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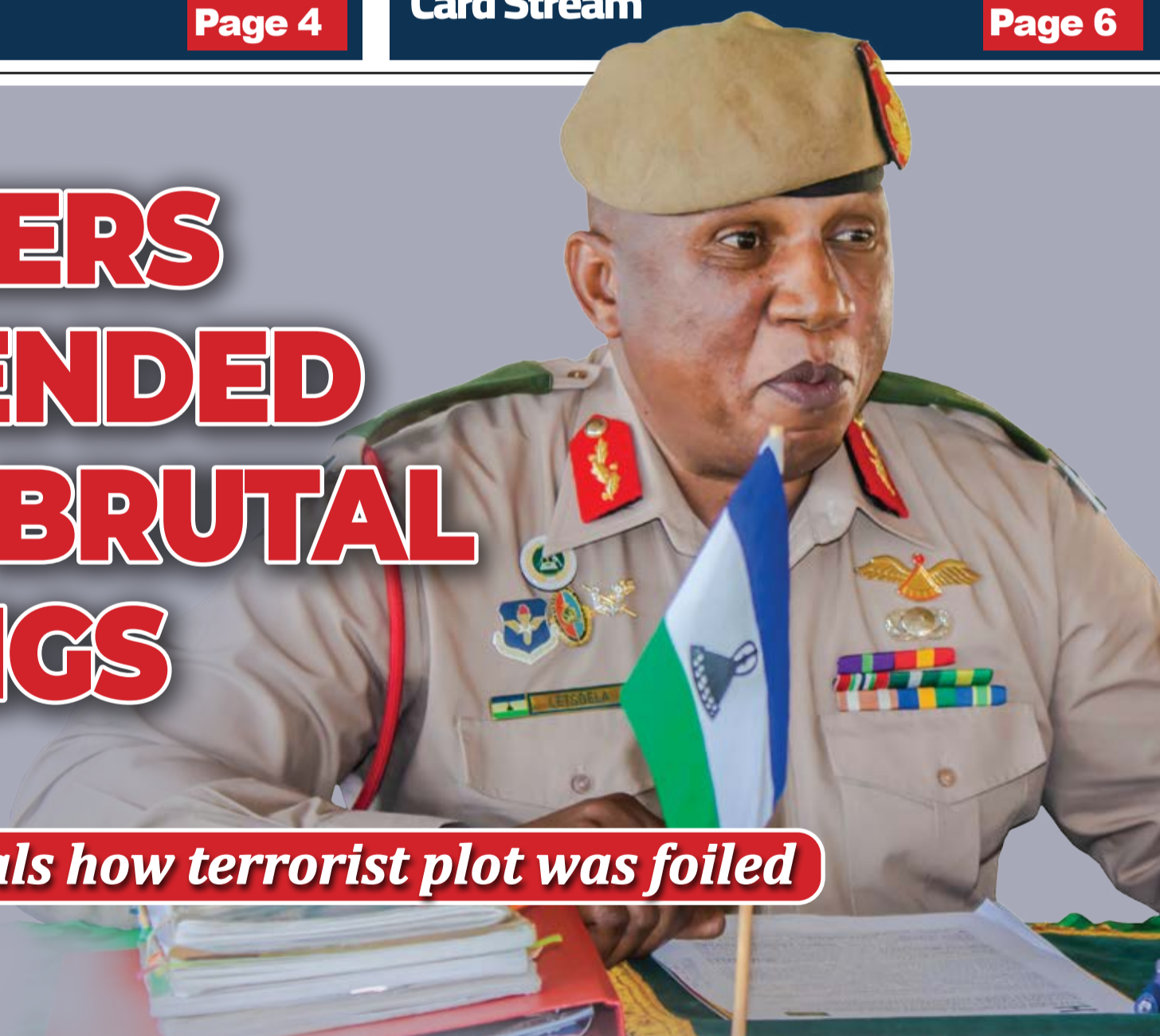
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Soldiers suspended over killings

Ntsoaki Motaung

Officers of the Lesotho Defence Force (LDF) have been suspended following the tragic deaths of two civilians during a military operation initially aimed at combatting "terrorism."

The announcement came as LDF commander, Lieutenant General Mojalefa Letsoela, faced a parliamentary committee on the Prime Minister's Cluster, where he was summoned to explain the fatal incidents that unfolded in Mosalamane, Khokhoba Ha Lebese.

During the operation, Lejone Mapoko and Nnete Lesoana Masupha were killed, while local leader Chief Lesoana Masupha of Khokhoba was assaulted and remains in critical condition.

Letsoela, addressing the committee, described the operation, infamously dubbed "Operation Hard Fist," meant to collect illegal firearms in the villages as a necessary response to an emerging wave of terrorism fuelled by money and rampant violence.

"I agreed to the name of the operation because we are faced with terrorism," he stated, emphasising that the mission was intended to protect citizens.

International scrutiny mounted as Amnesty International last week urged the Lesotho government to investigate allegations of torture and extrajudicial killings linked to the LDF's campaign to confiscate illegal firearms from gang members.

The operation was launched earlier this

year in response to rising violent crime and the proliferation of illegal firearms, with the army stating its intent to restore peace by targeting those in possession of unlicensed weapons.

Amnesty International's deputy regional director for East and Southern Africa, Khanyo Farise, stated last week: "These incidents are the latest in a series of grave allegations about the conduct of LDF soldiers. Torturing and unlawfully killing people can never be justified, even in the context of a crackdown on gangs."

"Lesotho's authorities must urgently investigate all incidents of torture and unlawful killings by the army, bring to justice anyone suspected to be responsible in fair trials and adequately compensate the victims and their families," Farise added.

Despite the stated objectives of "Operation Hard Fist," Letsoela's defense of the operation unraveled when he admitted that the deaths of the two civilians were not part of the plan.

The LDF commander's admission of responsibility raises serious questions about the military's role in law enforcement, particularly when operations are poorly planned and executed.

"We take full responsibility for what happened," Letsoela insisted, while also disclosing that the officers in charge would "have to account" for the tragic outcome.

The swift suspension of these commanders indicates a desperate attempt by the LDF to mitigate public outrage and assert that ac-



countability is being pursued.

Yet, despite acknowledging the gravity of the situation, Letsoela's statements during his testimony revealed a disturbing disconnect from the reality on the ground.

He conceded that the army was not suited for law enforcement tasks but insisted they were often compelled to act when the nation is under threat.

He also admitted that the army did not have any powers to arrest any civilian, yet simultaneously claimed a right to detain individuals for questioning.

This contradiction not only highlights the chaotic nature of military involvement in civil matters but also underscores a blatant disregard for human rights.

Speaking at a press conference held at Ratjose Barracks on Wednesday, a day before his parliamentary testimony, Letsoela acknowledged that the army was ill-suited for law enforcement operations.

He emphasised the inseparable nature of human rights and national security, asserting that the two must coexist harmoniously.

"Human rights play a crucial role in guiding our interactions with one another," he stated.

"We are not here to undermine those rights; rather, we are committed to protecting the most vulnerable among us against those who wield power. Just as the laws of motion illustrate, every action has a corresponding reaction, and what we put into the world will ulti-

mately come back to us."

At the same press conference, Sekonyela Mapejja, the executive director of the Lesotho Council of Non-Governmental Organisations (LCN), emphasised the absolute nature of the right to freedom from torture among all fundamental human rights, noting that this right holds a unique status compared to others.

Mapejja revealed that the commander will soon meet with the Committee on the Convention against Torture and the Commonwealth Secretariat.

"My heart bleeds when I consider that issues which should be resolved within our country are instead being discussed by external entities, whose resolutions are imposed upon us. It feels as though we are being controlled by others, despite our capacity to find solutions to our own problems," he lamented.

He further explained that the LCN had refrained from issuing a public statement on this matter in hopes of having a private meeting with the LDF before taking the discussion public.

The parliamentary committee's probing into Letsoela's understanding of constitutional supremacy and the legal limitations of military power revealed glaring inadequacies in the LDF's approach to civilian law enforcement.

Machesetsa Mofomobe, a member of the committee, pointedly questioned whether the army even understood its boundaries when it came to detaining civilians.



Ntsoaki Motaung

Lieutenant General Mojalefa Letsoela, Commander of the Lesotho Defence Force (LDF), delivered a gripping account yesterday of how a potential terrorist plot was foiled during a national event held on Moshoeshoe's Day, March 11, this year, in Peka, Leribe.

Testifying before the Parliamentary Committee on the Prime Minister's Cluster, Letsoela revealed the details of a planned assassination and how it was narrowly averted.

He told the committee that the horse-racing event was organised by a government ministry which he did not name, and as a national occasion, the army had to attend.

He said the guest list included a mysterious sponsor, whom he referred to simply as "Radebe," with no further details.

"When I laid my eyes on this person, I had my doubts. I quickly ordered intelligence to take his picture and send it to South Africa. In no time, we had his full profile," he revealed.

Turns out, "Radebe" was not just a sponsor

Letsoela reveals how terrorist plot was foiled

with deep pockets, he had a far more nefarious role in mind. According to Letsoela, the event was meant to appear as part of the celebratory build-up to Lesotho's 200th anniversary.

However, underneath the glitz and glamour of horse races and festivities, there was a sinister plan by some of the sponsors.

"There was a plot to kill one of the participants with horses at the event, just to undermine the authority present," Letsoela disclosed.

Letsoela said the event was organised as if it was a build-up activity to many activities that were held in celebration of the 200 years but the motive by some of the sponsors was different.

His Majesty King Letsie III and Prime Minister Ntsokoane Samuel Matekane were both supposed to attend, adding even more gravity to the situation.

"I worked hard to suppress that intention from happening, and it didn't," Letsoela said.

He explained that before the event, the LDF

had already conducted intelligence on the event's sponsors

"We conducted thorough intelligence on the event's sponsors, and we didn't find any direct ties to batho ba Likobo (Famo gangs)," he said.

Letsoela also addressed the growing problem of gang involvement in Lesotho, revealing that even within the ranks of the LDF, some soldiers had unknowingly become entangled with criminal gangs, including the feared Famo groups.

"Two of our soldiers once skipped the country due to their gang connections," Letsoela recounted, "but we tracked them down, and now they're back, serving the country again."

He explained how soldiers sometimes find themselves entangled with the gangs.

"In some cases, soldiers get associated with the gangs unaware, because some of the gang members are their family members. They ask for small favours, and next thing you know, they're caught up in gang activities without realising it," he explained.

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Powering down to power up

The Lesotho Highlands Water Project tunnel system and 'Muela Hydropower Station will be shut down from **OCTOBER 2024, TO MARCH 2025** for essential maintenance operations. During this time, water transfer in the tunnels will stop, and the station will not generate electricity.

Accused in Joki murder trial face damning testimony

Relebohile Makhetha

The murder trial of prominent radio journalist Ralikonelo 'Leqhashasha' Joki, who was brutally gunned down in May 2023, is underway, with the accused, Mothusi Tlelase, Sootho Liphopho, Moabi Sesioana, and Kamo Phakoe, facing overwhelming testimony.

Joki, known for his fearless reporting on corruption and government affairs on Tšeno-
lo FM's Hloko-
ana-La-Tsela, was shot dead outside his workplace in Maseru.

The Committee to Protect Journalists (CPJ) reported that he was hit



once in the head and at least 13 times in the body. Prior to his murder, according to CPJ, Joki had received multiple death threats tied to his exposés on illegal activities involving politicians.

