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Sunday, 17 May 2026

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*Information Liberates*



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## NEWS

# MP moves to compel PM's appearance before House

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# MP moves to compel PM's appearance before House

*A notice of motion filed by Hon. Pastor Remaketse Sehlabaka declares null and void any resolution purporting to excuse the Prime Minister from answering questions before the National Assembly, and orders the PM to appear on the next designated sitting day.*

By SEIPATI MATOBO



## NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

**A**n MP has filed a formal notice of motion demanding that the Right Honourable Prime Minister appear before the National Assembly to answer questions on matters of national importance, after what the motion describes as attempts to excuse or prevent that appearance in breach of Standing Order 27. The motion, filed by Hon. Pastor Remaketse Sehlabaka, contends that any resolution or decision purporting to excuse or prevent the Prime Minister's attendance before the House is inconsistent with Standing Order 27, and is therefore null and void." Standing Order 27 governs the obligation of the Prime Minister to

appear before the National Assembly and submit to questioning by members.

The motion asserts that this obligation is mandatory in nature and cannot be waived, suspended, or overridden by a simple majority vote. "The obligation of the Prime Minister to appear before this House to answer questions and address matters of national importance is mandatory and cannot be waived, suspended, or overridden by a simple majority vote." The notice of motion sets out five operative clauses directed at the House the Prime Minister, and the Clerk of the National Assembly.

### MOTION · OPERATIVE CLAUSES

- (1) Declares that the resolution or decision purporting to excuse or prevent the appearance of the Right Honourable Prime Minister before this House is inconsistent with Standing Order 27, and is therefore null and void.
- (2) Affirms that the obligation of the Prime Minister to appear before this House to answer questions and address matters of national importance is mandatory and cannot be waived, suspended, or overridden by a simple majority vote.
- (3) Resolves that any failure by the PM to comply with Standing Order 27 constitutes a breach of the privileges of this House and an erosion of parliamentary oversight.
- (4) Orders that the Right Honourable PM shall appear before this House on the next sitting day designated

for questions to the Prime Minister. (5) Directs the Clerk of the National Assembly to communicate this resolution forthwith. The motion frames non-compliance by the Prime Minister as a breach of parliamentary privilege, going further than a procedural objection to characterise any absence as "an erosion of parliamentary oversight."

### KEY FACTS

#### FILED BY

Hon. Pastor Remaketse Sehlabaka, MP

#### DOCUMENT TYPE

National Assembly Notice of Motion

#### GOVERNING INSTRUMENT

Standing Order 27, National Assembly Standing Orders

#### OPERATIVE DEMAND

PM to appear on next designated PM question day

#### CLERK'S OBLIGATION

To communicate the resolution forthwith upon adoption

#### CHARACTERISATION

Non-compliance described as breach of privilege and erosion of parliamentary oversight That framing is significant: a finding of privilege breach can trigger formal censure proceedings and is not subject to the same simple-majority threshold the motion seeks to invalidate. If adopted, the resolution would create a direct order of the House requiring the Prime Minister's attendance, with the Clerk mandated to serve formal notice.

The Tribune has sought comment from the Prime Minister's office and the Speaker. No responses had been received at the time of publication.

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# Ombudsman report exposes passport crisis at Home Affairs

*The Office of the Ombudsman has found that chronic passport and identity document backlogs at the Ministry of Home Affairs reflect deeper structural failures, citing supply chain dependency, ageing equipment, irregular hiring, and the unlawful retention of diplomatic passports by former officials.*

By **LEMOHANG BOTSANE**



A new report from the Office of the Ombudsman has revealed serious delays and management problems at the Ministry of Home Affairs, describing the ongoing crisis with passports and identity documents as a sign of deeper failures in how the Ministry runs its services. Many Basotho have been waiting for months, and in some cases more than a year, to receive passports, identity cards, and citizenship papers. During this time, most applicants say they received little or no clear information from officials about when their documents would be ready.

For many people, the Ombudsman's team that they lost job opportunities in South Africa because they could not obtain their passports in time. The Ministry has set turnaround times for processing documents, but in practice these deadlines are routinely missed. Other applicants said they made repeated trips to government offices simply to check on their applications. Long queues, transport costs, and time away from work made the process expensive and demoralising. Without clear updates, people were left unsure

whether to keep waiting or start the process again.

## EMERGENCY PASSPORTS OFFER NO GUARANTEE

The report also found that paying higher fees for an emergency passport did not guarantee faster service. In many cases, people who applied for emergency passports and paid

## SUPPLY CHAIN AND EQUIPMENT FAILURES

The Ombudsman's investigation points to several causes behind the delays. The Ministry has struggled with procurement problems and supply chain failures, having depended too heavily on a single foreign company to supply passport materials. When that supplier encountered difficulties, Lesotho ran out of materials and could not print passports. The Ministry's computer systems also break down frequently, and the machines used to produce documents are old and slow. Financial constraints have made it difficult to purchase new equipment or hire sufficient staff.

