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Water war brews in Berea

- **Residents say they were promised water but given excuses**
- **Officials preach patience as tank stays shut**

Ntsoaki Motaung and Palesa Moloinyane

Tensions flared on Sunday as frustrated residents of Lekokoaneng in Berea attempted to take matters into their own hands, threatening to forcibly open a long-completed water tank that has remained inaccessible since its construction last year.

The water infrastructure, reportedly part of a M40 million project intended to address chronic water shortages in the area, has become a potent symbol of delayed service delivery.

Despite repeated efforts to engage authorities, community members said they have been sent from pillar to post with no clear explanations or timeline for when the water supply will be functional.

The project's sod-turning ceremony was held in January 2024 and officiated by the Minister of Natural Resources, Mhloni Moleko, who emphasised water as a fundamental human necessity. He reiterated Lesotho's commitment to Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 6, which aims to ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all by 2030.

Yet, nearly a year after the infrastructure was reportedly completed in August 2024, and with promises of operational water access by December, residents are still without clean, running water.

In their latest attempt to seek answers, residents convened a community meeting on Sunday, inviting local chiefs, councillors, the District Administrator (DA), Members of Parliament (MPs), and officials from the Rural Water Supply (RWS).

None of the invitees attended, further enraging an already agitated community.

Some residents began calling for the tank to be forcibly opened. However, cooler heads prevailed after others warned that such actions would constitute trespassing and could lead to criminal charges.

Thuathe No. 26 MP, Voeswa Tsheka, told Newsday yesterday that she did not attend Sunday's meeting because she usually receives invitations to community gatherings through the area chief or local councillor.

Tsheka said she received this particular invitation directly from the organisers, which prompted her to contact the councillor, who informed her that a separate meeting with the community was being planned for Thursday of this week.

"The meeting was originally scheduled for today," she said on yesterday.

"However, it was postponed due to the cold weather. The challenge with weekend meetings is that government officials, who are directly involved in the project, often struggle to attend. These are the people best positioned to explain the technical details to the community."

When asked why the water tank remains



unused, Tsheka explained that although the tank was completed, it could not be put into operation due to the poor condition of the existing water delivery network, which is old and riddled with leaks.

"If the tank had been connected to the current system, most of the water would have been lost through leakages," she said.

"It was therefore decided that the delivery network should first be upgraded. This decision was communicated to the community. The budget for the network rehabilitation has been approved, the work is underway, and once completed, water will be delivered. That day is not far off," she added.

Speaking to Newsday by phone, Chief Souru Masopha acknowledged the community's long-standing struggle with water shortages.

Masopha confirmed that the project was supposed to be completed by August 2024 and said he was informed by stakeholders that the delay is due to missing pipes and incomplete infrastructure needed to distribute the water.

He admitted he did not attend the meeting because he forgot the date and was not reminded by the organisers.

Local councillor Matobako Hlephole also failed to attend, telling Newsday that the gathering was held outside his electoral jurisdiction. Hlephole added that community meetings, especially on critical issues such as water, should be hosted at the local chief's homestead, not elsewhere.

He said that while the contractor completed the tank in October 2024, his mandate did not include additional works like pipe installation. He noted that broken pipes from the old system had still not been repaired.

"There were delays in identifying a qualified person to manage the distribution network, and the original budget was exhausted," he explained. "Repairs are now underway, and the contractor has committed to completing the remaining work by 17 July 2025," he said.

Hlephole expressed disappointment that the community was not acknowledging the ongoing efforts. "They have been kept informed, yet they continue to demand immediate results," he said.

The lack of water has deeply affected daily life in Lekokoaneng, with residents forced to fetch water from distant and often contaminated sources.

'Mamonaheng Nthangoe, a woman in her 60s who uses crutches due to a health condition, explained the impossible choice she faces. "I live with my two grandchildren, aged 8 and 10. They are too young to fetch water at 3AM from a distant well. So, we are forced to use water from a dam, where animals also drink," she said.

The water from the dam is used for all household needs, cooking, cleaning, and drinking, exposing the family to serious health risks.

Another resident, 'Marelebohile Raletšele,

echoed these concerns, emphasising the burden on women. "We wake up as early as 3AM to fetch water. We only return around 11AM," she said. "These long hours rob us of time for rest, education, or income-generating activities."

For schoolchildren, the water crisis has added a heavy burden. Parents and guardians at the meeting expressed concern that children must trek long distances to wells after school, often returning too late or too tired to focus on their homework.

The crisis extends beyond household needs. Local businesses, particularly brick-making operations, have been brought to a standstill.

Thabang Noto, a resident, said: "Businesses that relied on water, especially those making bricks, have stopped operating. That means more joblessness and more poverty."

'Maitumeleng Tuoane, a community member leading the effort to demand accountability, shared what residents had learned from the Rural Water Supply.

According to Tuoane, officials explained that the tank remains non-operational because some essential pipes are missing, and there is no budget to procure them.

This explanation raised even more questions among the community. "Why was the project allowed to proceed with an insufficient budget, risking its completion and leaving us without access to water?" Tuoane asked.

She added that the situation is particularly dire for families who cannot afford to drill boreholes and are forced to buy water at M3 for 20 litres from those who have boreholes.

"Sometimes, we do not even have that M3 because we are unemployed," she said. "Our only option then is to fetch water from a well where we share with animals," highlighting the impossible choices residents are forced to make daily.

The community was especially alarmed by the alleged RWS's claim of a lack of funds, given their understanding that the project was financed by the African Development Bank.

Residents also recalled that before the current tank was built, there was a functioning tank in place. They used to contribute M20 monthly for electricity to pump water into a communal tank that met their needs. However, that system was dismantled when the new project began, without any warning or consultation, they said.

"We had no problems with that tank until it was demolished," one resident said. "We were simply told a new one would soon replace it and distribute water. But here we are, still waiting."

The dismantling of a working system in favour of one that remains unusable has only deepened feelings of betrayal and abandonment among the people of Lekokoaneng.

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ECCD funding still too low and donor-dependent

Ntsoaki Motaung

Despite notable growth in budget allocations for Early Childhood Care and Development (ECCD) in Lesotho over the past five years, a new report warns that the sector’s heavy reliance on donor funding and stagnant domestic investment threaten its long-term sustainability.

The report, jointly developed by the Ministry of Education and Training (MoET), the Network of Early Childhood Development of Lesotho (NECDOL), and the Lesotho Council of NGOs, analyses ECCD financing trends from 2020 to 2025.

It revealed that although ECCD funding has increased from 1.14 percent to 4.80 percent of the MoET’s budget, a staggering 78.44 percent of that funding comes from donors.

With government recurrent spending frozen at 1.45 percent throughout the five-year period, experts fear the country’s youngest learners remain vulnerable to shifts in donor priorities and external funding shocks.

The report called for urgent policy reforms, including a legislated seven percent minimum budget allocation for ECCD by 2026 and stronger domestic mechanisms for monitoring and coordinating expenditure.

ECCD, the report emphasised, is the foundation for lifelong learning and a key driver of national productivity.

Yet despite recognition of its importance, the government’s recurrent spending on early childhood services remains flat, hovering at just 1.45 percent of MoET’s total budget



over the period under review.

While ECCD’s share of the ministry’s overall budget grew from 1.14 percent in 2020 to 4.80 percent in 2025, the report noted that a staggering 78.44 percent of the sector’s funding is still donor-funded.

This raises concerns about long-term sustainability.

The report further revealed that MoET’s total budget allocation from the national purse dropped sharply, from 13.65 percent in 2023/24 to just 9.20 percent in the current financial year.

Capital funding fell by a dramatic 98 percent. This deepened the sector’s reliance on development partners such as UNICEF, GPE, and the World Bank.

International benchmarks, including those set by UNESCO and UNICEF, call on governments to allocate at least 10 percent of their education budgets to early childhood care and education.

In November 2022, UNESCO member states—including Lesotho—committed to reaching this target and ensuring fair pay and decent working conditions for ECCD profes-

sionals.

Currently, Lesotho lags behind this goal but still outperforms regional peers such as Malawi and Eswatini. However, it trails Kenya, which has already surpassed the 5.6 percent threshold.

The report warned that only 35 percent of ECCD centres in Lesotho have adequate learning materials, highlighting the urgent need for increased and better-targeted investment.

In its conclusion, the report argued that Lesotho’s progress in ECCD financing is commendable, but not enough.

“While the current ECCD budget is closer to five percent, it is donor-dependent and therefore unstable,” it read. “Strategic reallocation of government funds is necessary to ensure long-term sustainability and equitable access.”

It called on the government to legislate a minimum seven percent ECCD budget allocation by 2026 and to establish a Donor Coordination Unit to harmonise external contributions.

Other key recommendations include developing a detailed, costed ECCD expansion plan, launching a real-time expenditure tracking system, addressing delays in procurement, and prioritising rural and marginalised communities to ensure that no child is left behind.

“Develop a detailed costed plan for ECCD expansion, including infrastructure, teacher training, and curriculum improvements. Address delays in procurement processes to ensure the timely implementation of ECCD programs. Prioritise rural and marginalised communities to ensure all children have access to quality early childhood education,” it concluded.

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Audit bombshell: LEC spent over M200 million without signed contracts

Thoboloko Ntšonyane

The embattled Lesotho Electricity Company (LEC) spent over M200 million on materials from various suppliers without signed contracts, Newsday has learned.

This shocking revelation is contained in a damning internal audit report seen by Newsday, which exposed widespread procurement irregularities at LEC, raising serious questions about the utility's governance, financial controls, and commitment to transparency.

Covering procurement activities for goods and services in the 2023/24 financial year, the audit detailed a series of procedural breaches that auditors say expose the company to significant legal, financial, and reputational risks.

The report, prepared by LEC's Head of Internal Audit, Thato Matsoso, and submitted to the Audit and Risk Committee, highlighted as one of its most alarming findings the lack of signed contracts for multi-million-maloti tenders awarded by the LEC Board of Directors in July 2023.

Despite the board's clear instruction that formal framework agreements be drafted for each awarded lot, including price adjustment mechanisms linked to inflation indices from the Central Bank of Lesotho (CBL) and the South African Reserve Bank (SARB), auditors found no evidence that any contracts had been finalised or signed.

Procurement officials, according to the report, told auditors the draft contracts had been submitted to the Legal Department for finalisation, but there was no proof that these submissions ever occurred, nor any record of follow-ups or escalations to senior management.

In the meantime, procurement transactions continued with suppliers, including Lesehe, MM Building, and TJ Group, to the tune of over M200 million, all without signed contracts in place.

