided over by Justice 'Maliepollo Makhetha, tension filled the courtroom as witnesses narrated what they described as a long-standing cycle of disrespect, strained relationships and growing fear within the Rasekoai family.

The most emotional testimony came from the deceased's sister, Lineo Mohau, who took the stand as the third State witness. She told the court that her late sister had long complained about being mistreated by her own daughters.

According to her, the relationship between the deceased and the accused had deteriorated over the years, becoming almost unbearable in the months leading up to her death.

Mohau said her sister would often confide in her that the girls treated her harshly and showed no regard for her authority as their mother.

She further explained that despite their turbulent relationship, the deceased frequently found herself caring for the accused's young children. She described how the two women would leave their children behind and go out



partying, sometimes disappearing throughout the night.

But what made the situation worse, Mohau said, was her sister's physical condition.

The deceased had a dislocated arm, which made tasks like lifting, cooking and chasing after young children extremely painful and difficult.

Yet, even with this limitation, she was repeatedly left with the responsibility of caring for her grandchildren, responsibilities she carried out in tears and frustration.

Mohau said when the daughters eventually returned from their nights out, they would respond rudely and dismissively whenever their mother questioned them. The deceased, she testified, believed that because of her physical weakness, her daughters felt reassured to speak to her in a degrading manner.

“She told me she felt they

were using her disability against her,” Mohau told the court, her voice cracking as she recalled the conversations.

The court also heard from Mphula Sekhantšo, the former lover of the accused Nthei Rasekoai. His testimony shifted the focus from the family home to events surrounding the deceased's actual murder. Sekhantšo told the court that while he was in a relationship with Nthei, he left his Nissan X-Trail vehicle in her care when he travelled to South Africa for work. He said from 24 July 2022 to 11 August 2022, the period during which the deceased was buried, the car remained with Nthei.

He added that he was later contacted by police and informed that the same vehicle had allegedly been used in the commission of the crime. According to his evidence, the vehicle was seized by police on 6 January, 2023 and has remained

in police custody ever since.

His testimony, short but impactful, drew murmurs from the courtroom as it tied a significant piece of physical evidence directly to one of the accused.

Another witness, Ntholi Ntholi, a cousin of the accused sisters, gave chilling evidence about the night after the alleged murder. He told the court that on 25 July, 2022, Nthei arrived at his house late at night in a confused and disoriented state.

According to him, she appeared “dazed,” unable to explain clearly what had happened or why she had come to his house at that hour.

He described her behaviour as deeply unsettling and out of character. His testimony added yet another layer to the unfolding picture, a picture of confusion, secrecy and unexplained movements during the critical hours following the deceased's murder.

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Minister Launches Seedling Distribution Project, Empower Youth Farmers

By: Lemohang Botsane

The Minister of Agriculture and Food Security, Thabo Mofosi, this week handed over seedlings to young people from across the country, marking a significant milestone in the government's efforts to empower youth and enhance food security. The charitable ceremony, held at the Agricultural College, brought together the youth from all 10 districts of Lesotho, who received seedlings as part of the Smallholders Agricultural Development Project (SADPII). The initiative aims to equip young Basotho with the tools and resources needed to contribute to the country's agricultural sector and improve food security.

In his address, Mofosi emphasised that the seedling distribution project is designed to empower the youth to become job creators rather than job seekers.

"This initiative is not about creating jobs for young people, but about enabling them to create jobs for others," he said, urging the youth to take ownership of the project and drive positive change in their communities.

Mofosi also assured the young people that he would be visiting each district to provide guidance and support to ensure the



project's success. "I will be coming to your districts to see how you are doing and to offer my support. I want to see progress and I want to see results," he said. Principal Secretary in the Ministry of Agriculture, Dr Khothatso Ts'oana, highlighted the Ministry's commitment to empowering youth and improving food security. He said the initiative demonstrated a dedication to supporting young people and promoting

agricultural development. Ts'oana expressed gratitude to the ministry's partners and staff for their unwavering support and encouraged young people to seize the opportunity. On behalf of the youth, Stephen Mohobela said the seedlings represented trust in the youth's potential, motivating them to contribute to agriculture and food security. "We promise to use them responsibly and productively," he assured

the ministry. This seedling distribution initiative is part of the government's broader efforts to promote agricultural development and improve food security in Lesotho. The project is expected to benefit thousands of young people across the country, providing them with the tools and resources needed to succeed in agriculture, also emphasising the saying that "there is life in the land of Lesotho".

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Lesotho Tribune

By: Staff Reporter

The milestones of the Competitiveness and Financial Inclusion (CAFI) project over the past three years are a vivid illustration of the great things we can achieve through commitment, hard work and collaboration,” Palesa Matobako, the Principal Secretary in the Ministry of Trade, Industry and Business Development said in the official CAFI Newsletter, November 1st issue.

