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Money is deducted from wool and mohair earnings for a statutory levy, yet Revenue Services Lesotho will not say whether it ever examined how the money was handled.

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War on corruption far from over, says DCEO chief

Advocate Brigadier General Mantšo Sello told the National Dialogue Leadership Forum and Accountability Summit that corruption has become a national illness, as the DCEO points to expanded offices, more than 50 new officers and a M74 million budget.

By Staff Reporter



MASERU.

The Director General of the Directorate on Corruption and Economic Offences (DCEO), Advocate Brigadier General Mantšo Sello, has vowed that the institution will keep rooting out corruption, declaring that the fight against graft remains central to restoring public trust and improving the lives of Basotho. Adv. Sello made the remarks during the final day of the National Dialogue Leadership Forum and Accountability Summit, where leaders from government institutions, civil society organisations, the legal fraternity, faith-based organisations and members of the public gathered to reflect on accountability, integrity and good governance in Lesotho.

Presenting the DCEO's report on corruption, the Director General painted a sobering picture of the im-

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pact corruption continues to have on the country. He said corruption has become a national illness that affects every sector of society, depriving citizens of essential services and slowing economic development. He stressed that corruption is not a victimless crime, as it weakens public institutions, erodes confidence in government and diverts resources meant to improve the lives of ordinary Basotho.

“The nation is suffering because of corruption,”

Adv. Sello told delegates, adding that the DCEO remains determined to confront the challenge through prevention, education, investigation and prosecution. He listed several milestones achieved by the anti-corruption body in recent years, noting that the institution has significantly expanded its footprint across the country.

DCEO offices have now been established in the northern and southern regions, making services more accessible to communities outside Maseru and allowing investigators to respond more efficiently to corruption-related complaints. According to Adv. Sello, the institution has also strengthened its human resource capacity by recruiting more than 50 officers. He attributed these developments to increased financial support from government after the DCEO's budget rose to M74 million (about US\$4.5 million) during the 2023/2024 financial year. The additional funding, he said, has enabled the organisation to improve operations, recruit skilled personnel and expand public outreach initiatives.

“The nation is suffering because of corruption.”

ADVOCATE BRIGADIER GENERAL MANTŠO SELLO

The Director General also emphasised the importance of involving young people in the fight against corruption. He said the DCEO has built a strong working relationship with youth groups following an anti-corruption campaign held last year, during which young people pledged to become ambassadors for integrity within their communities. He noted that empowering the youth is critical because they represent the country's future leadership. By instilling values of honesty, transparency and accountability at an early stage, he said Lesotho stands a better chance of building a society that rejects corruption.

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Labour Court halts Geneva disciplinary hearing against Lesane

The Labour Court ruled it has jurisdiction to step in and granted every interim order Rets'elisitsoe Lesane sought, freezing a disciplinary hearing convened against him at Lesotho's mission in Geneva.

By STAFF REPORTER



THE Labour Court of Lesotho has halted a disciplinary hearing convened against a Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Relations employee at Lesotho's mission in Geneva, ruling that it has jurisdiction to intervene and granting all the interim relief he sought. The applicant, Retselisitsoe Lesane, brought the matter on an urgent basis under case number LC/REV/67/2026.

The court stayed the hearing pending the final determination of his review, barred the Principal Secretary and officers under his control from proceeding, and ordered the record of the disciplinary proceedings sent to the court and to Lesane's attorneys within five days.

ORDER	EFFECT
Stay	Geneva hearing suspended until the review is decided
Interdict	PS and his officers barred from proceeding
Record	Disciplinary record to be produced within five days

The three respondents are the Principal Secretary of the ministry, the chairperson of the disciplinary committee and the Attorney General. They filed no answering affidavit. Their only response was a preliminary objection that the court had no power to entertain the matter while the disciplinary hearing was still running.

The court rejected it. Lesotho's courts ordinarily decline to interfere in disciplinary proceedings before they end. Intervention part-way through is reserved for exceptional cases where a gross irregularity would cause irreversible injustice that a later appeal or review could not fix. Lesane argued that his case met that test.

“Unless exceptional circumstances are present, a court of law may not intervene in ongoing disciplinary proceedings involving an employer and an employee.”

COURT OF APPEAL, KHABELE V CHAIRPERSON OF THE DISCIPLINARY HEARING COMMITTEE, 2022

He challenged the appointment of the presiding officer. Under the public service disciplinary code, he argued, the chairperson of a hearing must be the head of section of the charged employee, and the wording is mandatory. In his case the Deputy Principal Secretary presided.

That, he said, collapsed his right to appeal, because appeals from a head of section are heard by the Principal Secretary. Lesane also argued that the same officer had chaired a staff meeting at the mission on 19 May 2026, at which grievances that later appeared on his charge sheet were discussed. A person cannot be both investigator and presiding officer, he submitted, and her earlier exposure to the matter disqualified her from hearing it.

He objected to a ruling that converted the hearing from oral evidence to written statements. That, he argued, removed his right to cross-examine witnesses under section 8(4) of the disciplinary code. The charges against him include sexual harassment of the initiator, which he said had also been reported to the police, and he argued that a charge of that nature could not fairly be answered on written statements alone. Lesane, who is not legally trained, said he had been refused legal representation while the officer prosecuting the case is an admitted legal practitioner. He also objected to rulings that the hearing be kept

confidential, that he sign an oath of secrecy, that he not record the proceedings, and that the hearing run outside working hours and on public holidays. He was represented by Adv T. Lesupi of PILT Legal Chambers. The interim orders stand until the review is finally decided. The ministry must produce the disciplinary record within five days.

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Continued from Page 2

In addition to community engagement, Adv. Sello revealed that the DCEO is embracing modern technology to strengthen investigations and improve the detection of corruption-related offences. He said technological innovation is becoming an essential tool in combating increasingly sophisticated financial crimes. Providing an overview of the institution's performance, Adv. Sello reported that four corruption cases were successfully finalised during the 2024/2025 financial year. He added that although five other cases were withdrawn, investigations into those matters had been completed before they were discontinued through legal processes.