The company has been actively buying from these suppliers:

- **M44.7 million** to Lesehe for transformers and mini-sub
- **M59.8 million** to MM Building for meters
- **M52 million** to TJ Group for cables
- **M28.5 million** to TJ Group for circuit



boxes and poles

- **M15.2 million** to Lesehe for miscellaneous hardware

This lack of contract oversight coincided with another red flag. Significant and unexplained price increases between the amounts quoted in suppliers' original bids and the prices actually paid.

In some instances, the price variances ranged between 10 and 69 percent. Procurement staff could not provide any documentation to justify these changes, nor evidence that they had been reviewed and approved by the appropriate authorities.

The Procurement Manager blamed the delay in awarding contracts, nearly a year after bids were submitted in August 2022, for the price hikes. However, the audit notes that without formal review, the price adjustments are not only irregular but may be masking deeper problems, including possible collusion between suppliers and procurement staff.

"A lack of proactive contract management and oversight has created opportunities for collusion between suppliers and procurement personnel, where suppliers may submit artificially low bids to gain preference, knowing that prices will be inflated later," the report read.

"LEC faces potential financial losses due to unsubstantiated price variations, increasing the risk of procurement fraud and unethical practices that could undermine the fairness and transparency of the procurement process," it added.

The audit further revealed how procurement protocols were bypassed under the pretext of urgency. Before the Procurement

Committee had formally approved recommended bidders, procurement staff initiated a separate process, issuing selective requests for quotations (RFQs) to suppliers already identified in the evaluation report.

Two suppliers, Big Potato and Southgate, were awarded contracts worth millions without the legally required competitive quotation process, a direct violation of Section 100 of the Public Procurement Act of 2023, which mandates that at least three quotations be obtained, even in emergencies.

Oversight failures also plagued the contractor approval process.

Phatsoane Construction, which was disqualified by the evaluation team for lacking a valid electrical certificate, later appeared on the final list of approved contractors and was awarded over M269,000 in service contracts.

Auditors found no explanation for how the company was reinstated, a lapse they warn could result in substandard or unsafe work.

"Despite disqualification, LEC engaged and continues to engage the company. According to SAP records, the total business awarded to Phatsoane Construction for works and services from FY23 to FY25 amounts to LSL 269,336.69," the report read.

"Ineffective review mechanisms and lack of due diligence in the contractor approval process allowed discrepancies between the evaluation report and final approvals to go undetected.

"Selecting a contractor who does not meet qualification criteria may lead to substandard work, is a safety hazard and could lead to financial losses and regulatory compliance issues."

The problems did not end there. Auditors

found that LEC had no procurement plan for goods, services, or works for the 2023/24 financial year.

The Procurement Manager claimed that divisions failed to submit their procurement needs, yet no evidence was provided to show that such submissions were ever requested. The absence of a procurement plan has led to procurement delays, poor financial forecasting, and inefficiencies that have slowed LEC's operations.

Pre-tender estimates, which are required by both the government's Procurement Manual and the Public Procurement Act, were also missing for all 13 tenders reviewed by the audit team.

This total non-compliance has meant that procurement decisions were made without any benchmarks, increasing the risk of overpricing and budget overruns.

Meanwhile, the audit uncovered irregularities in how suppliers were registered. With the exception of connections contractors, there was no documented or standardised process for evaluating or approving suppliers included in LEC's supplier database.

Supplier applications could not be provided for review, and decisions about inclusion appear to have been left to the discretion of individual procurement officers.

In one particularly alarming case, the auditors found that after the termination of a contract initially awarded to Tripple K for Lot 11, the work was reassigned to Big Potato in November 2023.

However, no documentation was available to verify the termination process. Nor was there any price renegotiation, even though the original pricing was based on a 90-day validity period that had long expired.

Instead, Big Potato submitted significantly higher prices, citing market inflation, a claim accepted without verification or benchmarking.

The audit concludes that ineffective internal controls, weak oversight, and poor documentation practices have undermined the integrity of LEC's procurement processes.

Without urgent corrective action, the report warns, the utility risks continued financial losses, exposure to legal liability, and public backlash over poor service delivery and questionable spending.

Parliament urged to free mentally ill inmates held at Mohlomi

Staff Reporter

The Christian Advocates and Ambassadors Association has called on Parliament to facilitate the immediate release of all intellectually disabled inmates held at Mohlomi Mental Hospital, citing inhumane conditions and unconstitutional detention.

In a letter dated June 12 and delivered to the Office of the Clerk of the National Assembly this week, the group's legal representative, Advocate Fusi Sehapi, described the conditions at Mohlomi as a "horrific ordeal" that violates the fundamental rights to health and dignity guaranteed by Lesotho's Constitution.

The group said its recent visit to the psychiatric facility revealed that many of the patients, most of whom are criminally charged individuals declared mentally unfit, are being detained under appalling conditions without valid legal justification.

"It is the considered opinion of the Christian Advocates that most of the prisoners are being kept in the psychiatric hospital or prison un-

constitutionally," Sehapi wrote.

"The law that allows for such imprisonment, specifically Sections 166 and 172 of the Criminal Procedure and Evidence Act of 1981, is overly broad and flawed."

According to Sehapi, the current legal framework compels magistrates to send mentally ill individuals to prison rather than considering alternatives such as conditional release and home-based treatment. He argued that this approach fails to uphold human rights and does not align with modern mental health care practices.

He also said conditions at Mohlomi are "not conducive to life or good health" and fall far below international standards. "The situation is spiritually, psychologically, and physically harmful. It is so dire that some patients who recover are pushed back into mental illness simply because they are not released and continue to suffer in such degrading conditions," Sehapi added.

The group has urged Parliament to implement the recommendations made by the Om-

budsman, Advocate Tlotliso Polaki, in October 2023, within one month, and to respond formally within 14 days of receiving the letter.

Polaki had previously raised alarm about the prolonged detention of mentally ill individuals, particularly in the hospital's Forensic Unit. This section houses individuals detained under the Criminal Procedure and Evidence (Amendment) Act No. 4 of 2009, which gives courts discretion to send mentally ill offenders to psychiatric care. However, these detentions often continue for years without periodic review or clear discharge procedures.

The Ombudsman warned that such practices constitute inhumane treatment under Section 8 of the Constitution and further deteriorate the mental health of already vulnerable individuals.

Concerns over the state of Mohlomi Mental Hospital are not new. In July 2024, a parliamentary portfolio committee on the social cluster visited the facility and was told that it was "fundamentally unfit for its intended purpose."



TSE HLOKAHALANG

HO LATA KARETE EA HAU EA **VISA**

MOTHO KA BO MONG/ INDIVIDUAL

- Boitsebiso/ Identity Document

K'HAMPHANI EA MOTHO A LE MONG/ SOLE PROPRIETOR

- Boitsebiso/ Identity Document



TSE HLOKOANG

HO BULA POLOKELO

MOTHO KA BO MONG/ INDIVIDUAL

- Boitsebiso/ Identity Document
- Bopaki ba bolulo/ Proof of Residence
- Mohloli oa chelete/ Source of Income

LIKHOEBO

K'HAMPHANI EA MOTHO A LE MONG/ SOLE PROPRIETOR

- Boitsebiso ba monga khoebo/ Identity Document
- Bopaki ba bolulo ba monga khoebo/ Proof of Residence
- Lengolo la Khafa le nakong/ Valid Tax Clearance
- Lakesense ea khoebo e nakong/ Valid Traders License/ Business ID

K'HAMPHANI/ COMPANY

- Boitsebiso ba beng ba khoebo/ Identity Documents for All Directors
- Bopaki ba bolulo ba beng ba khoebo/ Proof of Residences for All Directors
- Boitsebiso ba batekini ba lumelletsoeng/ Identity Documents for Authorized Signatories
- Bopaki ba bolulo ba batekini ba lumelletsoeng/ Proof of Residence for Authorized Signatories
- Lengolo la Khafa le nakong/ Valid Tax Clearance
- Lakesense ea khoebo e nakong/ Valid Traders License/ Business ID
- Lengolo la Ngoliso ea Khoebo/ Certificate of Incorporation
- Lengolo le bont'sang mesebetsi ea K'hamphani/ Company Extract
- Lengolo la tumellano ea ho bula polokelo/ Resolution Letter to Open Account



Newsday Business

T-Connect's vision for transforming connectivity in Lesotho

Palesa Moloinyane

As Lesotho grapples with an internet penetration rate of just 47 percent, particularly in its remote and mountainous regions, the arrival of Starlink, through its authorised reseller, T-Connect, promises to reshape the country's digital landscape. With bold ambitions to extend reliable, high-speed internet to even the most underserved communities, T-Connect is positioning itself as more than just a service provider; it sees itself as a catalyst for economic development, digital inclusion, and innovation.

In this exclusive interview with Newsday, T-Connect CEO Phelane Phomane shares the company's vision for connectivity in Lesotho, its role in supporting national digital transformation goals, and how satellite internet can complement existing infrastructure, empower small businesses, and open global doors for Basotho digital talent. He also addresses concerns around affordability, foreign ownership, and sustainability, highlighting the company's commitment to building a home-grown, inclusive digital future for Lesotho.

Newsday: How does T-Connect, as the authorised Starlink reseller, plan to address Lesotho's current internet penetration rate of just 47 percent, especially in remote and mountainous regions?

Phelane Phomane (PP): T-Connect's connectivity solutions allow us to provide internet services from anywhere in Lesotho. This gives us the flexibility to shape and develop products and services that will make the internet more accessible to anyone from anywhere.

Newsday: What specific benefits will Starlink's satellite internet bring to Lesotho's private sector, particularly small and medium-sized enterprises that have traditionally struggled with connectivity?

PP: SMMEs will be able to access reliable high-speed internet based on what they need and not what is available. Our business connectivity plans have been built with Basotho businesses of all types and sizes in mind.

Newsday: Can you elaborate on the potential economic impact of T-Connect's services in Lesotho, including job creation and opportunities for digital entrepreneurship?

PP: Our approach in all the markets we operate in is to drive impact in areas that need it the most. In Lesotho, one of the biggest challenges that we see is a massive opportunity in the digital economy, from the infrastructure and skills standpoint. That is why we are investing heavily in building



CEO of T-Connect, Phelane Phomane

the competitiveness of Basotho in the global digital skills market. Through our collaborations with Digify Africa and Holberton School in Lesotho, we will be upskilling Basotho in digital skills that are in high demand across the world and creating a marketplace where employers and people looking for such skills can easily find such talent. This alone will not be enough to create enough jobs to transform the economy. We also have a very ambitious plan to invest in backbone digital infrastructure and create a technology precinct that will allow Lesotho to provide digital services to not only its domestic market, but the regional and global market as well. In our opinion, to create sustainable jobs that have a lasting and long-term impact on the economy in Lesotho, the domestic market on its own is not sufficient. We must look at Lesotho as a provider of critical skills to the world, allowing us to export skills and services instead of people.