UNESCO Director-General Audrey Azoulay condemned the murder, calling for accountability, stating, "Violent attacks on journalists must not go unpunished".

In explosive testimony this week, a key witness, Teboho Kumi, who was driving the Honda Fit 4+1 used during the incident, testified that the accused had asked him to accompany them to Ha Thamae in Maseru on May 14, 2023, to collect "parcels".

Kumi, who admitted to being intoxicated at the time, said that when they arrived, the accused exited the vehicle with firearms and declared their intent to kill Joki. Shortly after, Kumi heard gunshots and saw the accused return, claiming they had completed the job and needed to flee.

Kumi also disclosed that this was not the first time he had driven the accused for similar purposes, as they had used his vehicle on previous occa-

sions while he was also under the influence.

Another witness, Sekhobe Maama, took the stand and recounted an incident where the accused, Mothusi, Sootho, and Kamo, approached him asking for contact details of someone connected to Ralikonelo.

When he questioned their motives, they openly declared their intention to kill the journalist, stating that the issue was related to initiation school matters.

Days later, Maama encountered Mothusi, who confirmed that they had killed Joki.

Maama also testified about another incident involving the murder of Mothibe Mothibe. He stated that Mothusi and Sootho asked him to contact Mothibe, and after locating him, the accused followed Mothibe and shot at his vehicle until it crashed.

Both Mothibe and Thomello Ntsane were in the car at the time of the attack. The accused then robbed Mothibe, taking his wallet, alcohol, and firearm.

Maama further testified about a conversation with Moabi, where he revealed that Moabi had paid Mothusi and Sootho M5,000 to kill Mothibe.

During cross-examination, defence lawyer Advocate Lepeli Molapo suggested that Maama was complicit in the killings of Mothibe and Thomello, even though he did not fire any shots. Molapo argued that Maama was testifying against the accused due to a promise of leniency from the police, as reflected in his confession to the magistrate.

The trial is being heard by High Court judge Justice Tšeliso Mokoko, with prosecutors Jobo Lephuthing and Advocate Lepeli Molapo leading the case.

DPE preaches peace in Mafeteng



Development for Peace Education (DPE) celebrated international peace day with 'Mamaebana Community

Seabata Mahao

As Lesotho grapples with one of the highest homicide rates in the world, the Development for Peace Education (DPE) organisation marked the annual International Day of Peace with a bold message of hope and unity in the crime-ridden district of Mafeteng.

The International Day of Peace ("Peace Day") is observed around the world each year on September 21.

Established in 1981 by a unanimous United Nations (UN) resolution, Peace Day provides a globally shared date for all humanity to commit to peace above all differences and to contribute to building a culture of peace.

Celebrating under the theme "Cultivating a Culture of Peace", DPE chose to gather with the people of Ha-Nthonyana in 'Mamaebana, Lehlakeng Community Council, to deliver a powerful call for peace in a nation plagued by violence.

DPE Coordinator, Tšepo Mosoeu, addressed the gathering, stating that the community was chosen for the celebration due to its ongoing involvement in peace education programs.

"We must remember who we are as Basotho. This nation was founded on peace, and that peace must continue to grow with us," Mosoeu declared.

"The culture of Lesotho provides the foundation, and the nation longs to live in peace at all times. We are committed to restoring peace among our people."

Mosoeu's remarks come at a time when violent crime continues to devastate Lesotho.

According to the 2022 crime statistics report from the Bureau of Statistics (BOS), Lesotho reported 944 murders and 11,939 serious crimes, including stock theft, housebreaking, and sexual offences.

The district of Mafeteng, where the celebration took place, is one of the hotbeds of violent crime.

In a message marking the International Day of Peace, UN Secretary-General António Guterres condemned global violence, drawing parallels with the unrest in Lesotho.

"From Gaza to Sudan, to Ukraine and beyond, civilians are in the firing line. Our world needs peace. Peace is the ultimate prize for

all humanity," Guterres said in his statement, which was read to the crowd.

"As this International Day of Peace reminds us, the solutions are in our hands. Cultivating a culture of peace means replacing division with justice, equality, and hope for all."

The event drew local leaders, including Member of Parliament (MP) for 'Maliepetsana, Lehlohonolo Hlapisi, who applauded the efforts of DPE in fostering peace at the grassroots level.

"This organisation is doing remarkable work in our community, but what they've brought us today is more powerful, the chance to see our community reclaim its power through peace," Hlapisi said, emphasising that this initiative should inspire national leaders to take peacebuilding more seriously.

Hlapisi urged the people of 'Mamaebana to collaborate with DPE and take ownership of the peace education efforts, asserting that peace starts within communities.

"This celebration should trigger a broader conversation in the National Assembly and Senate. Now, more than ever, peace education is a necessity," he stated.

Representing the community, 'Malitsabile Setšeiša expressed pride that DPE had chosen their village for the peace celebration.

"The people have decided to participate in the peace initiative that His Majesty the King and his government desire. This celebration will foster peace between us and the towns we are connected with, reducing the violence that has plagued our communities," Setšeiša said.

As Lesotho marks 200 years of its bicentennial history, the message of peace resonates deeply.

The International Day of Peace, with its emphasis on eliminating violence, is a stark reminder that peace is not a distant ideal but a right that can be cultivated within the hands of communities like 'Mamaebana.

DPE's efforts aim to bring that reality closer, even as Lesotho struggles with staggering crime rates and societal division. The day's celebration underscored that peace must be actively nurtured, particularly in a country that has long been marred by conflict.

'Youth fear pregnancy more than HIV'

... Risky trends among youth spark concern



Lebohang Mothae National AIDS Commission Executive Director

Ntsoaki Motaung

Lebohang Mothae, the Executive Director of the National AIDS Commission (NAC), has highlighted a troubling trend among today's youth: a greater fear of unplanned pregnancies than the risk of contracting HIV.

Speaking at a recent journalists' briefing on Sustainability Planning in collaboration with the Ministry of Health, Mothae addressed the urgent need for effective sexual education.

She indicated that lately, it seemed that comprehensive HIV education was better understood by older generations who lived through the HIV/AIDS crisis.

The older generation, she said, experienced firsthand the devastating effects, where every day, someone was dying from AIDS. In contrast, she added, the younger generation was less concerned about HIV because they see many individuals living healthy lives despite being HIV positive.

Mothae further revealed: "Our youth are so clever that they engage in risky behaviors to avoid pregnancy. For instance, they resort to anal sex, believing it will prevent pregnancy. This trend is particularly noticeable at the high school level."

"So because they fear pregnancy and the responsibility that comes with it, they found that they can do anal sex and do not get pregnant," she added.

Mothae stressed that the NAC must work closely with the Ministry of Education and Training to reassess how Comprehensive Sexuality Education (CSE) addresses the emerging risks youth face.

She indicated that they needed to ask themselves if CSE was still sufficient.

"Are we giving young people the comprehensive information they need to understand the dangers they face? What more can we include in our everyday messages to clarify the risks of certain sexual behaviours?" she asked.

She emphasised the urgency of adapting to new challenges.

"We must find ways to intervene because the data shows us that we still have gaps to fill. If we don't address these evolving dynamics, we will find ourselves regressing in our progress," she warned.

Providing an overview of Lesotho's HIV status as of 2023, Maema Ramaema, NAC's Strategic Information Manager, revealed that an estimated 271,396 people were living with HIV in the country, with a prevalence rate of 18.5 percent.

The year also saw 4,810 new infections and 4,056 AIDS-related deaths.

"Half of the new infections are among adolescents and young people aged 10-24. This highlights the significant amount of work still required to protect these vulnerable groups," Ramaema said.

Despite these figures, he noted that the national AIDS response was moving in the right direction, and Lesotho was on track to meet the United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS) 95-95-95 targets by 2025.

However, Ramaema cautioned that there was a pressing need to accelerate investments in combination prevention strategies and close gaps for men, children, and other vulnerable populations, particularly the youth and key populations.

"Lesotho must achieve the elimination of mother-to-child transmission of HIV," Ramaema stated, calling for a targeted movement to attain zero vertical transmission from mother to child.

A day of health, fun, and unity

... How sports brought healthcare to Ha Maphohloane's youth

Kananelo Boloetse

On Saturday, September 14, the usually serene village of Ha Maphohloane in Mohale's Hoek came alive with the laughter of children, the rhythmic beats of local music, and the uncontrollable energy of community spirit.

What appeared to be a typical sports day was, in fact, a pioneering initiative that blended fun, healthcare outreach, and engagement for the youth of the area.

The event, a collaboration between the Ministry of Health, UNICEF, USAID, and the Lesotho Sports and Recreation Commission (LSRC), was not just a day of fun and games, it was an innovative approach to bringing critical health services closer to children and adolescents.

The dusty football ground, near a cemetery, typically quiet, took on a new life.

Children from Ha Maphohloane and nearby villages arrived to partake in a celebration that combined the excitement of sports with access to vital healthcare services. From the moment the first notes of local music rang out, the atmosphere was one of vibrancy and unity.

Music from some of Lesotho's favourite artists – Sannere, Malome Vector, and Ntate Stunna – poured from large speakers, filling the air with familiar beats that had the crowd dancing even before the official program began.

Before long, the sports grounds were filled with excited young people, eagerly waiting to compete in various sporting events.

Sports events are often powerful platforms for uniting communities, and this event capitalized on that potential. By turning the spotlight on healthcare, the organisers found a way to ensure the youth and their families received essential services while enjoying themselves.

Health tents offering vaccinations, blood pressure checks, and other services were set up around the sports grounds, allowing easy access for everyone—young and old alike.

But what truly set this day apart from the typical government event was its energy. Unlike the long speeches and drawn-out formalities that often bore attendees, this was a celebration in every sense.

When the games kicked off, it was not just the usual football and netball on display. Instead, the event featured a variety of exciting challenges, many of which mirrored the viral sports challenges seen on social media.

Villages competed against one another in creative and physically engaging activities that kept spectators on their feet, cheering and dancing in between rounds.

As the games progressed, it became clear that this was more than just a fun day out. The health services offered at the event served as a reminder of the serious goal behind the celebration: to bridge healthcare gaps for children and adolescents, particularly in rural areas where access to medical care can be limited.

While the day was designed for youth, even older community members took advantage of



the health services on offer, popping into the tents for blood pressure checks and consultations.

For us journalists from Maseru, who trav-

eled over 100 kilometers to cover the event, what we expected to be a long day turned into a surprisingly short and enjoyable one. Being surrounded by children and the infectious en-



ergy of the village left us with a sense of satisfaction and unexpected joy.

The day's seamless blend of health awareness, fun, and community spirit was unlike anything we had imagined.

Even the Minister of Sports, Youth, Culture, and Tourism, Motlatsi Magoelap, joined in the day's lighthearted mood. Rather than delivering a lengthy speech, he spent most of the day under a tent, quietly watching the children play and enjoying the vibrant atmosphere.

It wasn't until later in the afternoon that he briefly took the microphone to officially close the event—a perfect reflection of the day's refreshing informality.

Of course, the day would not have been complete without the signature quirk of August and September in Lesotho: strong winds and swirling dust.

These two months are notorious for their strong winds and swirling dust, and this day was no exception. Imagine playing football with gusts of wind stealing the ball's direction just as you are about to score!

