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Lekhetso Makhanya

Twelve days after Newsday editor and human rights defender Kananelo Boloetse was abducted and tortured, the government has still not issued an official statement on the matter, a silence that National Assembly Speaker Tlohang Sekhamane says raises troubling questions about what authorities may be hiding.

Boloetse, who is also president of the rights group Section 2, was abducted by three unidentified men at his home in Katlehong, Maseru, on the evening of 5 September 2026. Since then, only Communications Minister Nthathi Moorosi has publicly condemned the attack and called for swift action, while the rest of government has remained silent.

The disguised attackers with covered faces, forced Boloetse into their car and drove him 24 kilometres from Maseru to Thaba-Bosiu, where they took turns torturing him before abandoning him for dead near the Phuthiatsana river.

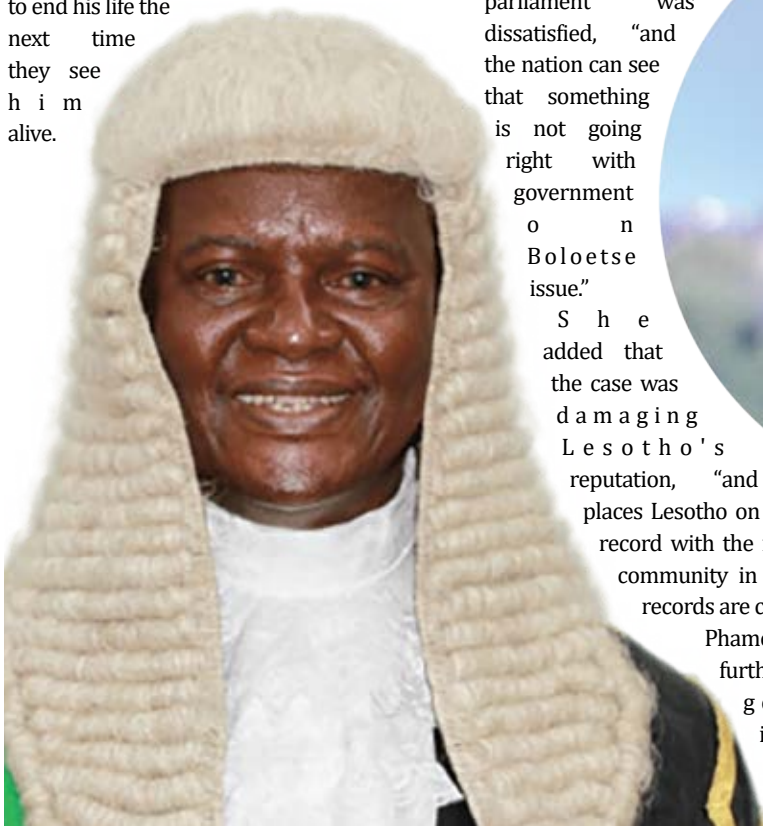
In his account of the ordeal, Boloetse has narrated how the irate men interrogated him about his work, both as a journalist and rights activist, while he was being subjected to torment.

Before leaving him almost lifeless, one of the attackers threatened to shoot him and dump his body in the river, Boloetse said. He had noticed two of them handling pistols when they forced him from his home that evening.

A passing motorist eventually found Boloetse, stopped to help, and drove him in his Sprinter minibus to the nearest army base, from where he was taken to Queen 'Mamohato Memorial Hospital for treatment.

Boloetse reported the attack to police himself the following day and gave a statement at Police Headquarters in Maseru. Yet Police Commissioner Advocate Borotho Matsoso told a press briefing on 10 September that investigators had made no breakthrough because they could not locate Boloetse to assist with the investigation, accusing his colleagues at Newsday of concealing his whereabouts.

Fearing for his life, Boloetse has since gone into hiding, because his abductors threatened to end his life the next time they see him alive.



Govt silence on Boloetse questioned

The attack has sent shockwaves through the country and abroad, with several international bodies issuing statements condemning it and calling on Lesotho authorities to launch an independent investigation.

Despite this, the government has yet to issue any official public statement, a silence that prompted opposition MP for Matlakeng and United Africans Transformation (UAT) leader Dr Mahali Phamotse to press the Speaker in parliament this week on when government would finally address the matter.

Rising on a point of order, Dr Phamotse said: "I stand to speak on the issue concerning Mr Kananelo Boloetse, Honourable Speaker."

She noted that parliament had briefly discussed Boloetse's case the previous Friday, "because government was said to be ready."

"Mr Kananelo Boloetse, was abducted, assaulted, and came back the way that he did. He reported his ordeal to the police, we now have proof of that. We discussed this briefly on Friday, but the Honourable Leader of the House then said the government was not prepared (to discuss the matter). I find this matter (of Boloetse) to be disturbing, serious and urgent."

She argued that the delay in producing an official statement was itself suspicious.

"This, really, is a serious matter. We wonder whether we are still safe. There could be next victim in line, to undergo similar ordeal, if the government continues to handle this matter lightly the way it does," she warned.

Phamotse said parliament was dissatisfied, "and the nation can see that something is not going right with government on Boloetse issue."

She added that the case was damaging Lesotho's reputation, "and places Lesotho on bad record with the international community in so far as crime records are concerned."

Phamotse went further, suggesting government involvement was suspected.

"We

have heard through the grapevine that the government is implicated. And people cannot stop speculating if the government cannot be seen to be addressing this matter publicly and with urgency. People disappear and come back assaulted under this regime. We need an official statement from the government," she said.

Responding, Speaker Sekhamane said he had, on parliament's behalf, already requested that government prepare an official statement, adding that the administration would remain under a cloud of suspicion for as long as it stayed silent.

Sekhamane said he had hoped that an address scheduled for that day by the Minister of Finance, Dr Retšelisitsoe Matlanyane, would touch on the Boloetse matter.

When she gave no indication that it would, he pressed the point directly: "Honorable members, hear me out, please I beg you to listen carefully. If the upcoming address from Honourable Minister of Finance is not going to address the issue on Mr Kananelo Boloetse, I should be made aware now by the Honourable Minister (of Finance) if her address is about Mr Kananelo Boloetse, if not so, I will notice by her silence and then I will continue with what I intend to say."

Receiving no response from Dr Matlanyane, he continued: "On Friday, there was a matter concerning Mr Kananelo Boloetse that was tabled for discussion. Kananelo Boloetse is a journalist, and he is involved in the business matters of Section 2. It is alleged he was abducted by some unidentified individuals. We then, on Friday, said we need to know from government what happened."

"What is it that the government officially knows about this issue, especially because this person is a practising journalist in Lesotho. These kinds of things happen in other countries, where we see journalists being harassed and victimised by some states, not because of their physical features, but simply because they are journalists.

"We see this happen in some countries elsewhere.

Sometimes because the journalists report in a manner not consistent with the government of the day."

Echoing Phamotse's concerns, Sekhamane did not mince his words: "This matter is serious and dangerous if left unattended by authorities. Why is the government silent on this matter. What are we harboring? Are we guilty of something? If not, why are we so silent? Why is the government so silent? I requested expressly for the government to deliver an official statement. If they they had heeded to my advice and issued an official public statement, I would not hesitate to reply to this inquiry by Honourable Member for Matlakeng. I would just refer to the government's official statement. I, expressly requested the government to issue an official statement," the Speaker said.

The government's silence has been mirrored by apparent reluctance on the part of police to pursue the investigation. Lesotho Mounted Police Service (LMPS) spokesperson Superintendent Thabo Mohai has now admitted, after some confusion over the timeline, that investigators have in fact been in contact with Boloetse, contradicting earlier claims that he could not be reached.

This follows last week's statement by Commissioner Matsoso that police were unable to get hold of Boloetse to clarify details in the statement he gave after the attack. Supt Mohai himself initially told a local radio station that, as of Wednesday this week, the investigating team had still not succeeded in reaching Boloetse.

However, Newsday can reveal that Boloetse spoke to Senior Inspector Petje Teke, who identified himself as head of the team investigating the case. The conversation, which began shortly before midday on Wednesday, lasted more than two hours.

When this publication contacted Supt Mohai the following day, he said he had only been made aware of the development that Thursday morning.

"While I cannot talk about the names of our officers, I can confirm that our investigators have been in contact with Mr Boloetse. I learned about this development upon arrival at work on Thursday morning," Supt Mohai said.



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Lekhetso Makhanya

The Labour Court on Monday heard the case of scores of Village Health Workers (VHWs) demanding that government recognise and pay them properly for their work under the Ministry of Health.

Buses of different shapes and colours filled the streets of Maseru on the day, packed with Basotho women from across the country. They parked near the Labour Court, Magistrate's Court, High Court and Court of Appeal, causing traffic jams as the women gathered to witness their historic case against government.

Dressed in their trade union colours, the women sang, ululated, and chanted revolutionary songs, creating a lively and unusual scene outside the courts.

A small group of these women represent the larger crowd as the lead applicants in the case, brought under the Lesotho Workers Association (LEWA). They are seeking to be paid a proper salary for the first time since Lesotho's village health work programme began.

According to a UNDP article on Lesotho's Village Health Workers, published on 12 April 2021, the Village Healthcare Unit has existed since 1978. The programme has aimed "to become a permanent active personnel unit within the Ministry of Health's Department of Primary Healthcare."

A long legal battle

The Applicants told the Labour Court that on 7 November 2023, the same court had already ruled in their favour under case number LC/REV/57/22. That judgment declared the Village Health Workers to be employees of the Ministry of Health and ordered the Ministry to pay them at least the minimum wage.

However, the Ministry failed to comply,

Village Health Workers fight on for better pay

...drag government to court in a landmark case

saying it did not have enough money budgeted for this. In 2025, the union asked Parliament's Social Cluster portfolio committee to step in, but the matter was not resolved.

On 23 May 2025, the Ministry of Health formally asked the Ministry of Finance for funding to pay the workers' minimum wage and the money owed to them, referring back to an earlier request made in January 2024. Despite this request and the court order, the Ministry of Finance refused to release the money.

On 2 June 2025, the Ministry of Finance responded, acknowledging the importance of following the court's ruling and paying the workers fairly, while raising some concerns of its own.

A settlement is reached — but not fully honoured

On 22 September 2025, the union and the Ministry of Health reached a settlement, which the court then made an official order. Under this agreement, the Ministry of Health was to request increased pay for the workers in two stages.

For the 2025/2026 financial year, the requested monthly pay was:

- Coordinators: M2,500
- Supervisors: M1,800

- Village Health Workers: M1,200

For 2026/2027, the requested monthly pay was to rise to:

- Coordinators: M3,100
- Supervisors: M2,800
- Village Health Workers: M2,500

The settlement stated that it "shall be served and/or attached to the documents submitted to the Ministry of Finance relating to payment of Village Health Workers," showing that the Ministry of Finance was meant to play a direct role in making the payments happen.

On 7 January 2026, the Ministry of Health again asked for the money needed to carry out the court order, explaining that the increases were meant to happen gradually over two years, from 2025/2026 to 2026/2027.

On 3 March 2026, the union wrote to the Ministry of Health, copying the Ministry of Finance, to formally raise concern that the workers had still not been placed on the agreed pay scale.

The letter argued: "This explanation is legally untenable. A court order cannot be suspended or ignored on the grounds of budgetary inconvenience. The rules of law require strict and immediate compliance."

The Ministry of Health replied on 14 April 2026, saying it had asked the Ministry of Finance for the necessary budget but that the request "was not honoured."

Ministry of Finance added to the case

By April 2026, the start of the new financial year, the workers' pay had still not increased. As a result, the Ministry of Finance was formally added to the case, since it controls the release of funds to all government ministries.

The applicants argue that without money from the Ministry of Finance, the Ministry of Health cannot carry out the court's order, and that the ongoing failure to pay amounts to "wilful contempt of a lawful court order."

In their court papers, the applicants stated: "It is against this background that the Respondents are deliberately and intentionally disobeying the order of this court... This matter is extremely urgent because the respondents have been contemptuous against this court and they seem not to have an intention to adhere to this court."

The case is postponed by the Labour Court to 28 September this year to allow the ministries involved time to familiarise themselves with case and come for their possible defence on the set date.

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Justice finally catches up with killer soldiers, nine years later

Lekhetso Makhanya

Nine years after their loved ones were abducted, strangled and dumped into Mohale Dam, the families of three murdered men can finally begin to find closure, after the Lesotho Defence Force (LDF) soldiers responsible were handed 20-year prison sentences this week.

