

WE OFFER:

- Computer Hardware & Accessories
- Office Automation • Mobile phones • Office products • Medical Supplies
- Engineering supplies • Software • Stationery

00266 22 324 660



SALES@BOHLOKOAMERCHANTS.COM - WWW.BOHLOKOAMERCHANTS.COM

MASERU, LESOTHO

Sunday, 19 April 2026

Lesotho Tribune



Information Liberates

www.lesothotribune.co.ls

VOL 5, ISSUE 32

M22.00

NEWS / SOCIAL AFFAIRS

UNICEF brings hope to children in conflict with the law at Juvenile Training Centre

...Page 6

COURTS & JUSTICE

Tholo Energy owes M6.6 million. The High Court said it is not its problem.

...Page 20



NEWS. POLITICS · LESOTHO

**They are supposed to fight corruption.
Instead they are becoming the threat.**

Page 2

DOMESTIC & INTERNATIONAL CHARTERS

**YOUR SKY,
YOUR SCHEDULE.**



CHARTER FLIGHTS · LESOTHO

+266 22 324 660

bookings@mohahlaulairlines.com

News

Official Statements, government communications, and institutional announcements



They are supposed to fight corruption. Instead they are becoming the threat.

A constitutional advocacy group has issued a sweeping indictment of institutional failure across Lesotho's anti-corruption, correctional, and security services, warning the country is moving towards a system in which power is exercised without restraint or accountability.

By SEIPATI MATOBO



A constitutional advocacy group, Section 2, has issued a stark and wide-ranging statement warning that Lesotho is experiencing a dangerous erosion of the rule of law, driven by what it describes as interconnected institutional failures across key state bodies.

In a statement titled “On the Collapse of the Rule of Law and the Rise of Unaccountable State Power in Lesotho,” the group argues that recent developments involving the Directorate on Corruption and Economic Offences (DCEO), the Lesotho Correctional Service (LCS), and the National Security Service (NSS) are not isolated incidents but part of a growing and systemic breakdown. Section 2 says the pattern is no longer dismissible. It is escalating. And it is dangerous.

At the centre of the group's concerns are allegations reported by The Post newspaper, in which the DCEO is said to have subjected Advocate Veronica Matlatsi to improper interrogation methods.

According to the report, she was questioned in her nightwear and under duress, outside the presence of a Commissioner of Oaths.

Section 2 is careful to note that these remain allegations. But it argues that if true, the conduct would not merely be irregular. It would be fundamentally incompatible with the rule of law and the administration of justice in Lesotho.

This is how democracies begin to unravel, not through dramatic rupture, but through quiet, sustained patterns of impunity. More troubling, the group says, is the silence that followed. More than ten days after the publication of the allegations, there has been no public clarification, denial, or reassurance from the DCEO or any relevant authority. Section 2 argues that this silence undermines institutional legitimacy and fuels public speculation at a time when trust in state institutions is already fragile. The concerns extend beyond the DCEO. Section 2 highlights findings from a report released by Advocate Tlotliso Polaki on 14 April 2026, which paints what it calls a “staggering reality” within the Lesotho Correctional Service.

The report reveals that three years after recommendations were made in 2023, not a single one has been fully implemented. Only 12 percent of those recommendations have seen partial progress. An overwhelming 88 percent remain entirely unimplemented. The conditions described are severe: over-

crowding, inadequate resources, poor inmate welfare, and the demoralisation of staff are all cited as persistent failures.

Section 2 warns that these conditions raise serious concern about Lesotho's compliance with international human rights standards.

Parallel to these developments is what Section 2 describes as a constitutional confrontation involving the National Security Service. The Director General of the NSS, Lieutenant General Tumeleng Letsepe, is said to have failed to comply with a binding judgment of the Court of Appeal. According to the statement, this failure, combined with prolonged silence, amounts to an open challenge to the authority of both the judiciary and the Constitution itself. Section 2 notes that it issued a public statement on 11 March 2026 condemning this conduct. More than a month later, there has been no clarification, no retraction, and no compliance. Taken together, Section 2 argues, these cases reveal a deeply unsettling reality. Institutions entrusted with upholding the law are increasingly operating outside it.

The DCEO is alleged to have manipulated evidence to sustain prosecutions; the LCS continues to function under conditions of systemic neglect; and the NSS has demonstrated open contempt for court orders without consequence. What appears most alarming, according to Section 2, is not only the conduct itself but the absence of accountability that follows. There has been no public explanation from the DCEO, no decisive action on the failures identified in the Ombudsman's report, and no enforcement of the Court of Appeal judgment against the NSS.

Continues in Page 4

DIGITAL EDITION · NOW AVAILABLE

Subscribe to *Lesotho Tribune*

Stay informed with Lesotho's most trusted source of credible journalism — in-depth reporting, opinions, and data-driven analysis, delivered to your device.

MONTHLY

M85

per month

ANNUAL — BEST VALUE

M1,020

per year · save 2 months

Our focus is on **data journalism and in-depth analysis** over surface-level reporting — covering politics, economics, governance, and society with both criticism and acclaim. Our political alignment is **economic liberalism**. Invest in journalism. Invest in democracy.

Pay via EFT / Bank Transfer

BANK DETAILS

Account name	BMC
Account number	9080008138164
Bank	Standard Lesotho Bank
Branch code	060667

Pay via Mobile Money



M-PESA
Merchant name: BMC

03444



ECOCASH
Merchant code

81329

Request a free digital copy on WhatsApp

 **+266 6272 0415**

Lesotho Tribune
Information Liberates

News

Official Statements, government communications, and institutional announcements



Continued from Page 2


This pattern of inaction sends a dangerous signal. It suggests that there are no consequences for overreach, defiance, or abuse. It implies that constitutional obligations are optional. And it reinforces the perception that institutions meant to check power are either unwilling or unable to act.

Despite the severity of its warnings, Section 2 also sets out a clear constitu-

tional position. It affirms that the Constitution remains supreme and binding on all persons and authorities; that the authority of the courts must be respected and enforced; and that accountability is foundational to democracy, not optional. The group calls for an independent investigation into the DCEO; a time-bound plan to implement the Ombudsman's findings on the LCS; immediate enforcement of the Court of Appeal judgment against the NSS Director General, including his removal from office; full Executive ac-

countability on all three issues; and the strengthening of oversight mechanisms to ensure no institution operates above the law.