The weather seemed determined to challenge the event, but despite the jealous, unpredictable conditions, the games went on with unabated enthusiasm.

For those like the author of this article, whose frame might be best described as "thin", walking against the wind was its own sport, requiring a great deal of effort to stay on course, especially when heading directly into the gusts.

However, for the children, this was simply another opportunity to find joy in the moment. Kids, with their endless curiosity and imagination, seemed to view the wind as another playful element in their day of fun. While adults strained to keep their balance, the youngsters laughed, chasing dust clouds and relishing the challenge of running against the breeze.

The weather may have tried to steal the show with its unpredictable gusts, but in the end, it only added to the charm of the day.

The event's combination of sports and healthcare outreach served as a reminder that addressing serious issues like health disparities does not always have to be formal or boring. Instead, it can be joyful, communal, and filled with life—just like the children running against the wind.

As the sun set and the dust finally began to settle, the legacy of the day was clear: a community brought closer together, children and adolescents receiving the healthcare they need, and a collective memory of joy and unity.

The event marked a significant step in ensuring that the youth of Lesotho can access the health services they deserve, all while celebrating the spirit of life that no amount of wind could ever blow away.

By embracing the power of sports and culture, the Ministry of Health and its partners showed that bringing services closer to the people does not have to be a routine affair; it can be an opportunity to inspire and connect.



CBL keeps repo rate steady at 7.5%



Seabata Mahao

The Central Bank of Lesotho (CBL)'s Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) has decided to maintain the repo rate at 7.5 percent per annum, reflecting stable domestic and regional economic conditions.

This announcement was made during a press conference held following the 109th MPC meeting held in Maseru on Tuesday.

In addition to maintaining the repo rate, the MPC lowered the Net International Reserves (NIR) target floor to M12.9 billion, down from M13.08 billion.

This adjustment is aimed at ensuring that sufficient reserves are in place to maintain the one-to-one peg between the Loti and the South African Rand.

The decision follows the MPC's assessment that both global and domestic economic conditions have remained relatively stable since the last meeting in July.

The current levels of net international reserves are considered adequate to support exchange rate parity, though a moderate adjustment may be needed in the medium term to safeguard ongoing stability.

On the global front, the economy is expected to remain resilient in 2024, despite existing risks. While inflation is projected to ease worldwide, persistent inflation in the services sector poses a potential risk.

Domestically, growth in July 2024 was modest, but it is expected to strengthen in the coming months.

Speaking at a press conference, CBL Governor Dr. Maluke Letete highlighted the Committee's review of the latest global, regional, and domestic economic and financial market developments.

"The CBL's NIR decreased by approximately M1.4 billion to M16.4 billion on September 11, 2024, from M17.8 billion on July 16, 2024," Letete said.

He attributed the decline to increases in foreign investment holdings by commercial banks and the need to meet foreign payment obligations by Lesotho nationals.

Letete added that the external sector recorded a surplus in the second quarter of 2024, supported by higher revenues from the Southern African Customs Union (SACU) and water royalties. The stock of foreign reserves remained stable, covering 5.5 months of imports, thus providing a strong buffer for external stability.

In July 2024, the Government's budget operations resulted in a surplus of 24.4 percent of Gross Domestic Product (GDP), while public debt as a percentage of GDP slightly increased to 55.2 percent from 54.9 percent in the previous month.

Regarding money supply, Letete reported a decline in July 2024, following a modest increase in June. This was primarily due to decreases in transferable and fixed-time deposits in the business sector. Meanwhile, credit to the private sector grew marginally, benefiting mainly business enterprises.

Domestic headline inflation eased to 6.0 percent in August 2024, down from 6.7 percent in July, driven by lower prices for education, transport, and clothing and footwear.

However, food prices rose due to higher demand and constrained supply.

Letete warned that despite recent currency appreciation, the weak exchange rate continues to pose a risk to the inflation outlook. The inflation rate is forecasted to average 5.5 percent in 2025 and 5.0 percent in 2026.

Lesotho's economy grew modestly in July 2024 after a contraction in June, supported by increased activity in the construction, transport, and services sectors, despite weak demand and subdued manufacturing.

Looking ahead, key projects, including the Lowlands Water Development Project, the Lesotho Highlands Water Project (LHWP), and Millennium Challenge Corporation (MCC)-supported horticulture initiatives, are expected to drive economic growth.

Inflation rates in selected economies declined in August 2024, mainly due to lower energy costs. Central banks responded by cutting policy rates between July and September 2024, leading to a decrease in both long-term and short-term bond yields.

In China, bond yields fell following the announcement of a stimulus package aimed at boosting the domestic economy.

BUSINESS

CBL unveils game-changing LeSwitch Card Stream

Seabata Mahao

The Central Bank of Lesotho (CBL), in collaboration with the Bankers' Association of Lesotho (BAL), has marked a significant milestone in Lesotho's journey toward a fully integrated, modern financial ecosystem with the launch of the LeSwitch Card Stream, starting with Auto Teller Machines (ATMs).

This initiative follows the earlier launch of the National Payment Switch, LeSwitch, and the Instant Payments Stream in March of this year.

This substantial advancement in the modernisation of Lesotho's payment infrastructure enabled individuals and businesses to transfer funds instantly across participating Fintechs.

The Instant Payments Stream has revolutionised day-to-day transactions, making them more efficient, reliable, and accessible.

"Building on this success, the Central Bank of Lesotho is excited to announce the next phase of LeSwitch: the launch of the Card Stream, beginning with ATM transactions. This development allows cardholders to withdraw and access their funds at ATMs nationwide, regardless of their bank, ensuring seamless, real-time access to their money," the CBL stated on Wednesday.

The bank emphasised that this development marks another significant step in Lesotho's journey toward a fully integrated and modern financial ecosystem.

The introduction of the Card Stream, according to the CBL, will offer numerous benefits to consumers, businesses, and the financial sector as a whole.

It will offer seamless ATM Access. "Cardholders will be able to use any ATM in Lesotho, regardless of their bank, providing greater flexibility and convenience."

CBL added: "Lower Transaction Costs: With do-



estic ATM transactions being switched locally through LeSwitch, transaction fees are expected to decrease over time, benefiting both consumers and banks.

Other benefits include improved speed and security. Transactions through LeSwitch will be processed quickly and securely, ensuring customers can access their funds without delays or safety concerns.

"Economic Growth and Modernisation: By facilitating instant and cost-effective access to funds, LeSwitch encourages greater participation in the financial system, promotes a cashless society, and contributes to broader economic growth," CBL said.

It added: "Wider Financial Inclusion: By simplifying access to ATM services and soon enabling point-of-sale and online transactions, LeSwitch empowers more Basotho to engage with formal financial services, including those with previously limited access."

Furthermore, CBL indicated that while the launch of the Card Stream focuses on ATM transactions, it is committed to expanding this service to point-of-sale terminals and e-commerce platforms in the near future, further enhancing access to fast, secure, and convenient card payments.

"Once fully operational, the Card Stream will support retail payments and online transactions, making it easier for businesses and consumers to transact in an increasingly digital economy," the CBL noted.

While the National Payment Switch is set to transform the payment landscape, it is essential to clarify its limitations.

"Not a Replacement for Global Card Schemes: LeSwitch will not replace international card schemes like Visa or Mastercard for global transactions. Its focus will remain on domestic payments, allowing local transactions to be processed efficiently within Lesotho," CBL said.

"Cash Will Not Be Eliminated: While promoting the adoption of cashless transactions, LeSwitch aims to provide more efficient and convenient digital options without mandating a complete shift away from cash usage," it added.

The bank concluded by highlighting that LeSwitch will not instantly resolve all payment challenges. Its full potential will be realised through ongoing upgrades, collaboration with banks and fintechs, and public awareness initiatives.

RSL empowers journalists in financial, economic reporting

Seabata Mahao

Revenue Services Lesotho (RSL) recently hosted a two-day capacity-building workshop aimed at enhancing the skills of journalists in reporting on business, economics, finance, and development.

Held in Maseru, the workshop sought to equip journalists with the expertise necessary to report accurately and effectively on financial and economic matters, as well as taxation.

In his opening remarks, delivered on behalf of the RSL Commissioner General, Pheello Mphana emphasised the workshop's purpose: to strengthen journalists' knowledge and ability to ask the right questions when covering financial and economic issues.

Mphana noted that with the increasing demand for transparency in today's information-rich era, the media plays a critical role in shaping public understanding of these complex matters.

"We embark on a journey that will equip you with the knowledge and skills necessary to navigate the complex world of tax and financial reporting," Mphana stated. "This training is not just about understanding numbers and regulations; it is about empowering you to communicate effectively, ask the right questions, and hold institutions accountable."

Mphana further highlighted the pivotal role journalists play as intermediaries between complicated financial data and the public.

He stressed that journalists' ability to translate intricate financial reports into accessible stories is essential for keeping citizens informed, ensuring institutional accountability, and guiding policymakers with accurate information.

The workshop was also designed to help journalists grasp the implications of ongoing and upcoming changes in Lesotho's economic policies.

Mphana underscored that the training would provide the tools for accurate analysis and reporting on these evolving policies.

"As we move forward, let us remember the importance of ethical reporting," Mphana said.

"In a world where misinformation can spread like wildfire, our commitment to truth and accuracy is paramount. We must strive to be not just reporters

of facts but educators who help our audiences understand the implications of those facts."

He also mentioned that the workshop was part of RSL's broader media relations strategy, aligned with its corporate strategy, 'Lesokoana'. He hinted at plans to recognise and reward excellence in journalism through annual media awards, as part of RSL's efforts to strengthen ties with the media.

Speaking at the event, the Director of the Media Institute of Southern Africa (MISA) Lesotho Chapter, Lekhetho Ntsukunyane, commended RSL for its proactive approach to engaging the media and enhancing their understanding of financial and economic issues.

The workshop was facilitated by experts from the Governance Institute for Sustainable Development (GISD), who brought a wealth of experience in finance, economics, and journalism.

Their insights and best practices provided invaluable learning opportunities for the participants.

This initiative marked an important step in improving the quality of financial and economic reporting in Lesotho, equipping journalists to better serve the public by delivering clear, accurate, and insightful news on critical economic developments.

Contacted for comment this week, the chairperson of MISA Lesotho, Kananelo Boloetse said: "I would like to highly commend RSL for this commendable initiative of capacitating journalists in financial, economic, and development reporting."

Boloetse mentioned that in an age where transparency and accountability are paramount, equip-



ping the media with the skills to report effectively on these critical areas "is a step in the right direction".

He said the knowledge imparted during this workshop will not only enhance reporting but will also strengthen the media's role in educating the public on key financial and economic matters that directly affect their lives.

"I am particularly excited by RSL's commitment to recognising and rewarding excellence in journalism through media awards. This aligns perfectly with MISA Lesotho's vision of celebrating the critical role played by journalists."

Boloetse divulged that later this year, MISA Lesotho will be hosting its annual journalism awards to honour outstanding contributions in the industry.

"It would be a tremendous privilege to collaborate with RSL in these awards, joining hands to ensure that the celebration of excellence in journalism is a success. Together, we can foster a media environment that is both empowered and ethical to drive accountability and development in Lesotho," he concluded.

