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An Electoral Earthquake, Still Unfinished

...Rakuoane was right to describe this shift as an electoral earthquake...

20 years ago!

BY: Staff Reporter

When Lesotho adopted the Mixed Member Proportional (MMP) electoral system, it did not merely adjust a technical rulebook. It unsettled a political culture that had, for decades, mistaken exclusion for stability and dominance for legitimacy. Lekhetho Rakuoane was right to describe this shift as an electoral earthquake. Not because it was sudden, but because it altered the fault lines beneath our democracy.

Electoral reform in Lesotho did not arise from academic curiosity or donor fashion. It emerged from crisis. From elections that produced grotesque distortions between votes cast and seats won. From a system that repeatedly delivered parliaments painted in a single colour after campaigns that had promised rainbows. In 1993, a party secured three quarters of the popular vote and every seat in parliament. In 1998, just over half the electorate translated into almost total legislative control. These outcomes were legal under First Past the Post, but they were politically explosive. They bred suspicion, delegitimised institutions, and pushed losing parties to the edge of the constitutional order.

MMP was therefore not a luxury. It was an act of democratic self-preservation.

At its core, the reform attempted something deceptively simple: to inject proportionality into a majoritarian culture without abandoning constituency representation. To borrow Rakuoane's framing, it sought to strike two birds



with one stone. Accountability through constituencies on the one hand, inclusion through proportional representation on the other. In theory, the elegance of the compromise is compelling. In practice, it has been deeply unsettling.

The ordinary voter was suddenly asked to cast two votes on two ballots bearing the same party symbols.

The same candidates could lose in the constituency and re-enter parliament through party lists. Constituencies could be represented by multiple MPs of different political persuasions. To many, this looked like political madness. To others, it was democratic justice finally catching up with arithmetic.

This confusion was not incidental. It was structural. MMP is not intuitive, especially in societies long accustomed to winner-takes-all logic. And Lesotho adopted one of the most complex variants of the system: no fixed threshold, closed party lists, double candidacy, and two distinct categories of Members of Parliament. These design choices carried consequences that political elites were either unwilling or unable to explain honestly to the electorate.

Political parties sit at the centre of this tension.

Under First Past the Post, Lesotho drifted toward a two-party logic, but without the discipline such systems assume. Floor-crossing, splintering, and elite manipulation flourished. Ironically, the same critics

who now fear that proportionality encourages fragmentation must still explain why the most dramatic party splits occurred under the old system. Electoral rules do not create political virtue. They merely shape incentives. And in Lesotho, the incentives of exclusion proved far more destabilising than those of inclusion. Yet MMP has not delivered all it promised. Closed party lists, controlled by party executives, have weakened the link between voters and proportional representatives. Candidates elevated through lists often arrive in parliament without a clear constituency, and too often without accountability. The democratic potential of party lists to promote women, professionals, and marginalised voices has been squandered. With few exceptions, parties failed to produce genuine rainbow lists. Gender representation barely improved. A historic opportunity was missed, not because the system forbade it, but because political leadership lacked the courage to use it.

This failure has fed a dangerous narrative: that proportional representation is inherently illegitimate, that PR MPs are somehow less authentic than constituency MPs, and that MMP was imposed without popular consent. These claims are often made selectively. The same actors who praise the system as a guarantor of peace when speaking to international audiences will denounce it domestically when it constrains their dominance. Such double standards do more damage to democratic legitimacy than any technical feature of MMP.

The deeper problem, as Rakuoane observed, is that MMP was operationalised faster than it was legiti-

mised. Voters were mobilised to deliver seats, but not educated to understand power. Parties benefited from inclusion without investing in political explanation. Parliament accommodated two categories of MPs without treating them as equals. The result is a system that works mechanically, but not yet culturally. And yet, the alternative is far worse. The greatest danger of an electoral system is not complexity. It is hopelessness. When opposition parties and their supporters believe they have no plausible route to representation, democracy itself becomes fragile. Lesotho learned this lesson painfully in the aftermath of the 1998 elections. MMP restored something essential: the belief that losing does not mean exclusion, and that participation is not futile.

The earthquake, then, is not over. Its tremors are still being felt in party structures, parliamentary practice, and public understanding. Whether it ultimately strengthens or weakens Lesotho's democracy depends less on the formula itself than on the political maturity brought to it. Electoral systems cannot substitute for leadership, but they can constrain its worst instincts. MMP gave Lesotho a chance to align power with votes, diversity with representation, and competition with peace. That chance has not been fully taken. But it has not been lost either. The question now is whether the country chooses to complete the democratic transition it began, or retreat into nostalgia for a system that delivered certainty at the cost of legitimacy.

Earthquakes reshape landscapes. They do not guarantee better architecture. That remains a political choice.



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Lesotho Launches BIOFIN Project

By: Staff Reporter

Maseru

The Ministry of Environment and Forestry, in partnership with the Ministry of Finance and Development Planning and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) has launched the Biodiversity Finance Initiative (BIOFIN) project- a global programme that supports countries to identify, mobilise and sustainably manage financial resources required to protect biodiversity and strengthen ecosystem resilience.

This initiative is expected to support the implementation of the National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan III (NBSAP III) by bridging the biodiversity finance gap in Lesotho. Taye Amsalu, the UNDP Deputy Resident Representative to Lesotho, said biodiversity is a very important part of nature worthy of being protected so that it can take care of people in return, encouraging participants of the launch to take care of their ecosystem and territories as the makers and breakers of sustainable development.