Section 2 concludes with a warning that Lesotho stands at a critical juncture. The question, it says, is no longer whether institutions are failing. That is now evident. The real question is whether there remains the political will to correct course. If the current trajectory continues, the rule of law will not simply erode. It




BMC
BOHLOKOA MEDIA COMPANY

CRÉATION AFRICA
TOP 50
2026

WE TELL EVERY STORY.

Production · Broadcasting · Publishing · Digital
Publisher of the Lesotho Tribune
Est. 2021 · Maseru, Kingdom of Lesotho



◆ PRODUCTION
◆ LIVESTREAM
◆ DRONE
◆ WEB & APP
◆ SOUND HIRE
◆ TRIBUNE

[GET A QUOTE](#)

info@bmc.co.ls
+266 6337 4978
bmc.co.ls

Police witness names suspects as gun exhibit stuns Kamoli bombing court.

By Tholoana Lesenya



Deputy Commissioner of Police Sera Makharilele took the stand this week, giving detailed evidence on how police responded to the blasts on the day they occurred. He told the court that officers were alerted to multiple explosions at two locations in Maseru, Moshoeshoe 2 and Ha-Abia. Makharilele testified that upon arrival at the scenes, police found evidence of the explosions and began gathering information while ensuring public safety. He told the court that investigations led them to identify Nyakane and Seithleko as having taken part in the bombing at Moshoeshoe 2, while the late Hashatsi and Heqoa were said to have been involved in the bombing at Ha-Abia.

As part of his testimony, the court was shown a firearm introduced as an exhibit. The weapon drew visible attention in the courtroom and was presented as part of the physical evidence collected during investigations into the bombings. “Physical evidence, especially weapons, often has a strong impact in court. It allows the judge to directly assess items said to be connected to the alleged crimes.” Legal observers · Rex vs Kamoli and 4 Others The defence is expected to scrutinise how the weapon was obtained, handled, and linked to the accused. In criminal trials, exhibits such as firearms are often central to proceedings, as they can either strengthen the prosecution’s argument or raise

questions if their connection to the accused remains unclear.

“Kamoli and his co-accused have maintained their innocence throughout the proceedings.” Rex vs Kamoli and 4 Others · High Court of Lesotho The defence has consistently denied any involvement in the bombings and is expected to challenge both the credibility of witnesses and the reliability of the evidence presented.

The trial forms part of wider efforts to address serious crimes linked to Lesotho’s past instability, particularly within the security sector. The 2014 bombings remain one of the most consequential incidents from that period.

UNICEF brings hope to children in conflict with the law at Juvenile Training Centre

A donation event at the JTC becomes a moment of reaffirmation — that compassion, when paired with action, can open doors once thought permanently closed.

By Tholoana Lesenya



MASERU

Laughter, cautious smiles, and a renewed sense of possibility filled the grounds of the Juvenile Training Centre (JTC) this week, as the United Nations Children’s Fund hosted a heartfelt donation event aimed at uplifting children in conflict

with the law.

The gathering was more than a simple handover of gifts. It carried a deeper message— one of restoration, dignity, and the belief that every child, regardless of their past, deserves a second chance. Officials, caregivers, and the young residents themselves

came together in an atmosphere that balanced reflection with hope for the future. Leading the proceedings was the Minister of Law and Justice, Richard Ramoetsi, who expressed sincere gratitude to UNICEF for its continued and expanding support. He noted that since June 2025, the organisation has gone beyond its initial commitments, demonstrating what he described as a genuine and unwavering dedication to the welfare of vulnerable children in Lesotho. “This is not just about donations,” he said, addressing attendees. “It is about restoring hope, rebuilding lives, and ensuring that no child is left behind. UNICEF has shown us that partnership rooted in compassion can truly transform lives.”

The minister emphasised that the collaboration between the government and UNICEF has become a cornerstone in efforts to reform the juvenile justice system. He highlighted that such partnerships are essential in creating pathways for children to reintegrate into society successfully after serving their time. “Justice for children must go beyond punishment — it must include rehabilitation and opportunity.” Richard Ramoetsi, Minister of Law and Justice According to Ramoetsi, reintegration is often misunderstood. He explained that it does not mean overlooking wrongdoing.

Continues in Page 8



NUL council member threatened with death over Vice-Chancellor recruitment role

Prof Vinodh Jaichand, a South African-based academic serving on the Joint Committee of Council and Senate, has received anonymous threats warning him to withdraw or face harm.

By LESOTHO TRIBUNE REPORTER



The National University of Lesotho's governing council has gone public with a chilling disclosure: a member of the committee tasked with recruiting the institution's next Vice-Chancellor has received anonymous death threats, prompting police reports in South Africa and a formal directive from the NUL Council for management to open a criminal case in Lesotho. Prof Vinodh Jaichand, who is based in South Africa and sits on the Joint Committee of Council and Senate (JCCS), was warned by unknown

individuals that if he did not withdraw from the recruitment process, his reputation would be destroyed and he could be killed.

Prof Jaichand has since reported the matter to South African police and notified both his family and legal counsel.

CONTEXT · WHAT IS THE JCCS?

The Joint Committee of Council and Senate was established by the 15th Council of NUL to conduct the re-

ruitment of a new Vice-Chancellor. It draws members from both the governing Council and the academic Senate, operating as a cross-institutional body with oversight over the appointment process.

The threats, described by the Council as "dastardly," were issued amid what is understood to be a highly contested search for a new Vice-Chancellor at the Roma-based university. The targeting of one of the JCCS's members raises immediate questions about who stands to gain from disrupting or influencing the outcome of the process. In a public statement issued on Friday, 17 April 2026, the NUL Council said it was "perturbed" and condemned the threats in the strongest terms. The statement stressed that Council members and committee members are unpaid volunteers who contribute their expertise in service of the institution and must not be made to fear for their safety or their lives.

"A threat to one member of Council and its committees is a threat to all members." The Council has directed NUL management to open a case with the Lesotho Mounted Police Service for investigation. The identity of those behind the threats is not yet publicly known. It is also unclear whether law enforcement agencies in Lesotho and South Africa are coordinating their inquiries.

NUL has not announced any suspension of the Vice-Chancellor recruitment process. Prof Jaichand's continued participation in the JCCS was not addressed in the statement.