ESTATE NOTICE

Notice in terms of section 37 of the Administration of Estates and Inheritance Act No. 2 of 2024

ESTATE LATE THABISO RETHABILE MPHOLE E139/2024

Notice is hereby given in terms of section 37 of the Administration of Estates and Inheritance Act No. 2 of 2024 calling upon all heirs, legatees and creditors of the deceased to attend a meeting before the master of the High Court in Maseru on Tuesday 17th SEPTEMBER 2024 at 10:00 am for the purpose of:

Proposing some person/persons to be appointed by the master as Executor dative.

Dated at Maseru on this 1st day of August 2024

Master of the High Court

Magistrate Court

Old Prosecutors Office

Maseru



Lesotho Secures US\$ 2.5 Million GPE Multiplier Grant to Strengthen Education and Improve Learning Outcomes for Basotho Children



On September 12th, 2024, the Global Partnership for Education (GPE) approved a US\$ 2.5 million Multiplier Grant to support equitable and inclusive access to quality education in Lesotho. This funding, made possible through contributions from Lesotho's private sector—notably ECONET/HigherLife Foundation, Vodacom Lesotho Foundation, and Standard Lesotho Bank—marks a significant step toward improving learning outcomes for all Basotho children, particularly those from vulnerable communities.

As part of its innovative financing mechanism, GPE had approved US\$ 5 million for matching investments from donors, for which Lesotho was eligible. By early 2022, UNICEF, in collaboration with the Roger Federer Foundation (RFF) managed to unlock \$ 2.5M. The private sector partners-Standard Lesotho Bank, Vodacom Lesotho Foundation, and Econet Telecom Lesotho (ETL)/ HigherLife Foundation Lesotho, unlocked the balance with the commitment of \$3.5M which exceeded the amount required to unlock the balance.

As per the GPE multiplier grant, every \$ from the private sector and Foundations will unlock a matching grant from GPE. Sarah Beardmore, representing the GPE, commended Lesotho for achieving this milestone: "Lesotho is to be commended for its sustained efforts in strengthening its education system. The significant progress made toward achieving near-universal access to primary education, including the provision of school meals, is very encouraging. Additionally, the increased efforts to expand access to pre-primary and secondary education, particularly for vulnerable children, are highly commendable."

The grant will bolster the Ministry of Education and Training's efforts to increase enrolment and retention of disadvantaged children in primary and secondary schools. Key interventions include scholarships for vulnerable children, re-entry programs for out-of-school youth, and governance improvements in the education sector to ensure that no child is left behind.

The Minister of Education and Training, Honourable Prof. Rapapa, expressed his gratitude for the collaboration: "This support will help us address critical areas within our education system that have long required attention, particularly in ensuring that the most disadvantaged girls and boys are enrolled and retained in both primary and secondary schools." Standard Lesotho Bank also reiterated its commitment to education. Anton Nicolaisen, the Chief Executive at Standard Lesotho Bank, said: "As Standard Lesotho Bank, our purpose says, 'Lesotho is our Home, we drive her growth.' At our Bank, we understand that one of our key roles is to make a meaningful impact on the lives of our people, and that impact can be driven by affording our young people an opportunity to get an education. I take this opportunity to thank our partners, Econet Telecom Lesotho and Vodacom, for their commitment. I believe our combined efforts will make a lasting impact on education for our children, and I hope this will inspire other corporates to join us in securing more grants like this one for Lesotho."

According to Mr. Kimanzi Muthengi, UNICEF Deputy Representative, the grant will not only improve access but also strengthen academic supervision and mentoring systems in Lesotho. The goal is to enhance the quality of education by ensuring teachers are well-supported, while technology-enabled assessments and early warning systems will help reduce dropout rates. Digital tools will also transform classrooms into vibrant, interactive learning environments.

Mohale Ralebitso, Vodacom Lesotho's Chief Executive Officer emphasized the role of technology in modernizing education: "This \$2.5 million grant is a game-changer for education in Lesotho. As a private sector partner, we are excited to support this transformative initiative, which will harness the power of technology to enhance the learning experience and open new opportunities for children to succeed."

On behalf of Econet Telecom Lesotho and HigherLife Foundation, the Chief Executive Officer, Dennis Platjies, reinforced the private sector's commitment: "For as long as Basotho continue to enjoy our products and services, we pledge to keep investing in human capital development through education. It is our vision to see our country rise from a lower to an upper-income economy."

Reflecting on the collective efforts of all involved, the Minister of Education and Training added: "I would like to once again thank our private sector partners, UNICEF, GPE, and all those who have contributed to making this initiative possible. Your dedication and investment in the education of our children are commendable, and I look forward to seeing the positive impact this will have on the lives of young girls and boys across Lesotho."

With the joint efforts of private sector partners and UNICEF in supporting the Ministry of Education and Training, the GPE grant will lay the foundation for a stronger education system, empowering Basotho children with the tools and knowledge they need to unlock their full potential.



Suspension of soldiers welcome, but justice must prevail

The suspension of Lesotho Defence Force (LDF) officers following the tragic deaths of Lejone Mapoko and Nnete Lesoana Masupha is a step in the right direction.

However, it is far from enough to address the deep wounds inflicted on the families and communities affected by these killings. No suspension or disciplinary action can bring back the lives lost, and no act of accountability can undo the trauma suffered by Chief Lesoana Masupha, who remains in critical condition following the brutal assault.

What makes this situation even more troubling is the chilling revelation that these killings occurred during an operation, ominously named "Operation Hard Fist", designed to combat terrorism.

It is hard to ignore the irony that in the name of protecting the nation, the army unleashed terror of its own on innocent civilians. The LDF's duty is to safeguard the nation, but in this case, it overstepped its bounds in the most tragic way imaginable.

While it is understandable that the military is called to intervene in times of crisis, this does not give them carte blanche to act with impunity. The LDF is not above the law, and certainly, the threat of terrorism does not grant them a passport to torture and kill civilians.

Gestapo-style tactics, where the army takes the law into its own hands and employs brutal force against its own people, have no place in a democratic society.

Lieutenant General Mojalefa Letsoela's admission that the deaths were not part of the plan should ring alarm bells for all of us. The military should not be involved in law enforcement if it lacks the training or authority to carry out such operations without violating the rights of civilians.

The admission that the army has no powers to arrest civilians but continues to detain people under the guise of "questioning" further exposes the chaotic and unlawful nature of these operations.

We cannot ignore the persistent allegations of torture and extrajudicial killings that have marred the LDF's recent operations. Amnesty International has already raised the alarm, and it is clear that independent investigations are urgently needed.

Those responsible for these heinous acts must be held accountable, not only to the victims' families but to the nation as a whole.

The suspension of the officers involved is merely the beginning.

The rule of law must prevail, and justice must be served. More importantly, the LDF must immediately reconsider its approach to civilian matters. The protection of human rights and national security is not an either/or proposition. Both must coexist, and no operation, however justified in its aims, should come at the expense of innocent lives.

We stand with the families of those killed, knowing that no amount of action will restore what they have lost.

Their pain must be a reminder to us all: no nation is truly secure if its citizens live in fear of those meant to protect them.

The elephant in the room remains Prime Minister Sam Matekane's infamous directive to the soldiers to "do whatever" it takes to restore peace.

Such reckless utterances were, and continue to be, deeply problematic, as they give dangerous carte blanche to the military and fuel the kind of unchecked aggression witnessed during 'Operation Hard Fist'.

It is time for the Prime Minister to swallow his pride and issue a profound apology, not only to the grieving families of the victims but also to the nation as a whole.

Leadership requires accountability, and only through sincere contrition and meaningful reform can the government begin to heal the deep wounds inflicted on our society.



No Comment

Data-Driven Public Relations: Why Forging Meaningful Relationships Delivers Results

Tanki Kotelo

"People will forget what you said, people will forget what you did, but people will never forget how you made them feel," said Maya Angelou. This truth became evident for Pepsi in 2017 when a controversial ad led to public outrage. Rather than dismissing the criticism, the brand repositioned its focus to authentic storytelling, featuring real stories of their community activism. This approach not only resurrected their image but also strengthened the idea that in today's data-driven public relations (PR) landscape, honest emotional connections are what truly audiences relate to.

In an information-abundant world where people have fleeting attention spans, the landscape of PR has progressed dramatically. Amidst the technological revolution that has happened over the years, one fundamental concept remains unaltered: the importance of building genuine relationships. So, how can brands then leverage data and research to craft emotional connections, ultimately building mutually beneficial relationships that stand the test of time? Let us unpack.

It is worth indicating that data-driven PR is not merely about collecting numbers but also about understanding the real meaning behind those numbers. With the right data, PR professionals can gain insights into audience preferences, behaviours, and sentiments.

For instance, by analysing social media engagement metrics, PR teams can identify which types of content resonate most with their audience. Moreover, data can help PR professionals segment their audiences more effectively. One such example is Dove's "Real Beauty" campaign, which used consumer insights to deliver a radical campaign that championed body positivity and disrupted beauty standards.

By understanding the different personas within their target market, organisations can create personalised communication strate-



gies that speak directly to each group's unique interests and values, making their audiences feel seen and understood. In a world where consumers are bombarded with generic messages, this move can set an organisation apart. However, data alone is not enough. The human element is crucial in building successful PR strategies. While analytics can provide insights into audience behaviour, it is the emotional connection that ultimately drives engagement.

In 2021, in the wake of COVID-19, Coca-Cola nailed this through its "Open to Better" campaign; the campaign encouraged customers to share insights from the lockdown and pledge to do things better heading into the new normal. People are undoubtedly drawn to brands that appeal to their values and emotions; thus, PR professionals must strive to tell genuine stories that reflect the brand's mission and values while, in the same breath, speaking to the concerns and aspirations of their audience.

This storytelling approach not only humanises the brand but also builds trust and credibility in the long run.

In the past, traditional PR often placed significant reliance on media placements and press releases, but the cornerstones of today's successful PR are engagement and interaction. Today, customers want some TLC (tender loving care). Social media channels, while powerful, are just tools for connection. The real work lies in how brands use these platforms to build relationships with their audiences.

By engaging in meaningful conversations, responding to feedback, and showing empathy, organisations can create a sense of community around their brand. Airbnb's "We Accept" campaign is the very epitome of this. In 2017, surrounded by backlash due to its users experiencing discrimination on its platform, the organisation launched a Super Bowl commercial, which not only sparked global conversation but was also praised for promoting inclusivity and diversity. Many brands can learn from the ordeal.

Additionally, the rise of influencer marketing indicates how relationship-building has become central to PR strategies. Influencers, who have grown their own loyal followings, serve as extensions between brands and their consumers. By partnering with influencers who align with their values, organisations can piggyback on the already ingrained trust and credibility, conveying their message in a way that feels seamlessly authentic. This approach pinpoints the notion that successful PR is not just about broadcasting messages but about cultivating connections that resonate on a personal level.

In essence, it's important for brands to always remember that people rarely buy into what you do, but rather into why you do it. In navigating the dynamic terrain of modern PR, brands must remember that behind every data insight lies a human story waiting to be heard. Besides, an accurate judge of success will always lie in the relationships we build—reminding us that, even in a period marked by technology, it is our humanity that will always prevail!

Bloom Communications is a Lesotho-based consultancy, specialising in best-in-class media-driven communications, professional writing, public relations, social media management, and marketing for individuals, corporates, and micro, small, and medium-sized brands. For feedback contact: info@bloom-communications.co.ls.

FEATURE

Silent scars: Surviving school punishment

“He stepped on my chest and neck... He said, ‘Because I love you.’”