Newsday: Given the opposition from some local stakeholders regarding Starlink's foreign ownership, how does T-Connect ensure that the Basotho people and economy will benefit from this partnership?

PP: T-Connect is not Starlink. T-Connect is owned by Africans, including Basotho, and

is led by Basotho as well. There is no greater assurance that Basotho will benefit. In addition, Lesotho is an integral part of our continental strategy in driving digital transformation across the continent. The jobs created by our data centre initiative will benefit Basotho directly.

Newsday: How is T-Connect working with the Lesotho government to support national digital transformation goals and improve public services such as education, healthcare, and commerce through enhanced connectivity?

PP: Fortunately, the Government of Lesotho has developed and published a Digital Transformation Strategy. This, on its own, gives us a clear direction and indication of where the Government needs support. As a privately held business, we believe our role is to act within policy and strategy. Our initiatives already do so. As much as we are yet to engage formally and conclude a formal relationship, we also don't need to wait for that to happen. The government has issued a policy directive and a strategy. Ours is to buy into it and implement.

Newsday: What measures are in place to make Starlink's satellite internet affordable and accessible to a broad segment of Lesotho's population, consider-

ing the country's modest average income?

PP: Starlink specifically works with resellers such as T-Connect to make the service more accessible to the local market. We price based on a regulatory schedule informed by our mission to digitally transform Lesotho. We certainly cannot achieve that if our solutions are inaccessible.

Newsday: How does T-Connect's presence and operations in Lesotho compare with its activities in other African countries, and what lessons or best practices are being applied locally?

PP: First and foremost it is never a one size fits all. Every country is different. Every country has different needs, tastes and challenges. For instance, Botswana is very different from Lesotho. It's a bigger economy and a bigger land mass. However, we are using global best practice across ALL our markets and ALL our solutions. Our approach is to find the best and most efficient, and effective solution to allow Africans to compete in the global marketplace, regardless of where it is from.

Newsday: What role does T-Connect see for satellite internet in complementing existing terrestrial infrastructure provided by local operators like Vodacom Lesotho and Econet Telecom Lesotho?

PP: Firstly, collaborations with telecom operators have the potential to make the internet more accessible, both in terms of cost and reach. Secondly, almost every Mosotho has a mobile phone. Being able to provide reliable satellite connectivity to every Mosotho through this channel would be a massive game-changer for the country. Other telecoms operators are doing the same, and this has yielded positive results for the market and end-users. Surely, it could be done in Lesotho as well.

Newsday: Can you discuss the long-term vision for T-Connect and Starlink in Lesotho beyond the initial rollout, particularly regarding expanding coverage and fostering innovation ecosystems?

PP: At the centre of T-Connect's ethos is collaboration. In the long term, we would like to facilitate and connect multiple collaborations across multiple industries, through partnerships, joint projects and hopefully joint infrastructure initiatives hosted at our technology precinct. In our opinion, ecosystems are the only way that Lesotho will truly move forward. Different parts moving together towards the same goal

Newsday: How does T-Connect balance the challenges of regulatory compliance, local partnerships, and technological deployment to ensure sustainable growth and digital inclusion in Lesotho and across Africa?

PP: We have taken a long-term view to digital transformation. This requires engagement with all stakeholders at all levels. It is a combination of fast and slow, patience and aggression, focus, intentionality and humility.

TSEBISO! TSEBISO!

Mona ke tsebisoe ea hore re le litho tsa tsa Movement for Economic Change, re lahlehetsoe ke tokomane ea rona ea molao oa motheo oa mokhatlo. Nomoro ea ngolisoe ke **2017/30**. 'Me re kopa mang kappa mang ea ka tholang molao theo kapa ea ka bang le khanyetso ea taba tse na itlalehe liatireseng tse na, nakong ea libeke tse tse tharo ka mora phatlalatso ena.

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Notice in terms of section 37 of the Administration of Estates and Inheritance Act No.2 of 2024; **ESTATE LATE TUMISANG LATISLAS FESI E890/2024**

Notice is hereby given in terms of Section 37 of the Administration of Estates and Inheritance Act No.2 of 2024 calling upon surviving spouse, their heirs, legatees and creditors of the deceased to attend a meeting before the Master of the High Court, In Maseru on **THURSDAY, 14TH AUGUST 2025** at 09:00 am for the purpose of: Proposing some person/persons to be appointed by the Master as Executor dative.

Dated at Maseru this 20th May 2025
Master of the High Court Office

Magistrate Court Building
Maseru



Crucial maternity equipment boosts remote hospital

Staff Reporters

St. James Mission Hospital in Mantšonyane, Thaba-Tseka district has received a life-saving donation of maternity equipment, newborn clothing and blankets intervention expected to significantly improve neonatal care and reduce infant mortality in the district.

The donation was made by the Lesotho chapter of the Third Order Society of St. Francis (TSSF), a global Anglican/Episcopal religious order, during a handover ceremony held this week at St. John's Parish in Maseru.

The event was attended by church leaders, healthcare staff, TSSF members, and other stakeholders, and was presided over by Rt Rev Dr. Vicentia Kgabe, the Anglican Bishop of Lesotho.

Speaking at the event, Bishop Kgabe, who is also the Bishop Protector for the African Province of the TSSF, commended the Society's continued dedication to community development.

"I really want to thank the Third Order Society of St. Francis movement in Lesotho for their decision to support the hospital for the benefit of the people," she said.

The donated items include an infant radiant warmer, a fetal Doppler, a patient monitor, a sphygmomanometer, a three-section gynecological couch, and warm baby clothing and blankets. These will benefit the maternity and labour ward of St. James Hospital, which services six rural health centres



in the area.

Manager of Hospital Nursing Services, Khonyane Mabitso, welcomed the donation, particularly highlighting the challenge of operating under the harsh winter conditions of the highlands.

"The cold conditions under which we work at this time of the year make it challenging to properly take care of the newborn babies at the hospital, and the baby warmer will come very handy in enhancing our work," he said.

Mabitso also noted the added burden of teenage pregnancies and high poverty levels in the district, which result in many

mothers arriving for delivery without baby clothing.

"With these clothing, we are going to make sure that when they leave the hospital, their babies are wearing warm, cozy clothing like others, thereby keeping the dignity of the parent intact," he added.

Thaba-Tseka remains one of the most underserved districts in Lesotho's healthcare system, with the highest infant mortality rate in the country.

Hospital Administrator Zuzeka Xama underscored the ongoing need for support in other hospital departments and the pressing need for expansion to cope with patient

demand.

TSSF Lesotho Convenor, Ntsebeng Mafereka, explained that their decision to assist the hospital was driven by first-hand observation of its challenges, particularly during the winter season.

"We donated the equipment and clothing because we have observed their serious needs, especially at this time of the year," Mafereka said.

Chaba Mokuku, the Master of Ceremony and a member of the St. Francis Society, highlighted the vital role of the Monaco Department of International Cooperation in funding this initiative. The Department supports various critical sectors aimed at uplifting communities in developing countries like Lesotho.

These sectors encompass education and child protection, health, food security and nutrition, and access to decent work.

Earlier this year, the TSSF also used part of the €12,000 it received from Monaco to procure six braille machines and educational supplies for 22 visually impaired learners at St. Catherine's High School in Maseru.

The successful delivery of maternity equipment to St. James Hospital marks another milestone in the Society's mission to uplift vulnerable communities in Lesotho through healthcare and education, continuing its legacy of service inspired by St. Francis of Assisi.

UN flags mixed progress on Lesotho's health front



Ntsoaki Motaung

A recent United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) report, State of World Population 2025, themed "The Real Fertility Crisis", highlights both the progress and persistent challenges facing Lesotho in the areas of maternal health and sexual and reproductive health (SRH).

While the country has made commendable strides, particularly in the rate of skilled birth attendance, critical gaps remain, especially in reducing maternal mortality and expanding access to comprehensive sexual and reproductive health education.

Lesotho continues to face a high Maternal Mortality Ratio (MMR), recorded at 478 deaths per 100,000 live births in 2023.

The uncertainty range suggests this figure could be as high as 725 or as low as 298, underlining the urgent need to strengthen maternal health services and address systemic healthcare gaps.

On a positive note, 89 percent of births in Lesotho are attended by skilled health personnel, indicating that most pregnant individuals are receiving professional care during delivery, a key factor in reducing risks to both mother and child. The challenge now lies in improving the quality of care and tackling the underlying causes of maternal deaths.

In the domain of sexual and reproductive health, Lesotho reported 3.00 new HIV infections per 1,000 uninfected people in 2023. While this reflects a continued struggle with the epidemic, it also reinforces the need for sustained investment in prevention, education, and treatment programs.

In terms of family planning, the contraceptive prevalence rate among women aged 15–49 stands at 50 percent for any method and 67 percent for modern methods. Although this reflects reasonable uptake, there remains an unmet need for family planning, nine percent for all women and 13 percent for married or in-union women.

Encouragingly, 83 percent of demand is satisfied by modern contraceptive methods.

Lesotho's Universal Health Coverage (UHC) service coverage index is currently at 53 percent, signaling room for improvement in making essential health services more widely available and affordable.

According to the report, which includes data from 2001 to 2024, Lesotho's adolescent birth rate is 53 births per 1,000 girls aged 15–19. However, progress has been made in reducing child marriage: the proportion of girls married before age 18 has declined to 13.4 percent in 2024, down from 20.7 percent in 2004 and 24.2 percent in 1999.

Nonetheless, intimate partner violence remains a significant concern. As of 2018, 16.5 percent of women aged 15–49 reported experiencing physical and/or sexual violence from a current or former intimate partner within the previous 12 months.

The report paints a complex picture of progress and persistent inequality. While advances have been made, urgent and sustained efforts are required to improve maternal outcomes, reduce HIV infections, expand reproductive health services, and combat gender-based violence in Lesotho.



