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Ministry of Health Sells Jobs for M15,000

Minister and PS implicated in the jobs-for-sale scandal

BY: Staff Reporter

Lesotho's Ministry of Health is drifting into a crisis that senior officials can no longer deny. It is a crisis documented by the Ministry's own Human Resources personnel. It is a crisis confirmed by internal correspondence that has been on the Principal Secretary's desk for more than a year. And now new allegations suggest that the rot has continued despite repeated warnings.

Sources at the Ministry confirmed to the Lesotho Tribune that as recently as Thursday 27 November 2025, the same Mr Jack who has long been accused of manipulating recruitment processes has reportedly hired scores of new workers. These individuals are believed to be headed to Maseru District Hospital. It is alleged that each person paid fifteen thousand maloti directly to him to secure employment.

This is unfolding in a public health system that has been brought



to its knees by staff shortages, collapsing services and chronic mismanagement.

Leadership Pretends Not To Know

When the Lesotho Tribune approached the Principal Secretary for Health, she acknowledged being warned about the sale of jobs and requested that we bring her evidence. She said we should meet her on Monday 1 December 2025. Her response was startling because the leaked letter exposing the malpractice carries a date

stamp from her own office that is more than a year old. The information has been in her possession for months. It was not new to her. What is new is public scrutiny.

A Recruitment System That Has Become a Private Business

The leaked HR complaint paints a disturbing picture. Shortlisting inside the Ministry has collapsed into a one man operation. One officer allegedly handpicks candidates in complete disregard of the Public

Service Act. There is no consultation with line managers. There is no supervision. There is no compliance with the law.

The requirements of the Act are clear.

Section 8 demands merit based recruitment.

Section 10 allows the Minister to create policies that promote fairness and equal opportunity.

Sections 20 and 21 insist that recruitment be transparent and compliant with the Act.

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RFP at war with itself... WhatsApp group texts expose a party tearing from within

Silence became Matekane's only contribution

By: Staff Reporter

The Revolution for Prosperity has long insisted it is united behind its reform message. But a leaked and heated exchange between two of its own MPs tells a very different story. The messages, dripping with accusation, resentment and outright hostility, reveal a party broken into factions and paralysed by infighting at constituency level. What emerges is not a healthy internal debate. It is a political knife fight happening inside the ruling party's own house.

The conversation, between RFP backbencher 'Mope Khati and Foreign Affairs Minister Lejone Mpotjoane, reads like a political earthquake. The two men accuse each other of sabotage, vote interference, manipulation of constituencies, and deliberate obstruction of public services. Both claim the other is running parallel structures on the ground. Both insist the other is lying. And neither hides the bitterness. A Backbencher Declares War In the first message, 'Mope delivers a scathing rebuke. He accuses Minister Mpotjoane of positioning himself as a kingmaker inside RFP. He says the Minister



treats constituencies like private territory and recruits his own preferred candidates behind the backs of elected MPs. The tone is raw. He accuses the Minister of undermining him in Pela-Ts'oeu, blocking services meant for his voters and spreading messages that promised government projects will never materialise. He even warns that the RFP leadership should tell him directly if they no longer want him as an MP. His frustration is not quiet. It is a roar.

"You Are Not a Godfather Here" Khati fires a salvo, reminds Mpotjoane that he once said Sam Matekane (RFP leader) was merely a front for

Democratic Congress. **You always complain!**

Mpotjoane denies blocking electricity connections or bridge construction in Pela-Ts'oeu. He denies recruiting candidates in constituencies that are not his own. He accuses 'Mope of twisting facts and weaponising private conversations they shared. He calls 'Mope a habitual complainer... It is a reply that reveals a man deeply insulted and prepared to fight back.

Accusations of Parallel Structures

The exchange then escalates into claims that Mpotjoane has been coordinating teams within Pela-Ts'oeu. 'Mope insists that the Minister's drivers,

allies and committee members have been moving through his constituency campaigning for a candidate allegedly loyal to him. He says these individuals even boast that public services will be withheld because they have the Minister's blessing. It is an extraordinary accusation for one ruling party MP to direct at another.

A Party Coming Apart What the conversation shows is not simply personal disagreement. It is evidence of structural decay inside RFP. MPs no longer trust one another. Ministers are suspected of interfering in constituencies not their own. Grassroots committees

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The Regulations require that HR must shortlist with the line manager and obtain approval from the Head of Department and the Minister.

None of this is being followed.

The leaked memo states that the current system “perpetuates factors of bias and corruption” and creates fertile ground for job selling. The language is calm but the meaning is severe. Recruitment has become a personal revenue stream.

A Case That Laid Bare the Abuse

The letter cites a real case that exposed the depth of the malpractice. A candidate was shortlisted and appointed as Manager Childhood Illnesses without input from the line manager. The line manager refused to accept the appointment. They had no role in the process. They had no knowledge of it. The officer who was appointed through this flawed process is now stuck in a professional limbo created entirely by the Ministry.

The case is still unresolved. It is one example of many. And it is happening at a time

when Lesotho continues to lose experienced health workers to better governed systems in the region.

Whistleblowers Punished, Not Protected

The Directorate on Corruption and Economic Offences has been silent, even though job selling is a textbook example of corruption. Our sources inside the Ministry say the silence is not accidental. They claim that details of the whistleblowers were shared with senior management. These individuals were later transferred to remote facilities with harsh working conditions. The transfers were not coincidental. They were punishment. The whistleblower anticipated this possibility. In the leaked letter they write that the memo “might put my head on the block”. They were right. They were targeted for telling the truth.

Minister Silence and Political Questions

We also asked Minister Selibe Mochoboroane whether he had instructed Mr Jack to hire village health workers aligned to his political party. He did not respond. The silence feeds suspicion. The Ministry’s leader-

ship has been aware of the allegations for over a year. None of them have acted decisively.

A System That Has Normalised Illegality

What emerges from all the documents and testimonies is a Ministry that has allowed illegality to become routine. A Ministry that treats recruitment as an informal marketplace. A Ministry that protects the perpetrators and abandons the victims. When one man can shortlist candidates, sell positions, ignore line managers, and continue operating despite a formal complaint that reached the PS, the Minister, the Director General, the Director HR and the Public Service Commission, it becomes clear that this is not a rogue act. It is a structural collapse.

The DCEO’s Silence Is A Scandal On Its Own

The DCEO said it wasn’t aware of this particular case. It was created to investigate exactly this type of misconduct. Its failure to act is a scandal within a scandal. It raises the question of whether the Directorate has capacity or whether it is simply unwilling to confront politically protected wrongdoing.