- *Mpho’s story sheds light on the painful reality of corporal punishment in Lesotho.*

Nicole Tau



Winter mornings in Lesotho bite deep. That August day, the cold crept into 12-year-old Mpho’s bones as he rose at 5:30 am, preparing for school like any other day. He boiled water for his bath, wolfed down a quick breakfast of homemade bread and Oros, of course, and set out into the morning chill, unaware that this day would mark a painful turning point in his young life.

As the 7th-grade class buzzed with early morning chatter, Mpho’s classmate taunted him, “Halala,” he teased. “You didn’t finish your notes. I wonder what Sir’s going to do to you...”

Mpho’s right hand still throbbled from a previous punishment, making it difficult to complete his notes, but he knew his classmate was right. The teacher’s wrath was unforgiving. He had every reason to worry.

When the teacher called for notebooks, Mpho, desperately, scribbled down as much as he could, hoping to escape attention, but it was no use. The teacher demanded Mpho bring him his notes.

Trembling, Mpho walked to the front of the class. The teacher compared his incomplete work with another student’s and then called Mpho to follow him.

Quietly, the teacher led him to the computer lab where grade one students were busy with their lesson, now watching.

“He asked me to bend down and hold a metal rod-like object on the floor,” Mpho said.

Mpho hesitated. The rod was too low. Instead, he reached for the wall, but the teacher barked at him again. Reluctantly, Mpho bent down and grasped the rod. The two blows came quick and sharp, the red hosepipe stinging his back. He yelped in pain, pleading for mercy, but it only fueled the teacher’s fury.

“He demanded that I put my head between his thighs,” said Mpho.

Mpho refused, gripping the wall, until two slaps landed on his face, forcing him to comply. Humiliated, he crouched between the teacher’s thighs, trying to breathe through the panic. But that was not enough, as he pushed Mpho down on the floor and whipped him again across his buttocks.

The teacher then forced him to the floor, pinning him down with his shoe, and pressing hard on Mpho’s neck and chest.

With other students out at lunch, the teacher remained, standing over Mpho like a shadow. He picked up the stick again, and asked, “Do you know why I’m doing this?”

“No, sir,” Mpho whispered.



“It’s because I love you. If I didn’t love you, I wouldn’t do this.”

The twisted words hung heavy in the air as the teacher ordered Mpho to crouch between his legs once more. But this time, something in Mpho snapped. When the teacher reached for the hosepipe, Mpho wrenched free, grabbed the pipe, and hurled it toward the chalkboard. His defiance earned him two sharp slaps across the face, and just like that, the fight drained out of him.

Falling to his knees, Mpho waited for the next strike, for the blows to rain down, but they never came. The teacher, seemingly satisfied with his domination, left him alone.

“Our children are our greatest treasure. They are our future. Those who abuse them tear at the fabric of our society and weaken our nation.” – Nelson Mandela.

When the incident reached social media, headlines focused on the teacher. However, public reactions revealed deeper divides in attitudes toward corporal punishment.

A post titled “Look at the Teacher that Assaulted the Child” generated over 200 comments, with most condemning the abuse. Some called for the teacher’s dismissal, with one commenter writing, “I think the teacher should be behind bars... or he will kill children.”

While 84 percent of comments condemned the teacher, calling for dismissal, a small but vocal 16 percent sympathised, suggesting mental health issues or blaming the child.

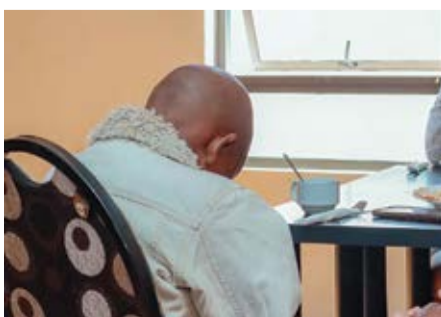
Even among those critical of the teacher, many still supported corporal punishment in general, only drawing a line between discipline and outright abuse.

Reports from parents and former students revealed that this teacher’s behaviour was not an isolated incident, revealing a culture of silence and complicity in schools where such violent outbursts had long been ignored.

“The child is not a vessel to be filled, but a flame to be ignited.” – Maria Montessori.

A 2024 UNICEF survey revealed that 76 percent of children aged 1-14 in Lesotho have experienced violent discipline, including physical punishment or psychological aggression.

Despite Lesotho having ratified the Convention on the Rights of the Child (1992) and the African Charter on the Rights



and Welfare of the Child (1999), which mandate protection from all forms of violence, corporal punishment remains entrenched in schools, defended as a cultural norm.

After the brutal beating, Mpho was forced to sit through the rest of the school day in excruciating pain. His suffering went unnoticed, or worse, ignored. By the time the final bell rang, he could barely carry his school bag. His hour-long walk home stretched even longer as he walked under the weight of his injuries.

His mother, Maneo, noticed the lash marks running down his back to his buttocks.

“The teacher had beaten him so badly,” she said, her voice trembling. “I didn’t know what I was supposed to do.”

When Mpho complained of chest pain and difficulty walking the following day, Maneo rushed him to the hospital, where shocked nurses immediately called doctors to assess the severity of his injuries. Mpho was admitted for monitoring, placed on a drip, and fitted with a catheter.

“The most important thing we can do is instill in our children a sense of hope and positivity.” – Michelle Obama.

Psychotherapist Makamohelo Malimabe explains that corporal punishment can have lasting effects on a child’s brain development.

During critical developmental years, children may normalise such abuse, internalising violence as part of their reality.

“Corporal punishment and physical abuse are two sides of the same coin,” Malimabe says. “No matter the intention behind it, the harm is the same.”

She challenges the cultural defence of corporal punishment, drawing a powerful comparison to domestic abuse.

“If a spouse slapped their partner, we’d call it abuse. So why, when a teacher beats a child for being late, is it called corporal punishment?”

Malimabe argues that terms like “corporal punishment” soften the harshness of the act, making it harder to grasp the real harm.

“We need to stop calling it ‘corporal punishment’ and start calling it what it really is, violence. Adults are taking out their frustrations on defenceless children.”

“I raise my voice not so that I can shout, but so that those without a voice can be heard.” – Malala Yousafzai.

Lesotho’s legal community is growing increasingly concerned about the gap between law and practice when it comes to corporal punishment.

Advocate Thato Seheri, a human rights lawyer, points out that the Education Act of 2010 and the Children’s Protection and Welfare Act (CPW) 2011 remain vague on the issue, leading to widespread confusion.

“The law is silent on



corporal punishment, so people interpret it in various ways. We need a clear court directive to establish whether it’s prohibited or not,” advocate Seheri says.

A local prosecutor echoes this sentiment, explaining that the courts are left to interpret what constitutes “reasonable chastisement.”

“It can be argued both ways, and the best argument wins... The burden falls on the shoulders of the courts to interpret what the reasonable chastisement is.”

The prosecutor also wishes parents would file civil claims against teachers who assault their children.

“In criminal cases, even if the teacher is fined, the money goes to the government, not the victims. In civil matters, families can claim compensation for the emotional and physical damage they’ve endured.”

Advocate Seheri stresses that the solution begins with a clear legal prohibition of corporal punishment.

The Ministry of Education and Training seems disconnected from the ongoing reality of corporal punishment in schools.

Principal Secretary Ratšiu Majara, however, offers a progressive stance, advocating for a shift in how children are disciplined.

“We need to engage students when they perform poorly, not beat them,” he said. Majara believes the ministry must focus on sensitising parents to non-violent forms of discipline and holding schools accountable for teacher behaviour.

Parents’ stories highlight systemic issues. Most only report corporal punishment when their children suffer visible injuries, and many cases stall at the police station. Some families, lacking funds, cannot even gather proper documentation, while others face delays in the courts, with cases dragging on for months or even years.

In Mpho’s case, the teacher charged with assault was released on bail for M1,500. The case, which began in August, is not set to proceed until 2025. Although the teacher eventually resigned, most teachers in similar cases remain in their positions.

Human rights bodies have repeatedly called for action, including the Committee on the Rights of the Child in its 2018 report. While corporal punishment is banned in Lesotho’s schools, the Committee urged the government to explicitly prohibit corporal punishment in all environments and establish safe reporting mechanisms for children.

The Committee also recommended training programs for parents and teachers to promote non-violent discipline, along with public awareness campaigns to shift societal attitudes.

Advocate Seheri concludes with a call for stronger punishment for those found guilty of corporal punishment.

“The penalties should be severe enough to send a clear message that corporal punishment is indeed prohibited.”

***Names have been changed to protect the identity of children involved.**

This story is published with the support of Media Monitoring Africa and UNICEF as part of the Isu Elihle Awards Initiative.


 LESOTHO
 COMMUNICATIONS
 AUTHORITY

Advertisement

VACANCY: MANAGER INFORMATION & COMMUNICATIONS TECHNOLOGIES

Lesotho Communications Authority (LCA) is the regulatory body for the communications sector in Lesotho. Following the adoption of the Lesotho Telecommunications Policy of 1999, the Authority was established by an Act of Parliament in 2000. Presently, the Authority operates under the Communications Act of 2012 for the regulation of Information and Communications Technologies (ICTs), Broadcasting and Postal Services.

LCA invites applications from suitably qualified candidates for the position of **Manager: Information & Communications Technologies (ICT)** reporting to the **Chief Technology Officer**.

Job Summary

The ICT Manager is responsible for leading and managing the Information Technology (IT) functions within the Authority, ensuring that all IT initiatives are aligned with the organizational strategy. The role includes overseeing enterprise IT services, ensuring robust IT governance, and managing national internet critical infrastructure, including the Country Code Top-Level Domain (ccTLD) registry and the Lesotho Internet Exchange Point (LIXP).

Key Responsibilities

1. **Business Process Development**
 - Collaborate with senior management to contribute to the development and enhancement of the Authority's business processes, ensuring integration of ICT capabilities to support business objectives.
 - Provide input on how emerging technologies can be integrated into business processes to improve efficiency and service delivery.
2. **Enterprise IT Planning and Management**
 - Develop and implement IT strategies, policies, and procedures to support organizational goals.
 - Ensure the effective planning, provisioning, and management of Enterprise IT resources, including hardware, software, network infrastructure, and cloud services.
 - Oversee the delivery of IT support across the organization, ensuring minimal downtime and rapid resolution of issues.
 - Manage vendor relationships, negotiate contracts, and ensure the timely acquisition and maintenance of IT systems.
 - Define the enterprise information architecture
3. **IT Governance and Risk Management**
 - Coordinate IT governance activities, ensuring that IT policies, procedures, and standards are aligned with best practices and regulatory requirements.
 - Lead enterprise IT risk management by identifying potential risks and implementing controls to mitigate those risks.
 - Ensure compliance with relevant laws, regulations, and standards in the management of IT assets and operations.
 - Regularly review IT performance metrics and provide reports to senior management on the state of the IT infrastructure.
4. **National Internet Critical Infrastructure Management**
 - Oversee the operations of critical national internet infrastructure, including the ccTLD (.ls) Registry and the Lesotho Internet Exchange Point (LIXP), ensuring high availability and security.
 - Plan, organize, and implement strategies for the continuous improvement of national internet infrastructure to support growing national demands.
 - Develop mechanisms and technical solutions to enhance the performance and visibility of the LIXP and ccTLD registry.
 - Ensure effective collaboration with internet exchange point peers and support registrars to ensure optimal technical operations.
5. **Stakeholder Engagement and Representation**
 - Engage with national, regional, and international stakeholders to promote the development and use of the LIXP and .ls domain registry.
 - Ensure the registry is involved in global internet governance activities, participating in regional and international forums related to domain names, numbering resources, and protocol assignments.
 - Act as the primary representative of the Registry and LIXP at local and international events, including technical forums, policy-making bodies, and industry conferences.
6. **Policy Development and Advocacy**
 - Coordinate the design and implementation of policies and methodologies to ensure active participation by the Lesotho internet community in global internet governance processes.
 - Advocate for the adoption of best practices in internet governance within Lesotho, promoting the interests of the local internet

community.