News

Official Statements, government communications, and institutional announcements



Continued from Page 6

ing, but rather addressing it in a way that encourages accountability while opening doors for growth. His words resonated strongly with many in attendance, particularly those who work closely with the children on a daily basis. Staff members at the centre have long advocated for a more rehabilitative approach — one that recognises the complex social and economic factors that often lead children into conflict with the law. Chief of Correctional Services, Matingoe Phamotse, echoed this sentiment, underscoring the evolving role of correctional institutions. He stressed that facilities like the JTC are not merely places of confinement but are meant to serve as environments for transformation. “These children are not defined by their past actions,” he said. “They are individuals with potential, with dreams, and with the ability to change. Our responsibility is to guide them, to support their development, and to prepare them to return to their communities as responsible and productive citizens.” Phamotse further explained that rehabilitation involves a combination of education, counselling, life skills training, and emotional support.

He noted that without these elements, reintegration becomes significantly more difficult, often leading to cycles of reoffending. The donation event itself was carefully designed to support these broader goals. The items distributed — ranging from clothing and educational materials to personal care products — were selected with the intention of addressing both immediate needs and long-term development. For many of the children, these gifts symbolised more than material support; they represented recognition and care from the outside world.

Some of the young beneficiaries could be seen examining their new belongings with quiet excitement, while others engaged in conversations with officials and visitors. Though many remained reserved, the impact of the gesture was evident in their expressions. One staff member at the centre noted that such initiatives play a critical role in boosting the morale of the children. “When they see that people care about them, it changes something inside,” she said. “It helps them believe that they still have a future.” UNICEF representatives present at the event reiterated their commitment to supporting children in Lesotho, particularly those in vulnerable situations. They emphasised that their work is

guided by the principle that every child has the right to protection, development, and participation in society. The organisation’s involvement at the JTC forms part of a broader effort to strengthen child protection systems in the country. This includes working closely with government ministries, civil society organisations, and community leaders to ensure that children receive the support they need at every stage of their journey.

As the event drew to a close, there was a shared sense that something meaningful had taken place — not merely the distribution of goods, but the reaffirmation of a collective responsibility to guide, protect, and uplift the next generation. For the children at the Juvenile Training Centre, the day served as a reminder that their stories are still being written. Despite the challenges they have faced, there remains a path forward — one shaped by support, opportunity, and the belief that change is always possible. In a world where young offenders are often stigmatised and forgotten, this event stood as a powerful statement: that compassion, when paired with action, can open doors that once seemed permanently closed.



— FARM FRESH · LESOTHO HIGHLANDS

Grown with care, delivered *fresh.*

Premium produce from the fertile valleys of the Kingdom of Lesotho

ORDER NOW food.bohlokoenterprises.co.ls



SCAN TO
ORDER ONLINE

food.bohlokoenterprises.co.ls

ESG Lens



Sustainability, accountability, and development impact across Lesotho and the region

Africa's newest oil frontier faces the test its neighbours failed

As the 8th Namibia International Energy Conference closes in Windhoek, the Lesotho Tribune examines whether Africa's newest oil frontier can deliver on promises of governance accountability, social inclusion and a credible dual energy identity.


BY STAFF REPORTER



2029	2,500+	6
TARGET YEAR FOR NAMIBIA'S FIRST OIL	DELEGATES FROM 46 COUNTRIES AT NIEC 2026	MAJOR OPERATORS ACTIVE IN THE ORANGE BASIN

The mood at Droombos Estate this week was unmistakably one of arrival. Three days of high-level panels, bilateral deal-making and keynote addresses from the highest offices of the Namibian state closed what organisers described as a defining moment in the country's energy journey. The 8th Namibia International Energy Conference, held from 14 to 16 April 2026, was not a gathering of prospectors hunting for possibility. It was the convening of a country that believes it already knows what it has found, and is now negotiating the terms on

iney integrated or wnetner they repre-



SUBSCRIBER EXCLUSIVE

This article is available to Lesotho Tribune subscribers. Subscribe today and get full access to all our reporting.

[SUBSCRIBE AT +266 6272 0415](tel:+26662720415)

— Lesotho Tribune · Information Liberates —

Continues in Page 11

Business & Economy

Markets, Monetary policy & the structural forces shaping Lesotho's economy

10 **IT**

The stone that lost its shine: how lab-grown diamonds and China's quiet retreat are hollowing out the economies of Lesotho and Botswana


A Bloomberg investigation has confirmed what market analysts had long feared: the global natural diamond industry is enduring its deepest crisis in modern history. For two small, landlocked Southern African nations whose fortunes are hewn from kimberlite rock, the consequences stretch far beyond the trading floors of Antwerp and Surat.

By Lesotho Tribune




There is a particular cruelty in the timing. Just as Lesotho and Botswana had built their modern states on the promise of diamonds — sovereign wealth, public hospitals, paved roads carved into highland rock — the

[Blurred text representing the main body of the article]



SUBSCRIBER EXCLUSIVE

This article is available to Lesotho Tribune subscribers.
Subscribe today and get full access to all our reporting.

 **SUBSCRIBE AT +266 6272 0415**

— Lesotho Tribune · Information Liberates —

[Blurred text representing the main body of the article]

ESG Lens

Sustainability, accountability, and development impact across Lesotho and the region



Continued from Page 9

reforms Lesotho Tribune · lesothotribune.co.ls ESG Lens · Energy & Resources · 2026 that will shape the sector’s regulatory environment for a generation. The Upstream Petroleum Unit is led by Kornelia Shilunga, whose stated priorities include transparent governance and broad-based empowerment, reinforced by strict asset declaration requirements for senior officials managing offshore resources.

The African Energy Chamber was explicit about the significance of this leadership configuration, arguing that Namibia’s oil boom is redefining what leadership looks like in African energy. bp’s Exploration Manager for New Ventures framed diversity not as a social obligation but as a commercial imperative. This is meaningful. But leadership visibility and structural transformation are not the same thing. Local content, in its truest ESG meaning, is not only about who sits on panels in Windhoek. It is about who gets the technical training, who secures the service contracts, who benefits from infrastructure investment, and how communities adjacent to offshore operations are consulted and compensated. The next two to three years will reveal whether Namibia’s social commitments are structurally embedded or aspirationally stated.

III · GOVERNANCE: REFORM OR RUBBER STAMP?