He said Lesotho was one of the few countries that is good at ratifying international treaties and international frameworks, commending its government for approving environmental-related treaties, conventions and frameworks. However, he said these conventions need to be localised so that their trickle-down effect can be



visible on the ground. "What we are doing here is to domesticate some of those frameworks and make it work in our context. We have our own national sector development plan where environment is mainstream. We have our biodiversity strategic and action plan. And today we are going to see how do we really finance the plans we have," Amsalu said. He warned of the shortage in funding, saying the financial gap is one of the issues threatening Lesotho's development impact.

"In terms of development trajectory, we are lagging behind in a lot of development dimensions. And one of the problems is financing," he said.

Amsalu said this issue was becoming very hard, especially given the current financial cuts across the globe, however reassuring that the launch was meant to reflect what Lesotho's biodiversity's financial architecture looks like.

The Ministry of Environment has been undertak-

ing a lot of initiatives and activities to protect the environment, introducing alternative plans like the plastic levee, protected area use, tourism levees and others.

The Minister responsible for Environment and Forestry, Letsema Adontsi, said the project launch marked an important milestone in a collective journey to secure sustainable financing for biodiversity conservation and to position biodiversity as a core pillar of national development.

He warned of the source of biodiversity which he said was under increasing pressure, adding that the decline in climate, water, the system's strong erosion and growing threat to water resources were suspected contributing factors.

Adontsi said these challenges were continuously intensifying the situation, putting an additional strain on the ecology systems and communities that depend on weather.

"Communities are suffer-

ing larger disturbances and harvesting smaller quantities. This clearly indicates that natural regeneration can no longer keep pace with humanity," he continued, adding that the government was however finalising the recognition of national biodiversity strategies and active action plans aligned with other global biodiversity frameworks. Through experience, the ministry has learned that strategies alone are not as sufficient. Without sustainable and predictable financing, "even the best plans remain aspirations rather than actions."

As part of the Convention on Biological Diversity, Lesotho like many other parties is required to prepare, update and implement its National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plans (NBSAPs) which provides the global direction for biodiversity action through to 2050; a vision to live in harmony with nature.

This vision, Rorisang Thamae, the UNPD Technical Leader, said can only be achieved if people were to take action to halt and reverse biodiversity loss for the benefit of people and the planet through conservation, sustainable use and fair and equitable sharing of benefits.

The Ministry of Forestry had engaged the UNDP in this initiative to look at some sustainable financing solutions that would be recommended for the implementation of biofin, bringing together economists and environmental partners to find financing solutions for biodiversity conservation in Lesotho.

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Lephema Presents Lesotho's Refugee Progress at GFP in Geneva

By: Staff Reporter

Lesotho took part at the Global Refugee Progress (GFP) Review that was held in Geneva, Switzerland this week.

This global event serves as a platform for governments to take stock of the progress made toward achieving the objectives of the Global Compact on Refugees (GCR), allowing participants to report on their progress in implementing outstanding pledges from the inaugural forum in of 2019 and pledges made in 2023.

Lebona Lephema, the Minister of Local Government, Chieftainship, Home Affairs and Police, at the forum reaffirmed Lesotho's commitment to playing its part to contribute to a future where every displaced person is protected and contribute meaningfully to the county's development. He said the country was on track to domesticate the African Union Convention for the Protection and Assistance of Internally Displaced Persons in Africa (Kampala Convention), with the government amending its legal framework on refugee protection to align with international standards and ensure better access to protection



for displaced persons. The government of Lesotho is reported to have conducted a comprehensive study on statelessness within the country to inform future policy and is said to be finalising a bill that will grant nationality to these children. Lete this year, it held discussions on one-stop border services and study permit waivers for Lesotho students in neighbouring South Africa to improve regional mobility. Lephema reaffirmed that despite limited resources, the country remains committed to finding durable solutions for refugees, including their integration into national development plans. The Progress Review of the GRF is a leading global gathering on refugee issues and provides

a chance to take stock of progress on pledges made at previous forums, reflecting on challenges and gaps and renewing collective efforts under the Global Compact on Refugees (GCR). The progress review focuses on expanding support for refugees and the countries that receive them, identifying and directing efforts towards areas in need of further support. This forum comes at a critical moment when global humanitarian funding is shrinking, the principle of asylum is being politicized and global solidarity with refugees is being tested. Over 200 refugees and people with lived experience of displacement and statelessness participated in the forum, including 130 supported by the

UNHCR.

Refugee leaders, as essential partners, co-designed sessions, identifying challenges and shaping solutions in areas such as education, livelihoods and protection. Other participants at the event included high-level government officials, representatives from civil society, private sector organizations, other UN and development agencies and faith leaders. Despite the challenging global context, advances in refugee support and protection are happening in countries and communities worldwide. Since the adoption of the Global Compact on Refugees, data show that collective action and solidarity are effective, provided the required political will and financial resources are in place.

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ESG Lens

Comparison of Sector Lending Patterns With National Climate and Development Priorities



Lesotho Tribune

By: Staff Reporter

A. National Climate and Development Priorities

Lesotho's strategic documents (NSDP II, NFIS II, NDCs and resilience frameworks)

emphasise shifting the economy toward productive, climate-resilient and export-oriented sectors. Core priorities include agriculture, MSMEs, manufacturing, tourism, technology and climate-resilient livelihoods.