Lesotho continues to spend millions on anti corruption institutions that retreat when the stakes are high.

The Collapse of Governance at the Heart of the Health System

The Ministry of Health is supposed to protect lives. Instead, its hiring system has been turned into a private business venture. Laws are being ignored. Whistleblowers are being punished. Public trust is being shredded.

This is no longer an internal administrative issue. It is a collapse of governance at the core of the health sector.

A Call for Immediate Action

Lesotho cannot rebuild its health system under this level of corruption. The Public Service Act is not optional. The leadership cannot continue pretending that the evidence does not exist. The DCEO cannot continue protecting silence.

The country deserves a Ministry that hires fairly. A Ministry that protects whistleblowers. A Ministry that does not sell jobs to desperate Basotho. A Ministry that treats public office as a public trust.

This is a scandal the Ministry of Health cannot hide any longer.

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are split into hostile camps. Promised public services are allegedly used as political weapons. Internal disputes are no longer discussed quietly in party rooms but hurled across text messages in the language of betrayal.

The tone is emotional. It is territorial. It is personal. And it exposes a party struggling to contain its own ambitions.

Old Ghosts of Coalition Politics

What 'Mope says at one point should worry the RFP leadership. He compares the party's internal sabotage to the chaos that destroyed the All Basotho Convention. In Lesotho's political history, this is not a light warning. Parties here do not collapse from opposition pressure. They collapse from internal poisoning. RFP may be following the same path.

A Party With No Internal Discipline

The exchange makes one thing clear. The party has no functioning dispute-resolution mechanism. If MPs resort to public outbursts and private text wars, it means no one at the top is enforcing discipline or mediating conflicts. It means factions are running

freely. It means the promise of unity that helped RFP win the 2022 election has evaporated.

Both men accuse the other of feeding private conversations to the party leader. Both accuse the other of dishonesty. Both believe they are victims of political sabotage. In a party with firm leadership, such an exchange would not be possible.

What This Means for Governing Factional fights inside a ruling party always spill out into governance. The allegations here point directly to stalled public projects in Menkhoaneng and Peka-Ts'oeu. They point to cabinet ministers accused of blocking development for political advantage. They point to MPs who no longer coordinate but openly accuse each other of sabotage.

If the ruling party is this fractured internally, the country's governance will inevitably feel the consequences. When the Leader Is Present But Leadership Is Absent

What makes this entire saga even more astonishing is where it unfolded. These were not private side-messages exchanged in frustration. This was a full-scale political

knife fight happening inside an official WhatsApp group that includes Prime Minister Sam Matekane and the entire RFP leadership. They watched the blows land. They watched the accusations fly. They watched their MPs tear each other apart in full view of the party command. And they said nothing. Not a correction. Not a reprimand. Not even a call for calm.

Silence became the leadership's only contribution.

It was the kind of silence that tells a story all on its own. A story of a leader who has lost the room. A story of a movement that no longer fears its own centre. A story of a governing party that has become so uncertain of its authority that it cannot even contain a public internal brawl happening right in front of it. And now something darker has surfaced. RFP insiders say the party will not field candidates in constituencies belonging to nineteen MPs who have been demanding that Matekane fire corrupt ministers. Even if these MPs win their primaries, the party will simply refuse to register them with the IEC. In Peka, for example, RFP

has already signalled that if MP Mohopoli Monokoane wins the primary, the party will abandon the constituency entirely. Instead, it will openly instruct its supporters to vote for Tello Kibane, who is preparing to run as an independent candidate.

It is a move that reveals a party leadership willing to punish dissent even at the cost of shrinking its own footprint. It is also a move that confirms what many Basotho have suspected but could not yet prove. The RFP is no longer fighting the opposition. It is fighting itself. And the battlefield is every constituency where an independent mind refuses to bow to a corrupt minister or a powerful faction.

What the public witnessed in those WhatsApp messages was not just two MPs trading insults. It was the live disintegration of internal discipline. It was the slow unravelling of authority. It was a governing party losing control in real time.

If this is how RFP behaves behind closed doors, the question is no longer whether the party is divided. The real question is whether it is still governable at all.

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Healing Starts Boiketlong Centre, Home for GBV Victims

By: Lemohang Botsane

In a powerful step toward fighting gender-based violence (GBV), Boiketlong Multipurpose Centre officially opened its doors for victims of GBV this week.

As a beacon of hope for survivors, the centre pledges shelter, support and a path to renewal for women and children fleeing abuse without revealing their location for safety.

During the handover ceremony, Vodacom Lesotho's Finance Manager, 'Mamoorosi Ralitapole cut through the silence, saying they are choosing courage.

"No more shadows for GBV. We stop watching, we start healing." Her words echoed calls from Deputy Prime Minister Justice Nthomeng Majara for unity in this fight and UN Lesotho Representative Amanda Khozi Mukwashi's vow that no survivor walks alone.

In a powerful show of solidarity, Lydia Zigomo, the UNFPA East and Southern Africa Regional Director, reaffirmed the agency's unwavering commitment



to eradicating GBV by 2030 during her official visit to Lesotho.

"Lesotho's efforts to combat this scourge inspire us," Zigomo said, adding that the journey is far from over, but together there is potential to build a nation where women and girls can live in dignity, equality and freedom.

"Today and beyond these 16 Days of Activism—we renew our partnership with the government to make this vision real," she exclaimed.

Speaking amid the launch of the Centre, a safe haven for survi-

vors, Zigomo stressed that no woman or girl should endure violence. She made a promise that the UNFPA will keep amplifying local efforts, pushing for systemic change and supporting survivors' paths to healing.

Queen 'Masenate Mohato Seeiso, a patron of compassion in this fight, underscored the pain of abuse by those meant to protect.

She said it was very heartbreaking to hear stories of abuse; however, she promised victims and survivors to stand with them to help rebuild their lives

and live fear-free.

The centre offers safe shelter- a refuge in crisis and crèche for kids while their mothers, often victims of abuse, find healing. It also offers free counselling and legal aid- a package of emotional and legal support and livelihood training to equip survivors with the necessary skills to restart, thrive.

This is a joint effort by the Ministry of Gender, the UNFPA, Vodacom Lesotho Foundation and other international partners and is indeed an answer to all the victims of GBV.