Sergeant Lekhooa Moepi and Private Tieho Tikiso were sentenced without the option of a fine for the horrific 2017 murders of three suspected Famo musicians. The two were convicted last month, with Justice Charles Hungwe reserving sentencing pending a mitigation hearing on August 28.

They had faced four counts relating to the abduction, strangulation and dumping of civilians Likhoele Noko, Khothatso Makibinyane and Molise Pakela. Moepi was found guilty on two counts, the murder of Noko and his abduction, while Tikiso was convicted on all three murder charges.

Delivering the sentence on Monday, Justice Moroke Mokhesi, standing in for Justice Hungwe, sentenced Moepi to 20 years' imprisonment for his role in Noko's murder, plus an additional three years for abduction. The sentences will run concurrently, meaning Moepi will serve 20 years in total.

Tikiso received a 20-year sentence for each of the three murders, also to run concurrently, meaning he too will serve a single 20-year term.



The High Court took into account that both men have been in custody since their arrest in 2017, having awaited trial for nine years. Justice Mokhesi ruled that this time already served counts toward their 20-year sentences, meaning Moepi and Tikiso will each serve roughly 11 more years behind bars.

The three victims, suspected of ties to Famo music gangs, were abducted, strangled and disposed of in Mohale Dam by members of the Military Intelligence (MI) unit, in an apparent act of retaliation. The killings followed a shooting at the Maseru border gate in which one soldier was killed and another wounded.

Investigations by police led to MI officers, prompting requests for their cooperation. On September 21, 2017, Military Police brought in Captain Mahlehle Moeletsi and Sergeant Moepi for questioning. The next day, Moepi was taken to the Maseru Magistrate's Court, where he gave a confession detailing how the victims met their deaths.

While police pursued their own investigation, releasing some suspects and charging others, a separate group of soldiers was reportedly tasked with rearresting those the police had freed.

On April 18, 2017, Moepi and fellow soldiers were ordered to follow two suspects traveling in a taxi. They intercepted the vehicle and apprehended the men. The group was then directed to stop a bus carrying additional suspects. At Lekokoaneng, soldiers boarded the bus and forcibly removed a suspect who allegedly resisted arrest.

According to Moepi's confession, the suspects were taken to Setibing, near the military base, where they were allegedly ordered to be executed. Moepi said he proposed suffocating the men rather than shooting them, to avoid drawing attention, but when he hesitated to carry this out, he was allegedly threatened with death if he refused to comply.

He described how plastic bags were used to suffocate the suspects, after which their bodies were weighted with stones and dumped in Mohale Dam.

Thoboloko Ntšonyane

Lesotho and South Korea this week celebrated the 60th anniversary of their diplomatic relations with a colourful cultural event in Maseru.

South Korea was among the countries that established diplomatic relations with Lesotho in 1966, following the country's independence.

The celebration featured lively Sesotho traditional dances alongside Korean traditional dances and musical performances, entertaining guests throughout the event with a vibrant display of culture and the spirit of friendship between the two nations.

Speaking on the occasion, South Korea's Chargé d'Affaires, Sang Uk Yoon, highlighted the longstanding relationship between the two countries, noting that it provides an opportunity for people from both nations to appreciate and celebrate their cultural traditions.

Yoon commended the peace in Lesotho and paid tribute to the country's leaders for choosing sovereignty.

"Peace is the rain that makes the grass grow, and war is the wind that dries it up. Just as King Moshoeshoe I forged the very foundation of the Lesotho people through compromise and persuasion 200 years ago," he said.

The Chargé d'Affaires went on to commend Lesotho's forebears for resisting incorporation into South Africa and seeking sovereignty. He noted that Korea feels a profound sense of empathy and kinship with Lesotho's history of national growth, adding that Korea has delivered over \$2.2 million (about M35 million) in aid over the past four years to advance agriculture and protect the country's forests.

He also announced that Korea will donate mobile X-ray diagnostic units to Lesotho. Prime Minister Ntsokoane Matekane led Lesotho's delegation to South Korea at the 2024 Korea-Africa Summit, and Korea was also present to witness Lesotho's bicentennial celebrations that year.

Finance Minister Dr Retšelisitsoe Matlanyane attended the 8th Korea-Africa Economic Cooperation (KOAPEC) Ministerial Conference, held in Seoul from 8 to 11 September 2026.

At the conference, Korea and African gov-

Lesotho and South Korea reaffirm six decades of partnership



ernments adopted a joint declaration and agreed on a 2027/28 Action Plan to guide cooperation over the next two years.

Lesotho and Korea agreed to strengthen cooperation in artificial intelligence, digitalisation, healthcare, education, agriculture, climate change, critical minerals and infrastructure. Matlanyane said Korea is contributing to the world through culture, technology and the arts.

Representing government, Minister of Labour and Employment Tšeliso Mokhosi noted that since establishing bilateral relations six decades ago, ties between the two nations have grown from strength to strength.

"We have successfully built these relations on the solid foundation of mutual respect. We have successfully built these relations on the solid foundation of mutual respect, win-win cooperation, and sovereign equality.

"As a result we have witnessed cooperation with tangible results in many areas, including human resource development and capacity building. While in this sector, we feel particularly appreciative of the Korean Government's relentless efforts in assisting Lesotho to build strong human resource capital through training our youth and civil servants in different programs in prestigious institutions in Korea,

under the Korean International Cooperation Agency (KOICA)," Mokhosi said.

The Minister also commended Korea's transformation from a country once facing development challenges into a globally recognised centre of technology, innovation and industrial advancement, describing it as an inspiring example of what can be achieved through resilience, determination, investment in human capital, innovation and strong national institutions.

"For Lesotho, Korea's development journey and experience offer valuable lessons. Without replicating all what Korea has achieved, we are ready to learn from its outstanding socio-economic development programs and adapt relevant lessons suitable for our own local conditions and development priorities," he continued.

Lesotho has received agricultural equipment from Korea, including tractors and implements essential for productivity and food security, alongside assistance in health, education and digital transformation.

Mokhosi noted that as Lesotho places great importance on deepening economic relations with Korea, the Prime Minister is keen to see increased Korean investment in the country, particularly in sectors capable of creating employment for Basotho, transferring skills and technology, and expanding opportunities for young people.

"As we commemorate these sixty years of warm diplomatic relations, we should ask ourselves not only what we have achieved but also what more we can accomplish together," said the Minister.

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Inclusive traffic lights introduced on Kingsway

SeabataMahao

Maseru has taken its first step toward becoming a smart city, with the Roads Directorate unveiling innovative, technology-driven traffic lights along Kingsway designed to make road crossings safer and more accessible for pedestrians with disabilities.

The new inclusive pedestrian signals, fitted with countdown timers and audible buzzers, were activated at the State Library intersection this week, marking the first installation of its kind in Lesotho and a milestone in the country's move toward smarter, more responsive urban infrastructure. The initiative is expected to be extended to four intersections along Kingsway.

Speaking at the activation ceremony, Roads Directorate Director General Teboho Mokhoane said the upgraded signals were designed to provide clearer guidance to pedestrians, particularly those with visual and hearing impairments.

"The new pedestrian signals will be integrated with the existing system and will feature green walking and red standing symbols, a two-digit countdown timer and an audible buzzer for pedestrians with visual and hearing impairments," Mokhoane said.

He said the features would help pedes-

trians determine when it was safe to cross, contributing to safer and more accessible movement along one of Maseru's busy roads. Mokhoane described the launch as a historic development for the country, saying it formed part of broader efforts to build a transport network, and, more broadly, a city, that enabled people of all abilities to move safely and independently.

Minister of Public Works and Transport Matjato Moteane said busy roads could present particular challenges to people living with visual or hearing impairments. He said the pilot project demonstrated the government's commitment to incorporating people with disabilities into infrastructure planning, and to ensuring that as Lesotho's roads modernise, they do so in a way that responds to the needs of all Basotho without discrimination.

"Roads and public service areas must be accessible and serve everyone. Inclusiveness will be seen when all people with disabilities know how to get to work, schools and health facilities without any hindrance," Moteane said.

He said freedom of movement was a fundamental human right and that the government's efforts were aligned with the principles of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. Moteane stressed that accessibil-

Maseru City goes smart

• *as inclusive traffic lights signal new era for Kingsway*

ity should not be regarded as an optional feature of public infrastructure, but rather as an essential component of smart, forward-looking planning, engineering and governance.

"Accessibility is not an optional extra to be added when convenient. It is an essential part of good planning, sound engineering and responsible government," he said.

He added that inclusion would only become meaningful when people could access workplaces, schools, health facilities and business areas without unnecessary barriers.

The Minister, however, noted that accessibility challenges extended beyond traffic signals, particularly where pedestrian walkways had been occupied by informal commercial activities. He acknowledged that such activities provided livelihoods for some Basotho, but said this should not compromise the ability of other members of society, particularly people with disabilities, to move safely.

"The right of some to make a living should not be trampled upon by others to travel safely," he said.

Moteane also raised concern over motorists who disregard traffic signals, saying the behaviour undermined efforts to improve road safety. He called for stronger enforcement against drivers who cross intersections when traffic lights are red,

warning that such conduct endangered both motorists and pedestrians.

The Minister appealed to motorists to drive responsibly, reduce speed, remain alert and allow pedestrians sufficient time and space to cross. He also urged police to intensify enforcement of traffic laws, particularly against motorists who ignore traffic lights.

"Similarly, pedestrians should cross the road at safe, designated crossing points and follow the signs. Road safety is a responsibility that we all must take, and respect for each other on the road is a habit that we must build," Moteane said.

Road Fund Chief Executive Officer 'Matšepang Sekhokoana said the organisation was proud to finance the project, reaffirming its commitment to supporting the Roads Directorate in improving road infrastructure and promoting the safety of road users.

The rollout of these smart, inclusive signals marks a deliberate shift in how Lesotho approaches urban infrastructure, embedding accessibility and technology into road design from the outset rather than retrofitting it later.

With the pilot expected to expand to four Kingsway intersections, the Roads Directorate will further assess the role these innovations can play in building a safer, more accessible and more connected Maseru.



Econet introduces travel eSIM for international travelers

SeabataMahao

Telecommunications company Econet Telecom Lesotho (ETL) has introduced a Travel eSIM service designed to provide customers travelling outside Lesotho with convenient access to mobile data without the need to buy or change physical SIM cards at their destinations.

The new digital connectivity service is aimed at customers travelling for business, leisure, studies or family visits. It allows users with compatible smartphones to select a destination-specific data plan online, pay for the service and install the eSIM digitally before departure or while travelling.

Once customers arrive at their destination, the Travel eSIM connects to a supported mobile network, enabling them to access mobile data while abroad.

The introduction comes as mobile connectivity becomes increasingly important to international travelers, who rely on data services to communicate, navigate unfamiliar destinations, manage travel bookings, access emails and banking services, and use other online platforms.

ETL Acting General Manager – Products and Services, KetjaNhlapo, said the service expands the connectivity options available to customers travelling beyond Lesotho's borders.

"Customers increasingly rely on digital services wherever they go, and travelling should not interrupt that experience. With Econet's Travel eSIM, we are giving our customers another convenient way to prepare for their connectivity needs before they travel and access connectivity when they reach their destination," Nhlapo said.

Unlike conventional physical SIM cards, an eSIM is installed digitally on a compatible smartphone. This means customers can retain their normal Econet SIM in their device while selecting the Travel eSIM as their mobile data line when abroad.

Nhlapo said the service could also help travellers prepare for their connectivity needs before leaving the country.

"Travel comes with many things to organise, and connectivity is increasingly one of the essentials. Econet's Travel eSIM gives customers an opportunity to prepare their mobile data before departure,



Ketja Nhlapo, ETL's acting GM – Products and Services

just as they prepare their flights, accommodation and other travel arrangements," he said.

However, customers are required to ensure that their smartphones support eSIM technology before making a purchase.

Nhlapo advised customers to dial *#06# on their smartphones and check whether an EID appears among the device information displayed, as this indicates eSIM compatibility.

The available Travel eSIM packages differ according to destination, data allowance, validity period and price, giving customers the flexibility to select a pack-

age that corresponds with their travel requirements.

The plans can be purchased using either airtime or EcoCash. The Travel eSIM becomes active only at the destination for which the selected plan is applicable, allowing customers to purchase their connectivity in advance while maintaining control over their spending.

Nhlapo said the service forms part of ETL's broader efforts to develop digital solutions in response to changing customer needs.

"Innovation should ultimately make things easier for our customers. As the

way people live, work and travel becomes more digital, we have to continue developing solutions that give our customers greater convenience and choice in how they stay connected," he said.