B. Actual Lending Patterns in the Banking Sector

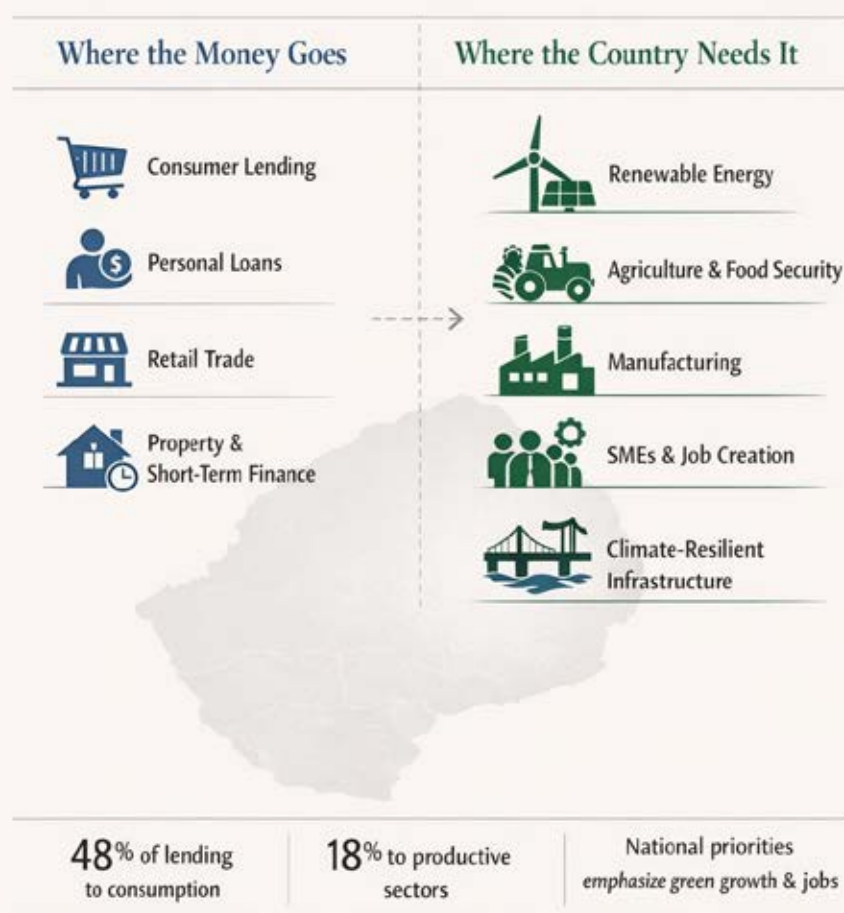
Available CBL and IMF data show that lending is dominated by households, real estate, business services and

manufacturing. Agriculture remains one of the smallest credit recipients, while MSMEs face major collateral and formality barriers. Climate-aligned sectors remain under-financed.

C. Alignment Matrix: Policy Priorities vs Lending Reality

Comparison of Sector Lending Patterns With National Climate and Development Priorities

Do current credit flows support Lesotho's development agenda?



Priority Domain	Policy Expectation	Observed Lending Pattern	Alignment	Comment
Agriculture	Climate-resilient agriculture and food systems	Consistently lowest share of credit	Low	Largest mismatch between priority and financing
MSMEs	Job creation, productive credit expansion	Most MSMEs excluded from bank credit	Low-Medium	Banks serve mainly formal, larger firms
Manufacturing	Export-oriented industrialisation	Material share of business credit	Medium-High	Alignment visible but concentrated in bigger firms
Tourism & Creative Industries	Sector growth and job creation	Buried within services/real estate	Medium-Low	No targeted lending strategy
Green Tech & Innovation	Low-carbon, resource-efficient MSMEs	No dedicated lending lines visible	Low	Strong policy, weak implementation
Water & Ecosystems	Adaptation and resilience	No bank-driven financing; mostly public/donor	Low	Natural resource finance not commercialised
Energy Transition	Renewables and efficient technology	Some solar/clean energy lending	Medium	Emerging but still marginal
Inclusive Jobs	Youth and women's focused access	No gender/youth disaggregated lending data	Low-Medium	Initiatives exist but small scale

D. ESG Interpretation

The comparison shows partial alignment: manufacturing and some service sectors receive meaningful credit, but agriculture, MSMEs, climate adaptation sectors and green

entrepreneurship remain heavily under-financed. The ESG implication is clear: Lesotho's banks have not yet shifted portfolios in line with national climate and development strategies.

E. Implications for Accountability and Policy Dialogue

This matrix exposes where banks need to reallocate capital. For an ESG-aligned financial sector, Lesotho requires greater disclosure of sectoral loan books, climate-linked products and MSME financing outcomes. Tribune or Data Matrix can use this comparison to demand transparency and challenge banks to publish climate-relevant lending data.

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Court of Appeal nullifies secret bail, High Court orders fresh hearing before same Judge

By: Tholoana Lesenya

The High Court has ruled that the fresh bail application by retired Commissioner of Police (COMPOL) Molahlehi Letsoepa, who stands accused of the murder of Police Constable Mokalekale Khetheng, will be heard by Justice 'Mafelile' Ralebese, the same judge who previously granted him bail before the matter was reversed on appeal. The ruling was delivered this week following heated legal arguments over the interpretation of an earlier order by the Court of Appeal, which had set aside Letsoepa's bail and declared the original proceedings a nullity.

At the centre of the argument was whether the Court of Appeal, when it ordered that the matter be settled to the High Court to be heard afresh and in open court, intended that the bail application should be placed before a different judge altogether.