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ESG Lens

Fitch Keeps Lesotho at 'B' While Everyone Else Moves



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Lesotho Tribune

By: Staff Reporter

Every few months the global rating agencies look at countries and decide what they are worth on the world's risk ladder. Sometimes the moves are dramatic. A downgrade sends governments into panic mode. An upgrade gets paraded as proof that things are finally turning around.

Fiscal Surpluses: Fitch forecasts a budget surplus of 2.0% of GDP for the fiscal year ending March 2026 (FY25), down from an estimated 8.8% in FY24. The surpluses in FY23 (7.1% of GDP) and FY24 were due to SACU windfalls, under-spent capital budgets, and higher water royalties in FY24. We estimate that SACU receipts will decline by 6.4% of GDP in FY25 to 20.8%, partially offset by an 4.5% of GDP increase in water royalties, after Lesotho renegotiated its water export rates to South Africa, resulting in over a two-fold increase, effective January 2024. Fitch

projects a 2% decrease in tax revenue in FY25 and FY26, due to potential textile factory closures. When Fitch looked at Lesotho in June this year, it simply kept the country at B with a Stable Outlook. That is the same rating Lesotho has carried since 2019. No change, no drama, no signal that anything fundamental has shifted. As November comes to an end, the silence has grown louder and more uncomfortable. Policymakers like to believe that no news is good news. It really is not. A decade of rating history tells a very different story. If you go back to 2015, Lesotho held a BB minus rating. It was still speculative, but it was a step above where we are today. By the following year, Fitch had cut the rating to B plus. For a while it held there. In 2016, 2017 and 2018 the rating remained at B plus, although by 2018 the outlook had turned negative. The agency was already warning about

structural weaknesses, political turbulence and a widening fiscal hole. Then came August 2019. Fitch downgraded Lesotho to B, pushed by weakening public finances and growing economic vulnerabilities. That was the moment the country fell deeper into junk territory. It has not climbed out since. The outlook has moved around instead. In 2020 and 2021, Fitch kept the rating at B but changed the outlook to Negative. It cited high external debt, declining revenues, and a worrying history of political instability that makes reform difficult and inconsistent. In 2022 the outlook went back to Stable and has stayed there through to 2023, 2024 and the latest review in June 2025.

This is the entire picture. A downgrade in 2016. Another downgrade in 2019. Six years stuck at B with no movement in either direction. That is not stability. That is stagnation.

Fitch is never emotion-

al. Its language may be bland, but it is brutally honest if you pay attention. Over the years the agency has repeated the same points. Lesotho relies heavily on SACU revenues that rise and fall without warning. Public debt is climbing faster than the economy can grow. The political environment is unpredictable. Government reforms start with fanfare, stall midway and then get overtaken by new crises. Growth is too weak to carry the load. Even before Covid, the economy had fallen into a recession that policymakers never acknowledged until the numbers became too obvious to spin away. More recently, Fitch noted that growth picked up only slightly in 2024, reaching just above two percent, and is expected to slow again into 2025. This is nowhere near the pace required to stabilise debt or improve living standards. It is certainly not enough to convince investors that the country is becoming more resilient or better governed. **ESG - Governance:** Lesotho has an ESG Relevance Score (RS) of '5' for both Political Stability and Rights and for the Rule of Law, Institutional and Regulatory Quality and Control of Corruption. These scores reflect the high weight that the World Bank Governance Indicators (WBGI) have in our proprietary

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Lesotho Tribune

By: Staff Reporter

A disturbing conflict of interest scandal is unfolding inside the Lesotho National Development Corporation. At the centre of it is Tšepo Putsoa, the LNDC Property Manager who has already been suspended for corruption involving

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Central Bank Cuts Policy Rate Amid Moderating Inflation

By: Staff Reporter

Maseru

The Central Bank of Lesotho (CBL) has announced a reduction in its key policy rate, signalling a strategic move to align with regional monetary conditions and support domestic economic stability. The Governor of the bank, Dr Maluke Letete, announced this at the Monetary Policy meeting held in Maseru this week. He highlighted that the bank had resolved to lower the CBL Rate by 25 basis points, bringing it down to 6.50 percent per annum from the previous 6.75 percent.

This decision, Dr Letete said, comes as the bank continues its commitment to maintaining the peg between the Loti and the South African Rand, following a similar rate cut by the South African Reserve Bank (SARB). The Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) has therefore advised banks to set their prime lending rate at no more than the CBL Rate plus 350 basis points, warning also that the Net International Reserves (NIR) target floor has been revised downwards to US\$830 million from US\$840 million, a change deemed adequate to underwrite the Loti-Rand



peg. These decisions, DR Letete said, were informed by a comprehensive review of global, regional and domestic economic conditions.

The bank's 2025 projections had predicted a slight upward revision, though the overall sentiment remains one of moderation, with advanced economies experiencing subdued activity. Likewise, inflation has generally eased across major economies but persists as a concern in selected regions while risks like trade tensions, labour supply shocks and financial vulnerabilities remain pertinent.

Dr Letete alerted that regionally, South Africa's economy had demonstrated improved growth in the third quarter of 2025, primarily driven by household spending.

Despite an uptick in in-

flation to 3.6 percent in October 2025, he said, the SARB also

reduced its policy rate by 25 basis points to 6.75 percent, a move Lesotho has now mirrored to maintain monetary alignment.

He announced a shocking revelation, informing that Lesotho's economy experienced a slowdown in the third quarter of 2025, attributed to weak manufacturing and subdued domestic demand, particularly in private spending. While the medium-term outlook suggests modest growth due to weaker exports and mining output, it was said that this is expected to be partially offset by anticipated stronger textile exports to South Africa. On a lighter note, inflation in the country is said to have moderated to 4.5 percent last month, down

from 4.7 percent in September. This easing, Dr Letete said, was primarily due to lower food prices, increased supply of vegetables, reduced fuel costs and a stronger Rand. However, he cautioned that inflation could remain moderately higher if food prices persist in their elevation.

In July, the government's budgetary operations (GBO) recorded a notable surplus of 10.0 percent of GDP, a major boost by SACU receipts and water royalties while public debt-to-GDP saw a slight increase to 56.0 percent due to project disbursements. Meanwhile, the current account deficit moderated in the third quarter, a result of stronger exports, with SACU receipts and foreign investment income continuing to provide crucial buffers.

Dr Letete said the NIR increased by US\$60.78 million between September and November, an increase that exceeded the bank's revised target. Looking ahead, the Governor emphasised the MPC's commitment to closely monitoring global and regional developments, reaffirming its readiness to implement necessary measures to safeguard the credibility of the Loti-Rand peg while also ensuring continued financial stability for Lesotho.

