

Lekhetho Makhanya

Law and Justice Minister Richard Ramoeletsi's secret plan to coax Newsday editor Kananelo Boloetse out of hiding collapsed at the eleventh hour, after Boloetse pulled out of a planned meeting at the minister's office, Newsday can reveal.

The failed approach is the latest in a string of attempts by senior members of government to draw Boloetse out of hiding.

Chief of Police advocate Borotho Matsoso, Home Affairs and Police Minister Voeswa Tsheka, Prime Minister Ntsokoane Samuel Matekane and now Ramoeletsi have all tried to get him to come forward in person.

None has succeeded. The effort has left many asking why the state is so keen to have Boloetse physically present for a police investigation into an attack on him. Boloetse remains in danger from his unknown attackers.

Newsday's investigation shows Ramoeletsi worked separately from the police. He used a lawyer who is well known to Boloetse and trusted by him, apparently in the hope that Boloetse would let his guard down.

The lawyer, acting on the minister's instructions, contacted Boloetse on 17 September. He asked whether Boloetse would be available to meet the minister to discuss his safety and the police case. The lawyer's identity is withheld for his safety.

The lawyer said Ramoeletsi wanted to facilitate talks between Boloetse and the police. He also said the minister guaranteed Boloetse's safety at the ministry.

Boloetse tentatively agreed to a meeting at the minister's office on 24 September. Shortly before the date, he called it off. The reason relayed was that members of his team, who were to accompany him, were inconvenienced.

Sources close to Boloetse say the deeper reason was that he did not trust the police, who are said to be involved in the process, with his safety.

Boloetse believes his safety cannot be guaranteed in the hands of the police. United Africans Transformation (UAT) leader Dr Mahali Phamotse has told the National Assembly that police are among the suspects in the attack.

The secret Ministers approach ran alongside a public one. Earlier this week, Matekane announced that Boloetse should avail himself to the police, both for his own safety and to help investigators. While the Prime Minister made that appeal in public, Ramoeletsi had privately failed to convince the journalist to get to his office.

About a fortnight ago, Home Affairs Minister Tsheka was grilled in parliament over the Boloetse matter. Basotho National Party leader Machesetsa Mofomobe asked why Ramoeletsi was interested in the matter and had asked the journalist to come out of hiding and meet him at his office.

Mofomobe appeared to know how Ramoeletsi had gone parallel to the police investigation and started his own mission.

"What is his interest? He is the Minister of Law. The relevant Minister of Police is yourself," Mofomobe said, referring to Tsheka. "Why does Minister Ramoeletsi interfere in the matter that belongs with the police?"

Tsheka said she was absent when police

Ramoeletsi's secret plan to lure Boloetse out flops

began their investigation, having left Public Works and Transport Minister Matjato Neo Moteane in charge. She said Moteane then left the country, leaving Ramoeletsi as acting Minister of Home Affairs and Police.

Newsday's independent investigation contradicts that account. On 17 September, when the lawyer first contacted Boloetse, Tsheka was still the substantive Home Affairs and Police Minister. Moteane was launching new traffic lights along Kingsway Road in Maseru, in his own ministry's portfolio.

Ramoeletsi had appeared on 15 September before the UN Committee on Enforced Disappearances in Geneva. The committee was reviewing Lesotho's implementation of the international convention against enforced disappearance during its 31st session.

How the saga began

Boloetse was abducted from his home in Katlehong, Maseru, on 5 September 2026. Three unidentified men took him to a remote location, questioned him about his journalism and human rights work, then assaulted him and threatened his life. The assailants abandoned him in the Thaba-Bosiu area. He regained consciousness and made his way to a road, where a passing driver picked him up.

Neighbours had seen a suspicious vehicle watching the house in the hours before the abduction. They passed the vehicle's registration plate to investigators. The attack followed after a cyberattack disrupted Newsday's website and email services. Newsday has linked that attack to its investigative work on education financing in Lesotho.

Boloetse filed a complaint at a Maseru police station the next morning. Police spokesperson Thabo Mohai confirmed that a special investigative team had been set up. On 7 September, Communications Minister Nthathi Moorosi visited Newsday's offices and assured the newsroom of government support.

International press freedom groups reacted quickly. Amnesty International urged the authorities to guarantee Boloetse's safety and to conduct a prompt, independent and impartial investigation. RSF and the International Press Institute also called for a thorough investigation. MISA Lesotho, which Boloetse once chaired, condemned the assault.

The attack also recalls earlier violence against journalists in Lesotho. In May 2023, radio host Ralikonelo Joki was shot dead in Maseru. At the time Boloetse, as MISA-Lesotho chair, said the group

believed Joki was attacked because of his work.

The question that remains

Amnesty's call for an independent investigation underlines the problem. When the person at the centre of a case says he cannot trust the police, and the police have been publicly named as suspects, summoning him to a police process does not obviously serve justice. Why,

then, are so many ministers pressing for his physical appearance?



Richard Ramoeletsi

Leaders split over Lesotho's electoral model

Thoboloko Ntšonyane

Political leaders and stakeholders were divided on the first day of a national political dialogue over whether Lesotho's Mixed-Member Proportional (MMP) electoral model should be kept, strengthened or replaced.

Some called for reforms to improve representation, political stability and inclusion. Others argued that the system should be better understood and properly implemented, not changed.

The two-day dialogue was convened by the Independent Electoral Commission (IEC) to examine the country's electoral model, how it has performed and where it falls short. It also covers political-party governance and relations between and within parties.

Organisers said it was meant to promote informed national reflection and constructive engagement, without predetermining any reform outcome.

IEC's Director of Elections Tebello Nthakong said the formation of coalition governments and the allocation of proportional representation (PR) seats are not the IEC's responsibility alone.

He said strong parties are built on fairness, and that whatever path the electoral process takes must be owned by Basotho and serve them. A communicate will be adopted to guide the next phase.

Lesotho's National Assembly has 120 seats. Eighty are elected through constituencies and 40 are allocated proportionally, based on the national party vote. MMP was introduced for the 2002 elections, replacing the first-past-the-post system used in 1993 and 1998.

That history shapes today's debate. The 1998 elections were disputed after the then ruling Lesotho Congress for Democracy (LCD) won 79 of the 80 seats. The opposition Basotho National Party (BNP) accused the LCD of fraud, and the protests that followed turned into unrest, with towns burnt and economic activity disrupted.

The Southern African Development Community (SADC) intervened, including with troops from Botswana and South Africa.

Former Deputy Prime Minister Mothetjoa Metsing questioned why the country should “fix it if it is not broken”. He argued that civic education on the MMP model should be strengthened so the country could “sing from the same hymn”.

He said parties must tell their members how to use the party ballot properly, and he called for the continued use of two ballots, which are the party ballot and the individual ballot.

“When we make decisions it is no longer for the common good but to protect ourselves. Let’s make this model in a universally accepted manner,” he said.

Molefi Ntšonyane also said there is nothing wrong with the existing model and that the problems lie with political parties. “The law does not have emotions.”

Maimane Maphathe came at the issue from a different angle. He criticised the country for not fully using the MMP model, pointing to the zebra model, which places men and women alternately on party lists to determine PR seats. He said no similar arrangement applies in constituencies, where more men than women contest elections.

Executive Director of the Lesotho Council of NGOs (LCN), Sekonyela Mapetja, said any electoral system presented a “dilemma” between ensuring fair representation and ensuring government stability.

Others wanted more change. Lebohang Thotanyane argued that the closed PR list should be done away with and replaced with an open list. He also criticised the inability of political parties to remove a Member of Parliament.

Former MP Teboho Sekata also called for an open PR list. Prof Motlamelele Kapa described the open PR system as one in which voters directly choose the candidates they want in Parliament.

Litaba Mohatle, who represents political parties outside Parliament, welcomed the dialogue as a platform to discuss the future of Lesotho. He described the current model as distorted.

He proposed moving to a 100 per cent MMP electoral model, saying it would be cheaper and accommodate a 60:60 arrangement. The alternative, he said, would be to keep the current model with two ballots: a candidate ballot and a party ballot.

Mohatle also called for the strengthening of the Electoral Act on political donations, including the auditing of expenses. He said parties should not be funded by foreign sources because this could influence the country.

He also complained that party funding goes only to parties represented in Parliament, and said parties outside Parliament should receive an allocation too because they serve the population.

The dialogue also brought together representatives of the European Union (EU) and SADC, including electoral bodies from South Africa, Botswana and Namibia.

United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) Resident Representative Dr Jacqueline Olweya said institutions must act impartially and political actors must resolve their differences peacefully. She described the relationship between citizens, institutions and political leaders as a compact in which citizens confer legitimacy.

For her, the test of any system is not only how parties compete but how they talk to each other and represent the people who put them in office.

“Again, whatever system that we adopt, it would be very important to ensure inclusivity. Yes, at the centre of any system are the citizens, but are all the citizens represented in the right way? Are we considering women? Are we considering persons with disabilities? Are we considering, in our case here in Lesotho, people who are farthest away from the centre in other words, the most rural, mountainous areas are they able to bring their space into being? Similarly, are we considering the youth?” she said.

Leader of the Opposition Mathibeli Mokhothu said the dialogue must not happen only in times of crisis but should be an ongoing process. He said inclusion must be understood in terms of representation as well as voting, and that the strength of the political system is closely tied to citizens' confidence.

He said the dialogue came at a crucial time, as the country is still pursuing reforms across many sectors, and he noted that Lesotho has built institutions, held elections periodically and learnt from neighbours and international partners.

“At the same time, our experience reminds us that elections are not simply events that take place periodically and do pass. Democracy is a continuous process. It is about how political parties conduct themselves between elections, how citizens participate in public affairs, how institutions exercise their mandates, how disagreements are managed, and how peaceful political competition is conducted in our country.

“We should therefore use this dialogue not merely to discuss electoral procedures, but to consider the broader democratic environment in which our electoral system operates, reflecting on the MMP electoral model, that is, the Mixed-Member Proportional electoral model

that our country is applying or using,” Mokhothu said.

He argued that the MMP system needs careful, evidence-based evaluation, not a simple verdict on whether it is good or bad. He questioned whether it provides meaningful representation and ensures that every vote cast and counted contributes to the outcome.

He also asked whether it strikes the right balance between proportional and constituency representation, limits the dominance of constituency winners, and gives smaller parties a real chance of gaining seats.

Speaker of the National Assembly Tlohang Sekhamane echoed calls for the electoral system to be assessed periodically, to start a national conversation on what works, what challenges it faces and what changes are needed. He also called for political tolerance in Parliament.

Sekhamane described Lesotho as the “most democratic country in the world”, pointing to the snap elections held since coalition governments began to emerge in 2012, when no party won a majority of seats. He said the electoral model must be efficient and effective, even if it has to change.

“People don't eat democracy, people eat food. If democracy continues to put bread on the table then our people will not reject democracy,” he said, referring to the poor voter turnout in the 2022 elections that produced the current administration.

He said democracy must also be able to uproot corruption.

“Corruption is an albatross on which the nation falls. Parliament is the best voice against all ills of society,” he said, calling for its autonomy.

IEC Chairperson Dr John Maphephe said the dialogue is not about a predetermined electoral model but a platform to pause, listen and learn from one another. For the IEC, he said, the electoral process is not only about what happens on election day, echoing the view that democracy requires regular engagement.

He said the IEC would be the first to feel the effects if political parties were unstable within their ranks, which makes dialogue between and within parties equally important. He stressed that trust underpins everything.

“Trust cannot simply be requested from citizens; it is earned through consistent institutional behaviour. The public must have confidence that electoral institutions are independent, impartial, transparent, and accountable to our people. They must have confidence that their vote matters, that electoral rules are applied consistently.”

Representing the government, Minister of Law and Justice Richard Ramoetsi said the government would respect democratic processes and governance institutions. He called for dialogue that promotes constitutional processes rather than political expediency.



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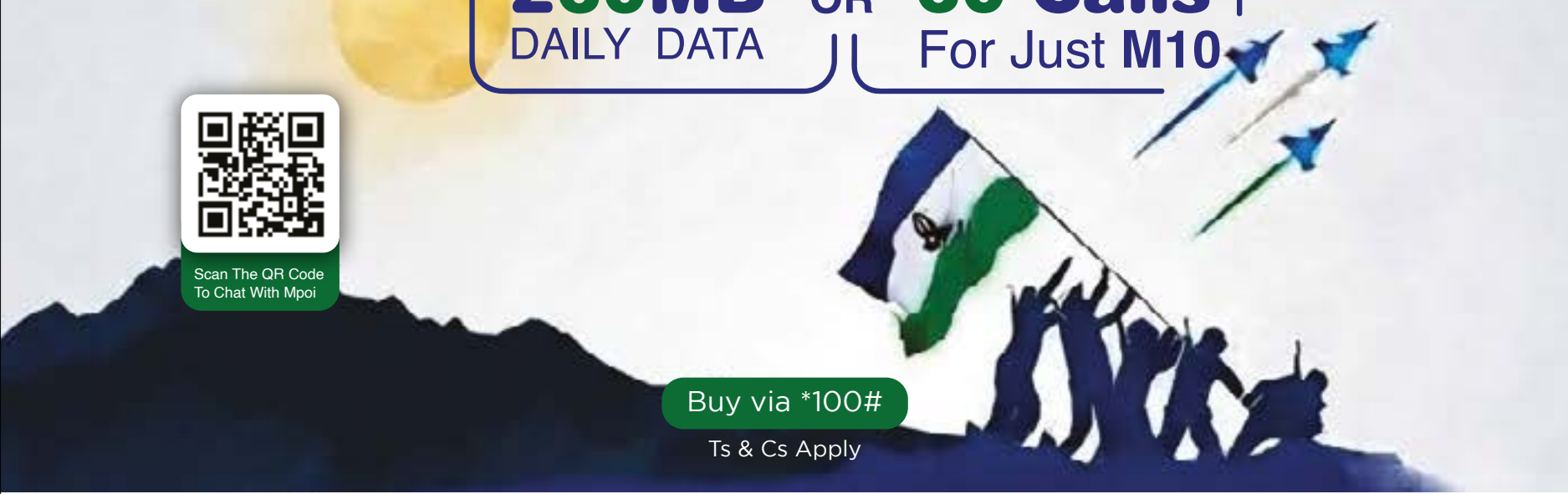
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Media houses turn up heat on govt over Editor's abduction

Lekhetho Makhanya

The local media industry has united to turn up the pressure on government over the unresolved abduction and assault of Newsday Media News Editor Kananelo Boloetse, demanding an independent commission of inquiry into an attack that has raised fresh fears about the safety of journalists and the state of press freedom in the country.