The prosecution, represented by the office of the Director of Public Prosecutions (DPP), strongly argued that the matter should not return to Justice Ralebese. The DPP maintained that because the Court of Appeal had nullified the earlier bail proceedings, the application ought to start on a "clean slate" before a different judge to avoid any perception of bias or preconceived views.

However, the High Court rejected that argument, ruling that nothing in the order of the Court of Appeal expressly required that the bail application be heard by a new judge. The court held that Justice



Ralebese remains properly seized with the matter and is competent to hear the application afresh, provided that it proceeds in open court and in accordance with established legal norms.

The ruling clears the way for the controversial bail application to be argued anew, this time under intense public scrutiny, following months of legal arguing and emotional reactions from the family of the deceased police officer. Letsoepa's fresh bail bid comes after the Court of Appeal, during its October sitting, reviewed and set aside the High Court order that had admitted him to bail. In a strongly worded judgment, the appellate court declared the bail proceedings a nullity and ordered that the matter be remitted to the High Court for a fresh hearing conducted openly.

The Court of Appeal found that the original bail hearing had taken place in chambers, without the involvement of the family of the late Constable Khetheng, who had a direct and substantial interest in the outcome. The judges ruled that, in the absence of exceptional circumstances, hearing bail applications in chambers is irregular and unlawful.

"The proceedings were conducted in secrecy," the appellants argued, insist-

ing that such an approach undermined transparency, fairness and public confidence in the administration of justice.

The appeal was brought by members of Khetheng's family, who challenged the legality of the bail proceedings and questioned how such a serious matter, involving the alleged murder of a police officer, could be handled behind closed doors.

In upholding the appeal, the Court of Appeal emphasised the importance of openness in criminal proceedings, particularly in bail applications that have far-reaching implications for both the accused and the victims' families. It ruled that the High Court had made a mistake by entertaining the bail application in chambers without exceptional circumstances to justify such a departure from normal practice.

As a result, the appellate court nullified the bail order and directed that the matter be reconsidered afresh, in open court, and according to the norm. Following that ruling, Letsoepa filed a fresh bail application at the High Court. However, before the merits of the application could be canvassed, the prosecution raised a preliminary objection, insisting that the matter should be assigned to a different judge.

The DPP argued that since Justice Ralebese had already expressed herself on the bail application during the earlier proceedings, it would be inappropriate for her to hear the matter again. According to the prosecution, the phrase "heard afresh" in the Court of Appeal order implied a completely new process before a different judicial officer.

The defence, on the other hand, dismissed the prosecution's interpretation as strained and unsupported by the wording of the appellate court's order. They argued that a matter being heard afresh does not automatically require a change of judge, especially where the earlier proceedings were nullified on procedural grounds rather than on the merits.

In its ruling, the High Court agreed with the defence position. The court held that the Court of Appeal had been clear in its criticism of the procedure followed, namely, the decision to hear the bail application in chambers, and not the identity of the judge who presided over it. The court further noted that judges are trained to approach matters impartially and to apply their minds afresh where required to do so by law. It concluded that Justice Ralebese is capable of reconsidering the bail application without being influenced by the earlier, now-nullified proceedings. The decision means that Letsoepa's bail application will proceed before Justice Ralebese, but this time in open court, where the prosecution, defence and interested parties, including the family of the deceased, will be afforded an opportunity to participate.




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Lesotho Tribune

By Staff Reporters

NEW YORK/PORT SUDAN, 9 December 2025

With Sudan facing one of the world's most severe humanitarian crises, including escalating conflict, rising hunger, and the highest level of child displacement in the world, UNICEF Executive Director Catherine Russell called for urgent action to safeguard children and essential services on her visit to the country. In Sudan, an estimated 10 million people have been displaced, half of them children. More than 30 million people require humanitarian assistance. Children trapped in besieged and hard-to-reach areas, including in the Darfur and Kordofan regions, are especially vulnerable, where access to food, water and medical supplies remains practically cut off.

"Children in Sudan are living through unrelenting violence, hunger and fear," said UNICEF Executive Director Catherine Russell. "Women and girls are bearing the brunt of the crisis, including horrific levels of sexual violence. They need

UNICEF Executive Director warns of deepening protection crisis in Sudan as violence and displacement intensify



UNICEF/UNI912906/RajabOn 7 December 2025 in Sudan, UNICEF Executive Director Catherine Russell interacts with 4-year-old Ahmed at the play shade in Jembia women and girls' centre in Kassala State.

protection, services, and global solidarity." During her visit to Kassala, Russell met women and adolescent girls receiving psychosocial support and skills training at a UNICEF-supported centre. Many fled violence and found care and safety at the centre, but similar services are extremely limited in Darfur and Kordofan states due to ongoing insecurity.

"I spoke to a girl named Nahed, who was just 16 when the war broke out, while she was visiting Khartoum to celebrate Eid with her family," said Russell. "They fled, but the war followed. When armed men attacked her village, they started killing people, her grandfather and uncle among them, while girls were raped or taken. Nahed managed to escape but said it was terrifying. The chilling memories remain." In North Darfur, fighting in and around Al Fasher has forced more than 106,000 people to flee since late October, overwhelming reception sites and turning areas like Tawila into vast informal set-

tlements. Newly displaced children arrive exhausted, dehydrated and in urgent need of protection, nutrition and medical support. UNICEF is there providing those services, but insecurity hampers the response. Famine has been declared in parts of Darfur and Kordofan regions, with the risk of spreading. Families attempting to flee face dangerous routes, and those who reach safer areas often arrive severely malnourished, sick and distressed. Humanitarian agencies are often blocked by insecurity in delivering essential humanitarian supplies. Children in the frontline areas are often left without psychosocial care, support for survivors of gender-based violence, and other essential services. "I spoke with a young boy who had escaped Al Fasher and arrived to Kassala two weeks ago," said Russell. "He told me of fear and violence in Al Fasher, and finally making an escape on foot with his family. But they were stopped along the way several times by armed men demanding

money for their passage. He said it was incredibly scary."