Travel eSIM is an additional international connectivity option alongside ETL's existing international roaming service. The service is data-only for supported destinations outside Lesotho and does not replace customers' local ETL data bundles.

Customers can purchase and access the service through Econet Travel eSIM or through the Roaming section of the ETL website.



Ntsoaki Motaung

The Acting UNICEF Representative for Lesotho, Bob Muchabaiwa, has called on all partners to work together to strengthen the country's health information systems, saying this is key to improving sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR) for women, adolescents, and other vulnerable groups.

Muchabaiwa was speaking at the opening of a five-day national workshop focused on strengthening SRHR data and information systems in Lesotho.

The workshop, held under the Regional Access and Accountability for Increased SRHR Equity in East and Southern Africa (RAISE SRHR) programme, brought together government officials, UN agencies, development partners, and civil society organisations.

In his address, Muchabaiwa made it clear that UNICEF and other UN agencies see this work as a top priority: "This piece of work is very serious to us, and we would like to see it generate meaningful results," he said.

He emphasised that the goal is not just to produce another document, but to develop a roadmap that will lead to real change in Lesotho's health sector: "Stronger SRHR outcomes depend on a stronger system. The core aspect of that is data," Muchabaiwa stressed, adding that, "Data is the currency that drives development. If you miss the data piece, your planning, your implementation, your monitoring will not work."

Muchabaiwa urged participants to be open and honest about the challenges facing Lesotho's health data systems.

"It becomes very easy to just say, okay, finally in a workshop, we talk about this and that, but we are not actually addressing the underlying challenges and bottlenecks," he warned.

He called on everyone to use the workshop to identify real solutions that can be implemented, financed, and monitored.

He also thanked the Swedish government for funding the initiative and stressed the need for proper financing and ongoing monitoring.

"No matter how much you say you are committed to an issue, if we do not commit resources to that issue whether human or financial it becomes talk, and talk then is cheap," he said.

Dr. 'Mamotena Sekhobe, Head of the Family Health Division at the Ministry of Health, thanked partners including UNICEF, WHO, UNFPA, and UNAIDS for their support.

She highlighted the importance of bringing together a diverse group of stakeholders, from the Ministry of Health and the National Statistics Office to civil society and technical experts, to work together.

"This workshop comes at a critical time for Lesotho," Dr. Sekhobe said, noting that while there have been significant investments in key areas like maternal and adolescent health, the real test is whether these interventions are backed by strong data.

"We must move beyond collecting data for reporting purposes alone and ensure that data is actively used to identify gaps, allocate resources, improve service quality, and strengthen accountability at all levels of the health system," she said.

Dr. Sekhobe outlined the goals for the week, including reviewing Lesotho's health information ecosystem, assessing data quality, undertaking field visits, and creating a prioritised, costed national action plan for SRHR data systems.

Both Muchabaiwa and Dr. Sekhobe stressed the importance of practical, realistic solutions.

UNICEF calls for stronger data systems to protect health rights in Lesotho



Kerry-lee Bothma, a specialist from the UNICEF Centre for Excellence on SRHR



Acting UNICEF Representative for Lesotho, Bob Muchabaiwa

"The roadmap developed through this workshop should not become another document that sits on a shelf and gathers dust. We need interventions that are realistic, implementable, and capable of delivering tangible improvements within existing national

systems," Dr. Sekhobe said.

She also called for stronger collaboration and ownership, noting that the Ministry of Health cannot do this work alone.

"It requires the collective efforts of all stakeholders represented here. Success will

depend on our ability to work together, align resources, harmonise reporting systems, and support a common national vision," she said.

Experts from the Ministry of Health gave detailed presentations on the current state of Lesotho's health information systems.

Ntebaleng Molemane, from the Health Management Information Systems (HMIS) Division, explained how health data is collected from both communities and health facilities, using a mix of paper-based and electronic registers. She highlighted the need to move from simple reporting to using data for real decision-making.

Seipati Napo, from the Ministry's ICT department, discussed ongoing efforts to expand and integrate digital health systems. She noted that while some programmes now use electronic registers, others still rely on paper, and key systems, such as the laboratory information system, are not yet fully integrated into the national data warehouse.

"We are on a journey to improve our data analytics and to develop an interoperable national health data system," she said.

Kerry-lee Bothma, a specialist from the UNICEF Centre of Excellence on SRHR, explained that Lesotho's efforts form part of a larger regional programme, supported by the European Union and Sweden, to harmonise SRHR indicators and improve data quality across Southern Africa.

"We want to ensure that when we measure an indicator in Lesotho, we are measuring the same thing as in Malawi or South Africa," she said.

Mosito reclaims NUL helm

Thoboloko Ntšonyane

Embattled Professor Kananelo Mosito has secured a victory against the National University of Lesotho (NUL) following a legal challenge with the institution.

The Court of Appeal this week ordered the university to reinstate Prof Mosito to his former office and facilitate his appointment as Acting Vice-Chancellor, in accordance with the university's regulations.

The ruling marks a victory for Mosito, who has consistently maintained that NUL erred by not appointing him to act as Vice-Chancellor after 31 July 2026, when the then-incumbent's contract came to an end.

In this case, Prof Mosito had approached the country's highest court seeking a contempt order against the first, second, third, fourth, fifth and ninth respondents.

Prof Mosito, who also serves as President of the Court of Appeal, was the applicant. The respondents were the Council of NUL, Prof Motlatsi Molati, Dr Khabele Matlosa, Advocate Mamello Makau, Dr Lipalesa Mathe, Dick J. Makoetlane, the Commissioner of Police, the Attorney-General, and NUL itself cited as the first to ninth respondents, respectively.

The case was heard by Judge Petrus Damaseb (Namibia), Judge Van Der Westhuizen (South Africa), and Judge Moneuoa Kopo.

The apex court also found that the university had misdirected itself by removing Prof Mosito from the position of Pro-Vice-Chancellor and relegating him to the status of an ordinary staff member in the Faculty of Law.

Mosito was appointed Pro-Vice-Chancellor on 1 November 2023, and his term in that office is set to conclude on 31 October 2027, in line with his contract.

"It is declared that the first and ninth respondents failed to comply with paragraph (e) of this Court's order dated 1 June 2026 by preventing the applicant from exercising the functions of Acting Vice-Chancellor after the vacancy arose on 31 July 2026, by appointing the second respondent to that office and by terminating the applicant's substantive appointment as Pro-Vice-Chancellor," reads the judgment.

On 3 August 2026, the NUL Council, the university's supreme governing body, announced its decision to terminate Prof Mosito's Pro-Vice-Chancellorship, arguing that his conduct had "fundamentally impaired the trust and confidence essential to the senior management." By that point, Mosito had already been suspended.

The court also ordered Prof Molati, who had been holding the fort in the Vice-Chancellor's office, to step aside for Prof Mosito.

"The second respondent must, upon service of this order, cease holding himself out as or exercising the functions of Acting



Professor Kananelo Mosito

Vice-Chancellor and deliver the records and access rights of that office to the applicant."

On 31 July, when the contract of then-Vice-Chancellor Prof Isaac Fajana came to an end, Prof Mosito presented himself that morning but was stopped by the Council from assuming the office. On 2 August, Prof Molati was appointed Acting Vice-Chancellor, and Prof Regina Thetsane was endorsed as Acting Pro-Vice-Chancellor.

Curiously, in his farewell statement, Prof Fajana made no mention of Prof Mosito, despite Mosito having served as his deputy and having ushered him into office in 2021, when Fajana joined NUL as Vice-Chancellor.

Mosito's dispute with the university centres on the legality of the process the Council initiated to recruit a new Vice-Chancellor.

The matter dates back to October last year, when Prof Fajana informed the Council that he would not seek an extension or renewal of his contract upon its expiry.

Prof Mosito subsequently engaged the

Council on the matter, but the parties failed to reach an agreement. He then approached the High Court, seeking to bar the university from proceeding with the recruitment process, arguing that it had violated his right to act in the position.

Prof Mosito contended that Section 16(2) of the NUL Order of 1992 could only be invoked once a vacancy had actually arisen in the office of the Vice-Chancellor. In his view, the recruitment process was premature, as the incumbent should first vacate the office before the university advertises the position.

The case saw several interlocutory applications while pending before the High Court. The university first challenged that court's jurisdiction, but the court ruled that it did have jurisdiction.

NUL also challenged the panel of High Court judges hearing the matter, arguing that Prof Mosito, by virtue of being President of the Court of Appeal, was their superior, but lost on that point as well.

In June, NUL petitioned the Court of Appeal on an urgent basis, seeking a stay of the High Court proceedings, but

was unsuccessful. Judge Philip Musonda (Zambia), presiding at the time, stated that "the fact that unfolding events may justify urgent Interlocutory consideration does not, without more, entitle a litigant to appellate priority over others awaiting hearing."

In his ruling, Judge Musonda said NUL and the Council, as petitioners, had failed to meet the threshold requiring compelling and exceptional circumstances for the case to be treated as urgent. The court ordered that NUL's appeal instead be heard during the next ordinary session of the Court of Appeal, in October.

In his application, Prof Mosito had cited the respondents in both their professional and personal capacities. However, the ruling directed only the first and ninth respondents to bear the applicant's costs, including the costs of two counsel.

The court did not find against the other respondents in their personal capacities "As no finding of wilfulness, mala fides or personal contempt is made, neither punitive or personal costs are justified against an individual respondent."



Is Lesotho drifting towards kakistocracy?

By: Dr. Theko Tlebere

There is a word in political vocabulary that sounds almost deliberately insulting: *kakistocracy*. Derived from the Greek kakistos, meaning “worst”, and *kratos*, meaning “rule” or “government”, kakistocracy refers to government by the least suitable, least competent or least qualified people.

It is a powerful word. It is also a dangerous one. Used carelessly, it becomes nothing more than an insult directed at politicians we dislike. Used analytically, however, it provides a useful question for Lesotho: what happens when political systems repeatedly place political loyalty, personal connections and short-term survival above competence, integrity and institutional performance?

That question deserves serious attention, hence our article today shall deliberately talk to how we can move away from “Kakistorcracy” tendencies as a nation.

Lesotho does not necessarily fit the textbook definition of a kakistocracy. The country has elections, Parliament, courts, a civil service and constitutional institutions. Governments change. Ministers are appointed according to constitutional procedures.

Therefore, calling Lesotho an outright “kakistocracy” would be intellectually lazy.But there are unmistakable kakistocratic tendencies in the way the state sometimes recruits, rewards and retains political leadership.The problem is not that Basotho lack capable people.

Lesotho has doctors, economists, engineers, lawyers, academics, administrators, entrepreneurs, teachers and professionals working both at home and abroad. The problem is that the political system does not always convert the country’s available human capability into state capability.

That distinction is crucial.A government can contain highly educated individuals and still produce poor

governance. Degrees do not automatically produce competence in public administration.

What matters is whether people are appointed to positions according to the requirements of the job, whether they are held accountable for performance, whether institutions have the capacity to function and whether political leaders are willing to listen to evidence.

This is where the kakistocracy concept becomes relevant.Consider the recurring spectacle of appointments to public institutions. The question is often not simply, “Who is the best person for this position?” It can become, “Who is politically reliable?” Once political loyalty becomes more important than professional competence, the state begins to select people according to criteria unrelated to the responsibilities they are expected to perform.That is how a country can have competent citizens while having incompetent institutions.

The consequences are visible in the everyday experience of governance. Policies are announced without adequate implementation capacity. Government programmes sometimes lack continuity when administrations change. Public institutions struggle with weak coordination.

Procurement controversies repeatedly damage public confidence. Reports are produced but recommendations are not always implemented. Strategic plans exist, but the distance between policy documents and what citizens experience remains enormous.

This is not simply a problem of “bad politicians”It is a systems problem.A kakistocratic system does not necessarily consist entirely of foolish people. It can be populated by intelligent individuals operating within incentives that reward the wrong behaviour.

A capable person who understands that promotion

depends primarily on political allegiance rather than performance may rationally choose loyalty over professionalism.Eventually, the institution itself becomes distorted.

The danger is particularly serious in a small country like Lesotho, where political and professional networks inevitably overlap. When the same individuals circulate between political offices, public institutions and other centres of influence, meritocratic safeguards become even more important.

Otherwise, the state can gradually become an ecosystem of patronage.The greatest danger is not merely that an unsuitable person gets one appointment. Democracies make mistakes. The greater danger is when the system loses the ability to correct its mistakes.