## IRREGULAR HIRING PRACTICES

The report also raised concerns about staff appointments within the Ministry. The Ombudsman received information that some temporary workers were appointed without following procedures set by the Public Service Commission. Such hiring, the report suggests, may have increased costs and placed further pressure on limited resources.

## DIPLOMATIC PASSPORTS RETAINED UNLAWFULLY

A further concern raised in the report is the misuse of diplomatic passports. The Ombudsman found that some former government officials are still holding diplomatic passports despite a legal obligation to return them. The Ombudsman made clear that enforcing the law is

## FOREIGN PROFESSIONALS ALSO AFFECTED

The delays are not confined to Basotho citizens. The report notes that foreign professionals working in Lesotho, particularly doctors and nurses, are also experiencing difficulties obtaining citizenship and residence documents. Their families face problems accessing schools and crossing borders, creating strain for people providing essential services to the country. **RECOMMENDATIONS** To address these problems, the Ombudsman has put forward several recommendations. These include diversifying the supply chain for passport materials, moving services online to reduce paperwork, improving communication with applicants, and opening additional document collection points closer to communities. The report also calls for stronger measures to prevent corruption and the misuse of public funds.

The Ombudsman stressed that passports and identity documents are not mere paperwork. They are tied to fundamental rights, including freedom of movement and equal access to public services. When the system fails, those rights are directly affected. Thousands of Basotho remain without their documents, and public trust in the Ministry of Home Affairs remains low. The government is expected to respond to the report and outline how it intends to fix the system.

premium fees waited just as long as everyone else. Officials often told applicants to "keep checking back" but could not provide a clear date or explanation for the delay. "Unless corrective measures are implemented within the recommended timelines, the challenges affecting passport and identity document services are likely to persist."

**OFFICE OF THE OMBUDSMAN** not optional and should not depend on political will.

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# News

Official Statements, government communications, and institutional announcements



## High Court warns Lebollo is being hijacked by gangsters

*Justice Hlaele raises serious concern over the abuse of Lebollo by violent gangs while sentencing two Roma men for a murder arising from a stick-fighting dispute during an initiation ceremony, warning that courts will not tolerate criminal factionalism linked to initiation schools.*

By **THOLOANA LESENYA**



The High Court has raised serious concern over growing gangsterism linked to initiation schools, commonly known as Lebollo, warning that the cultural practice is being abused by some groups who use it to promote violence and crime. Justice Mabatsoeneng Hlaele made the remarks during the sentencing of two Roma men, Tšepo Tabola and Motsie Mochesane, who were convicted of murdering Molojoa Mabokoane in 2020.

The murder followed a violent dispute connected to a stick-fighting game during an initiation ceremony. According to evidence presented before the court, tensions escalated after the deceased allegedly shot Mochesane during the altercation. The conflict later ended in Mabokoane's

death. While delivering judgment, Justice Hlaele stressed that the court fully respects Lebollo and its cultural significance within Basotho society.

She said initiation schools have historically played an important role in shaping responsible men and women in the community. The judge explained that initiation is widely recognised as a rite of passage that marks the transition from childhood to adulthood. She said the tradition is meant to teach young people about responsibility, discipline, respect, family values and service to the nation.

“Bravery and manhood should never translate into the commission of repulsive crimes.”

Justice Hlaele noted that many scholars and cultural experts describe initiation as an important form of indigenous education that helps preserve Basotho identity and traditions. She said the process is designed to guide young people through cultural and moral development under the supervision of responsible adults within society. However, the judge expressed disappointment that some initiation-related groups have drifted away from the true purpose of the practice. She said the growing involvement of initiation graduates in violent gangs and criminal activities is damaging both society and the image of Lebollo itself.

According to Justice Hlaele, some initiation schools have become commercialised and are now operating more like business

enterprises than cultural institutions focused on moral development. She warned that the rise of factional groups linked to initiation schools is contributing to violence in communities and creating fear among the public. The judge further stated that criminal activities committed in the name of manhood or initiation teachings cannot be accepted.

She said the accused had desecrated the sacred values of Lebollo by using lessons associated with manhood and bravery to commit serious crimes. Justice Hlaele added that true manhood should never be measured through violence, intimidation or the taking of innocent lives. “Society is increasingly beginning to associate initiation schools with criminal behaviour because of the actions of some groups.”

She also warned that this perception threatens the dignity and cultural value of Lebollo, which has for generations been respected as an important Basotho tradition. Justice Hlaele stressed that the courts will not tolerate gang formations or violent factionalism connected to initiation schools.

She said cultural practices must always operate within the boundaries of the law and should contribute positively to the development of society rather than promoting fear and violence. The comments come at a time when public concern over violence linked to initiation schools continues to grow across Lesotho. In recent years, there have been repeated reports of clashes between rival initiation groups, assaults, intimidation and even killings associated with initiation-related disputes.