Nine media houses, Lesotho Tribune, MNN Centre for Investigative Journalism, MoAfrika FM, The Post, Lesotho Times, Newsday Media, Uncensored News Lesotho, Public Eye and Mapholi FM, have accused government and the police of failing to demonstrate that the attack will be investigated "independently, transparently and without fear or favour."

Boloetse was abducted on 5 September 2026 by three unidentified men who allegedly took him from his home in Katlehong, Maseru. He was interrogated about his journalism and human rights work, assaulted and later dumped in Thaba-Bosiu, about 20 to 25 kilometres east of Maseru.

Amnesty International has said Boloetse was also threatened with death. More than three weeks later, the suspects remain unidentified and no one has been held accountable.

The media houses say the handling of the case by government and the Lesotho Mounted Police Service (LMPS) has done little to restore confidence that the attack will be properly investigated.

Instead, they say, statements by Chief of Police Advocate Borotho Matsoso and Home Affairs and Police Minister Voeswa Tsheka have raised further questions about the authorities' approach to the case.

The media houses say the conduct and public statements of Matsoso and Tsheka paint a disturbing picture of a government that does not appear intent on thoroughly investigating the matter or bringing the alleged perpetrators to justice.

The government's position is that the police should continue with the investigation. Prime Minister Samuel Matekane on Wednesday insisted that Boloetse, who remains in danger from his unknown attackers, should come out of hiding and report to the police.

Matekane made no reference to the proposed commission of inquiry and instead maintained that the LMPS should be entrusted to investigate the matter.

His position comes despite growing demands for an independent investigation and a parliamentary move to establish a commission of inquiry.

On 24 September, Matlakeng legislator and United Africans Transformation (UAT) leader Dr Mahali Phamotse filed a notice of motion

in the National Assembly calling for a full commission of inquiry into the case.

Phamotse argues that the police are implicated in the ordeal and therefore cannot properly investigate the matter.

The media houses have now thrown their weight behind the call, demanding that the proposed inquiry go beyond the circumstances surrounding Boloetse's abduction and examine the conduct of the police and the accountability of the Chief of Police.

They want an independent Commission of Inquiry into Boloetse's abduction and assault, and other serious abuses directed at members of the media.

They also want the commission's terms of reference, membership, proceedings and findings made public and its work conducted transparently and independently.

The demand places the government under increasing pressure to explain how an attack on a senior journalist allegedly linked to his professional work can remain unresolved weeks after the incident.

Chief of Police 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.

He also accused Boloetse's Newsday colleagues of concealing his whereabouts. Newsday, however, says police insisted on a physical meeting with Boloetse despite him offering alternatives.

The media houses indicated that police continue to harass Newsday management and make the investigation depend solely on the physical availability of Boloetse.

The dispute has effectively turned the police response itself into one of the central issues surrounding the case. The government has also sent mixed signals over the possibility of a commission.

When Tsheka addressed Parliament, she hinted that government could establish one but quickly raised the issue of the financial cost. She said she would approach the Ministry of Finance for a budget.

The media houses, however, want the government to move beyond assurances and take concrete steps to demonstrate that attacks on journalists will not be tolerated.

Their demands include proper investigation of all attacks, threats, arrests and acts of intimidation against journalists and accountability for those responsible.

They also want government to commit publicly and unequivocally that no journalist will be arrested, harassed, threatened or harmed because of legitimate journalistic work during the election period or at any other time.

The Boloetse case has also revived concerns over a series of unresolved or contro-

versial incidents involving journalists in Lesotho.

On 29 August, 2025, Lesotho Times editor Mohalenyane Phakela was arrested by the Directorate on Corruption and Economic Offences (DCEO) after publishing a report alleging corruption involving the Commissioner of the Lesotho Correctional Service.

The DCEO later dropped the case, conceding that there was insufficient evidence. The media houses say the incident remains an accountability issue.

"A journalist was arrested for doing his job, and no one has answered for it," the statement said.

In 2024, Lesotho Tribune publisher Phafane Nkotsi received threatening notes warning him against pursuing his journalism. Three notes were found on the newsroom desk, including warnings linked to his reporting on public funds.

The media fraternity also continues to point to the 2016 shooting of Lesotho Times editor Lloyd Mutungamiri. Mutungamiri was seriously injured after being shot at his Ha Thamae residence in Maseru while returning from work.

The case remains unresolved, while four members of the Lesotho Defence Force suspected in the shooting were released on bail.

The nine media houses said the incidents form a troubling backdrop to the Boloetse case.

"Taken together, these incidents raise serious questions about the safety of journalists and the environment in which independent journalism is practised in Lesotho."

They argue that the consequences of attacks on journalists extend far beyond the individuals involved because such attacks threaten the public's access to information and ability to scrutinise those in power.

"When journalists are attacked for doing their jobs, the damage extends beyond the newsroom. It undermines the public's right to receive information, scrutinise those in power and hold public institutions accountable."

The unity among the media houses is itself significant. The organisations are competitors with different editorial positions, business interests and priorities, but the Boloetse case has brought them together around the question of journalist safety.

"We do not always agree. But on this issue we speak with one voice: journalists and newsrooms must be safe and free to report without fear, and those who attack or intimidate them must be held accountable."

They have also warned that the timing of the case cannot be ignored as Lesotho enters a sensitive period in its electoral cycle.

"Experience has shown that journalists

and media houses are the first casualties when political tensions rise," they warned.

The media houses say what is allowed to pass without challenge now could influence how journalists are treated in the months ahead. Their concerns come at a time when Lesotho has sought to project an image of democratic consolidation and institutional reform.

The media houses acknowledge the country's reforms, including the Tenth Amendment to the Constitution and its subsequent removal from the SADC Organ Troika agenda, which were presented as milestones for peace, stability, human rights, the rule of law and democratic consolidation.

But they say the alleged abduction and assault of a journalist because of his work sits uneasily alongside those achievements.

Section 149P of the Constitution, introduced through the Tenth Amendment, recognises the media as an integral part of Lesotho's development and democratisation.

"We call on the State to give practical effect to that commitment."

The media houses' demands have also received backing from rights organisations.

MISA Lesotho has called for an immediate and transparent police investigation and for all perpetrators to be held accountable. It has also demanded that government publicly disavow the violence and provide concrete safety guarantees to Boloetse, his family and the Newsday team.

Amnesty International has called on authorities to guarantee Boloetse's safety and conduct a prompt, thorough, independent and impartial investigation.

The International Press Institute has also condemned the attack and called for a swift and thorough investigation. Information Minister Nthathi Moorosi visited the Newsday offices on 7 September and assured the newsroom of government support.

The media houses said support must now be measured by action. At the heart of the dispute is a simple but consequential question: who should investigate an attack when the conduct of the police themselves has become part of the controversy?

Government insists the LMPS should handle the matter. But the media houses and supporters of the parliamentary motion want an independent commission capable of examining both the attack and the state's response to it.

The Public Inquiries Act No. 1 of 1994 provides for the establishment, powers and procedures of commissions of inquiry. It empowers government, through the prime minister or relevant authorities, to establish formal commissions to investigate matters of public concern or specific events.

To the press, the issue has now moved beyond the fate of one journalist. It is about whether journalists can investigate corruption, scrutinise public institutions, expose wrongdoing and report on matters of public interest without becoming targets themselves.

"The freedom of the press is not a privilege granted by those in power. It is a fundamental public interest and an essential safeguard of democracy. An attack on one journalist is a warning to every journalist. An attack on one newsroom is an attack on the public's right to know," the media houses said.



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Police still hunting Boloetse – Matekane

Lekhetho Makhanya

Prime Minister Samuel Matekane insists that Kananelo Boloetse, who remains in danger from his unknown attackers, must come out of hiding and report to the police, 25 days after his ordeal.

Boloetse is the same man whose masked attackers told him they would find and kill him if he breathed a word to the public about what happened.

Matekane was briefing the media on Wednesday this week, following his week-long trip to the United States, where he attended the UN Week in New York. Asked whether he was aware of developments in Boloetse's case since his abduction and torture on 5 September, and what his position was, he responded.

The Prime Minister had not publicly addressed the matter until this week. Matekane said the police briefed him on the case when he returned from New York:

"As the government, we categorically condemn this unfortunate act on Boloetse. I was informed the police are going on with investigations, but the police have requested him to come out of his hideout and report himself with them to assist them with some details about the investigations."

He said the police had undertaken to provide Boloetse with safety, "and want him to come out of hiding to assist them with investigations. They (police) said they no longer found him as they try to reach him. They reported to me that Boloetse was assisted by his colleagues and sought refuge elsewhere, instead of being in the safety of police. And the government of the day, our doors are also open for Boloetse to find safety. As government, we also need to know what is going on with this case. He should come out and help us."

The Prime Minister said the police claimed they could no longer reach Boloetse by phone:

"They said every-time they called him, he was not reachable and he did not return their calls. They keep bothering him, but there is no effort from him to return their calls, they said."

It remains unclear what exactly the police need from Boloetse. Many Basotho have expressed dismay that the police, who are expected to investigate the attack, appear to be spending resources chasing Boloetse rather than identifying his abductors and torturers.

Last week, Members of Parliament asked in the National Assembly whether the police were handling the case properly. An opposition legislator has now moved to force the

government's hand by asking Parliament to set up an independent commission of inquiry.

Dr Mahali Phamotse, the Matlakeng constituency legislator and leader of the United Africans Transformation (UAT), has filed a notice of motion in the National Assembly, dated 24 September 2026. It seeks to move the case beyond the current police investigation and establish a full commission of inquiry. Dr Phamotse argues that the police are implicated in the ordeal and cannot properly investigate themselves.

The motion is seconded by Popular Front for Democracy (PFD) leader Advocate Lekhetho Rakuoane. It also calls for a probe into the government's alleged involvement in the attack and for a full report to be tabled before the House.

Boloetse is an editor at Newsday and a human rights defender with Advocates for the Supremacy of the Constitution – Section 2. He was abducted by three unidentified men at his home in Katlehong, Maseru, on the evening of 5 September.

The attackers, whose faces were covered, forced him into their car and drove him 24 kilometres to Thaba-Bosiu, where they took

turns torturing him before abandoning him for dead near the Phuthiatsana River.

In his account, Boloetse said the men interrogated him about his work as both a journalist and a rights activist while they tortured him. Before leaving him almost lifeless, one of the attackers threatened to shoot him and dump his body in the river, he said. He had noticed two of them handling pistols when they forced him from his home.

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

Boloetse reported the attack to the police himself the following day and gave a statement at Maseru Central Charge Office. 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. He accused Boloetse's Newsday colleagues of concealing his whereabouts.

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

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

The Prime Minister made no reference to the proposed commission of inquiry but insisted the Lesotho Mounted Police Service should be trusted to investigate the matter.

Seabata Mahao

Lesotho is set to deepen its participation in the global textile value chain after American cotton farmers entered into a partnership with textile manufacturers in Lesotho, Kenya and Mauritius.

The development was announced by Prime Minister Samuel Ntsokoane Matekane during a media briefing at State House on 30 September 2026, following the official opening of the Trans-Atlantic Cotton Partnership.

Matekane said the partnership marks the beginning of structured cooperation between American cotton producers and textile and garment manufacturers in the three African countries.

"Under this partnership, American farmers will grow cotton and export it to these countries, where it will be spun and processed before being used by factories to manufacture garments that will then be exported to the American market," Matekane said.

He said the arrangement would see garments manufactured in Lesotho using American-grown cotton and subsequently sold in the United States.

"This means that clothes will be manufactured in Lesotho using American cotton and sold in the United States," he said.

Matekane described the partnership as an opportunity for the participating countries to leverage their existing industrial capabilities while strengthening trade links between Africa and the United States.

The Lesotho National Development Corporation (LNDC) also participated in the launch of the partnership in Manhattan, New York, reaffirming Lesotho's interest in strategic trade and investment arrangements aimed at industrialisation, job creation and sustainable economic growth.

According to the LNDC, the partnership brings together American cotton producers and African manufacturers with the potential to expand textile value chains, attract investment and strengthen industrial capacity.

"For Lesotho, this presents an opportunity to build on our established export-oriented garment industry and move further up the value chain through investment in spinning, weaving, knitting, dyeing and fabric production," LNDC said.

Matekane speaks on new partnership for US cotton to Lesotho



Prime Minister Samuel Ntsokoane Matekane

The corporation said the initiative is closely aligned with its recently launched Letsema Strategy, which seeks to mobilise stakeholders around investment and trade, attract private capital and develop resilient value chains in strategic sectors.

"From cotton production to manufacturing and global markets, partnerships such as these demonstrate what is possible when businesses, governments and development partners work together," LNDC said.

The partnership follows negotiations that began in July 2026, when discussions between the LNDC and the US-Africa Trade Desk (USATD) explored a commercial arrangement under which American-grown cotton would be supplied to Lesotho's textile manufacturers.

The proposed model envisaged American cotton being shipped to Lesotho, processed locally and ultimately transformed into denim garments destined for major US retailers.