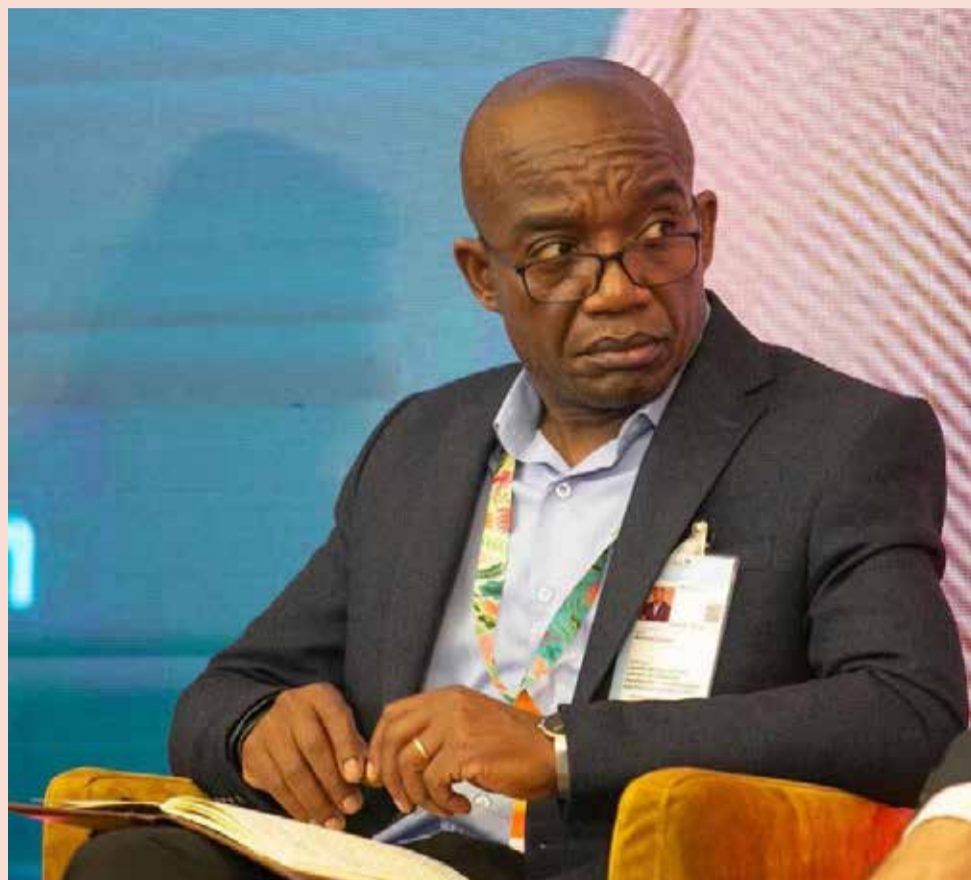
CAFI, an initiative of the government of Lesotho with financing from the World Bank, has proven to be a game-changer in the business sector, incubating 200 enterprises; 92 led by women and 111 by youth, creating over 1200 jobs for Basotho.

This week, as one of the project’s programmes – the Lesotho Entrepreneurship Hub and Seed Financing Facility (LEHSFF) celebrated its Demo Day, Chaba Mokuku, CAFI’s Managing Director said the celebration themed “Inspire, invest and transform” was a call to action to investors to ensure the growth of the entrepreneurial sector of Lesotho.

BUSINESS & ECONOMY

CAFI Celebrates Success

...200 enterprises, 1200 jobs, clean audit report



factor and promote transparency and predictability in government services. Because access to finance remains a challenge, CAFI is supporting financial institutions and the Ministry of Finance to strengthen credit infrastructure systems, developing financing products and instruments to help MSMEs and startups access financing. ‘Mamoriti Phangoa, the Acting Entrepreneurship Hub Manager, said the Hub, celebrated this week, was established with the mission of building a strong,

innovative and investment-ready pipeline for Basotho enterprises and is a representation of a future of job creation, digital transformation, clean innovation and inclusive economic growth.

To highlight the impact of the hub, some enterprises incubated under it have been said to already be exporting regionally and globally, demonstrating that there is potential to compete and scale beyond borders.

Phangoa convinced investors, policymakers and development partners present at the event that Basotho enterprises were ready to scale, export and attract investment.

It also aligned with the international momentum around innovation, building on the success of the Diaspora Investment and Trade Forum that was held in South Africa to demonstrate the importance of Basotho entrepreneurs and the importance of collaboration.

“This day coincides with the midterm review of the CAFI project and this presents us with an opportunity to reflect, take stock and when necessary, adjust the project to meet the emerging needs of this country,” Mokuku said.

He told attendees that the government, in implementing the project, had put in place measures to revitalise the country’s economy, particularly the private sector with a focus on youth and women-led enterprises.

During the break of COVID-19, Mokuku continued, MSMEs and startups were mostly hit hard because they are less resilient to external shocks and this response resulted in the

launch of the CAFI project to diversify the economy. The project is driven by three reinforcing areas of intervention, one being to improve the business environment by removing obstacles to investment (developing an investment action plan) to reduce the cost and time of doing business and to increase access to business support services and financial products.

Through the project, numerous achievements can be noted: digitisation of government business services to promote public sector efficiency and automation of business processes to remove the human



World Bank, Government Praise Power of Collaboration

By: Staff Reporter

The World Bank has consistently supported Lesotho through various financing initiatives, from funding its electrification projects to promoting the growth of the business sector.

