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Lesotho Tribune

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VOL 5, ISSUE 43

Sunday, 28 June 2026

M22.00



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Prison inmates are farming 150 acres in Mohale's Hoek – and the Ministry keeps 80% of the harvest

The Ministry of Law and Justice wants more landowners in Mohale's Hoek to hand over idle fields to a block farming scheme run by prison inmates. About 150 acres are already under maize. The Ministry keeps 80 percent of the harvest.

By THOLOANA LESENYA



Minister of Law and Justice Richard Ramoetsi has called on landowners in Mohale's Hoek to join the Lesotho Correctional Services block farming initiative, telling a community meeting at Setanteng that fields which sat idle for years are now producing maize and that more land is needed to expand the programme. The meeting, attended by farmers, prison officials and the Ministry's Principal Secretary Relebohile Lebeta, focused on preparations for the current harvest and the terms under which maize produced by inmates on community land will be distributed.

Ramoetsi said some farmers had initially been reluctant to join, but the results since the programme launched in 2024 had removed the grounds for hesitation. He said delays and operational problems in earlier seasons had been noted and that better planning and timely planting were expected to produce higher yields this year.

THE SPLIT

Assistant Commissioner Neo Moramotse told the meeting that approximately 150 acres are currently under cultivation. Harvesting will be done by combine harvester. Under the agreed arrangement, the Ministry retains 80 percent of the maize to feed correctional facilities,

with the remaining 20 percent shared among participating landowners in proportion to the acreage each contributed. "Our goal is to ensure that families have enough food to last until the next farming season while also producing enough to sell. Agriculture should become a source of sustainable income rather than simply a means of survival."

— MINISTER RICHARD RAMO-ELETSI, MINISTRY OF LAW AND JUSTICE COMMERCIAL AMBITIONS

The Minister proposed formalising the arrangement into a commercial block farming society bringing together the Lesotho Correctional Services and local farmers. He said such a structure would allow households to produce food for their own consumption and generate income from surplus harvests. The Ministry also intends to expand into surrounding areas beyond Setanteng, increasing the total acreage available for cultivation.

REHABILITATION, NOT PUNISHMENT

Acting Commissioner Matingoe Phamotse told the gathering that farming participation is classified as rehabilitation, not additional punishment. He said inmates are separated from their families and live under constant supervision, and that correctional facilities should focus on preparing people to return to society rather than deepening hardship. "Our responsibility is not only to keep offenders in custody but also to prepare them to return to society as responsible and law-abiding citizens," Phamotse said. He added that agricultural work teaches discipline, responsibility and self-reliance while giving inmates practical skills they can use after release.

Phamotse also pointed to the financial case for the programme. Food purchases consume a substantial portion of public resources each year. Because the Ministry does not own agricultural land — land allocation in Lesotho remains under the ownership of Basotho through existing land laws — partnerships with communities are the only way to grow the scheme.

FARMERS URGED TO SHOW UP
Assistant Commissioner for the Southern

Region Letlaka Banyane raised a specific concern: poor attendance by farmers during the weeding stage had forced Correctional Services to rely almost entirely on inmate labour and to borrow hoes from facilities in Leribe and Quthing. He called on participating landowners to become more actively involved in future seasons.

Representing the farmers, Phethisang Ranku praised the initiative for bringing

previously unused fields back into production. He encouraged other landowners to join. The meeting also warned farmers to keep livestock out of cultivated areas, saying uncontrolled grazing damages soil and threatens future yields.

PROGRAMME AT A GLANCE

DETAIL	FIGURE / NOTE
Land under cultivation	~150 acres
Ministry share of harvest	80%
Landowner share	20%, split by acreage
Harvesting method	Combine harvester
Programme launched	2024, Ministry of Law and Justice

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DPP and WLSA sign agreement to coordinate abuse cases in five districts

The Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions has signed a Memorandum of Understanding with Women and Law in Southern Africa to coordinate criminal case handling in five districts. Since 2024, WLSA has recorded 1,832 abuse-related cases in those areas. Nearly 500 required prosecution.

By THOLOANA LESENYA



The Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions has signed a Memorandum of Understanding with Women and Law in Southern Africa, formalising a working relationship between the two institutions in the handling of criminal cases involving women and vulnerable groups across five districts. The agreement was signed at a ceremony in Maseru this week. It covers districts where WLSA currently runs programmes: Thaba-Tseka, Mokhotlong, Quthing, Qacha's Nek and Leribe. The MOU sets out a framework for communication, coordination and referrals between the two institutions. Its stated purpose is to ensure that victims and survivors of abuse receive legal support and do not lose assistance as cases move through the courts.

THE CASELOAD

Statistics presented at the signing ceremony showed that WLSA has recorded 1,832 abuse-related cases across the five

target districts since its project launched in 2024 with financial support from the Global Fund. Of those, 488 were criminal cases that required legal intervention and prosecution. Stakeholders at the event noted that many survivors continue to face barriers when seeking justice, including limited access to legal services, fear of reporting offences and delays within the court system. "The signing of this Memorandum of Understanding is not only about formalising cooperation but also about improving access to justice for those who have suffered abuse and violence. It is our responsibility to ensure that victims are supported and that justice is delivered effectively."