NO COMMENT



Rethabile Mathealira-Molapo

Common Concern

War – what is it good for? Questioning the morality of war

In his 1970 number-one hit, Edwin Starr posed a question that has echoed through generations: “War – what is it good for?” His answer was as thunderous as it was true: “Absolutely nothing.” Yet across time and continents, war persists, not merely as a strategy, but often as a default response to fear, disagreement, or ambition. It is rarely questioned. When we do engage with it, the focus is usually on who started it, who is right or wrong. We may express compassion for its victims. But seldom do we stop to ask the deeper question: why do we, as a society, still accept the very idea of war?

Beneath the politics and policy, war often serves something quietly dangerous, human ego. It enables those in positions of power to project strength, assert dominance, or claim ownership over land, resources, and decisions that were never theirs to begin with. At its core, war is about conquest and dispossession. It says: “What you have, I believe I deserve. And I will take it, even if it costs lives.”

The tragedy is not only in the violence itself, but in how easily it is justified. So the idea of war is that people, ordinary people who want nothing more than to live, to raise families, to contribute to their communities, can be sent to fight and die to satisfy political aims or maintain control. These are people with dreams and relationships, people who simply want peace and stability. Yet they

become instruments in conflicts shaped by decisions made far away from the battlefield, often by those shielded from the consequences.

And we are told this is honourable. That it is a sacrifice worth making. That there is dignity in dying for one’s country. But do we ever stop to ask: Is there dignity in making life so easily disposable? Have we so normalised the practice of sending young people to die that we have forgotten to question the logic behind it? Why have we accepted that disagreement should lead to destruction, and that violence is a necessary part of leadership?

The lives of those who fight in wars are often treated as collateral, not because they are unimportant, but because the machinery of war has made it seem acceptable. We examine which side is justified, but we do not question the act of war itself. What does this say about how we value life?

Most of the time, those who fight each other on opposing sides have no personal quarrel. Their lives intersect because two or more governments, distant figures of authority, could not resolve their differences without force. These soldiers become representatives in battles not of their making, living out the consequences of decisions that were made in safety, with distance, comfort, and detachment.

But the violence of war does not stop at the frontlines. Innocent civilians,

who have no part in the power struggles, pay a price that is rarely acknowledged. Women pay with their bodies as sexual violence is often weaponised against them. Entire communities are uprooted. Families are torn apart. Children lose not only their parents but also their sense of safety, their innocence, and their childhoods.

War ravages not just lives but the life within places. Homes that once echoed with laughter and prayer, love and rest, are reduced to ash. People lose not only property, but memories, the chair where a grandfather sat every morning, the place where children liked to play, the tree planted by a father’s hand. Ties to land that span generations are shattered in moments. And still, we call it strategic.

It can be said of leaders that it is easier to wage war when they are not the ones carrying its weight. When their own families are safe, when their own bodies are not on the frontlines, and when the suffering happens elsewhere, war can feel like strategy or policy. But for those who live through it, war is never abstract. It is the destruction of homes, the death of loved ones, and the end of ordinary life.

What would it look like if leaders could bear the physical weight of their decisions, if those who abused their power were also the first to be exposed to the risks they ask others to take? Would wars last as long? Would they be waged so quickly?

It is not a weakness to question war. In fact, it may be the truest act of strength to ask why we still allow this cycle to continue. If the logic of war means that ordinary people must pay with their lives for the decisions of a few, what does that say about

our priorities as a society?

War is not simply a clash of armies; it is a statement about what we are willing to do to others to achieve what we want. It is about the ease with which we overlook the humanity of people we have never met. It is about the silence we maintain when we should ask: what kind of world does this make us, if we allow this to go unquestioned?

And in the end, it is ordinary citizens who pay for it. We pay in grief, in destroyed infrastructure, in the loss of cultural heritage, in the scattering of families, in the disintegration of communities that took generations to build. We pay with the stolen joy of children who should have been playing in schoolyards, not sheltering from bombs. We pay with the brokenness that lingers long after ceasefires are signed.

The logic of war rests on a painful premise: that some lives can be lost for the comfort, control, or pride of others. But it does not have to be this way. We can create systems that prize diplomacy over destruction, dialogue over dominance. We can raise future generations to believe that strength is not proven by taking life, but by protecting it.

So perhaps Edwin Starr’s question still holds power, and still deserves an honest answer. “War - what is it good for?” When we listen not only with our minds, but with our conscience, the answer is still: “Absolutely nothing.”



Newsday Opinion

State of emergency, or state of character?

A wake-up call to Basotho youth

Theko Tlebere

When the Prime Minister of Lesotho declared youth unemployment a state of emergency last week, he highlighted not just a jobs crisis but a deeper societal issue. This declaration was not merely a plea to the government, NGOs, or international donors; it was primarily an appeal to the youth of this nation to look inward, reflect, and ask: What kind of character do I bring to the table of national development? This week, we delve into a very sensitive issue, the issue of 'Character'. We aim to trigger a rejuvenated way of thinking among the youth of Lesotho.

We must confront a painful truth: our greatest enemy may not be structural unemployment but our character deficit. Heraclitus was right: a man's character is his fate. And as Thomas Jefferson wisely noted, nothing can stop the man with the right mental attitude from achieving his goal; nothing on earth can help the man with the wrong one.

Too often, we cover ourselves in spiritual devotion, fasting, praying, and binding demons while ignoring the demons within: laziness, entitlement, bitterness, disrespect, gossip, and dishonesty. We cry out to God for jobs, yet fail to arrive on time for interviews. We seek scholarships but neglect to read the terms. We dream of entrepreneurship but shy away from

the discipline it requires.

As a young Mosotho man who grew up under the stewardship of Christianity, I have watched sorrowfully as brilliant young people choose excuses over effort, emotion over discipline, and superstition over self-improvement. Many shout "Amen" on Sundays but treat others with cruelty from Monday to Saturday. We build spiritual castles on foundations of sand because prayer, without character, is a loud gong signifying nothing. It's time to say it plainly: prayer is not everything. As Dutch Sheets once said, prayer is not a check request asking for things from God; it is a deposit slip depositing God's character into our bankrupt souls.

We must become young people who are not just heavenly-minded but also earthly-useful. This means showing up, dressing up, speaking right, and working even harder, even when no one is watching. The greatest opportunities are unlocked not by CVs or connections alone, but by character. The Shunammite woman received a miracle not because she prayed but because she was hospitable. Imagine if she had insulted the Prophet instead. Many of us have blocked our blessings by disrespecting

those placed in our lives to help us. We are at odds with our destiny helpers.

What has happened to humility, diligence, and courtesy? We fight against the government but refuse to volunteer. We blame ministers but won't mentor a child. We quote scripture but fail to honour our parents. We seek jobs yet ignore internships. Youth, we cannot be both victims and entitled. The youth of Lesotho must rise not just in number, but in depth.

We need a new revolution, not one of violence or slogans, but one of responsibility, character, and excellence. We must outgrow this culture of dependency and finger-pointing. Remember the Great Wall of China? It was impenetrable in structure but was defeated by bribed guards. Why? Because the Chinese built the wall but forgot to build the character of the guards. This is us. We demand policies and programmes, but neglect personal discipline. We want infrastructure and innovation, yet we treat each other poorly. We build projects with foreign aid, only to destroy them with corruption and carelessness.

Here's the reality: no government programme can save a generation that refuses to save itself. Policies can open doors, but it is character that walks through them. This state of emergency is not just about

joblessness. It is about the emergence of integrity, ethics, and effort.

Let us learn from West Berlin. When their neighbours dumped garbage across the wall, they responded with food, care, and dignity, leaving a note: "Each gives what he has." What do you have to give, Basotho youth? Bitterness or ideas? Complaints or contributions? Self-pity or solutions? If all we carry is negativity, no job, programme, or grant can sustain us. But if we carry love, purpose, and skill, no wall can hold us back.

So, young Basotho, I ask you:

- Are you employable, or just employed in blame?
- Do you treat people with respect, or only when they are useful to you?
- Do you show up early, or pray late into the night?

As Shakespeare said, the fault lies not in our stars but in ourselves. Lesotho needs builders of roads, but first, builders of character. Let this be the turning point. Let the Prime Minister's state of emergency not just mobilise the government, but it must galvanise your souls as young people of this country. It must birth a youth army of ethical entrepreneurs, respectful employees, humble leaders, and visionary thinkers. Character is destiny. And destiny begins with you. May this generation not just pray for change but become the change. The future is **NOW!**



Newsday Opinion

Lesotho's removal from hunger hotspots is a milestone – but not the finish line

Patrice Talla Takoukam

This month brought a rare but welcome headline in global food security: Lesotho is no longer on the list of global hunger hotspots.

According to the latest Hunger Hotspots 2025 report by the Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) and the World Food Programme (WFP), Lesotho, alongside Malawi, Mozambique, Namibia, Zambia, and Zimbabwe, has been removed from the list of countries facing the most severe levels of food insecurity thanks to notable improvements in food security.

It is a significant moment for the country, one that deserves recognition. But more importantly, it demands reflection and renewed resolve.

The report attributes this achievement to a combination of favourable climatic conditions and coordinated interventions that have borne fruit. For Lesotho, this is not just a technical adjustment on a global chart. This is a momentous achievement for Lesotho and the SADC region and a testament to the hard work and dedication of the Government of Lesotho, partner organisations and communities.

We should take pride in this progress. But we must also acknowledge a difficult truth: food security in Lesotho remains fragile. A shift



in weather patterns, a poor harvest, or a regional economic shock could easily reverse the gains we have made.

Years of droughts, floods, and economic hardship have pushed thousands of Basotho households into chronic food insecurity. That context has not disappeared overnight. What

has changed is our ability to respond more effectively, with tools like climate-smart agriculture, better seed and fertiliser distribution, and stronger coordination across sectors.

FAO and its partners have played a key role in this progress, helping to build resilience for smallholder farmers, who form

the backbone of the food system, through improved access to resources and knowledge. Irrigation systems have been rehabilitated. Climate-smart practices are slowly taking root. We are seeing what is possible when evidence-based policies meet community-driven solutions.

Still, this is no time for complacency. Being delisted from a hunger hotspot report does not mean hunger has been defeated. It means we're heading in the right direction—but the journey continues. We must keep investing in sustainable agriculture, building climate resilience, and strengthening social protection programmes so that no one is left behind.

FAO remains committed to providing technical assistance, capacity building, and policy support to ensure long-term food security and sustainable development in Lesotho and across the African region.

The road ahead is long. But today, Lesotho is in a stronger position. Let us build on this momentum to ensure that every family in Lesotho can count on the food they need, not just today, but for generations to come.