A healthy democratic state should be capable of removing ineffective leaders, correcting failed policies, disciplining misconduct and promoting people who demonstrate competence. A kakistocratic tendency emerges when failure has few consequences while loyalty is consistently rewarded.

That creates an extraordinary incentive structure.A public official can fail and survive. A politician can make an obviously poor decision and simply blame predecessors. A government programme can underperform and be repackaged as a new initiative.

Meanwhile, competent professionals may discover that technical expertise carries less weight than political proximity. Eventually, citizens begin to lose faith not only in particular politicians but in government itself. Actually, this may help explain one of Lesotho’s most persistent political problems: the gap between political promises and administrative delivery. Elections encourage politicians to think in electoral cycles. Development requires thinking in decades.

Building a functional health system, improving education, reforming public finances, modernizing agriculture, developing infrastructure and creating productive employment cannot be accomplished through enticing slogans, even my uncle in Ha Khohlopo knows that. They require competent institutions, evidence-based policies, continuity and disciplined implementation.

The kakistocracy lens therefore asks a deeper question than whether a particular minister is

competent. It asks: Does Lesotho’s political system systematically reward the qualities required to govern a modern state?If the answer is no, changing ministers or permanent secretaries alone will not solve the problem.

Lesotho needs stronger meritocratic recruitment, transparent appointments, performance contracts that actually matter, professional protection for civil servants, stronger parliamentary oversight and consequences for persistent failure. Political parties themselves must also confront the uncomfortable reality that a person who is excellent at mobilising voters is not necessarily excellent at managing a ministry.

The distinction between political leadership and technical competence must be respected.Ministers have a legitimate political role. They set priorities and are accountable to citizens. But ministries require professional systems capable of translating political priorities into effective programmes.

When political interference destroys that boundary, both politics and administration suffer.There is also a role for Basotho that should not be overlooked.We cannot demand meritocracy from government while rewarding politicians solely because they belong to our party, village, constituency or faction. If citizens defend incompetence when it comes from “our side” and condemn it only when it comes from the “other side” , we become part of the problem.

Perhaps, therefore, kakistocracy should not become another fashionable insult in Lesotho’s political vocabulary. It should become a warning. The real question is not whether every person in government is the “worst” person available. Clearly, they are not.

The more important question is whether our institutions are becoming better at selecting, promoting and retaining the right people, or whether they are increasingly rewarding political loyalty over public competence. I am afraid that If the latter continues, Lesotho will not need to formally become a kakistocracy for Basotho to experience its consequences.

They will experience them at the Mantšonyane hospital, at the Hamotjalo-tjalo Primary school, at the Passport office in Hlotse, in the job market and in the quality of public services. And that is ultimately where government is judged, not by the quality of its speeches, but by the quality of life it produces. The Future is NOW!

Panta Moelets

Lesotho has never been short of people willing to call themselves revolutionaries. Advocate Teboho Mojapela broke from the All Basotho Convention (ABC) in 2017 and named his new party the Socialist Revolutionaries (SR), built, in his own words, on integrity, discipline, and a bold vision for national reform.

Mojapela was born in Mokhotlong in Lesotho’s northeast and has described his party as an answer to a political culture he found governed more by greed than service. A few years later, a successful businessman named Ntsokoane Samuel Matekane entered politics and called his own vehicle the Revolution for Prosperity (RFP), and within months, he was prime minister.

Two men, two parties, one shared instinct, that the word “revolution” still carries currency in Lesotho, that it still moves people who are tired of waiting.

There is nothing wrong with that instinct. A revolution, at its root, is simply a sudden and complete turning. The word comes from the Latin revolvere, to roll back, and it is not surprising that people hungry for change reach for a word with that kind of gravity attached to it.

But there is a difference between claiming the word and earning it, and Lesotho’s recent history offers a case study in that difference, playing out not in a party manifesto but in a modest, chronically under-resourced organisation called SECTION 2, and in the life of the man who helped build it, Kananelo Boloetse.

A thing with no box to fit into
SECTION 2, formally the Advocates for the Supremacy of the Constitution, does not run on donor conferences or party membership drives. It has taken the Lesotho Electricity and Water Authority to court over a multi-year tariff increase, arguing that the public could not meaningfully weigh in on a decision affecting every household’s power bill without access to the audited financial statements the law required. It lost that case in June 2026. A High Court judge found the missing documents had not, in fact, prevented public participation, and that the matter had become largely academic once the tariffs took effect.

And yet Boloetse’s response to that loss was not retreat. He pointed out, publicly, that the ruling still bound future tariff applications to more current financial disclosure, and pressed the question of why statements from years earlier still had not been published. That is not the posture of an organisation performing defiance for an audience. It is the posture of one that has decided losing a battle is an acceptable price for narrowing where an institution can hide next time.

This is, I think, the heart of what makes SECTION 2 so difficult for Lesotho’s political class to categorise, and therefore so difficult for it to neutralise through the ordinary tools of politics. It is not a party, so it cannot be out-campaigned, defected from, or absorbed into a coalition government the way Mojapela watched his own defectors get peeled away and reabsorbed elsewhere. It is not a conventional NGO either, cycling through workshops and communiqués aimed at donors abroad. Its fights are local, specific, and aimed at institutions Basotho actually deal with, LEWA, the National Manpower Development Secretariat (NMDS) the courts, the Ministry of Education and Training. In barely three years, without a war chest, without a convoy, without the scaffolding that normally announces an organisation as a serious political force, it became something a great many ordinary Basotho, young and old, rural and urban, began to recognise and, by most visible measures, to trust.

That is an uncomfortable fact for at least two audiences at once. It is uncomfortable for a government that has never had to answer to an opposition quite like this, one it cannot defeat at the ballot box because it is not contesting one, and cannot discredit as a foreign-funded NGO because its fights are so plainly local and so plainly popular.

And it is, in its own way, uncomfortable for the government’s political opponents too, who have found in SECTION 2’s litigation a convenient supply of ammunition, every tariff filing it forces into daylight, every disclosure it wins, becomes a talking point for whichever party is currently out of power: SECTION 2 did not build itself to be anyone’s proxy, and it is telling that both the people who fear it and the people who quietly benefit from it seem equally unsure of how to actually deal with an organisation that answers to neither of them.

What “revolutionary” actually means here

This is where I would push back, gently, on the instinct to reserve the word revolutionary for the people who put it on a party letterhead. Mojapela and Matekane both understood something true, that Basotho are hungry for a break from politics as usual, and both built institutions, of very different character, to answer that hunger.

But an institution that needs the word revolution in its name is, in a sense, still asking to be taken on faith. SECTION 2 asked to be taken to court instead. It built its credibility the slow way: filing after filing, disclosure after disclosure, a running record any citizen could go and read for themselves rather than a promise anyone had to trust in advance.

Boloetse himself has never, so far as the public record shows, described himself as a revolutionary. He has simply kept doing the same unglamorous thing, asking a regulator, a court, a ministry to show its work, since at least

Kananelo Boloetse: The revolutionary who never needed the name

2018, when he first wrote to the Lesotho Communications Authority (LCA) over predatory mobile data charges, long before SECTION 2 existed as an organisation at all. A man does not need to name himself after the thing he is doing if the thing he is doing speaks plainly enough on its own.

The speed bump

It has not yet been established, and I want to be careful here, exactly who abducted Kananelo Boloetse from his home in Katlehong on the night of September 5, or exactly why. Front Line Defenders has explicitly asked investigators to examine whether state security personnel played any role, while being equally explicit that this is a question to be investigated, not an answer to be assumed. Amnesty International has called the episode deeply alarming and warned that it raises serious concerns for the safety of journalists and human rights defenders across Lesotho more broadly. Those are the facts as documented.

Everything past that point is interpretation, mine, and I want to say plainly that it is mine.

My own reading, watching this unfold as a citizen who has observed SECTION 2’s rise, is that the timing is very hard to read as coincidence. In the weeks before the abduction, something had visibly shifted. People were publicly declaring, without much prompting, that SECTION 2 had become the only real hope left for ordinary Basotho, the one organisation still standing that was unmistakably in the people’s corner.

Basotho were recruiting each other into it, urging friends and relatives to sign up and help it grow into an even more formidable force, and Boloetse himself had just announced that membership was open to the public. The organisation was beginning to take root in institutions of higher learning, and students, notoriously difficult to organise around anything but their own grievances, seemed genuinely drawn to it.

The ground was, quite literally, shifting under the feet of Lesotho’s political establishment. And for the men who have spent years positioning themselves as the nation’s saviours, the self-styled messiahs promising to lead Basotho to some or other promised land, SECTION 2’s rise threatened something more dangerous to them than an electoral loss. It threatened exposure. An organisation

growing precisely because it made no such promises, and simply did the work, was starting to make the promise-makers look like what many suspected they had always been.

None of that proves state involvement. But it is consistent with a pattern that does not require conspiracy to explain. When an institution proves too popular to out-argue and too unconventional to out-organise, the remaining option, for those who feel threatened by it, is to try to slow it down, not permanently, perhaps, but enough. A speed bump, not a roadblock. Something to make the man at the center of it more cautious, his sources more frightened, his organisation’s momentum harder to sustain, without ever requiring anyone to admit that was the intention.

If that reading is even partly right, it will have badly misjudged its target. SECTION 2’s entire method has been to survive losses, the tariff case included, by converting them into narrower, harder-to-dodge fights the next time around. An organisation that was gaining members by the week, welcoming students onto campuses, and being called the people’s last honest advocate by ordinary Basotho is not obviously the kind of organisation that stops because its founder spent a night in the back of a car with tape over his mouth. It may, in fact, be the opposite. Lesotho’s police chief has already had to stand before journalists and ask the public to help him find a man his own force is supposed to be protecting, which is its own kind of accountability moment, imposed not by SECTION 2’s lawyers this time but by the plain optics of the case.

Basotho do not need Kananelo Boloetse to call himself a revolutionary. They have already watched what he built, in three years, out of court filings and public letters and open membership rolls and a willingness to keep showing up in the same ordinary suburb where, on one September night, someone decided he needed to be taught a lesson. Whether that lesson sticks is now the real test, not of Boloetse alone, but of whether Lesotho’s institutions intend to protect the kind of accountability SECTION 2 represents, or quietly let a speed bump do the work an election, and the promise-makers who fear one, never could.

Peaks of potential: Unlocking Lesotho's tourism goldmine

Thoboloko Ntšonyane

The inaugural Tourism Pitso, convened by the Lesotho Tourism Development Corporation (LTDC) to commemorate Tourism Month, has showcased Lesotho as a potential premier tourism destination, and thrown into sharp relief just how much of that potential remains locked away.

First of its kind, the Tourism Pitso launched this month brought together stakeholders from industry, investors, creative entrepreneurs, partners and government alongside the LTDC, the convener.

The two-day affair was held under the theme "Unblocking tourism investment and sustainable growth for inclusive economic development." The initiative is expected to become an annual fixture to promote the tourism industry.

Tourism has been earmarked as a priority sector under the National Strategic Development Plan II (NSDP II), as extended, and the numbers explain why.

According to the Lesotho National Development Corporation (LNDC), tourism is rebounding and effectively leveraging the country's unique mountain landscapes and cultural assets, with international arrivals reaching around 1.14 million in 2019, contributing about 5.5% of GDP, a figure projected to climb toward 6.1% by 2024 as recovery continued.

A sector still punching below its weight

More recent figures suggest that recovery, while real, has been uneven. The tourism sector generated over M562 million from accommodation, food and beverages in the 2025/26 financial year, despite a slight decline in visitor arrivals.

Speaking in Parliament, Tourism Minister Motlatsi Maselepo said this marked an improvement on the M541 million recorded the previous year, pointing to higher spending per visitor among the roughly 787,000 tourists recorded, even as overall numbers dipped from a peak of over 900,000 the year before, largely on the back of an 18% drop in arrivals from South Africa, Lesotho's primary source market, which the minister linked to ongoing border management challenges.

The government has set its sights considerably higher: officials say the goal is to reach one million visitors annually, and have earmarked fresh private-sector investment through the LTDC to upgrade key destinations toward that target.

Yet even against these gains, Lesotho's tourism sector remains, by regional standards, dramatically underdeveloped relative to its natural assets. As one recent analysis put it, Lesotho is the only country on Earth whose entire territory lies above



1,000 metres and hosts the only ski resort in sub-Saharan Africa, yet tourism's total contribution to GDP has hovered around 5.5%, with international tourism receipts sitting at roughly 2.5% of GDP.

Locally, the sector has employed about 25,000 people, and the government's 2025/26 budget allocated M207.2 million to tourism under an "Economic Transformation" theme, part of a broader push, officials say, to diversify an economy still leaning heavily on textiles, remittances and SACU receipts.