— ACTING DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC PROSECUTIONS, ADVOCATE LEHLANAKO MOFILIKOANE
WHAT THE DPP SAID
Acting Director of Public Prosecutions Advocate Lehlanako Mofilikoane said

the agreement would close communication gaps between prosecutors and WLSA and allow both institutions to handle criminal matters more effectively. She said the DPP's office recognises gender-related challenges and is committed to addressing them in line with the objectives of the National Strategic Development Plan. She said WLSA's track record in advocating for the rights of women and girls and providing legal support made it a natural institutional partner for the DPP. WHAT WLSA SAID WLSA's Vice Chairperson of the Board, Advocate Jobo Raswoko, said the agreement had been long anticipated and reflected a shared commitment to advancing justice and protecting the rights of women and girls across Lesotho.

He said formalising the relationship would create a structured framework for cooperation and ensure that victims are not left without legal support during court proceedings. "This agreement represents our collective commitment to ensuring that women and girls are protected and that the rule of law is strengthened through effective cooperation," he said.

MOU AT A GLANCE

DETAIL	NOTE
Parties	Office of the DPP's Women and Law in Southern Africa (WLSA)
Districts covered	Thaba-Tseka, Mokhotlong, Quthing, Qacha's Nek, Leribe
Cases recorded by WLSA since 2024	1,832 abuse-related cases
Criminal cases requiring prosecution	488
Funder of WLSA project	Global Fund



INVITATION FOR PRE-QUALIFICATION OF SUPPLIERS FOR THE PROVISION OF GOODS, SERVICES AND MINOR WORKS

The Pension Fund invites applications from suitably qualified and compliant suppliers, service providers and contractors for pre-qualification and inclusion in the Fund's Supplier Database for the 2026/27 financial year.

1. Background

The Fund hereby invites interested and eligible suppliers to submit Expressions of Interest for consideration and inclusion in the Fund's Supplier Database under the categories listed below.

2. Categories for Pre-Qualification

Lot	Category	Goods / Services
1	General Office Supplies	Mineral water supply, office refreshments, sugar, coffee, tea and creamer
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4	Marketing and Branding	Video production, photography, documentary production, branding, design and printing of promotional materials
5	Corporate Wear	Staff uniforms and related apparel
6	Advertising	Newspaper advertising, vehicle branding, radio, television, social media and billboard advertising
7	Computer Equipment and Software	Laptops, desktops, internet services, web hosting, security equipment, maintenance and repairs
8	Office Equipment	Printers, photocopying machines, projectors, shredders, drones, cameras and water dispensers

Lot	Category	Goods / Services
9	Office Furniture	Office desks, chairs, boardroom tables, coat hangers, letter trays and wooden bins
10	Vehicle Maintenance	Supply of tyres, vehicle servicing, repairs and maintenance
11	Logistics and Travel	Travel agency services, vehicle hire, freight forwarding, clearing services, courier and mail delivery
12	Marketing and Branding	Travel agency services, vehicle hire, freight forwarding, clearing services, courier and mail delivery
13	Hotels, Halls and Catering	Accommodation, conferencing facilities, event management and catering services
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3. Mandatory Requirements

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4. Due Diligence and Database Inclusion

Following evaluation of submissions, the Fund may conduct due diligence and verification exercises prior to final inclusion in the Supplier Database. Inclusion in the Supplier Database does not guarantee award of any contract or business opportunity with the Fund

5. Clarifications and Submission of Expressions of Interest

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Men Urged To Talk About Mental Health And Redefine What Strength Means

By Lemohang Botsane



Mental health experts and community leaders in Maseru are calling on Basotho men to take their psychological well-being seriously, speak up when they are struggling, and let go of old ideas that say “real men don’t show emotion.” The message came out strongly on Friday during a Men’s Mental Health Awareness event held in Maseru. Speakers said men’s mental health has been ignored for too long, and it is time to treat it with the same importance as physical health.

‘Mamathe Khetsi, a clinical psychologist and psychiatry-trained lecturer at the National University of Lesotho, told the audience that illnesses like high blood pressure, diabetes, and prostate cancer get a lot of attention. But mental health, she said, is often left out of the conversation even though it affects how men think, feel, make decisions, and relate to others. Quoting the World Health Organization (WHO), Khetsi said mental health means being in a state of well-being where a person understands his strengths, handles normal life stress, works well, and contributes to his community.

“Good mental health is not just about not being sick,” she explained. “It is also about managing your emotions, knowing yourself, and being able to adapt when life gets hard.” One of the biggest problems, Khetsi said, is what psychologists call restrictive emotionality. This is when men are taught from a young age to hide their feelings be-

cause society expects them to be strong, independent, and tough.

“Many men grow up believing they must deal with problems alone,” she said. “They think that crying, asking for help, or talking about fear is a sign of weakness.” This belief, she added, leads to self-stigma. Many men see seeking help as a personal failure. As a result, they suffer quietly and only look for help when they are already in a crisis.

Khetsi also challenged the idea that a healthy man never feels stress, fear, or sadness. “That is the heroic misconception,” she said. “True strength is not about avoiding problems. It is about how you manage them.” She warned that poor mental health affects every part of a man’s life. It can make it harder to be a good father, do well at work, and keep healthy relationships. She urged men to look after their minds the same way they go to the gym or see a doctor for physical issues.