Patrice Talla Takoukam is the FAO Sub-regional Coordinator for Southern Africa and FAO Representative for Eswatini, Lesotho and Zimbabwe



Celebrating the first anniversary of the basic structure doctrine, and unconstitutional constitutional amendments

Mokilimi Tšosane

Introduction

14 June 2025 marks the first anniversary of the landmark *Democratic Congress and Others v. Puseletso and Others* decision in which the Court of Appeal of Lesotho recognised the applicability of the basic structure doctrine as an implicit substantive limitation to constitutional amendment power entrusted in parliament. Interestingly, the decision was handed down when the nation was struggling with the procedural aspects for undertaking the mega constitutional reforms aimed at transforming the constitution from top to bottom. At the same time, a wave of democratic recession and backsliding fuelled by populist rhetoric was in full swing globally and continues to date. To counter this wave, this essay borrows from and addresses Godel's idea on whether there is a hidden flaw in the Constitution which when leveraged legitimately can result in a democracy being transformed into a dictatorship.

History has proven that despots opposed to democracy and the constitutions that implement its ideals, principles, precepts, doctrines, conventions and practices can become either heads of states or heads of governments in democratic states through democratic processes. A typical example is Adolf Hitler's democratic ascent to power and the consequent transformation of Germany from a democracy to a dictatorship. In 1933, Germany was swept by a wave of stealth authoritarianism where existing democratic processes and mechanisms were used to erode democracy. State actors neglected their constitutional duty to protect democracy to contain the predatory political ambitions of Adolph Hitler. With this history, it is no surprise that Germany adopted the Basic Law (Constitution) with eternity clauses which comprise certain fundamental features of Germany democracy which can never be destroyed or emasculated, not even by parliament.

Authoritarian populism has given rise to debates on safeguarding democratic constitutions, their core values and features against volatile political shifts. In recent times, since the third wave of democratisation, democracy has been in a recession. Authoritarian populists have strategically blamed democracy for governance dysfunctions. With the populace convinced that democracy has failed, these authoritarian populists take advantage of the degeneration to hollow out democratic structures, subtly declaring "popular" wars on democracy and the constitutions that embody its ideals. The United States of America, a country which has promoted democracy around the globe, is also facing extreme populist ideologies from President Donald Trump. The threat posed by Trump's populism is by far one of the greatest tests to American constitutional democracy's resilience.

States like Hungary, Poland, Israel, and Brazil have also fallen victim to anti-democratic populists' antics, intensifying the democratic decay process. What is evident, as noted by Dan Mafora, is that populists deride democratic institutions as elitist and oppressive, especially those with the potential to constrain their power. In order to achieve these anti-democratic agendas, tools of constitutional change may form part of the strategies to entrench their power. Formal amendment procedures may be deployed to erode, destroy, subvert and/or emasculate the basic features and values of the constitution that underlie the democratic order in phenomena termed abusive constitutionalism and clownstitutionalism.

The Kingdom of Lesotho has not been or may not be any immune to signs of democratic backsliding and populist rhetoric against its democratic governance. An interesting rhetoric to challenge the traditional and conventional foundations of democracy has been echoed by prominent political figures and others disillusioned by governance dysfunctions. The current mega constitutional reforms premised on a populist rhetoric that the

constitution is the source of political instability and military interference in politics also present a live challenge to the basic structure, features and values of the democratic constitutional kingdom. Given these developments, the essay addresses whether Lesotho's current democratic constitution can be transformed into an autocratic or authoritarian instrument through the constitutional amendment procedures. In other words, are there hidden flaws in the amendment procedure for Parliament to torture the democratic life out of the Constitution to create a dictatorship?

Judicial Review of Constitutional Amendments, Unconstitutional Constitutional Amendments and the Basic Structure Doctrine

There is without question that Parliament has the authority to amend every section in the Constitution. However, Advocate Karabo Mohau Kings Counsel warned that while "constitutional amendment is indispensable to constitutional development but, like a double edged sword, the process is capable of either helping or hurting a country's project to build a constitutional state." In the words of Van der Westhuizen AJJA, "a democracy can democratically destroy itself following constitutional prescriptions, a constitution can be gutted." (Sic)

High Court and Court of Appeal of Lesotho's recognition that the Constitution of Lesotho has a basic structure, basic features and core values that cannot be undermined, destroyed, subverted or emasculated through the formal use of the amendment procedure is a positive development. It is a positive development, propounding that the constitution amendment procedures should not be used to advance the tyranny of the majority, authoritarian populism, and democratic backsliding. In other words, it avails substantive constitutional remedies to counter democratic subversion, abusive constitutionalism, abusive borrowing, and clownstitutionalism.

Musonda AJJA astutely highlighted that a constitution can be undermined through constitutional means, and the constitution should be insulated from opportunistic and radical amendments by limiting parliamentary sovereignty. In the end, amendment powers can pose an existential threat to the core tenets of constitutional order if left unchecked. Musonda AJJA observed further that "legislative power is intended to perfect imperfections in the constitution and not to make or remake the constitution."

The rationale and purpose of the Basic Structure Doctrine, according to Musonda AJJA, is essentially to protect the constitutional democracy ideals, values and presuppositions from abuse through constitutional procedures. It is noted that with democracy undergoing a recession, constitutional amendment procedures may be used to undermine the very essence of constitutionalism. Musonda AJJA, in his concurring opinion, included the following rationales and purposes: maintains supremacy of the Constitution; upholds constitutional morality; preserves constitutional integrity; prevents authoritarianism; ensures stability and consistency; protects democracy; protects fundamental rights; and promotes judicial review.

Following a thorough analysis of some constitutional literature and judicial precedents, Mosito P highlights certain fundamental features of Lesotho's Constitution, such as the separation of powers, the independence of the judiciary, and the protection of fundamental rights and freedoms, as forming part of the basic structure. Musonda AJJA, in his concurring opinion relying on Sikri C.J. in *Kesavananda*, added other foundational principles that constitute the basic structure: "the secular character of the Constitution, separation of powers between legislative, executive and the judiciary; the rule of law; independence of the judiciary; unity and integrity of the nation; judicial review; freedom and dignity of the individual; harmony and balance between fundamental rights and directive principles; the principle of equality; free and fair elections; independence of the judiciary; limited

power to amend the Constitution; effective access to justice and principles (or essence) underlying fundamental rights."

However, it is important to note that an exhaustive list of the foundational and core features upon which the constitution is built may not necessarily be unintelligible, as every section in the constitution has underlying principle(s). Damaseb AJJA drawing heavily from erudite submissions of Advocate M. Teele KC (for respondent) adds the exercise of the prerogative powers by the King and the uniqueness of the King in Lesotho's constitutional democracy.

Writing for the minority of two out of five, Van der Westhuizen AJJA, indicated that at the core of the constitution of a constitutional democracy like that of Lesotho, is the principle, practice and ideal of democracy. Musonda AJJA, concurring opinion to the majority, declares that the Basic Structure Doctrine ensures that the Constitution remains intact while the Constitution keeps evolving through amendment. This is to guarantee that the Constitution keeps evolving through amendments. Musonda AJJA reasoned that the Basic Structure Doctrine ensures that the foundational principles of the Constitution remain intact while the Constitution keeps evolving through amendments.

The Court of Appeal noted that armed with this power of judicial review, the courts have exercised powers to protect the integrity and the spirit of the Constitution, having struck down amendments to the Constitution. To declare constitutional amendments unconstitutional, the courts have utilised explicit and implicit limitations on amendment powers. In the High Court, Moahloli J (retired) observed that "the Constitution has an implicit unamendable core that cannot be amended through delegated amendment powers..." In simple terms, the constitution amendment power cannot be used to destroy, subvert or erode the basic features, core values, and presuppositions that form the basic structure of the Constitution. Constitutional vulnerability to abusive constitutionalism, clownstitutionalism, constitutional dismemberment, constitutional capture, and constitutional retrogression through "amendment" procedures raises issues for judicial intervention to protect the fundamental principles of constitutionalism.

Rejection of Formalist Resistance to Unconstitutional Constitutional Amendments

The minority judgement penned by J Van Der Westhuizen AJJA (Moses Chinhengo AJJA concurring) acknowledges the relevance and application of the Basic Structure Doctrine and those other formulations raised in the majority judgement. However, the learned judge raised the issue of the 3-year time lapse between the successful enactment of the Amendment to the Constitution and the constitutional challenge. In his words, "... the unreasonable lapse of three years since the passing of the Ninth Amendment Act, this seems like a situation in which courts neither have to, nor should, interfere."

Perhaps, the idea that time cures unconstitutionality of otherwise unconstitutional constitutional amendments needs to be considered with a trajectory whereby obita dicta, Mokhesi J adopted a formalist resistance approach to unconstitutional constitutional amendments doctrine in *Boloetse v Speaker of the National Assembly, 2023 (Boloetse II)* and *Christian Advocates and Ambassadors Association v Shao, 2022*. In *Boloetse II*, this formalist resistance to the unconstitutional constitutional amendments approach was adopted by Mokhesi J and affirmed by J Van Der Westhuizen on appeal albeit obita dicta where he reasoned that if an Act of Parliament that amends the Constitution becomes law, the Court would then lack the necessary judicial authority to review its constitutional validity.

Arguing against formalist resistance to unconstitutional constitutional amendments, countries embracing constitutional supremacy, the courts serve as the bulwark to ensure that the laws passed by parliament are consistent with the provisions of the

constitution. The supremacy of the Constitution, which the courts have to give effect to, is neither limited by time nor by compliance with the procedural dictates for passage of otherwise unconstitutional constitutional amendments. Courts declining or refusing to exercise judicial review over validity of unconstitutional amendments under the impression that time cures unconstitutionality or successful passage of amendments intended to undermine, emasculate, subvert, overthrow, destruct, overthrow or dismember the Constitution they purport to amend bars courts from reviewing constitutional amendments is court's betrayal of the constitution. Lastly, the formalist resistance to unconstitutional constitutional amendments assumes that the derived secondary constituted powers to amend the constitution and the constituent power to change the constitution enjoy the same legal status as emphasised by Professor Yaniv Roznai in his writings.

At paragraph 109 of *Pusetso Lejone v Speaker of the Assembly*, His Lordship, Justice Keketso Moahloli points to the danger of formalist resistance to unconstitutional amendments by quoting Rosalind Dixon and David Landau in *Transnational Constitutionalism and Unconstitutional Constitutional Amendments*. In the article, the two learned professors cautioned that amendment procedures may be used by a powerful president to extend their term in office, to remove parliamentary checks and balances on the executive power, and to narrow or suspend basic human rights protections. Therefore, the learned professors assert that recognising limitations on constitutional amendment powers has clear democratic benefits.

