

Police allowance stand-off

Lekhetho Makhanya

Home Affairs and Police Minister Voeswa Tsheka has pushed back against accusations that she is stalling the restructuring of police allowances, saying she still supports the reform and the improvement of the welfare and working conditions of the men and women in blue.

The Minister issued her statement late yesterday in response to a strongly worded memorandum from the Lesotho Police Staff Association (Leposa), which accused her of frustrating the process for paying monthly police allowances.

Leposa also said she had undermined it as a recognised police union by challenging its locus standi.

Leposa represents members of the Lesotho Mounted Police Service (LMPS), promoting their interests, welfare and general working conditions. The memorandum, which it sent to members on Monday, is dated 5 October 2026 and addressed to officers across the country. In it, the union's national executive committee narrated;

"You will recall that the National Executive previously informed you through our memorandum dated 10 September 2026, that an agreement had been reached on the proposed Police Allowance of M1, 500, which was to be implemented in three phases."

Leposa said its negotiating team met Tsheka on 2 October 2026 "to obtain a clear final position on whether the agreed Police Allowance would be included in our salaries. To our disappointment and serious concern, the Honourable Minister informed the negotiating team that Leposa should go back and submit its concerns in writing for her attention."

The association argues in the memorandum; "This position is unacceptable to Leposa, it is contrary to the understanding and commitments reached during the meeting held in the Honourable Minister's boardroom on 29 June, 2026. We cannot continue to move backwards every time our members expect the government to honour commitments made during negotiations," they charged.

Leposa said that, even more concerning, the Minister questioned whether the union had the right to engage with her or the Chief of Police. This question, they said, "left the negotiating team astonished and deeply concerned."

The union described itself as a "recognised voice of of police officers, and our responsibility is to represent interests, welfare and working conditions of our members. We will not apologise for standing up for police officers. We will not be intimidated from raising issues that directly affect our members."

In reaction, Tsheka yesterday said: "I wish to clarify reports suggesting that I have withdrawn support for restructuring police allowances or abandoned the welfare concerns of members of the LMPS. That account does not accurately reflect my position or the process agreed upon."

She said that from her first meeting with the Commissioner of Police, "I acknowledged the challenges facing the officers, expressed support for addressing them and expressed regret over the treatment they had experienced. My position remains clear: we cannot demand high standards of service without properly addressing officers' remuneration, welfare and working conditions".

The Minister said she supported taking two requests to Cabinet as part of the police reform journey.

"As part of the police reform journey, I supported taking two requests to Cabinet: The retention of officers on leave pending retirement and restructuring of police allowances."

She said Cabinet's approval was subject to concurrence from the Ministry of Home Affairs and Police, the Ministry of Finance and the Ministry of Public Service, so further work between the institutions was required.

To advance the requests, Tsheka said she met Finance Minister Dr Retšelisitsoe Matlanyane and her team, "accompanied by the Commissioner of Police, Advocate Borotho Matsoso, and the Director of Human Resources".

At the meeting, Tsheka said Dr Matlanyane advised that both requests required careful consideration and asked LMPS to identify which should be addressed first.

"The Commissioner proposed beginning with retention. The agreed approach was for the relevant teams to complete work on that request first and then proceed to allowances", the minister said.

Leposa's memorandum disputes that sequencing. The union alleges that, in her meeting with its negotiating team, the Minister indicated that LMPS management had raised two major issues: the retention of



Home Affairs and Police Minister Voeswa Tsheka

police officers who remain on leave pending retirement, and the Police Allowance.

"We were informed that the issue of retirement should be prioritised, and that we should deal with one matter at the time as indicated by the Director of Finance, Leposa said. Leposa said its members should not be made to believe that retention was part of the package it negotiated.

"There were three key issues that Leposa negotiated and expected to see implemented": the Police Allowance, the LMPS Administration Regulations, 2025, and the Workmen's Compensation Regulations.

The union said it did not negotiate the issue of retention "in any form or at any stage of these negotiations. Retention was not one of the three issues placed on the negotiation table by Leposa."

It added that "the painful reality is that, not even one of these three issues has been implemented. These means that, despite the negotiations and discussions that took place, our members have yet to see tangible results from these engagements."

Leposa said it understands the disappointment and frustration this has caused among members: "It may seem as though we negotiated and talked and made commitments, but nothing changed ultimately in the lives of police officers.

"Leposa cannot pretend that everything is fine when our members are still waiting for the outcomes of their issues that were

negotiated on their behalf. Our members deserve to be informed, respected and kept updated about matters that directly affect their welfare and working conditions."

The union accepts its responsibility "to communicate more openly with its members and to continue pursuing these outstanding matters through the appropriate channels".

But it maintains that the retention of officers on leave pending retirement "has no financial implication to the extent that it can affect Police Allowances. The two matters are important and affect our members in different ways.

The fact that one matter requires urgent attention cannot be used as a reason to push the Police Allowance aside. Our members cannot be expected to continue waiting indefinitely while commitments made to them remain unfulfilled".

Police allowances, it said, have been long overdue "and affect all police officers, as opposed to the retention of which we do not even know how the selection criteria was reached".

The union said the matter is not merely a question of money: "It is a question of recognition, fairness, respect and dignity for the men and women who continue to protect the people of Lesotho. It is therefore deeply disappointing that, after negotiations and assurances, our members are once again being asked to wait and submit further representations. Leposa will not remain silent" they said.

Newsday/Seahlolo proprietor in Africa Top 100 list

Thoboloko Ntšonyane

The Managing Director, Managing Editor and co-owner of Newsday Media, Lerato Peggy Matheka has been nominated for the 2026 Powered by Africa Top 100 Most Influential Africans in Infrastructure.