The draw: falls, dams and festivals

Lesotho's appeal lies in destinations such as the Maletsunyane Falls, Thaba-Bosiu Cultural Village, the Maloti Mountains and the Katse Dam, offering sightseeing, hiking and cultural exploration, alongside annual drawcards such as the Maletsunyane Braai Festival, the Moshoeshe Walk and the Roof of Africa.

The Falls alone recorded an 8.6% rise in visitors, from 7,468 in 2024 to 8,093 in 2025, while the Roof of Africa event has

grown into a fixture on the global motor-sport calendar, drawing more than 400 registered riders annually and generating millions in revenue across accommodation, hospitality, fuel and retail.

The creative economy, crafts, music, film and fashion, is increasingly positioned as tourism's natural partner, offering youth-intensive entrepreneurship opportunities that stretch the sector's economic footprint beyond hotel beds and entrance fees.

Globally, the backdrop is one of cautious recovery: the UN Tourism World Tourism Barometer estimates 690 million international arrivals were recorded worldwide between January and June 2026, about three million more than the same period last year, though growth has been uneven, up 2% in the first quarter before slipping 1% in the second, following a 3% decline in April.

The investment gap

Chaba Mokuku, Project Manager and Managing Director for the Competitive-

ness and Financial Inclusion (CAFI) programme, decried that Lesotho does not have an investment law and this does not augur well for the country.

"Without the investment law, the investors have no trust in the business environment," he said.

He also noted that this law protects the interests of the investors, calling for a reformed tourism act.

The concern is not new. Officials have for years acknowledged that the sector remains largely untapped relative to its promise, hampered by limited product development and thin recreational offerings that fail to keep visitors engaged for longer stays.

One of the players in the creative industry, Mpho Letima, emphasised the importance of joining forces with the communities, saying they should be taught to create their own work.

After visiting the heritage sites, Letima lamented that a 72-year-old resident of one of the country's tourist destinations admitted that they were unaware of the attractions in their own area.

She stressed that heritage is also an important component that should not be neglected.

Turning assets into industry

Speaking at the event, the Minister of Tourism, Sports, Arts and Culture, Mputi Stephen Mputi, highlighted that the warmth of Basotho helps to position tourism promotion in the country.

He highlighted the importance of the Tourism Pitso, saying it gives the country a platform to showcase Lesotho's tourism potential and growth.

"This is why Tourism Pitso is important, it gives us a platform to move beyond discussions, identify opportunities, build partnerships, expand market access and find practical solutions to the challenges facing our tourism sector."

Mputi emphasised that host communities should also benefit, and that the country must not lose what makes Lesotho unique in the process of developing it.

He called on players within the sector to make it a point to understand tourists' preferences and ensure personalised experiences for visitors.

Describing tourism as one of the key drivers of economic growth, job creation and cultural promotion, the Minister called on participants to exploit it for the benefit of the country.

"We must turn our assets into products, our products into business and our businesses into investment opportunities that create sustainable livelihoods especially within the host communities," Mputi said.

Ntsoaki Motaung

The sound reaches you before the village does. A rise and fall of small voices, singing something half-remembered from a nursery rhyme, carried on the thin mountain air of Thaba-Tseka. Follow it, and you will find a playground that did not exist a year ago, full of children who, for many of them, are discovering for the first time what it feels like to belong to a classroom.

This is what change looks like at ground level. It has a name, the Multiplier 1 Programme, a three-year initiative of the Ministry of Education and Training, the Global Partnership for Education, and UNICEF, but in Thaba-Tseka's villages, it looks simpler than any policy document could make it sound. Children playing, learning, and being counted, some for the very first time. The ambition behind it is disarmingly modest and enormous all at once, that every child in Lesotho should get the strong start they deserve, the foundation on which everything else in a life of learning is built.

A new dawn at Mahlong Primary School

At Mahlong Primary School, you do not need statistics to see that something has shifted. A year ago, a proper reception class here was little more than a hope. Today, Principal Mahloane Mahloane stands at the edge of a newly refurbished playground and watches children in uniform chase each other across it, unable to keep the smile off his face.

"We were introduced to the programme at the beginning of the year," he says. "It was aimed at improving what we already had in terms of early childhood education. Last year, we prepared ourselves with training, but this year our reception class became real."

Getting there was not easy. Before the programme arrived, Mahlong already ran its own preschool, but it survived on the goodwill and the wallets of parents, who covered the teacher's salary between them. For many families, that

was a burden too heavy to carry for long. "Now, parents are not responsible for the teacher's pay," Mahloane says, "and the programme even helped us repair the classroom door and paint the playground. We also received cement for the classroom, and resources like a tablet full of learning modules for the teacher."

More children, brighter futures

Take away the fees, and something predictable happens, more children walk through the gate. "We have seen our numbers go up," the principal says. "Because parents no longer have to pay, more children are able to come to school. They also benefit from the school feeding programme, so there's no reason to keep them at home."

The change is visible in the smallest daily rituals. At morning assembly, learners take turns presenting what they have learned that week, a fixture of school life that, until this year, belonged only to the older grades. "Our preschool children now take part in these presentations, something they could not do last year," Mahloane says. "They are maturing before our eyes."

Even the playground tells its own story of shared effort. Once dull and worn, it is now bright with colour, much of it thanks to parents who brought whatever materials they had at home to help build swings and climbing frames. "It feels like the whole community is involved," the principal says.

Yet progress here has not erased its limits. "Our classroom is still small, and the toilets are designed for older learners, not suitable for our youngest children," Mahloane admits. Twenty-two children now fill a space built for far fewer, a number he hopes, cautiously,

Where childhood gets a second chance

... Inside Lesotho's Multiplier 1 classrooms



Mokoto Primary School, Early Childhood Education classroom refurbished, fitted with chalk board, windows and a floor mat, waiting to be furnished ...

will keep growing.

A teacher's perspective

For 'Mathato Tsolo, who joined Mahlong at the start of the year to lead the new reception class, the programme's real impact lies less in bricks and cement than in what it has taught her about the children in front of her.

"I have learned how to help a child improve physically, emotionally, spiritually, and socially," she says. "The programme showed us how to assess each learner individually. Now, I can spot a child who needs extra help much sooner."

She speaks of the playground the way someone speaks of a favourite tool. "Play is so important. It helps children's minds grow, makes their muscles strong, and teaches them how to get along with others." The tablet loaded with learning modules has become another ally



in her classroom, though not without its wish list. "I wish it had videos as well instead of pictures only, and I hope we can receive more training in the future."

Space remains her most persistent frustration. Her classroom doubles as a church hall. "Every Friday, we have to pack up all our teaching materials to make space. We need a classroom of our own."

Parents join the journey

Ask a parent what the programme has meant, and the answers come quickly, almost urgently. 'Masechaba Maqai's six-year-old daughter is now in Mahlong's reception class, and the transformation, she says, has been nothing short

of life-changing. "We were asked to help build a child-friendly playground, using whatever we had at home," she recalls. "Since January, I have seen a huge difference in my child. She can write, remember what she learned, and even play with older children. My older children were not able to do these things at her age."

Maqai has become something of an evangelist for the programme among her neighbours. "Reception class helps children learn to write and speak for themselves before grade 1. I advise other parents to bring their children too."

'Makhosi Nthoana, another parent, sees the same pattern. "Children in the reception class develop faster in every

an old storage building into a classroom for our youngest learners."

Kuni has seen, up close, what happens when children skip this stage altogether. "When children come straight from home into grade 1, it is hard for them. They cry a lot, sometimes even wet themselves, and it takes time for teachers to manage their behaviour. With a reception class, children will be ready, they will know how to sit in class and listen."

She remembers an earlier, short-lived attempt at early learning at her school, one that folded when parents could no longer afford the fees. "For the short time it ran, we saw a real difference. I believe that with this programme, our results will improve, and by grade 3, our children will be able to read and write."

At Mokoto Primary School, teacher 'Mathabile Mohlomi describes a similar act of collective rebuilding. "We have a classroom ready for the reception class. Parents helped to put in windows, plaster the walls and paint, install a door and chalkboard with support from the programme." What was once an empty building, one occasionally damaged by local boys with nothing better to do, is now waiting only for furniture.

Mohlomi is under no illusions about what a reception class is for: "Reception class helps children to be ready for grade 1 — to listen, to talk, to understand." But geography still has the final word some days. "In rainy weather, the river floods and children cannot come to school. But when the weather is good, every child can get here."

The Multiplier 1 Programme: Facts and Figures

The Multiplier 1 Programme is at

work across five of Lesotho's most disadvantaged districts, with a goal simple enough to fit on a classroom wall: make sure every girl and boy enters school ready to learn, and stays on track through grade 3.

- Duration: Three years
- Direct reach: 57,480 learners in grades R-3, including at least 2,565 children with disabilities
- Teachers and leaders trained: 1,350 teachers, 300 school principals, and around 100 district education officials

Objectives:

- Establish and equip 300 new reception classes
- Refurbish existing classrooms and supply child-friendly furniture and materials
- Train more than 1,300 teachers and principals in the latest early-learning methods
- Provide tablets and learning kits to support teaching and gather data
- Mobilise parents and communities to support enrolment and learning at home

The numbers explain why this work matters. In 2020, only 36.4 percent of children in Lesotho were enrolled in pre-primary education, and just 15 percent of pre-primary learners showed basic literacy and numeracy skills. The Multiplier 1 Programme is trying to bend that curve, aiming to lift school readiness by 10 percent, strengthen grade 3 literacy and numeracy, and give every child, wherever they start, a real chance to succeed.

Back in Thaba-Tseka, that ambition is still measured in smaller units: a repainted playground, a door that finally shuts properly, a six-year-old who can now write her own name. It is slow, patient work, the kind that rarely makes headlines on its own, but that, village by village, is quietly redrawing what childhood in Lesotho's classrooms can look like.





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Request for Bids

(One-Envelope Bidding Process)

Country: Kingdom of Lesotho
Name of Project: Department of Mining and Geoscience
Contract Title: DMG, Security services, 2026-2027

RFB Reference No.: DMG/S/GOL3/2026-2027

1. The Ministry of Natural Resources has received financing from the Government of Lesotho (GOL) toward the cost of the Security services and intends to apply the proceeds toward payments under the contract for **DMG, Security Services, 2026-2027**

2. **The Ministry of Natural Resources** now invites sealed Bids from eligible Bidders of Security Services to submit tenders for **DMG, Security Services 2026-2027**

3. Bidding will be conducted through Open National competitive Tender as specified in Public Procurement Act of 2023 and Regulations.

4. Interested eligible Bidders may inspect the Bidding document during office hours; **09:00** hours to **16:00** hours at the **Department of Mines and Geology offices, located at LNDC Block C Level 5**

5. The bidding documents in **English, will be collected from Department of Mines and Geology Administration LNDC Block C Level 5, Maseru from Monday 7th September 2026 to, at the non-refundable fee of M500.00.** Payment shall be made to Accounts Office DMG Maseru, **Bidders must produce the receipt obtained from accounts office to procurement Unit in order to receive the bidding**
- documents.

6. Bids must be delivered to the address below on or before 2nd, October, 2026, at 10:00 am. And the opening will be at 10.15a.m. Electronic Bidding **will not** be permitted. Late Bids will be rejected. Bids will be publicly opened in the presence of the Bidders' designated representatives and anyone who chooses to attend at the address below:

Procurement Unit
Tender Box
Bokamoso Business Suit
Opposite Old Prison Headquarters and Center for accounting studies.

7. All Bids must be accompanied by a **Bid Security of M5, 000.00** in the form of a Bank Guarantee.

A Compulsory Pre-tender meeting shall be held on **22th September, 2026 at 10:00 am** at the DMG Maseru opposite Police Headquarters.

8. All questions and clarifications relating to this tender should be directed to The Procurement Unit, Ministry of Natural Resources, Bokamoso Business Suit, Old Christie House, Orpen Road, and Opposite Centre for Accounting Studies Maseru. Tel: 27325160.



IMPORTANT NOTICE

WITHDRAWAL AND RE-ADVERTISEMENT:
DIRECTOR CORPORATE SERVICES

Reference is made to the vacancy advertisement for the position of **Director Corporate Services**, published on media platforms from 23 July 2026.

The Lesotho Public Procurement Authority (LPPA) **hereby notifies** the public that the advertised position is **withdrawn with immediate effect**, and the **corrected position profile will be re-advertised** in due course.