For Lesotho, the significance of the arrangement lies in its potential to move the country's textile industry beyond its longstanding Cut-Make-Trim (CMT) model.

Under the CMT system, factories, many of them foreign-owned, generally import fabrics, patterns and accessories before Basotho workers assemble garments for export, particularly to the US market.

While the model has supported thousands of jobs over the years, it has also limited the amount of value that remains within Lesotho, with much of the upstream textile production

taking place outside the country.

The proposed cotton partnership could therefore create opportunities for Lesotho to develop additional stages of textile production, including spinning, weaving, knitting, dyeing and fabric manufacturing.

This would potentially increase domestic value addition while creating opportunities for new investment and industrial skills development.

The initiative also comes against the backdrop of Lesotho's longstanding access to the US market under the African Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA).

AGOA has provided preferential market access for eligible African exports to the United States and has played an important role in supporting Lesotho's garment industry.

The emerging cotton arrangement, however, could add a commercial dimension to the relationship by linking American agricultural production directly with African manufacturing capacity and the US consumer market.

For Lesotho, the focus will now be on translating the partnership into concrete investment in local textile infrastructure and expanding the country's role beyond garment assembly.

LNDC said the partnership demonstrates the potential of coordinated action between governments, businesses and development partners to build a more diversified industrial economy.

"Through Letsema, we are steadily building the foundations for a more competitive and diversified industrial economy," the corporation said.



Happy 60th Independence Day, Lesotho

Lilemo tse 60 tsa Boipuso

On 4 October 1966, Basotho took charge of their own future. Sixty years on, the Lesotho Highlands Development Authority proudly joins the nation in celebrating that founding promise.

For forty of those years, we have had the privilege of building in the highlands, alongside the people who call them home: dams, roads, bridges and community infrastructure that will serve generations not yet born.

The water that rises in our mountains is part of our national inheritance. We remain committed to developing it with care, with our communities, and with pride in what Basotho can achieve.

Mokete o monate oa Boipuso.

Khotso. Pula. Nala.



Local firms chase regional market share

Seabata Mahao

Basotho-owned enterprises in the leather, textiles and handicrafts sectors are being positioned for wider domestic and regional markets following a business-to-business (B2B) workshop that connected promising micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs) with buyers and investors.

The Ministry of Trade, Industry and Business Development hosted the workshop in partnership with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA). It is part of efforts to tackle a major constraint facing small businesses: limited access to markets and finance.

The event brought together selected enterprises, potential buyers and investors. Discussions focused on export readiness, standards, certification, market intelligence, financing and the opportunities offered by regional trade arrangements.

Principal Secretary in the Ministry, Palesa Matobako, said the Government was placing private-sector-led growth at the centre of its development agenda.

“Lesotho’s entrepreneurs possess the talent, the ideas, and the determination to compete. What they require are the connections that transform potential into commercial reality. This Business to business event creates precisely that bridge,” Matobako said.

She said the Government had created an environment conducive to business growth and investment, including incentives through the Lesotho National Development Corporation (LNDC) and institutional support through the Competitiveness and Financial Inclusion Programme.

According to Matobako, the Ministry and UNDP had identified high-potential enterprises and helped them improve their investment and export readiness. She urged buyers and investors to explore the businesses represented at the workshop, particularly those in leather, textiles and handicrafts.

“I would like to see some of your products on the shelves of businesses across the country and also on shelves within the region,” she said.

From local shelves to regional markets

Ha Makoti, an enterprise founded in Qacha’s Nek and now based in Khubetsoana, Berea, said the workshop strengthened its understanding of business operations and export logistics.

Founder Mosa Sixishe said the programme exposed entrepreneurs to areas ranging from financial management and value-chain development to building business networks and preparing for cross-border trade. She



leather, textiles and handicrafts products from Basotho firms

said the lessons would also be shared with the young people involved in the business.

Ha Makoti sources Drakensberg alpine oat grass, commonly known as moseea, from districts including Thaba-Tseka and Berea. Sixishe said the business works with communities that harvest, group and preserve the material before it is collected for production.

The enterprise already supplies stores in Lesotho and is working towards entering neighbouring markets within the next six to 12 months.

Leather businesses eye bigger orders

Leathersole and Suppliers, meanwhile, is looking beyond its existing market as it prepares to increase production of its bespoke leather shoes.

The company began operating in 2016, was incubated under BEDCO and employs about 10 people. It has received support through the Competitiveness and Financial Inclusion Programme.

Its representative, Thabo Nchemane, said the workshop helped the company better understand the certification and standardisation requirements it will face as it expands. The company has already exported to South Africa and eSwatini and is working on an order from the United States, he said.

However, production capacity remains a major challenge.

“The challenges that we are facing so far are labour which is expensive if you do not have machinery,” Nchemane said, adding that the company was working towards acquiring machinery and suitable production space.

He said increasing production was essential if local manufacturers were to compete for large orders, including in the school-shoe market.

Nchemane said the company’s strategy is to strengthen the domestic market first, improve cash flow and build the capacity needed to compete in the SADC and wider African markets. It sources most of its leather, soles

and glue from South Africa.

Disability no barrier to enterprise

For Stixs Leather and Upholstery co-founder Setenane Makhabane, entrepreneurship is also a route to economic participation despite the challenges associated with disability.

Based in Hlotse, Leribe, the business has operated for about two to three years. It specialises in leather products, upholstery and the re-covering of seats, and also makes belts, sandals and horse-related leather products.

Makhabane said the business works mainly on a customised, order-based model rather than producing goods for retail shelves. The high cost of leather, which raises the final price of its products, is one of its challenges. To reduce transport costs for clients, the business also provides upholstery services at customers’ homes.

Makhabane said his experience had reinforced his determination to show what persons with disabilities can contribute to the economy.

Retailers demand quality and reliability

For potential buyers, however, access to markets depends not only on attractive products but also on the ability to meet commercial requirements consistently.

Michael Lawrence, Executive Director of the National Clothing Retail Federation of South Africa, said the organisation was assessing whether Lesotho’s small manufacturers could provide the quality, quantity, reliability and delivery capacity that large retail chains require. He said the workshop

had revealed several creative and potentially interesting business opportunities.

However, Lawrence said businesses must communicate their production capacity and product information clearly so buyers can judge whether they can fill particular orders. He also stressed the importance of standards, quality, rules of origin, trade conditions, safety and environmentally responsible production.

For smaller manufacturers, he said, there could be opportunities either to supply larger producers or to develop niche products for retailers.

ECA: Market access goes beyond tariffs

Zodwa Mabuza, Regional Adviser on Trade and Regional Integration at the UNECA, said market access involved much more than removing tariffs. She said small businesses needed to understand where opportunities existed, what buyers wanted, which rules applied and how to meet market requirements consistently and competitively.

The workshop therefore covered market intelligence, export markets, tariffs, market-entry requirements, rules of origin, technical barriers to trade, standards, certification, and sanitary and phytosanitary requirements.

Mabuza said businesses should treat quality and compliance as investments in competitiveness rather than administrative costs. Proper records, traceability, improved production processes and appropriate certification, she said, could help them build buyer confidence and gain access to larger and more sophisticated markets.

“Ultimately, trade happens between businesses,” Mabuza said, adding that the B2B engagement and exhibition allowed MSMEs to showcase their products, meet potential buyers and investors and begin building relationships that could translate into commercial transactions.

She encouraged participating enterprises to follow up on contacts made during the workshop, understand customer requirements and keep improving their products. She also urged entrepreneurs to join chambers of commerce and other business associations, saying stronger networks and collective support would benefit them.

Mabuza said the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) offered African businesses access to a much larger continental market, but it would be up to the enterprises themselves to turn that opportunity into increased trade, investment and employment.

The workshop highlighted a central challenge for Lesotho’s MSMEs: turning production capability into sustainable commercial opportunities. For the participating enterprises, the next step is to convert the contacts, knowledge and market information gained into orders, partnerships, higher production and access to new markets.

NOTICE !! NOTICE!!

Publication for a residential property.

OWNER: Mr Moabi Edgar Mothibeli (deceased)	Hillsview, Maseru 100 Lesotho.
PROPERTY DETAILS: 1. Main House with 5 x rooms and toilet. 2. Small House with 3 x rooms and toilet.	MARKET VALUE EVALUATION: *M2,300,000.00*
PROPERTY LOCATION: Property No: 2292-250 Manong Road,	For inquiries please contact Rethabile Reginald Mothibeli 6205 6206 / +27 83 741 2892

BMI backs Berea as tourism campaign gains another corporate partner

Staff reporters

Blue Mountain Inn (BMI) has become the latest corporate organisation to support the “RE BONTŠE LESOTHO” tourism campaign, led by the Lesotho Tourism Development Corporation (LTDC).

The Teyateyaneng-based hospitality establishment has adopted Berea district under the campaign, which seeks to promote tourism capabilities, attractions and stories from across the country’s districts.

The adoption was officially unveiled on Tuesday in Teyateyaneng. Speaking on behalf of Blue Mountain Inn, ‘Mabatho Nthane said it is a privilege and an honour to be working alongside LTDC in their nationwide campaign of “RE BONTŠE LESOTHO” as they are going to adopt Berea District.

“Adoption of Berea district is based on the fact that BMI is found in Berea district and as an accommodation and service provider, our job is also incorporate the public we serve through corporate social responsibilities hence we are giving back to public as a way of creating jobs,” she said.

“BMI and its sister hotels would like to give back to the communities they operate from and through this initiative ad others, we will achieve our goals,” Nthane added.

On his part, LTDC’s Head of Strategic Marketing, Phomolo Lebotsa, said the initiative was part of the corporation’s mandate to implement the plans of the Ministry of Tourism, Sports, Arts and Culture, particularly by strengthening cooperation



between the public and private sectors through tourism.

“The economy of the country is not the responsibility of the government alone but of the private sector as well through job creation and other means. Even in tourism, we will see growth and development when private sector is growing,”

Lebotsa said the campaign was also intended to encourage Basotho to explore tourism destinations within the country before travelling abroad.

“LTDC would like to see a Mosotho citizen engaging in domestic tourism to all districts of the country whether through sports, leisure or touring. We want to see Basotho willingly eager to travel inland before travelling abroad. Through “RE BONTŠE LESOTHO”, we wish to make domestic tourism the first priority of every

Mosotho,” Lebotsa stated.

He further said the initiative would help international tourists learn more about Lesotho’s attractions online, potentially increasing their interest in visiting the country.

“We want Lesotho’s stories to be told by Basotho and also putting Basotho in the forefront. We wish to be the ones who tell our stories of how we live and our stories,” Lebotsa explained.

The LTDC officially launched Re Bontše Lesotho alongside the Lehakoe Photobank at the Manthabiseng Convention Centre, with the aim of promoting tourism while empowering local creatives.

The campaign was inspired by a visit by African content creator Wode Maya, whose masterclass generated interest in digital storytelling among young Basotho.

Under the district adoption model, each corporate partner sponsors a content creator from a specific district by providing equipment, training and other resources to help them produce and promote tourism-related content.

BMI joins a growing list of businesses that have adopted districts under the initiative. Standard Lesotho Bank adopted Butha-Buthe, Alliance Group Investment Holding Company adopted Leribe, Econet Telecom Lesotho adopted Mokhotlong, while Metropolitan Lesotho adopted Qacha’s Nek.

LNIG Hollard Lesotho adopted Quthing, while Vodacom Lesotho and ‘Melesi Lodge adopted Maseru.

In August, the LTDC announced the first cohort of creators, with one winner selected from each of the country’s 10 districts. The corporation subsequently invited private-sector companies to adopt creators in the remaining districts of Berea, Mafeteng, Mphahle’s Hoek and Thaba-Tseka. Reitumetse Mahlaba was selected as Berea’s top creator.

LTDC’s Acting Chief Executive Officer Mamello Morojele has said the success of the pilot programme encouraged the corporation to continue with the initiative, which will become an annual programme from 2027 to 2029.

BMI’s adoption of Berea leaves Mafeteng, Mphahle’s Hoek and Thaba-Tseka among the districts that the LTDC had earlier identified as awaiting corporate partners.

The campaign seeks to place Basotho at the centre of telling Lesotho’s tourism story, using local creators to showcase destinations, culture and experiences to both domestic and international audiences.

Demystifying tax for the newsroom

...as RSL trains journalists to report tax with confidence

Thoboloko Ntšonyane

The Revenue Services Lesotho (RSL) this week held a two-day training to help journalists improve their reporting on tax matters.

Designed to “make tax journalism practical, understandable and immediately useful in the newsroom”, the training helped reporters understand key tax issues, interpret relevant information and present tax-related stories clearly and accurately to the public. It also covered the responsible use of Artificial Intelligence (AI).

RSL Head of Strategic Partnerships and Public Relations, Pheello Mphana, emphasised that the partnership between the RSL and the media matters because journalists are the voice that bridges communication between the RSL and the public. He said they serve as a link between information and its ultimate consumers.

Mphana added that effective reporting on economic and financial matters is a skill that requires constant refinement. The training, he said, was intended to give journalists the tools and discipline to explain complex tax issues in a way taxpayers can easily understand. If citizens appreciate the importance of taxation and understand how tax revenue contributes to infrastructure development and public services, he said, they will be more willing to pay their taxes.

The RSL administers tax and customs in Lesotho, including income tax, VAT, withholding taxes and customs duties. Tax revenue funds government operations, public services and infrastructure development.

Training facilitator Tsebo Matšasa said journalists should use AI as an assistant to carry out research, correct their grammar and analyse documents. However, he

cautioned against dependence on it, saying that “will kill journalism”.

“AI can help you find what to investigate; it cannot become your evidence. We should not ignore ethics,” he said.

Mohau Tholeng of Harvest FM said the training will help him become familiar with business and economic jargon. “You will find that there are words which we don’t know what they mean.”