Conclusion

As with the actual proof to Fermat's Last Theorem remaining a mystery, Godel's Loophole, as told to a judge when Godel was sworn as a US citizen, remains a mystery. However, if this message could reach Godel, he should be assured that the Constitution of Lesotho has the safeguards, implicit and explicit, to protect its basic and core features from opportunistic amendments. However, it is important to note that an exhaustive list of the foundational and core features upon which the constitution is built may not necessarily be unintelligible, as every section in the constitution has underlying principle(s). In the same breath, it is worth noting that the basic structure doctrine and related appellations may not be a panacea against any form of authoritarian advances in a democratic state, but are an important guardrail. This does not necessarily mean that judicial abuse of the basic structure doctrine by the judiciary should be tolerated.

While complying with the procedure prescribed, parliament is not authorised to pass amendments engineered to defeat the very Constitution they seek to amend. The supremacy clause proscribes any exercise of power or authority in a manner that defeats the Constitution. In a judgement delivered on 2 May 2025, the President of the Court of Appeal in *Molikuo Sekhonyana and Anor v Principal Secretary – Ministry of Public Service and 4 Others* notes that all exercise of public power must be rationally connected to the purpose for which the power was conferred. The amendment power as conferred was never rationally intended to be a gateway for the tyranny of the majority or designed as a tool for clownstitutionalists to undermine the Constitution.

The rejection of the formalist resistance to unconstitutional constitutional amendments is welcome as it exposes the Constitution to opportunistic and radical amendments, which may potentially lead to the tyranny of the popular elected political elites. In this populist era characterised by abusive constitutionalism, clownstitutionalism, and abusive borrowing, this would have created a fertile environment where a majority intoxicated with power may threaten the constitutional and democratic stability of the nation. In a country undergoing democratic recession due to democratic backsliding, powerful popular prime ministers with majorities in the National Assembly may "contrive a common mischief, to make nonsense of the Constitution", to borrow Benson Tusasirwe's words. When all is said and done, a constitution is not a self-executing document hence, it needs to be defended to defend the essence of constitutionalism, democracy, and the rule of law.

Professor Richard Albert argues that not every amendment is an amendment simply because it is called an amendment; others are dismemberments inconsistent with the values and presuppositions of the constitution they purport to amend. Adopting this proposition for substantive limitations to the constitution amendment procedure, the doctrine of unconstitutional constitutional amendment is a necessary feature of modern constitutionalism in Lesotho's context. For various reasons, the doctrine seeks to protect the Constitution from radical, revolutionary amendments meant to defeat or make a joke out of the very Constitution they were meant to perfect.



Government of Lesotho
MINISTRY OF NATURAL RESOURCES

Tender Notice

INVITATION TO TENDER REF: MNR/EQP/F/2025/2026

Supply and Installation of Office Equipment, Non Office Equipment and Office Furniture

1. INTRODUCTION

The ministry of Natural Resources through its departments; Administration, Mining, Rural Water Supply , Water Affairs and Commissioner of Water Invites sealed tenders from eligible bidders for the supply of office Equipment and Office Furniture.

2. Tender Issuance and Submission

The tender is issued on the 12 June 2025, and closes on the 23 July 2025 at 10:00am. The MNR therefore invites competent bidders to bid for this tender. Tender documents are available at the Department of Rural Water Supply (Procurement Unit) at non-refundable fee of M500.00 (five hundred Maloti) from Thursday, 12 June, until Wednesday 16 July 2025. Tender document is payable in cash at the Ministry of Ministry of Natural Resources (DRWS) Accounts office, Railway Station next to WASCO Offices. Receipt issued by Accounts, must be produced to the DRWS Procurement Unit for collection of Tender documents.

Bid responses from competent bid-

ders must be submitted as follows:
one (1) original and four (4) hard copies to the Ministry’s Tender Box situated next to the Ministerial Boardroom Bokamoso Business suite 2nd floor, Orpen Road, Opposite Centre for Accounting Studies Maseru , not later than 10:00am, 23 July 2025. The bid response must be in a sealed envelope bearing no Identification of bidder marked “Supply of Office Equipment, Non Office Equipment and Office Furniture REF: MNR/EQP/F/2025/2026”.

All tenders will be opened on Wednesday 23 July, 2025 at 10:30am at the Ministry of Natural Resources Ministerial Boardroom Bokamoso Business Suite 2nd floor, Orpen Road, Opposite Centre for Accounting Studies Maseru.

3. CLARIFICATIONS

All requests for clarifications and queries on this tender must be addressed in writing to the Procurement Manager, Ministry of Natural Resources Bokamoso Business Suite 2nd floor, Orpen Road, Opposite Centre for Accounting Studies Maseru 100 no later than 12:00 noon, 16 July, 2025. Tel: 27325160.



GOVERNMENT OF LESOTHO
MINISTRY OF LABOUR AND EMPLOYMENT

TENDER NOTICE

Tender number: MOLE/01/2025-2026

The Ministry of Labour and Employment invites tenders from legally registered and suitably qualified Security Companies for the provision of Security Services at its Premises in Eight Districts, Labour Court, Labour Department and Ha-Mafafa for the Financial Year 2025/2026.

SPECIFICATION FOR SECURITY SERVICES: MAY 2025
A Compulsory site inspection will be on the following dates:

LOCATION:	NUMBER OF SECURITY OFFICERS	DATE	TIME
NORTHERN DISTRICTS			
Mokhotlong : Day and Night shifts	2	30/06/2025	09:00am
Butha – Buthe: Night Shift	1	30/06/2025	15:30pm
Leribe: Night Shift	1	01/06/2025	09:30am
Berea: Night Shift	1	01/06/2025	12:00 Noon
CENTRAL DISTRICTS			
Labour Department: Day and Night Shifts	2	07/06/2025	10:30am
Ha Mafafa: Night Shift		07/06/2025	11:30am
Labour Court: Day and Night Shifts	2	07/06/2025	12:30am
SOUTHERN DISTRICTS			
Mafeteng : Night Shift	1	02/07/2025	09:30am
Mohale’s Hoek : Night Shift	1	02/07/2025	12:00 Noon
NSTC : Day and Night Shifts	2	02/07/2025	15:30pm
Quthing : Night Shift	1	03/06/2025	11:00am
Qacha’s Nek : Night Shift	1	04/06/2025	09:30am
TOTAL NUMBER OF GUARDS	16		

- MANDATORY REQUIREMENTS:
1. Certified (at source) copy of a valid Tax Clearance Certificate
 2. Certified (at source) copy of relevant Traders’ Licence

3. Copy of the company profile
4. Bidders must attach the certificate of bonafide tendering, signed and stamped.
5. Bidders must attach a form of tendering, signed and stamped.
6. Bidders must attach an original copy of the proof of payment receipt with a bank stamp.
7. Bidders must attach a recent bank statement (3 Months before the tender’s publication date). April, May and June and 2025.
8. Bidders who fail to submit mandatory requirements will be disqualified.
9. Audited Financial statements for the past year to date.

The Ministry of Labour and Employment is not bound to accept the lowest tender price

TERMS AND CONDITIONS

- Bidders are expected to use bid forms provided by the Ministry of Labour and Employment for uniformity. Bidders who do not use the forms will be disqualified.
- Prices should include all relevant costs, e.g. transport costs, VAT included. The acceptance of any tender will not necessarily be based on a lower price.
- All bidders are expected to stick to the specifications provided by the Ministry, no extra points will be awarded for bonus specifications.
- The tender document must be valid for Ninety (90) from the submission date.
- Complete Tender documents will be obtainable from Procurement Office No: 701 or 702 at level 7 during working hours.
- Visiting hours shall be on Mondays to Fridays from 10:00 am to 03:00 pm.
- Tender document shall be available for a non –non-refundable fee of Five Hundred Maluti only (M500.00) from the 16th of June 2025 to the 28th of July 2025 payable in cash at the revenue office and receipt of payment will be issued and is to be submitted to the procurement office for tender document collection.

Two sealed tenders, original and 2 copies bearing no identification of the tenderer must be deposited in the Ministry’s Tender Box placed on the 7th floor, LNDC block D, Kingsway, Maseru in sealed envelopes marked “TENDER FOR PROVISION OF SECURITY SERVICES FOR THE MINISTRY OF LABOUR AND EMPLOYMENT” on or before 12:00 noon on the 28th JULY, 2025.

Tenders will be opened on the same date 28th July 2025 at 2:00 pm in the boardroom 7th floor, BLOCK D, LNDC BUILDING.

Interested bidders are expected to be legally registered and to comply with their tax obligations. To prove compliance, they must attach valid certified copies of valid tax clearances and traders’ licences, which should be certified by the issuing authorities. All prices should include VAT.

Disclaimer:

The Government of Lesotho – Procurement Committee reserves the right to accept or reject any or all tenders for reasons that may be advanced. Payment will be processed upon delivery of goods.

For Enquiries:
Contact: Procurement Office at mulungoa@gmail.com and phokojoemb@gmail.com
58011551/53793835
All tenders must be addressed and delivered to:

PROCUREMENT UNIT
MINISTRY OF LABOUR AND EMPLOYMENT, P.O. BOX, BLOCK D, LNDC BUILDING, 7TH FLOOR, KINGSWAY, MASERU LESOTHO.



COMPETITIVENESS AND FINANCIAL INCLUSION PROJECT

REQUEST FOR EXPRESSIONS OF INTEREST

“RE-ADVERTISEMENT”

(CONSULTING SERVICES- FIRM SELECTION)

Country : Lesotho
Project Name : Competitiveness and Financial Inclusion (CAFI) Project
Credit No. : 7169-LS
Assignment Title : Consulting Services to Support Setup, Management, and Provide Capacity Building and Ongoing Support for Lesotho Entrepreneurship Hub and Seed Financing Facility (LEHSFF)
RFP Number : CAFI-WB-0053
Reference No. : LS-MTI-498529-CS-QCBS

CONSULTING SERVICES TO SUPPORT SETUP, MANAGEMENT, AND PROVIDE CAPACITY BUILDING AND ONGOING SUPPORT FOR LESOTHO ENTREPRENEURSHIP HUB AND SEED FINANCING FACILITY (LEHSFF) (CAFI-WB-0053)

The Government of Lesotho has received a credit from the International Development Association (IDA) of the World Bank to implement the Lesotho Competitiveness and Financial Inclusion (CAFI) Project and intends to apply part of the proceeds for consulting services.