The most significant development of NIEC 2026 from a governance standpoint was President Nandi-Ndaitwa’s announcement of the Petroleum (Exploration and Production) Amendment Bill. The stated purposes are the right ones: streamlining regulatory decision-making, improving sector coordination, strengthening investor confidence, and aligning Namibia’s hydrocarbons strategy with Vision 2030 and the Sixth National Development Plan.

The ESG caution is not with the intent of the bill but with the conditions under which it is being introduced. When urgency to attract capital drives the pace of legal reform, the provisions most likely to be sacrificed are those that protect communities, require transparency, and establish accountability mechanisms for revenue distribution. Stability achieved by weakening accountability is not durable. It creates the conditions for the resource curse that has hollowed out other African producers. NJ Ayuk of the African Energy Chamber has been consistent in his message: regulatory and fiscal stability are inseparable from investment attraction. His warning that Africa has seen countries make discoveries but fail to produce due to instability is well-taken. But

the ESG corollary is equally important.

ESG VERDICT

NIEC 2026 confirmed that Namibia has built an ESG narrative that is coherent, institutionally supported and visible at the highest level of government. The conference itself reflects this: a Namibian-owned, woman-founded platform that has grown from 120 participants to over 2,500 delegates from 46 countries. But narratives are not outcomes. The local content policy, the Future Energy Leaders Programme, the UPU’s governance commitments, the renewable energy ambitions: impressive as a structure. Its integrity will be determined by what happens in the production phase.

Namibia is not there yet. First oil is still three years away. The amendment bill has not been tabled. What NIEC 2026 showed is that the country knows what it wants its energy story to be. The harder work of making that story true has not yet begun. For observers across southern Africa, including in Lesotho, the Namibia story is a live experiment in whether an African country can use a major resource discovery to catalyse inclusive industrial development rather than replicate the enclave extraction model that has failed so many of its neighbours.



— FARM FRESH · LESOTHO HIGHLANDS

Grown with care,
delivered *fresh*.

Premium produce from the fertile valleys of the Kingdom of Lesotho

ORDER NOW food.bohlokoenterprises.co.ls



SCAN TO
ORDER ONLINE

food.bohlokoenterprises.co.ls

Business & Economy

Markets, Monetary policy & the structural forces shaping Lesotho's economy

12



Alliance Insurance refused to pay. A Lesotho judge forced their hand.

A Lesotho judge found that Alliance Insurance Company Ltd had no legal basis to withhold M470,000 from a beneficiary while police investigations into the death remained open.

By THOLOANA LESENYA



In the case of Karabo Ralebakeng vs Alliance Insurance Company Ltd, Judge A.R. Mathaba ordered the insurer to pay M470,000 to the plaintiff, who is the beneficiary of his late brother's insurance

policies.

Karabo Ralebakeng took the matter to court after Alliance Insurance Company Ltd delayed payment following the death of his brother, Linna Ralebakeng, in October 2018. The deceased

had taken out several insurance policies, including four with the defendant.

After the claim was submitted, the insurer refused to process it immediately. Instead, it said it would wait for police investigations to be completed and for a suspect to be identified, arguing that the case raised "red flags." The court found, however, that this position was not permitted under the terms of the insurance contract.

Judge A.R. Mathaba · High Court of Lesotho The court also rejected the insurer's argument that the deceased had failed to disclose other insurance policies held with different companies. Judge Mathaba held that this information was not material to assessing the risk and therefore did not affect the validity of the claim.

"The existence of other policies covering the same risk was not material." Judgment · Ralebakeng vs Alliance Insurance In the final order, the court directed Alliance Insurance Company Ltd to pay M470,000 for the insurance claim, M1,000 for airtime costs as provided under the policy, interest at 10.5 per cent per year, and full legal costs.

The plaintiff was represented by Advocate M. Ntaote. Advocate K. Letuka appeared for the defendant.

She would not break. ‘Maesiah Thabane holds her ground in Kamoli cross-examination.

By THOLOANA LESENYA



Advocate Letuka Molati, representing one of the accused, led the cross-examination of ‘Maesiah Thabane during the latest proceedings. The questioning focused on testing the reliability of her earlier testimony, with the defence probing for inconsistencies and gaps in her account of events.

Molati questioned the witness at length, revisiting statements she had previously made in court and comparing them with other evidence presented. At several points the exchanges became intense, as Molati pressed for clear answers on specific details. The court heard questions relating to timelines, conversations, and actions allegedly taken around the time of the bombings. The

defence sought to highlight areas where the witness may have been uncertain or where her recollection appeared unclear.

“Maesiah Thabane continued to answer without major contradictions being immediately apparent in open court.” Rex vs Kamoli and 4 Others · High Court of Lesotho Prosecutors are working to piece together a clear account of what happened during the 2014 explosions and to establish links between the incidents and the accused.

Testimonies such as that of ‘Maesiah Thabane are key in building that narrative, particularly where direct evidence may be limited.

“The defence has consistently maintained that the accused bear no responsibility for the bombings and has challenged the evidence put forward by the prosecution.”

Rex vs Kamoli and 4 Others · High Court of Lesotho Kamoli and his co-accused have denied all charges. The defence has consistently maintained that the accused bear no responsibility for the bombings and has challenged the evidence put forward by the prosecution.

The trial forms part of wider efforts to address serious crimes linked to Lesotho’s past instability, particularly within the security sector. The 2014 bombings remain one of the most consequential incidents from that period.

Tshiamiso Trust move to scrap key medical certificates could shut thousands of Basotho miners out of compensation

A campaign organisation representing former mineworkers has declared a proposed amendment to the Tshiamiso Trust deed unlawful, warning it would cut thousands of elderly and gravely ill Basotho miners and their widows off from the only compensation they were ever promised.

BY SEIPATI MATOBO



Thousands of former gold mine-workers face being stripped of their right to compensation under a proposed change to the Tshiamiso Trust, the legal settlement established by South Africa's gold mining industry to pay out workers who contracted silicosis or tuberculosis underground.

The trustees of the Trust have quietly resolved to adopt Amendment No. 9 to the Trust Deed, which would remove the legal standing of Occupational Diseases in Mines and Works Act certificates, known as ODMWA

certificates, as valid grounds for a compensation claim. The amendment requires approval from the Master of the South Gauteng High Court to take effect. How can an MBOD certificate be good enough to end a man's livelihood, to send him home to die, but not good enough to pay him what he is owed?