“Seeking help is not weakness,” she said. “It is a step toward resilience, productivity, and healthier families.” Sempe Mahapang from the group ‘Gents With Brains’ told men to redefine masculinity around good character. He said being a man is not just an identity, but a daily choice to live with responsibility, respect, integrity, and compassion. “Society needs men who make a positive impact at home, at work, and in the community,” Mahapang said. “Real masculinity shows when a man protects, supports, and leads with humility and accountability.”

He also spoke about emotional intelligence. He said men should learn to understand their own feelings and communicate openly, especially with their partners. “Healthy communication makes relationships stronger and creates space for men to express emotions without fear,” he added. Mahapang warned that men in leadership

have extra responsibility. “Your actions set the tone,” he said. “You can either inspire others or harm them by the example you set.”

Malefane Matele, Human Resource Manager for Prevention of Sexual Exploitation and Abuse, said society must also focus on raising boys well. He noted that while much work has been done to empower women, men and boys also need guidance to adapt to changing times. “Do we have enough positive male role models?” he asked. “Many boys grow up without seeing what healthy masculinity looks like.”

Matele said masculinity should be redefined to mean responsibility, respect, and resilience. Boys need mentors who show them how to lead with good behavior. He also spoke about equity vs equality. “Equality means giving everyone the same thing,” he explained. “Equity means understanding that men and women face different challenges and giving practical support so both can thrive.” He warned that if only one gender is supported, it can cause tension in families and communities.

Matele added that money problems are another big pressure for men. Many communities still expect men to be the main providers. When finances are tight, it can lead to stress, conflict, and broken relationships. Even as gender roles change, these traditional expectations remain strong. He called on government, families, and communities to invest in both women and men. “We need to move beyond just talking about equality,” he said. “We need solutions that help both women and men live and contribute together.”

The event was dedicated to raising awareness about men’s mental health and giving a platform to voices that are often ignored. Speakers agreed on one point: silence is harmful. Talking, seeking help, and building positive character are signs of real strength.

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LEC can't pay Eskom. Its acting MD has a security convoy.

The Lesotho Electricity Company survives on government cash injections, owes Eskom and EDM hundreds of millions, and has been grilled by parliament for inflated acting salaries. Its board has now approved a two-vehicle security convoy for the acting managing director, sources tell the Lesotho Tribune.


By Staff Reporter



Tsheiso Mokela is the acting managing director of the Lesotho Electricity Company. His company owes South Africa's Eskom and Mozambique's Electricidade de Moçambique hundreds of millions of maloti. Its liabilities exceed its assets by M98.6 million (approximately \$5.99m). Its cash reserves have fallen by M145.8 million (approximately \$8.87m). The government injected M300 million (approximately \$18.24m) to keep the lights on.


The board of directors, sources tell the Lesotho Tribune, has authorised a security arrangement for Mokela that they say has no precedent for a parastatal executive in this country. "This acting MD uses a company Toyota Fortuner and his security entourage uses another Fortuner. Not even a minister in this country is guarded like this" a





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Ha Nyakane man gets five years for tavern killing

A Ha Nyakane man who struck a fellow villager on the head with a nylon stick at a tavern in 2021, killing him, has been sentenced to five years in prison. The court also ordered him to pay M6,000 (approx. USD 330) to the deceased's family.

By THOLOANA LESENYA



The High Court has sentenced Mokhopheli Motete, 30, of Ha Nyakane, Maseru district, to an effective five-year prison term after he admitted to fatally assaulting a fellow villager with a nylon stick at a local tavern in September 2021. Justice Mabatšoeneng Hlaele delivered the judgment after accepting Motete's guilty plea to culpable homicide. The prosecution had originally charged him with murder but agreed to reduce the charge.

WHAT HAPPENED

On or about 19 September 2021, Motete, the deceased and other villagers were drinking at a tavern in Ha Nyakane. Motete fell asleep. When he woke, he attacked the deceased, striking him on the head with a nylon stick. The blow was severe

enough that the victim lost the ability to speak. He was taken to a local health facility and later referred to Tšepong Hospital, where he died from his injuries.

A post-mortem examination confirmed the cause of death as bleeding in the brain caused by the assault. Court records show that Motete later told his wife he had killed the deceased. The nylon stick was handed over to police and produced as an exhibit.

THE SENTENCE

Justice Hlaele sentenced Motete to 20 years imprisonment, suspending 15 years on condition that he does not commit another offence involving the loss of human life within five years. The effective custodial term is therefore five years. The court noted that while Motete had pleaded guilty and was considered capable of rehabilita-

tion, the seriousness of the offence required a custodial sentence. The judge found that the nylon stick, traditionally regarded as a potentially lethal weapon, demonstrated the gravity of the attack. The court also took note that Motete did not assist in taking the injured man to hospital after the assault.

Motete told his wife he had killed the deceased. The nylon stick was handed to police and produced in court as an exhibit. — COURT RECORD, HIGH COURT OF LESOTHO

ORDERS OF THE COURT

In addition to the custodial sentence, the court ordered Motete to pay M6,000 (approx. USD 330) in compensation to the deceased's family. The amount must be paid within three years of his release from prison, or earlier. The court also directed the State to confiscate and destroy the nylon stick under the supervision of the court registrar or a designated representative.