Some community members, church leaders and civil society organisations have repeatedly called for stronger regulation of initiation schools to protect lives and restore dignity to the practice. Others argue that efforts should focus on restoring the original purpose of initiation and ensuring that those who abuse the tradition are held accountable. Justice Hlaele's remarks are likely to spark further debate on the future of initiation schools in Lesotho and the balance between protecting cultural traditions and enforcing the rule of law. For many observers, the case highlights the urgent need to separate cultural values from criminal behaviour and to ensure that Lebollo remains a source of pride



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Official Statements, government communications, and institutional announcements

## Nurses gather in Maseru to mark International Nurses Day

*Hundreds of nurses converged on the capital on Tuesday under the global theme “Our Nurses, Our Future: Empowered Nurses Save Lives”, with the LeNMO president urging unity, self-care, and a renewed commitment to quality patient care.*

By LEMOHANG BOTSANE



**H**undreds of nurses from across the country came together in Maseru on Tuesday to celebrate International Nurses Day, a day set aside every year to recognise the hard work and sacrifice of nurses around the world. This year’s event was held under the global theme: “Our Nurses, Our Future: Empowered Nurses Save Lives.” “The theme spotlights how backing and empowering nurses helps build stronger health systems and saves more lives. The celebration brought together nurses, student nurses, and leaders from the Lesotho Nursing and Midwifery Organisation (LeNMO) to reflect on their role in the country’s healthcare system and to honour those who have helped shape the profession.

QUALITY OF CARE

Speaking at the event, Busa Qhala, President of LeNMO, asked nurses to take a moment to think about the quality of care they give to Basotho every day. He said nurses are often the first and last people patients see when they are sick, injured, or afraid. Because of this, he said, it is vital for nurses to treat every patient with respect, kindness, and professionalism. “Empowered nurses play a critical role in saving lives and giving hope to patients during difficult moments.”

BUSA QHALA · PRESIDENT, LENMO

Qhala also reminded nurses not to forget about their own health. Nursing can be stressful and emotionally heavy work, so he urged them to take care of their mental and emotional wellbeing. He said a healthy nurse is better able to care for others.

UNITY AND SOLIDARITY

The LeNMO President also called for more unity among nurses across the country. He said the health sector in Lesotho faces many challenges, including staff shortages, heavy workloads, and limited resources. To overcome these problems, he said nurses need to stand together, support one another, and speak with one voice. “Solidarity and cooperation are essential in overcoming challenges facing the health sector.”

BUSA QHALA

He made a promise that LeNMO will continue to fight for the rights of nurses and work to strengthen the nursing profession so that it gets the respect and support it deserves.

TRIBUTE TO FORMER LEADERS

Loti Matsoso, Chairman of the Student Chapter of LeNMO, said International Nurses Day is more than just a celebration. It is also a reminder of the important role nurses play in every community. He used the occasion to pay tribute to two former LeNMO leaders who helped build the pro-

fession in Lesotho: Tanti Ranthimo, former LeNMO President, and Mr. Santi Morephe, former General Secretary.

Matsoso said both men dedicated their lives to improving nursing in the country through mentorship, leadership, and service. Even though they are no longer alive, their influence is still felt today. “Their dedication, mentorship, and leadership continue to inspire many nurses today. Although they are no longer physically present, their contributions remain deeply rooted within the profession.”

LOTI MATSOSO · CHAIRMAN, LENMO STUDENT CHAPTER

He urged current and future nurses to honour that legacy by working with integrity, compassion, professionalism, and a strong commitment to humanity.

FLORENCE NIGHTINGALE’S LEGACY

International Nurses Day is celebrated every year on 12 May, the birthday of Florence Nightingale, the founder of modern nursing. In Lesotho, nurses are often the backbone of the health system, especially in rural areas where doctors are few. Events like this give nurses a chance to connect, share experiences, and remind the public of the vital work they do every day, often under difficult conditions. As the celebration ended, many nurses said they felt motivated to return to their clinics and hospitals with renewed energy and a stronger sense of purpose.

He further encouraged nurses to ask themselves a simple question: “Would I be happy if I received the same treatment I give to my patients?” He said this question can help nurses check their own attitude and improve the way they care for people.

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## Storm damage leaves thousands without power three weeks on

*Parts of the country remain without power three weeks after severe storms destroyed transformers, poles and transmission lines across multiple districts, with repair teams battling damaged roads and remote terrain to restore supply.*

**BY LEMOHANG BOTSANE**



**M**any parts of Lesotho are still waiting for electricity to come back after bad weather damaged power lines and poles three weeks ago. The Ministry of Energy and Mining, working through the Lesotho Electricity Company (LEC), said it is currently busy fixing the damaged electricity network across the country. The update was given by Lejone Mpotjoane, the Minister of Energy and Mining, when he spoke in the National Assembly on Tuesday. He told lawmakers that teams are on the ground fixing what was broken by strong winds, heavy rains and snow.