Justice for Miners (JFM), the campaign organisation representing the miners and their dependants, this week declared the proposed change unlawful, immoral, and a betrayal of the very purpose for which the Trust was

created. It has written to Ms Beatrice Desiree van Wyk, Master of the South Gauteng High Court in Johannesburg, requesting that she reject the amendment and call the trustees to account.

ODMWA certificates are statutory documents issued by the Medical Bureau for Occupational Diseases, a South African government body. They formally certify the presence of silicosis or tuberculosis in a miner. For decades, an ODMWA certificate was legally sufficient to have a miner declared unfit for work and retrenched, often returned to his home country with a disease in his lungs and no income. Under Amendment No. 9, that same certificate would no longer be sufficient to secure the compensation he was owed.

Many of the affected miners are Basotho citizens who migrated to work on South Africa's gold mines and returned home with occupational diseases and little else. Their beneficiaries are among the most vulnerable people in Southern Africa, men who gave their lungs, and in many cases their lives, to an industry that generated enormous wealth while destroying their health.

Continues in Page 15

AFRICA

15

IT

Continued from Page 14

For living claimants, the amendment would not merely change a procedure. It would construct a wall. Where an ODMWA certificate once served as sufficient, lawful proof of disease and entitlement, the change would force every living claimant to submit to a new Benefit Medical Examination, requiring them to travel, often over long distances, to designated examination centres. The ODMWA certificate was never a loophole. It was the floor. Amendment No. 9 removes that floor entirely.

For men who are elderly, seriously ill, and in many cases living in remote villages in Lesotho, Botswana, Malawi, Eswatini, Zimbabwe or Mozambique, this severely compromises their access to compensation. JFM further warns that Benefit Medical Examinations conducted under the Trust's own framework have repeatedly produced findings that result in lower awards than what ODMWA certificates already certify, effectively reclassifying miners downward and paying them less than they are legally owed.

The situation is, if anything, more catastrophic for the dependants of

miners who have already died. A dead man cannot undergo a Benefit Medical Examination. He cannot present himself at a clinic or answer a call centre's questions. The ODMWA certificate issued in his name is, in many cases, the only credible evidence that survives him: evidence that he was examined, certified, and found to have a qualifying disease. It is the document on which his widow's entire claim depends.

Remove that certificate from the equation, and widows and dependants are left to reconstruct a medical history from scratch. They are expected to produce death certificates, mine medical records, and employment histories that are near impossible to find, particularly given the poor record keeping by mines and hospitals over decades. Death certificates alone are routinely rejected by the Trust if they do not conform to its specific requirements.

JFM's legal position is that Amendment No. 9 is unlawful on its face. Section 20.2 of the Trust Deed explicitly prohibits any amendment that adversely affects the rights of eligible claimants, which is precisely what the proposed change does. The organisation has requested that the Master exercise her supervisory ju-

risdiction under the Trust Property Control Act 57 of 1988 to reject the amendment and, if appropriate, investigate potential maladministration of the Trust. In parallel, JFM has formally appealed to the Ministers of Health, Mining, and compensation authorities in South Africa, Lesotho, Botswana, Mozambique, Malawi, and Eswatini to write to the Master of the High Court requesting rejection of the amendment. The organisation argues that a substantial proportion of the Trust's beneficiaries are citizens of these countries, and that their governments have both a moral obligation and a direct interest in ensuring they receive the compensation they are owed.

JFM has requested in-person meetings with government officials in each of these countries to present its case and coordinate a joint intervention before the Master makes any decision on the amendment.

The Tshiamiso Trust was established following a class action settlement in the South African courts, agreed to by the major gold mining companies, to compensate workers who developed silicosis or tuberculosis as a direct result of underground work. Justice for Miners Campaign NPC represents mine-workers and their dependants who are beneficiaries of the Trust.



— FARM FRESH · LESOTHO HIGHLANDS

Grown with care, delivered *fresh*.

Premium produce from the fertile valleys of the Kingdom of Lesotho

ORDER NOW food.bohlokoenterprises.co.ls



SCAN TO
ORDER ONLINE

food.bohlokoenterprises.co.ls

Editorial

The Tribune's position, and voices that challenge, provoke and inform



The poorest member of its own club

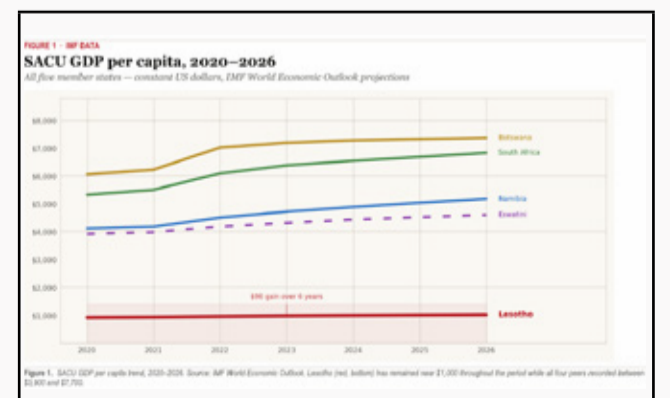
Six years of IMF data show Lesotho has not closed a single dollar of the gap separating it from every other nation in the Southern African Customs Union. The question is no longer whether there is a problem. It is whether anyone in power intends to solve it.

By Editorial



There is a chart doing the rounds in policy circles that ought to provoke national outrage. It does not. That, perhaps, is the most damning thing about it. The chart, drawn from International Monetary Fund data, plots the GDP per capita of Lesotho and its four partners inside the Southern African Customs Union — Botswana, Eswatini, Namibia, and South Africa — across six years from 2020 to 2026. The lines move in different directions, at different speeds, with different textures of crisis and recovery. Only one line barely moves at all. It belongs to Lesotho.

In 2020, Lesotho's GDP per capita stood at \$928.28. By 2026, the IMF projects it will reach \$1,024.10. That is a nominal increase of \$95.82 across six years, or roughly sixteen dollars per person per year. Meanwhile Botswana, the union's wealthiest member, will end the same period at \$7,379.00 per person. South Africa, despite its well-documented structural crises, sits at \$6,834.50. Even Eswatini and Namibia, the two smaller economies most comparable in size and geography to Lesotho, are tracking at \$4,610.14 and \$5,182.21 respectively.