He said journalists need to know the terminology used in financial matters so they can deliver clear messages to the nation. Without the workshop, he would not ordinarily have understood some of these terms and would have struggled to relay the information accurately to his audience.

“I am also going to better approach AI knowing that I can also give me wrong information to write tax issues and explain in a clear way,” he said.

Lehlohonolo Sekonyela of The Reporter said the training had deepened his understanding of tax and how revenue works. He is now familiar with the technical terms and better able to recognise the different types of taxes, such as the VAT that appears on a receipt. He added that the training also gave him a better understanding of the responsible use of AI and which platforms to choose.

“This workshop matters to me because tax is where public money and public accountability meet. As a journalist who has covered government accountability, I’ve seen how often tax stories are left out because they feel technical or dry. Yet they affect every Mosotho, from what we pay at the till to what our schools, clinics, and roads receive,” said Letsatsi Selikoe, an investigative business journalist who also reports for Lesotho Insights.

She said the workshop gave her a clearer grasp of how the RSL collects and administers taxes, and how to read revenue data critically rather than simply report headline figures.

She added: “I have also learnt to ask sharper questions about where the money goes and to explain terms like VAT[value added tax], PAYE [pay as you earn!], and compliance in plain language, so readers can follow the story and hold institutions to account.

“It has strengthened my commitment to making tax reporting accessible, accurate, and useful to ordinary citizens.”



A partnership for health, bringing vaccines to every child in Lesotho

Ntsoaki Motaung

In Lesotho, reaching every child with life-saving vaccines is not an easy task. The land is covered with tall mountains and deep valleys.

Many villages can only be reached by walking for hours, riding on horseback, or even by helicopter; especially during the rainy season when roads are washed away.

But the people of Lesotho, together with strong partners like the World Health Organization (WHO), UNICEF, and Gavi, the Vaccine Alliance, are working hard every day to make sure no child is left behind.

At a recent meeting in Lesotho, representatives from these organizations came together to talk about the progress and challenges of the country's immunization program.

Dr. Innocent Nuwagira, the WHO representative, explained that Lesotho's health system is built on primary health care, where immunization is part of regular services for mothers and children.

"More than 6,000 village health workers and many partners work together to deliver vaccines, even in the most remote areas," he said.

He said over the years, Lesotho has achieved a lot. The country has been free



from polio since 2005 and has also stopped maternal and newborn tetanus since 2000.

"New vaccines, like those for pneumonia, rotavirus, and HPV, have been introduced to protect even more children. The government has also increased its own spending on immunization, showing a strong commitment to keeping children healthy," he said.

Nuwagira highlighted big challenges including some parts of Lesotho called "hardest to reach," where children are still

missing out on vaccines.

"The coverage for the second dose of the measles vaccine is only 60 percent, much lower than the 95 percent needed to fully protect everyone. Outbreaks of measles and diphtheria in neighboring countries are also a concern, as diseases can easily cross borders," he said.

He stated that, this is why planning and partnerships are so important. The Ministry of Health, with support from partners, has

created a new National Immunization Strategy to guide their work.

"They are also finalizing a new health policy and a strategic plan for the health sector. These documents will help Lesotho apply for new support from Gavi, known as Gavi 6.0". Dr. Nuwagira stressed that, even with progress, more funding is needed, especially for small countries with big challenges like Lesotho.

The Minister of Health, Mamokete Ntsekhe, shared her own story of growing up in a mountain village where vehicles could not reach.

She explained how the difficult terrain makes it hard to deliver health services, but she is proud of what health workers achieve every day.

She thanked Gavi for their support, which has helped bring new vaccines and build a stronger health system.

However, she also expressed concern about planned reductions in funding. She warned that if funding is cut too quickly, it could undo the progress made over the past twenty years.

Jonna Jeurlink, Gavi's Senior Country Manager, agreed that the challenges are real. She said Gavi's new phase, Gavi 6.0, will bring changes, including less financial support. This means Lesotho must find more resources within the country.

Jonna encouraged the government to plan carefully, set clear priorities, and work closely with all partners.

She also stressed the importance of making sure funds reach the health workers who deliver vaccines.

Dr. Ngozi Kennedy from UNICEF praised the hard work of the Ministry of Health and all partners.

She said UNICEF will continue to support Lesotho with technical help, data analysis, strengthening the supply chain, and community engagement.

She called for strong coordination and teamwork, so that every child can receive the vaccines they need.

Ntsoaki Motaung

This September, as countries around the world mark Deaf Awareness Month, 'Mamaliela Qhalehang, an educator, sign language interpreter, civic leader, and founder of the LSL Inclusive Education Initiative, is urging the public to look beyond simple awareness and focus on true inclusion.

"Deaf Awareness Month is not just about talking about deafness," said Qhalehang.

"It is about recognising Deaf people's rights, language, culture, and identity. It should challenge the barriers that Deaf people still face in education, employment, and everyday life."

Qhalehang, who works to help hearing children understand inclusion from an early age, said that real progress is measured by everyday access.

"Are there qualified sign language interpreters? Is there accessible information and inclusive education? Can Deaf people participate fully in work and community life?" she asks.

According to the World Federation of the Deaf, over 70 million Deaf people worldwide use sign language as their first language, yet

Educator bemoans lack of inclusion for the Deaf

many still struggle to access basic services.

A recent World Health Organization (WHO) report estimates that more than 430 million people globally need rehabilitation for their hearing loss, and many still lack access to sign language information or interpretation.

Qhalehang pointed out that while some countries have recognised sign language in law, there is often a gap between recognition and real support.

"A Deaf person should not have to fight for communication or information at school, at work, or in emergencies," she said.

Qhalehang also highlighted the importance of changing how society sees deafness, from

a medical condition to a cultural and linguistic identity.

"Sign languages are complete languages, not just gestures or simplified versions of spoken language. When hearing children learn sign language, they learn to communicate, not just assume."

For families of Deaf children, Qhalehang stressed the need for early and balanced information.

"Families need to know all the communication options, including sign language, and need support from Deaf adults and organisations. No child should have to wait until school to learn their first language," she said.

The International Labour Organization reports that Deaf people are more likely to be unemployed or underemployed. Qhalehang notes that the barriers begin with unequal access to education and continue into the workplace, where employers may still have misconceptions about Deaf people's abilities.

Technology, such as AI-generated captions, is helpful but not a complete solution. "Technology can help, but it should never replace qualified interpreters," "We must always ask, does the technology provide reliable and meaningful communication for the Deaf person?" Qhalehang warned.

"Awareness alone is not enough. Awareness should lead to communication, then participation, and finally real inclusion," she said.

El Niño's deadly toll: A survival test for mothers and children

Ntsoaki Motaung

As the world is predicted to face one of the strongest El Niño climate events on record, Molumaela Lepeli, a nurse educator, public health specialist, and PhD candidate, is sounding the alarm about the silent suffering that could soon spread across communities, especially among women and children.

"El Niño is not just a weather event," Lepeli insists. "It is a test of survival for mothers and their children."

Known for causing above-average sea temperatures in the Pacific Ocean, El Niño's effects ripple across continents, triggering droughts, heatwaves, floods, and storms. But for millions in low- and middle-income countries, especially in Africa, these disruptions are more than a scientific curiosity, they are a looming crisis.

Lepeli describes a likely daily reality where young children may gasp for breath in stifling heat and mothers could walk hours under a scorching sun, searching for water and food.

"Children are not just small. Their bodies are still growing. They eat and drink more for their body size, their immune systems are not fully developed, and their lungs work harder. When the air is thick with dust or smoke from wildfires, or when water is dirty, children fall sick much more easily."

If this year's El Niño event unfolds as predicted, temperatures are expected to rise and crops may fail in many regions, especially in eastern and southern Africa. The likely result is a surge in malnutrition.

"When crops fail, there is not enough food. Children start losing weight, and some never recover. Their growth can be stunted for life."

He recalls visiting villages where the only meal for a family is a handful of maize meal, stretched thin with water that it is not safe to drink.

Pregnant women could face even greater risks; "Pregnancy is a stress test for a woman's body. The heart, lungs, and immune system all have to work harder. Now imagine a pregnant mother who has to walk for miles in the heat just to reach a clinic, or who cannot find enough food. Dehydration can set in quickly, and what harms the mother harms the unborn child."

Too often, expectant mothers may skip antenatal visits because of unbearable heat or because they cannot leave their younger children at home alone.

"Some mothers are forced to give birth at home, without a trained midwife," Lepeli adds. "If there are complications, it can take hours or even days to reach a health facility. We lose both mothers and babies this way."

Lepeli warns that the pressure of El Niño will go beyond physical health. In many families, when food and water run out, the burden falls on women to find solutions.

"Women are usually the ones who fetch water, cook, and care for the sick. When resources are scarce, they spend more



Molumaela Lepeli, a nurse educator, public health specialist, and PhD candidate

time walking, carrying heavy loads, and less time resting or working for income. Girls may have to stay home from school to help, and education becomes a casualty too."

The strain on families might lead to even darker consequences. "We see a rise in gender-based violence and even child marriages during times of crisis. When families are desperate, marrying off young daughters can seem like a way to cope or reduce mouths to feed. But it is a tragedy that only deepens the suffering."

The health risks will not end with hunger and heat. As water becomes scarce or contaminated, outbreaks of diseases like cholera, diarrhea, and malaria could become more common.

"Children are the first to get sick, and sometimes the last to get help. Hospitals and clinics may become overwhelmed, and medicines could run out."

The toll on mental health is just as severe. "Children who survive disasters like floods or fires often struggle with anxiety and trauma. When schools close or homes are destroyed, the sense of safety is lost. We see more cases of depression and post-traumatic stress, especially in young people."

Lepeli believes that the world cannot afford to ignore these warning signs. "El Niño exposes deep inequalities in our societies. Those who are poor, who live in rural areas, who already have limited access to healthcare, these are the people who suffer most."

He calls for urgent support, strengthening health systems, ensuring access to clean water and food, and supporting women and children through community programs.

As the climate crisis fuels more frequent and severe El Niño events, Lepeli's message is clear, "We must act before the next disaster strikes. Every child's life, every mother's health, should matter. We need early warning systems, better support for pregnant women, and real investment in community resilience. El Niño's impact is not inevitable, it is a call to action."

The World Health Organization (WHO) warns that "El Niño does not directly cause disease. It can instead be considered as a risk modifier, with the greatest risks expected where El Niño-related climate anomalies coincide with weak health systems, low population immunity, poor access to care, and environmental conditions favorable to disease transmission."

A major new study published in *Nature Communications* shows just how dangerous El Niño can be for children.

Researchers found that when mothers are exposed to El Niño-like conditions during and before pregnancy, the risk of their children dying before the age of five rises dramatically, by as much as 48 percent compared to normal years.

The risks are expected to be even greater for families living in rural areas, those who lack clean drinking water, and mothers with little education.

Six decades of independence and the lifetime diplomatic passport question

By: Dr. Theko Tlebere

As Lesotho prepares to celebrate 60 years of independence on 4 October 2026, I received a long and important telephone call from my uncle in Ha Khohlopo, Thaba-Tseka.

He had been listening to a radio station when he heard that an opposition Member of Parliament was pushing for a motion asking that Members of Parliament be given diplomatic passports for life. My uncle's first question was simple: "What is a Diplomatic passport?" It is a reasonable question. And perhaps, as we celebrate six decades of independence, it is a question that every Mosotho should be able to ask, and find reasonably fair answers that would make sense even if they are related to villages like Setlakalleng or Ha Makunyapane.

A passport is fundamentally a travel document proving identity and nationality. Lesotho has three principal categories: a regular passport(green one), an official passport(blue one) and a diplomatic passport(Red/maroon one). The Passports and Travel Documents Act of 2018 gives the Minister responsible for passports the power to issue them.

A diplomatic passport is therefore not simply a "better passport" for richer or more important people. It is a state-issued document associated with particular public offices and official responsibilities. It signals that the holder is travelling in a capacity connected to the state and may require appropriate consular assistance and protection when abroad.

But there is an important distinction: a diplomatic passport does not, by itself, make someone a diplomat, nor does the red passport automatically give its holder diplomatic immunity. Diplomatic privileges and immunities arise from international law and the status of the person concerned, not

merely from the colour of the passport. Lesotho's Ministry of Foreign Affairs itself explains that passports provide the basis for consular access and protection through Lesotho's diplomatic missions and consular posts.

So who qualifies in Lesotho? Here is where my uncle's question becomes particularly interesting. Section 7(4) of the Lesotho Passports and Travel Documents Act, 2018 provides that diplomatic passports shall be issued to Their Majesties and Their Royal Highnesses and may be issued to a number of senior office-holders.

These include the Prime Minister, President of the Senate, Speaker of the National Assembly, Chief Justice, President of the Court of Appeal, Deputy Prime Minister, Cabinet members, former Prime Ministers and former Deputy Prime Ministers, members of the Council of State, judges who are Basotho citizens, the Leader of Opposition, Attorney General, Vice-President of the Senate, Deputy Speaker, members of the Senate and National Assembly, foreign service officers not below attaché level, and other persons or offices designated by the Minister through a Gazette notice.

Therefore, contrary to what my uncle initially thought, the law already recognises Members of Parliament among the categories that may receive diplomatic passports. But there is a crucial catch. The same Act says that a regular, official or diplomatic passport issued to a person aged 16 or above is valid for 10 years.

In other words, the present law does not create a "passport for life" simply because somebody has served as an MP. This is why the proposed motion matters. If Parliament were to establish a lifetime diplomatic passport for former MPs, it would move the privilege away from being principally connected to the current office of Parliamentarian and towards

being a permanent privilege attached to having once occupied that office. That is a significant policy question, not merely a passport question.