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Sovereign Rating Model (SRM). Lesotho has a medium WBGI ranking at 32.8 reflecting a recent record of peaceful political transitions, a moderate level of rights for participation in the political process, moderate institutional capacity, established rule of law and a moderate level of corruption.

Five months after the June review, the rating has not changed. It is tempting for the government to shrug and say the rating was confirmed so things must be fine. Meanwhile, the world around us is moving. Ghana, a country that hit the absolute bottom of sovereign finance and entered restricted default, managed to secure an upgrade to B minus in June as part of its recovery program. South Africa is now openly edging toward its first upgrade in almost twenty years after a period of fiscal tightening and structural adjustments. Kenya, to the other extreme, took a downgrade after stalled reforms and tax protests shook investor confidence.

Across the region the rating map is shifting. Either up or down. Lesotho is the only one standing still. In practice, a country that stands still is sliding backwards, because the world does not wait for us to fix our politics or tidy up our books. Investors do not

reward countries that refuse to reform. They punish them quietly through higher interest rates, poor sentiment and a reluctance to commit long term capital.

A 'B' rating carries real consequences. It signals that lending to Lesotho carries a high risk of default. It means that if the government ever turned to international markets, the interest rates would be painful. It tells global institutions and private investors that public finances are fragile, reforms are slow and the political environment is a constant drag on implementation capacity. Even where debt is concessional, the rating is a reminder that the country's margin for error is thin. Fitch has warned more than once that continued drawdowns of government deposits and persistent current account pressures could eventually stress the very foreign reserves that protect the loti to rand peg.

The truth is that ratings reflect behaviour, not speeches. A decade of Fitch reports shows that the agency kept waiting for reforms that never arrived. Public finance management remains weak. Procurement is still a playground for political networks. Major projects are delayed year after year. Even the Lesotho Highlands Water Project, which should have been a growth engine, has been slowed down by politics

and bureaucracy. In this environment no rating agency will give an upgrade simply because a minister says things are improving.

By the time 2025 closes, Lesotho will have spent ten straight years trapped in the same corner of the ratings map. Formerly BB minus. Then B plus. Now B. With a Stable Outlook that quietly means nothing is improving fast enough to change the country's position.

This is not only a financial story. It is a leadership story. Countries that take reform seriously

find a way to climb back up the ladder. Ghana did it from the worst possible starting point. South Africa is trying. Even smaller economies with far more limited resources than ours have pushed for better credit outcomes through discipline, governance and clear reform paths. Lesotho has not done that. The long stagnation at B is not Fitch's judgment alone. It is the world's quiet conclusion that our politics and our institutions have become comfortable with underachievement.



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PS ordered to tear up Tsebo deal, PAC smells foul play

By: Tholoana Lesenya

MASERU

The Public Accounts Committee (PAC) has instructed the Principal Secretary of the Ministry of Health, who also chairs the Queen 'Mamohato Memorial Hospital Management Committee to immediately scrap the contract awarded to Tsebo Health Solutions until the Auditor General confirms it was granted lawfully. The bold directive came during a tense PAC session this week, where MPs expressed shock and concern over how Tsebo Health Solutions ended up winning the right to run the hospital's private ward, coffee shop and pharmacy despite never submitting a tender. PAC Chairperson, 'Machabana Lemphane Letsie, said the committee had already asked the Auditor General to investigate the deal and determine whether the process followed the law. She told the PS that preliminary observations suggest the contract



may have been granted unfairly, raising serious accountability questions. She criticised the PS for alleging that the Minister of Health had instructed her not to cancel the contract, warning that such reasoning was unacceptable and dangerous for public administration. "Cancel it before implementation to prevent legal consequences," Lemphane Letsie said firmly, adding that government ministries are expected to

rely on the Attorney General for legal guidance not ministerial instructions. The PS, appearing visibly uneasy, insisted she was only following the Minister's order not to cancel or discuss the matter. But PAC members reminded her that as chief accounting officer, she carries full responsibility for decisions made under her watch. To add to the controversy, the committee revealed that eight com-

panies had actually tendered for the project, yet none of them received the award. That gap opened the door for a company that had never been in the race to walk away with the lucrative contract, raising even more questions. The PAC has made it clear that the contract must be halted, the Auditor General must investigate, and the Ministry must account to the nation.

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EDITORIAL

The Minister Is Shocked. The Country Is Shocked That She Is Shocked



15

Lesotho Tribune

By: Editorial

There are moments in a nation's economic story when a minister of finance must project clarity. Calm. Competence. Something that resembles a steady hand on the tiller. What we saw in the Mid-Term Budget Review delivered on 26 November 2025 was the opposite. The minister of finance expressed shock at an economy that has been screaming for attention for two years. She sounded blindsided by problems that her own decisions helped create. And she seemed genuinely surprised that the numbers had turned against her, even though the storm clouds were visible from the moment the RFP government took power. The most troubling part of this review is not the data. It is the disbelief shown by the person responsible for managing it. The minister lamented everything from



weak growth projections to revenue shortfalls, grants collapsing and royalties underperforming. Yet each one of these problems was either predictable, preventable or caused by policy choices that defied economic logic. The shock feels theatrical.

A Government That Intentionally Strangled Its Own Economy

When the RFP government announced that it would no longer procure goods and services through small suppliers because it could no longer afford to pay so-called middlemen, it presented the decision as fiscal discipline. In reality, it was a reckless assault on the backbone of the local economy. The truth is simple. In Lesotho, govern-

ment is the single biggest customer. Most businesses, from traders to service providers, survive on government procurement. Removing that spending without a transition plan was not discipline. It was sabotage.

The result was obvious. When you kill demand, you shrink the tax base. You increase unemployment. You hollow out the very private sector you claim you want to grow. The minister should not be shocked that tax revenue is lagging or that the domestic economy remains weak. It is the predictable outcome of a government that withdrew spending from its own market.

Trump's Sanctions Arrived Before the Budget. The

Minister Pretended They Did Not.

One of the most astonishing omissions in this budget is the failure to adjust when Donald Trump announced sanctions and punitive tariffs long before the 2025/26 Budget was passed. These tariffs targeted exactly the sectors that fund Lesotho's export earnings and donor credibility. That alone should have prompted an immediate redraw of the national budget.