DETAIL	NOTE
Accused	Mokhopheli Motete, 30, Ha Nyakane, Maseru district
Charge	Culpable homicide (reduced from murder)
Incident date	On or about 19 September 2021, Ha Nyakane
Sentence	20 years, 15 suspended — effective 5 years
Compensation	M6,000 (approx. USD 330) to deceased's family
Presiding judge	Justice Mabatšoeneng Hlaele

Green Recovery Drive Begins In Lesotho To Heal The Land And Support Families

By Lemohang Botsane



Lesotho has started a new nationwide campaign to fix its damaged environment and give communities more ways to earn a living.

The Ministry of Environment and Forestry officially launched the Green Recovery Initiative on Thursday in Maseru. The programme will run for the full 2026/27 financial year and is being described as one of the country's biggest efforts yet to fight land degradation, grow more trees, and improve life in both rural and urban areas.

This is said to be more than just planting trees, Minister of Environment and Forestry, Thabo Mofosi, said the project is also about the future of Basotho.

“The Green Recovery Initiative is not only about planting trees; it is about building a sustainable future for present and future generations,” Mofosi told the crowd at the launch.

According to the Ministry, the plan has four main goals: cut down soil erosion, increase the number of

trees across the country, help households earn more money, and play a part in slowing down climate change.

Officials say the work will be practical and hands-on. The key activities include: Large-scale tree planting across villages, towns, and open land, protecting forests and grasslands that are already there, so they are not lost to cutting or overgrazing, building green boundary walls using trees and shrubs instead of only stone or wire, teaching better land care so farmers and communities can use soil and water wisely as well as getting communities involved so local people own and look after the projects.

Director of Forestry, Mokete Bereng, said new forest laws and clear guidelines will back up the work to make sure it lasts.

“We will no longer simply plant trees; we will raise trees,” Bereng said. “That means we will watch them,

care for them, and make sure they survive.”

The Ministry says the initiative is also an economic plan. By focusing on fruit trees and forestry work, the programme is expected to create jobs and increase fruit production. That could mean more food at home and more products to sell in local markets.

Bereng noted that many Basotho villages face serious problems right now, including soil erosion, loss of forests, and the effects of climate change. These issues are hurting farmland and the families who depend on firewood and farming to survive.

To make sure the trees do not die after planting, the Department of Forestry will monitor new sites closely and support communities with the care and knowledge they need.

The first phase will begin in Leribe District and teams plan to plant 850 fruit trees at Matlameng in Ha Mahlehle to kick off the project. After that, the initiative will be rolled out to other districts across Lesotho.

The Ministry is urging every Mosotho to be part of the campaign. Officials say the success of the Green Recovery Initiative depends on people planting trees, protecting young plants from animals and fire, and keeping them safe until they are fully grown.

“Plant a tree, protect a tree, and preserve a tree,” the Ministry urged. “Together we can secure a greener and more sustainable future for our children and grandchildren.”

Back To Care Drive Helps More People With HIV Return To Treatment

By LEMOHANG BOTSANE



More people living with HIV in Lesotho are returning to treatment after a nationwide campaign to find and support those who had stopped taking their medication. On Thursday, the Meeting Targets and Maintaining Epidemic Control (EpiC)

Project, working with the Ministry of Health, held a Back to Care Campaign Dissemination Symposium in Maseru. The event brought together government leaders, health workers, development partners, and community stakeholders to share

results, lessons, and next steps.

Lesotho has made big progress in controlling HIV over the years. But one problem remains: some people start treatment and then stop, or “interrupt”

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their care. When treatment is interrupted, the virus can get stronger, health can decline, and the risk of passing HIV to others increases.

The Back to Care Campaign was launched in selected districts to trace people who had been lost to follow-up and bring them back into care. Teams visited homes, used community structures, and worked with clinics to reconnect clients with treatment services.

Minister of Health, Mamokete Nts'ekhe, said the symposium showed both progress and the work that is still left to do. She said Lesotho's success comes from strong leadership, dedicated health workers, strong communities, and support from partners. But she warned that treatment interruption is still a major challenge.

"Progress is not only about putting people on treatment," Nts'ekhe said. "It is also about making sure they stay in care for life."

She said the campaign proved that when government, communities, and partners work together, results follow. Many people who had dropped out of care have now returned. "This has restored health,

dignity, and hope to families," she added.

Dr. Tafadzwa Chakare, EpiC Project Director, explained that the campaign was a team effort. The Ministry of Health, district health teams, clinics, and community structures all worked together to trace clients and support them to return to treatment.

He said the campaign showed three things that make a difference: good data systems to find clients, community involvement to build trust, and integrated services so people can get help in one place. "The lessons we learned will help us strengthen national systems for treatment continuity and community-based care," Dr. Chakare said.

Tiisetso Piet, Programmes Manager at the National AIDS Commission (NAC), said Lesotho has reduced new HIV infections, but gaps remain. She said children, adolescents, and men are groups that need more focus.

She also raised concern about social and economic issues that make HIV harder to fight. These include people moving for work, poverty in households, and

gender-based violence. "These factors continue to drive new infections and make it hard for some people to stay on treatment," Piet said.