It is also worth noting that Lesotho's own parliamentary record has previously reflected this issue. In a November 2025 Hansard, concern was raised about former MPs retaining red diplomatic passports after leaving Parliament, with reference to the expectation that such passports should be surrendered when the qualifying status ends. Now let us bring this back to Ha Khohlopo.

It's true, the ordinary Mosotho does not have a diplomatic passport. He or she applies for a regular passport and pays the prescribed fee. According to the Ministry of Home Affairs, a 32-page regular passport costs M130, while a 64-page regular passport costs M300. The fees introduced under the 2019 regulations put a 32-page diplomatic passport at M1,000 and a 64-page diplomatic passport at M1,200.

That does not mean an MP automatically receives M1,000 or M1,200 from the taxpayer every time a diplomatic passport is issued. But it illustrates something important: that MPs fork out from their own pockets to obtain diplomatic passports. In essence what I am trying so what to bring home is that state privileges have a financial and administrative dimension.

If Parliament creates a permanent entitlement for former office-holders, Basotho deserve to know WHY? and what public purpose the continuing privilege serves. There is also a practical point that my uncle in Ha Khohlopo should further know. Diplomatic passports are not issued by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs states explicitly that it does not issue passports either in Lesotho or abroad.

Passport issuance falls under the passport

authorities of the Ministry of Home Affairs, while an application for a diplomatic passport requires a recommendation from the Principal Secretary responsible for foreign affairs.

For an ordinary Mosotho, passport services are decentralised. So, as we celebrate 60 years of independence, what should we ask? The question is not whether Members of Parliament deserve recognition. They hold an important constitutional office. Nor is it whether former public servants should be respected. They should. The deeper question is whether a privilege created because of public office should automatically survive long after the office has ended. Independence was not achieved so that Lesotho could simply reproduce a hierarchy of privileged citizens. Independence was supposed to give Basotho political sovereignty and the opportunity to build institutions that serve the public interest.

Sixty years later, our celebrations should therefore include ululations and celebrations, but also reflection. My uncle in Ha Khohlopo does not wake up asking whether he have a diplomatic passport. He wakes up thinking about the price of food, roads, jobs, electricity, healthcare, education and whether his children will have a better life than he did.

That is why a proposed lifetime diplomatic passport deserves public scrutiny. Parliament should explain what problem the proposal is solving, what benefit it provides to Lesotho, what it will cost, and why the privilege should continue after an MP has ceased to be an MP.

On our 60th birthday as an independent country, perhaps that is the more important passport question: Are we building a Lesotho where public office opens a permanent door for the few, or a Lesotho where independence opens opportunities for many? The future is NOW!



By: Dr. Theko Tlebere

This week as I deeply meditated about my beloved country Lesotho, I came to a point of asking myself, but what does Lesotho really need except for democracy?

Everyday I get a chance to browse my socials I become increasingly impressed when I realize that Lesotho's political conversations have increasingly moved beyond Parliament and political rallies. Facebook, WhatsApp and online news platforms have become important arenas in which Basotho debate constitutionalism, political leadership, youth participation, freedom of expression, corruption and the performance of public institutions.

This is not merely a technological change. It reflects a deeper transformation in how citizens participate in public life. The question, therefore, is no longer simply whether Lesotho is a democracy. The more important question is how deeply democracy has become embedded in the everyday relationship between citizens and the state.

Lesotho returned to democratic rule in 1993, following years of political instability. More than three decades later, democratic consolidation remains a continuing project. The recent development of Civic and Voter Education and Voter Registration Strategies by the Independent Electoral Commission, with support from

Lesotho needs more than elections: The unfinished struggle for democratic emancipation

International IDEA and UNDP, demonstrates recognition that democracy requires informed and sustained citizen participation beyond election day.

This distinction matters, it doesn't only matter, but its critical for the debates young people have today. Its true, elections provide citizens with an important mechanism for choosing representatives. But democratic citizenship extends beyond periodically selecting political leaders.

It includes access to information, freedom of expression, participation in decision-making, institutional accountability and confidence that public institutions operate according to established rules.

Recent debates concerning court orders, the independence of oversight institutions and the relationship between executive authority and other arms of the state illustrate why constitutionalism remains central to Lesotho's democratic development. Opposition leader Mathibeli Mokhothu has raised concerns about alleged non-compliance with court orders by government.

These are political allegations and should be assessed through the courts and other appropriate institutions, but the underlying constitutional principle is straightforward,democratic government requires respect for the separation of powers and judicial authority.

The same principle applies to freedom of expression.The reported abduction and assault of journalist and human-rights defender Kananelo

Boloetse has generated significant concern among civil-society and human-rights organizations. Amnesty International has called for an independent investigation.

The case demonstrates why the protection of journalists, activists and ordinary citizens who express dissent is important to the functioning of democratic society. Democratic emancipation, however, should not be understood only through the relationship between citizens and government. It also requires transformation within political society itself.

Lesotho's young people remain particularly important in this discussion. The Lesotho News Agency recently reported that only three members of the National Assembly are young people, all men. This raises questions about political representation and whether younger generations have sufficient access to formal decision-making institutions.

Social media may partly be filling this representational gap. Young Basotho increasingly use digital platforms to debate public affairs, challenge political narratives and organize around issues that matter to them. Recent regional research similarly suggests that youth disengagement from conventional politics should not automatically be interpreted as political apathy; it can also represent dissatisfaction with existing forms of political participation.

This creates both an opportunity and a responsibility.Political emancipation cannot mean

replacing one political elite with another. Nor should it mean treating every government decision as inherently wrong or every opposition position as inherently correct.

It should mean building institutions in which government can be questioned without hostility, opposition can criticize without intimidation, citizens can organize without fear, journalists can investigate without reprisal, and public officials can be held accountable through lawful processes.

That is the deeper meaning of constitutional democracy. Lesotho therefore needs to move from an understanding of democracy as an event, and elections, to an understanding of democracy as a continuous social and institutional process. The unfinished task is not simply to change governments. It is to strengthen the citizen. A politically emancipated Mosotho is not one who merely votes for a party.

It is one who understands the Constitution, scrutinises public decisions, demands evidence, participates in civic life and recognises that political authority ultimately requires public accountability.

The future of Lesotho's democracy will consequently depend not only on who occupies political office, but on whether citizens and institutions collectively deepen the democratic culture that began in 1993.

The next stage of Lesotho's democratic journey should therefore be neither partisan nor personal. It should be institutional: from electoral participation to meaningful citizenship, and from formal democracy towards genuine democratic emancipation. The Future is NOW!



CELEBRATING A NATION CONNECTED BY PRIDE, PROGRESS AND POSSIBILITY.

As Lesotho celebrates its Diamond Jubilee, Econet Telecom Lesotho proudly joins the entire nation in honouring this remarkable milestone and the generations that have contributed to our country's journey.

We remain committed to connecting the Mountain Kingdom to opportunities, technology and possibilities that will shape the years ahead.

— *Happy* —
**INDEPENDENCE DAY
LESOTHO**





INVITATION TO TENDER

supply, delivery, installation and commissioning of office furniture

Procurement Reference: LNDC-LAS-2026-11

1. The Lesotho National Development Corporation (LNDC) has allocated funds to be used for supply, delivery, installation and commissioning 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	16 November 2026
(g) Contract Signature	30 November 2026
(h) Address	LNDC Development House, Block A, Reception Area



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



Invitation to Bidders

BID NOTICE UNDER OPEN COMPETITIVE TENDERING

Ministry of Education and Training

02-October 2026

Supply and Delivery of Printing Material- GOL/PRNT/TARL 26/27

1. The **Ministry of Education and Training** has been allocated/received funds from the government of Lesotho to be used for the acquisition of **Printing Material**.
2. The Entity invites sealed bids from eligible bidders for the provision of the above Goods.
3. Bidding will be conducted in accordance with the open national bidding method contained in the Public Procurement Act and is open to all bidders.
4. Interested eligible bidders may obtain further information and inspect the bidding documents at the address given below at 8(a) from **8;00AM to 16:00 hrs**.
5. The Bidding document in English may be purchased at no cost by interested bidders on the submission of a written application to the address below at 8(b).
6. Bids must be **delivered** to the address below at 8(c) at 10:00hrs on the 13th November 2026 .All bids must be accompanied by a **bid security of (M5000.00)** or a bid securing declaration..Bid securities or bid securing declarations must be valid until 90 days **(11/02/27)**.Late bids shall be rejected. Bids will be opened in the presence of the bidders' representatives who choose to attend at the address below at 8(d) at **10:30hrs on the 13th November 2026**.
7. There shall be a pre – bid meeting at **10:00hrs EFU Building** on the dates indicated in the proposed schedule in this notice.
8. (a)Documents may be inspected at:Ministry of Education and
- Training,Procurement Unit EFU Building next to Fokothi,opposite NCDC.
- (b) Documents will be issued from:Ministry of Education and Training EFU Building next to Fokothi opposite NCDC.
- (c) Bids must be **delivered** to:Ministry of Education and Training headquarters ,Inspectorate Building room 404
- (d) **Address of bid opening:** Procurement committee Ministry of Education and Training headquarters ,Inspectorate Building room 404.
9. The planned procurement schedule (subject to changes) is as follows:
- | Activity | Date |
|--|---------------------------|
| a. Publish bid notice | 02th October 2026 |
| b. Pre-bid meeting where applicable | Tuesday 13th October 2026 |
| c. Bid closing date | 13th November 2026 |
| d. Evaluation process | 30 November 2026 |
| e. Display and communication of best evaluated bidder notice | 30 November 2026 |
| f. Contract signature | 10 December 2026 |
- Signature: 
- Name: 
- Position of Authorised Official: 



Invitation to Bidders

BID NOTICE UNDER OPEN COMPETITIVE TENDERING

Ministry of Education and Training

02-October 2026

Supply and Delivery of Science Chemicals and Equipment- OCB No: GOL/SCIENCE FUND 26/27

1. The **Ministry of Education and Training** has been allocated/received funds from the government of Lesotho to be used for the acquisition of Science chemicals and equipment.
2. The Entity invites sealed bids from eligible bidders for the provision of the above Goods.
3. Bidding will be conducted in accordance with the open national bidding method contained in the Public Procurement Act and is open to all bidders.
4. Interested eligible bidders may obtain further information and inspect the bidding documents at the address given below at 8(a) from **8;00AM to 16:00 hrs**.
5. The Bidding document in English may be purchased at **no cost** by interested bidders on the submission of a written application to the address below at 8(b).
6. Bids must be **delivered** to the address below at 8(c) at **10:00hrs on the 13th November 2026** .All bids must be accompanied by a bid security of **(M5000.00)** or a bid securing declaration.. Bid securities or bid securing declarations must be valid until 90 days **(11/02/27)**. Late bids shall be rejected. Bids will be **opened** in the presence of the bidders' representatives who choose to attend at the address below at 8(d) at **10:30hrs on the 13th November 2026**.
7. There shall be a pre – bid meeting at 10:00hrs **EFU Building** on the dates indicated in the proposed schedule in this notice.
8. (a)Documents may be inspected at:Ministry of Education and
- Training,Procurement Unit EFU Building next to Fokothi,opposite NCDC.
- (b) Documents will be issued from:Ministry of Education and Training EFU Building next to Fokothi opposite NCDC.
- (c) Bids must be **delivered** to:Ministry of Education and Training headquarters ,Inspectorate Building room 404
- (d) **Address of bid opening:** Procurement committee Ministry of Education and Training headquarters ,Inspectorate Building room 404.
9. The planned procurement schedule (subject to changes) is as follows:
- | Activity | Date |
|--|---------------------------|
| a. Publish bid notice | 02th October 2026 |
| b. Pre-bid meeting where applicable | Tuesday 13th October 2026 |
| c. Bid closing date | 13th November 2026 |
| d. Evaluation process | 30 November 2026 |
| e. Display and communication of best evaluated bidder notice | 30 November 2026 |
| f. Contract signature | 10 December 2026 |
- Signature: 
- Name: 
- Position of Authorised Official: 



Government of Lesotho

THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE AND DEVELOPMENT PLANNING

EXPRESSION OF INTEREST NO: 3 OF 2026/2027 (INDIVIDUAL CONSULTANT)

A CALL FOR EXPRESSION OF INTEREST- INDIVIDUAL CONSULTANT TO DEVELOP A NATIONAL HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT POLICY

1. Introduction

The Government of the Kingdom of Lesotho (GoL), through the Ministry of Finance and Development Planning (MFDP), is committed to building a skilled, knowledgeable, and adaptable human resource base that can drive sustainable national development, reduce poverty, and improve the quality of life for all Basotho. Human Resources Development (HRD) is central to achieving the targets set out in the National Strategic Development Plan (NSDP), the African Union's Agenda 2063, and the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). It is against this background that the Ministry of Finance and Development Planning seeks an individual consultant to develop a National Human Resource Development Policy.

A complete set of bidding documents in English will be available to interested bidders for collection at Planning Procurement Unit office number 124 during office hours (between 8:00 am until 4:30 pm).

Bids must be deposited on or before **27th October 2026 at 12:00HRS** in the tender box situated at Government Complex Phase 2 at Development Planning 2nd floor. Bids arriving after the closing date time shall be rejected. Tenders will be opened in the presence of bidders or representatives at **14: 30** hours on the same day.

Clarification requests and bid submissions

should be addressed to:

Secretary Procurement Committee
Ministry of Finance and Development Planning
Development Planning Africa House
P.O. Box 630
Maseru 100.
Tel no. 22 317433

Tender Timetable for the expression of interest

Activity	Dates
ITT Issued	1st October 2026
Clarifications dates	1st – 21st October 2026
Deadline for obtaining Tender Document	21st October 2026
ITT Close	27th October 2026 at 12:00 noon
Tender opening	27th October 2026 at 14:30 hours
Evaluation dates	2nd – 6th November 2026

To obtain the Expression of Interest (EOI), interested and eligible individuals should request the EOI document from thato.pokola@gov.ls. The request should include: Name of Applicant, telephone numbers and email address.