The standard defences, when they are offered at all, tend to reach for structural explanations. Lesotho is landlocked. Lesotho

Continues in Page 17

Editorial

The Tribune's position, and voices that challenge, provoke and inform



Continued from Page 16

is small. Lesotho is mountainous. Lesotho has no mineral wealth comparable to Botswana's diamonds. These things are true, and none of them explain the stagnation visible in this chart.

Eswatini is also landlocked. Namibia's coastline did not conjure its GDP by magic; it was built through deliberate policy choices around tourism, fisheries, and institutional stability. Botswana's diamond revenues were consequential, but Botswana also made extraordinary decisions about how to manage those revenues rather than squander them. The structural conditions of small, landlocked economies explain a gap. They do not explain a gap that has remained essentially fixed for six consecutive years.

What the chart actually shows, stripped of diplomatic softening, is a country that has failed to leverage its position inside one of the world's most functional regional trade blocs. SACU is not a punishing arrangement for Lesotho. It guarantees the Kingdom a share of the common revenue pool, provides preferential access to the South African market, and shields domestic producers from the full exposure of global competition. Other members have used these conditions as a floor from which to build. Lesotho has treated them, functionally, as a ceiling.

BOTSWANA	NAMIBIA	LESOTHO
7.2x	5.1x	\$96

WEALTHIER PER CAPITA THAN LESOTHO (2026)	WEALTHIER PER CAPITA THAN LESOTHO (2026)	TOTAL PER CAPITA GAIN OVER SIX YEARS 2020–2026

“Lesotho is not poor because it is landlocked. It is stagnant because its institutions have consistently chosen short-term extraction over long-term investment.”

The manufacturing sector, which for a brief period in the early 2000s appeared to offer a genuine pathway through the AGOA-driven garment boom, has never been diversified beyond its dependency on a single trade preference and a single buyer country. When AGOA conditions tighten, Lesotho's export earnings contract with them, because nothing else was built alongside the factories. Two decades on, that vulnerability remains essentially unchanged. Agriculture is perhaps more instructive still. Lesotho sits in some of the most fertile highland terrain on the subcontinent.

The Maluti Mountains produce water that powers South Africa's industrial heartland through the Lesotho Highlands Water Project. They could also produce food — high-altitude produce, specialty crops, premium livestock. Instead, the country imports the majority of its food from South Africa, spending hard-won revenue on goods it has the land and climate to produce domestically.

The rural economy that sustains the majority of Lesotho's population has been structurally neglected across successive governments of different parties and dif-

ferent ideological textures, all of which found other uses for the national budget.

The LHWP generates revenue. But revenue, by itself, does not transform an economy. It must be directed, with discipline and accountability, toward productive investment. There is no serious evidence that this has happened at the scale the data demands.

The political class's preferred response to this kind of analysis is to point at projects. A new road. A hospital under construction. A tourism initiative. The figures in this chart are not moved by projects. They are moved by systems — by the

consistent functioning of institutions that attract investment, protect property rights, deliver education that builds human capital, and connect producers to markets. None of this is inevitable. The trajectory shown in this chart is a policy outcome, not a geographical sentence. The same conditions that produced \$1,024 per person in Lesotho produced \$4,610 in Eswatini. That difference was made by choices.

The question the chart forces is not a comfortable one for anyone in a position of authority in this country. If six years of IMF data show no meaningful convergence with peers who share your trade agreements, your regional infrastructure, and

your developmental challenges, at what point does the explanation shift from circumstance to governance?

That conversation is overdue. This chart is a good place to start having it.



— FARM FRESH · LESOTHO HIGHLANDS

Grown with care, delivered *fresh.*

Premium produce from the fertile valleys of the Kingdom of Lesotho

ORDER NOW food.bohlokoenterprises.co.ls



SCAN TO ORDER ONLINE

food.bohlokoenterprises.co.ls

Opinion

Official Statements, government communications, and institutional announcements

18 **IT**

The credible commitment problem: why Lesotho, Trump and Iran all suffer from the same political disease

By MALEFO THINYANE



There is a concept in political science that cuts through the noise of every election campaign and every diplomatic initiative with the quiet precision of a blade. It is called the credible commitment problem. Its logic is deceptively simple: a promise is only as good as the promisor's demonstrated ability and willingness to keep it. Where that track record is absent, or worse, actively contradicted by prior conduct, no amount of eloquence can rescue the pledge from its own hollowness. Voters who accept such promises without scrutiny are not naive. They are simply not yet equipped with the theory

That theory applies with uncomfortable directness to two political landscapes that Basotho have reason to watch closely at this moment: their own, and the United States. When the current administration came to power in Lesotho, it arrived on the

customary wave of promises. Jobs. Development. Accountability. Good governance. The vocabulary was familiar because it always is. But the credible commitment problem asks a harder question than "what did you promise?" It asks: what in your history gives us reason to believe you? Credibility is not asserted. It is demonstrated, over time, through a pattern of decisions that subordinate short-term political advantage to long-term public good. The current administration had no such pattern to point to. Its principals were not unknown quantities exactly, but they were unknown as rulers. There was no prior term to examine, no record of difficult decisions taken under pressure, no institutional legacy to scrutinise. The promise was the entirety of the offering.

This is not a moral indictment. It is a structural one. Without a track record, the commitment cannot be credible, not because

the government is necessarily dishonest, but because there is nothing to anchor the belief that it would hold firm when circumstances turned costly. The early evidence has done little to resolve the uncertainty. The structural problems of governance in Lesotho, the patronage networks, the institutional fragility, the revolving door of coalitions, the gap between policy announcement and implementation, did not yield to the arrival of a new set of faces. They rarely do without the harder work of credibility-building that only time and consistent conduct can supply.

If Lesotho's problem is the blank slate, Donald Trump's is the overcrowded one. Trump has spent decades advertising himself as a dealmaker. It was the brand before the politics, the autobiography before the presidency. And in the logic of the credible

Continues in Page 19

Opinion

Official Statements, government communications, and institutional announcements



commitment problem, a dealmaker is precisely the kind of actor whose commitments should be discounted most heavily, because a dealmaker's defining characteristic is that no deal is ever truly final. Every agreement is a starting position. Every signature is conditional. Every promise carries the implicit codicil: until something better comes along.