Matheka, who is also the founder of Seahlolo Newspaper, learned of the nomination in a congratulatory letter from Powered by Africa. The organisers cited her leadership, impact and contribution to shaping Africa's infrastructure and development landscape.

The initiative recognises leaders from across the continent and the global African diaspora. Its scope extends beyond infrastructure delivery to include communications, technology, investment and public service.

Reacting to the nomination, Matheka said she was proud to see work rooted in Lesotho receive continental attention.

"I am delighted and deeply honoured by this nomination. Working in Lesotho, I have seen how much expertise, determination and potential exists within our communities. It means a great deal to see work rooted in our country recognised in a continental development conversation," she said.

Her career brings together public-interest journalism, agricultural communication and stakeholder engagement. Through Newsday Media, she leads reporting on governance, health, climate change and development.

In 2023 she founded Seahlolo to provide sustained coverage of agriculture and a plat-

form where farmers, experts and institutions can share knowledge and engage on issues affecting food production and rural livelihoods.

This year, Newsday Media and Seahlolo took over the management of Farmers Pitso for three years. Matheka helped lead its expansion into a four-day Agriculture Week, held in Maseru from 9 to 12 September.

The programme combined farmer knowledge exchange, a schools agriculture challenge, an AgriExpo and excellence awards, bringing together farmers, businesses, experts and institutions around agricultural development.

She said these platforms have given people greater visibility and linked them to opportunities.

"Through Newsday Media, Seahlolo and Farmers Pitso, my team and I have built platforms that give people visibility and connect knowledge with opportunity," she said.

The nomination statement says her work illustrates the role of media and stakeholder networks in development: making information accessible, enabling engagement between communities and institutions, and strengthening public accountability. It adds that the nomination brings continental visibility to a media entrepreneur whose platforms are rooted in Lesotho.

She credited others for the achievement.

"This milestone belongs to the people who have helped build that work. I am proud of what we are contributing and encouraged to keep strengthening the partnerships that help our communities move forward," she said.



The inaugural Top 100 list is scheduled to be unveiled during Powered by Africa's Accra delegation in Ghana from 17 to 21 November 2026. The programme includes an Infrastructure and Investment Conference on 19 November and a gala on 20 November. Matheka has been confirmed as a nominee, and the final list has not yet been announced.

Powered by Africa describes itself as a global campaign showcasing African leadership and achievement across infrastructure, investment, innovation, entrepreneurship, manufacturing, technology and business. Its activities include international convenings, documenta-

ry storytelling and strategic partnerships.

Matheka is a media executive, journalist and entrepreneur with more than 15 years of experience in journalism and media management. Her work spans print, digital and visual storytelling. She serves as Secretary of the REPS-SI Lesotho Country Advisory Board and is a Southern Africa Ambassador for Africa Women Experts.

A graduate of the WAN-IFRA Women in News Global Leadership Accelerator, she also mentors emerging journalists and advocates for greater visibility of women's expertise in public discourse.

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Up to 36 days lost a year: How period poverty undermines education for school girls

Ntsoaki Motaung

In Lesotho, period poverty is one of the factors that results in girls missing school, or even end up deciding to drop out of school for good.

When a girl goes on their periods for three days and are forced to miss school because they do not have access to sanitary towels, it means they miss school for about 36 days in year. If they take five days on their periods, that is about 60 days away from school.

According to the National Education data from the Ministry of Education and Training (MoET) and the United Nations Children Fund (UNICEF), Lesotho on period poverty (2019-2021), around 22 percent of girls miss school during menstruation due to lack of pads, privacy or support.

These are the realities witnessed by many people, girls themselves, their parents, teachers as well as the community at large.

For Mosa Mpelo 22 years old from 'Male-filoane High School in the community council of Sanqebethu, while she had a privilege of parents who always made sure she does not lack sanitary towels, she has witnessed her friends and classmates missing school because of period poverty.

"To help, I used to carry some pads with me to school even when I was not on my periods, the only reason was that if there is one girl in need of them at school, I would give some to them. I hated seeing my fellow girls uncomfortable or even missing school because they have no pads," she said.

Mpelo appreciated the Menstrual Health and Hygiene Project by the Ministry of Gender, Youth and Social Development with support from the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) to distribute sanitary towels, across Lesotho to girls in and out of school as well as women with disabilities.

The programme was officially launched in the district of Mokhotlong Ha Senkoase in November 2025.

"I am grateful for the initiative because the pads are so helpful because we come from different families with different abilities. Some of the girls do not go school because they are uncomfortable going to school when they are on their periods without pads," she said.

Mpelo said being on periods also has some stigma. "Girls fear going to school because they are afraid that, if they stain themselves, they are going to have unusual looks from their peers. Apart from that they find it difficult to ask for a pad from others, that is



Picture Courtesy - Student Wellness Centre

why some choose to stay at home and miss school during those days."

She said this result in declined performance of such a learner. "As a result I am grateful for the initiative because already it is achieving its intended meaning of making sure that no girl misses school because they do not have pads. The initiative has also helped to deal with discrimination because there are no longer those who would gossip about others for borrowing pads from them," she said.

Puseletso Mahlelebe from the Ministry of Gender, Youth and Social Development indicated that in the community council of Sanqebethu, they have managed to distribute sanitary towels to all the schools except for only two primary schools where no girls are already seeing their periods.

She indicated that, one of the challenges they faced with is being unable to reach other places, which she can say are hard to reach areas. "We are mostly challenged when trying to access out of school girls. Even when we would have tried to go close, it is very difficult for them to meet us on the way because sometimes rivers are full. We are making a plea to UNFPA to help in that regard," she said.