On some occasions, the institute has often found itself having to question what had happened to the funds that have been allocated to bring about developments in the country, but in some cases, it has had to pat the government's back on a job well done.

This week, the World Bank Country Representative, Dinara Djoldosheva, beamed with pride as she stood before a multitude of investors, policymakers and entrepreneurs at the CAFI Demo Day, with an expression on her face that said the institute had no regrets in financing the project. At the CAFI mid-term update in the past week, the project's Managing Director had said that the project's audits were found to be very clean and all the money spent was traceable.

Therefore, the World Bank didn't stutter when it said it was proud to have collaborated with the government on the project.

For the institution, the day was a celebration of innovation, resilience and the transformative power of entrepreneurship and a platform where creativity meets investment and part-



nerships are forged to drive sustainable growth.

"In a world where economic shocks and global uncertainties challenge us daily, entrepreneurship stands as a beacon of hope and driver of resilience," Djoldosheva said, highlighting the importance of the CAFI project that stands as a testament to the Basotho's commitment to fostering a dynamic and inclusive private sector. With financing from the World Bank, the project has become a catalyst for entrepreneurship growth and job creation in the country, and its beneficiaries are not just the heartbeat of economic transformation but an inspiration for a new generation to pursue opportunities and create a lasting change. Djoldosheva said CAFI's achievements are a result of a healthy partnership; without collaborating, these achievements would not have been possible.

She said that in every area, to achieve transformation, unlock markets, attract investment and build an ecosystem that nurtures innovation, the partnership model was a critical component to add to the recipe.

She emphasised the World Bank's pride in partnering with the government of Lesotho in its journey of financial inclusion and economic revival, "supporting the development of a business environment where innovation thrives and every entrepreneur has the tools and resources to succeed." In a rapidly changing geopolitical landscape, Mokhethi Shelle, the Minister of Trade, Industry and Business, said innovation and competitiveness were not optional but imperative, encouraging that entrepreneurs be equipped with all the necessary skills not only to adapt but to lead.

"That is why we continue to invest in platforms like the entrepreneurship hub to nurture talent, accelerate growth and position Lesotho as a dynamic player in the global economy," he said.

For Prime Minister Sam Matekane, the demo day was a statement of confidence in the creativity and ambition of youth entrepreneurs.

Through projects like CAFI, Matekane said, the government they were committed to building an inclusive, sustainable economy empowered by the private sector through the extended NSDP II, not forgetting to express gratitude to the World Bank for funding the project. "We place private sector development, job creation and digital transformation at the centre of our growth agenda. This hub brings that agenda to life by helping young innovators turn ideas into viable, scalable businesses," he said.

The hub, central to the day's events, has proven to strengthen the economic ecosystem by providing mentorship, networks and a collaborative space where entrepreneurs are presented with an opportunity to grow.

The Prime Minister said it was only through coming together, collaborating, that sustainable innovation could be built, "not through isolated efforts, but through a connected community."

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African States Urged to Strengthen Child Protection Laws in Business Practices

By: Staff Reporter

A new study by the Institute for Human Rights and Development in Africa (IHRDA) has revealed critical gaps in the integration of children's rights into National Action Plans (NAPs) on Business and Human Rights (BHRs) across the African continent, assessing the extent to which African nations are addressing the unique vulnerabilities of children within their business and human rights frameworks. Despite children comprising nearly half of Africa's population, studies found that their rights are often overlooked in business and human rights frameworks, reflecting a systemic exclusion. It has been said that the intersection of business and children's welfare is a pressing issue, with economic expansion driven by extractive industries and global trade significantly impacting children's lives.

However, only five African countries, including Kenya and Uganda, have developed NAPs on Business and Human Rights, with minimal provisions specifically addressing child protection.

It was also revealed that Africa faces significant hurdles, including widespread child labour estimated at 92 million children, a dominant informal economy, risks in agriculture and mining, corruption, illicit financial flows (US\$80 billion annually) and weak enforcement of existing laws.

Speaking at a two-day meeting on human rights held in Maseru this week, Dr Musa Kika, the Executive Director of IHRDA, said it has become a com-



mon occurrence in Africa for children's consumer rights to be violated, revealing that Africa registers some of the highest statistics in child labour.

"In Africa, we have an undeveloped normative framework of protecting children in the context of businesses. And this is a broader problem because we do not have a binding normative framework around business and human rights," Kika said. What is available to respond to the problem, Kika said, is a UN guiding principle and the guidelines of BHR. "But its implementations remain a big problem. We do have national legislation across our 55 African states," he said, highlighting gaps in labour and environmental regulations and consumer protection as some of the domains where implementation processes remain a big problem.

The meeting therefore served as the first step towards changing the situation by looking at how children's rights can be protected.

Honourable Joseph Sunday Sinnah, an Expert Member from the Group on Business and Children's Rights,

commended IHRDA on this effort which he said not only shows intention but also prioritises inclusion.