Despite severe access constraints, UNICEF is delivering across the country. Recent efforts include the identification and registration of unaccompanied and separated children, with more than 200 reunifications in North Darfur; gender-based violence assistance, including psychosocial care, referrals and cash support for survivors; and psychological support for thousands of children and caregivers in high-risk locations.

UNICEF has also restored access to safe water access for hundreds of thousands of people and is using mobile clinics and partner facilities to provide health and nutrition services, as well as responding to disease outbreaks, including cholera.

UNICEF is calling for an immediate end to the violence and for all parties to uphold international humanitarian law, ensuring the safety and dignity of every child and civilian. Safe and unhindered humanitarian access must be guaranteed, barriers to the movement of aid and personnel removed, and humanitarian workers protected. Increased flexible funding is urgently needed, particularly for child protection, gender-based violence and psychosocial support.

"Everywhere I went, children told me the same thing: 'All we want for Sudan is peace,'" said Russell. "The world must do better to deliver on that wish."

Court slams RSL board, orders reinstatement of fired CG

By: Tholoana Lesenya

The Labour Court of Lesotho has ruled strongly in favour of dismissed Revenue Service Lesotho (RSL) Commissioner General, 'Mathabo Mokoko, delivering a judgment that has sent shockwaves through the country's public institutions and reignited debate over governance, due process and political interference in state-owned entities.

In a ruling handed down this week, the court found the RSL Board to be in contempt of a previous court order and sentenced its members to 30 days' imprisonment. The sentence, however, was suspended on strict conditions, meaning the board members will not serve time in prison unless they again defy the court's directives.

Most significantly, the court ordered that Mokoko be immediately reinstated to her position as Commissioner General of RSL, pending the final determination of the case. The respondents were also ordered to pay the legal costs of the application on the ordinary scale.

The ruling follows a dramatic chain of events that began in early November when the RSL Board terminated Mokoko's contract with immediate effect and appointed Rakokoana Makoa as Acting Commissioner General. The dismissal came despite an earlier court order that had expressly barred the board from taking such action while the matter was still before the court.

The Labour Court noted that its earlier order was clear and unambiguous. It had restrained and interdicted the respondents from dismissing or threat-



ening to dismiss Mokoko pending the outcome of her application. The court had further ordered that she could not be dismissed without the board following due process, including a proper disciplinary hearing as required by clauses 12 and 13(c) of her employment contract.

Despite this, the RSL Board proceeded to terminate her contract on November 7, an action the court described as a deliberate disregard of its authority.

In its judgment, the court emphasised that court orders are not suggestions but binding directives that must be obeyed by all parties, regardless of their status or position. By ignoring the earlier order, the court found, the board members placed themselves above the law and undermined the rule of law.

As a result, the court convicted the respondents of contempt and imposed a 30-day prison sentence, suspended on condition that they fully comply with the court's orders going forward. Any further defiance, the court warned, could result in the sentence being enforced.

In addition to reinstating Mokoko, the court ordered the respondents to pay

the costs of the application. It also directed that the respondents be given notice to appear before court to show course why both the interim and final relief sought in the matter should not be confirmed. Mokoko's legal battle has drawn widespread public attention, not only because of her senior position but also because of the broader issues it raises about independence, accountability and political influence within key state institutions.

In October, weeks before her dismissal, Mokoko had taken the extraordinary step of seeking refuge in Parliament, where she accused the Minister of Finance, Dr. Retšelisitsoe Matlanyane, of political interference in the operations of RSL. Her claims sent ripples through both political and administrative circles and added a highly charged political dimension to her dispute with the board.

Mokoko was appointed as Commissioner General of RSL on August 2, 2023, becoming the first woman to hold the position. She succeeded Thabo Khasipe and was appointed on a three-year contract set to expire in August 2026. Her appointment was widely

welcomed at the time as a milestone for gender representation in senior public offices. Since taking office, she has been credited by supporters with pushing for reforms and improved governance at the tax authority, although her contract has also been marked by tension between management, the board and political authorities.

The respondents cited in the matter include the Revenue Service Lesotho Board as a whole, its individual members, Lindiwe Sephomolo, Tšireletso Mojela, Lerato Lerato, Rebecca Ralebakeng, Morongoenyane Nyakane, 'Mamonaheng Koenane and Libako Lesisanyane, as well as Revenue Service Lesotho (Pty) Ltd. As matters stand, Mokoko is expected to resume her duties as Commissioner General, while the RSL Board remains under a clear warning from the court, any further disregard of judicial orders may carry serious personal consequences. The final outcome of the case is likely to have far-reaching implications for labour relations, corporate governance and the rule of law in Lesotho. For now, the Labour Court has sent a clear and powerful message, no institution and no board is above the law.

EDITORIAL

Proportional Representation and the Age of Coalitions...What MMP Has Really Changed in Lesotho



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Lesotho Tribune

By: Editorial

When Lesotho adopted the Mixed Member Proportional electoral system in the early 2000s, the immediate objective was clear and largely uncontested. The country needed to end the cycle of disputed elections, post-electoral unrest, and winner-takes-all outcomes that had repeatedly pushed politics to the brink. On that narrow test, MMP succeeded. It delivered inclusive parliaments, reduced electoral violence, and restored a basic level of confidence in the ballot.