### WORST-HIT AREAS

According to the minister, the areas hardest hit include Morija, Metolong, Mafeteng, Semonkong, Ts'enola, Matala and Makhoathi, among others. In these places, the storm destroyed important parts of the electricity system, including transformers, electricity poles, and both transmission and distribution lines. Without these, power cannot reach homes, schools, clinics and businesses. Mpotjoane said the ministry is giving priority to the most critical areas first, specifically places where

electricity is needed urgently, such as hospitals, water pumps and government offices. "Some areas are still without electricity due to severe destruction while others are difficult to access."

### LONG-TERM STRENGTHENING PLAN

Mpotjoane also announced a long-term plan to make the electricity network more resilient. The ministry has decided to replace old electricity poles that are weak and prone to collapse during storms. Stronger replacements will reduce the frequency of power cuts when conditions deteriorate.

LEC teams will also work to cut down trees and clear vegetation growing too close to power lines. Falling branches are among the main causes of outages during storms and strong winds.

### PUBLIC URGED TO REPORT FAULTS

Mpotjoane called on the public to cooperate with LEC workers carrying out repairs, saying community support makes the work faster and safer. He

also encouraged people to keep reporting any electricity faults and outages they notice. "When you report quickly, it helps us find the problem and fix it faster." LEJONE MPOTJOANE

Residents can report faults by calling the LEC customer care lines or visiting the nearest LEC office.

### DISASTER RELIEF UNDER WAY

Meanwhile, Prime Minister Ntsokoane Matekane said earlier this week that the Disaster Management Authority is collecting information on how flash floods and snow have affected people across the country. The data will be used to direct relief assistance to where it is needed most. Many families lost homes, crops and livestock during the bad weather. "Repairing a damaged electricity network is not easy, especially after heavy snow and floods. Workers have to deal with broken poles in remote mountain areas, washed-away roads, and safety risks when fixing live wires."

### LEJONE MPOTJOANE

The Ministry said it understands how hard life is without electricity and promised to keep the public updated on progress. The immediate focus is on restoring power to homes and making the network more resilient against future storms. Once repairs are finished, the ministry hopes fewer communities will be left in the dark when severe weather strikes again.

### LEJONE MPOTJOANE . MINISTER OF ENERGY AND MINING

He added that repair teams are working hard every day to restore supply, even in places where roads and bridges were damaged by the weather.

# Business & Economy

# 10

IT

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

## World Bank mission reviews Lesotho transport and trade project

*A World Bank mission led by Wei Yan has completed a week-long review of the Lesotho Integrated Transport, Trade and Logistics Project, focusing on road works, border post upgrades, and improvements at Moshoeshoe I International Airport.*

By **LEMOHANG BOTSANE**



A team from the World Bank has wrapped up a week-long visit to Lesotho to review progress on a major project to improve the country's roads, borders, and airport. The project is called the Lesotho Integrated Transport, Trade and Logistics Project (LITTL). Its goal is to make it easier and faster for goods to move in and out of Lesotho, and to make transport safer and more reliable.

The World Bank mission was led by Wei Yan. During their stay, the team met with government officials and other key partners to assess progress, identify problems requiring attention, and ensure work stays on schedule.

### ROADS AND PROCUREMENT

According to Nosezolo Mpopo, Corporate Communications Manager at the Roads Directorate, the mission focused heavily on Component One of the project, which deals with road works and procurement. The World Bank team provided technical advice to help speed up these processes and resolve delays. The team also reviewed the aviation component, working with the Roads Directorate and Airport Services to ensure all parties are coordinating smoothly

on upgrades at Moshoeshoe I International Airport.

### SMART BORDER POSTS

For Component Two, the mission assessed progress on customs and trade facilitation. A central focus is the Smart One Stop Border Post initiative

### SITES VISITED

During the visit, the World Bank team inspected several sites earmarked for upgrades, including Moshoeshoe I International Airport, planned for safety and security improvements; the A1 Road at Lekokoaneng, earmarked for spot improvements to address deteriorating sections; the Ha Nyenye intersection in Maputsoe, scheduled for upgrades to ease traffic problems; and the A8 intersection in Hlotse, also set for improvements.

The team wanted to assess conditions on the ground and confirm that plans match actual needs.

### MINISTERIAL BRIEFING

The World Bank delegation also met with the Minister of Public Works and Transport. They provided updates on the project's progress and discussed where addi-

tional support may be needed for Lesotho's transport sector going forward.

### BROADER PROJECT GOALS

Mpopo explained that the LITTL Project has objectives that go beyond road repairs. These include improving climate-resilient connectivity along the Katse-Thaba-Tseka Road corridor so the road can withstand heavy rains and adverse weather; making logistics faster and cheaper for businesses moving goods; improving border processes at Maseru, Maputsoe, Caledonspoort, and Qacha's Nek;

### PROJECT FUNDING WORLD BANK IDA

\$80 million  
OPEC FUND \$40 million  
TOTAL \$120 million

The Roads Directorate said the visit was valuable in keeping the project on track and ensuring all partners are working towards the same goal. With these upgrades, the government hopes to make it easier for Basotho businesses to trade, lower the cost of goods, and create stronger links between Lesotho and the rest of Southern Africa.

at the Maseru and Maputsoe border crossings. This system is designed to reduce waiting times by allowing travellers and trucks to clear customs once, rather than stopping twice on both sides of the border. The idea is to make trade faster, cut costs for businesses, and help Lesotho compete better with other countries in the region.