Globally, an estimated 500 million women and girls lack access to menstrual products and adequate facilities.

According to 'Maseretse Ratiea, National Programme Analyst for Adolescents and Young People at UNFPA said the project is a coordinated initiative between the Ministry

of Gender, Youth and Social Development and UNFPA.

Providing a broader perspective, UNFPA Country Representative John Kennedy Mosoti highlighted that at least 10 percent of girls drop out of school due to menstruation, a figure he described as conservative.

Mosoti noted that the situation is even more severe for girls from disadvantaged backgrounds and those living with disabilities.

During the launch of the programme, UNFPA had procured 109,000 sanitary pads and 250 related products to support approximately 8,000 adolescent girls aged 10 to 18, both in and out of school.

The pilot programme run from November 2025 to March 2027 in Mokhotlong, Mafeteng and Maseru, after which the Government of Lesotho is expected to assume full implementation in the following fiscal year.

Mosoti said this is one of the flagship programs that, for UNFPA, are very important. "And we realise that it is important because it helps keep the girls in school. We have seen that because we have the research that shows that menstruation affects girls differently, especially in different parts and rural areas where we see them dropping out of school.

He said Menstruation is a natural thing. "Menstruation is the reason why we are alive, all of us. Every single person in here and in the world is alive because of menstruation. And therefore, we do not want to shame girls when accidents happen. And I

know boys sometimes do that, girls can understand, but boys sometimes shame girls because an accident has occurred in schools, or in social places, or even at home. And this is something that we as boys, as men, we have to stop," he said.

"I was asking a few girls today in the morning, some of the ambitions and the potentials that they have as girls, and they talked about teachers, talked about being nurses and police officers, and being helpful to the community, but the most important issue I told them, that is not going to happen if you are going to drop out of school, and certainly it is not going to happen if you get pregnant or if you become married at a young age," he said.

Under Lesotho law and international treaties, menstrual health is recognised not merely as hygiene issue, but as a fundamental human right linked to health, education, and bodily autonomy.

Lesotho's 1993 Constitution, the Children's Protection and Welfare Act of 2011, and the 2019 removal of the 15 percent VAT on sanitary pads establish the government's duty to ensure menstrual products and Sexual and Reproductive health (SRH) education are accessible.

Nationally and regionally, supported by the African Union's Maputo Protocol and global frameworks like CEDAW, the law mandates that states remove physical and financial barriers to menstrual dignity, particularly to keep girls in school and safeguard their reproductive health.

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M455m to rebuild airport road

Seabata Mahao

Potholes have long dictated the pace of traffic on the road to Lesotho's main airport. Now, after years of patchwork repairs, the government has decided to tear up the failing surface and start again.

The government of Lesotho has launched a major rehabilitation of the A2, awarding a M454, 875,390.77 contract to China Jiangxi International Economic and Technical Cooperation Co. Ltd.

The company will reconstruct a 14-kilometre section from the main traffic circle to the junction leading to Moshoeshoe I International Airport. The work is expected to take 18 months and forms part of a phased programme to rehabilitate the A2, commonly known as Main South I.

Minister of Public Works and Transport Neo Matjato Moteane said the road had reached the end of its useful life. Extensive potholes and deterioration, he said, were making parts of the route increasingly difficult to navigate.

For years, he said, the Roads Directorate has patched potholes along the route, but the damage now runs deeper than the surface.

"For a long time, my Ministry, through the Roads Directorate, has been patching potholes along this road. However, the impact of these interventions is no longer visible because the road has deteriorated from its foundation and now requires complete reconstruction," he said.

Moteane said he had recently introduced the contractor to residents of Quthing at a gathering at Alwyn'skop, where he outlined plans to rebuild the southern section of the A2.

"I told the people of Liphakoe then, and I repeat today, that the districts in the southern part of the country have not been forgotten. The Government is committed to rebuilding this road because it has reached the end of its useful life," Moteane said.

He described the A2 as strategically important because it links Maseru with Mafeteng, Mohale's Hoek and Quthing. The section covered by the latest project also connects to the airport. Because of the road's length and importance, he said, the Government has opted to rebuild it in phases.

"Roads are the backbone of Lesotho's economy. This is why the Government is strongly committed to rebuilding the country's road network. When our roads are in good condition, the economy will grow. Trade between districts will increase, while the movement of people will become easier," he said.

The contractor will widen the road and expand the bridge over the Phuthiatsana River, improvements expected to increase traffic capacity and ease the movement of people and goods along one of the country's key transport corridors.

Moteane said the project would also tackle safety concerns, particularly where poor visibility and hazardous gradients have increased risks for motorists. The rehabilitation will include measures to improve visibility and control gradients in those sections.

"The project will not only improve the flow of traffic but will also help reduce the rate of road accidents along this route," he said.

Flooding is another major concern along the A2, particularly in Borokhoaneng, where

stormwater has repeatedly affected homes and businesses. The project will include the reconstruction of major drainage structures to divert stormwater safely away from the road and prevent it from undermining the infrastructure.

"Whenever it rains heavily, we have repeatedly seen flooding affecting homes and businesses along the A2 road, particularly in Borokhoaneng, where floodwaters enter buildings," he said.

The minister acknowledged that climate change is making weather events more severe. However, he said developments in road reserves, wetlands and natural water channels have also contributed to the flooding.

The Government has also raised concern over settlements and developments within the road reserve, which could interfere with construction and long-term maintenance. Moteane said the contractor has been tasked with removing these encroachments before construction begins, and he appealed to affected communities to cooperate with the contractor and the Roads Directorate.