The consulting services (“the Services”) include the services to support setup, management, and provide capacity building and ongoing support for Lesotho Entrepreneurship Hub and Seed Financing Facility (LEHSFF), and the assignment is to be implemented over a period of twenty-four (24) months which may be followed by a one-year of mixed remote and in person support to the LEHSFF Management Team. The Ministry of Trade, Industry and Business Devel-

opment through CAFI Project Management Unit (PMU) now invites eligible consulting firms (“Consultants”) to indicate their interest in providing the Services. Interested Consultants should provide information demonstrating that they have the required qualifications and relevant experience to perform the Services (brochures including the name of the country in which the firm is registered; experience of projects related to the assignment, including brief descriptions of most recent relevant assignments showing location, client, costs and staff involved, etc.).

The short-listing criteria are:

- a. quality of submission;
- b. core business and years in
- c. business;
- d. experience of a firm on similar assignments (relevant experience);
- e. technical
- f. and managerial capability of the firm;
- g. firm’s experience working in developing countries
- h. especially in the SADC region; and
- i. international, potential association with local consulting firms.

The detailed Terms of Reference (TOR) for the assignment can be obtained at the address given below and at the following website: www.cafi.org.ls

The attention of interested Candidates is drawn to Section III, paragraphs, 3.14, 3.16, and 3.17 of the World Bank’s “Procurement Regulations for IPF Borrowers “February 2025 (“Procurement Regulations”), setting forth the World Bank’s policy on conflict of interest.

Consultants may associate with other firms in the form of a joint venture or a sub-consultancy to enhance their qualifications but should indicate clearly whether the association is in the form of a joint venture and/or a sub-consultancy. In the case of a joint venture, all the partners in the joint venture shall be jointly and severally liable for the entire contract if selected.

The Consultant will be selected in accordance with the Quality and Cost Based Selection (QCBS) method set out in the Consultant Guidelines.

Further information can be obtained at the address below during office hours [08h00 to 16h30 hours local time].

Expressions of interest must be delivered in a written form, in sealed envelopes labelled “CONSULTING SERVICES TO SUPPORT SETUP, MANAGEMENT, AND PROVIDE CAPACITY BUILDING AND ONGOING SUPPORT FOR LEHSFF (RPF NO: CAFI-WB-0053)” with the name of the firm on the reverse side of the envelope, to the address below in person or by mail on or before Friday, July 04, 2025 at 14h00. E-mail submissions should be sent to procurement@cafi.org.ls with a copy to tmohejane@cafi.org.ls and lnthunya@cafi.org.ls.

The Managing Director
Lesotho Competitiveness and Financial Inclusion Project
1st Floor ‘Matanki House
P.O. Box 747,
Maseru 100
Lesotho
Tel.: (+266) 22 315 100

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Standard Invitation to Bidders

BID NOTICE UNDER COMPETITIVE BIDDING

27/06/2025

Supply and installation of Electric Fence – LEGCO/EF/03/2025-2026

1. The Lesotho Electricity Generation Company has allocated/received funds to be used for the acquisition of Supply and Installation of Electric Fence at Ramarothole Solar Plant.
2. The Entity invites sealed bids from eligible bidders for the provision of the above works.
3. Bidding shall be conducted in accordance with the procedures contained in the Public Procurement Act.
4. Interested eligible bidders may obtain further information and inspect the bidding document at the address given below at 8(a) from 08:00 a.m. to 16:30 p.m or on mnkotsi@legco.co.ls.
5. The bidding document which has been prepared in the English *language* may be purchased by interested bidders at 8(b) upon payment of a non-refundable fee of *Two Thousand Maloti only (M2000.00)* and collected at 8(a).
6. Bids must be delivered to the address below at 8(c) at or before **08/08/2025 at 11:00 a.m.** All bids must be accompanied by a bid security of Five Thousand Maloti (M5000.00). Bid securities must be valid until **30/11/2025**. Late bids shall be rejected. Bids will be opened in the presence of the bidders' representatives who choose to attend at the address below at 8(d) at **11:30 a.m. on 08/08/2025**.

7. There shall be a site visit at *Ha Ramarothole in Mafeteng* at 10:30 a.m on the dates indicated in the proposed schedule in this notice.
8. Bidders should note the following:
 - (a) Documents may be inspected and issued at: **[251 Sekhaila Tlali, Honeymoon Park, Maseru West]**
 - (b) Documents will be purchased at: **[Ministry of Energy, Government Complex Planning Building]**
 - (c) Bids must be delivered to: **[251 Sekhaila Tlali, Honeymoon Park, Maseru West]**
 - (d) Address of bid opening: **[LEGCO Foyer, 251 Sekhaila Tlali, Honeymoon Park, Maseru West]**
9. The Planned Procurement Schedule (subject to changes) is as follows:

Activity	Date
(a) Publish bid notice	27/06/2025
(b) Site visits	10/07/2025
(c) Bid closing date	08/08/2025
(d) Bid opening date	08/08/2025
(e) Evaluation process	11-15/08/2025
(f) Display and communication of Notice of Tender	01/09/2025
(g) Contract signature	23/09/2025

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Arts & Entertainment

Newsday

Sothokids to headline “Festivals du Sud” in Europe & beyond



Chris Theko

Lesotho is about to take centre stage on the global cultural map, as Sothokids Culture Agency prepares for a historic creative tour across Europe and the Caribbean.

From July 11 to August 27, 2025, the dynamic youth-led agency will represent the Kingdom at the Festivals du Sud Tour, performing in France, Spain, Switzerland, and the Caribbean Islands, alongside renowned artist Omali Themba.

What began as a bold ambition has now become a lived reality for the founder and director, Makhebe Seatlana, who shared his heartfelt reflections on what this moment means.

“This tour is a milestone for our agency. It serves as a confirmation that hard work indeed pays. It is also a proud moment for Basotho culture, a chance to showcase our heritage on an international platform, proving that our stories and creativity have a place on global stages,” Seatlana said.

Lesotho’s participation in the tour is a remarkable achievement. Seatlana

explained that Sothokids was discovered online and later invited to a presentation where four other African countries were being considered for the opportunity.

“Fortunately, Lesotho through Sothokids was picked. This moment is not just for us, it is for the nation.”

The team has dedicated countless hours to preparation. For months, they have rehearsed every Sunday, focusing on storytelling through performance, music, and movement.

The performances promise a powerful fusion of traditional Basotho music and dance with modern creative expression, a raw, visually striking celebration of Basotho culture.

“We have worked on our creative elements while also taking care of travel logistics. We are proud to share that we have already secured our visas and flight tickets,” Seatlana said.

This journey holds deeper meaning beyond the stage. Sothokids sees this tour as a stepping stone toward a larger vision of building a sustainable cultural industry in Lesotho.

“We aim to become a leading cultural agency that supports, trains, and exports African creativity to the world, while remaining deeply rooted in Lesotho,” said Seatlana. “Our very core is about helping young people make a living from their talents to help beat the high unemployment rate in our country.”

For Seatlana, this journey is also personal. “I am beyond humbled and excited for this opportunity. It is a reminder of my hard work, resilience, and patience. As a young leader, it has been challenging for me, but against all odds, a dream has now become reality. I hope this serves as proof of God’s grace.”

Despite the team’s unwavering commitment, the road was not without its obstacles. Funding posed one of the biggest challenges. “We could not execute certain things because of the absence of money,” he explained. But the dream was kept alive by the support of generous sponsors who stepped forward to make the journey possible.

These include Buti’s Car Wash,

Sechaba Milling Co., FNB Lesotho, Jonko-Mane Denims, EcoFest, Brand New Vixion, TWGI Group, and Econet Telecom Lesotho.

“Their support was absolutely important as it made everything financially and logistically possible. We are truly grateful.”

While the major logistics have been covered, the team is still in need of additional funding, particularly for performance costumes and participant allowances.

Seatlana appealed to the public and the private sector alike: “Anyone who believes in the power of youth and culture is welcome to support this initiative. We are almost there, and every contribution matters.”

The tour is being promoted under the slogan #18moyeng, a powerful declaration that young Basotho are on the move, breaking barriers, and claiming their space on global platforms.

“This is bigger than us,” Seatlana said. “We are carrying the hopes of a generation, and we are doing it with pride.”

Melodius Music gears up for 2nd annual National Music Awards

Chris Theko

Music lovers across Lesotho are in for a treat as Melodius Music prepares to host the second annual National Music Awards (NMAs) on September 27, 2025, at the 'Mathabiseng Convention Centre.

Following the success of last year's inaugural event, this year's edition promises a bigger, better, and more refined celebration of Lesotho's diverse musical talent.

Launched in 2024 to recognise and reward excellence in the local music industry, the NMAs have quickly become a national platform for artists to gain recognition. While the first edition was well-received, organisers are confident that the 2025 awards will exceed expectations.

Speaking on behalf of the organising committee, Rorisang Motsamai said the team has addressed lessons from the first edition.

"We had challenges last year, particularly with the nomination process, public engagement, and private sector involvement," she noted.

"This year, we have built better systems and are working tirelessly to ensure a smooth, vibrant event that truly showcases Lesotho's talent."

One of the highlights of the NMAs is its diverse set of 18 categories, including:

- Best Gospel Album
- Best Sotho Hop/Hip Hop Album
- Best Traditional Album
- Best Afro Soul Artist
- Best Jazz Album
- Song of the Year
- Political Song of the Year
- Record of the Year



- Best Famo Album
- Best Producer

These categories reflect the rich diversity of Basotho music, spanning traditional, contemporary, and socially conscious genres.

Public participation remains central to the awards. Voting opened in early June and runs until mid-September, allowing fans to choose their favourite artists.

"We believe in giving the public a voice," said Motsamai. "Music connects people, and

this voting platform strengthens that bond between fans and artists."

Among this year's top contenders are Citizen LS, Sannere, and Ntate Stunna, whose artistry and cultural influence have left a lasting mark on the local scene.

Beyond honouring talent, the NMAs also serve as a networking platform for producers, promoters, sound engineers, and young creatives, helping to foster collaboration and visibility in Lesotho's growing creative indus-

try.

The 2025 ceremony will feature live performances, special tributes, and surprise appearances from both emerging and veteran artists, making it one of the most anticipated entertainment events of the year.

As the countdown begins, excitement is building. Artists, fans, sponsors, and media houses alike are gearing up for a night that promises to be a vibrant celebration of Basotho music, culture, and creative excellence.

Digital Innovators Summit 2025 officially unveiled

Chris Theko

Empowering Truth in the Age of AI; this is the bold theme guiding the Digital Innovators Summit (DIS) 2025, which officially launched its programming with a high-impact press conference held at the American Corner in Maseru on Wednesday.