### ROADS DIRECTORATE

making Moshoeshoe I International Airport safer and more functional; and helping Lesotho meet international aviation standards.

# Business & Economy

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



## The shrinking contract: LNDC paid M159,840 less than its own purchase order authorised, with no itemised explanation

*A purchase order raised by LNDC for Clever Choice (Pty) Ltd totalled M402,690. By the time payment was processed, the amount had fallen to M242,850. A handwritten note cites omission of two items. The items are not named. The supporting letters are not in the file.*

By MALEFO THINYANE



This is the second part of a three-part investigation into maintenance expenditure at the LNDC Hlotse Residential Outestate in Leribe. Part One examined how M545,238 was paid to SPT Construction under a completion certificate, while nine major items were later found undelivered. Part Three examines the procurement process that brought in a third round of service providers in 2022.

Maseru

On 22 March 2021, the Lesotho National Development Corporation raised a purchase order for alteration and additional work at the Hlotse Residential Outestate. The contractor was Clever Choice (Pty) Ltd. The purchase order number was 2674. The total value of the works listed across ten line items, excluding tax,

came to M402,690.01.

By the time the payment was processed three months later, the amount had shrunk to M242,850. Then it shrank again. The audit slip records a final disbursement of M230,707.50. No public explanation was ever given for the difference between what the purchase order authorised and what was ultimately paid.

THE MONEY TRAIL ·  
CLEVER CHOICE (PTY) LTD ·  
PO 2674 / INVOICE 013  
PURCHASE ORDER  
M402,690  
10 items, excl. tax  
22 March 2021 PAYMENT APPROVED  
M242,850  
“2 items omitted”  
21-22 June 2021 AUDIT SLIP PAID  
M230,707 After 5% WHT  
25 June 2021  
Gap between PO total and approved payment: M159,840 — more than a third of the contract value. No itemised record of which two items were omitted appears in the documents. The documents reviewed by the Lesotho Tribune do not contain any amended order, any variation certificate, or any formal record identifying which works were dropped and why. What the file does contain is a single handwritten comment on the payment processing approval form.

“Pls note the reduced order amount to M242,850.00 following omission of 2 items on the purchase order and support-

ed by attached letters from the contractor confirming same.” Handwritten note, LNDC payment processing approval, June 2021 The two omitted items are not named. The letters from the contractor referred to in that comment do not appear in the document bundle reviewed by this newspaper. The gap between the purchase order total and the amount approved for payment is the equivalent of more than a third of the entire contract value, removed from the payment with no itemised justification visible in the documents.

The purchase order itself, printed on 22 March 2021, runs across two pages and lists ten distinct items: paving bricks at M147,840; a perimeter fence at M94,500; a sliding steel gate at M21,350; a diamond mesh gate at M4,000; window blinds at M12,000; carpentry and joinery at M2,500; wardrobe shelving at M4,500; construction of a guardhouse with electricity, plumbing, and plastering at M88,000; replastering and repainting the main house at M6,000; and metalwork for burglar-proofing all external doors at M22,000. The total excluding tax across all ten items is M402,690.01.

PURCHASE ORDER 2674 · TEN ITEMS · 22 MARCH 2021  
ITEM AMOUNT  
Paving bricks — 672m<sup>2</sup>,

**Continues in Page 12**

# Business & Economy

# 12



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

## Continued from Page 11

herringbone pattern

M147,840

Perimeter fence — 210m galvanised diamond mesh

M94,500

Designed sliding steel gate — 6m with pedestrian gate

M21,350

Diamond mesh gate same existing, Fort Knox padlock

M4,000

Window blinds — 43 vertical navy blue

M12,000

Carpentry — seal all baths with chipboard

M2,500

Wardrobes — shelving for files, varnish paint

M4,500

Guardhouse construction — electricity, plumbing, plaster

M88,000

Replaster and repaint main house

M6,000

Metalwork — burglar-proof all external doors

M22,000

PO total (excl. tax) M402,690

Amount actually approved for payment M242,850

Unexplained reduction: M159,840 .

Omitted items: unnamed . Supporting letters: not in file

The payment processing approval, by contrast, reflects M242,850. The approval signatures on the form belong to the PMO, PM, and GM-PDM, dated 21 and 22 June 2021. A further anomaly emerges from the dates on the documents. The Certificate of Practical Completion for Order 2674, signed by LNDC's maintenance clerk Ntlamelle and the Clever Choice contractor, bears the date 1 June 2021. The invoice submitted by Clever Choice, Invoice No. 013, also carries the date 1 June 2021. The completion certificate and the invoice are therefore dated the same day. "Has been completed to satisfaction of the LNDC; hereby dully represented by the Building Supervisor as the clerk of works."