Beyond investigations, the DCEO continues to focus on preventing corruption before it occurs. Adv. Sello explained that the institution operates through specialised departments responsible for public education and prevention, investigations, prosecution support, asset recovery and the report centre. He said these units work together to ensure a comprehensive approach to combating corruption. Part of the DCEO's preventive strategy includes working closely with government ministries to establish Systems Integrity Committees. These committees are tasked with identifying

weaknesses within public institutions and implementing measures to reduce opportunities for corruption before they arise.

The Director General's presentation sparked robust engagement from participants attending the summit. Among those who contributed to the discussion was MISA Lesotho Chairperson, Khotsofalang Koloi, who emphasised that the media remains one of the country's strongest allies in exposing corruption and promoting accountability. He urged the DCEO to strengthen its relationship with journalists rather than undermine institutions that play a critical watchdog role.

Koloi said a free and independent media helps uncover wrongdoing, informs the public and promotes transparency, making it an indispensable partner in the national fight against corruption. He encouraged the DCEO to build cooperation with media practitioners to ensure corruption cases receive responsible and accurate public coverage. The discussions also turned to the role played by the Office of the Ombudsman in strengthening public accountability.

Representing the Ombudsman's Office, Advocate 'Maretšepile Motanyane said the institution has also expanded its services beyond Maseru. Offices have now been established in the northern

and southern regions, with plans underway to extend services to additional parts of the country. The expansion, she explained, is intended to improve access to justice by bringing the Ombudsman's services closer to communities. Throughout the summit, speakers repeatedly stressed that defeating corruption requires a collective national effort. Government institutions, law enforcement agencies, civil society organisations, religious bodies, the private sector, the media and ordinary citizens all have a role to play in promoting transparency and accountability.

As the Accountability Summit concluded, delegates agreed that while institutions such as the DCEO and the Ombudsman's Office continue to strengthen their capacity, the fight against corruption cannot succeed without active public participation. They called on Basotho to report corrupt practices, reject unethical behaviour and support institutions mandated to protect public resources. For the DCEO, the message was unequivocal: the war against corruption is far from over. With expanded offices, increased staffing, improved resources, stronger partnerships with young people and the adoption of modern technology, the institution says it is better positioned than ever to pursue its mandate of safeguarding integrity and ensuring that corruption has no place in Lesotho's future.



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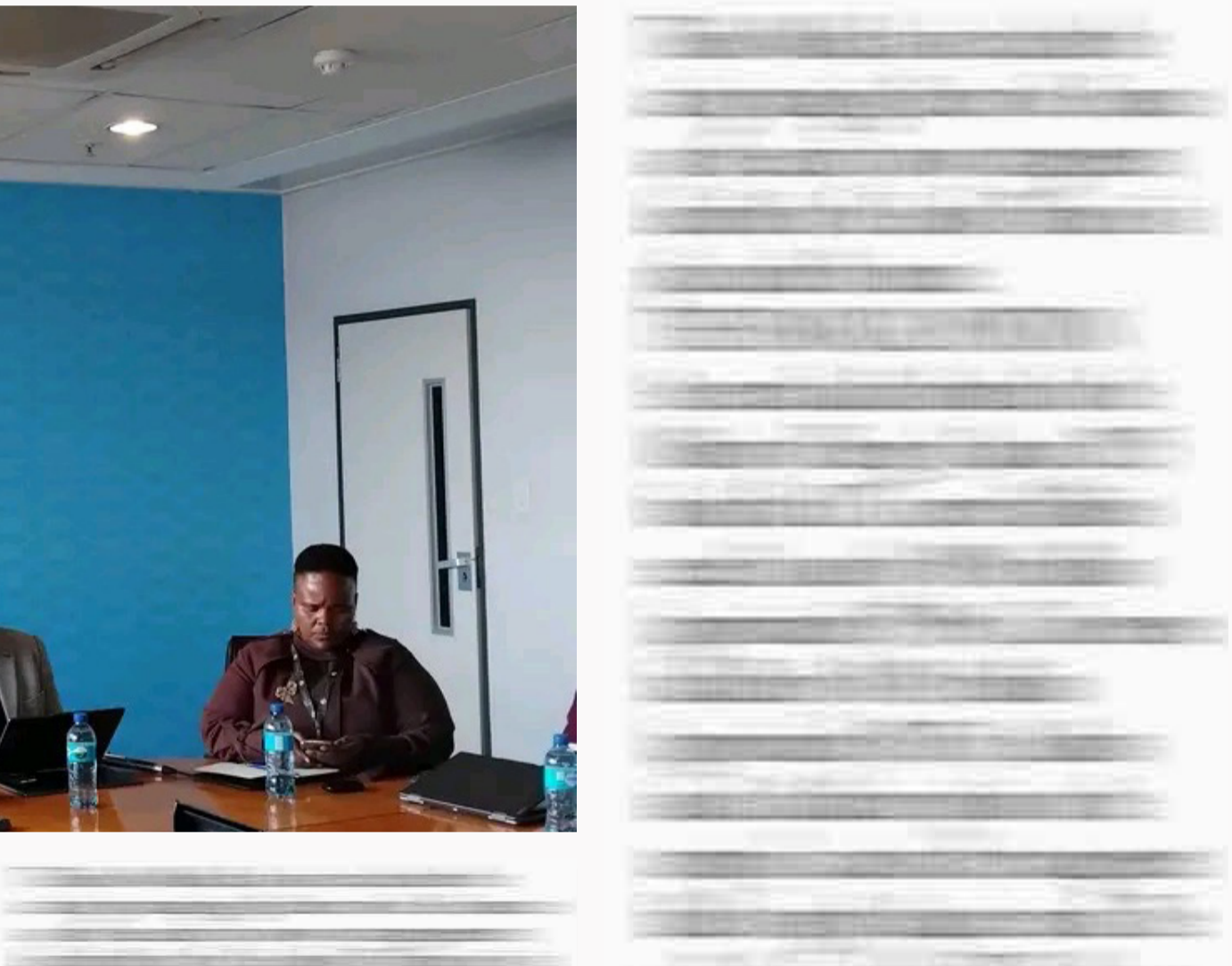
Roads Directorate unveils M1.86 billion works plan for 2026/27

The Roads Directorate has set out a M1.86 billion plan for 2026/27, covering road upgrades, 22 new footbridges, drainage works and a crackdown on building inside road reserves.