Vacancy Announcement

Title	External candidates link	Deadline
Knowledge Management Consultant	https://wd3.my-workdaysite.com/recruiting/wfp/job_openings/job/Maseru-Le-sotho-The-King-dom-Of/Knowledge-Man-agement-Consul-tant_JR126917	03.10.2026

NB.: It's important to us to create an accessible, inclusive workplace for everyone, so please email global.inclusion@wfp.org if you are shortlisted and need any disability related adjustments for your interviews/test/technical assessment. Our reasonable accommodations team will then connect with you to confidentially discuss your options.



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

- 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.
- The entity invites sealed bids from eligible bidders for the provision of the above goods.
- 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.
- 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.
- 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**
- 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.
- There **shall** be a pre-bid meeting/ site visit for **LOT 3 Bidders**.
- 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



LESOTHO HIGHLANDS WATER COMMISSION

5th Floor, Standard Lesotho Bank Tower, Kingsway Road, Maseru, Lesotho

REQUEST FOR QUOTATIONS

SUPPLY AND DELIVERY OF CORPORATE UNIFORMS
RFQ No. LHWC/RFQ/2026/1

The Lesotho Highlands Water Commission (LHWC) invites quotations from reputable and suitably experienced suppliers and manufacturers for the supply, tailoring and delivery of corporate uniforms for its staff, in the following lots:

Lot A – Ladies' Uniforms: office pantsuits, skirt suits, blouses, long winter coats and short winter coats.

Lot B – Gentlemen's Uniforms: suits, shirts, long winter coats and short winter coats. Suppliers may quote for one or both lots.

Obtaining the RFQ Documents

Interested suppliers can request the full RFQ documents, including detailed specifications, the price schedule and submission requirements, free of charge by email to sec@lhwc.org.ls. Please use the subject line "Request for RFQ Documents – Corporate Uniforms" and include your company name, contact person, telephone number and email address.

Key Requirements

Suppliers must provide, among other things:

- certified company registration certificate and valid trader's licence;
- valid tax clearance certificate from Revenue Services Lesotho (RSL); South Africa Revenue Service (SARS);
- company profile showing tailoring or manufacturing capacity; and
- at least three references from clients supplied with corporate uniforms.

Submission of Quotations

Completed quotations must be emailed to sec@lhwc.org.ls by **Friday, 30th October, 2026 at 12:00** noon (Lesotho time). Late submissions will not be considered.

LHWC is not bound to accept the lowest or any quotation and reserves the right to accept or reject any quotation in whole or in part.

Enquiries: sec@lhwc.org.ls

TSEBISO!

Econet e Ntlafatsa Marang-rang a Litifiso

Econet Telecom Lesotho e ikemiselitse ka hohle-hohle ho ntlafatsa marang-rang le litšebeletso mol-emong oa boiketlo ba bareki ka linako tsohle.

Ke ka hona khafetsa, Econet Telecom Lesotho e lulang e tsetela haholo ho ntlafatsa le ho pharalatsa likhokahanyo tseo e fanang ka tsona, ho ikamahanya le mahlale le lihlaioa tsa sejoale-joale tse ka sebelisoang joaloka **AI** ele hore bohle ba ntlafale le hona ho hatela-pele joaloka baahi ba linaha tse ling.

Ele karolo ea bona boitlamo bona le ntšetso-pele ea leeto lena, Econet Telecom Lesotho e tla ntlafatsa marang-rang a litefiso (Billing System) ka khoeli ea Mphalane 2026 molemong oa ho arabela litlhoko tsa linako tsena tseo re phelang ho tsona.

Ho tsoa Econet Telecom Lesotho, re motlotlo haholo ka ntlafatso ena kaha e tlo fetola tšobotsi eo baji ba lihlaioa tsa rona ba fumanang litšebeletso ka teng.

Nakong eo Econet Telecom Lesotho e fetelang ho marang-rang ana a macha, ha rea lebella hore ho ka ba le tšitiso e kholo kapa hona ho khineha hoa litšebeletso nako e telele. Leha ho le joalo, re tla lula rele beha leseling nako-le nako le hore na le ka ikatela joang nakong ena ea tšebetso. Re tla lula re fumaneha ho **100, 199** kapa **6140** bakeng sa litlhakisetsa.

Re tla leboha tšebetso ea lona e sa thekeseleng ha re tsamaea leeto lena ‘moho.

NOTICE!

Econet Upgrades Billing System

Econet Telecom Lesotho is fully committed to continuously improving its network and services for the benefit and convenience of its customers.

For this reason, Econet Telecom Lesotho continues to invest significantly in improving and expanding the connectivity it provides, while also keeping pace with modern technologies and digital solutions such as Artificial Intelligence (**AI**), so that everyone can benefit from these advancements.

As part of this commitment and the continued progress of this journey, Econet Telecom Lesotho will upgrade its billing system during October 2026 to better respond to the evolving needs of the times in which we live.

Econet Telecom Lesotho is proud of this upgrade, as it will significantly improve the way we serve our customers and how they access and use our products and services. The aim is to ensure that customers enjoy greater benefits from these services and that they contribute even more to improving their everyday lives.

As Econet Telecom Lesotho transitions to this new system, we do not anticipate any major or prolonged interruptions to our services. However, we will continue to keep customers informed from time to time and provide guidance on how they can prepare during the migration process. We will also remain available on **100, 199 or 6140** for further clarification.

Thank you for continuing this journey with us



INSTITUTE OF
DIRECTORS
OF LESOTHO

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Stronger Institutions.
A Prosperous Lesotho.*

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Recognition & Networking

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PROF. MERVYN KING

Chair Emeritus of the King Committee on Corporate Governance. A leading global voice on governance, sustainability and integrated reporting.



MS CAROLYNN CHALMERS

CEO of the Good Governance Academy. International governance practitioner and contributor to ISO 37000:2021 – the global standard for governance of organisations.



MR. ROBERT LIKHANG

Chartered Accountant, Chartered Secretary and governance professional with extensive experience in boards, strategy, risk and finance. Played a key role in the development of the Mohlomi Corporate Governance Code and has served on several key boards and professional bodies in Lesotho.

The combination of international and local expertise ensures a practical, relevant and high-impact governance experience for all participants.

INVESTMENT



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M2 500.00



NON-MEMBERS

M3 000.00



TABLE OF 10 – CORPORATE
(MEMBERS)

M20 000.00



TABLE OF 10 – CORPORATE
(NON-MEMBERS)

M25 000.00



26 NOVEMBER 2026



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*Good Governance
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From the accordion to Sotho Hop: Six decades of grounded Basotho sound

Chris Theko

When Lesotho celebrates six decades of independence, the country will inevitably reflect on its political history, its leaders, institutions, struggles and achievements.

But there is another history that has accompanied the nation throughout those 60 years. It is the history told through music.

From the voices of traditional performers and choirs to the accordion-driven Famo of Apollo Ntabanyane and his generation; from Sankomota and the late Tsepo Tshola to the pioneers of local hip hop; and from Skebza D and his contemporaries to Ntate Stunna, Sannere and Litšepe LR, the evolution of Basotho music mirrors the evolution of Basotho society itself.

It is a story of migration, faith, love, hardship, identity, politics, social commentary and, increasingly, entrepreneurship. And perhaps most importantly, it is a story of adaptation.

Before independence, there was already a Basotho sound

Although this article looks at the six decades since 1966, Lesotho's musical story did not begin at independence.

Before the flag of the independent kingdom was raised, Basotho musicians were already developing forms of musical expression that blended indigenous traditions with influences brought by Christianity, formal education and migration.

Among the most significant figures was composer Joshua Pulumo Mohapeloa, whose work became an important part of Basotho choral music.

His Moshoeshe, Tsoha, composed before independence, was performed during the 1966 Independence celebrations, an indication that music was already intertwined with national identity at the birth of the modern Basotho state.

The young nation therefore inherited not an empty musical landscape, but a culture with an established vocabulary of song, poetry, oral history and communal performance.

Then came the sound that would become perhaps the most recognisable musical expression of Basotho life: Famo.

When the accordion found the Basotho story

Famo's roots stretch back to the early 20th century. The genre developed among Basotho communities, including migrant workers in South Africa's mines, and evolved from older Basotho musical traditions. The accordion eventually became one of its defining instruments.

The genre's importance was not simply musical. For Basotho migrants, music became a means of carrying home with them.

In shebeens and other social spaces, the accordion, drums and voices became vehicles for storytelling. Famo could speak about relationships, money, migration, work, betrayal, hardship and everyday life. It was, in many ways, a newspaper without paper.

By the late 1960s, Tau ea Matšekha, featuring Forere Motloheloa and Apollo Ntabanyane, had become one of the first major Famo acts to make a living from recorded music. Their recordings, including Ha Peete Kea Falla, helped

As Lesotho marks 60 years of independence, its music offers a remarkable record of the country's changing identity, from traditional and choral music to Famo, Sankomota, hip hop and the contemporary Sotho Hop movement. But after six decades of creativity, has Lesotho built a sustainable music industry around its talent?

establish Famo as a commercial recording genre.

Ntabanyane would later declare himself the "King of Famo" in 1974.

His generation demonstrated that a musical form associated with ordinary Basotho could become commercially viable and culturally influential.

But the journey was not without prejudice.

Veteran musician Lephoi Mohale, better known as Mantša, says Famo was once among the genres most taken for granted.

"Especially FAMO music, it was one of the most taken for granted genres back then."

For Mantša, however, that perception was something musicians themselves fought to change.

"We worked so hard to turn that around and I am not even ashamed to say that I was at the forefront of fighting to protect and grow the music industry specifically in the FAMO genre."

His recollection is significant because it places musicians themselves at the centre of Famo's transformation from a marginalised musical form into an important component of Basotho cultural identity.

The women who entered a man's world

The history of Famo is also a history of women challenging the boundaries of the genre.

Famo was traditionally dominated by men, with women often participating as dancers rather than principal performers.

That began to change with artists such as 'Malitaba' and, most prominently, Puseletso Seema.

Seema would become known as the Queen of Famo and is widely recognised as one of the genre's pioneering female performers. Recent reporting on her life describes her as one of the women who broke into a musical space that had previously been largely reserved for men.

Her story adds another dimension to the history of Lesotho's music. The evolution of the industry was not only about new sounds. It was also about who was allowed to speak.

Beyond Famo: a country finding its musical range

It would nevertheless be misleading to describe Lesotho's musical history as simply a history of Famo.

Choral music, gospel, traditional music and other popular forms continued to flourish alongside it.

Lesotho's geographical position also made it a significant meeting point for musicians from across Southern Africa. During the apartheid era, South African artists performed in Lesotho, exposing local audiences and musicians to different sounds while giving Basotho performers access to a wider musical environment.

Then there was Sankomota.

The group, associated with musicians including Tsepo Tshola and Frank Leepa, became one of Lesotho's most important musical exports, developing a sound that drew on African musical traditions and international influences.

Its history also demonstrated the political reality of the region. The group's predecessor, Uhuru, encountered restrictions under apartheid before its evolution into Sankomota.

By the 1980s, Sankomota had become an important example of the ability of Basotho musicians to create music that could travel beyond Lesotho's borders.

This was also an era when radio was extraordinarily influential.

Radio Lesotho had been launched in 1964, two years before independence. For generations of Basotho, radio would become one of the most important routes through which local music reached national audiences.

Before streaming services, social media and algorithmic playlists, radio was the gatekeeper. A song that received airplay could become a national hit.

Then the young people picked up the microphone

By the 1990s, another cultural force was changing the musical landscape: hip hop.

There is some uncertainty about exactly when hip hop first arrived in Lesotho, but the early 1990s saw a wave associated with figures such as Papa Zee, while the genre became increasingly established towards the end of the decade.

Initially, the influence was overwhelmingly American. The fashion was American. The language was often English. The production was heavily influenced by American hip hop.

But young Basotho did what young people everywhere eventually do with imported culture. They made it their own.

Maseru became a centre of emerging hip hop culture. Crews developed, rap battles and competitions provided platforms for young artists, and performers including Kislev, Skebza D, Sadon, Core Wreka and T-Mech helped shape the emerging scene.

The significance of that generation lies not only in the music it produced, but in the cultural confidence it represented.

Young Basotho were no longer simply consuming international popular culture. They were participating in it.

From hip hop to Sotho Hop

Eventually, the question became less about whether Basotho could rap and more about what it meant to rap as a Mosotho.

This is where the evolution commonly described as Sotho Hop becomes significant.

Rather than simply reproducing American hip hop, artists increasingly incorporated Sesotho, local narratives, Basotho cultural referenc-

es and traditional musical elements.

Skebza D has been particularly vocal about this cultural dimension, describing Sotho Hop as a form rooted in Southern African and Sotho identity. His career has stretched across generations of Lesotho's hip hop culture, with music, mentorship and cultural storytelling forming part of his contribution to the scene.

The contemporary generation has taken that evolution further.

Ntate Stunna has become one of the most recognisable names in contemporary Sotho Hop, while artists such as Sannere and Litšepe LR represent different expressions of the current sound.

Sannere is especially interesting in this historical continuum because his music brings together elements that might once have been regarded as belonging to different eras: the accordion and hip hop.

Academic research on the evolution of Sotho accordion music documents the way storytelling, spoken word and rap styles became incorporated into the music, illustrating that the boundaries between genres have never been as rigid as they might appear.

Mantša sees the connection even more directly.

He argues that the influence of Famo can be heard in the newer generation:

"Basotho from all walks of life have accepted and embraced and even became influenced by famo music so much that it has even birthed other genres such as Sotho Hop."

Whether one describes Sotho Hop as a direct descendant of Famo or as a parallel development influenced by the wider Basotho musical tradition, the important point is that contemporary artists are increasingly comfortable combining modern production with older cultural vocabulary.