Thomas Hines, from the U.S. Embassy, praised Lesotho's progress and said the U.S. will continue to support stronger health systems and better access to treatment.

"The Back to Care initiative is not only about numbers," Hines said. "It is about restoring lives, strengthening families, and building more resilient communities."

He added that challenges are still there. Stigma, poverty, long distances to clinics, and mental health pressures can make it hard for people to stick to treatment. He said addressing these issues is just as important as providing medicine.

The Back to Care initiative will continue as part of ongoing efforts to trace and re-link people living with HIV who have defaulted. The goal is to make sure they return to care quickly and keep receiving life-saving services without interruption. Health officials say the campaign's success shows that when communities and clinics work together, more people can stay healthy and live longer.



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Farmers Corner



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

Fresh produce prices and the CPI: what South Africa's latest data means for farmers

South Africa's fresh produce markets are sending a mixed signal this winter: vegetables are holding up in price as demand softens and fruit remains in deflation, while the country's overall cost of living hit its highest point in nearly two years, driven not by food but by fuel.

By Staff Reporter



South Africa's national consumer price index (CPI) rose to 4.5% in May 2026, up from 4.0% in April, according to Statistics South Africa. This is the highest rate since July 2024, when it was 4.6%. The monthly increase was 0.7%. The surge did not come from the food basket. The inflation rise was largely driven by increases in fuel prices. The fuel index recorded a second large monthly increase, leaping by 14.3% to reach an annual rise of 28.7%. Over the past 12 months, prices for petrol increased by 24.8% and diesel by 53.8%. Stripped of fuel, the annual CPI stood at 3.7% in May, unchanged from the month before. Inflation for food and non-alcoholic beverages continues to subside, declining to 1.9% from 2.9% in April. This is down from the peak of 5.7% recorded in July 2025. For farmers who sell staple vegetables and fresh fruit, the data tells a more specific story, and it is not uniform. "Prices for fruits and nuts and vegetables are lower than a year ago, at -8.5% and -6.0% respectively. Both categories have been in deflationary territory since October 2025."

STATISTICS SOUTH AFRICA, MAY 2026 CPI RELEASE VEGETABLES: SOFTENING DEMAND, BUT PRICES HOLDING

At the national fresh produce markets, vegetable prices have come under demand pressure heading into the

second half of June. According to AMT's Dr Johann van der Merwe, vegetable demand has softened over the most recent trading weeks, with the question now being whether prices will follow. Demand improved during parts of the past period, giving support to several vegetable prices. However, increasing volumes are limiting strong upward momentum, especially in potatoes. Carrots and onions still show potential for further gains. Potatoes, onions, tomatoes, cabbages, and carrots are the five highest-volume vegetables at South Africa's national fresh produce markets. Johannesburg's market holds a 46% share of national trade, with an estimated 43 million people across the country depending on the national markets for fresh fruit and vegetables.

SELECTED PRICE MOVEMENTS, MAY-JUNE 2026

Commodity	Month-on-month	Year-on-year	CPI Direction
Potatoes	Volume	pressure	-6.0% (vegetables)
Onions	Potential for gains	-6.0% (vegetables)	Carrots
Maize meal	Deflation deepening	-4.4%	Brown bread
Marginal decrease	-0.3%	Sources:	Stats SA CPI May 2026; AMT Fresh Produce Market Report June 2026.
	= lower year-on-year.	= mixed/watch.	

FRUIT: VOLUME PRESSURE, FALLING PRICES

The fruit market has faced sustained downward pressure since October 2025. Prices for fruits and nuts are 8.5% lower than a year ago, and the category has been in deflationary territory continuously since October 2025. Banana prices dropped sharply in late May, while oranges, lemons, grapefruits and avocados also remained under pressure due to higher volumes on the market. Table grapes and blueberries were exceptions, still showing strength.

Fruit markets continued to face a clear downward trend across most categories, driven largely by increasing supply and relatively soft demand. The key question as markets move deeper into winter is how long this pressure will last before tightening

seasonal supply provides a floor. MEAT AND DAIRY: INFLATION COOLS BUT REMAINS POSITIVE Meat inflation cooled in May, recording an annual increase of 7.3% compared with April's 9.4%. The monthly rate was -0.8%. Stewing beef prices dropped by 3.0% and beef mince by 2.4% between April and May. For farmers supplying beef to market, the monthly relief does not erase an elevated year-on-year position. The annual rate for the milk, other dairy products and eggs category increased to 0.9% from 0.1% in April. Full cream long-life milk rose 1.7% month-on-month, low fat fresh milk by 1.5%, and cheddar cheese by 1.5%.

WHAT THIS MEANS AT THE FARM GATE

For Basotho farmers selling into the South African market, the data points in two directions. Fruit and most vegetable categories are cheaper than a year ago, which is good for consumers but compresses margins for producers. At the same time, fuel costs are 28.7% higher year-on-year, raising transport costs for every tonne that moves from the Free State or the Lesotho highlands to a national market. Annual deflation for cereal products deepened in May, dropping to -1.4%, with maize meal 4.4% cheaper than a year ago. Cheaper staples reduce input costs for livestock farmers using maize-based feed, but also reduce the price of competing starch products in the retail basket.