By Lemohang Botsane



LESOTHO can expect better roads, new bridges and more maintenance work next year after the Roads Directorate announced a M1.86 billion (about US\$115 million) plan for the 2026/27 financial year. The plan was unveiled on Wednesday. It sets out how the government and its partners will spend money on building, fixing and maintaining roads and bridges across Lesotho. Officials say the aim is safer travel, better connected communities and support for the economy. The total budget is M1,861,492,888.40 (about US\$115 million). It is funded from four sources.



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Mofomobe calls for expulsion of South Africans from Polihali

The BNP leader accused the South African government of complicity in the expulsion of Basotho and other foreign nationals, and urged Lesotho to remove more than 2,000 South Africans working on the Polihali water project.

By Staff Reporter



BASOTHO National Party leader Machesetsa Mofomobe has called on the Lesotho government to expel more than 2,000 South Africans working on the Polihali water project, in response to the removal of Basotho and other foreign nationals from South Africa.

Mofomobe made the call at a press conference in Maseru on Wednesday, where he addressed the media on the treatment of Basotho migrants across the border. He accused the South African government of complicity in the expulsions and said Pretoria bore responsibility for the pressure now falling on foreign residents.

He said Lesotho should respond by removing South African nationals employed at Polihali, the Phase II dam of the Lesotho Highlands Water Project. The project, valued at close to M50 billion (about US\$3 billion), is built under a 1986 treaty between the two countries and supplies water to South Africa's Gauteng province. Mofomobe put the number of South Africans working on the project at more than 2,000.

His remarks come during a wave of deportations and anti-migrant action in South Africa. South African authorities reported more than 5,000 arrests for immigration offences in a single week in mid-June, and thousands of

migrants have left the country in recent weeks. The departures have followed both official enforcement and threats from anti-migrant groups. Rights groups and news organisations have reported the destruction of migrant homes, mob attacks, and the death of a Malawian man near Pietermaritzburg.

Nigeria and Ghana have arranged transport to repatriate some of their nationals. Basotho are among the largest migrant communities in South Africa, with a long history of labour migration to its mines, farms and households. Many live and work there under the Lesotho Exemption Permit. Money sent home by Basotho workers is a significant source of income for households in Lesotho. South Africa's government has linked its enforcement campaign to unemployment, which stood at about 32 percent early in 2026, and to public anger over undocumented migration.

It has said its operations are conducted within the law. Mofomobe leads the BNP in opposition, and his call is a demand on the government of Prime Minister Sam Matekane rather than a statement of policy. The government has not announced any move to remove South African workers from Polihali. Polihali is central to the water relationship between the two countries. It is the second phase of a scheme that has channelled water from the Lesotho highlands to South Africa for close to four decades, in exchange for royalty payments to Lesotho.

Where did the farmers' M15 million go? Nobody will say

Money is deducted from wool and mohair earnings for a statutory levy, yet Revenue Services Lesotho will not say whether it ever examined how the money was handled.

By Staff Reporter



ABOUT THIS SERIES

This is the first in a three-part Lesotho Tribune investigation into how BKB and the LWMGA allegedly came to hold M15 million (about US\$925,000) that was meant to be collected by the government as dipping levy, a statutory charge deducted from the earnings of Basotho wool and mohair farmers. Over the coming parts, the Tribune will trace how the levy was collected and administered, and press the institutions responsible for an account that farmers have waited years to receive. This reporting will be updated as outstanding responses arrive.

A levy comes out of the earnings of thousands of Basotho wool and mohair farmers, season after season, collected in the name of keeping their livestock free of disease. Ask what became of that money, and whether it was accounted for as the law requires, and the answers run dry.

When the Lesotho Tribune put those questions to Revenue Services Lesotho,

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Absenteeism by MPs stalls Parliament, Speaker warns

Speaker Tlohang Sekhamane told the Leadership Forum and Accountability Summit that MPs who skip sittings are stopping the House from reaching quorum, as Parliament finalises a Code of Conduct that would name and shame repeat absentees to their constituencies.

By THOLOANA LESENYA



PERSISTENT absenteeism by Members of Parliament has emerged as one of the biggest threats to the effectiveness and credibility of Lesotho's National Assembly, with parliamentary leaders warning that the problem continues to delay legislative business and erode public confidence in the country's law-making institution.

The issue took centre stage during the Leadership Forum and Accountability Summit this week, where Speaker of the National Assembly, Tlohang Sekhamane, delivered a candid assessment of the challenges confronting Parliament. While acknowledging progress made in strengthening democratic institutions, he said Par-

liament continues to face structural and operational obstacles that prevent it from fully carrying out its constitutional mandate. Among the most pressing concerns, Sekhamane identified absenteeism by Members of Parliament (MPs), describing it as a persistent problem that disrupts proceedings and undermines the institution's ability to represent the interests of Basotho. He said Parliament cannot function efficiently when elected representatives repeatedly fail to attend sittings, as their absence often prevents the House from reaching the quorum required to conduct official business.

According to Sekhamane, debates on important national matters are frequent-

ly delayed because there are not enough members present to proceed. This, he noted, affects not only the legislative process but also public confidence in Parliament as an institution entrusted with making laws and holding the Executive accountable. He stressed that Basotho expect Parliament to work in their best interests and that lawmakers have a responsibility to honour the mandate entrusted to them by voters.