Trump's first term was a masterclass in strategic inconstancy. He campaigned on renegotiating the Iran nuclear agreement, calling it the worst deal ever. His administration initially certified Iranian compliance in April and July of 2017, then reversed course entirely. In May 2018, he terminated United States participation in the JCPOA and reimposed economic sanctions on Iran. The stated rationale shifted with the news cycle. On the day he withdrew, he declared that when he makes promises, he keeps them. The irony appeared to escape him entirely. His second term has not offered a course correction. The pattern is identical. The rhetoric of dealmaking continues to coexist, apparently without friction, with a record of broken commitments that would disqualify any private counterpart from serious negotiations.

This is where the theory becomes genuinely consequential, because the stakes are no longer electoral disappointment. They are war and the possibility of its absence. In early February 2026, Iran and the United States held indirect nuclear negotiations in Oman. Just before the strikes of 28 February, Oman's Foreign Minister reported that a breakthrough had been reached. Iran

had agreed both to never stockpile enriched uranium and to full verification by the IAEA.

He said peace was within reach. Talks were expected to resume on 2 March. Then, on 28 February 2026, the United States and Israel launched airstrikes on Iran, targeting military and government sites. The surprise attacks were launched during those very negotiations. The Omani foreign minister, who had brokered the talks, said he was dismayed. The word is a diplomatic understatement of some magnitude. This was not the first time. The Twelve-Day War of June 2025 began when Israel bombed military and nuclear facilities in Iran in a surprise attack. The United States had announced negotiations between the two countries in April of that year. The strikes came the day after the deadline expired, with the United States intercepting Iranian counter-attacks and bombing three Iranian nuclear sites on 22 June.

Consider what Iran is being asked to believe. It is being asked to enter negotiations with a country whose president tore up the last nuclear agreement his predecessor signed. It is being asked to trust a mediating process that was punctured twice by military strikes, once while talks were still live. It is being asked to take seriously the diplomatic overtures of an administration that has repeatedly demonstrated that its commitments are provisional. Senator Tim Kaine stated it plainly: the last negotiation that led to control of Iran's nuclear programme ended with the United States making the decision to tear it up and walk away from the deal. Iran's scepticism is not

irrationality. It is the correct application of lessons learned at considerable cost. The credible commitment problem does not require that Iran's government be virtuous or its nuclear ambitions be legitimate. It only requires that we ask the prior question: why would any rational state trust a counterpart whose behaviour has, with consistency and documentation, demonstrated that its commitments are contingent? The point of raising the credible commitment problem in this context is not fatalism.

Institutions can be built to constrain inconsistent actors. Credibility can be rebuilt through sustained, costly signals, the kind that hurt in the short term precisely because they are not reversible. Lesotho's government can still build a track record. American foreign policy can still find mechanisms to bind future decision-makers. But none of that begins without honesty about the present condition. Promises made by actors who cannot demonstrate the capacity to honour them are not a foundation for governance. They are a deferral of accountability. And the cost of that deferral, whether it is paid by Basotho waiting for jobs that do not arrive, or by a region watching a war that diplomacy failed to prevent, is always borne by those with the least leverage to demand better. The theory does not make cynics of us. It makes us more precise about what trust requires, and more honest about when it has not yet been earned.

Malefo Thinyane writes on politics, governance and international affairs for the



— FARM FRESH · LESOTHO HIGHLANDS

Grown with care,
delivered *fresh*.

Premium produce from the fertile valleys of the Kingdom of Lesotho

ORDER NOW food.bohlokoaenterprises.co.ls



SCAN TO
ORDER ONLINE


food.bohlokoaenterprises.co.ls

Tholo Energy owes M6.6 million. The High Court said it is not its problem.

By THOLOANA LESENYA



The dispute stems from a sub-lease agreement signed in July 2020, under which Tholo Energy was given control of a filling station. The agreement became effective



SUBSCRIBER EXCLUSIVE

This article is available to Lesotho Tribune subscribers. Subscribe today and get full access to all our reporting.

SUBSCRIBE AT +266 6272 0415

Lesotho Tribune · Information Liberates

Sentiment Tracker

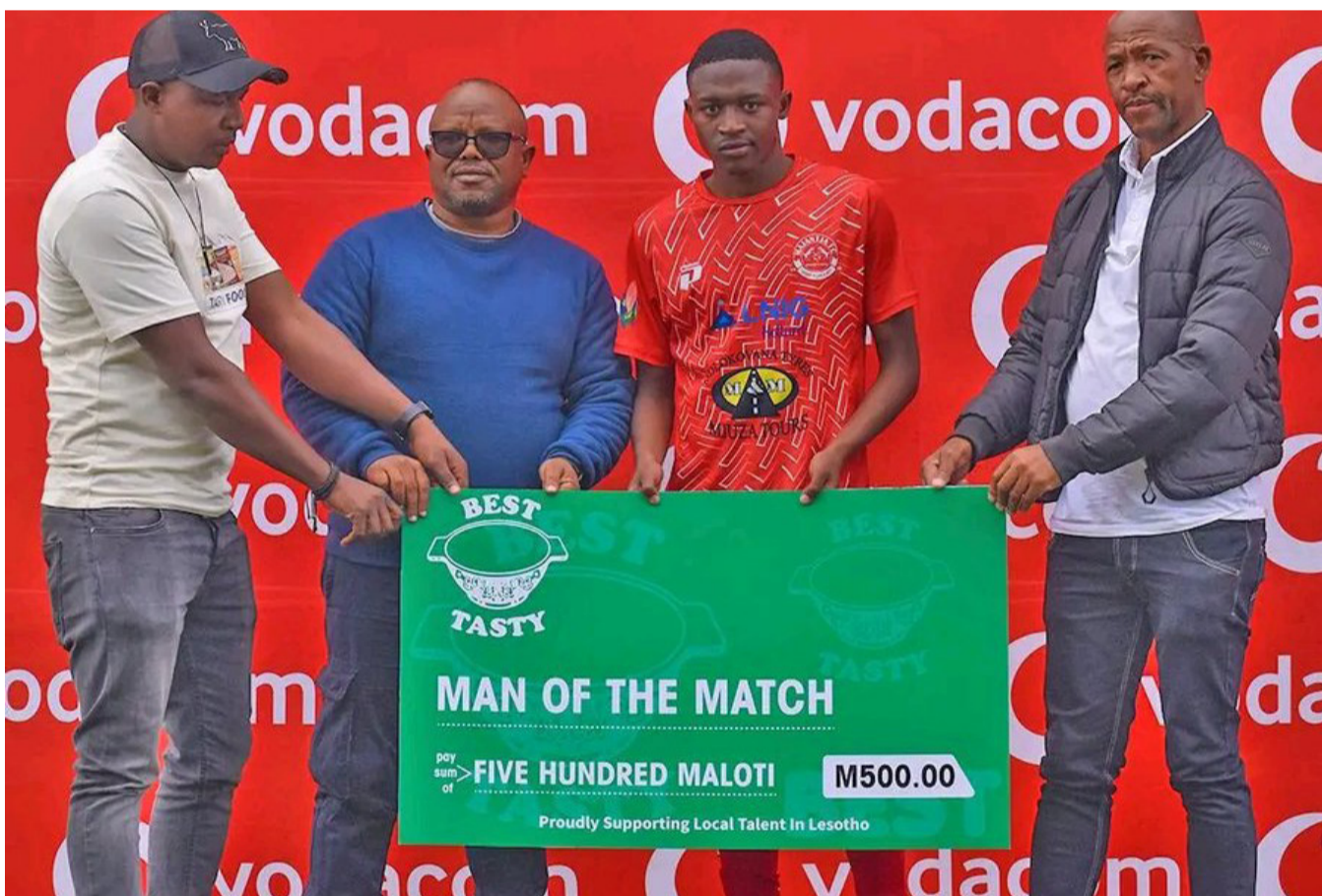
Technology, Connectivity and the digital transformation of economics like Lesotho