- Provide expert advice to government agencies and other stakeholders on matters related to ICT, internet governance, and infrastructure development.
7. **Technical Leadership and Support**
 - Lead the IT team in providing high-quality technical support for internal users and external stakeholders, ensuring a customer-focused approach.
 - Manage system upgrades, patch management, and backup strategies to ensure the reliability and security of IT systems.
 - Ensure that all national internet critical infrastructure systems are secure, reliable, and perform optimally, adhering to global standards for resilience and redundancy.
 8. **Managerial Roles & Responsibilities (In-House)**
 - Supervises the work of the section;
 - Mentors the staff of the section;
 - Participates in the preparation of sectional annual operational plans,
 - Prepares quarterly work plans, and budget and performance reports for the section;
 - Provides input in the process of developing skills and capacities to optimize performance;
 - Carries-out performance reviews and identifies any gaps that may be addressed through training and other capacity enhancement activities;
 - Participates in the formulation and implementation of the performance targets that relate to the section within the framework of the Performance Management System (PMS) of the Authority.
 - Participates in the timely preparation and production of sectional reports of all activities including budget and expenditure.
 - Performs any other relevant duties that may be assigned from time to time.

Qualifications

Bachelor's degree in Information Technology, Computer Science, or a related field. A Master's degree would be an added advantage.

Experience

- Minimum of 5-7 years of experience in IT management, preferably within the telecommunications or internet infrastructure sector.
- Experience in managing national internet infrastructure, including ccTLD and IXPs.
- Proven experience in IT governance, IT service management (ITIL), and risk management frameworks.
- Experience in managing large-scale ICT projects, including infrastructure upgrades, cybersecurity, and cloud services.
- Familiarity with global internet governance frameworks, including ICANN policies, IETF protocols, and best practices in domain name and numbering resource management.

Key Skills

- **Leadership and Management:** Strong leadership and team management skills, with the ability to inspire and guide IT teams in a fast-paced environment.
- **Strategic Thinking:** Ability to develop long-term IT strategies that align with organizational goals.
- **Technical Proficiency:** Deep understanding of IT systems, internet infrastructure, and emerging technologies relevant to national critical infrastructure.
- **Communication:** Excellent written and verbal communication skills to engage with both technical and non-technical stakeholders at all levels.
- **Problem-Solving:** Strong analytical skills with the ability to assess complex technical problems and develop effective solutions.
- **Stakeholder Engagement:** Ability to build and maintain relationships with local and international stakeholders in the ICT and internet governance fields.

Tenure

The position is permanent and pensionable.

Remuneration

The LCA offers an attractive and competitive package for the position.

How to Apply

Application letters accompanied by certified copies of relevant certificates, Curriculum Vitae and names and addresses of three referees should be emailed to: hr@lca.org.ls on or before **11 October, 2024. At 12 noon.**



Opportunity

HISTORY

The Red Cross was established in 1863 by Henri Dunant after witnessing the suffering of soldiers at the battle of Solferino. Initially focused on wartime aid, it evolved into a global humanitarian movement, leading to creation of national societies and the adoption of the Geneva Conventions to protect victims of war. Today the movement comprises the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC), coordinating disaster response and 191 national Societies worldwide, promoting humanitarian efforts across various crises. The Movement is guided by seven Fundamental principles being **humanity, impartiality, neutrality, independence, voluntary service, unity and universality.**

The Lesotho Red Cross (LRCS) was established on November 9, 1967 shortly after Lesotho's independence as a successor to the British Red Cross branch. Over 50-year history, LRCS has

provided vital humanitarian services, including healthcare and disaster relief, particularly during crises like HIV/AIDS pandemic and severe droughts. The organization operates in all ten districts of Lesotho, offering support in food security and community health initiatives. Today LRCS continues to adapt its services to meet the evolving needs of Basotho communities.

Become a Volunteer

Your time and talent can make a real difference in people's lives.


Visit our Offices in your Districts.

LRCS is in 10 districts.

Partner with us

Find out what it's like to partner with us and how together we can support people in crisis. Explore how we work with businesses to build long term, strategic and commercially beneficial partnerships that support people during crisis.

For more information please contact: **Phone: (+266) 22323911** or **Email: redcross@redcross.org.ls**

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|  | | | | NATIONAL DRUG SERVICE ORGANIZATION | | | |
| GENERAL DOCUMENT | | | | | | | |
| DOCUMENT TITLE | | | | Invitation Letter | | | |
| DOCUMENT IDENTIFICATION NUMBER | | L4-GEN-PD-50 | | REVISION NUMBER | | 01 | |
| EFFECTIVE DATE | | | | 25 January 2024 | | | |
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INVITATION FOR THE BIDS (IFB)
IFB No.:[NDSO/SOLAR-PANELS/2024/09]

Engagement of the Consulting Engineer(s) for the NDSO Solar Panels Project.

- The National Drug Service Organization (NDSO) is the Central Medical Store for the Ministry of Health. It is mandated to **procure, store, and distribute** Medicines, Medical Supplies, and Laboratory Consumables for the Health Institutions in Lesotho. NDSO is legally gazetted through the Legal Notice Supplement No.4 to Gazette No.19 of the 2nd March 2007. NDSO has set aside funds for the engagement of both the Consulting Engineer(s) and the Contractor for the NDSO Solar Panel Project.
- NDSO now invites sealed bids from eligible bidders for the engagement of the Consulting Engineer(s) for the NDSO Solar Panels Project, the details are in the **Technical Specifications** of this Bidding Document.
- The margin of preference for the local Bidders shall be applied under the requirements of Clause 78 of the Government of Lesotho Public Procurement Act, 2023 during the evaluation. Additional details are provided in the Bidding Documents.
- All interest bidders are expected to make a site visit at NDSO on Friday the 25th October 2024.
- The Bidding shall be conducted through National Competitive tendering procedures based on the Public Procurement Act, of 2023.
- It is expected that Bidders shall be notified about the outcome of the tender on or before [27th November 2024].
- Interested eligible bidders may obtain further information from and inspect the bidding documents at:
National Drug Service Organization
Main South One Road
Mafeteng 900
Lesotho
Email address: tenders@ndso.org.ls
Telephone: +266 222 15 300
- A complete set of bidding documents may be purchased by interested Bidders upon payment of a non-refundable fee of LSL1000.00 (One Thousand Maloti only which is equivalent to South African Rand) on or before Thursday 31st October 2024 at the address below for Bidders who prefer the hard copy of the bidding document. The bidding document will be provided for free when shared electronically with the interested Bidders.
- Account details for payment for bidding documents:
Account number: 9080001845574
Account name: National Drug Service Organization
Bank name: Standard Lesotho Bank
Branch name: Mafeteng Branch
Branch code: 060667
Swift Code: SBICLSMX
- It is mandatory for the bidders to submit: **(a)** the bid form, **(b)** a bonafide certificate for bidding **(c)** bid security (these documents must be filled according to the Forms Provided In section V-The Forms), **(d)** tax clearance certificates (a certified copy of the Original document from the Lesotho Revenue Authority) and **(e)** Trader's license from Ministry of Trade and Industry (A certified copy of the Original document issued by the Ministry of Trade and Industry and/ or any other relevant regulatory or statutory body). Non-compliance with this requirement **shall invalidate** their bids.
- The Bids must be delivered to the address below at or before **1400 hours on [31st October 2024]**. All the bids must be accompanied by the Bid Security of **[Fifty Thousand Maloti (LSL50,000.00)]**. The Bid Security must be in the form of a Bank Guarantee issued by a reputable bank agreeable to NDSO. Late bids shall be rejected. Bids shall be opened in the presence of the bidders' representatives, who choose to attend at the address below at **1430 hours on [31st October 2024]** at the address given below:
The NDSO Procurement Committee
National Drug Service Organization
Main South One Road
Mafeteng 900
Lesotho
M.G. Sefali (Mr)
Chairperson
The NDSO Procurement Committee



Road Fund

VACANCY ANNOUNCEMENT SYSTEMS SUPPORT OFFICER

The Road Fund Secretariat requires the services of a suitably qualified Lesotho National to fill the position of **Systems Support Officer**.

Job Purpose:

To provide Information and Communication Technology (ICT) technical support services to the Road Fund Secretariat. The incumbent will ensure that all Systems Faults/Incidents are correctly prioritised for resolution in order to minimise downtime and meet the Service Level Agreement (SLA). This shall include appropriate escalation of issues through the ICT Manager as may be necessary.

Qualifications, Working Experience and Knowledge:

- Degree in Computer Science, Information Technology / Systems or related field, with at least four (4) years experience in the following Areas: IT Infrastructure, Systems Administration and Applications Support Systems;
- Network administration experience, with a CCNA or equivalent qualification and extensive knowledge of network security.

The successful candidate must be a holder of a valid driver's license with at least two (2) years driving experience in the highlands and be willing to travel to the districts as required.

Remuneration:

Salary will be in accordance with the Road Fund scales of remuneration, which are competitive and market related.

Closing Date for applications: Thursday 3rd October 2024 at 12:00 noon.

Interested candidates may send their applications, complete with Curriculum Vitae, Certified Copies of Certificates of Academic Achievement, certified copy of driver's license, certified copies of National Identity Document and letters of reference from two referees to: The Head of Human Resources and Administration, Road Fund, P. O. Box 14644, Maseru 100 **OR** hand deliver at the Ground Floor Reception Office of the Road Fund Secretariat, situated at the former Department of Rural Roads, corner Senate and Moshoeshoe Roads Industrial Area, Maseru **OR** email to recruitment@roadfund.org.ls

Disclaimer:

- Only applications received on or before the closing date and time will be considered;
- Correspondence will only be conducted with short-listed candidates;
- Road Fund reserves the right not to appoint if no suitable candidate is found.

For further details on the Systems Support Officer's job profile, please visit the Road Fund website: www.roadfund.org.ls.



Advertisement

Vacancy: Chief of Party

FHI 360 is a nonprofit human development organization dedicated to improving lives in lasting ways by advancing integrated, locally driven solutions. Our staff includes experts in Health, Education, Nutrition, Environment, Economic Development, Civil Society, Gender, Youth, Research and Technology— creating a unique mix of capabilities to address today's interrelated development challenges. FHI 360 serves more than 60 countries.

FHI 360 is seeking qualified candidates for the position of Chief of Party (CoP) for an anticipated USAID-funded Lesotho Sustaining Epidemic Control through Unified Prevention (SECURE). The purpose of the project is to advance prevent, detect, and respond to new HIV infections through unified approaches to prevention and strengthened community systems. SECURE will advance the Government of Lesotho's (GOL) efforts to improve access to combination prevention services for people at risk of acquiring HIV.