Beyond absenteeism, Sekhamane expressed concern about Parliament's limited institutional independence. He argued that the National Assembly should enjoy greater autonomy in carrying out its constitutional responsibilities without undue interference from other arms of government. He said there have been occasions where both the Executive and the judiciary have attempted to influence parliamentary affairs, a development he believes weakens the doctrine of separation of powers. "We want to reach a point where Parliament makes its own decisions because that will ultimately benefit the nation."

SPEAKER TLOHANG SEKHAMANE

According to Sekhamane, Parliament must be free to make independent decisions guided solely by the Constitution and the interests of the people. "We want to reach a point where Parliament makes its own decisions because that will ultimately benefit the nation," he said. The Speaker also reflected on Parliament's public image, acknowledging that the conduct of some legislators has negatively affected how the institution is perceived by citizens. He noted that incidents involving inap-

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appropriate behaviour by MPs, combined with poor attendance, have contributed to declining public trust in Parliament at a time when the country expects stronger leadership and greater accountability from elected representatives.

Echoing the Speaker's concerns, Chief Whip Lethole Lethole admitted that absenteeism has remained a recurring challenge for many years despite repeated efforts to encourage better attendance. He said while there may be legitimate reasons for some members to miss sittings, it is often difficult to determine the circumstances surrounding every absence.

Parliament, he added, can no longer afford to ignore a problem that directly affects its effectiveness. To address the issue, Parliament is in the final stages of developing a comprehensive Code of Conduct that will establish clear standards of accountability for Members of Parliament. The proposed legislation seeks to ensure that elected representatives fulfil their constitutional responsibilities by attending sittings and actively participating in legislative work.

One of the most notable provisions in the draft Code of Conduct is a "name and shame" mechanism intended to promote transparency and accountability. Under the proposal, Parliament would publicly identify Members of Parliament who repeatedly

fail to attend sittings without acceptable justification. Their names would also be communicated to their respective constituencies, allowing voters to know how frequently their elected representatives report for duty.

Lethole said the measure is designed to strengthen accountability by ensuring that citizens have access to information about the performance of the individuals they elected into office. He argued that voters deserve to know whether their representatives are fulfilling the responsibilities they were entrusted with before making future electoral decisions. The proposal is one of the strongest attempts in recent years to tackle absenteeism through public accountability rather than relying solely on internal disciplinary measures.

Senator Seabata Motsamai provided an update on the progress of the proposed Code of Conduct, revealing that it is currently before the Senate for consideration. He said senators are carefully examining the legislation before it proceeds through the remaining parliamentary processes. Although he expressed optimism that the process is nearing completion, Senator Motsamai questioned whether the National Assembly would ultimately support the legislation in its current form. His concern stems from the fact that once enacted, the Code of Conduct will apply equally to all Members of Parliament, regardless of political affiliation or seniority.

Should the legislation become law, MPs who fail to attend sittings without valid

reasons could face increased public scrutiny and pressure from the very communities that elected them. The discussion at the Leadership Forum and Accountability Summit turned to broader concerns about accountability within democratic institutions and the need for public officials to lead by example. Participants said Parliament plays a central role in shaping national policy, approving legislation and providing oversight over government expenditure. For these responsibilities to be carried out effectively, lawmakers must consistently attend sittings, participate in debates and contribute to committee work.

Several speakers noted that strengthening Parliament requires more than legislative reforms. They argued that rebuilding public confidence also depends on restoring professionalism, discipline and ethical leadership within the institution. As Lesotho continues its efforts to strengthen governance and democratic accountability, the proposed Code of Conduct is being viewed as a significant step towards improving parliamentary standards. Supporters believe the reforms could encourage greater discipline among lawmakers, increase transparency and reassure citizens that Parliament is committed to serving the public interest. Whether the proposed measures will be sufficient to eliminate chronic absenteeism remains to be seen. The message emerging from the Accountability Summit was clear: Members of Parliament are expected to fulfil the responsibilities entrusted to them by the electorate, and failure to do so should carry consequences.



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Met services expects near-normal winter rain as El Niño builds

The Lesotho Meteorological Services expects near-normal to above-normal rainfall over much of the country this winter, while it watches the development of an El Niño that will shape the main rainfall season from October.

By STAFF REPORTER



THE Lesotho Meteorological Services (LMS) has forecast near-normal to above-normal rainfall over much of the eastern and central parts of the country for July to September 2026, as it monitors an El Niño expected to dominate the coming summer season. The western lowlands have a slightly higher chance of below-normal rainfall, though near-normal conditions remain the most likely outcome across most areas. Winter is Lesotho’s dry season, and rainfall will be limited, falling mainly with the passage of cold fronts.

Western lowlands	Slightly higher chance of below-normal; near-normal still most likely
Country-wide	Limited winter rainfall, mainly from cold fronts

The outlook, shown in a probability map issued with the bulletin, updates the El Niño watch statement LMS released in April under reference PWS/Bul/01/2026. LMS said it is working with the Disaster Management Authority and the World Food Programme in Lesotho, through Anticipatory Action, to plan for possible adverse effects of El Niño. It said it is tracking sea surface temperatures to gauge how the pattern develops.

“We are, clearly, heading for an El Niño year.”

LESOTHO METEOROLOGICAL SERVICES

El Niño is expected to be the dominant climate driver for the October 2026 to March 2027 rainfall season. LMS said uncertainty remains over when it will

set in and how strong its effects will be, which may change the size and spread of its impacts across Lesotho and southern Africa. LMS said it will keep watching conditions in the El Niño–Southern Oscillation and issue updated seasonal forecasts as confidence in the outlook grows.

AREA	JUL–SEP 2026 OUTLOOK
Eastern and central	Near-normal to above-normal rainfall most likely

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Labour Court sets aside recall of Tokyo diplomat

The Labour Court reviewed and set aside the recall of Mampoi Keta, a Third Secretary at Lesotho's Tokyo mission, after finding that the wrong official chaired her misconduct inquiry, and ordered the disciplinary hearing to start afresh.