Lesotho Premier League Man of the Match prize too small, readers say— but half argue the real issue is respect

A recent Man of the Match award in the Lesotho Premier League has reignited debate about whether sponsor-driven prizes reflect the true value of elite football performance, or whether they have become a liability for the clubs and leagues that endorse them.

BY LESOTHO TRIBUNE STAFF



The latest Man of the Match award in the Lesotho Premier League has done what such awards occasionally do: it has made people angrier than the match itself. A sponsor-gifted prize, modest by almost any measure of professional football’s commercial scale, was handed to a standout performer and promptly set off a debate that has spread well beyond the stadium. The question at the centre of it is not new. Should a prize tied to a player’s peak performance be proportional to the league’s standing and the player’s contribution? Or is the act of giving sufficient in itself, regardless of scale? Among Tribune readers, a

majority lean towards the view that the prize undersells the player’s effort. The largest share of respondents, 52 percent, said the prize is too small and that players deserve better recognition for a standout performance.

For a quarter of readers, the issue is not the size of the prize. It is what a small prize says about how the sport values its best performers. A quarter of respondents took the broader view, arguing that the issue runs deeper than money. For them, the discomfort with small prizes is a question of institutional respect: whether the league and

its commercial partners treat players as ambassadors of the sport or simply as recipients of whatever gesture a sponsor chooses to make. One in five readers took the opposing position, arguing that a voluntary gift carries no obligation of scale. On this view, sponsors are under no contractual or moral duty to match the financial profile of the league, and criticism of their generosity is misplaced. The smallest share of opinion, one in ten readers, called for a structural solution: that sponsors operating at Lesotho Premier League level should be expected to align their rewards with the league’s commercial standing, setting a floor rather than leaving the value of recognition to individual discretion.

The debate reflects a wider tension in professional football between its commercial scale and the informal, often symbolic, culture of recognition that persists within it. As the Lesotho Premier League continues to grow its commercial footprint, questions about what its awards and gestures should communicate are unlikely to go away.

TRIBUNE READERS · SENTIMENT

19 votes recorded · 16 April 2026

52%	The prize is too small, players deserve better LEADING
25%	The issue is institutional respect, not prize size
20%	A voluntary gift carries no obligation of scale
10%	Sponsors should align rewards with league standing

Arts & Sports

The stories Lesotho about itself - on the field, on the stage, and on the page

22

The 4th Edition of People's Cup Returns with High Stakes

BY LITS'ITSO LETSUNYANE



The Bocheletsane football pitch is set for another thrilling showdown of local football as the fourth edition of the People's Cup competition heads to Monongoaha, in Mants'onyane, Thaba-Tseka, on Saturday, April 25th.

Backed by a M1.1 million cash sponsorship from Econet Telecom Lesotho (ETL), in partnership with the Premier League Management Committee (PLMC) and the Sam Matekane Foundation (SMF), the one-day tournament promises high-intensity action as usual, significant financial rewards, along with a very strong display of fan influence.

Unlike traditional football competitions, the People's Cup places power directly in the hands of supporters and fans. The four teams competing this year earned their spots through public

voting, which shows connection between clubs and their fan bases.

When the final results were unveiled on Friday, April 17th, it was Lioli Football Club, the reigning league champions, who led the way with an impressive 162,122 votes. Close behind were Matlama FC with 156,036 votes, while defending People's Cup champions Bantu FC secured 150,231 votes. Lijabatho FC completed the lineup with 139,118 votes.

All four sides will battle it out in a fast-paced knockout format, where there will be no room for error:

- * 09:00 AM: Lioli FC vs Lijabatho FC
- * 11:00 AM: Bantu FC vs Matlama FC
- * 03:00 PM: Final

With two matches standing between

each team and the trophy, squad depth and tactical discipline will be crucial in navigating the demanding schedule.

Beyond pride, there is plenty at stake financially. The tournament winners will walk away with M400,000, while the runner's up will earn M200,000. The two remaining teams will each collect M100,000.

Individual brilliance will also be rewarded, with M5,000 set aside for the Player of the Tournament, M4,000 for the Top Goal Scorer, and M2,000 for the Best Goalkeeper. Each Man of the Match will receive M1,500, while the Best Referee will take home M1,000.

The People's Cup continues to stand out for its innovative structure, blending competition with commercial participation. Revenue generated through the voting process will be split, with 45% going to the participating clubs, 45% to Econet Telecom Lesotho, and 10% covering administrative costs.

Supporters also have more to play for. Ten lucky fans who spend at least M100 during the voting process will win access to 30 Premier League matches in the upcoming season, courtesy of Econet Telecom Lesotho.

The four top clubs, their passionate supporters, and meaningful financial incentives all in play, the People's Cup is rapidly cementing itself as a key fixture on the country's football calendar. As teams prepare to converge in Thaba-Tseka, many fans and supporters will all have their eyes on who the champion will be to claim the 2026 People's Cup.