Job Summary:

The Chief of Party (COP) will provide overall leadership and technical direction for the project, ensuring achievement of project deliverables. The COP will be the primary liaison with USAID and will manage project staff and implementing partners to ensure proper reporting, financial management, and compliance. The COP is expected to coordinate with government and other stakeholders, including other PEPFAR programs and partners, to ensure that activities complement ongoing initiatives and adhere to country and global standards. The position is anticipated to be based in Maseru, Lesotho but can be revised after the final SOW. The position will report to the FHI 360 Lesotho Country Representative. Recruitment is contingent upon successful award of the project and the selection of final applicant is subject to USAID approval.

Accountabilities:

- Responsible for the overall planning, implementation and management of the project as well as the achievement of the goals and objectives of the project in a timely and cost-effective manner;
- Oversee a team of senior technical and program management staff for the project and ensure strong communication and coordination with and between all team members;
- Oversee/manage partnerships and ensure strong lines of communication and collaboration are established and maintained;
- Lead the planning of all project activities and set high quality performance targets ensuring adherence to technical standards, best practices and donor guidelines;
- Oversee strategies and interventions to ensure excellence and accountability to beneficiaries and USAID;
- Represent project both internally and externally to other donors, stakeholders, implementing partners and government counterparts. Produce and present papers at local, regional and international fora to share experiences and emerging best practices;
- Ensure financial and grants management compliance with FHI 360 and USAID rules and regulations.
- Serve as the primary point of contact and collaboration for the team and in-country stakeholders, including USAID, implementation partners, Government of Lesotho partners and other key stakeholders;
- Ensure timely, high-quality and complete submission of work plans, quarterly and annual reports, financial reports, and any other reports required by USAID;
- Promote sustainability of project activities with effective networking, linkages to other programs, capacity building of project staff, and institutional strengthening of implementing partners and community-based organizations.

Applied Knowledge & Skills:

- Comprehensive knowledge of theories, concepts and practices with project management, process development and execution.
- Excellent and demonstrated project management skills.
- Excellent oral and written communication skills.
- Strong influencing and negotiation skills.
- Strong consultative skills.
- Strong critical thinking and problem-solving skills to plan, organize, and manage resources for successful completion of projects.
- Ability to motivate, influence, and collaborates with others.
- Ability to build positive local working relationships with local communities, district government officials, UN and where appropriate, donor representatives.
- Must be able to read, write, and speak fluent.
- English, fluent in host country language.

Problem Solving & Impact:

- Decisions and actions have a significant impact on management and division operations.
- Problems encountered are complex and highly varied.
- Exercises judgment to meet business strategies and develops objectives that align with organizational goals.
- Strong analytical and problem-solving capabilities.

Supervision Given/Received:

- Sets goals and budgets for projects and leads department in achieving strategic goals.

- Leads coordination of resources for ongoing projects across business units and addresses/resolves project issues.
- Typically reports to Program Director or Portfolio Director.

Education:

- Bachelor's Degree or its International Equivalent • Civil Society, Communication and Social Marketing, Economic Development, Education, the Environment, Gender, Health, Nutrition, Research, Technology and Youth or a Related Fields.
- Project Management (PM) Certification preferred.

Experience:

- Typically requires 12+ years of relevant experience with projects management principles and practices (including 8+ years of line management experience).
- Proficient with applicable rules, regulations, and policies associated with international development and non-governmental organizations (NGOs).
- Demonstrated experience in multi-sector project management and implementation.
- Demonstrated strategic planning, staff development and capacity building experience.
- Demonstrated experience in leading and managing complex projects that are strategic in nature and national/international in scope.
- Experience working in a non-governmental organization (NGO).

Typical Physical Demands:

- Typical office environment.
- Ability to spend long hours looking at computer screen and doing repetitive work on a keyboard.
- Ability to sit and stand for extended periods of time.
- Ability to lift/move up to 5 lbs.

Technology to be Used:

- Personal Computer/Laptop, Microsoft applications (i.e., Office 365, SharePoint, Skype/Zoom/Teams), cell phone/mobile technology, and standard office equipment.

Travel Requirements:

- 10% - 25%

**Or an equivalent combination of relevant education and/or experience sufficient to successfully perform the key responsibilities of the job. This job description summarizes the main duties of the job. It neither prescribes nor restricts the exact tasks that may be assigned to carry out these duties. This document should not be construed in any way to represent a contract of employment. Management reserves the right to review and revise this document at any time. Disclaimer: Note the Compensation Band that appears on the job description is associated with those jobs assigned to the US Salary Structure and employees that are paid from US payroll. The Compensation Band for all national local employees aligns to the Compensation Structure based on the Country location of the job.

This job posting summarizes the main duties of the job. It neither prescribes nor restricts the exact tasks that may be assigned to carry out these duties. This document should not be construed in any way to represent a contract of employment. Management reserves the right to review and revise this document at any time.

FHI 360 is an equal opportunity and affirmative action employer whereby we do not engage in practices that discriminate against any person employed or seeking employment based on race, color, religion, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, national or ethnic origin, age, marital status, physical or mental disability, protected Veteran status, or any other characteristic protected under applicable law.

Our values and commitments to safeguarding: FHI 360 is committed to preventing any type of abuse, exploitation and harassment in our work environments and programs, including sexual abuse, exploitation and harassment. FHI 360 takes steps to safeguard the welfare of everyone who engages with our organization and programs and requires that all personnel, including staff members and volunteers, share this commitment and sign our code of conduct. All offers of employment will be subject to appropriate screening checks, including reference, criminal record and terrorism finance checks. FHI 360 also participates in the Inter-Agency Misconduct Disclosure Scheme (MDS), facilitated by the Steering Committee for Humanitarian Response. In line with the MDS, we will request information from job applicants' previous employers about any substantiated findings of sexual abuse, exploitation and/or harassment during the applicant's tenure with previous employers. By applying, job applicants confirm their understanding of these recruitment procedures and consent to these screening checks.

FHI 360 will consider for employment all qualified applicants, including those with criminal histories, in a manner consistent with the requirements of applicable state and local laws.

FHI 360 will never ask you for your career site username or password, and we will never request money, goods or services during the application, recruitment or employment process. If you have questions or concerns about correspondence from us, please email CareerCenterSupport@fhi360.org.

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ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT



Film industry faces challenges amid cinema void

Motsamai Mokatjo

The grim reality is that Lesotho does not have a single cinema making screening and post-production a challenge in the film and documentary space.

The last one closing its door over a decade ago has forced Li Eme Ka Lekoa the film, according to its synopsis, to tell the compelling story of a daughter who faces the traditional hurdle of being unable to inherit her father's chieftainship upon his death, Executive Director, Mpho Letima, to look in neighbouring states.

The most unique challenge facing Lesotho's film industry is the lack of cinemas in the country. This absence of traditional distribution channels has forced the producer to look into the neighbouring countries, South Africa and Botswana, to afford the film to be premiered in these two different countries as a requirement to qualify for submission at the Oscars and to explore alternative distribution channels and platforms.

In the absence of local cinemas, film festivals have become a vital avenue for showcasing Lesotho's cinematic works.

Li Eme ka Lekoa has already been submit-

ted for several Academy Award film festivals, African film festivals, human rights film festivals, and festivals that give light to work about women providing crucial exposure for the film and the country's potentially growing industry, Letima told NewsDay this week.

She further revealed that after they are also exploring digital platforms and community screenings as an avenue to showcase the film. As for post-production cost, she indicated that they were not prepared since theirs is a learning curve of how to navigate the tides.

The executive director further indicated that the technical aspect of post-production editing was also a challenge since the scarcity of experienced post-production collaborators within the country led to some working with different in-country post-production skills for purposes of establishing and identifying local talent, "so we are not reliant on outside expertise".

Sound design and the final mix proved to be adding significantly to both costs and timelines, which affected our budget and schedule.

Independent film director Philip Leteka resonated with Letima about the challenges of having cinemas in Lesotho.

"It is as though we have been forgotten. It is as though cinema never really had a chance. A handful of those filmmakers who had at one point been resiliently outnumbered against the tide have chosen to go elsewhere," Leteka told independent publication Afrokritik recently.

"I will not be building cinemas, the physical buildings, but I am interested in building a more resilient community of young filmmakers, as I believe that to

be the place where Lesotho's cinema will reside," he said.

Another filmmaker, Silas Monyatsi, trusts that change is on the horizon, noting that: "What we're seeing is the birth of a unique film culture in Lesotho. It may not follow the traditional path, but it's one that's authentically ours."



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Li Eme ka Lekoa sheds light on gender equality and inheritance in Lesotho

Arts

Motsamai Mokotjo

The issue of gender and inheritance is intricately woven into the first feature film, *Li Eme ka Lekoa*, which stars Tlhalefo Mohasoa as Princess 'Masentle and Lereko Phakisi as Prince Khama.

According to its synopsis, the film tells the compelling story of a daughter who, upon her father's death, faces the traditional barrier of being unable to inherit his chieftainship.

The film delves into the impact of traditional practices on contemporary life in the region, provoking critical reflection on the place of women in leadership roles.

Speaking with Newsday this week, Mohasoa emphasized the importance of equality for girl children in leadership, stating, "I believe we should practice equality; patriarchy has no place in our society." She added, "People are often surprised that a woman can be a car mechanic, which I am."

For Mohasoa, this was her first time acting or being in front of a camera, a challenge made easier by the support of experienced professionals around her.

"It was intimidating, but I had the support of the team. I put a lot of pressure on myself to deliver." She added, "I auditioned like everyone else and was given the role. I'm not sure what the casting team saw in me."

Her co-star, Phakisi, echoed her sentiments on equality, asserting, "Girls should not be discriminated against when it comes to leadership. The real issue is that we are equal; leadership should not be based on gender, but on the quality of leadership we bring to our communities."



On the issue of language since the *ouvré* is a concoction of Sesotho and Setswana, he indicated that it was a bit challenging for him to articulate the former in its purest form.

"I was lucky in that I have a history of having visited Botswana even before I even auditioned for the film.

"There's a huge difference between Pretoria-based Setswana and one spoken in Botswana; for me as a Mosotho, I had to also learn that Sepedi, and though similar in some ways, they slightly vary," he noted.

For his part, the director, Boikarabello Michael Motaung, echoed Phakisi's stance, going further to indicate that "there is a strong clash of ideologies in this film and everyone wants his side to be heard, which is a chal-

lenge, and the dialogue reaches a breaking point."

"This film was inspired by the story that happened at Ha 'Mamathe, where the daughter of the principal chief was sidelined after the death of her father and had to fight for the chieftaincy; she even went as far as taking the matter to the constitutional court because everyone was saying the chieftaincy of Lesotho is run by the customary law; we all know how the story played out, so making this film was a reflection of where we are as a nation," Motaung said.

Themes development was a keenly observed aspect, as articulated by the director; thus, he said they had to do groundwork in researching issues of heritage.

"...we had to do some research, as this is a traditional story, so firstly it was a question of addressing the theme and what we want to achieve, taking into account the position of women in our society. Now that the world is changing fast and women are taking prominent roles, where are we as a nation? So research was paramount in doing this picture."

On the issue of character treatment, Motaung said they had to hold auditions in the bid to find *crème de la crème*; hence, "we had to take her [Mohasoa] through some rehearsals and make her understand the type of story we are telling; of course all characters in the picture undergo some form of development because of how the story is structured and what is expected of them."