The accordion did not necessarily have to disappear for the hip hop beat to emerge. The old story could survive inside the new sound.

The soundtrack has changed. The economic question has not.

And this brings us to the uncomfortable part of Lesotho's musical history. The country has produced musicians. It has produced genres. It has produced audiences. It has produced stars.

But has it produced a sustainable music industry?

The distinction matters.

A music culture can exist without musicians earning sustainable incomes from their work.

Lesotho's history contains numerous examples of artists struggling to benefit financially from the music they created.

Ntate Mantša himself is a striking example.

Ntate Mantsa began recording in 1987, but because Lesotho lacked the recording infra-

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structure he needed, he travelled to South Africa to record. He eventually received his first royalties in 2010, more than two decades after he began recording.

His experience points to a problem that has persisted across generations: Basotho have been able to create musical value faster than the country's systems have been able to monetise it for them.

Today, the problem is being confronted through efforts to strengthen copyright and collective rights management.

Building the machinery behind the music

LESCOSAA, the Lesotho Copyright Society of Authors and Artists, represents an important development in this regard.

The organisation's own assessment is that Lesotho's music industry is not yet financially sustainable.

One of the major missing pieces has been collective management, a system through which music users can be licensed and royalties collected and distributed to creators.

According to LESCOSAA's Membership and Documentation Manager Relebohile Tsoamotse, the collective-management system had effectively not been functioning in Lesotho for many years, despite the legal framework having existed on paper. LESCOSAA became operational in 2021, but says royalty collection has yet to fully take off.

That is an important distinction. The problem is not necessarily that the concept of royalties does not exist.

It is that the machinery required to systematically collect and distribute them has been underdeveloped.

LESCOSAA says almost 300 artists are currently registered, but acknowledges that this remains a small number.

The organisation also identifies another problem: some artists lack sufficient knowledge of copyright and the business side of music.

That means the industry's challenge is not simply about legislation.

It is about education, enforcement, licensing, infrastructure and professionalisation.

As Tsoamotse puts it: "Music has value, as does intellectual property. It should be protected and paid for."

That sentence captures perhaps the central economic question facing the industry at 60.

Recognition is growing

There are nevertheless signs that the industry is becoming more organised. Music awards have become increasingly prominent vehicles for recognition and visibility.

The National Music Awards, now in their third edition, have established categories covering Famo, Sotho Hop, gospel, jazz, traditional music, amapiano, choral music and hip hop, among others. The awards' 2025 winners included Apolo Ntabanyane, who received the Queen Mamohato Lifetime Achievement Award, while Mantša was recognised as Best Recognised Artist.

The 2026 edition, held in September as Lesotho approached its Independence anniversary, also used the awards platform to celebrate the country's musical heritage and cultural identity.

The significance of such platforms goes beyond trophies.

They help create visibility, establish career milestones and provide an industry narrative in which musicians can be recognised as professionals.

But recognition alone cannot build an industry. An award cannot replace a publishing agreement. A performance cannot replace a royalty system. A viral song cannot replace financial literacy.

And popularity does not automatically translate into sustainable income.

Music as an employer

For Mantša, the next chapter requires government to look at musicians differently. Not simply as entertainers. Not simply as cultural ambassadors. But as economic participants.

He argues that government should protect and invest in musicians, particularly after the damage COVID-19 inflicted on the live enter-

From the accordion to Sotho Hop: Six decades of grounded Basotho sound



tainment sector.

His argument is that musicians can also contribute to employment creation.

"Musicians can help government create jobs and reduce high unemployment rate."

He wants to see public funding allocated to musicians to help them create employment and build sustainable enterprises around their work.

He also challenges the private sector to give Basotho artists greater opportunities at events and festivals instead of routinely importing performers from outside the country. This is an important shift in the conversation.

If music is treated only as entertainment, support for musicians can be viewed as discretionary.

If music is treated as part of the creative economy, the discussion changes to investment, employment, intellectual property and economic returns.

The Famo question

Any serious retrospective of Lesotho's music must also confront the difficult modern history of Famo.

The genre has become entangled with violent rivalries and criminal activity, and the government has taken action against certain Famo groups.

That reality cannot simply be erased from the genre's history. But neither should the contemporary violence be allowed to define Famo's entire history. Famo existed for generations before the modern conflicts.

Its roots lie in Basotho storytelling, migration, working-class life and musical innovation. Its artists have used it to document relationships, social problems and everyday experiences. Recent reporting has also shown that the music remains deeply embedded in Basotho cultural life.

The challenge, therefore, is to distinguish between a cultural genre and the criminal activities that have become associated with some

groups operating around it.

Mantša's own perspective is that musicians have worked for decades to protect the reputation and value of Famo.

That history deserves to remain part of the national conversation.

Six decades later, what have we actually built?

Perhaps the most revealing thing about Lesotho's musical history is how consistently musicians have adapted.

The traditional performer adapted to Christianity and formal education. Famo absorbed the accordion. The accordion travelled with migrant workers. Sankomota absorbed regional and international sounds. Hip hop arrived from America. Basotho rappers localised it.

Sotho Hop emerged as a contemporary expression of Basotho identity. Digital technology then changed how music is recorded, promoted and consumed.

Every generation has found a way to take what came before and reinterpret it.

That is why describing the history simply as "Famo versus Sotho Hop" would miss the point. It is not a story of replacement. It is a story of evolution. The music changes because the people change.

And yet, beneath the changing beats, the fundamental function remains surprisingly familiar.

Tell the story.

Tell the story of the migrant worker. Tell the story of the shepherd. Tell the story of the lover. Tell the story of the politician. Tell the story of the young person trying to find an identity. Tell the story of the nation.

That is what Basotho musicians have been doing for generations.

The unfinished business of musical independence

At 60, therefore, Lesotho's music industry presents something of a paradox. The country has extraordinary musical heritage. It has gen-

erations of recognised performers. It has an increasingly diverse contemporary scene. It has awards platforms. It has digital access to audiences beyond its borders.

And it has institutions beginning to address copyright and collective rights management.

Yet the systems that convert creativity into sustainable income remain incomplete.

LESCOSAA is still trying to establish an effective collective-management system. Artists still need greater copyright and business education.

The private sector still has an important role to play in creating local opportunities. Government policy and infrastructure can still do more to treat creative work as an economic sector.

And musicians themselves need to become increasingly conscious of the business behind the art.

That may ultimately be the central lesson of Lesotho's first 60 years of musical independence.

The country has never lacked people capable of creating the soundtrack.

The unfinished work is building an industry capable of rewarding those who create it.

From Apolo Ntabanyane to Puseletso Seema. From Mantša to Tsepo Tshola. From Sankomota to Skebza D.

From the early hip hop crews to Ntate Stunna, Sannere and Litšepe LR. The names change. The instruments change. The technology changes. The audience changes. But the music continues.

And as Lesotho enters its next 60 years, perhaps the ambition should be bigger than producing more successful musicians.

It should be to build a country in which Basotho music is not only culturally valuable, but economically valuable to the Basotho who create it.

After six decades of creating the soundtrack of the nation, that may be the next stage of Lesotho's musical independence.



Vacancy: Accountant

Location: Maseru, Lesotho

Employment type: Full-time, on-site

Closing date: 5 October 2026

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Newsday Media Ls is a dynamic media company committed to innovation in journalism and visual storytelling. As a leading creator of online visual journalism and a current affairs video-on-demand platform in Lesotho, we publish digital news daily, a print newspaper every Friday, and a monthly hybrid newspaper. Our content reaches audiences through multiple platforms and formats, making news accessible to diverse communities.

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- Clear written and verbal communication skills, including the ability to explain financial matters to colleagues without a finance background.
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George Malelu considers legal action against Miss Botswana Organisation

Chris Theko

Lesotho-born designer George Malelu is considering taking legal action against the Miss Botswana Organisation, after a royal-blue gown worn by Miss World Botswana Ruth Thomas was linked to his work.

Malelu says his management has already written to the organisation asking for a public apology and compensation. The organisation confirmed it received the letter, but he says weeks have passed without what he considers a real response.

He is now looking for legal help and plans to speak publicly about the matter. At this stage he is only weighing his options.

What started as a striking fashion moment on the Miss World stage has become a dispute about who owns a creative idea, who gets the credit, and how African designers are treated, with Malelu demanding public accountability from the Miss Botswana Organisation.

Malelu says he first saw the gown the morning after the pageant, when a friend tagged him in a Facebook post. His first reaction was confusion.

“I thought, this is my work. How did it get there?”

The gown was shown in the pageant’s Designers of the World segment. Many Basotho saw similarities with Malelu’s work, especially his Potato collection, which he says was inspired by his mother.

An early post by MET Designs Fashions described the outfit as “by our very own MET Designs Fashions, featuring Makgabe made from Kgetsi”. The post called it a celebration of culture, customs and heritage.

As criticism grew, the Miss World platform changed its description. It said the garment was “inspired by one of George Malelu’s creations and made by Met Designs.”

Malelu says the word inspired does not describe what happened.

“Being inspired is something else,” he says. “There was not an issue of inspiration, it was plagiarism.”

For him, this is a serious matter of credit, not a small difference in wording. That is Malelu’s own view of the matter. No court or other independent body has made a legal finding on it.

What the Miss Botswana director said

A WhatsApp exchange between Malelu and Benjamin “Ben” Raletsatsi adds another piece to the story. Malelu identifies Raletsatsi as the National Director of Miss Botswana.

In the message, Raletsatsi says he spoke to the designer who made the gown. He says she confirmed that Miss Botswana herself gave her the design or reference.

“She simply executed the idea as provided to her,” Raletsatsi wrote.

He continued:

“So it appears the original inspiration/reference came from our side, rather than from the designer who made the outfit.”

Raletsatsi said he was updating Malelu while they worked out exactly how the design came to be used.

The message does not on its own show where Ruth Thomas got the reference. It also does not show whether she knew it was Malelu’s work, or whether anyone involved asked for permission to use it. But it does appear to place the source of the reference with the Miss Botswana side, and not with a designer who came up with a similar gown on her own.

Malelu says things became more complicated in later conversations. He says he was told that Raletsatsi and Thomas sent the reference to the designer and asked for the design “as is.”

That, he says, raised more questions about how the design was sourced, and why his work was not acknowledged from the start.

“This was supposed to be a compliment”

Malelu says that when he first saw the gown, he thought the resemblance might be flattering. That changed when he thought about what

the design meant to him.

He says the collection it came from was inspired by his mother and is deeply personal.

“This potato collection was inspired by my mother,” he says. “It marked me deeply, going back with a close tie to my heart.”

For Malelu, this is about more than fashion.

He believes it shows a wider pattern in which African creatives see their work used, copied or adapted without proper credit.

“We are overlooked while the world has been taking from us. People take from us but don’t want us to be involved in telling our stories.”

Why he is saying no to private deals

Malelu says there were several fair ways his



work could have been used. He could have been paid to make the garment. The rights to the design could have been negotiated. Or someone could have asked his permission.

Instead, he says, none of this happened before the gown reached the Miss World stage.

He says both the designer and the Miss Botswana Organisation

have since apologised in private. But he believes a private fix is not enough, because the gown was shown to the public.

“If my work was publicly presented, then accountability should also be public,” he says.

Malelu says the remedies discussed included compensation and a chance to travel to Botswana to design clothing for the First Lady of Botswana. He turned the offer down.

In his view, taking another professional job would have turned a separate collaboration into a substitute for dealing with the original problem. He also says he had to think of the Basotho people who publicly defended his work during the controversy.

He says money is not his main goal.

“I am not so much after the compensation. I want to pass a message and a lesson to say this must stop.”

Malelu is also worried about other creatives who may be afraid to challenge powerful organisations because it could cost them opportunities.

A bigger question for Basotho creatives

The dispute raises a wider question for Lesotho’s creative industry: what happens when local creativity travels beyond the country’s borders?

Traditional culture belongs to communities, and no single designer can claim ownership of Basotho heritage itself. But contemporary designers make their own creative choices when they turn that heritage into modern fashion. That is why credit matters.

Malelu’s career already shows how far Basotho creativity can go. His work has appeared on major African platforms and reached international audiences, including through his work with the late Quiteria Kekana.

For him, the Miss World episode is not just about one dress. It is about whether African creatives can help tell the stories that come from their own cultures, and whether credit follows their work when it crosses borders.

“It’s bigger than George Malelu,” he says.

Sesotho Fashioneng 2026 is happening - Stunna

- **Founder says the brand is “bigger than personalities” as dispute over the event’s future plays out online**



“Please give the same energy to building that you give to rumours about destruction,” he said.

He added that his team would not spend its time responding to everyone claiming that the event would not take place.

“We would rather spend that energy making sure it does,” he said.

Stunna concluded by describing Sesotho Fashioneng as “bigger than personalities. Bigger than disagreements. Bigger than any one individual.”

Ownership dispute

In an exclusive interview with this publication, Ntate Stunna described the brand as “my baby” and said he owns the Sesotho Fashioneng trademarks.

He said he only realised later how significantly the brand had grown, describing its development as “purely growth” and attributing part of its expansion to connections established in South Africa.

Ntate Stunna refrained from mentioning any specific names, but in a question about his relationship with Matseletse, he said it was a relationship of booking agent and artist but that the two are no longer working together. He said said he would not want to be drawn into any further conversation about him.

Addressing the broader question of contributions to an organisation or brand, Ntate Stunna argued that involvement does not automatically create ownership or entitlement. He said, however, that he understood Matseletse’s position.

“When you work for a company and be part of something big, when you leave it’s not your thing,” he said.

The dispute over who controls Sesotho Fashioneng and what role, if any, Matseletse has in the brand remains publicly contested. For now, Stunna maintains that the 2026 edition will proceed.