Certificate of Practical Completion, Or-

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der

2674, signed 1 June 2021

DATE ANOMALY . COMPLETION CERTIFICATE VS INVOICE . ORDER 2674

CERTIFICATE SIGNED

1 June 2021 Ntlamelle & Clever Choice

INVOICE NO. 013 DATED

1 June 2021 Same day as certificate

LEASING OFFICER SIGNED

15 June 2021 14 days later

PURCHASE ORDER RAISED

22 March 2021 71 days before both

Under standard practice, a completion certificate is issued after physical inspection. Issuing it on the same day as the invoice raises the question of whether any independent inspection was conducted.

Under standard procurement practice, a certificate of practical completion is issued after a physical inspection confirming that the contractor has met the specifications of the order. Issuing such a certificate on the same day as the contractor's invoice raises the question of whether an independent inspection was conducted at all, or whether the certificate was signed as a procedural formality to release payment. The leasing officer's signature on the certificate carries a different date, 15 June 2021, suggesting a 14-day gap between when Ntlamelle signed and when the second signatory added their approval. No explanation for the discrepancy in signing dates appears in the documents.

Once payment was approved at M242,850, a further reduction appears at the disbursement stage. The audit slip records the total amount as M230,707.50. The difference of M12,142.50 corresponds to a withholding tax deduction at five percent, which is a standard statutory requirement. That deduction is therefore explicable. The gap between the purchase order total and the payment approval is not. The works in the Clever Choice scope are substantively different from those in the SPT Construction scope of 2020. They are not the same items being paid for twice. They represent a separate tranche of expenditure on the same property, in addition to the M545,238 already paid to SPT Construction, and on top of the M33,200 paid to SPT for roof

paint weeks after the 2020 completion certificate was signed.

CUMULATIVE EXPENDITURE .

HLOTSE OUTESTATE . 2020–2021

SPT Construction —

Invoice 53 (renovation, PO 2543)

M545,238

SPT Construction —

Invoice 54 (roof paint, PO 2576)

M33,200

Clever Choice — Invoice 013 (alterations, PO 2674)

M242,850

TOTAL PAID OUT M821,288

None of this expenditure prevented the Feb 2022

task team from finding the building structurally

compromised and unfit for use as a regional office.

By the time the Clever Choice payment was processed in June 2021, cumulative expenditure on the Hlotse Residential Outestate had reached at minimum M821,288 across three payment cycles. Eight months later, the corporation's own task team could not hold a meeting in the building.

The corporation has not responded to questions about the Clever Choice contract, including why the two omitted items were not identified by name in the payment processing documentation, what became of the contractor's supporting letters, and on what basis the Certificate of Practical Completion was issued on the same date as the invoice.

By early 2022, LNDC was preparing to solicit yet another round of service providers for the same property. The evaluation process that followed produced its own set of questions. Those are examined in Part Three.

## COMING IN PART THREE

Part Three: The evaluation scorecards are blank. One design firm presents late and is still considered. A third contractor receives payment before the evaluation concludes. The procurement paper trail runs dry.

# Sentiment Tracker

*Technology, Connectivity and the digital transformation of economics like Lesotho*

13 **IT**

## Two weeks on, Lephema still absent from ministry as public anger mounts

*Two weeks after the cabinet reshuffle, Minister Lephema has yet to report to his new portfolio. The Lesotho Tribune asked subscribers what PM Matekane should do. About 40 per cent condemned Lephema outright. The rest largely avoided the question.*

BY LESOTHO TRIBUNE STAFF



**T**wo weeks have elapsed since Prime Minister Sam Matekane reshuffled his cabinet, and his newly appointed minister, Lephema, has yet to formally report to the ministry he now leads. The Lesotho Tribune put a direct question to its subscribers: what should the Prime Minister do? The answers that came back were uneven, charged, and in several cases more revealing about the state of public trust in government than they were about

Lephema himself.

Approximately 40 per cent of respondents used the moment to directly condemn the minister. Several questioned not only his continued absence from his portfolio but also his confirmed use of state-funded transport and security while attending to private business interests. For this segment of the public, the issue is not ambiguous: a minister who will not report to his ministry has no standing to claim its resources. The remainder of respondents either

deflected or turned the question back on the Tribune itself. One subscriber, NtsaneJulius Ntsane, declined to engage with the specific question and instead contextualised the situation within Lesotho's political history since independence, arguing that what is happening now is no different from what has been done since 1966.

“Basotho people still have trust in this government.”

**Continues in Page 14**

# Sentiment Tracker



*What Basotho think - traced, measured, reported with rigour*

**Continued from Page 13**

TUMELO MOETI · TRIBUNE SUBSCRIBER

A vocal minority pushed back on the Tribune’s framing altogether. Tumelo Moeti, whose comment drew five endorsements from other readers, accused the publication of attempting to change public minds rather than reporting facts.