"I therefore appeal to communities living within the road reserve to work together with the contractor and the Roads Directorate so that this road can achieve its intended lifespan," he said.

The project is also expected to provide employment for approximately 300 Basotho during construction. Moteane urged those who secure work on the project to take responsibility for protecting the infrastructure they help build.

"To those who will be fortunate enough to secure employment on this project, I urge you



Director General of the Roads Directorate, Linehella Ntšere

to work diligently and take good care of this road because it belongs to you," he said.

The A2 programme will continue beyond the current 14-kilometre section. Moteane said the Ministry has already begun planning the reconstruction of the road from Mafeteng to Quthing. Another contractor has already started work on the stretch towards Quthing town.

He said he would travel to Mafeteng for a similar groundbreaking ceremony for the next section, from Mazenod, where the current project ends, to Mafeteng. That will be followed by the Mafeteng to Meriting section.

"The reconstruction project of the A2 road from the main traffic circle to Mazenod has now officially been launched," Moteane stated.

The Government expects the phased rehabilitation to strengthen connectivity between Lesotho's districts, improve access to the main airport, support the movement of goods and people, and reduce the economic costs of deteriorating roads.

Topollo Tlali

The government has stepped in to address the pay crisis facing Lesotho's dairy farmers, dissolving the Lesotho Dairy Products (LDP) board and taking direct control of the dairy industry until a new board is established in November.

The Ministry of Agriculture, Food Security and Nutrition will manage the sector in the interim. The move follows months of complaints from farmers over delayed payments for the milk they supply, with some going about two months without pay.

Minister of Agriculture, Food Security and Nutrition Selibe Mochoboroane said the Ministry had investigated the root causes of the problems at LDP, focusing on its ownership and management structures.

One finding was that shareholders had been reshuffled without the consent of all shareholders.

"The investigations were conducted to establish the root causes of the challenges at Lesotho Dairy Products, focusing on its ownership and management structures, and one of the findings is that shareholders were reshuffled without the consent of all shareholders," the Minister said.

"Lesotho agreed with Canada in 1985 to establish Lesotho Dairy Products. The company is owned by shareholders including the government and farmers, with the Lesotho National Dairy Board (LNDB) holding a 60 per cent shareholding on behalf of government."

Mochoboroane pointed out that the problems began in 2015, after the government introduced its one-stop-shop initiative, which affected the company's shareholding arrangements.

"The LNDB subsequently recalled its representatives from the Lesotho Dairy Products board, while farmers also recalled their repre-

Mochoboroane tackles dairy farmers' pay crisis



Minister of Agriculture honorable Selibe Mochoboroane

sentatives, leaving the company without a properly constituted board."

The Ministry now intends to fill that gap and set the industry on a firmer footing.

"The Ministry of Agriculture will engage shareholders, including government, farmers and employees to establish a new board in November to determine the company's future management and operations."

"The new board will be expected to determine how the company will operate, including how milk will be processed. We have heard farmers' concerns, and we are committed to addressing them," Mr. Mochoboroane said.

LNDB farmers' representative Nts'ibane Nts'ibane said LDP had been operating under individuals rather than a properly constituted board.

"The planned changes will provide a lasting solution even though results will not be immediate.

"A business should generate profit through effective operations while protecting the interests of its employees," he said, adding that employees also had concerns that needed attention.

He said resolving the challenges would help farmers receive the services they need and enable shareholders to realise value from their investments.

On his part, the Permanent Secretary in the Ministry, Khothatso Ts'ooana, said the Ministry is working to restore order in the dairy sector and end the suffering of farmers.

"As a Ministry, we are working hard to put everything to avoid long periods of suffering for our dairy farmers. It is unacceptable for a farmer to wake up every morning to milk cows and then wait two months without pay.

"More investigations are continuing to assess the finances owed to farmers, and once the findings are out, farmers will know, and we will account for every litre that was delivered, and we will make the report public," Ts'ooana said.

Police block march over Boloetse's case

Thoboloko Ntšonyane

Heavily armed police yesterday disrupted a planned march to deliver a petition to the Lesotho Mounted Police Service (LMPS) over the stalled investigation into the alleged abduction and torture of journalist Kananelo Boloetse.

The organisers were forced to hand over the petition to the Chief of Police Advocate Botho Matsoso without a demonstration. Hands Off Basotho has demanded immediate action over the kidnapping, torture and death threats against Boloetse.

In the petition letter, the organisers demanded for the perpetrators to be identified, arrested and prosecuted within seven days of receiving the petition.

But the police were highly visible around Setsoto Stadium, where marchers were set to assemble ahead of the demonstration to the police headquarters.

Boloetse, the Editor of Newsday, was by his own account, abducted on the night of 5 September at his home in Katlehong, Maseru, by three unidentified men with covered faces. He was tortured and abandoned at Thaba-Bosiu. A Good Samaritan found him by the roadside and took him to an army camp.

The march was organised by Hands Off Basotho, an organisation which says it fights for the rights of Basotho in Lesotho and South Africa and describes itself as apolitical.

Maseru City Council (MCC) Public Relations Manager Lintle Bless confirmed to this publication that the council had granted the organisers permission to march.

Police nevertheless stopped the march, citing the "absence" of a permit. Traffic police officer at Setsoto Stadium Sub-Inspector Mabea told this publication that officers were deployed to make sure the march did not go ahead because the organisers had no procession permit.

Hands Off Basotho President Semenyane



Linale confirmed that the group had been barred from proceeding.