But two decades on, the more difficult question has emerged. What has MMP done to governance itself?

Since 2012, Lesotho has lived almost continuous-

ly under coalition governments. Elections no longer produce decisive winners. Instead, they generate negotiations, alliances, counter-alliances, and fragile majorities stitched together by necessity rather than shared vision. Coalition politics has shifted from being an exception to becoming the permanent condition of governance. In principle, this should not be alarming. Proportional systems across the world routinely produce coalitions. In stable democracies, coalitions can enhance accountability, force compromise, and prevent the excesses of dominant parties. The

problem in Lesotho has not been coalition government as such, but coalition government without coalition culture. MMP exposed a political environment that was unprepared for proportionality. Parties entered coalition negotiations without coherent programmes, without clear red lines, and often without internal consensus. Agreements were frequently reduced to leadership arrangements and cabinet arithmetic, thin on policy substance and silent on dispute resolution. When tensions inevitably arose, there were few institutional or political mech-

anisms to manage them. The result has been a pattern of instability that elections alone have failed to resolve. Votes of no confidence became frequent. Floor-crossing, though regulated differently than under the First Past the Post era, re-emerged in new and creative forms. Executive authority became contested not just in parliament, but through the courts, security institutions, and extra-parliamentary manoeuvring. Government collapse stopped being exceptional and started to feel routine.

It is tempting to blame

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Radio Presenter's Reckless Gun Chase Leaves Innocent Guard Shot

By: Staff Reporter

Friday morning, where an innocent security guard was shot in the leg during a chaotic confrontation involving a local radio presenter. According to an account from one of the victims and his friend, six men had been drinking at a bar near the shopping centre earlier in the evening. At some point, they went to buy food from a nearby fast-food outlet. While they were eating, a man known to them as a neighbour who is reportedly mentally unstable approached and began eating their food without permission.

The victim said he attempted to speak to the man, but the individual grabbed the food container and ran off. The victim and one friend chased him, while the remaining four stayed behind at the restaurant. The man allegedly ran into the yard of a nearby radio station. As the two men entered the premises in pursuit, a vehicle suddenly arrived and stopped near the station gate. A man later identified as Abiele Sebolai, a presenter at Tsenolo FM, reportedly exited the vehicle holding a firearm and began chasing them. The victim said he and

his friend immediately fled back towards the shopping centre, with Sebolai allegedly pursuing them while armed. While running, the victim looked back and saw Sebolai pointing the firearm directly at him. He then changed direction and ran towards a nearby donga. Moments later, shots were fired. One of the

bullets struck an innocent security guard who was sweeping outside his workplace at the shopping centre. The guard, who had no involvement in the earlier events, sustained a gunshot wound to the leg. After the shooting, Sebolai is said to have stopped the chase and transported the injured security guard to hos-

pital. When questioned about why he had pursued the men while armed, Sebolai allegedly claimed that he was attempting to stop a fight between the two individuals. At the time of publication, Abiele Sebolai had not yet been arrested, and it remains unclear whether any formal charges have been laid.



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MMP for this volatility. That temptation should be resisted.

Electoral systems distribute representation. They do not manufacture political maturity. What MMP did was remove the artificial stability that First Past the Post once imposed by excluding large segments of the electorate. Under the old system, dominance masked fragmentation. Under MMP, fragmentation is visible, measurable, and politically consequential.

In that sense, MMP did not create instability. It revealed it.

The deeper causes of coalition failure lie else-

where. Weak internal party democracy has produced parties that are vehicles for personalities rather than institutions with ideological coherence. Leadership contests often take place in government rather than within party structures. Loyalty is negotiated, not assumed. Access to state resources continues to outweigh long-term policy performance as the central incentive of politics.

Coalitions formed in such an environment are bound to be fragile.

Yet, it would be a mistake to conclude that Lesotho must choose between proportionality and stability. The experience of the past

decade suggests a different lesson. Proportional systems demand stronger institutions, clearer rules, and higher political standards than majoritarian ones. They require enforceable coalition agreements, transparent policy frameworks, regulated floor-crossing, and a shared understanding that losing power within a term is not a constitutional crisis.

MMP corrected the arithmetic of representation. It ensured that votes mattered and that opposition voices could no longer be erased by electoral formulas. What it did not do, and could never do on its own, was reform political behav-

our.

That task remains unfinished.

If Lesotho's first democratic struggle was about inclusion, the current one is about governability. The challenge now is not to abandon MMP, but to mature into it.

To build parties that can survive without permanent access to power. To normalise compromise without treating it as betrayal. To accept that pluralism is not disorder, but a condition that must be managed.

Coalition instability is not proof that MMP has failed. It is evidence that Lesotho's democracy is still learning how to live with the consequences of fairness.

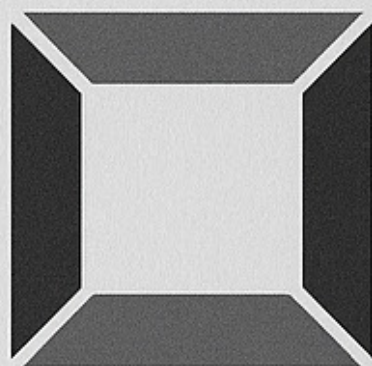


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Ministers of Water, Lesotho and SA Review LHWP Phase II

By: Staff Reporter

Minister of Water and Natural Resources, Honourable Mohlomi Moleko, alongside South African Water and Sanitation Minister Pamela Majodina, led a tour through the Lesotho Highlands Water Project Phase II (LHWP II) in Mokhotlong last weekend to oversee the Polihali dam construction.