The response is notable less for its content than for what it signals: for a segment of readers, the act of asking the question was itself an editorial position, not a journalistic one. A separate but related thread concerned the use of private number plates on ministerial vehicles. Joxy Muze Mohau raised the question pub-

licly, receiving no official response. The implication, widely understood by those who commented, is that the use of unmarked vehicles by ministers makes oversight harder and accountability thinner.

Ntsane Letsie offered the most pointed historical verdict. In his view, Lephema’s non-appearance is entirely consistent with how he conducted himself in his previous ministry, where he was, in Letsie’s assessment, hardly visible. If the pattern holds, the question the Tribune put to its subscribers may answer itself before the Prime Minister does.

**METHODOLOGY NOTE**  
The sentiment tracker does not con-

stitute a scientific poll. It reflects the views of Lesotho Tribune subscribers who engaged with the Tribune’s public post of 7 May 2026, at the two-week mark since the reshuffle. Approximate proportions only.

**SUBSCRIBER SENTIMENT · TWO-WEEK MARK**

How Tribune readers responded to the Lephema question

Response category	Share	Character
Criticism of Lephema	~40%	Direct condemnation of conduct and use of state resources
Deflection / no direct answer	~35%	Engaged with post but avoided the question asked
Defence of government / PM	~15%	Expressed trust; accused Tribune of bias
Historical / systemic commentary	~10%	Linked conduct to patterns since 1966

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# Editorial

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



## Not everyone worships money

*Minister Lephema has now received two lessons in quick succession: one from the voters who declined to follow him into battle, and another from his own party, which declined to follow him at all. At a certain age, lessons like these tend to arrive too late. The RFP's internal reckoning may yet prove otherwise.*

By Editorial



There is a particular kind of man in Lesotho politics who confuses the accumulation of wealth with the accumulation of influence. He arrives at meetings in vehicles that announce his importance before he does. He distributes favours as though they were invoices, expecting gratitude rendered on demand. He has, over many years, watched money open doors, and concluded, reasonably enough given the evidence available to him, that all doors yield to it eventually.

“He has watched money open doors, and concluded that all doors yield to it eventually.”

THE LESOTHO TRIBUNE

What the Lejone-led faction delivered was not merely a political defeat. It was something more instructive: a clear, unambiguous demonstration that within the RFP itself, not everyone has a price. A decisive

loss of this kind, administered from inside one's own political home, carries a sting that no external opposition can replicate. It is one thing to be beaten by an adversary. It is quite another to be beaten by people who know you well, who have attended the same meetings, sat at the same tables, and still looked at what was on offer and declined.

The ministry, of course, continues to wait. Two weeks after the cabinet reshuffle, Minister Lephema has yet to formally report to the portfolio he was handed. The state-funded transport and security detail continue to serve him faithfully. Private business interests, one gathers, do not observe ministerial timetables.

There is something almost poignant about learning, at a late stage in one's public life, that loyalty is not a commodity. That trust is not purchased in the way that equipment is purchased, or that the affections of party members are not structured like a

procurement contract with performance clauses and penalty provisions.

These are lessons that most people learn in their youth, through smaller defeats on smaller stages. Minister Lephema has been given the full production: lights, cast, and a captive audience. He should make the most of it. The Lejone faction's victory will be interpreted in various ways depending on one's sympathies. Minister Lephema, according to those inside the Revolution for Prosperity who have grown weary of saying so quietly, is that man. The assessment is not especially complicated. RFP diehards, speaking with the candour that comes when a faction war is already lost, have described Lephema in terms that are almost affectionate in their bluntness: a typical rich man who believes that people will worship him because he has money.

The word “worship” is well chosen. It implies not merely that he expects compliance, but that he expects reverence, and that he regards the distinction between the two as irrelevant.

Some will see it as a consolidation of principle over patronage. Others will see it as one faction of the same party outmanoeuvring another. What is beyond reasonable dispute is that the result represents a constraint on the assumption that money, connections, and the proximity to power are sufficient to command political allegiance within the RFP. Whether Minister Lephema draws the correct conclusions from all of this remains to be seen.

He would do well to consider that Lesotho's political graveyard is well populated with men who were, by every material measure, very comfortable, and who found, somewhat to their surprise, that comfort and consequence are different things entirely.

EDITORIAL POSITION

The editorial position of the Lesotho Tribune is that public office is a public trust, not a reward for private means. The credibility of Lesotho's reform agenda depends on the governing party demonstrating, through its internal conduct, that it holds that distinction seriously.

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# Farmers Corner



*Small holder farming, land, climate risk, and Lesotho's climate risk*

## Harvest above average as foot-and-mouth disease spreads in highlands

*An above-average harvest, stable import flows, and improving agricultural labour opportunities are expected to support household food access across Lesotho through September. A worsening foot-and-mouth disease outbreak and sharply higher fuel costs remain the principal risks to an otherwise favourable outlook.*

**BY SEIPATI MATOBO**



The main harvest, which began in April and continues through August, is projected to be above average following a rainy season that was largely average to above average between October 2025 and March 2026. Rainfall was particularly favourable in the crop-producing western and northwestern regions, driving above-average total planted area. Southern and southeastern areas entered the harvest period with crops approaching maturity under good conditions, and household access to food is expected to improve progressively through September. Winter crop preparation is also under way. Above-average rainfall in April has supported early land preparation and planting for winter wheat, particularly in the lowlands and foothills. This is creating additional agricultural labour income opportunities expected to persist through August, supplementing income already being generated by the maize and bean harvests currently under way.