"Across the continent, business operations shape children's lives in countless ways, from labour markets, land use decisions to digital platforms, environmental practices and supply chains. Yet, too often, children are either mentioned only in passing or omitted entirely from the frameworks that regulate business conduct." He said the study, therefore, paints a clear picture of the extent to which national action plans on businesses and human rights integrate children's rights and where the gaps are.

The study's findings resonate with the committee's study on children's rights and business adopted in 1973, which, among other things, examined the treatment of children's rights within national action plans.

It was concluded that AU member states need national action plans with clear expectations, measurable commitments, detailed implementation pathways, periodic reviews and adequate funding for without such

investments, even the most promising commitments will remain unfulfilled. Human rights institutions, child protection agencies and the courts also need to be equipped with resources to enforce standards that shield children from business operations.

It can therefore be concluded that the meeting was not just an opportunity to discuss findings but an opportunity to strengthen collaboration, discuss challenges that remain, examine state obligations, corporate responsibilities, track progress and design practical solutions.

In addition to the recommendations, it was said that countries need to align their laws with international standards, criminalising all forms of child exploitation and explicitly integrating child rights into the NAP on Business and Human Rights and lastly implement mandatory child-

protection codes of conduct for high-risk industries such as tourism, agriculture, transport and mining. Businesses, on the other hand, were advised to adopt Child-Rights Policies, aligning them with the UN Guiding Principles, Children's Rights and Business Principles, and ILO standards. They also need to ensure human rights due diligence and oversight of third-party recruiters and incorporate child protection through no-child-labour clauses.

Amidst all presented challenges, businesses have immense potential to advance children's well-being, yet, far too often, their activities expose children to exploitation, hazardous labour, environmental degradation, displacement and digital harms.



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Daughters accused of murder shift blame to uncle

By: Tholoana Lesenya

The High Court heard shocking accusations when the murder trial of sisters Nthei and 'Mamphoka Rasekoai took a dramatic turn. The two women are now pointing fingers at their uncle, Matlere Theko, whom they claim is the real culprit behind the crime.

The allegation surfaced during the cross-examination of Theko who appeared as a State witness. What began as a routine questioning quickly escalated into a tense exchange dripping with suspicion, family conflict and competing narratives about what truly happened in July 2022.

Representing the accused, Advocate Makhabane Masupha confronted Theko with a series of accusations allegedly made by the sisters. According to the defence, the accused claim that during the early stages of the police investigation, they overheard their uncle conspiring with officers to have them arrested.

The defence told the court that in August 2022, while investigators were still piecing together events surrounding the death of the deceased, accused 'Mamphoka allegedly heard Theko tell police officers that he would reward them if they arrested the sisters. This claim caused visible dis-



comfort in the courtroom, with several spectators shifting in their seats as the defence continued to press the witness.

Advocate Masupha further told the court that the accused alleges another incident occurred in May 2023 when 'Mamphoka went to the police to report an assault she says was committed by Theko. According to her, the officers on duty allegedly responded by complaining that Theko had not yet paid them.

These allegations, while untested, cast a shadow of doubt and suspicion over the witness and ignited a dramatic confrontation that revealed deep-seated conflicts within the Rasekoai family. Throughout the cross-examination, Theko maintained his composure, repeatedly denying the accusations. He insisted he had no reason to pay police officers, nor did he ever attempt to frame his nieces for their

mother's death.

But the defence was relentless, suggesting that the State's witness had ulterior motives for testifying and accusing him of manipulating the investigation to point the blame away from himself. The court watched the exchange unfold with intense interest, as every response from the witness was met with sharp interrogation from the defence.

What had seemed like a straightforward testimony quickly evolved into a heated battleground over truth, motive and credibility.

The prosecution, which began presenting its case only a day earlier, has already led six witnesses to the stand. Each is expected to shed light on the events surrounding the violent death of the deceased and the strained, complicated relationship within

the Rasekoai family. While the State maintains that the two sisters are responsible for their mother's killing, the defence appears determined to steer the court's attention toward a different narrative, one where the deceased's own brother could have played a more evil role.

The introduction of these accusations has added a dramatic twist to a case already marked by allegations of family conflict, mistreatment and disturbing details from the witnesses who have testified so far.

The accusations against Theko have thrown open new questions in a trial that is becoming increasingly complex with each passing witness. The defence seems poised to argue that the investigation may have been influenced or misdirected, while the prosecution insists it has evidence solidly placing the two sisters at the centre of the crime. As the trial resumes, all eyes will remain fixed on the witness stand, where every statement, accusation and denial will shape the court's understanding of a murder that has shaken an entire family and captured the attention of the nation. The proceedings continue this week as the State prepares to call more witnesses, hoping to strengthen its case amidst a storm of counter-accusations and shifting narratives.

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EDITORIAL

Lesotho Is Being Left Behind Because Its Leaders Do Not Know What They Are Doing



15

Lesotho Tribune

By: Editorial

Sometimes I think this country has become too comfortable with calling itself “full of potential.” We say it everywhere. At conferences, in glossy investment decks, even during those awkward television interviews where officials promise miracles with a straight face. The phrase has almost become something we use to reassure ourselves when things are clearly going wrong, like when the power cuts hit again or when a flagship project collapses before it even starts.