By Staff Reporter



THE Labour Court has set aside the decision to recall a Lesotho diplomat from the Tokyo mission, ruling that her misconduct inquiry was chaired by the wrong official and ordering the disciplinary hearing to start afresh. Mampoi Keta, a Third Secretary at Lesotho's mission in Tokyo, was found guilty of misconduct in April over the overpayment of her own salary and told she would be recommended for demotion. The Principal Secretary of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Relations then recalled her from foreign service with effect from 19 May 2026.

Keta brought the recall on review under case number LC/REV/56/2026. The court reviewed, corrected and set aside the recall and ordered that the disciplinary hearing begin de novo, meaning afresh. It made no order as to costs. The judgment was delivered on 30 June 2026.

3 Mar 2026	Notice of disciplinary hearing
23 Mar 2026	Disciplinary hearing held
14 Apr 2026	Found guilty; demotion recommended
19 May 2026	Recall to take effect (stayed)
30 Jun 2026	Recall set aside; hearing to restart

The court found that the chairperson of the disciplinary hearing was appointed contrary to the Codes of Good Practice 2008. Section 8(3)(a) makes it mandatory for a public officer's inquiry to be chaired by the head of that officer's section. The hearing was instead chaired by the Deputy Principal Secretary of the Ministry of Public Works and Transport, an official from a different ministry who was neither

Keta's head of section nor her supervisor. The Principal Secretary argued that Keta's head of section, the Ambassador at the Tokyo mission, was conflicted and could not preside. The court found

that claim unsupported. The Ambassador had filed no affidavit, the minutes of the hearing recorded no conflict or recusal, and the ministry did not explain how the conflict arose. Where the Code makes the appointment mandatory, the court held, the head of section should have presided and formally recorded any reason for standing down. "Where the provision is mandatory, the head of section ought to have presided over the matter and then formally noted the reasons for recusal."

LABOUR COURT, LC/REV/56/2026
The court also found that the recommendation was wrongly routed. The chairperson recommended that Keta repay the money and be demoted from Third Secretary, not that she be dismissed. Under section 8(6) of the Code, a recommendation goes to the head of department only where dismissal is proposed. Handing the demotion recommendation to the Principal Secretary, as head of department, was irregular.

On other grounds the court sided with the ministry. It found no inconsistency in how Keta's case was handled compared with another officer who had also been overpaid, and declined to consider a challenge to her earlier suspension because she raised it only in reply, months after the suspension took effect.

Keta was represented by Adv T. Lesupi. The respondents, the Principal

Secretary and the Attorney General, were represented by Adv T. Mohloki. The effect of the ruling is that Keta's disciplinary hearing must be held again from the start. The recall falls away, and the outcome of the first inquiry is undone pending the fresh hearing.

DATE	EVENT
9 Feb 2026	Suspended pending investigation

Farmers Corner



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

Wool exports near clearance after foot-and-mouth curbs

The agriculture minister told farmers that Lesotho's wool and mohair are free of foot-and-mouth disease and that a certificate allowing exports is expected within days, as growers pressed for local testing labs and a dedicated farming fund.

By Staff Reporter



WOOL and mohair from Lesotho are free of foot-and-mouth disease, and a certificate allowing exports to resume is expected within days, the Minister of Agriculture and Food Security, Selibe Mochoboroane, has told farmers. Mochoboroane was responding to farmers' concerns at the Leadership and Accountability Summit. Lesotho declared a state of disaster in March after foot-and-mouth disease was found in the highlands of Qacha's Nek and Butha-Buthe in February. The government quarantined affected areas, banned livestock markets and animal movement without veterinary approval, and culled animals in some areas.

The outbreak put the country's leading agricultural export at risk. After the disaster was declared, China and South Africa required Lesotho to prove its wool and mohair were free of the disease before they would take the product. Mochoboroane said Lesotho had provided that proof and a protocol had been signed. The wool and mohair already

at the Port Elizabeth auction floor, and the clip harvested since, were free of the disease, he said. He said a certificate permitting the movement of wool and mohair to export markets was expected before the end of the week.

WOOL AND MO-HAIR	FIGURE
Share of farm exports	About 60%
World mohair rank	2nd, after SA
Annual value	~M900m (US\$55m)
National flock	~2 million sheep
Rural population	More than a quarter
Main markets	Port Elizabeth, Durban

Wool and mohair are the main source of cash income in the highlands and foot-

hills, where sheep and Angora goats have been kept since the 1800s. The two fibres account for about 60 percent of Lesotho's agricultural exports, and the country is the world's second-largest mohair producer after South Africa. Mochoboroane said the industry brings in about M900 million (about US\$55 million) a year from a national flock of some two million sheep.

He urged farmers to raise more sheep and goats, and said processing the fibre before export would earn the country more than selling it raw. Farmers used the summit to press for change. A farmer from Quthing, Teboho Nkau, asked when the government would overhaul how the wool and mohair trade is run, and when it would upgrade the Tele Bridge border post used to move the fibre to market. Another farmer asked when Lesotho would build its own laboratories to test wool and mohair, rather than depend on facilities abroad.

Farmers also raised the yearly delay in seeds and fertilisers. Mochoboroane said supplies would arrive earlier this year and that the government wanted fertiliser sold at a uniform price.

"We are working towards availing seeds and fertilisers by the 1st August 2026."

SELIBE MOCHOBOROANE, MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE AND FOOD SECURITY

There were also calls for a dedicated farming fund. Tsikoane Peshoane said the Public Financial Management Act allows the finance minister to set up funds, as was done for roads and petroleum, and proposed an agricultural development fund to

regulate the sector. Mochoboroane agreed that the country needs an agricultural fund. Once issued, the certificate would clear the harvested clip to move to the Port Elizabeth and Durban auction floors, where Lesotho's wool and mohair are sold.