The rand traded at approximately R16.48 to the US dollar on 23 June 2026 (USD \$0.061). For farmers with export exposure, any further rand softening would partially offset the local price deflation in fresh produce. The rand has averaged R16.43 to the dollar so far in 2026.

Lesotho's own CPI data, published by the Bureau of Statistics, lags South Africa's by several months. The most recent available figure, for February 2026, showed inflation at 2.7%, down from 3.4% in January. No figures for March, April or May have been published. The gap in publication timing means Basotho farmers and poli-

South Africans are more accepting of LGBTI people— and more hostile to immigrants

A new national survey finds that South Africans have grown more accepting of LGBTI people over the past decade. The same survey finds they have grown more hostile to immigrants over the same period. The two trends are linked.

BY STAFF REPORTER



South Africa has become measurably more accepting of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex people over the past decade. It has also become more hostile to immigrants over the same period. A new nationally representative survey, released in Johannesburg on Friday night, finds those two trends are correlated — and flags the connection as a concern for advocates and policymakers. The report, titled *Admission Reserved*, was commissioned by the Other Foundation and conducted by the Human Sciences

Research Council (HSRC). It is the first nationally representative survey to provide a disaggregated estimate of South Africa’s LGBTI population, and builds on *Progressive Prudes*, a landmark public opinion survey published by the Other Foundation and the HSRC in 2015.

The report was launched at the Other Foundation’s offices in Parkwood, Johannesburg, on 26 June 2026, a date that falls on the 20th anniversary of marriage equality for LGBTI people in

South Africa, and 30 years after the adoption of South Africa’s Constitution, which was the first in the world to explicitly prohibit discrimination on the grounds of sexual orientation. **THE ANTI-IMMIGRANT LINK** The report reveals a correlation between anti-LGBTI and anti-immigrant attitudes. People who hold more hostile views towards LGBTI people are more likely to hold hostile views towards immigrants, and vice versa. The report does not establish the direction of causation, but the co-movement of the two trends across the decade is one of its most pointed findings.

While acceptance of LGBTI people has generally increased, hostile attitudes towards immigrants intensified in the same period. The report identifies this as an area requiring attention from civil society and policymakers working on both sets of issues.

“The door to equality and freedom has opened, but admission is still too often reserved.”

— **ADMISSION RESERVED, OTHER FOUNDATION HSRC, 2026**

WHAT THE NUMBERS SHOW The proportion of South Africans who say same-sex sexual activity is “always wrong” has fallen from 66% in 2015 to 52% today. Support for marriage equality has risen from 37% to 45% over the

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Editorial

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



SADC and the leaders who will not leave

SADC was built to guarantee democracy, peace, and shared prosperity across southern Africa. Its record in recent years suggests it has become something closer to a mutual protection society for those in power.

By Editorial



When Zambia's Frederick Chiluba attempted to manoeuvre around his country's constitutional term limits in the early 2000s, his peers in the region did not look away.

As Prof. Nqosa Mahao, Lesotho's former Minister of Energy, dismissed after calling out corruption in the Matekane government, noted this week: "We learn from President Mbeki that when President Chiluba tried to amend the constitution to extend his rule his counterparts in SADC sent President Mogae to talk him out of it." Mogae talked Chiluba out of it. Chiluba stepped down in 2002. Democratic norms held.

Prof. Mahao then asked the question

that hangs over every crisis now unfolding in this region: "Perhaps the problem lies with our current breed of Regional Leaders. Do they appreciate that they bear the moral responsibility to hold each other to certain standards for the sake of good governance and the stability of our individual countries?" Judging by the evidence of the past two years, they do not. Former President Ian Khama of Botswana said it plainly this week: "Here we go again. Another power hungry president has the constitution amended through rigging and cash inducements to extend his term of office." He was speaking about Zimbabwe. He could have been speaking about the region at large. "Zimbabwe has now become the latest in a growing list of countries whose

presidents want to cling to power and manipulate the constitution to achieve that."

SERETSE KHAMA IAN KHAMA, FORMER PRESIDENT OF BOTSWANA

Zimbabwe's National Assembly passed Constitutional Amendment Bill No. 3 this month. The bill extends presidential and parliamentary terms from five to seven years, defers elections from 2028 to 2030, and removes the right of citizens to directly

elect their president. In future, parliament will choose the head of state. In Zimbabwe's case, that means ZANU-PF will choose the head of state. President Emmerson Mnangagwa, 83 years old and elected for a constitutionally final term in 2023,

now looks set to remain in office until 2030 at the least. Analysts warn the structural changes could lock his party's control of the presidency until 2044.

Public consultations on the bill were marred by violence and intimidation. Opposition withdrew. The bill sailed through on ZANU-PF's two-thirds parliamentary majority. What has SADC said? Essentially nothing. What has SADC done? Essentially nothing. Mnangagwa is, at this moment, the chairperson of SADC. MADAGASCAR: A COUP BY ANOTHER NAME

In October 2025, Madagascar's President Andry Rajoelina was forced from office by a military unit, CAPSAT, after weeks of youth-led protests over service delivery failures. Rajoelina fled the country. Parliament impeached him in his absence. The Constitutional Court then installed Colonel Michael Randrianirina, the CAPSAT commander, as president.