And while we keep repeating the same comforting line, the rest of the world is moving. Fast. The momentum around clean energy, sustainable tourism and climate related investment has shifted in a way that should worry anyone who still believes Lesotho can catch up by doing nothing. This was clear during the recent G20 gathering in South Africa

where global leaders talked climate finance and renewable investment as if it were the centre of the economy, not a side conversation. It should have been our moment too, in some way. But we were nowhere near the picture.

I sometimes wonder if our leaders fully grasp how big this transition is. The world is turning toward renewables with a speed that feels, honestly, a little intimidating. Investors want solar, wind, green hydrogen, pumped storage and stable grids. They want regulation that is predictable. They want countries that show they understand where the future is leaning. Lesotho

could fit in that category. We have the altitude, the hydrology, the wind corridors, the sunlight. The tourism appeal too. Even international agencies point out that our renewable potential is exceptional and that electrifying the whole country sustainably is quite possible if leadership actually commits.

But that last part is always the problem. Leadership. We enjoy making big announcements. Targets like one hundred percent electrification. Exporting green power. Becoming a renewable hub. The list stretches on. And yet the basic groundwork is never done. The political class

seems more comfortable with the performance of vision than the discipline of execution. And it shows in the simplest ways. Slow institutions. Confusing regulations. Appointments that reward loyalty rather than competence. Infrastructural neglect that undermines tourism long before tourists arrive. When ministries struggle with basic tasks, the world will not take the country seriously on the bigger ones.

This isn't some abstract complaint. It affects real people. If we miss the energy transition, we remain stuck with power imports and unpredictable supply.

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Lesotho Tribune

By: Staff Reporter

Over the past weekend, a robust debate unfolded on social media regarding two Maseru-based designers and allegations of design theft. While public comments ranged from accusations of secondary copying citing a famous South African brand to endorsements of cheaper alternatives, the ensuing discussion missed the single most critical legal principle: the territorial nature of Intellectual Property.

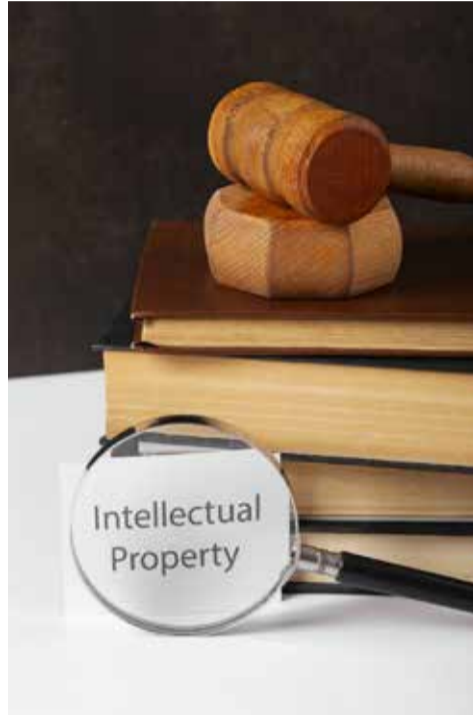
It is imperative that every entrepreneur and creative professional operating in Lesotho understands this foundational truth.

I. The Principle of Territoriality: A Legal Reality
The core legal reality that was overlooked in the public debate is straightforward: Intellectual Property rights are strictly territorial.

The Legal Rule: If the alleged South African designer has not formally protected their designs or marks within the Kingdom of Lesotho, no local IP infringement has occurred. The local designer, in this scenario, has the legal free-

OPINION

The Unseen Shield: Why Local IP Registration is Non-Negotiable for Basotho Businesses



dom to operate within this jurisdiction, regardless of whether a similar design is protected elsewhere.

This case powerfully highlights the absolute necessity of local protection. An IP right registered solely in one country provides zero protection in another. By failing to register their designs in Lesotho, international brands inadvertently leave the market open for local utilization, underscoring the vital need for Basotho creatives to proactively secure their rights domestically.

II. The Illusion of Safety: Why Unprotected Ideas are Public Property
Many local businesses operate under the dangerous impression that their originality grants them exclusive rights. This is fundamentally incorrect. **The Fact:** If your creative work be it a logo, a unique product design, or an invention is not formally protected under the national Intellectual Property regime, you hold no exclusive rights to it. It can be legally copied by any com-

petitor, and you possess no recourse to prevent them. **The Power of Protection:** When properly secured, IP becomes an enforceable legal tool. It allows you to legally stop competitors (cease and desist) or seek significant damages for infringement. This is not a theoretical exercise; recent high-profile IP disputes, such as the widely publicized "Please Call Me" case involving Vodacom, demonstrate the potentially multi-million Maloti value of enforceable IP rights. **III. IP as a Strategic Business Tool**
Intellectual Property protection is not merely a defensive shield; it is a powerful strategic asset. When your core product is protected, it grants you the leverage to dominate your market.

With enforceable IP, you are empowered to strategically fragment your market offering. You can offer different versions of the exact same underlying creation to cater to diverse customer segments: the premium buyer, the average consumer, and the budget-conscious market.