Editorial

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



The workers are coming home. Is anything ready for them?

The country is arguing about whom to expel. The harder question is who is coming home, and whether anything here is ready for them.

By Editorial



Every Basotho worker driven out of South Africa this year is a person arriving somewhere. That somewhere is here. While the political class debates retaliation at Polihali, the more consequential event is quieter and already under way at the border posts: Basotho are coming home, and home is a country that has spent a century arranging itself around their absence. For generations Lesotho has run on an export it rarely names as one. Not water, not diamonds, not wool. People. Basotho men went to the South African mines, Basotho women to South African kitchens, and the money came back as remittances that fed households in every district.

The 1986 census found nearly half of adult men working across the border. The country did not solve unemploy-

ment. It exported it, and lived on the wages. That arrangement is now closing, not by Lesotho's choice. South Africa has arrested more than 5,000 people for immigration offences in a single week and driven thousands more out through mob threat and official raid. The Lesotho Exemption Permit that regularised many Basotho is precarious. The pipeline that carried the surplus workforce south is narrowing, and the workers are turning around.

A returning worker is not a crisis. A returning worker with no field to plant and no wage to earn is.

Consider what waits for them. One tenth of Lesotho's land is arable. Home-grown cereals cover less than a third of what the country eats, and the rest is bought from the same South

Africa now sending its labour back. A returnee who left a mine wage for a rural village is not returning to a farm that can absorb him. He is returning to a food bill his family already struggles to pay. This is the failure the expulsion argument hides. For thirty years Lesotho treated the border as a pressure valve. As long as the young could leave and the money could return, no government had to build an economy that employed people at home. The valve is being welded shut from the other side, and the room behind it is filling up.

The honest response is not a counter-expulsion. It is preparation. Count the returnees and know where they are landing. Point them at the sectors that can still grow here, wool and mohair, conservation farming on the land that is arable, the trades that the water project and its towns need. Treat remittance dependence as the structural weakness it always was, rather than a permanent feature of national life.

None of that is quick, and this page will not pretend it is. But the alternative is to keep staging the wrong argument. A South African engineer at Polihali is not the reason a Mosotho miner is coming home with a packed bag and no plan. The reason is that Lesotho never built the thing that would have let him stay in the first place.

The people at the border are Basotho. They are not a problem to be managed at the gate. They are the workforce this country always had and never used. Whether their return becomes a burden or a beginning depends on what is built to meet them, and there is very little time to build it.

Editorial

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

15 **IT**

Do not answer expulsion with expulsion

The mistreatment of Basotho in South Africa is real. The remedy proposed this week is not.

By Editorial



Machesetsa Mofomobe is right about the wrong. Across the border, Basotho are being arrested, threatened and driven from their homes. South African authorities logged more than 5,000 immigration arrests in a single week last month. Mobs have burned migrant homes and killed at least one foreign national. Thousands of people have packed up and left.

The BNP leader named that injustice

this week, and he was right to name it. His answer is another matter. Mofomobe wants Lesotho to expel more than 2,000 South Africans working on the Polihali dam. That would be a mistake, and Lesotho would pay for it. Start with the arithmetic. Far more Basotho live and work in South Africa than South Africans live in Lesotho. Their wages feed households in every district of this country. A contest of expulsions is one Lesotho cannot win,

because Lesotho has more people on the other side of the fence and more to lose when the fence comes down.

Then there is Polihali. The dam is not a South African favour. It is a joint project under the 1986 treaty, and Lesotho is paid for the water it sells south. The engineers Mofomobe wants gone are building an asset that pays Maseru its royalties. Sabotaging the project to make a point would cut Lesotho's own income and break a contract Lesotho depends on.

A passport is not a crime in Katse. It is not one in Maseru either.

There is also the principle. Removing people by nationality is the precise logic of the mobs now hunting migrants in Johannesburg. Lesotho cannot condemn that reasoning across the border and adopt it at Polihali.

The lawful road is open, and Lesotho has not walked far enough down it. Protect Basotho through the consulates. Push South Africa to honour the Lesotho Exemption Permit rather than tear it up. Raise the treatment of Basotho at SADC. Hold Pretoria to the treaty it signed and the constitution it claims to follow. Demand protection for our people, not revenge against theirs. The harder truth sits closer to home.

Lesotho is exposed because, for thirty years, it has sent its people to dig South African gold and clean South African houses instead of building work for them here. That is the wound. A South African engineer at a dam did not open it, and expelling him will not close it. The anger this week is earned. It should be aimed correctly. Basotho do not need a scapegoat at Polihali. They need a government that makes coming home worth it.

Opinion

Official Statements, government communications, and institutional announcements

16 **IT**

Flagship objectives of Young Basotho Professionals, corroborated by China development initiatives and Lesotho government policy at the YBPF AGM

Nearly half of all Basotho say they have considered leaving. Among the educated, the young, and those with the most to give, the figure is higher still. This is not a statistic. It is a quiet verdict on what home has become.

By YOUNG BASOTHO PROFESSIONALS



THE Young Basotho Professionals Forum held its maiden Annual General Meeting and Strategic Planning Workshop on the 29th and 30th of June 2026. The event gathered emerging professionals, practising professionals, young entrepreneurs, graduands and graduates about to enter the workforce in Lesotho's ailing job market, exploring themes that included, inter alia, leadership, national development (youth unemployment, job creation), international collaboration, national cohesion, national psyche, philosophy and peace.

The Young Basotho Professionals Forum (YBPF) workshop also reflected on issues of national identity and patriotism, as well as high mettle and conscious-

ness in socio-politico-economic affairs, both geopolitically and nationally. The workshop aimed to hone a generation of leaders and promote an active citizenry that values dialogue, unity, innovation and accountable governance, in order to achieve a peaceful society in which Lesotho is at peace with itself, its neighbours and the international community.