Randrianirina promised elections within 18 to 24 months.

The African Union read this for what it was: an unconstitutional change of government. It suspended Madagascar immediately. SADC chose a different path. Rather than suspension, SADC engaged. It invited Randrianirina to a virtual summit. It urged dialogue. When South African President Cyril Ramaphosa received Randrianirina in Pretoria in January 2026, the

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same period. Some 46% of respondents say their views towards LGBTI people have become more accepting in the last five years.

On equal rights, 60% of South Africans now believe gay and lesbian people deserve the same rights as all other citizens, up from 51% a decade ago. Some 57% say the same about bisexual and transgender people. On intersex rights specifically, 68% agree that intersex people deserve equal rights.

Family acceptance figures show roughly half of South Africans would accept a gay (49%), lesbian (51%), transgender (50%), or bisexual (46%) family member. Acceptance of an intersex family member is higher, at 64%. Around half also say LGBTI people should be included in their culture and traditions.

POPULATION ESTIMATE

For the first time, the survey provides a reliable national estimate of the LGBTI population. It finds that 5.3% of South Africa’s adult population is LGBTI, representing approximately 2.39 million people. Within that figure, 2.5% identify as gay, lesbian, or bisexual; 1.0% as transgender or non-binary; and 2.7% as intersex.

The report finds no significant racial group differences in levels of acceptance or rejection of LGBTI people.

FIVE ATTITUDE CLUSTERS

Committed Champions strongly support LGBTI inclusion across all areas of life and make up 9% of the population. They are most likely to be women, urban residents, tertiary-educated, and people with lower levels of religiosity.

Evolving Allies broadly support equal rights but are less certain on specific issues such as same-sex parenting or transgender rights. At 32%, they are the largest group and tend to be younger. In-Betweeners hold mixed or uncertain views, shaped by religion and social media conversations. They make up 29% of the population and are identified by the report as most likely to shift towards acceptance through personal contact with LGBTI people.

Principled Conservatives at 22%, show low acceptance around same-sex relationships and family inclusion but may still support basic equal rights in principle. They are more likely to be male, older, and from rural or non-metro areas. Uncompromising Hardliners represent 7% of the population and consistently reject LGBTI inclusion in all areas. Some 51% of this group has

had no real-life contact with an LGBTI person.

PUBLIC ADVOCACY GAP

Despite broadly rising acceptance, public advocacy for LGBTI people remains limited. Only 17% of South Africans say they have spoken in support of or defended a gay, lesbian, or bisexual person in public. The figure is lower for transgender people, at 9%. A further 27% say they have not done so but may do so in future; 30% say the same about transgender people. Some 39% of South Africans report having at least one LGBTI friend or family member.

INDICATOR	2015	2026
Same-sex activity always wrong	66%	52%
Support marriage equality	37%	45%
Gay lesbian: equal rights	51%	60%
Would accept lesbian family member	—	51%
Views more accepting (5 yrs)	—	46%

Source: Admission Reserved, The Other Foundation & HSRC, 2026. The 2015 baseline is drawn from Progressive Prudes, the Other Foundation & HSRC.



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Editorial

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



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reception was warm. The message

from the region was, in effect, accommodating.

The organisation that suspended Madagascar in 2009 when Rajoelina himself led a coup now welcomed back a colonel who came to power through precisely the same mechanism. Its own inconsistency made Madagascar's instability more predictable, not less. That price is credibility, and SADC has been spending it freely.

MOZAMBIQUE: SILENCE AS ENDORSEMENT

Mozambique's post-election crisis of 2024 and 2025 produced some of the most damning evidence of SADC's institutional failure. After a deeply contested election in October 2024, in which the EU observation mission noted unjustified alterations to results, two senior opposition figures were shot dead in Maputo. Months of protests followed. Police killed protesters, including children as young as 16. By early 2025 the death toll had exceeded 300.

SADC's observer mission declared the election orderly and professionally conducted. When the violence escalated, the regional body convened an extraordinary summit in Harare in November 2024. Tanzania led the push to ensure Mozambique would not face meaningful SADC pressure. The summit's communique merely noted a briefing from the outgoing Mozambican president. Nothing more. Mozambican civil society did not bother petitioning SADC when they sought external support. They went directly to South Africa. When citizens facing state violence no longer trust the regional body designed to protect them, that body has lost its core purpose.

A CONTINENT OF CLOCKS RUNNING BACKWARD

Khama listed the examples: "Cameroon (Paul Biya, 43 years in power and 93 years old), Uganda (Yoweri Museveni, 40 years in power and 81 years old), Rwanda (Paul Kagame, 26 years in power and counting and 68 years old)." The list of those who will not leave is longer than the list of those who do. He identified what connects

them: "Political assassinations, fabricated charges and detentions, kidnappings and disappearances as recently in Tanzania and Uganda are the modus operandi of these and other such tyrants." These are not accidents of governance. They are its methods. On Zimbabwe's specific history, Khama did not spare the language:

"Zimbabwe and its long suffering people have been subjected to the same from the days of Gukurahundi to present day." And he drew a conclusion that should settle any argument about whether this constitutes continuity or change: "The only thing that has changed since Rhodesia and Ian Smith, is the name of his country and that of its leaders. Oppressors come in all colours."