But pride got in the way. Instead of revising the numbers, the ministry acted as if the old assumptions were still valid. It passed a budget based on grant flows that were no longer guaranteed, includ-

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Lesotho Tribune

By: Tholoana Lesenya

Bail has become one of the most misunderstood areas of Lesotho's criminal justice system. Every week, court corridors and social media streets echo with public frustration: Why was this one granted bail?" or "How can someone charged with murder walk free?" Yet, in other cases, people accused of seemingly "minor offences" find themselves detained for years or granted miraculously "high amounts of bail".

This confusion is not because courts act arbitrarily but because bail decisions are rooted in specific constitutional principles and guided by factual considerations unique to each case. To appreciate how and why bail is granted or denied, we must start with the legal foundation.

The Constitution at the Centre of Bail Section 6 of the Constitution of Lesotho guarantees the right to personal liberty.

Importantly, it also supports the presumption of innocence: an accused per-

OPINION

Bail in Lesotho

WHY COURTS TREAT MURDER, THEFT AND OTHER CASES DIFFERENTLY

WHY LAW CAN'T EXCUSE ILLEGAL ACTIVITIES



son is innocent until proven guilty. Because of this, the courts are required to avoid treating an accused as though they have already been convicted. But, as emphasised in numerous High Court judgments, this right is not absolute. It must be balanced against the interests of justice, public safety and the integrity of the investigation.

The Role of the Criminal Procedure and Evidence Act, 1981 Lesotho's bail process is mainly governed by the Criminal Procedure and Evidence Act (CP&E Act). The Act sets out circumstances where bail may be restricted, especially for serious offences such as murder, treason, rape and armed robbery. While the Act gives courts discretion, this discretion must be exercised rationally and based on established legal

criteria.

Why bail outcomes differ from case to case

1. The Seriousness of the Offence Courts consider the severity of the offence as a major factor. The general rule is: the more serious the charge, the higher the risk that the accused will flee to avoid trial.

This is why murder suspects face stricter bail scrutiny compared to those charged with theft or dagga possession.

Bail in Murder Cases Murder is one of the most serious offences under Lesotho's Penal Code. It carries the potential for life imprisonment. Courts therefore bring up questions like: is there a strong likelihood the accused might run? Can the accused interfere with witnesses, particularly those who know them? Are investigations at a sensitive stage? Is there risk of pub-

lic disorder or retaliation?

In several High Court cases such as R v Molefi, R v Tjamela and others, recent bail decisions delivered by Justices Mokhesi and Mohloli—courts emphasised that murder bail is not impossible, but must be approached with caution.

Bail in Theft Cases Theft covers a wide range, from stealing groceries to theft of high-value property.

Although still criminal, it is less severe compared to murder. Courts commonly grant bail in these case unless: the accused is a repeat offender, they have pending cases, there is risk of interfering with evidence (stolen items not yet recovered) or the accused poses a flight risk. Magistrates' courts on the other hand, the courts that handle most theft matters, often release first-time of-

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ing MCC and USAID support. The consequences appear clearly in the review. Grants were budgeted at M3.48 billion. By mid-year, government had received only M758.9 million. The projection for the year is just M1.38 billion. The minister calls this a shock, yet the disappointment was visible from the first day the sanctions were announced. This is not shock. It is negligence disguised as surprise. On Muela, The Minister Pretends Not To Have Known The minister also laments the decline in LHDA royalties, blaming the “unexpected extension” of Muela maintenance for reduced water transfers to South Africa. But this was a planned shutdown. She knew about it. The Min-

istry of Finance is always briefed on LHDA maintenance schedules because royalties are a strategic revenue line.

To act stunned now suggests either she ignored the briefing or she is retreating behind uncertainty to hide poor planning. Either way, it weakens public trust. A serious finance minister does not pretend Muela maintenance happened in the dark.

The Numbers Tell a Story of Avoidable Weakness The review shows that Lesotho is projected to grow at 1.3 percent, down from the 3.4 percent expectation that the minister herself sold to the public. This is not global pressure alone. This is domestic policy failure layered on external shocks. Grants have collapsed. Capital spending is at only 18 percent of gov-

ernment-funded projects. Manufacturing is in crisis. Mining is shedding jobs. Agriculture is recovering from last year’s drought. And the private sector is suffocating.

The minister attributes most of the pain to external factors. Yet the most damaging decisions were made here at home.

The Shock Is Not in the Numbers. It Is in the Leadership Vacuum.

What stands out in this review is the absence of accountability. The minister delivers the numbers as if someone else prepared the budget. As if someone else ignored the sanctions. As if someone else strangled the procurement system. As if someone else failed to prepare for Muela.

It is difficult to build public confidence when the national strategy appears

to rely on hoping for good luck. It is even harder when the minister seems genuinely startled each time reality arrives.

Lesotho needed a minister who would acknowledge her missteps, adjust her course and restore confidence. Instead, we received a performance of surprise. The shock is not that the economy is struggling. The shock is that the minister seems unaware of the role she played in getting us here.

If nothing changes, then the next budget will read worse than this one.

Blame placed everywhere else. And a minister who continues to be shocked by outcomes she helped shape.

In fact we boldly predict that the coming budget will be the most incoherent since democracy.

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Lesotho Tribune

By David Gregory-Kumar

Using other insects to control pests like greenfly has been a massive success story for farming, reducing the use of chemical pesticides.

But new research from Harper Adams University suggests the aphids may well be evolving resistance to this approach. Scientists there are talking to the companies that farm wasps and produce other biological controls to alert them to the issue.

The solution might be to diversify the genetic mix of wasps and other predators, so they can out-evolve any resistance the aphids come up with. On one Shropshire fruit farm, just down the road in Newport, there are still a surprising number of strawberries for early November.

The farmer there, Gabriel Slabbert, has used tiny wasps, no bigger than a grain of rice, to control a grower's eternal enemy,

SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY

Scientists look at new solutions to aphid problem



aphids.

This is biological pest control and Mr Slabbert said it was an "essential" tool for farmers.

He said many pesticides were restricted or even banned and supermarket buyers also wanted growers to reduce their chemical use.

"We hang a tube [containing wasps] at the side of the gutter. Open a little trapdoor and they fly out to do what they need to do," he said.

But the wasps do not eat the aphids, like ladybirds do, rather they inject an egg inside the aphid.

As it grows into a baby wasp it also kills the aphid and means the strawberries of Littywood Farm continue to thrive.

However, researchers at Harper Adams University have found that aphids are starting to become resistant to the commercially grown wasps.