Police Spokesperson Superintendent Thabo Mohai said police could not have "given" a permit to an organisation whose legal standing they could not establish, saying it was not from Lesotho.

The same position was set out in a letter dated 29 September 2026 from Senior Assistant Commissioner of Police Ts'eliso Moerane, the officer commanding Maseru Urban District, to the petitioners.

"This office acknowledges receipt of your formal notice dated 19th September 2026, wherein you express your intention to organize and mount a public protest match (sic) to the office of the Commissioner of Police on 8 October 2026. We note the purpose of your demonstration is to present a petition concerning the unresolved, alleged abduction and assault of journalist and human rights defender, Mr. Kananelo Boloetse.

"Upon perusal of your communication, this office notes that HANDS OFF BASOTHO lists its official operational base and address in Preto-

ria, South Africa. Prima facie, your entity appears to be an association or organization registered and operating from a foreign country."

Newsday has established that Hands Off Basotho is registered and operates in South Africa.

Senior ACP Moerane's letter continues:

"Consequently, this office hereby requests formal clarification as to whether HANDS OFF BASOTHO is registered with the Registrar of Societies within the Kingdom of Lesotho pursuant to the Societies Act of Lesotho.

"You are requested to furnish this office with the aforementioned clarification and supporting documentation at your earliest convenience to allow for the lawful processing and final determination of your protest your notice,(sic)."

The Public Meetings and Processions Act 2010, which governs marches and protests, requires anyone wishing to hold a public meeting or procession to notify the police officer in command of the jurisdiction where it will take place. It also provides that if the police decline, an appeal may be lodged with the Minister of

Police.

Lesotho is also party to the 1981 African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights. Article 11 provides that:

"Every individual shall have the right to assemble freely with others. The exercise of this right shall be subjected only to necessary restrictions provided for by law, in particular those enacted in the interest of national security, the safety, health, ethics and rights and freedoms of others."

More than a month after Boloetse was abducted, tortured and left near dead, police have made no arrests and there has been little visible progress in tracking down his abductors.

Asked for the latest developments, the police spokesperson was less than impressed and, told this publication that investigations were continuing and that police would give an update once there is a breakthrough.

Last week, at a press conference convened by Prime Minister Ntsokoane Matekane, the Prime Minister repeated the police position that Boloetse should report the matter in person, even though police have been communicating with him.

Part of Hands Off Basotho's petition handed to the police reads:

"This petition is triggered by the recent barbaric kidnapping, severe torture, and death threats inflicted upon human rights activist and journalist Kananelo Boloetse by unidentified individuals. This heinous crime is not an isolated incident; it reflects a dark, recurring, and systematic pattern of torture, abductions, and extrajudicial killings historically perpetrated against Basotho citizens by the very security institutions legally mandated to protect them," the organisation said.

The organisation further said in the petition that citizens had become "completely exhausted", accusing institutions entrusted with their safety of becoming places of terror and calling for an end to what it described as brutality and state-sponsored violence.

It also called for an end to what it described as state-sponsored torture, illegal detention and systematic intimidation of journalists, activists and ordinary Basotho by security agencies.

The organisation warned that if its demands are not met within seven days, it will escalate its peaceful actions, including public demonstrations, until what it described as a definitive solution and complete justice are achieved.

"Justice for Boloetse is Justice for all Basotho!" the petition concludes.

Matsoso silent on Boloetse's meeting request

Lekhetho Makhanya

Police Commissioner Advocate Borotho Matsoso had not responded by late last night to a request from journalist Kananelo Boloetse for a virtual meeting with police investigators, even though the request gave him until today on 9 October 2026, to reply.

As it stands, the meeting does not look likely to take place today. Boloetse, the Editor of this publication, was abducted on 5 September. His lawyer, Advocate Fusi Sehapi, first wrote to the Commissioner on 2 October 2026, requesting the meeting to speed up the police investigation, now more than a month old.

When that letter went unanswered, Adv Sehapi wrote again yesterday, asking Matsoso to say whether the virtual meeting would go ahead today. This time he copied the letter

to Prime Minister Ntsokoane Matekane and Police Minister Voeswa Tsheka.

There was still no response when this paper went to press last night.

Newsday saw a copy of the follow-up letter, which bore the stamps of all three offices where it was received: the Commissioner's, the Prime Minister's and the Minister's. Adv Sehapi titled it "Request for virtual meeting with the investigating team on or before Friday 9 October, 2026, regarding his abduction, assault, attempted murder and death threats."

"Reference is made to the above heading and our letter of legal demand dated 2 October, 2026," Adv Sehapi noted.

He continued: "Police have been up and down looking for the whereabouts of client, Mr Kananelo Boloetse. However, it is our

understanding that the police must not look for the person (corpus) of either Boloetse or his lawyer/s, but for the allegedly lacking information regarding his abduction, assault, attempted murder and death threats so that justice may be done for him and unto his perpetrators.

"We and client have made a clear offer to avail ourselves to avail such information virtually but no response came forth, hence this follow up letter requesting to know whether the virtual meeting is proceeding tomorrow the 9th October, 2026, or not."

The offer comes after the police and government insisted that Boloetse should report in person. Sehapi said the Prime Minister, the Minister of Police and the Commissioner of Police have made it clear that "absent such information, plus client's body, client shall never get justice hence Client's corporation and readiness to provide any such necessary information allegedly lacking, provided it may be in his possession or knowledge and does not compromise his privacy and security".

Adv Sehapi said it was appropriate for Boloetse to exhaust all "local remedies by doing all what is available in his power to assist the police before he could jump to conclude that the police and the government failed and/or refused to do justice to his case so that he may finally, with a clear conscience, take other alternative means of appropriate and effective redress as contemplated by the Constitution".