The LPPA regrets any inconvenience this may cause to applicants who have already submitted applications and wishes to thank all candidates for their interest in the Authority. Applicants who wish to be considered are encouraged to re-apply once the corrected position is re-advertised.



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INVITATION TO TENDER

Supply and Delivery of Promotional Material

Procurement Reference: LNDC-LAS-2026-12

1. The Lesotho National Development Corporation (LNDC) has allocated funds to be used for Supply and delivery of **Promotional Material**
2. The LNDC invites sealed bids from **eligible local service providers** for provision of the above said goods.
3. Bidding & bidder eligibility shall be conducted in accordance with the Open National Competitive Bidding procedures prescribed in the Public Procurement Act, 2023 and the Regulations made under the Act.
4. Interested and eligible bidders may obtain further information and inspect the bidding document at the address given in Table below, at Item 7 (h) from the **04 September 2026 between 08:30am and 16:30pm**.
5. The bidding document which has been prepared in the English language is **available free of charge in soft copy by emailing procurement@lndc.org.ls**.
6. Late bids shall be rejected.
7. The planned Procurement schedule (subject to changes) is as follows:

Activity	Date
(a) Issue of Request for Bids	04 September 2026
(b) Non-compulsory pre-bid meeting	15 September 2026 @ 10:00 am
(c) Bid closing date	08 October 2026 @ 10:00 am
(d) Public Opening	08 October 2026 @ 10:15 am
(e) Evaluation process	12 - 16 October 2026
(f) Display and communication of best evaluated bidder notice	14 October 2026
(g) Contract Signature	30 November 2026
(h) Address	LNDC Development House, Block A, Reception Area



EXPRESSION OF INTEREST

PRE-QUALIFICATION OF SECURITY SERVICE PROVIDERS
FOR THE PROVISION OF AD-HOC SECURITY SERVICES

Procurement Reference: LNDC-LAS-2026-13

1. **Background and Objective:** The Lesotho National Development Corporation (LNDC) intends to prequalify competent security service providers for the provision of reliable and responsive security services on an ad-hoc, on-call basis at its properties and designated locations in Lesotho. Interested providers must demonstrate professional competence, integrity, qualified personnel, adequate resources, regulatory compliance, and the capacity to deliver quality services.
2. Bidding and bidder eligibility shall be conducted in accordance with the Lesotho Public Procurement Act, 2023, and its Regulations.
3. **The Properties:** The LNDC intends to enter into an Open Framework Agreement for the provision of security services on an ad-hoc basis across selected LNDC properties in Lesotho. Interested locally registered security service providers may express interest in providing services at one or more of the properties, as detailed in the Expression of Interest (EOI) document.
4. **The planned Procurement schedule (subject to changes) is as follows:**

Activity	Date
(a) Issue of Request for EOI	04 September 2026
(b) Non-compulsory pre-bid meeting	09 September 2026 @ 10:00 am
(c) Bid closing date	16 September 2026 @ 10:00 am
(d) Public Opening	16 September 2026 @ 10:15 am
(e) Evaluation process	17-18 September 2026
(f) Commencement	1st October 2026
(g) Address for submission	LNDC Development House, Block A, Level 1 Reception Area, Tender Box
(h) Email to request a detailed tender document	Procurement@lndc.org.ls



Government of Lesotho

Invitation to Bidders

BID NOTICE UNDER OPEN NATIONAL COMPETITIVE BIDDING

The Ministry of Law and Justice (MLJ)
Government Printing

03rd September 2026
SUPPLY OF A 3 WHEEL ELECTRIC FORKLIFT, LEASING OF PHOTOCOPIER MACHINES, AND
SUPPLY AND INSTALLATION OF A SURVEILLANCE SYSTEM - MLJ/GP/FRKLFT/CCTV/PHT/2026/2027

1. The Ministry of law and Justice has been allocated funds to be used for the acquisition of a 3-wheel electric forklift, leasing of photocopier machines, and supply and installation of a surveillance system for the Department of Government Printing and Stationery.
2. The entity invites sealed bids from eligible bidders for the provision of the above goods.
3. Bidding shall be conducted in accordance with Open National Competitive Tendering procedures contained in the Public Procurement Act 2023 and the Regulations made under the Act.
4. Interested eligible bidders may obtain further information and inspect the bidding document at the address given below at 8(a) from 8am to 3:30pm.
5. The bidding document which has been prepared in English may be purchased by interested bidders at 8(b) upon payment of a **non-refundable** fee of **One thousand Maloti only**. The method of payment will be cash payable at accounts office Government Printing and Stationery, from **8am-3:00pm only, from 03rd September to 08th October 2026**. The receipt must be presented to the **Procurement Unit Office Government Printing and Stationery**
6. Bids must be delivered to the address below at 8(c) at or before 10:00 am, 08th October 2026. All Bids must be accompanied by a bid security of 2% of their bid price, expressed as a fixed amount and not with decimal points. Bid security must be valid until 18th December 2026. Late bids shall be rejected. Bids will be opened in the presence of the bidders' representatives who choose to attend at the address given below at 8(d) at 10:30am, 08th October 2026.
7. There **shall** be a pre-bid meeting/ site visit for **LOT 3 Bidders**.
8. Bidders should take note of the following:
- (a) Documents may be inspected at: Government Printing and Stationery, Procurement office, Maseru Industrial Area, Lioli Road, Opposite Hippo Knitting

- Factory.
- (b) Documents will be issued from: Government Printing and Stationery, Procurement office, Maseru Industrial Area, Lioli Road, Opposite Hippo Knitting Factory.
- (c) Bids must be issued to: Government Printing and Stationery, Reception Area, Maseru Industrial Area, Lioli Road, Opposite Hippo Knitting Factory.
- (d) Address of bid opening: Government Printing and Stationery, Conference Room, Maseru Industrial Area, Lioli Road, Opposite Hippo Knitting Factory.
9. The planned procurement Schedule (subject to changes) as follows:

Activity	Date
(a) Publish bid notice	03rd September 2026
(b) Pre-bid meeting for LOT 3 Bidders	14th/September/2026 at 10:00 am
(c) Bid closing date	08th October 2026
(d) Bid closing Time	10:00am
(e) Evaluation process	12th October 2026 to 23rd October 2026
(f) Display and communication of Notice of Tender	30th October 2026
(g) Contract signature	20th November 2026

10. **ADDITIONAL INFORMATION OR CLARIFICATIONS**

For additional information or request for clarifications on issues concerning the request should be in writing, please contact the following office:

Ministry of Justice and Law
Department of Government Printing and Stationery,
Maseru
Tel: **+26622311160/22313023** / +266 6313 2552 / +266 6313 2455
Email: lawjustice.procurement@gov.ls



INVITATION TO TENDER

Supply and Delivery of Office Furniture

Procurement Reference: LNDC-LAS-2026-11

1. The Lesotho National Development Corporation (LNDC) has allocated funds to be used for Supply and delivery of **office furniture**.
2. The LNDC invites sealed bids from **eligible local service providers** for provision of the above said goods.
3. Bidding & bidder eligibility shall be conducted in accordance with the Open National Competitive Bidding procedures prescribed in the Public Procurement Act, 2023 and the Regulations made under the Act.
4. Interested and eligible bidders may obtain further information and inspect the bidding document at the address given in Table below, at Item 7 (h) from the **04 September 2026 between 08:30am and 16:30pm**.
5. The bidding document which has been prepared in the English language is **available free of charge in soft copy by emailing procurement@lndc.org.ls**.
6. Late bids shall be rejected.
7. The planned Procurement schedule (subject to changes) is as follows:

Activity	Date
(a) Issue of Request for Bids	04 September 2026
(b) Non-compulsory pre-bid meeting	15 September 2026 @ 10:00 am
(c) Bid closing date	08 October 2026 @ 10:00 am
(d) Public Opening	08 October 2026 @ 10:15 am
(e) Evaluation process	12 - 16 October 2026
(f) Display and communication of best evaluated bidder notice	14 October 2026
(g) Contract Signature	30 November 2026
(h) Address	LNDC Development House, Block A, Reception Area

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First BNC review charts course from dialogue to implementation



Staff Reporter

The inaugural Mid-Term Review of the Second Session of the Lesotho-South Africa Bi-National Commission (BNC) recently concluded in Pretoria on 9 September 2026, following three days of intensive deliberations aimed at accelerating the implementation of commitments between the two sister countries.

The Lesotho delegation was led by Mr Thabang Lekhela, Principal Secretary of Foreign Affairs and International Relations, who served as Co-Chair of the Mid-Term Review alongside Ambassador Tebogo Seokolo, Deputy Director-General of the Department of International Relations and Cooperation (DIRCO) of the Republic of South Africa.

According to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, key outcomes of the review were progress towards a New Migration Model to address persistent migration challenges and enhanced labour mobility; advancement of Phase II of the Lesotho Highlands Water Project, including the Polihali Dam; and efforts to accelerate Smart One-Stop Border Posts at Maseru and Ficksburg.

The two countries also advanced economic cooperation through measures aimed at strengthening cross-border value chains, Special Economic Zones and clean energy cooperation.

On political and strategic cooperation, Lesotho and South Africa reaffirmed their harmonised positions within SADC, the African

Union and the United Nations, including cooperation on peace and security, conflict prevention and the silencing of guns on the African continent.

In his closing remarks, Lekhela expressed appreciation to the government and people of South Africa for their hospitality and highlighted the significant progress achieved across the five Sectoral Clusters.

He emphasised that the review provided an opportunity for both countries to move decisively "from dialogue to implementation" and to ensure that bilateral commitments translate into tangible benefits for their peoples.

The BNC mechanism itself is relatively young. South Africa and Lesotho held their inaugural Bi-National Commission session in 2025 in Maseru, with President Cyril Ramaphosa at the time describing the summit as a "great opportunity to take stock of our bilateral relations as well as cooperation in a number of fields."

In his closing remarks on that occasion, Ramaphosa noted that the two countries' common interests, historical links and shared heritage remain strong, and that South Africa and Lesotho would continue to play constructive roles in SADC, on the African continent and globally.

The Mid-Term Review in Pretoria was therefore the first formal stocktaking exercise since that inaugural session, designed to check progress against commitments made and to ensure the relationship does

not stall between full BNC sittings.

The Polihali Dam featured prominently in the discussions, and for good reason: it is the centrepiece of Phase II of the Lesotho Highlands Water Project (LHWP), the decades-old bilateral scheme that supplies water to South Africa's Gauteng province while generating hydroelectricity for Lesotho.

According to the Lesotho Highlands Development Authority (LHDA), the dam is a concrete-faced rockfill structure that will create a reservoir on the Senqu and Khubelu rivers, adding 2.325 billion cubic metres in storage capacity and increasing the current yearly water supply rate from 780 million cubic metres to 1.27 billion cubic metres a year.

Recent progress reports indicate the project is advancing steadily, if not without earlier delays. By July 2026, construction of the 166-metre-high dam had reached 50% completion and remained on track for the start of impoundment in the 2027/28 rainy season.

Engineering data show that 9.6 million cubic metres of rock had been placed at an average rate of 26,000 cubic metres per working day, bringing the dam's rockfill component to 67% completion, with full completion of the dam expected in 2029. Notably, 2026 also marks the 40th anniversary of the signing of the original LHWP Treaty, giving added symbolic weight to this year's progress milestones.

On the border management front, the

Smart One-Stop Border Posts initiative discussed at the Mid-Term Review builds on a Joint Action Plan signed earlier by the two governments to modernise the Maseru Bridge and Ficksburg crossings.

The initiative forms part of a broader regional push by South Africa's Border Management Authority (BMA) to introduce coordinated, electronic border-processing systems that reduce congestion and reliance on physical infrastructure.

BMA commissioner Dr Michael Masiapato has previously said such systems would "significantly improve the facilitation of both goods and people at critical ports of entry" by consolidating border control procedures into a single location, enhancing coordination and reducing waiting times.

Maseru Bridge and Ficksburg are among six land ports across the region earmarked for this redevelopment, alongside crossings into Zimbabwe, Mozambique, Eswatini and Botswana.

For ordinary travellers and traders, congestion at Maseru Bridge in particular has long been a source of frustration, given that it is one of the busiest land border posts in Southern Africa. The push toward a "juxtaposed" one-stop model, in which officials from both countries work from shared facilities, is intended to allow goods and people to be cleared for exit and entry in a single stop, rather than undergoing separate processes on each side of the border.

On political and strategic cooperation, Lesotho and South Africa reaffirmed their harmonised positions within the Southern African Development Community (SADC), the African Union and the United Nations, including cooperation on peace and security, conflict prevention and the silencing of guns on the African continent.