In partnership with LNIG Hollard, the event set the tone for a series of transformative engagements designed to shape Lesotho's digital future through ethical and inclusive Artificial Intelligence (AI) integration.

The press event followed the successful DIS high-level webinar hosted on June 5, where leading voices from the worlds of technology, education, policy, and innovation gathered virtually to explore how AI can be leveraged responsibly for national development.

Since its inception in 2024, the summit has laid a strong foundation for ongoing conversations and action toward an inclusive digital culture in Lesotho.

At the press briefing, DIS founder and Project Lead, Tello Leballo, outlined the vision behind this growing movement.

"The digital space is important, and with the emergence of AI, it has become even more critical to provide education and information," Leballo said. "We saw the need to guide people, especially the youth, on how to use AI ethically and responsibly, which is why we began with a series of summits," he added.

Leballo recounted the early support from institutions such as the American Corner, the U.S. Embassy in Maseru, and the U.S. Department of State, which helped catalyse the movement.

"After our initial engagements, my team and



I sat down to reflect on our impact. While we celebrated successes, we realised the work was far from over. That is when we began engaging corporates and institutions interested in continuing the mission."

The movement gained further traction when institutions of higher learning, including Botho University (BU), Limkokwing University of Creative Technology (LUCT), and the

National University of Lesotho (NUL), opened their doors to DIS. Support soon followed from key national stakeholders like the Ministry of Communications, Lesotho Communications Authority (LCA), and the Ministry of Education.

Strategic partnerships with corporate giants such as LNIG Hollard and the Revenue Service Lesotho (RSL) have also helped scale the

impact.

LNIG Hollard's Head of Brand and Marketing, Liepollo Tsekoa, reinforced this call for digital readiness. "We must not fear AI, we must master it. It is reshaping how we work, live, and connect. Every industry is being impacted, so we need to ensure that no one is left behind," Tsekoa said.

The press conference officially launched the DIS 2025 calendar of activities, which will include AI workshops, school and university outreach programs, digital storytelling initiatives, and innovation challenges. These efforts aim to make AI and digital technology more accessible to youth, entrepreneurs, and communities across the country.

Leballo stressed that 2025 will see the initiative expand to even more tertiary institutions. "AI is now relevant in every sector, and we're continuously approached by more partners eager to be involved. But beyond skills and awareness, we're calling on policymakers to catch up. The reality is here. We have heard from researchers, educators, and technologists, now it's time to solidify legal frameworks to protect the public."

Encouragingly, some progress is already visible. "We were pleased to learn that the Ministry of Communications has launched the National Digital Transformation Strategy, and an AI policy is currently in development," said Leballo. "Even universities we engaged with last year are starting to review their curricula to include AI-focused content."

With momentum growing and critical support from both the public and private sectors, DIS 2025 is set to be a defining force in shaping how Lesotho navigates the AI era, one built on inclusion, ethics, and opportunity for all.

Mahlaha's homecoming confirmed

...as ex-LMPS player returns to lead the team

Karabo Ramathe

Lesotho Mounted Police Service (LMPS) Football Club has officially welcomed back Halemakale Mahlaha, this time as head coach, marking a significant homecoming for the former player who once wore the team's colours on the pitch.

Mahlaha's appointment follows his recent suspension from Matlama FC towards the end of the 2024/25 season, where he had been serving as head coach. His return to LMPS, where he played during the 1998–1999 season, adds a deeply personal dimension to the new role.

Speaking at the unveiling, Mahlaha expressed heartfelt gratitude for the opportunity to lead the club that helped shape his football journey. He said the appointment came directly from the Commissioner of Police, Borotho Matsoso, who also serves as the team's president.

"I played for LMPS FC between 1998 and 1999, so this team is close to my heart," Mahlaha said during his official unveiling at the Police Headquarters this week.

"This is a big assignment from the Commissioner and I intend to carry it out with dedication. I will seek wisdom from God to lead this team with intelligence and discipline."

Mahlaha brings with him not only experience but a profound connection to the club. His return is seen by many as a full-circle moment, coming back to where it all began, now tasked with rebuilding and elevating the very institution he once represented as a player.

He acknowledged the quality already present in the current LMPS FC squad, highlighting their experience in domestic football and national team exposure.

Mahlaha will hope to improve the fortunes of the side that finished seventh at the end of the 2024/2025 Vodacom Premier League season, while also challenging for some silverware during his tenure.

"The mandate is clear. We will see the rest unfold on the pitch and at the Police Training College where most of our training will take place," he added.

His one-year contract, which covers the 2025–2026 seasons, comes after the resignation of the former head coach, Tiisetso Molete, just last week. Mahlaha will continue his duties with the national Under-20 men's team, Makoanyane XI, while leading the LMPS.

Also present at the briefing, LMPS's General Manager Toka Matseletse emphasised that Mahlaha's appointment is part of a broader mission to restore the team's competitive edge and former prestige.

"As the executive committee, we are confident that under the new leadership, LMPS FC will regain its former glory. We encourage our supporters to come back and support us; we want them to enjoy football again," Matseletse said.

To bolster Mahlaha's return, the club also revealed his technical support team. Itumeleng Galeboe Metso and Sheli Ramoseeka will serve as assistant coaches, while Selai Liphehlo takes on the role of goalkeeper coach.



50 young footballers unearthed in LeFA's national tourney

Seabata Mahao

The Lesotho Football Association (LeFA) has successfully concluded its nationwide district-level football competition, a cornerstone of its ongoing effort to scout and nurture young football talent through the School of Excellence Programme (SEP).

The recently completed competition saw 50 promising boys under the age of 15 selected to proceed to the next stage of the SEP, marking a major milestone in the initiative's quest to build the foundation for Lesotho's future national team.

The selection followed a thrilling final match in Maseru between teams from Maseru and Thaba-Tseka.

The competition began in 2024 as part of LeFA's broader strategy to develop football talent from the grassroots. The initiative has brought together children from across the country to compete, sharpen their skills, and be exposed to structured football development.

According to LeFA's Technical Director Caswell Moru, the competition is not only about discovering raw talent but also about instilling strong technical skills in young players early in their development.

"We have brought together children from the districts of Leribe, Butha-Buthe, and Berea to compete," said Moru. "Unfortunately, Mokhotlong could not participate this time due to poor weather conditions, but we plan to include them in the next round."

Since its inception, the SEP has steadily expanded, starting with Leribe, Berea, and Butha-Buthe, before moving on to Mohale's Hoek, Qacha's Nek, Quthing, and Mafeteng. An earlier edition also scouted 55 girls, narrowing them down to 33 who are now be-



ing developed under the program.

Moru noted that districts like Mohale's Hoek and Leribe continue to produce talented youngsters, offering strong hope for the long-term success of the national football pipeline.

"There is already promising talent among these youngsters, but there are also others who, if given a chance, could prove themselves. That is the purpose of this scouting initiative."

LeFA's ultimate goal is to form a formidable national U-15 team, composed of the most outstanding players from every participating district. Moru emphasised the

need for continued investment and logistical support, especially in hard-to-reach areas where football potential is often overlooked.

"We need to properly train male and female facilitators and coaches at the grassroots level. This will help reduce conflicts and complaints about player selection," he explained.

To ensure transparency and fairness, LeFA has collaborated closely with local coaches in each district throughout the selection process. The association also called on schools and parents to actively support and encourage children to take part in foot-

ball activities, recognising the critical role they play in nurturing future talent.

The SEP is already showing results. Talents such as Mosoeu Seahlolo and Hlomelang Lebina, both products of the program, have advanced to the senior national team, Likuena, and now play for leading domestic clubs including Majantja FC and LDF FC.

Lebina praised the program for shaping his football journey: "This initiative played a major role in my development. I encourage every young player to take it seriously. Learn the game while you are still young, it is much harder when you start late."



Tour de Maseru lights up the capital

Seabata Mahao

Maseru came alive with energy and excitement this past Saturday as nearly 100 cyclists of all ages and backgrounds participated in the second edition of the Tour de Maseru.

The event, which continues to gain momentum, brought together sport, community, and international cooperation in a vibrant display of unity and celebration.

Organised by Alliance Française de Maseru in collaboration with the French Embassy to South Africa, Lesotho, and Malawi, this year's tour was held in honour of Olympic and Paralympic Day, celebrated globally on June 23.

The day commemorates the founding of the modern Olympic Games in 1894 and promotes core values such as excellence, friendship, respect, and inclusion, all of which were on full display in the heart of Lesotho's capital.

Participants assembled at Maseru Mall for the start of the event, representing a diverse cross-section of society, from seasoned cyclists and youth clubs to families and international visitors.

The race featured different categories tailored to age and skill level, transforming the city streets into a lively festival of sport and solidarity.

The event received strong organisational support from the Federation of Cycling Lesotho (FCL), Lesotho National Olympic Committee (LNOC), BBL Mountain Bike Club, and the United States Embassy in Maseru.

Beyond promoting physical fitness,



the Tour aimed to encourage cultural exchange and community engagement.

Thabo Tsiki, Sports Director at the Ministry of Tourism, Sports, Arts and Culture, lauded the growing influence of the Tour de Maseru.

"This is only the second edition of the Tour de Maseru, but we believe it

will become one of the biggest cycling events in Lesotho. We want to see more and more athletes participating each year, not just from Lesotho, but from neighbouring countries as well," Tsiki said.

He emphasised that such events help strengthen regional bonds and demonstrate Lesotho's preparedness

to compete on the international stage, highlighting the country's consistent representation at the Olympic Games and other global competitions.

FCL's President Rammotang Makatile echoed this vision, stressing the tour's importance in nurturing young local talent.

"One of our main goals is to get more young people, especially those aged 15 to 21, involved in cycling. The Tour serves as an important preparation for major international competitions like the MTB Championships and the Olympic Games," said Makatile.

He added that planning for the 2025 World Championships is already in progress, with cycling being the first sport from Lesotho to secure qualification for the event.

The Tour de Maseru first launched in 2023 as part of the bicentennial celebrations of the Basotho nation and in the build-up to the 2024 Olympic Games. Reflecting on the tour's origins, Elisabeth Douillet, Director of Alliance Française de Maseru, spoke of the strong community support it received.

"We were so encouraged by the excitement and participation in the first edition that we decided to make this an annual event," Douillet said.

She thanked all the partners involved, especially LNOC and FCL for making the event possible.

"The energy from the riders and the community has been incredible. This race has become more than just a cycling event; it is a celebration of community and global friendship," she added.

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