Lesotho and South Africa are making good progress on this large water project that will assist both countries. The project includes building a dam and other important structures.

The ministers in charge of water in both countries were pleased with what they saw during their site visit to the project. They said the project is going well, despite some challenges faced earlier on.

This project will help ensure both countries have enough water and create employment for people. The ministers agreed that regular checks are needed to finish the project on time. This project is important for both countries and will bring many bene-



fits.

The Polihali dam is 40 percent complete and its transfer tunnel to Katse Dam is at 48

percent completion.

Other related infrastructures, such as the Senqu bridge, are at 93 percent and expected to operate

in February 2026, while the Mabunyaneng and Khubelu bridges are still lagging at 67 percent before completion.

The issue of settlements posed challenges on the project, with only 24 houses that have been built and 105 still under construction for relocated people.

However, the project has brought a positive impact on the people in its area. Women from affected communities have been equipped with life-changing skills, including detergent manufacturing, to help improve their lives and those of their families.

The dam construction commenced in 2023 and was intended to end in 2028.



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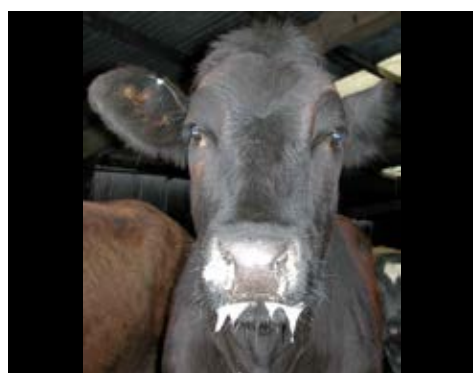
Lesotho Tribune

By: Staff Reporter

Lesotho has not had a recorded case of Foot and Mouth Disease (FMD)- a trans-boundary threat to livestock, rural livelihoods and cultural heritage- within its borders for some time. However, with the proximity of FMD, prevalent in some Provinces of South Africa, the government is actively working to prevent an outbreak which is considered a significant threat to the country's livestock. To prepare for this fight, the Ministry of Agriculture, Food Security and Nutrition, through its Department of Livestock and Animal Health Services hosted a meeting this week to establish a Foot and Mouth Disease Multi-Sectoral Task Team to monitor the disease. This meeting focused on strengthening government strategies in the help to fight the disease while also preparing farmers and stakeholders alike for its break since its widespread has been reported in the neighbouring country's provinces.

FARMERS CORNER

Ministry of Agric Forms Task Team To Fight Foot, Mouth Disease



Before the formation of the task team, surveillance activities were carried out in districts like Quthing in the previous year to gather data and maintain the country's FMD-free status declaration.

The country's veterinary doctors were then commended for ensuring Lesotho remains free from the disease.

However, officials have expressed concern over the high risk of FMD entering the country due to its geographical location, cross-border movement of unregistered livestock, often due to theft and ongoing FMD outbreaks in the Free State.

The ministry and its partners were therefore called to action to put together prevention strategies and strengthen regional disease monitoring mechanisms. Speaking at the meeting, the Director General of the Ministry of Agriculture, Dr Relebohile Lepheana, explained that FMD is a highly contagious disease, famous among cattle, sheep and goats.

However, there has never been a report of the disease in quite a while in the country, but this, she

alarmed, although can be regarded as an achievement, does not mean Lesotho is immune to the disease.

"The country remains at high risk because of cross-border movement of unregistered livestock," she warned.

If the task team is slow to work and the disease successfully made its way into the country, Dr Lepheane warned of a couple of potential consequences that may arise including the loss of access to wool and mohair markets and the high costs associated with disease control, vaccination, movement restrictions and quarantine measures. She therefore urged Baso-

tho to adhere to measures that have been put together to regulate the importation of susceptible animals. She also urged the ministry to conduct rapid livestock assessments, establish animal protection zones and ensure the availability of contingency plans for everyone.

The newly found task team has been tasked with an important job of strengthening national coordination, prevention and preparedness efforts of the disease and the ministry vowed to stay committed to safeguarding technical and animal health standards while supporting the enforcement of animal movement controls.

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Defence challenges phone records in mother's murder case, seeks 'trial within trial'

BY: Tholoana Lesenya

MASERU

Drama unfolded in the High Court this week when defence lawyers for the Rasekoai sisters strongly challenged the use of cellphone records in their murder trial, arguing that the evidence was obtained illegally and violated the accused persons' constitutional right to privacy.

The matter was before Justice 'Maliepollo Makhetha, where sisters Nthei Rasekoai and 'Mamphoka Rasekoai stand charged with the murder of their mother, Martha Rasekoai.

The alleged crime is said to have occurred on July 25, 2022, at their home in Masowe 4, after which the deceased's body was allegedly dumped in a donga where it was later discovered.

During proceedings, defence lawyer Advocate Makhabane Masupha applied for the court to hold what is known as a "trial within a trial", a separate legal process conducted within the main trial to determine



whether certain evidence was lawfully obtained and whether it should be admitted.