“Stable import flows, carryover stocks, and government subsidies are

together holding the line on food prices, even as fuel costs climb.”

FEWS NET ·

APRIL–SEPTEMBER 2026

The stability of staple food prices is notable given broader cost pressures. Fuel and diesel prices have increased by 30 and 62 per cent respectively since February, linked to the indirect effects of escalating conflict in the Middle East. Government subsidies have prevented further increases, while stable import flows of maize meal and other commodities from South Africa, alongside carryover stocks from the previous marketing year, are maintaining market supply. Prices are expected to remain broadly stable nationally, though remote areas face localised pressure due to higher transport costs.

RISK ALERT · FOOT-AND-MOUTH DISEASE

The government declared a state of emergency on 27 March in response to an outbreak in Qacha’s Nek and Butha-Buthe. Cases have risen from 66 in March to 167 as of 18 April, with spread to Mokhotlong and Leribe. Livestock mortality remains low, but further spread would erode highland household incomes through loss of wool and mohair sales.

Labour migration to South Africa continues at normal levels, maintaining remittance flows as a key source of household income. Combined with the improving agricultural labour market, these factors are expected to sustain purchasing power for most rural households through September.

The trajectory of the foot-and-mouth outbreak will be the critical variable. For highland communities, the effectiveness of veterinary containment measures will determine the degree of hardship

experienced in the months ahead.

Factor	Current status	Outlook to September
Main harvest	Above average	Improving food availability and income through August
Winter wheat prep	Favourable	Above-average land preparation; additional labour income through August
Staple food prices	Broadly stable	Expected stable; localised pressure in remote areas
Fuel prices	+30–62% since Feb	Subsidies limiting further increases; indirect cost pressure persists
Agricultural labour	Improving	Harvest and winter wheat preparation providing income through August
Labour migration (SA)	Normal levels	Remittances continuing as key household income source
Foot-and-mouth disease	167 cases · spreading	Key risk; further spread could materially reduce livestock income in highlands

Source: FEWS NET Lesotho Key Message Update, April–September 2026: Favorable start of harvest likely improving food consumption. FEWS NET is a United States Government-funded activity. Content does not necessarily reflect the view of the United States Government. Contact: southernafrica@fews.net · fews.net/southern-africa/lesotho

# Arts & Sports

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

17 **IT**

## Sprinter Mojela Koneshe Denied Final Spot Following Controversial Red Card

BY LITS'ITSO LETSUNYANE



Lesotho's promising short-distance runner, Mojela Koneshe, has found himself at the center of controversy after being disqualified from the semi-finals of the CAA African Senior Athletics Championship in Accra, Ghana.

The young sprinter, who has been enjoying an impressive season, was shown a red card after officials claimed he started the race before the other opponent athletes. The decision immediately ended his semi-final race and sparked widespread debate among athletics fans.

Koneshe has been one of the country's standout sprinters in recent months. On April 8, he competed at the Hezekiel Sepeng International Meet in Potchefstroom, South Africa, where he secured a podium finish in the men's 100m first final. He crossed the line in third place with a time of 10.20 seconds, continuing to establish himself as one of Lesotho's rising sprint talents.

On May 12, Koneshe once again represented Lesotho at the CAA African Senior Athletics Championship in Accra, Ghana. The sprinter proudly flew the country's flag high after finishing in first place in his heat with a time of 10.54 seconds, a performance that comfortably booked his place in the semi-finals.

However, his campaign took a dramatic turn during the semi-final race. Officials immediately stopped the event after accusing Koneshe of starting before the rest of the field. Despite the ruling, slow-motion footage circulating among fans appeared to suggest that the alleged false start may not have occurred.

The incident quickly divided opinion among athletics supporters. Some fans argued that officials unfairly targeted Koneshe because he posed a serious threat to win the race, while others believed the disqualification was the correct decision according to competition

rules.

Following the controversial call, Koneshe and his team lodged an appeal in an effort to overturn the decision. The appeal was successful enough for him to be granted another opportunity to race. However, the setback appeared to have already taken a toll on the athlete.

With the pressure, stress, and emotional impact of the incident affecting his focus, Koneshe was unable to recover mentally for the re-run and failed to secure victory, effectively ending his hopes of reaching the final of the championship.

Despite the disappointing outcome, Koneshe's performances throughout the season continues to highlight his growing potential on the continental stage. His strong showings in both South Africa and Ghana have demonstrated that Lesotho possesses sprinting talent capable of competing against some of the world's best athletes.