Tough AFCON start leaves Likuena on the back foot



Lesotho in action against Morocco at Toyota Stadium

Seabata Mahao

The senior national football team, Likuena, endured a difficult start to their Africa Cup of Nations qualifying campaign after a 2-0 defeat to Morocco at Toyota Stadium in South Africa, on Tuesday.

The result followed a 2-1 loss to Niger four days earlier, leaving Likuena pointless after two matches and already under pressure in the group.

Against Morocco, Likuena spent long spells defending but kept their shape and moved well without the ball. Their resistance was finally broken in the 44th minute, just before the interval. Lesotho kept pushing in the second half but could not find a way back into the contest.

Head coach Bob Mafoso praised his players' attitude and tactical discipline, while acknowledging the gulf in quality between the two sides.

"I am happy with the attitude of our players. We stayed in our tactical approach for longer periods of the first half and those of the second half," Mafoso said.

"But, like I said, our quality made the difference. We had those moments and they buried them."

Mafoso said Likuena must improve their tactical endurance against opponents of Morocco's calibre, arguing that keeping the game level for longer could give them a better chance of competing.

"With our tactical endurance, it needs to

go further. Let us concede maybe in the 65th minute if we are playing against such quality. If things don't go well, let us just prolong the time," he said.

He was nevertheless encouraged by the competitiveness of his side.

"We are not happy with the result, but now we competed with this monster. Everyone feared them. Nobody was afraid of them. But I think we gave them a challenge," Mafoso said.

He explained that Lesotho deliberately used numerical superiority around the ball to limit Morocco's one-on-one opportunities, particularly against their wingers.

"We just had to make sure that it's not one versus one. Let us avoid situations where their winger is one with ours," he said.

"It was qualitative superiority, and then we dealt with it with a numerical one."

Reflecting on the opening defeat to Niger, Mafoso said Likuena created opportunities but were punished for lapses in concentration.

"We created enough chances to have scored before they had a chance. We missed, and then when we took control of the game in terms of taking the grip, we lost possession. Unfortunately, on the counter, we conceded," he said.

Lesotho then conceded from a free-kick, a situation they had anticipated before the match.

"We knew that if they felt it was difficult for

them to get behind the line, then they would resort to set pieces because of their height, which is what they did."

Mafoso said second-half tactical changes helped Likuena gain greater control of midfield and create chances, while Niger spent much of the half defending in a low block.

"They didn't create anything. First shot on target, second half, 26th minute. It shows you how I think we did well in the second half. We just couldn't score," he said.

"I am proud of how we expressed ourselves."

The coach said the two defeats had at least offered lessons for a team facing high-level opposition.

"I am proud of the attitude of my boys, competitiveness, and the attitude towards both phases positive attitude towards attacking, positive attitude towards defending," Mafoso said.

Morocco coach Mohamed Ouahbi acknowledged that his side had expected long periods of difficulty against Lesotho.

"We knew that there would be longer periods of suffering because of the quality that we were playing against. We always knew that we had to defend well and then try to threaten them with some tactics, which is what I felt we did," Ouahbi said.

He credited Morocco's quality for making the difference, particularly during transition

moments.

"The goals came from pure quality. We are happy with certain moments, honestly, with the two matches," he said.

Ouahbi also praised his players for maintaining their physical intensity after their previous match, saying they had competed for 90 minutes against a determined Lesotho side.

Looking ahead, he said Morocco would keep working on defending without possession and improving their response during negative transitions.

"Defend well for longer periods, defend when we will not have possession. This is key for us," Ouahbi said.

The back-to-back defeats to open the campaign are an early setback for Likuena, and a start on the back foot does not bode well for the remaining group fixtures unless the team arrests the rot soon. With no points on the board, every match ahead takes on added weight, and the margin for error is already slim.

Mafoso believes the competitiveness and attitude shown against two strong opponents offer a foundation to build on. But attitude alone will not earn points, and Likuena will need to turn spirited performances into results, starting with finishing their chances and staying switched on at the back, if their qualifying hopes are to stay alive.

Seabata Mahao

The Men’s National Cricket Team has recorded back-to-back victories in Harrismith, South Africa, as preparations intensify for the ICC T20 Men’s World Cup Qualifier C in Abuja, Nigeria, later next month.

Lesotho completed a successful weekend of preparatory cricket by defeating HPPCC 2nd Pluckers XI by 64 runs on Sunday, following a five-wicket victory over the same weekend.

Batting first in Sunday’s match, Lesotho posted 151 for seven in their allotted 20 overs, with Maaz Khan leading the scoring with a composed 45 off 32 balls.

Mohammed Jamadar contributed 28 runs from 20 balls, while Lefulere Monanthane made 21 off 19 balls and Inshaf Mohammed added 15 off 11 balls.

The hosts struggled to mount a serious chase as Lesotho’s bowling attack kept them under control, restricting HPPCC 2nd Pluckers XI to 87 for four after their 20 overs.

Tsepiso Chaoana, Inshaf Mohammed, Lefulere Monanthane and Ajaz Patel each claimed a wicket as Lesotho completed a convincing 64-run victory.

Lesotho Cricket Association (LCA) Media Liaison Officer and National Cricket Team Manager, Dr Clifford Molefe, said the two victories provided the team with valuable match exposure ahead of the World Cup qualifier.

“Two wins, one mission. The Lesotho Men’s National Cricket Team has completed a successful weekend in Harrismith, South Africa, recording two consecutive victories as part of its preparations for the ICC T20 Men’s World Cup Qualifier C in Nigeria,” Molefe said.

He said Lesotho began the weekend with a five-wicket victory on Saturday, September 26, before completing the double on Sunday with the 64-run win over HPPCC 2nd Pluckers XI.

“Batting first on Sunday, Lesotho posted 151/7 in 20 overs, with Maaz Khan top-scoring with 45 off 32 balls. Mohammed Jamadar added 28, while Lefulere Monanthane scored 21,” he said.

“In reply, HPPCC second Pluckers XI finished on 87/4 in 20 overs, giving Lesotho a 64-run victory. Tsepiso Chaoana, Inshaf Mohammed, Lefulere Monanthane and Ajaz Patel each took a wicket.”

Cricket team records back-to-back Harrismith victories



The Men’s National Cricket Team has recorded back-to-back victories in Harrismith

The Harrismith fixtures form part of Lesotho’s wider preparations for the ICC T20 Men’s World Cup Qualifier C, which will be staged in Abuja from October 18 to 26, 2026.

The national side had earlier travelled to Bloemfontein for a preparatory engagement with Bobbies Cricket Club, although the planned friendly matches could not take place because of wet outfields.

Despite the disruption, Molefe said the trip remained productive, with the team completing two days of practice at the Knights’ indoor facility.

The sessions enabled the players to maintain their training programme while also benefiting from the knowledge and experience of the Bobbies coaching team.

According to Molefe, the interaction exposed the players to additional cricket skills, tactical approaches and practical insights that could prove useful as they prepare for the qualifier.

“The Lesotho Cricket Association appreciates the support and cooperation extended by Bobbies during the visit. The experience has added value to the national

team’s ongoing preparations as the players continue working towards the ICC World Cup Qualifier in Nigeria,” he said.

With the Harrismith victories now adding competitive match experience to the team’s preparation programme, the focus shifts to maintaining momentum and sharpening both individual and collective performances.

“The focus now remains on maintaining momentum, improving individual and team performance, and ensuring that the national team is well prepared for the challenge ahead in Abuja,” Molefe said.

Kick4Life unveils new players

Seabata Mahao

Kick4Life has ushered in a new generation of female footballers following the unveiling of new players for its Junior and Senior Women’s teams ahead of the 2026/27 season.

The unveiling, held on 27 September 2026, brought together experienced players, emerging talent and young footballers progressing through the club’s development pathway.

The occasion also highlighted Kick4Life’s commitment to developing players both on and off the pitch, with education remaining a key component of the Academy’s approach.

The Senior Women’s team has been boosted by nine new players drawn from different stages of the Kick4Life pathway and beyond.

Reitumetse Mpeka joins from LCS FC Development, while Tšepiso Ramatšella and Mats’eliso Namane have progressed from the Kick4Life Juniors.

Reitumetse Motsiba has been promoted from the Kick4Life Soccer School programme, while Puseletso Jobo returns to the senior side after spending two years attending school in Nigeria.

Five of the new senior players, Mpeka, Ramatšella, Namane, Motsiba and Jobo, attended the unveiling. Khaliso Seboka, ‘Mamosa Ramotla, Bongiwe Lepolesa and Retšepile Khabele were unable to attend due to school commitments.

Their absence underlined one of the central principles of the Kick4Life Academy — that football development and education



Kick4Life officially welcomed a new generation of footballers

should go hand in hand.

Through its Academics Pillar, the Academy provides structured tutoring, academic monitoring, mentorship, career guidance and assistance with university, scholarship and internship applications.

The programme is designed to equip young players with the knowledge, skills and confidence needed to pursue opportunities both in football and beyond the sport.

One of the major highlights of the unveiling was the promotion of 14-year-old Motsiba directly from the grassroots Soccer School programme into the Senior Women’s team.

Motsiba’s performances earned her a place among the senior players, allowing her to bypass the Junior Women’s team and make the

unusual jump directly to the highest level.

The promotion marks the first time in Kick4Life’s history that a player has progressed from the Soccer School directly into the Senior Women’s team.

For the club, the development demonstrates the opportunities available within its pathway for young players who show the ability and readiness to take on greater challenges.

The Junior Women’s team has also undergone significant changes following the promotion of several players from last season’s squad to the senior team.

A total of 17 players has joined the Juniors, with most being new registrations who had not previously been attached to a club but had gained experience through their school teams.

Six new junior players, Lerato Pasa, ‘Mahlaoli Papashane, Nts’ebo Moshoeshoe, Makibi Kulehile, Boitumelo Mokolokolo and Mosa Rantja, attended the unveiling.

The remaining 11, namely Bophelo Makhasane, Rethabile Motanyane, Phethahatso Moshoeshoe, ‘Mamojalefa Ramashamole, Lithapelo Khechane, Liako Molapo, ‘Mamanama Hlojeng, Neo Ralebitso, Mpho Ramarumo, Leseli Letsie and Palesa Mohale, were absent because of school commitments.

Kick4Life said the continued balancing of school and football reinforces the Academy’s belief that education should not be sacrificed for sporting ambitions.

Welcoming the new players, Kick4Life Country Director Motlatsi Nkhahle urged them to work hard and maintain the quality and style of football associated with the club.

He also reminded them of the responsibility that comes with representing Kick4Life as they embark on the new season.

The newly unveiled Junior and Senior Women’s players later met Kick4Life staff who were present at the event, receiving words of encouragement and well wishes ahead of the campaign.

With fresh talent entering both the junior and senior ranks, Kick4Life’s 2026/27 campaign represents another stage in the club’s effort to build a sustainable pathway for female footballers while developing their education, character and life skills alongside their sporting careers.



Chabeli continues to stake his claim among top Roof riders

Seabata Mahao

Sechaba Chabeli once again carried the hopes of the home crowd as the Roof of Africa returned to Roma for another gruelling round of hard-enduro racing, finishing 10th in the Silver category to remain Lesotho's top-performing rider.

Chabeli completed the race in 11:59:04, improving significantly on his performance from last year when he finished ninth in 12:16:09.

The improvement of 17 minutes and five seconds, however, came with mixed feelings for the local rider as he slipped one place in the standings and fell short of his personal target.

Chabeli had set his sights on at least a second-place finish, a result he said would have given him the confidence to move up to the prestigious Gold category next year.

In the Bronze category, Moosa Shabeer also flew the national flag with distinction, finishing seventh overall in 7:28:04.

Despite the individual performances, the numbers remain a concern for local hard-enduro enthusiasts.

Lesotho fielded 11 riders in this year's event, but only Chabeli and Katleho Tlhaole competed in the Silver category, while no local rider lined up in Gold, the event's most demanding class.

Meanwhile, motorcycle enthusiasts braved the rain to witness the roar of engines as riders tackled the rugged mountains around Ha-Lebamang in Roma.

The challenging course tested competitors with steep climbs, rocky



Local rider Sechaba Chabeli - Picture courtesy Deutsche Welle

terrain and unfamiliar sections, demanding exceptional endurance, precision and motorcycle-handling skills.

Bulgarian rider Teodor Kabakchiev claimed the Big Loop victory, completing the sixth round of the competition in 5:48:58.

South African rider Wade Young finished second in 5:49:30, while Germany's Manuel Lettenbichler secured third place in 5:51:12.

South Africa's Matthew Green was fourth in 5:52:49, followed by compatriots Kyle Flanagan and Luke Walker.

Kabakchiev also emerged as the only rider to break the 10-hour barrier in the Gold category, stopping the clock at 9:59:46 after three days of brutal racing in Roma and Ha Lebamang, which began on Thursday.

The Gold podium carried its own compelling storyline, with nine-time Roof of Africa champion Wade Young making his return to the event after burn injuries forced him to miss last year's edition.

Beyond the competition, the Roof of Africa once again showcased Lesotho's spectacular mountain landscapes to riders, support crews, spectators and international audiences.

The event provides an important platform for promoting Lesotho as a destination for tourism, adventure and sporting activities, while attracting visitors who contribute to local economic activity.

Hotels, restaurants, transport operators and other businesses can benefit from the influx of international riders, support teams and spectators during the event.

The international exposure generated by the race also highlights Lesotho's rugged terrain, high-altitude landscapes and outdoor adventure opportunities, strengthening the country's tourism offering.

With its challenging mountain routes and striking scenery, Lesotho provides a distinctive setting for one of Africa's most demanding hard-enduro events.

The latest edition also highlighted the need to broaden Lesotho's representation in the upper categories as the country continues to host an event that draws some of the world's leading hard-enduro competitors.



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