"It's patchy, and sometimes they work fine," Laura Martinez-Chavez, from the university, said. "But sometimes they don't work at all or at least aren't as effective as the grower expects them to be." It is not unusual for pests to develop resistance to chemicals over time, but in this case some aphid populations have found a way of countering their predators by stopping their eggs developing inside them.

It means these particular wasps no longer kill the aphids and so are less

effective or even useless as a form of pest control. "It happens in nature" Entomologist Professor Tom Pope explained. "First one side evolves resistance, but then the other evolves to overcome it." There is a lot of complex genetics going on here, which the researchers are studying, while also warning the companies which produce the wasps of the danger.

The likely solution is to diversify the genetic mix of wasps and other predators.

Currently the extent of this resistance is unclear, but by taking action now it is hoped the industry can preserve the effectiveness of biological control in the long term. News Source: BBC

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fenders with moderate bail amounts, sometimes even accompanied by personal recognisance (release without payment but with conditions).

Bail in Dagga Selling and Possession Cases Dagga (cannabis) offences fall under the Dangerous Drugs Act, which makes selling, cultivating or distributing dagga illegal without medical or industrial authorization.

Many offenders argue that selling dagga is their only source of income—but courts cannot legally consider an illegal activity as a valid livelihood. The law does not recognise financial hardship as justification for crime.

In these cases, the Courts look at the quantity of dagga found, whether the accused is a repeat dealer or whether they belong to organised distribution networks and the possibility of re-offending if released.

For first-offenders found with small quantities intended for personal use, bail is commonly granted. But for those clearly involved in trade, courts may impose stricter bail or deny it to prevent continued illegal activity.

Why illegal livelihood is not a defence A frequent argument during bail hearings is always “Ke ne ke rekisa matekoana ho fepa lelapa” translated I was selling dagga to support my family.

While poverty is real, the courts cannot endorse unlawful conduct as a legitimate source of income. If they were to consider such arguments, it would create a dangerous precedent—effectively allowing criminal activities to be protected under the guise of economic survival.

Lesotho’s judiciary has repeatedly emphasised this principle in decisions involving illegal mining, cattle rustling, and dagga trade. For this reason and others, the law cannot bend to accommodate crime even when driven by poverty.

Other factors Courts must consider 1. Likelihood of Absconding In granting bail for offenders of the law, the court weighs options like permanent residence, employment status, family ties and previous compliance with court orders no matter the state of the crime.

Someone with a stable life in Lesotho is less likely to flee compared to a transient person with no fixed address.

2. Interference with Witnesses This is often a major concern in murder and domestic violence cases. If the accused lives close to witnesses or shares family ties with them, the danger is higher, hence stricter the Courts become.

3. The Stage of Investigations Courts avoid releasing, on any conditions, an accused person when: key witnesses have not yet been interviewed or evidence (weapons or stolen items) is still being traced.

This is especially relevant in murder cases where investigations are most of the time very complex to crack.

4. Public Interest and Safety If an accused person poses a threat to the community such as in repeat violent offences, courts prioritise protection of the public. Why the system sometimes appear unfair The public often perceives bail outcomes as inconsistent and very bias. But what

seems like unfairness usually reflects the complexity

of the factors courts must weigh.

Two suspects charged with similar offences may have different personal circumstances. One may have strong community ties and the other may be a habitual offender.

One may face weak evidence while the other may face overwhelming prima facie evidence. Bail is highly individualised and cannot be applied with a blanket rule.

The real issue: Delays and systematic weaknesses Where the bail system truly fails is not in the judges’ decisions, but in delays that cause 0eople to remain in remand for years, cases to collapse due to slow investigations and witnesses to disappear or lose interest in the case.

If cases moved faster, bail would become less contro-

versial because pre-trial detention would be shorter and more reasonable. Balancing rights and justice Lesotho’s courts operate under a constitutional duty. They must safeguard the liberty of the accused while at the same time protecting the public and upholding justice.

Bail is not meant to favour criminals nor to satisfy public anger. It exists so that people are not punished before they are proven guilty. Understanding how courts differentiate between murder, theft and other criminal cases helps the nation appreciate that bail decisions are grounded in law—not emotion.

But ultimately, improving investigations, speeding up trials and strengthening policing will do far more to restore public confidence than any bail ruling ever could.



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Lesotho Aims for Peace, Reform