Lesotho's ambitious plan to rebuild textile industry

Seabata Mahao

Lesotho has launched a new Textiles and Apparel Sector Strategy that aims to create more than 70,000 jobs and lift annual exports above US\$1 billion by 2033, with the goal of moving the industry away from its dependence on the United States market.

The strategy was launched on Wednesday, October 7, 2026, by the Ministry of Trade, Industry and Business Development (MTIBD) in partnership with the World Bank Group, the Competitiveness and Financial Inclusion (CAFI) project and the Lesotho National Development Corporation (LNDC). It seeks to reposition the sector as more diversified, higher-value and resilient.

- By 2033, the Government wants to:
- Create more than 70,000 jobs and reach annual exports above US\$1 billion.
 - Have markets outside the US account for 55 percent of textile and apparel exports.
 - Attract more than US\$400 million in new investment.
 - Move more than a third of production from cut-make-and-trim operations to full-package manufacturing.
 - Raise the share of Basotho in management positions to 40 percent.
 - Process at least 20 percent of the country's wool and mohair domestically.

The strategy contains 28 actions in three phases: Diversification to 2028, Expansion to 2031 and Consolidation from Year Seven. The Government says each action will have defined timelines, budgets and performance indicators. Progress is to be reviewed quarterly and the action plan updated annually.

The strategy calls for Lesotho to retain and upgrade its position in the US market while expanding sales to South Africa and the wider African market. It also seeks new opportunities in the European Union and other high-end markets, and identifies the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) as an opening for regional growth.



Lesotho targets 70,000 textile jobs in industry turnaround plan

It comes after the recent extension of the African Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA) to December 31, 2028. Delivering remarks on behalf of the Ministry's Principal Secretary, Palesa Matobako, Director of the One Stop Business Facilitation Centre (OBFC) Monaheng Monaheng warned that the extension should not be treated as a permanent solution. He said the two years should instead give the country time to implement reforms and reduce its reliance on a single market.

The strategy aims to position Lesotho as a global supplier of high-end and complex garments and services, supported by modern technology, skilled labour, stronger middle management and the country's indigenous wool and mohair.

LNDC Chief Executive Officer Thabo Khasipe said the turnaround requires Lesotho to move beyond assembling imported fabrics and add value to its own natural resources. Lesotho is the world's second-largest mohair producer, and Lesotho and South Africa together account for approximately two-thirds of global mohair production.

Wool and mohair make up about 60 percent of the country's agricultural exports and sup-

port approximately 40,000 growers and more than 350,000 Basotho directly through farmers and their families. Khasipe said most of the fibre is still exported raw, leaving significant value and jobs outside the country.

The strategy proposes investment in scouring, combing, spinning, knitting, weaving, garment production, craft, design and branding. Initial opportunities could include locally produced knitwear, blankets and home textiles, linking producers more closely to domestic manufacturers. Khasipe said domestic testing, biosecurity and traceability could also help position Lesotho's fibre as a premium product internationally.

On infrastructure, Monaheng said new factory shells at Ha Belo in Butha-Buthe are nearing completion and are expected to provide plug-and-play capacity for new investors. Feasibility work is also expected to begin on dedicated textiles and wool and mohair industrial parks.

- On skills, the Government plans to:
- Conduct a national skills-needs assessment.
 - Establish vocational training centres for machine operators and line super-

- visors.
- Offer scholarships and set up a fashion incubator to develop Basotho designers, engineers and managers.

The textiles and apparel industry has for decades been the backbone of Lesotho's manufacturing sector and remains the country's largest formal private-sector employer, with 42 firms currently operating. Monaheng said apparel manufacturing accounts for more than 80 percent of manufacturing value added. At its peak, the sector employed more than 50,000 Basotho, the majority of them women, and contributed close to a third of national output.

The industry has since been hit by the COVID-19 pandemic and uncertainty over AGOA. Monaheng said employment, which stood at between 38,000 and 40,000 workers in 2023, has fallen to between 30,000 and 35,000. Factories have closed, and exports to the US declined by more than a third between 2022 and 2023.

He said the strategy builds on Lesotho's established manufacturing base, skilled workforce, preferential market access and abundant wool and mohair.

"What we have lost is orders and confidence, not capability," Monaheng said.

World Group Country Representative Dinara Djoldosheva said the global textile industry faces rising competition, changing buyer requirements and uncertainty in key export markets, and that Lesotho could no longer afford to stand still. She said the strategy offers a practical pathway to a more competitive, resilient and higher-value sector, but warned that success would require strong governance, accountability and resources. Its success, she said, should ultimately be measured by factory expansion, new investment and the number of people earning sustainable incomes from the industry.

Thematic Working Group representative Malikhabiso Majara described the strategy as a roadmap for transforming the sector through improvements in production, value chains, skills and market access. She stressed the Government's role in creating an enabling policy and trade environment, while ensuring stakeholders remain committed to implementation.

CAFI Managing Director Chaba Mokuku said the validation of the strategy marked the point at which the document moved from being a consultant's product to becoming the responsibility of the sector. He said LNDC would champion it by incorporating it into its corporate plan, performance targets and investor engagements.

Mokuku also called for stronger representation across the entire textile value chain, including large exporters, Basotho-owned companies, small and medium enterprises and wool and mohair producers. The strategy is expected to be presented to the High-Level Public-Private Dialogue Forum in November for approval.