This alignment reflects the two countries' longstanding practice of coordinating positions in multilateral forums, given Lesotho's status as a country entirely encircled by South African territory and its consequent economic and political interdependence with its neighbour.

Ambassador Tebogo Seokolo echoed the importance of turning the commitments reached through the BNC into practical action, reinforcing the shared resolve of both countries to deepen bilateral cooperation and deliver meaningful outcomes for the people of Lesotho and South Africa.

The Agreed Minutes endorsed at the conclusion of the Review set out clear timelines and accountability mechanisms to ensure that decisions translate into economic opportunities, secure borders, enhanced social protection and improved human development.

The outcomes of the Mid-Term Review lay a strong foundation for the Third Session of the Lesotho-South Africa Bi-National Commission, scheduled to be convened in South Africa in 2027.

Ramaphosa, addressing the inaugural session that set this cycle of engagement in motion, had already signalled his government's intention to keep the relationship on a structured, forward-looking track, closing his remarks by saying he looked forward to receiving his Lesotho counterpart in South Africa for the third session of the Bi-National Commission.

The review in Pretoria appears to have kept that timeline intact, with officials from both sides expressing confidence that the sectoral progress logged from migration policy to dam construction to border modernisation, will carry through to next year's full session.



Maja Ka Thata: From Testing the Waters to the NMAs

Chris Theko

When the news came that Maja Ka Thata had been nominated for the National Music Awards, the reaction was far from calm. There was nervousness, excitement and, for a moment, disbelief.

For a relatively young hip-hop collective still finding its feet in Lesotho's music industry, the nomination represented more than an award opportunity. It was confirmation that their work was beginning to attract attention beyond the circles in which they started.

According to founder Kopano Mphunyane, the group did not enter the National Music Awards with an expectation of walking away as nominees.

"When we submitted, we just wanted to be part of something big such as the National Music Awards. So we had an intention to test our recognition while at it," Mphunyane said.

That test appears to have produced an encouraging result.

The nomination comes at a time when Maja Ka Thata is still relatively new to the industry, making the recognition particularly significant for a group that is yet to establish a lengthy catalogue or years of experience.

Mphunyane says their short journey has already produced moments that have exceeded their expectations, with their performance at Cleketseng this year standing out as their biggest achievement so far.

"We are hoping to get even bigger recognition and achievements," he said.

For Maja Ka Thata, however, the nomination is not simply about an award. It is also an indication that their unconventional approach to building the group may be working.

Mphunyane says he came to the realisation that, despite being able to rap, he could not build the vision alone. He therefore brought together a group designed to offer versatility and variety.

"I realized that in as much as I know how to rap, I couldn't do it on my own hence I decided to put to-



gether a group that is versatile and has variety," he explained.

That variety, he believes, has contributed to the attention Maja Ka Thata has received.

But Mphunyane is clear about how he wants the group to be understood.

"We are a movement."

It is an important distinction. Maja Ka Thata is not positioning itself merely as another hip-hop crew competing for space in an increasingly crowded music scene. The group sees itself as part of something larger, a movement around hip-hop, identity and the continued evolution of Sesotho rap.

And that journey has not been without its disappointments.

Mphunyane says that one of the biggest lessons has been discovering that the music industry can be considerably more complicated than it appears from the outside.

"When all these good things are happening, you start also learning how tricky and challenging the thing that looked easy and glamorous on the outside can easily become full of disappointment and unfulfilled promises," he said.

That reality has taught the group patience and perseverance.

"Patience and virtue. This journey has been very challenging and bumpy," Mphunyane says when reflecting on the lessons they have learnt so far.

Perhaps one of the most important lessons has also been the need to approach music as a business.

Mphunyane says he quickly realised that artists need to work strategically rather than simply working harder.

"To work smart and not hard," he said.

He has also learnt that a single song can potentially change an artist's life, a realisation that has encouraged Maja Ka Thata to think beyond their current position.

"We are now dreaming bigger," he said.

Their National Music Awards nomination also comes at an interesting moment for hip-hop in Lesotho. Mphunyane believes the genre, and particularly Sotho rap, is receiving greater recognition and respect in the country, although he believes there is still a gap when it comes to the business side of the industry.

"Yes, but mainly the business side, because hip hop and Sotho rap are now given the recognition and respect in our country," he said.

For Maja Ka Thata, there is something particularly powerful about being recognised while remaining true to who they are.

"This moment means so much, to be recognized for being yourself," Mphunyane said.

Interestingly, he believes some of the group's strongest support has come from outside the country.

"Although we seem to actually have more support from South Africa than Lesotho," he adds.

That cross-border interest could become increasingly important as the group looks to expand its audience and establish itself beyond the local scene.

For now, however, their attention is firmly on the National Music Awards and what remains one of the biggest questions of the group's young career: what happens if Maja Ka Thata actually wins?

Mphunyane does not hesitate when imagining the moment.

"First of all I feel like we would cry that stage if we won."

But the emotion would quickly give way to responsibility.

"After that we would have to put in more work and show people that we are not taking chances."

That perhaps captures Maja Ka Thata's approach to the nomination itself. They may be newcomers, but they do not want to be treated as a passing moment.

Mphunyane believes a National Music Award would provide the group with more than a trophy to place on a shelf.

"The NMAs are a huge platform so I believe winning the award would be a big boost for us. That goes into our portfolio and it would certainly speak volumes and help with our branding."

For a group that initially entered the awards simply hoping to test whether it had gained enough recognition to belong on such a platform, the nomination itself is already an answer.

But Maja Ka Thata appears unwilling to stop at recognition. The nomination has given the movement a bigger target, a bigger dream and, perhaps most importantly, a reason to believe that the road ahead could be considerably bigger than the one they initially imagined.

Whether they leave the National Music Awards with a trophy or simply the experience of being among the nominees, Maja Ka Thata has already made one thing clear: they are no longer merely testing the waters. They are ready to make a bigger splash.

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Killer Joy rebrands to Letseka

Chris Theko

Lesotho's fast-rising hip-hop artist Killer Joy has officially entered a new chapter in his career, adopting a new stage name Letseka in a rebrand driven largely by his connection with his Basotho audience and his commitment to Sesotho music.

However, despite the name change, the artist insists that the music has not, if anything it has improved for the better under the new moniker.

In an exclusive interview with *Newsday Arts*, Letseka stated that the decision was rooted in a question that had increasingly been raised by his fans: why was an artist making predominantly Sesotho music carrying an English stage name?

"Killer Joy is an English name, but my music is Sesotho music," he explained.

“This confused my fans because they would ask why I sing Sesotho music while my name is English.”

The issue was also practical. With most of his audience being Basotho, he says some fans found Killer Joy difficult to pronounce, while Letseka is a name that can easily be said by everyone, from younger listeners to older generations.

The artist says his fans played a significant role in bringing the issue to the forefront.

"My fans are my pride. When they are happy, I am happy."

Eventually, what started as feedback from his audience became a realisation within his team that his stage name and musical identity were not entirely aligned.

He describes the combination of a Sesotho musician using an English name as being like “water and paraffin” - two things that simply do not mix.

But Letseka is not merely a more accessible name. It carries a deeper meaning for the artist. He describes Letseka as someone who comes to fight for what belongs to him, representing the things that Killer Joy, in his view, failed to fight for.

"Letseka is a man who has come to claim everything that Killer Joy worked for but did not receive the rewards for," he said.

That sentiment gives the rebrand a significance beyond changing a name. Letseka is positioning the new identity as an evolution of everything Killer Joy built, rather than an attempt to erase the past.

The transition, however, has not been entirely easy. After years of being known as Killer Joy, the artist acknowledges that fans and the wider music community had become accustomed to the old

identity.

Still, he says there are no dramatic changes planned.

"The change is only to the name. The music remains the same," he said.

He says he saw Killer Joy's dreams and potential in a way that others had not yet seen.

“What inspired me has not yet been seen by others; I am the only one who has seen it,” he said.

The rebrand also comes at a time when Letseka is preparing to give his audience more of the music they have been requesting.

Among the releases fans can look forward to are Ngooanana Lezulu, a song he says listeners have been eagerly anticipating, as well as the music video for Liba Sa Lerato.

For an artist navigating the developing Lesotho hip-hop landscape, Letseka believes one of the biggest challenges facing young musicians is a lack of confidence in their own sound.

He argues that some artists abandon their own musical identity in an attempt to imitate established acts.

According to him, young musicians need to trust what they have created rather than constantly looking elsewhere for a sound to emulate.

His own rebrand, therefore, appears to be an exercise in exactly that, embracing an identity that feels closer to his music, his audience and his roots.

And while Killer Joy may be the name that introduced him to many listeners, Letseka believes the journey is far from over.

The new identity comes with its own declaration: a man prepared to claim what he believes he has earned.

His introduction captures that mentality in a phrase that has become central to the new persona:

“TSEKA LETSEKA JANA SA LIKHELEKE SE
MONATE HA SE NKUOA KA LIPHAKA!”

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Kick4Life eyes safer sporting environment in communities

Seabata Mahao

Sport can transform lives by building confidence, developing life skills, creating friendships and giving children and young people a sense of belonging.

However, Kick4Life says these benefits can only be fully realised when children feel safe and protected while participating.

Through its Safe in Sport project, Kick4Life is working to create safer sporting environments where every child, particularly girls, can participate confidently, safely and equally.

The initiative forms part of broader efforts to strengthen safeguarding in Lesotho's sporting sector while challenging harmful gender stereotypes and cultural practices that can limit the participation of women and girls in sport.

Kick4Life partnered with Touch Roots Africa (TRA), a Lesotho non-governmental organisation specialising in safeguarding, to establish an independent and confidential Safe in Sport Reporting Mechanism. The mechanism allows anyone involved in sport to report abuse and access support.

Developed under Common Goal's Equal Play Fund, the mechanism is independently delivered by TRA and provides confidential and anonymous reporting channels, independent handling of reports and referrals to psychosocial, medical and legal support.

The mechanism is intended to complement, rather than replace, existing national safeguarding policies and reporting procedures, as well as those operated by individual sports clubs and organisations.

Kick4Life Community Programmes Manager 'Maphoka Ramokoatsi said creating safe spaces for girls was particularly important because safety concerns often prevent them from participating in sport.

"For many girls in Lesotho, the biggest barrier to sport is not talent, but it is feeling safe enough to participate. Most parents are also hesitant to let their girl children join sports because of safety concerns," she said.

Ramokoatsi said the Safe in Sport project had helped create an environment where girls could participate without fear.

"When girls feel safe to participate, they also find their voice, build confidence and begin to believe that they belong in sport. Just like myself, I was once that girl who unleashed her potential through sport," she said.

As part of the initiative, Kick4Life and TRA brought together schools, sports teams, federations, communities and government stakeholders to raise awareness about safeguarding, strengthen referral pathways and build the capacity of people responsible for protecting children.

The organisations also held a participatory workshop to develop a practical safeguarding and child protection training guide, focusing on



Making Sport Safer for Everyone - Kick4Life



prevention, reporting and response.

The guide was designed to be accessible and easy to understand and can be used by schools, clubs, federations and other organisations working with children and young people.

A total of 66 participants from schools, sports clubs and federations took part in safeguarding training.

The safeguarding message was subsequently taken onto the football pitch through the Safe in Sport League, which ran from March to July 2026.

The league brought together eight primary schools – Tsolo Government, Boitelo, Thamae, St James, Mohloli, Ratjomose, Motumi and Qoaling Primary Schools.

Football was used as a platform to promote life skills, safeguarding, gender equity and the wellbeing of children and young people.

Alongside football activities, participants discussed issues including respect, equality, in-

clusion, safe relationships and the importance of speaking up when something does not feel right.

The programme highlighted that safeguarding goes beyond policies and procedures, requiring children to have the knowledge and confidence to recognise unsafe behaviour and report concerns.

A mixed-gender tournament was also included in the league, bringing boys and girls together to challenge gender stereotypes and promote shared responsibility for creating safe sporting environments.

The involvement of boys was considered important because they can contribute to challenging harmful gender norms, promoting respect and helping create safer environments for both girls and boys.

The programme also strengthened Kick4Life's relationships with schools and communities, with regular engagement involving

teachers, coaches and school representatives helping improve communication and reinforce the message that child protection is a shared responsibility.

Among the young participants was 13-year-old Kananelo from Tsolo Government Primary School, who was named Player of the Tournament in the mixed-gender competition.