By: Lemohang Botsane

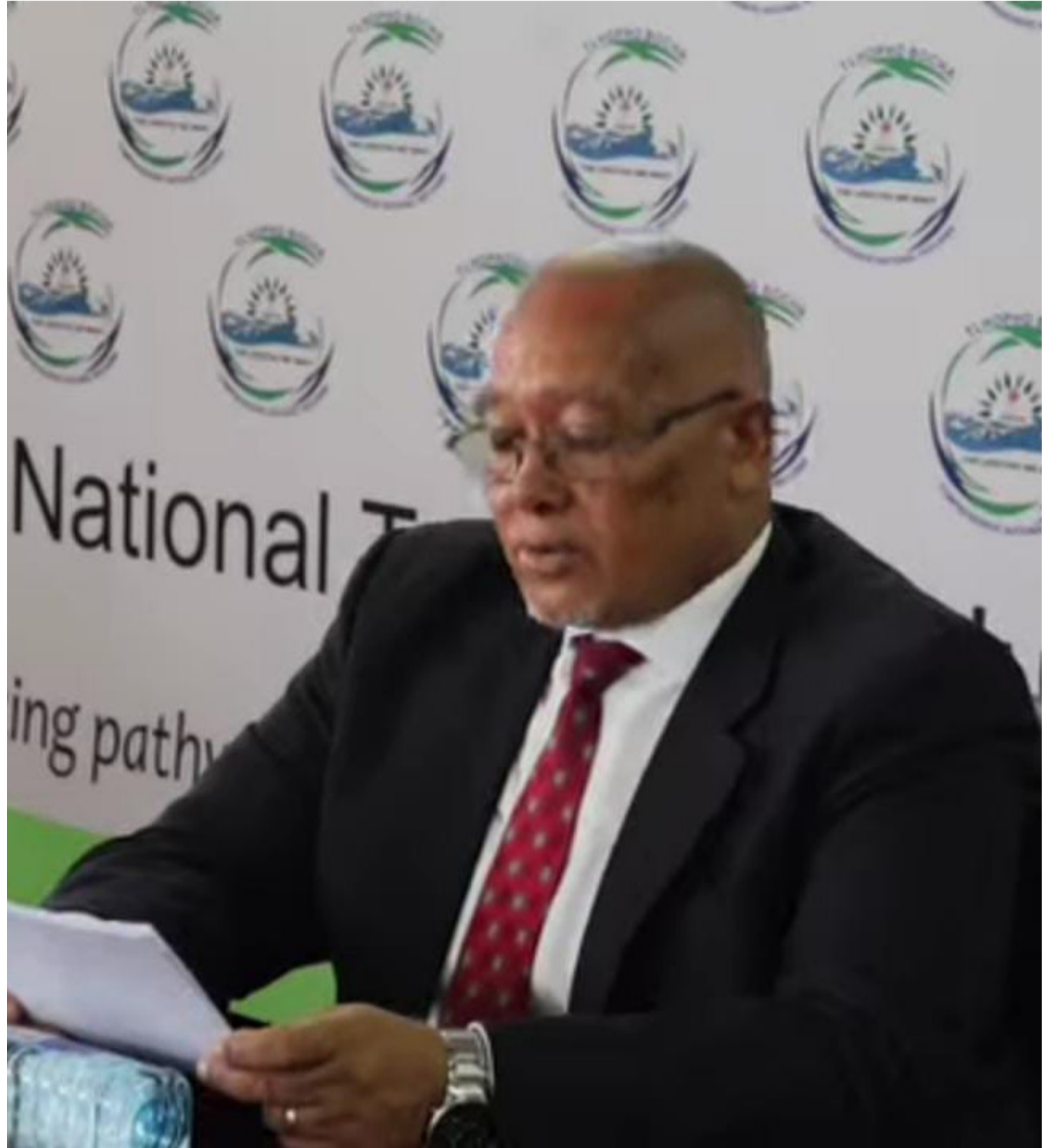
Maseru

The Ministry of Law and Justice, through its National Reforms Transitional Office (NRTO), marked a key moment in the country's quest for stability by bringing together academics, African Union and UN representatives, and youth delegates from as far as Zambia in a two-day National Transitional Conference in Maseru this week.

Speaking at the conference, Law and Justice Minister Richard Ramoetsi said the gathering was not a mere meeting, but a vital step toward peace-building, reconciliation, and broader reforms.

Building on the 2021 National Stakeholders' Consultative Forum, participants are working on a tailored transitional-justice framework for Lesotho, drawing lessons from models in South Africa, Rwanda and Sierra Leone.

This transitional justice – encompassing truth



commissions, reparations, prosecutions, institutional reforms and community-based initiatives – aims to address past community abuses and restore dignity, with elites debating root causes of recurring conflicts and drafting policies aligned with the

African Union's 2019 Transitional Justice Policy, stressing victim-centric approaches for legitimacy. Expected outcomes of the conference included drawing of frameworks that will promote accountability, national unity and social cohesion; actions

crucial for good governance and development.

The conference was therefore seen as a chance for Lesotho to adapt international best practices to local needs, potentially ushering in a new era of healing and stronger institutions.

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A killer's plea: man convicted of murder asks court to spare him

By: Tholoana Lesenya

MASERU

The High Court this week was drawn into an emotional battle for mercy as Tšeno-
lo Thamahane, recently found guilty of murder and attempted murder, stood before the bench to plead for a lenient sentence.

The packed courtroom held its breath as the defence attempted to soften the grim weight of the crimes he has been convicted of.

Thamahane's conviction arises from a violent shooting that unfolded on March 08, 2025, a tragic episode that claimed the life of 'Malechakane Mokhoema and left her sibling, High Court Assistant Registrar Tebello Mokhoema, fighting for her life.

Last week, Acting Justice Palesa Rantara rendered a categorical verdict: the prosecution had proved beyond reasonable doubt that Thamahane acted intentionally and unlawfully when he carried out the attack.

But with the sentencing phase now underway, the focus has shifted from guilt to the question of what punishment fits the crime, a question that flooded the courtroom with tense exchanges and contrasting narratives about motive, remorse and justice.

Representing the convict, Advocate Katiso Nhlapo painted a picture of a man overwhelmed by anger following a verbal confrontation, insisting that Thamahane had no premeditated



intent to kill.

According to the defence, the tragic turn of events stemmed from a momentary loss of control rather than a calculated decision. "Extenuating circumstances exist in this matter," Nhlapo told the court, urging the judge to consider the emotional volatility that he argues triggered the shooting.

The defence further leaned heavily on Thamahane's conduct after the incident as evidence of remorse. Nhlapo explained that his client turned himself in to the authorities soon after the shooting, demonstrating an acceptance of responsibility.

He told the court that while in custody, Thamahane went so far as to direct his relatives to approach the bereaved family with intentions of reconciliation and compensation. According to Advocate Nhlapo, Thamahane has expressed readiness to compensate both the family of the deceased and the sur-

living victim, a gesture the defence suggests shows a willingness to repair, as far as is possible, the damage he caused.

Adding another layer to the plea, Advocate Nhlapo highlighted Thamahane's personal circumstances. He is a father to a 15-year-old daughter and the primary provider for his household. He therefore urged the court to weigh the impact of a long sentence on the convict's young child and dependents, arguing that punishment should not unduly destroy the lives of the innocent.

However, the Crown held a firm and unyielding stance. Advocate Lehlohonolo Phooko dismissed the defence's arguments as hollow attempts to dilute an act of deliberate violence. According to the prosecution, the lack of extenuating circumstances is "as clear as daylight."

Phooko reminded the court that Thamahane did not act in a moment of blind rage, but with ex-

PLICIT intent. He reminded the court that the accused had announced his violent plans publicly and later carried them out with chilling precision.

The prosecution underscored the brutality of the killing, a defenseless woman gunned down in full view of children, an image that Phooko said would permanently scar the minors who witnessed it.

"Murder is among the gravest offences known to our law," Phooko argued, stressing that its severity dwarfs any personal hardships or responsibilities cited by the defence. The state insists that retribution and societal protection must take precedence, particularly in a case where the attack was calculated and executed with full awareness of its consequences. Last week's judgment, in which Acting Justice Rantara meticulously dismantled the defence's arguments on intent, continues to cast a long shadow over the proceedings. The judge found that Thamahane acted with full knowledge of what he was doing, rejecting any claims of provocation or diminished responsibility.

As sentencing approaches, the court faces a delicate and consequential task: balancing the convict's plea for mercy against the brutal facts of the crime and the enduring pain of the victims' family. The legal teams are now awaiting the court's decision, one that will determine whether Thamahane's appeals for leniency can survive the gravity of the offence for which he stands convicted.