NOTICE OF LOST LEASE

NOTICE is hereby given that I intend to apply for a certified copy of the registered title deed/ to the immovable property registered. Under no 1428-1313 on 27/11/2013 in favor of NTLAMAABARAHAM SHOKHOE in respect of every right or interest on and to the building (s) and other developments express or implied in a certain plot No. 1428-133 situated at Ha Tsosane, Maseru Urban Area on plot No. 14283 As held by the Chief Surveyor. All persons who object to the issue of the said copy are requested to lodge their objection in writing with the land registrar within three weeks of the last publication of the notice.

ADDRESS: APPLICANT'S NAME AND ADDRESS

Land Registrar KHOPOLO SHOKHOE

Land Admin Authority HATS'OSANE, MASERU

Lerotholi Road MASERU 100

P.O. Box 11856 Maseru 100

CONTACT NUMBERS: 56873306

NOTICE !! NOTICE!!

Notice in terms of section 61(b) of the Administration of the Estates and Inheritance Act No.2 of 2024; ESTATE LATE PETER TEBOHO VAN-TONDER E 897/2026 Notice is hereby given in terms of section 61(b) of the Administration of Estates and the Inheritance Act No. 2 of 2024, calling on all creditors of the deceased to lodge their claims with the administrator of the deceased's estate within thirty (30) days of this publication. The address at which the said claims can be lodged is mentioned hereunder;

ADDRESS: Ha Faso P.O Box 1326 Maseru 100

CELL NO. (+266) 594747/62555519

NAME: Moeketsi Van-Tonder

ADMINSTRATOR

Seabata Mahao

Maluti Mountain Brewery (MMB) has unveiled a refreshed corporate logo as part of its celebrations of Lesotho's 60th anniversary of independence, positioning the brewery's evolving identity alongside the country's national heritage.

The new visual identity was launched last weekend at the company's offices in the Maseru West industrial area.

The redesigned logo adopts a simpler and more modern appearance while retaining the iconic Maluti Mountains, a symbol closely associated with Lesotho and the brewery's flagship brand, Maluti Premium Lager.

MMB Managing Director 'Mapeete Ntjana said the redesign builds on the company's 2019 logo but removes unnecessary complexity to create a cleaner identity suited to the brewery's future direction.

"The new logo is not far different from the other that was first introduced in 2019. We have modernised and made our logo simple to remove bureaucracy and simplify things in a new developed and easy way," Ntjana said.

She said the decision to introduce the refreshed identity during the 60th anniversary celebrations was deliberate, linking the brewery's brand evolution with Lesotho's journey as an independent nation.

"We are doing it now because we want to celebrate the 60 years of independence," she said.

Ntjana drew parallels between national independence and the development of a distinctly Basotho brand, saying independence gave the country its own laws, flag and culture, while Maluti Premium Lager has become a recognised symbol of national identity.

"Independence meant Lesotho had laws, a flag and culture of its own. Now we have our own beer called Maluti Premium Lager," she said.

The brewery's branding exercise comes at a time when Maluti Premium Lager has gained increasing international recognition.

The flagship lager won a Gold Medal in the International Lager category at the 2021 African Beer Cup, providing international recognition of the quality of beer produced in Lesotho.

The brand has also reached another significant milestone through its appointment as an official beer sponsor of the FIFA World Cup 2026.

These achievements, according to MMB, demonstrate that locally produced brands can compete at the highest international standards while carrying the identity of their country of origin.

For the brewery, Maluti Premium Lager has therefore evolved beyond being a popular local beverage to becoming a representation of Basotho craftsmanship, national pride and international ambition.

The refreshed logo seeks to reinforce that positioning.

The mountain element represents Lesotho's heritage and national pride, while the gold colour signifies the premium quality associated with the product.

Ntjana said the new identity reflects a brewery that is looking towards the future while remaining firmly connected to the Basotho nation.

Beyond its branding and consumer activities, MMB also highlighted its contribution to the national economy.

Ntjana reaffirmed the brewery's commitment to addressing some of Lesotho's economic challenges, particularly unemployment, while continuing to meet its tax obligations.

"We are forever committed to solve all the nation's challenges, including unemployment and the dwindling economy," she said.

According to the company, the brewery has contributed to the creation of approximately 16,000 jobs and continues to pay taxes directly to the Lesotho Government, which has an ownership stake in the business.

The company's latest branding initiative is therefore being presented not only as a corporate makeover, but also as part of a broader commitment to supporting the local economy and celebrating national identity.

Lesotho's diamond jubilee inspires MMB's new identity



MMB Managing Director 'Mapeete Ntjana

As part of the 60th independence celebrations, MMB has also launched two consumer campaigns aimed at sharing the milestone with its customers.

The first promotion allows consumers to purchase three 660ml bottles of beer for M60, with the promotion running for 60 days.

The second campaign will see 60 customers winning special hampers through a random raffle.

Ntjana said the promotions are intended to ensure that the benefits of the national celebrations extend beyond the brewery to ordinary Basotho.

"There are also gifts that would be given to 60 customers in total. When our customers buy, we will do a raffle and award them so that all the Basotho nation benefits from independence," she said.

Thoboloko Ntšonyane

In 1870, India's High Commissioner to Lesotho Shri Prabhat Kumar told this week's India-Lesotho Business Dialogue, that a small band of Indian traders trekked from Durban to Botha-Bothe and swapped their goods for sheep.

Today the two countries trade pharmaceuticals, machinery, textiles and garments, yet the total remains modest: about US\$8.47 million, roughly M140 million, in the 2025-26 financial year, according to reported figures.