Among the facilitators, mentors and contributors of the workshop were Associate Professor Makhulu Makumane, Dr Khosi Mahlakeng and Thabo Qhesi, whose contributions spanned a plethora of topics and themes meant to equip delegates with solution-development tools and to inculcate forgotten virtues and values that will

be instrumental to the work of the forum as a think tank and to the delegate's personal development. As the Bible will have it, that "all things work together for good", fate also had it that, on the eve of the 105th anniversary of the Communist Party of China (CPC), the officiation of the main ceremonies comprised His Excellency

Yang Xiaokun, Ambassador of the People's Republic of China to Lesotho, as the main guest speaker, who, in his opening, outlined that his remarks contained three themes encapsulating the following topics: 1. The Global Civilization Initiative; 2. Full Zero-Tariff Treatment for All African Diplomatic Partners; and 3. The White Paper on Equitable Global Governance and the Global Governance Initiative. In consolidation of these three themes, His Excellency Yang Xiaokun said: "What I shared with you today ultimately addresses three fundamental questions: how can civilizations coexist peacefully; how can development opportunities be shared more fairly; and how can global governance become more just and equitable?"

China's answer is clear: through dialogue rather than confrontation, through cooperation rather than exclusion, and through shared development rather than zero-sum competition. The Global Civilization Initiative promotes mutual respect and mutual learning among peoples. China's expanded opening-up, including full zero-tariff treatment for African partners, creates new opportunities for common development. The Global Governance Initiative and the recently released white paper contribute Chinese wisdom and Chinese solutions to building a more just and equitable international order.

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As an important member of the Global South and a longstanding supporter of multilateralism, Lesotho has an important role to play in promoting peace, development and global governance reform. We highly value the important role that our think tanks and academic institutions play in fostering mutual understanding, generating policy ideas and strengthening international cooperation.

I sincerely hope that the YBPF will continue to leverage its intellectual strengths to deepen research and dialogue on issues such as exchanges among civilizations, South-South cooperation and global governance reform, and contribute more wisdom and insights to strengthen the China-Lesotho strategic partnership and build a more peaceful, prosperous and equitable world. China stands ready to strengthen exchanges and cooperation with think tanks, universities and academic institutions in Lesotho.

We welcome more scholars, researchers and young intellectuals from Lesotho to engage in exchanges with China and to jointly explore solutions to the common challenges facing humanity.”

In this powerful keynote speech, His Excellency Ambassador Yang Xiaokun also mentioned two noteworthy dates to conjure with. The first is 1 July 2026,

the Communist Party of China’s (CPC) 105th anniversary. He invited attendees to reflect on the monumental transformation since the CPC’s establishment in 1921. For 105 years the CPC has led the Chinese people and has achieved great feats across every facet of human endeavour, including balanced economic development, improved living standards, poverty eradication, employment generation, cutting-edge technological advancements and ecological conservation. These achievements underpin the ideological pragmatism of the CPC’s socialism with Chinese characteristics.

On the second noteworthy date, Ambassador Yang spoke to the issue of the General Assembly resolution A/RES/78/286, adopted to declare 10 June as the International Day for Dialogue among Civilizations. He described the date and resolution as a significant step towards the implementation of the GCI. The President of the Young Basotho Professionals Forum, Mr Lesolle Phalatsi, in his opening remarks, outlined the vision and mission of the organisation: that its mandate and core value offering is to become Lesotho’s most robust, people-centred and

research-based think tank, one that focuses on mentoring and honing the youth to become active, conscious and conscientious citizens who are self-reliant and independent, while fostering the same within Lesotho to bring about economic growth, improved living standards, poverty eradi-

cation, employment generation, peace and harmony. The AGM was also graced by the presence of the Minister of Labour and Employment, Honourable Ts’eliso Mokhosi. Minister Mokhosi noted that the coming into being of the YBPF is a significant step and a blessing, more especially as the nation is seized with a youth employment crisis, culminating in the recent multitudes of Basotho crossing the border back home, fearing for their lives in South Africa. He strongly emphasised that the Young Basotho Professionals Forum is indeed the answer to the economic problems faced by Lesotho, not only unemployment but also underemployment. The Honourable Minister encouraged the YBPF to form strategic partnerships and cooperation, and humbly exhorted the Chinese diplomats and Chinese communities in Lesotho to find possibilities and areas of cooperation in order to sharpen the human capital and capacity of the YBPF as an organisation.

The ensuing panel discussion on the Global Civilization Initiative and Global Development Initiative, as President Xi’s thoughts, was conducted in a robust yet warm atmosphere, in which delegates, experts and attendees interacted in dissecting the thoughts. To wrap up the proceedings, the meeting received a comprehensive and informative presentation on Full Zero-Tariff Treatment for All African Diplomatic Partners (53 African nations). This article was contributed by the Young Basotho Professionals Forum.



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LDF honours 16 fallen soldiers at Remembrance Day service

The Lesotho Defence Force honoured 16 fallen members at its annual Remembrance Day service, with tributes, prayers and the laying of wreaths at Khutsong Military Cemetery.

By **LEMOHANG BOTSANE**



THE Lesotho Defence Force (LDF) gathered at Khutsong Military Cemetery, Ratjomose Barracks, today to remember soldiers who died while serving the nation. The annual Remembrance Day prayer service was attended by senior government officials, military leadership and families of the fallen soldiers. The ceremony included prayers, tributes and the laying of wreaths for servicemen and women who died in the line of duty.

Speaking for the Ministry of Defence, Permanent Secretary Mpopo Ts'oele said it is the nation's duty to remember its heroes. "A country that forgets those who served and died for it risks losing its moral foundation."