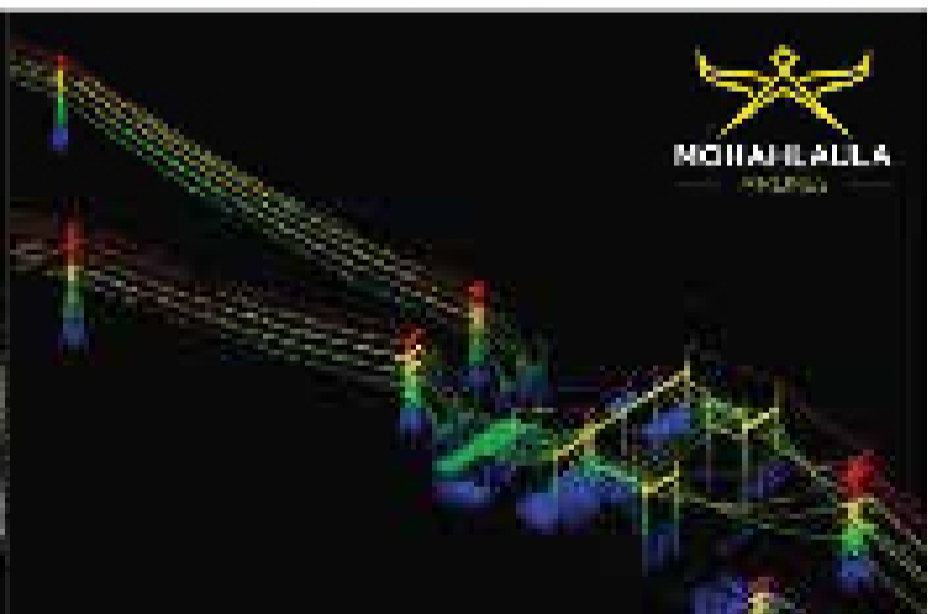


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Lesotho Tribune

By Litšitso Letsunyane

The 2025 edition of Roof of Africa lived up to its reputation as one of the world's toughest enduro motorcycle races. Running from the 19th to 22nd November 2025 across the rugged highlands of Lesotho. The event doubled as the Grand Finale of the FIM Hard Enduro World Championship (HEWC), drawing global attention to the "Kingdom in the Sky."

Roof of Africa is widely known as hard enduro's defining challenge, earning the nickname "Mother of Hard Enduro." It tests riders through steep climbs, rough rock, and shifting mountain terrain under extreme conditions. Since its inception in 1967, the race has grown from a modest local competition into an international event drawing hundreds of riders worldwide.

2025 Edition's Race Structure & Participation This was the 56th edition of Roof of Africa, and over 400 riders from about 15 countries, including Australia, Germany, China, USA, UK, South Africa, Zimbabwe and more took

ARTS & SPORTS

A New Era At The Roof Of Africa As James Moore Changes The Guard



part this year.

The competition ran across four classes as usual: Gold, Silver, Bronze, and Iron.

But the format was a little different this year.

- Day 1 (19 Nov): Registration, Press Conference, and a Mass Parade in the city of Maseru.

- Day 2 (20 Nov): Time Trial session at Ha Lebamang to set the starting order for the races.

- Days 3 & 4 (21–22 Nov): Gruelling mountain stages through the terrain of the Maloti mountains — demanding long riding days, technical skill, navigation, stamina and resilience.

Highlights & Final Results On Day 1 Time Trial, Billy Bolt (Husqvarna) posted the fastest time ahead of Manuel Lettenbichler (KTM) and James Moore (KTM).

Across the three intense days, James Moore, a rising rider — delivered a determined performance, handling the rocky climbs and unpredictable terrain with skill and determination.

On the final day, despite navigational difficulties for some, Moore maintained enough consistency to finish with a total time of 10:42:08, securing overall victory in the Gold Class. The full top 3 (Gold Class) were

1. James Moore (KTM) — Winner, 10:42:08

2. Manuel Lettenbichler (KTM) — +1:52 behind Moore

3. Billy Bolt (Husqvarna) — +5:52 from Moore

Other notable top-5 finishers: Mario Roman (Sherco) 4th, Mitch Brightmore (GasGas) 5th.

In Other classes:

- Silver: Top winner — Grant Burton-Durham
- Bronze: Winner — Stiaan van Den Heever

- Iron: Winner — Gideon Malherbe

Notably, On November 19th, when the event opened its doors for early registration and held its official media press conference at Avani Lesotho Hotel & Casino. Four top international riders sat on the press panel; James Moore, Manuel Lettenbichler, Sandra Gomez and Dylan Jones, fielding questions from the gathered media before a single wheel turned in the mountains. During the session, the MC placed Moore's season into perspective, reminding the audience that his rise had not been sudden.

"I won't say this is your breakout season because 2 seasons ago you won the final day of the roof — that's when everyone remembered your name. And last year you were smashing championships locally, then this year taking down the International Junior Championship. Tell me about your season."

Moore, calmly acknowledged the roller-coaster season of 2025.

"Yeah, my season started off a little bit shaky, to be honest," he began, explaining the early back-wheel failure. "Then, yeah, I had an injury after that, at one of the 10 Extreme rounds.

I ruptured my kidney. So yeah, it's been a huge up and down."

Despite the setbacks, his tone shifted when speaking about the final chapter of his year.

"To finish off... it gets in what the world championship is. I'm really happy, and we have this race, home-race, so it's really cool to be here, see all the fans, and all the organizers say it's gonna be a bit of a better year. Last year was crazy, 10-hour days, so i'm hoping for a little bit shorter." He smiled and added: "Yeah, i'm keen to get started." Another question fired at James pointed out his demanding travel schedule and asked whether schooling still fit into the picture. "It's been a very, very busy season for yourself. Are you still crowbarring schooling in there? It looks like you're traveling every time."

Moore responded with light humor, but the message was serious. "I'm fortunate enough to have a dad that supports my dream. I'm just focusing on riding now. Taking a gap year, another gap year next year," he replied cheekily. "I'm trying to focus on racing, and make something out of this."

James Moore arrived not only to race, but to prove that his breakthrough season has shaped a rider ready to contend amongst champions, and he went on and did just that by winning the gold class with a time of 10:42:08.

the win by a rising rider (James Moore) signals a shift, a "changing of the guard" emphasising that even newcomers, with grit and skill, can prevail.