Consider the airline industry: the core service of transport is segmented into First Class, Business, and Economy. This model allows the company to maximize revenue from the entire customer base while still protecting the essential value of their service. IP enables local entrepreneurs to adopt this level of sophisticated market segmentation, leading to enhanced competitive advantage and

higher profitability. **IV. The Duty to Educate and Differentiate**
Finally, possessing a registered design or trademark carries a reciprocal duty: the obligation to educate the public. It is incumbent upon the rights holder to ensure the consumer can clearly distinguish between the authentic, registered product and any subsequent cheap knock-offs.

The clarity of your brand identity must be unambiguous, much like the famous slogan, "If it doesn't say Prosidyn, then it is not Prosidyn." This level of public education is crucial for

maintaining brand integrity and preventing market confusion that benefits opportunistic copiers.

A Call to Action for Lesotho's Entrepreneurs
Without formal Intellectual Property protection, every local entrepreneur remains exposed to two critical risks: being effortlessly copied by competitors and facing unexpected legal action from others who secure overlapping rights first.

This single oversight can cost you market share, future earnings, and potentially the entire viability of your business. Do not allow your hard work and creativity to become merely a cautionary tale discussed on social media. Invest in local IP protection today to secure your future tomorrow.

By Advocate Itumeleng Mabusane IP Consultant
Company: Asante IP Nexus

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If we mismanage tourism, we create jobs for neighbouring countries instead of our own youth. If we keep ignoring renewable investment, capital will continue flowing to places where leaders actually know what they are doing. And those countries will grow while we stand still, telling ourselves again how much potential we have.

What frustrates me most is that the opportunity is actually there. It is not imagined. Studies have highlighted our hydropower potential over and over. We have the geography for wind. There is interest from investors. The King has even pitched projects abroad. We now have a national fund for the just energy transition. Yet somehow everything slows down

once it reaches the hands of politicians. Approvals take forever. Decisions are postponed. Professionals are sidelined. It feels like development is treated as a side project rather than a national priority.

Tourism and renewables could complement each other in ways that transform communities. Picture off grid eco lodges powered by solar. Hiking trails supported by clean micro grids. Local cooperatives running small energy projects. Jobs in hospitality growing alongside jobs in energy construction and maintenance. It is not unrealistic. Other countries have done it. Yet our government appears more obsessed with internal fights, two day summits and donor funded reports than real work. There is a strange belief that progress will

somehow arrive by itself. The truth, uncomfortable as it is, is that nothing improves without a different kind of leadership. We need people who understand climate finance, who appreciate what investor confidence truly means, who recognise that development is built through small, consistent decisions. Leadership that is willing to act boldly even at political cost. Leadership that values transparency because it knows investors read signals carefully. Leadership that understands tourism is not just about one event or some monument, but about a national reputation built over years.

Right now we have the opposite. Leaders who attend international conferences then return home to do nothing. Leaders who complain about marginalisation

after ignoring every chance to lead. Leaders who speak about renewable energy the way people use fashionable words they don't fully understand. Leaders who cannot stabilise failing institutions but still talk about exporting power. It becomes tiring to listen. Lesotho has resources, geography and people who can carry the country forward. What it does not have is a leadership class that treats the future with seriousness. If we keep going like this, the world will transition without us. Neighbouring countries will rise through tourism and renewables while we continue recycling the same promises. And the worst part is that we will act surprised when it happens. The time for believing that potential is enough has passed.

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Lesotho Tribune

By: Staff Reporter

Lesotho's ideal microclimate, the high altitude, the good soil and abundant water put its farmers at a comparative advantage insofar as deciduous agricultural products are concerned.

Amidst the efforts that the government of Lesotho in partnership with the Ministry of Agriculture and Food Security has put in place to expand and nurture, not just for fruit production sake but for farming in general, Green Lovers (PTY) Ltd, a farming business that specialises in growing vegetables for commercial purposes to supply businesses and individuals, has been said to be one of the leading and thriving agricultural businesses in Lesotho.

Lesotho Tribune reached out to the founder of the company, Malerato Lehano, to hear about how she got to where she is currently with her business, highlighting the challenges and successes in the struggling economy and the horrible climate challenges.

LT: Please tell us about

FARMERS CORNER

Green Lovers Strives to Fight Food Insecurity



Green Lovers (PTY) Ltd and you.

GL: I am a Limkokwing University of Creative Technology graduate and hold a Degree in Entrepreneurship. I founded Green Lovers (PTY) Ltd in 2019 and legally registered it under the Companies Act of 2011 as a private company in May 2020.

I got into the farming business after realising the hunger and poverty that were prevailing in the country, yet we have land. I was also eager to create a job for myself and for others.

At Green Lovers, we wish to grow vegetables in a perfect way to turn employees' skills and knowledge into extra income. By the end

of December 2026, we aim to serve the whole north region of Lesotho with our produce and expand our production by purchasing more land for production. Moreover, we aim to play a major role in fighting food insecurity. People certainly need sustainable food. We also aim to become the regional leading Agriculture Farm as well as a major player in the Agriculture sector and to produce on a very large scale to reach all levels and/ categories of people at a lower price. I wish to see the Green Lovers branch in all the districts of Lesotho, still growing crops as well as processing our own prod-

ucts to minimise wastage, then selling them at affordable prices.