Kananelo was recognised for her football performance as well as her active participation in the project's theoretical sessions.

She said the league had taught her that sport should be about more than competition and winning.

"The Safe in Sport League taught us that sport is about playing and winning. It is also about fair play, safety and caring for one another," she said.

Kananelo said participants had also learnt about treating others with respect and taking responsibility for creating safe sporting environments.

"It is especially important for girls to feel safe in sports because when girls are afraid of getting hurt or facing situations that make them uncomfortable, they may choose to stop playing," she said.

She added that unsafe situations needed to be prevented so girls could continue participating and demonstrate their abilities.

Through Safe in Sport, Kick4Life and TRA are seeking to make safeguarding an integral part of sport in Lesotho by strengthening systems, building partnerships and giving children opportunities to learn, participate and speak up.

The initiative demonstrates how football can be used not only to develop sporting talent but also to promote confidence, equality, respect and child protection.



Seabata Mahao

The Vodacom Premier League (VPL) has received a significant boost ahead of the 2026/27 season following Stanlib's commitment of M250,000 towards the league's Man of the Match awards.

The investment company will sponsor the individual awards throughout the season, with every outstanding player receiving M1,000 after each Premier League match.

The sponsorship follows an approach by the Premier League Management Committee (PLMC) to Stanlib, seeking support for the league and its players.

Stanlib Managing Director MohlabinyaneMohapi said the sponsorship came at an appropriate time as the company celebrates 25 years of operations in Lesotho.

Mohapi said the anniversary had prompted Stanlib to look for meaningful ways of giving back to the communities in which it operates.

The company subsequently considered the PLMC's proposal and identified football as an opportunity to contribute to one of the country's most popular sporting codes.

"For us, this is a way of giving back to the community and supporting football in the country," Mohapi said.

He said football's ability to bring Basotho together was among the reasons the company decided to support the Man of the Match awards.

According to Mohapi, the 2026/27 VPL season is expected to feature 240 matches, making the sponsorship a significant investment in recognising individual excellence.

He said rewarding players for outstanding performances could provide additional motivation while contributing to the development of football.

Mohapi added that Stanlib's 25th anniversary was not only about celebrating the company's achievements, but also about making a meaningful contribution to society.

On his part, Lesotho Football Association (LeFA) President Lijane Nthunya welcomed

Stanlib injects M250k in premier league football



the sponsorship, saying it aligns with the association's vision of promoting excellence and restoring a winning mentality among teams and players.

Nthunya said the initiative fits into LeFA's concept of "Reward for Excellence", which seeks to encourage higher standards and improve the quality of football in the country.

He said recognising the best player in every match could have a positive effect on players because outstanding performances would be acknowledged and rewarded.

Nthunya described the initiative as historic, particularly because the sponsorship will cover the Man of the Match award for every Premier League fixture.

He also expressed appreciation to Stanlib for responding positively to the PLMC's request and recognising the importance of working with football stakeholders to develop the game.

According to Nthunya, collaboration between the private sector, football authorities and the PLMC is important in efforts to improve the standard and competitiveness of domestic football.

He further thanked Stanlib for choosing football as one of the areas through which it would give back to the community during its anniversary celebrations.

PLMC Chairman Letsie Nokoane described the sponsorship as a major achievement and said it was encouraging for the league to enter

the new season with such a development.

Nokoane said the partnership would raise the profile of the VPL while giving players an additional incentive to compete for individual recognition.

He said knowing that strong performances could earn them the Man of the Match award would encourage players to give their best on the pitch.

Nokoane believes the initiative could help identify and bring out the best performers while contributing to improvements in the overall quality of domestic football.

He also said the sponsorship demonstrated the important role the private sector can play in supporting the development of sport in Lesotho.

The Vice President of the Lesotho Sports and Recreation Commission (LSRC), Kamohelo Hlomisi, also welcomed Stanlib's involvement, highlighting the role of sport in social development.

Hlomisi said one of the LSRC's priorities is improving sporting infrastructure, including playing fields, to provide athletes with better facilities in which to develop their talents.

He said football has the ability to unite communities and create connections between people and nations, making continued investment in the sport important.

Hlomisi added that initiatives such as the Stanlib sponsorship could help create an environment in which players are encouraged to develop their abilities.

He stressed that continued support from companies and other stakeholders remains important to the growth of sport, particularly given football's large following across Lesotho.

National chess team in Uzbekistan

Seabata Mahao

Lesotho's national chess team is currently in Samarkand, Uzbekistan, where it will represent the country at the 2026 Chess Olympiad, with the players aiming to test themselves against international opposition, improve their rankings and compete for medals.

The ongoing tournament running from 16 - 27 September will bring together chess players from countries around the world, giving the Basotho representatives an opportunity to fly the national flag and showcase the country's chess talent on the international stage.

Ahead of the team's departure, Chess Lesotho held a send-off ceremony attended by sports leaders and other stakeholders who gathered to encourage the players and wish them success in their international assignment.

Chess Lesotho President Moshe Mokone said the federation was proud of the players' dedication and talent, adding that the trip was part of efforts to develop a stronger national team.

"Our wish as an association is for the team to perform well. We want these young players to earn titles, improve their strength, win medals and become better players," said Mokone.

He said Chess Lesotho had been working to expose national team players to international competitions as part of their preparations, while local tournaments were also being organised to provide players with regular competitive experience.

According to Mokone, the federation had also sought the services of a highly experienced coach from Russia to assist the



National chess team in Uzbekistan

players in improving their rankings and overall performance.

However, he identified limited financial resources as one of the major challenges facing the association, particularly in securing experienced coaches.

"The biggest challenge is that we still do not have enough financial resources. Paying coaches is expensive, and that limits us. We want highly experienced coaches who can help our players," he said.

Mokone also highlighted the challenge of balancing chess preparations with school commitments, noting that some members of the team are still schoolchildren.

"Some of them are schoolchildren, so it is difficult for them to be available all the time. We need support that will help us strengthen them and give them enough time to prepare," he said.

He appealed to Basotho to rally behind the national team, saying public support was important in creating opportunities for players to develop and participate in international competitions.

Mokone further urged the players to respect their opponents while approaching every game with determination and the discipline expected of athletes representing Lesotho.

Meanwhile, Lesotho Sports and Recreation Commission (LSRC) Acting Chief Executive Officer Baba Malephane congratulated the team and wished the players well ahead of their journey to Uzbekistan.

Malephane said reaching the level of representing Lesotho at an international competition was an achievement in itself, but challenged the players to travel to Samarkand with the intention of competing rather than

merely participating.

He said the selected players had demonstrated that they were among the country's leading chess players and expressed hope that they would use the opportunity to demonstrate their abilities against international opposition.

Malephane also called on businesses and sports sponsors to support chess and other sporting disciplines, pointing to tax incentives available through the LSRC for companies that contribute to sports development.

He said financial assistance from the private sector could help sports associations acquire equipment, access quality coaching and create opportunities for athletes to compete internationally.

The LSRC official further encouraged members of the public and other stakeholders to contribute to the national sports fund as another avenue through which they could support the development of sport in Lesotho.

The Lesotho delegation travelling to Samarkand comprises 14 members, including players, officials and other team members.

Among the notable players are LebajoaTšepe and TokeloKlaas, both of whom hold the FIDE Candidate Master (CM) title, while BonoloNtsielo holds the Women Candidate Master (WCM) title.

The presence of FIDE-titled players provides the national team with valuable experience as it prepares to face players from across the world.

The team's participation has also received backing from several organisations and businesses that have contributed towards enabling the delegation to attend the international event.



“The door is open to everyone”

Seabata Mahao

Likuena head coach Bob Mafoso has sent a clear message to every footballer in Lesotho that form and effort, not reputation, will decide who wears the national colours.

The coach's philosophy was put into practice this week with the naming of a 25-man provisional squad for Lesotho's upcoming Africa Cup of Nations (AFCON) qualifiers against Niger and Morocco, headlined by the surprise inclusion of two uncapped domestic players.

Matlama forward Molefi Kulehile and Bantu attacking prospect Bakuena Ramakatsa have earned their first national team call-ups despite being overlooked for the initial 45-man training camp held three months ago, proof, Mafoso says, that no door is permanently closed to a player who is performing.

“The door is open for every Mosotho who performs,” Mafoso said.

“Sometimes it is difficult because we cannot call every player. We called the team and when the league started others performed better and that's why we picked them.”

He explained that the earlier pre-season selection had simply reflected the information available at the time, based on the previous campaign, and was never meant to be the final word on who could make the squad.

“The league has helped by starting sooner because when we selected the pre-season camp it was based on last season.”

Ramakatsa's rise has been the clearest illustration yet of Mafoso's open-door approach, with the coach praising the youngster for forcing his way into contention within weeks of the season starting.

“There are new players who have put their hands, for example Bakuena Ramakatsa. Nobody knew he would be playing in our league a week before it started and when he played, he proved beyond a reasonable doubt that he is a player that needs to be given an opportunity,” Mafoso said.

The provisional squad blends this emerging domestic talent with experienced players based both locally and abroad, reinforcing

the coach's insistence that places are earned rather than guaranteed.

Only 23 players will eventually travel for the two qualifiers, with Mafoso confirming that a final assessment will be conducted before the squad is trimmed. A three-way battle is currently underway for the final place, while several players remain under assessment because of injuries.

Mafoso has ruled out taking risks with injured players, with Bantu's Kananelo Rapuleng, LDF pair Katileho Makateng and Lehlohonolo Matsau, Majantja's Limpho Ralesupi and LMPS's Thabo Matšoele among those unavailable due to injuries.

Likuena will begin their qualifying campaign away to Niger on September 25. The match will be played in Accra, Ghana, after Niger was unable to use an approved home stadium, an arrangement that means the West Africans will not enjoy conventional home advantage, giving Lesotho an opportunity to prepare in similar conditions.

Likuena will then face regional giants Morocco four days later, on September 29, in Bloemfontein, South Africa. Mafoso said the team's preparations have progressed well, with two acclimatisation sessions planned in Ghana ahead of the Niger encounter.

He also expressed satisfaction with the work done during the July pre-season camp and subsequent non-residential camps, though the physical condition of players remained a challenge across Lesotho's domestic football.

“We had several tests, and we can safely say we are happy with the team... most of the training was loading the players on physical attributes, so the final preparations now will be specific on how we are planning to tackle the two matches,” he said.

The early start of the domestic Premier League season has also worked in the national team's favour, giving players competitive matches and improving their match fitness — another factor Mafoso credits for widening the pool of in-form players available to him.

Goalkeeper Mosoeu Seahlolo has retained his place in the squad despite making only



Likuena Head Coach, Atang Bob Mafoso

two club appearances this season, following his participation in the Lesotho Defence Force (LDF) training programme.

Mafoso said the technical team closely monitored six potential international players who underwent the military training to determine whether the demanding programme had affected or improved their footballing condition.

“There are about six players we would have liked to assess who were at the LDF training. These are players who were playing at their teams before and had potential to play for Likuena.”

“We knew they would be available for selection this season and we called them into camp. It was to be sure if LDF training left them behind or improved them,” he said.

True to his philosophy that current form should never be penalised, Mafoso said players who had benefited from the programme deserved their place in contention.

“If it improved them, we should not leave them behind. I can say I do not believe they are behind a lot because even at their clubs they are playing even if it's not all of them.”

The technical team has also undergone changes ahead of the qualifiers. Matlama head

coach Thabile Secker has joined the Likuena backroom staff as an assistant coach, while legendary goalkeeper coach Liteboho Mokhesi has replaced Shokhoe Matsoai, who stepped down for personal reasons.

Mafoso said the mix of youth and experience in the provisional squad was deliberate, once again stressing that performance, not profile, remained the deciding factor behind selection. The final 23-man travelling squad will be confirmed once the technical team completes its assessment of the players, particularly those carrying injuries.

Likuena provisional squad

Goalkeepers: Sekhoane Moerane, Leluma Mofoka, Mosoeu Seahlolo

Defenders: Itumeleng Falene, Tlotliso Mapola, Thabang Malane, Katileho Koeana, Thabo Makhele, Rethabile Mokokoane, Koketso Khorejane, Thabo Mafatle, Mohlomi Makhetha, Motlomelo Mkwanaazi, Fusi Matlabe

Midfielders: Thabo Lesaoana, Tlotliso Phatsisi, Tšepo Toloane, Lehlohonolo Fothoane

Forwards: Bakuena Ramakatsa, Neo Mokhachane, Tholang Makuru, Tšepang Sefali, Motebang Sera, Molefi Kulehile, Teboho Letsema



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