Advocate Masupha explained that, in law, a trial within a trial is often held to determine whether evidence was legally and constitutionally obtained before it can be used against an accused person. The application arose after the defence

objected to the testimony of Moneri Mochochoko, a Senior Specialist in Management Information Systems at Vodacom Lesotho. Mochochoko was called by the prosecution to testify about cellphone records allegedly linked to the accused. The defence argued that Mochochoko should not be allowed to continue giving evidence until the

court first determines whether the cellphone records were lawfully obtained. Advocate Masupha told the court that the accused never gave consent for their cellphone records to be accessed. He further argued that they were not made parties to the proceedings in the Magistrate's Court where the prosecution obtained a court order

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High Court grants bail to soldiers accused of attempted murder of journalist

By: Tholoana Lesenya

MASERU

After nearly a decade behind bars awaiting trial, two members of the Lesotho Defence Force (LDF) accused of the attempted murder of veteran journalist Lloyd Mutungamiri have been granted bail by the High Court in a ruling that has reignited debate about prolonged pre-trial detention and delays within the criminal justice system.

Brigadier Rapele Mphaki and Lance Corporal Mari-be Nathane were granted bail by Justice Molefi Makara after successfully petitioning the court, arguing that the prolonged delay in the prosecution of their case was not of their own making and amounted to exceptional circumstances warranting their release. The two are among four charged with the attempted murder of Mutungamiri, former editor of Lesotho Times and Sunday Express newspapers. Their co-accused are Khutlang Mochesane and Nyatso Tsoeunyane.

In their bail application, Mphaki and Nathane told the court that they had been incarcerated for close to 10 years without the matter being finalised despite their consistent availability to stand trial. They further submitted that the continued delay has been exacerbated by the uncertainty surrounding the continuation of the case following the suspension of the presiding magistrate.



Court records show that Senior Resident Magistrate Murenzi, who had been seized with the matter at the magistrate's court, was suspended by the Judicial Service Commission (JSC) over allegations of misconduct.

Following his suspension, the JSC directed that all case files that were before him be locked pending further processes. As a result, several cases, including this high-profile attempted murder matter, stalled indefinitely.

In a strongly reasoned judgment, Justice Makara held that the petitioners had established a prima facie case for admission to bail. He noted that the accused persons had endured an unusually long period of pre-trial incarceration, which, in itself, constituted exceptional circumstances under the law.

"The fact that the accused have been waiting in custody for almost 10 years for

their case to be concluded cannot be ignored by this court," Justice Makara said. "Such a delay, through no fault of their own, offends the interests of justice."

The court further found that the State had failed to place any countervailing evidence before it to demonstrate that releasing the accused on bail would jeopardise the administration of justice.

"There has been no counter evidence provided for the court to entertain any perceptible fear that the petitioners will defeat the ends of justice in any manner," the judge ruled.

Addressing concerns often raised in cases involving members of the armed forces, Justice Makara cautioned against blanket assumptions about the character and conduct of soldiers.

"There is a perception that members of the army are potentially dangerous people," he observed.

"That kind of image is not healthy and each case must be assessed on its own merits."

The court consequently ordered that each of the petitioners be released on bail under strict conditions. Mphaki and Nathane were each directed to pay bail in the amount of M2, 000 and to secure a surety of M10, 000.

Justice Makara emphasised that compliance with the bail conditions was not optional and warned that any breach would attract serious consequences, including possible revocation of bail.

The charges against the accused arise from an incident alleged to have occurred on July 9, 2016, at or near Ha Thamae in Maseru.

According to the charge sheet, the four accused persons allegedly acted in concert or with common purpose when they shot Mutungamiri, inflicting serious and potentially life-threatening injuries. They are charged with contravening section 22(1) read together with section 109 of the Penal Code Act No. 6 of 2010, provisions which relate to attempted murder and common purpose.

The shooting of Mutungamiri, a prominent journalist known for his investigative reporting and critical commentary, sent shockwaves through the media fraternity and broader society at the time, raising concerns about press freedom and the safety of journalists in Lesotho.

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Lesotho Tribune

By Litšitso Letsunyane

ACE Maseru Football Club's troubled A Division League campaign came to a premature end earlier this week after the club officially pulled out of the competition, closing a season defined by nothing but off-field problems and financial strain.

On Tuesday, 9 December, the A Division League Management Committee (ADMACO) circulated a notice to all A Division League clubs, stating that, together with the Club Licensing Committee (CLC), it had established that ACE Maseru FC failed to show-up to two of their scheduled league matches, a home fixture against All Aces and an

away match against FC Summit. The missed fixtures immediately set off alarm bells within league administration.

ADMACO and the CLC held a meeting last week Tuesday with ACE Maseru FC to seek clarity and explore possible solutions. The club was informed that failure to resolve the matter would result in the deduction of all points earned in matches involving the team. During these talks, the club's leadership revealed that they are facing severe financial challenges, which means they are no longer in

a position to continue competing in the A Division league. ACE Maseru then formally applied to ADMACO for permission to withdraw from the league, a development that was communicated to the Lesotho Football Association (LeFA).

On Wednesday 17th December, LeFA, working jointly with ADMACO, approved ACE Maseru FC's withdrawal from the A Division League. Ace Maseru's season had been problematic from the very start. The club failed to complete their Club Licensing registra-

tion within the required timeframe at the beginning of the 2025/26 season, a lapse that resulted in an automatic six-point deduction.

This penalty left the club rooted to the bottom of the standings from the opening rounds until their eventual exit from the league.

In retrospect, the administrative setbacks and continued struggles pointed to deeper-rooted challenges at the club, suggesting that the warning signs were present long before the final decision to withdraw was taken.



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