LT: As a farming business that produces for commercial purposes, how has business been in 2025?

GL: Business has been fairly well, except that in business, there are always ups and downs in different seasons, in that sometimes we may harvest more, and at other times we may go very low in comparison to our projections.

For instance, in January 2025, business was very good. We harvested more than our demand so much that we had to donate some of our produce to the needy freely and those who loved them. How-

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ever, some products were spoiled since we didn't have processing machinery to preserve our produce for longevity and availability;

vegetable dehydrators and refrigerators to freeze our mixed vegetables as well as canning skills.

LT: How many local markets do you supply and how many international franchises? What marketing strategies do you use?

GL: We supply 15 local markets. So far we are still supplying one franchise. However, we had two more customers who asked us to supply them, but we declined the offer due to a lack of delivery transport from Leribe, Hlotse to Maseru.

We visit different businesses to market our business, what we are about, and what we wish to sell to them, and take it from there.

We also attend market show exhibitions and market days because every chance we get, we use it to sell ourselves. We organise buyer and seller meetings.

LT: What sets you apart from other farming businesses? What strategies do you use to grow your vegetables in a "perfect" way?

GL: Our products are unique, organic and of good quality with guaranteed long shelf-life. We practice the spraying programme. We implemented a systematic feedback system from our customers, plus we offer free deliveries to local markets within a radius of 10km.

LT: Please tell us about your milestones, achievements and challenges.

GL: At first, Green Lovers was growing its crops in an open space, as a result, our harvesting was very depressing, not promising at

all, although my passion was and is still burning me.

And so during heavy rains, snow and hail, we faced a huge problem.

In addition to not having enough water to irrigate our crops, we also did not have a

storeroom to keep our equipment or packaging rooms to take in our harvest before classifying them according to their sizes.

We worked as a husband and wife for about a year because we did not have any other options (getting extra labourers) due to lack of funds- capital- because we had just bought land with the little we had saved over the years.

We now have three permanent employees, and from time to time, we employ temporary staff of five to eight people during sowing and harvesting seasons.

LT: I believe climate change is one of the biggest challenges. How are you tackling this? What preparation measures have you put in place to safeguard business in case the situation doesn't subside in the future?

GL: Like I mentioned

earlier, our work has improved. Climate change does not

bother us anymore. During dry seasons, we continue with our business as if nothing had happened because we now have a borehole. In adverse climates, when people can't produce, for us this is not much of a challenge. We sow throughout the year; it's

a nonstop farming with us lately.

Green Lovers is currently using 3479m² of land for its farming purposes. For the company, harvesting outcomes differ according to seasons: summer seasons are better than winter seasons.

The company's projections say that when 3,000 cabbage heads had been sown, sold at M10.00 per head, there is a high chance of M35,350 returns in sales if harvesting were a 100 percent success.

Likewise, if 4,000 pepper heads had been sown, sold at M3.00 per pepper, successful harvesting promises 100 percent returns in sales. Therefore, summer means more sowing and successful harvesting for

the company.

LT: What advice do you have for farmers?

GL: Farming requires passion. Do not let illusions of the high projections of the large sums of money calculated in farming make you believe you can achieve all that and it will be easy. It is not. To succeed in the business, you only need passion because sometimes, as a result of climate change, you'll find that you harvest close to nothing after spending all your money or incurring debt, a situation that may discourage you. One thing farmers need to know is that money made from sales cannot all go towards savings or spending outside the business; a huge amount of this money is supposed to go towards improving their business to grow. It is all up to you to take your business to the heights only you wish to see it at.

Self-employed farmers like us need to put in the work to win the race. They should also take advantage of markets or exhibitions, which will help them grow as farmers, and the projections will be visible in their businesses.



Lesotho Receives EUR50,000 in Food Donation

BY: Lemohang Botsane

Maseru

The United Nations World Food Programme (WFP) has received a generous contribution of EUR 50,000 (approximately US\$57,700) from the Government of Portugal to improve the nutritional intake of young children in Lesotho's schools.

This funding aims to support local vegetable and fruit production, enhancing the diversity and quality of school meals.

The donations will benefit approximately 1,900 children under the age of five in the Bera district.

WFP's Acting Country Director in Lesotho, Emily Doe, emphasised the importance of adequate nutrition for children's development, stating, "If children do not receive adequate nutrients during their first few years of life, it can result in learning difficulties, increased susceptibility to disease and reduced earnings in the future."

This programme includes training for teachers and school committee mem-



bers in 72 schools in the country on sustainable agriculture practices with a focus on climate-smart gardening techniques. It also aims to empower them to promote healthy eating habits and sustainable farming practices within their communities. Lesotho faces significant nutritional challenges, with high rates of stunting, micronutrient deficiencies and obesity.

According to the Lesotho Demographic and Health Survey (2023-24), one-third of children under the age of five are said to be stunted, and over 7 percent are affected by obesity. Portuguese Ambassador to South Africa and Lesotho, HE Carlos Costa Neves, expressed his country's awareness of Lesotho's nutritional challenges and pledged support for the country's National

Strategic Development Goals.