"From the inception of the story, we know that this has to be told in Sesotho regardless of our main character's educational background, which was important to be highlighted. The only aspect of dialogue that needed crafting was the tone of language that needed to be applied, especially with the chief's council, how they speak, and so forth, because the film itself is dialogue heavy, so attention was to be given on the dialogue given the psychology of the characters," Motaung indicated when asked about the style of dialogue in the film.

The director further indicated that there were challenges specifically finding locations for certain scenes; "[however] we tried to make sure that all locations are easily accessible, but that was a challenge because of how we wanted the story to look; at some point we had to compromise without hurting the story. And then, of course, the crew was not that big due to financial constraints, but we did our best to come up with the product we have."

Rapper T Born set to release Sesotho-themed EP "Sotho Man"

Pheello Mosesi

Rapper T Born, known for predominantly using English in his music, is gearing up to release his first Sesotho-themed EP, titled *Sotho Man*, next Friday, October 4.

This highly anticipated EP marks the gospel rapper's debut in his native language and will be available on digital streaming platforms.

The Morija-born artist shared the inspiration behind this new project, stating: "This album originates from me as a Mosotho man. It comes from my language, singing, and my culture.

"Yes, I grew up singing in English at church and in my previous albums, but in this album, I really wanted to venture into new areas, and I'm not ashamed of who I am."

T Born emphasised his pride in being Mosotho, mentioning his efforts to feature local talent in the visuals of his songs.

"I believe making this Sotho EP will give value to being Mosotho, both locally and even internationally. Furthermore, this album will contribute to making Sesotho fashionable, which is a significant movement in Lesotho," he explained.

The release date of the EP coincides with Independence Day, a timing T Born sees as



perfect, especially this year as the Basotho celebrate 200 years of nationhood.

The four-track EP includes songs like "Uena u Molimo" featuring Tankiso Moahl-

oli, "Kea Leboha," "Mosotho" featuring Botswana rapper Cluffings, and "Monate oa Lenyalo."

The project was finely mastered by producer and rapper Mat Ed, signed under Lekhotla Pina Records.

Although the EP promotes Basotho patriotism, T Born included the Tswana feature to express his desire for unity across the continent. He explained: "After the release of this EP, I'm looking to create complementary videos for the songs in collaboration with videographer North Ls."

Reflecting on the creative process, T Born said: "It was a really good experience that I enjoyed while creating this project, and I worked very hard on each and every song. Yes, it was my first time writing in Sesotho for an album, but since this is my mother tongue, it was not too difficult."

He expressed pride in the final product, confident it will resonate with listeners.

"I hope this album will reach so many people since it will be on digital platforms. This is my first project in that space, and I hope it will quench the thirst of those who've always urged me to sing in Sesotho," T Born added.

Highlighting the significance of using a native language, he stated: "It makes the citizens proud and shows that you love your language and are proud of who you are. For me, using English in my music is not because I wasn't proud of being a Mosotho, I'm very proud."

Looking ahead, the rapper hinted that his excitement in crafting the Sotho EP will inspire him to incorporate more Sesotho into his future lyrics.

SPORTS

Makoanyane XI set for TotalEnergies CAF U-20 AFCON, COSAFA qualifiers

Seabata Mahao



Makoanyane XI squad

Lesotho's Under-20 national football team, Makoanyane XI, will compete in the TotalEnergies CAF U-20 Africa Cup of Nations (AFCON) and the Council of Southern African Football Association (COSAFA) Qualifiers, taking place in Mozambique from yesterday to October 5,

2024.

The team, coached by Halemakale Mahlaha, has been drawn into Group C, where they will face South Africa, Malawi, and Comoros. Makoanyane XI will kick off their AFCON qualifiers campaign against Comoros today, September 27,

before facing South Africa on Sunday, September 29.

They will conclude the group stage with a match against Malawi on Tuesday, October 1, 2024.

Earlier this week, the team held their final training session ahead of their departure to Mozambique on Tuesday.

This followed a series of friendly matches against Mozambique in preparation for the COSAFA campaign, including a goalless draw last Sunday, September 22, at the Bambatha Tšita Sports Arena.

The Makoanyane XI provisional squad includes the following players:

Goalkeepers:

- Reitumetse Moeletsi (AC TIP FC)
- Leluma Mofoka (Matlama FC)

Defenders:

- Kabelo Ngatane (Kick4Life FC)
- Lehlohonolo Leemisa (Majantja FC)
- Mahlomola Mafetoe (AC TIP FC)
- Bafokeng Ntšeno (Kick4Life FC)
- Malefatsane Tamako (Matlama FC)

Midfielders:

- Tumelo Mokena (CCX FC)
- Sechaba Mohapi (Lioli FC)
- Rorisang Malefane (Linare FC)
- Reamohetse Mefane (Majantja FC)
- Thandazo Ndlovu (Majantja FC)
- Tšepo Senamolele (Kick4Life FC)
- Chewane Ntakha (LMPS FC)
- Mokhethi Raputsoe (Mzamane FC)
- Tumelo Shai (Orlando Pirates FC)

Forwards:

- Liphlo Ralesupi (Majantja FC)
- Tšepo Kome (Majantja FC)
- Paseka Maile (Kick4Life FC)
- Tholang Makuru (Lioli FC)

Makoanyane XI has qualified twice before for the continental youth tournament, first in 2005 under the leadership of the late Seephephe 'Mochine' Matete and Lehlohonolo Thotanyana, and again in 2011 with coaches Leslie Notši and the late Moses Maliehe at the helm.

The nation eagerly awaits to see if Makoanyane XI can repeat their success and secure a spot in the prestigious AFCON tournament.

Mokhosi appointed match commissioner for Super Cup final

Seabata Mahao



LeFA Secretary General, Mokhosi Mohapi

Lesotho Football Association (LEFA) Secretary General, Mokhosi Mohapi, has been appointed as Match Commissioner for the highly anticipated TotalEnergies CAF Super Cup 2024 final between Egyptian giants Al Ahly and Zamalek.

The sold-out clash will take place today at the Kingdom Arena in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia.

Zamalek, the champions of the TotalEnergies CAF Confederation Cup, will face their fierce rivals, Al Ahly, who claimed the TotalEnergies CAF Champions League title.

This historic match is expected to be a thrilling encounter, showcasing two of the most successful clubs in African football.

According to LEFA's information and

communications manager, Mikia Kalati, Mohapi was appointed by the Confederation of African Football (CAF) to oversee one of the continent's most prestigious matches as the official match commissioner.

Kalati also highlighted Mohapi's role on the CAF Club Licensing and Organising Committee for Inter-Club Competitions, further emphasising his extensive experience in African football administration.

Mohapi's appointment marks the third time a LEFA member has been selected for a major final in 2024.

Kalati explained that earlier this year, Souru Phatšoane officiated the CAF Champions League final, while Nteboheleng Setoko served as a referee for the CAF Women's Champions League and COSAFA Qualifiers final.

The Kingdom Arena, renowned for its world-class facilities, is set to host what promises to be an action-packed encounter, as two of Africa's most iconic football clubs battle for continental supremacy.

Thamae under medical observation after concerning incident

Seabata Mahao

Matlama Football Club (FC) midfielder Katiso 'Bushy' Thamae is currently undergoing medical treatment following what appeared to be a mental breakdown on Sunday.

Thamae was found in a residential house in Maseru East in the early hours of that day.

The house belongs to the Spokesperson of Maseru East Community Policing, who explained that upon their discovery, they sought as-

sistance and later confirmed that Thamae was in an unstable mental state.

Ramafahla Thamae, the communications and marketing manager of Matlama FC, has confirmed that Thamae was found in a distressed condition, although the underlying cause of his situation could not be determined at that moment.

Thamae stated that Matlama's medical team was working diligently to identify the root of the issue to provide Thamae with the necessary

support.

"Matlama FC is aware of Katiso 'Bushy' Thamae's current situation and our medical team is assessing, observing, and providing him with all the necessary medical assistance," the team said in a statement.

"We urge the Matlama family and the general public to allow the medical team the space to help him recover and to determine which substance he may have taken. Further details will be disclosed in due course," the statement concluded.



Matlam Football Club (FC)'s midfielder, Katiso 'Bushy' Thamae



27 Sept - 03 Oct 2024

Setso to finally receive long-awaited turf installation

Seabata Mahao

The long-abandoned Setsoto Stadium is finally set to undergo refurbishment, with the long-awaited installation of an artificial turf beginning next month.

This was disclosed by the Minister of Sports, Motlatsi Maqelepo, during a recent media briefing in Maseru earlier this week.

Maqelepo announced that the installation would commence immediately after the country's Independence celebrations on October 4, 2024.

The project, according to the minister, will involve both international and local contractors, with the latter tasked with addressing infrastructure issues like toilets, seating, and other necessary repairs.

"We have also hired a consulting company to help us appoint contractors who will handle essential fixes such as electricity and toilets. So far, this is what we have achieved," Maqelepo said.

"While it's hard to provide an exact timeline, I hope that if the turf installation starts in October, the entire project could be completed by January or February next year, despite some challenges," he added.

The minister acknowledged that Setsoto Stadium was outdated compared to stadiums in other countries, emphasising the immediate goal of making it functional again to host games.

However, he also hinted at the possibility of a full renovation or even demolishing and rebuilding the stadium in the long term.

"This stadium is old. In other countries, you wouldn't even find such outdated facilities. We understand the issue with our national teams being forced to play outside Lesotho, and we're committed to resolving it," he explained.

The renovation comes after the stadium was decommissioned for international games for four years, forcing Lesotho's national football team, Likuena, to play home matches in South Africa due to the poor condition of the stadium and its outdated facilities.

The government is now working to restore Setsoto Stadium to meet international standards. According to the Minister, the total cost of the renovations is estimated at M74 million.

Maqelepo mentioned that financial difficulties, including complications between the Ministry of Sports and the Ministry of Public Works, caused delays, with only partial payments made to contractors.

"Setsoto Stadium has been stagnant for a long time due to financial issues, but after extensive discussions, the contractor who was appointed last year to install the turf was here recently, and we reviewed the contract terms," Maqelepo added.

He also revealed plans to build additional



The old turf inside Setsoto Stadium

stadiums across the country, stating that the ministry was in talks with investment companies and exploring government funding options.

Smaller stadiums with a 5,000 seating capacity are planned for towns across Lesotho, while a larger, modern stadium is estimated to cost over M1 billion.

Meanwhile, Setsoto Stadium is expected to host Lesotho's upcoming Independence Day celebrations. The turf installation will begin immediately after the event, with the project anticipated to be completed between January and February, depending on the challenges faced.

In a related development, the Secretary General of the Lesotho Football Association

(LeFA), Mokhosi Mohapi, recently expressed concern over the delays at Setsoto Stadium.

Mohapi indicated that the situation led LeFA to forfeit development benefits under FIFA Project Funding. Mohapi accused the Ministry of Sports of holding LeFA's funding hostage.

"As a result, crucial projects like the Under-20 Girls National Team, Under-15 Boys and Girls National Academy, and the construction of two technical centers in Maseru and Leribe will not proceed," Mohapi said.

He added that the worst consequence was that the FIFA Forward 1.0 Project Funding could be withdrawn by FIFA by December 31, 2024, due to the ministry's failure to commit to refurbishment timelines.



The outside look of Setsoto Stadium from the east side



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