What Mnangagwa is doing to Zimbabwe's constitution is different in method but not in spirit. The bill's architects in ZANU-PF had the audacity to justify it by saying elections are toxic. The logical end of that argument is no elections at all. The 2013 constitution was drafted with the specific intention of preventing the accumulation of power that Robert Mugabe personified over four decades. CAB3 systematically dismantles those protections. Mnangagwa, who styled himself the father of a Second Republic distinct from Mugabe's excesses, now leads the effort to reverse the constitutional order built to prevent a return to exactly that. "The only thing that has changed since Rhodesia and Ian Smith, is the name of his country and that of its leaders. Oppressors come in all colours."

SERETSE KHAMA IAN KHAMA, FORMER PRESIDENT OF BOTSWANA

WHAT ACCOUNTABILITY REQUIRES

SADC's founding documents are not ambiguous. The Treaty of 1992 commits member states to human rights, democracy, and the rule of law. The SADC Principles and Guidelines Governing Democratic Elections require members to prevent political violence. The Windhoek Treaty provision against unconstitutional changes of government exists precisely for moments like these. These are not aspirational clauses. They are binding

obligations that member states signed. The problem is that SADC has no spine for enforcement when the violator is a sitting head of state, and particularly not when that head of state chairs the organisation. The AU at least suspended Madagascar. SADC watched. The AU expressed concern about Zimbabwe. SADC is run by the man whose constitution is being bent. The structural conflict of interest is complete.

What is required is not a summit communique that notes a briefing. What is required is the clarity that Prof. Mahao's question demands. When a member state amends its constitution to abolish direct presidential elections, that is not a domestic administrative matter. It is a fundamental alteration of the democratic contract between citizens and the state, and it falls squarely within SADC's stated mandate. When a member state kills hundreds of protesters after a disputed election, that is not an internal security matter. It is a regional crisis, because instability in Mozambique paralyzes the ports on which half of southern Africa's trade depends.

SADC leaders must either enforce the norms they agreed to or stop claiming to represent those norms. The current position, in which the body holds summits, issues communiqués, deploys panels of elders, and changes nothing, is worse than silence. It is performance in the service of impunity. The people of Zimbabwe deserve to directly elect their president. The people of Mozambique deserved an honest count of their votes. The people of Madagascar deserved a civilian government and a credible transition, not a colonel installed by constitutional fiction. In each case, SADC had the mandate, the platform, and the precedent to say so clearly. In each case, it chose otherwise.

Festus Mogae went to Lusaka. He talked. Chiluba listened. That is the standard this region set for itself, and it is the standard the current generation of leaders has abandoned. The question Prof. Mahao posed is the right one. Whether anyone in the region has the political courage to answer it honestly remains, for now, unanswered.

Journalists gets trained on economy and finance reporting

By LEMOHANG BOTSANE



Local journalists say they are better prepared to cover money, business, and investment stories after taking part in a two-day training workshop in Maseru this week. The workshop was organized by the Competitiveness and Financial Inclusion (CAFI) project working together with the Central Bank of Lesotho (CBL).

Reporters and editors from different radio stations, newspapers, and online media houses across the country attended. The goal of the training was simple: help journalists understand investment opportunities, financial inclusion, and how the economy affects everyday Basotho. Organizers also wanted to improve the quality and depth of economic and business reporting in Lesotho.

Many of the participants said the session was an “eye-opener.” Before the

workshop, some reporters avoided economic stories because they thought the topics were too technical or difficult to explain to the public. Now, with new skills and knowledge, the journalists say they are ready to change that. “We will not disappoint,” said Thabiso Kolotsane, speaking on behalf of the journalists. He said reporters now feel more confident and have promised to share economic and financial news more clearly and accurately with their audiences. Representing the Central Bank, Moroke Moroke told the journalists that the media has a big role to play as “the mouthpiece of the nation.” He said it is important for reporters to really understand the financial sector so they can give the public correct and useful information.

Moroke gave journalists three main pieces of advice: Build your economic knowledge – Journalists should take

time to understand how money, banks, and businesses work. This will help prevent mistakes and misinformation from reaching the public, write more feature stories – Instead of only reporting breaking news, he urged journalists to do in-depth features. These stories give reporters time to research properly and explain complex issues in a way people can understand and lastly break down the numbers – By making financial data simple, journalists can help citizens make better decisions about their money, jobs, and daily lives.

Lihaelo Nkaota, Public Relations Manager for CAFI Lesotho, thanked all the journalists for attending and taking the training seriously. She said the next step is now in the hands of the media. “Journalists must make sure economic news reaches the public on time and in a way that is accurate,” she said. “That is how we support sustainable economic growth.” Nkaota also thanked the Central Bank and media houses for working together. She said she hopes this workshop is only the beginning of more trainings and stronger partnership in the future.

Officials explained that this training is part of a wider CAFI Lesotho programme. The project, in partnership with the Central Bank, is working to help the media cover business, investment, and financial inclusion stories more effectively across all districts. With better reporting, organizers believe more Basotho will understand economic issues and be able to take advantage of new opportunities in the country.