This initiative is part of the School Gardens Campaign, led by WFP, the Ministry of Agriculture, Food Security and Nutrition and the Ministry of Education and Training.

The Government of Lesotho is a member of the School Meals Coalition, working towards ensuring every child receives a healthy meal in school by 2030.

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Parliament no longer open to everybody

By: Staff Reporter

The African Parliamentary Press Network (APPN), a network of journalists and information officers, in collaboration with MISA Lesotho has reached an important agreement; only recognised journalists will be granted access to parliamentary sittings, in-house and external activities and Parliament-related assignments.

The APPN operates under the umbrella of the Parliamentary Network Africa (PNAfrica) and serves as its media coordination arm. It advocates for parliamentary openness and aims to foster a strong, cordial working relationship between parliaments and the media. It also champions freedom of expression and ensures media access to information within legislative environments.

Since it started operations, the network has established partnerships with various national parliaments to formalise media relations and improve information flow. MISA Director General, Kananelo Boloetsi, has told Lesotho Tribune that accreditation has always been a requirement for journalists reporting on Parliament.

“This is not unique to Lesotho it is a global



standard. Journalists covering any major institution are accredited and during elections, for example, accreditation has always been routine and uncontroversial,” Boloetsi said.

He informed that the sudden change of things, as journalists were no longer required to produce accreditation cards when they entered parliamentary premises, had opened doors for anyone who wished to walk into parliament claiming to be a journalist, hence the meeting that led to the restriction.

“This is a national key point and allowing unrestricted access presents an obvious security risk. It undermines the credibility of the media. When individuals who are not journalists gain entry un-

der that guise and behave inappropriately, their conduct is attributed to the profession and damages its reputation.” Boloetsi said as Parliament works on the issue of accreditation cards, media houses have been requested to confirm their journalists so that they can be granted access to the Parliament premises.

“For freelancers who are not attached to any media house, we agreed that they will be confirmed by either MISA Lesotho or APPN,” Boloetsi informed.

The country has approximately 27 licensed radio stations and several media houses, including around 10 weekly newspapers but it has not yet been guaranteed if all are licensed by the Lesotho

Communications Authority (LCA).

On the issue of freelance journalists, there has not been any precise official count as many freelancers operate informally because there is no single mandatory government registration or licensing body specifically for individual freelancers.

Therefore, anyone can generally claim to be a journalist.

The general consensus from media reports is that there is a handful of freelancers, with the industry being difficult to navigate. For this and other reasons, the two media bodies need to decide who qualifies as a freelance journalist and the qualities that would make them eligible for accreditation.

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Lesotho Tribune

By Litšitso Letsunyane

North Korean football fans are getting a taste of the English Premier League (EPL), but not in the way the rest of the world sees it. Recent investigations reveal that the country's state broadcaster, Korean Central Television (KCTV), has been airing heavily edited versions of EPL matches under strict conditions that reshape both the length and the content of the games. While the broadcasts offer rare glimpses of international football to North Korean audiences, they come with significant censorship and modification that reflect the tightly controlled nature of the country's media. Matches Cut Down to 60 Minutes Instead of the standard 90-minute format, KCTV's version of Premier

ARTS & SPORTS

Inside North Korea's New Unusual Premier League Broadcasts



League fixtures is edited down to roughly 60 minutes. Research groups such as 38 North have confirmed that large portions of gameplay, analysis, and downtime are cut to create a shortened highlight-style program. The purpose appears to be both editorial control and fitting foreign content into state-determined broadcast slots. Delayed and Selective Broadcasting North Korean viewers do not watch the Premier League in real-time. Matches are aired weeks or even months after they take place, with only a small percentage of total fixtures making it onto the national broadcaster. How KCTV obtains the foot-

age remains unclear, but there is no evidence of any official licensing agreement with the Premier League. English Stadium Text Replaced Any English language signage or graphics visible in the stadium, whether on advertising boards, scoreboard overlays, or broadcast graphics — is removed or covered with North Korean text. In many scenes, Korean language graphics simply sit on top of the original feed, effectively erasing foreign branding. South Korean Players Are Edited Out One of the most consistent censorship practices involves removing footage of South Korean players.

Matches involving teams with South Korean stars such as Hwang Hee-chan (Wolves), Kim Ji-soo (Brentford), and Son Heung-min (Tottenham Hotspur) are either excluded entirely or edited so that the players do not appear on screen. Analysts believe this aligns with North Korea's long-standing information restrictions regarding South Korea.

Removal of LGBTQ+ Symbols

North Korean broadcasts also strip out any content containing LGBTQ+ symbols, including rainbow flags typically displayed by fans in Premier League stadiums. This aligns with the country's broader censorship policies toward foreign political or social messaging.

A Controlled Window Into Global Football

Despite the layers of editing and censorship, these broadcasts still offer North Koreans a rare window into international football. However, what they see is not the Premier League as the world knows it, but a carefully reconstructed version shaped to fit state priorities. In the end, the coverage says less about the action on the pitch and more about how tightly North Korea manages the flow of global culture, even when the subject is just the beautiful game.

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