MPOPO TS'OELE, PERMANENT SECRETARY, MINISTRY OF DEFENCE

Ts'oele commended the LDF for its role in keeping peace and stability in Lesotho. He said the government would support the force with the equipment, food and uniforms it needs, and called for closer cooperation between military leadership and government structures to strengthen the institution and help the public understand its work. The LDF Commander, Lieutenant General Mojalefa Letsoela, said Remembrance Day is a time to reflect on the lives of soldiers who died in service. This year the force is honouring 16 members. Letsoela said their sacrifice shows the courage of all LDF personnel who have lost their lives on duty.

He spoke about the 1998 Katse incident as one of the painful chapters in the force's history. "Events like Septem-

ber 22, 1998 remain part of our collective memory. They remind us why unity, discipline and service must always come first," he said. Letsoela said the LDF once marked Army Day on June 30 with public displays, parades, sports and open days at Setsoto Stadium. Those events were later stopped, he said, and the focus shifted to solemn commemorations for fallen soldiers. "The sacrifices of our fallen members are engraved in the memory of this institution and of the nation," Letsoela said. "Peace and stability do not come by chance. They require continuous commitment and vigilance." The Chief of Staff, Major General Ramanka Mokaloba, said the force has protected Lesotho and supported national development and regional cooperation. He recalled how the LDF assisted other defence forces in the region in its early years, and pointed to periods of political instability, including the events of 1998, as reasons to strengthen national security systems and give the military adequate support.

Speaking for the families of the fallen soldiers, Sekhoane Motseki thanked the force for including them in the commemorations each year. "We appreciate that our loved ones are remembered and honoured," he said. "It means a lot to the families to know that their sacrifice is recognized by the nation." The LDF observes Remembrance Day and Army Day every year on June 30, to honour soldiers who died in service and to reflect on the history of the force. The service ended with prayers, a moment of silence and the laying of wreaths at the graves at Khutsong Military Cemetery.

Government to build classrooms and toilets at 52 primary schools

The government will build new classrooms and latrines at 52 primary schools across all 10 districts, with the work due for handover between July and August 2026.

By **LEMOHANG BOTSANE**



MORE Basotho children will soon learn in better classrooms with proper toilets after the government announced plans to build new infrastructure at 52 primary schools across the country. The Minister of Education, Professor Ntoi Rapapa, made the announcement this week. He said the project is part of the government's plan to strengthen basic education and fix infrastructure problems that many schools face. New classrooms and latrines will be built at 52 primary schools in all 10 districts of Lesotho. Rapapa said the work is scheduled to start soon, and the government expects to complete and hand over all the projects between July and August 2026.

DISTRICT	SCHOOLS
Thaba-Tseka	10
Mohale's Hoek	8
Butha-Buthe	6
Maseru	5
Mafeteng	5
Mokhotlong	4
Leribe	4
Berea	4
Quthing	4
Qacha's Nek	2

Schools named by the minister include Thaba-Phechela Primary School in Constituency No. 48, Mafeteng; Hloahloeng Primary School in Constituency No. 64, Mohale's Hoek; and Thaba-Putsoa Primary School in Constituency No. 40, Maseru. The

Ministry of Education will publish the full list of 52 schools in the coming weeks.

Rapapa said many primary schools in rural and urban areas struggle with overcrowded classrooms and poor sanitation, which makes it hard for children to learn and for teachers to teach.

“Every child deserves to learn in a classroom that is safe and dignified.”

PROFESSOR NTOI RAPAPA, MINISTER OF EDUCATION

He said building more classrooms will reduce overcrowding, and that new latrines will make schools cleaner and safer, especially for girls.

“This major infrastructure project is about improving learning conditions in our primary schools,” he said. “When learners and teachers have safe, functional and accessible facilities, education outcomes improve for all Basotho children.” Rapapa said the project is part of the government's investment in basic education, and that good infrastructure is the foundation of quality learning.

The Ministry of Education said it will work with district education offices, community leaders and school management teams to complete the projects on time and meet the needs of each school. Once finished, thousands of learners are expected to use the new classrooms and sanitation facilities.

Arts & Sports

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

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IT

Pirates Star Relebohile Mofokeng Seals R56 Million Contract

BY LITS'ITSO LETSUNYANE



21-year-old Relebohile Mofokeng has signed a four-year contract running until 2030, with the club holding an option to extend his contract by a further year. Union Saint-Gilloise reportedly paid €3 million (approximately R56 million) to secure the services of one of South Africa's brightest young talents.

While Mofokeng had already established himself as a young star in the Premier Soccer League with Orlando Pirates, it was his performances on football's biggest stage, the FIFA World Cup, that truly captured the attention of European

clubs.

Representing Bafana Bafana at the FIFA World Cup, Mofokeng showcased the qualities that have made him one of Africa's most exciting attacking prospects. His fearlessness, close control, creativity and ability to unlock stubborn defences caught the eye throughout his game time during the tournament, with Belgian champions Union Saint-Gilloise convinced that the young playmaker possesses the quality to succeed in their squad.

The World Cup has long been regarded

as the ultimate shop window for footballers, and Mofokeng made the most of his opportunity. Against some of the world's strongest opposition, he demonstrated composure beyond his years and showed why many believe he is destined for the highest level of the game.

His performances not only elevated his own profile but also shone a spotlight on the growing quality within South African football. Mofokeng was among Bafana Bafana's standout performers during the tournament, helping the national team earn widespread praise for its displays against some of the world's best even though they did not make it far as a nation.

For Union Saint-Gilloise, Mofokeng represents an exciting investment for the future. The Brussels-based club has developed a reputation for identifying and nurturing young talent before giving players the platform to compete at the highest level. As reigning Belgian champions, Union will also offer Mofokeng the opportunity to compete for domestic honours and potentially test himself in European competition.

The move marks a significant milestone in the young attacker's career. Having developed into one of Orlando Pirates' most influential players, he now takes the next step in his football journey with the chance to prove himself in one of Europe's most respected development leagues.

Mofokeng will begin this new chapter in Belgium at the beginning of the season. Expectations will be high. However, if his World Cup performances are anything to go by, South Africa's newest European export appears more than ready for the challenge.