That is a sliver of the wider picture. Trade between India and the Southern African Customs Union (SACU) reached about US\$16 billion in 2025, according to International Trade Centre data. Both governments now say they want the next chapter to be about commerce rather than courtesy calls.

The dialogue, organised by the Indian High Commission to South Africa and Lesotho, centred on whether the private sector can turn good relations into economic gains. Honorary Consul of India to Lesotho Biju Abraham Korah hailed it as a landmark for the two nations.

High Commissioner Prabhat Kumar said cooperation already spans capacity building, agriculture, health, education, infrastructure, technology, defence, trade, cybersecurity and culture. He traced the commercial link back to those first traders.

"The local residents welcomed them, providing accommodation and allowing them to barter their goods in return for the sheep. This was the beginning of a long association of the people of these two cultures. Since then, India has carried on trade and commerce with the country," he said.

Kumar said India's exports to Lesotho are marked by regular supplies of pharmaceuticals, machinery and electronics, while its major imports from Lesotho include textiles, wool and garments.

The diplomatic groundwork is well advanced. The two countries' Joint Bilateral Commission for Cooperation met in New Delhi on 30 July 2026 and reviewed the full spectrum of ties, including trade and economic cooperation, with the next session due in Maseru in 2027.

In July 2025, Lesotho and India signed a memorandum of understanding on digital public infrastructure, paving the way for India to share expertise in digital identity systems, DigiLocker and AI-driven public services to support Lesotho's digital transformation.

The bigger prize may be regional. In August, SACU and India signed the Terms of Reference to guide negotiations towards a preferential

Lesotho and India chase a bigger trade story

trade agreement, on 12 August in New Delhi.

Such a pact typically cuts duties on an agreed list of products rather than covering everything a full free trade agreement would, and India is seeking tariff relief for cars, pharmaceuticals and industrial machinery. The negotiating framework reportedly covers eight areas, including market access, rules of origin and dispute settlement.

As a SACU member, Lesotho is expected to benefit through exporters such as diamond traders and garment factories.

Financing is part of the pitch. Exim Bank of India Resident Representative Shyamasish Acharya said the bank has facilitated transactions for micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs) in more than 70 countries across Africa, Latin America, Europe, the United States and Southern Asia.

He said the bank supports industries spanning automotive, iron and steel, agriculture, food, textiles and chemicals, and can facilitate cross-border partnerships, investments and industrial development projects.

Lesotho National Development Corporation (LNDC) General Manager for Development Finance Marina Bizabani welcomed the discussions and set a deadline. She said memoranda of understanding and strategic meetings between the two business communities should materialise within 100 days. She said the LNDC would act on the government's behalf and take the first step to ensure action follows.

Bizabani told potential Indian investors that Lesotho is a base for production and a gateway to vast global markets.

"We are here to demonstrate how LNDC provides a ready to invest pipeline of opportunities to you our potential partners from India. We have industrial parks that are ready for production; we have some plans

for economic zones where we are looking for partnerships to come and explore a number of opportunities in strategic sectors."

Basotho traders were less effusive. 'Manthabeleng Phakoe, who trades with Indian partners, described the relationship as fruitful but appealed for honesty and trust. She said it can be cumbersome at times because some Indian business partners leave the country without settling their debts. She urged retailers and wholesalers to give more shelf space to Basotho producers.

"Indians should trade in Lesotho and not sell."

Economist Thabo Qhesi said a dispute-resolution mechanism is needed, warning that disputes can be costly to resolve without one and can harm businesses. He said the settlement process should be clearly defined because it is an important component of doing business. Such provisions in trade pacts generally govern disputes between governments, so whether traders like Phakoe would be covered is a question the negotiations will have to answer.

Minister of Trade, Industry and Business Development Motlatsi Maselepo said there was no better time to talk business than 60 years after independence.

"Lesotho is open to business but not business as usual."

He said Lesotho sees significant opportunities in renewable energy, digitalisation, agro-processing and agriculture, and announced an upcoming business dialogue hosted by the LNDC, to which potential investors will be invited to explore the country's investment opportunities.

"Our ambition is to accelerate industrialisation and economic diversification by attracting investment that creates value in our skills, introduces technologies and connects Basotho businesses to regional and global markets," Maselepo said.



New waiting home for expectant mothers upgrades Mapholaneng clinic



Ntsoaki Motaung

For many women in Lesotho's remote districts, the journey to a health facility when labour begins is often long, difficult, and uncertain.

In places like Mapholaneng, a community in Mokhotlong district, the challenges faced by expectant mothers are a daily reality.

Last year alone, 18 women gave birth at home in the Mapholaneng area, a number attributed to the limited space at the health centre for pregnant women to wait their turn "Waiting mothers Home".

Dr. 'Mamohanyane Chabana, the District Medical Officer (DMO) for the Mokhotlong District Health Management Team, stressed the importance of the new park home that was provided at Mapholaneng Health Centre.

"For us health professionals, this is the most important shelter we could have in a health facility compound. This house is going to be a solution to many challenges facing Mapholaneng Health Centre," she said.

The Mapholaneng Health Centre serves a population of over 15,700 people, spread across 72 villages and supported by 39 Village Health Workers (VHWs). Yet, many people live in remote areas not always reached by health workers.

In 2025 alone, the health centre saw 315 pregnant women, with 160 delivering at the facility and 18 delivering at home.

Previously, the waiting mothers' home at the health centre could accommodate only two women, forcing many others to wait for

labour at home.

This lack of space is a key reason why so many mothers ended up giving birth without medical assistance. "Waiting mothers' home is where we expect that expecting mothers who are at their 38th week and are close to 40 weeks are housed to be closely monitored," Chabana explained.

"Most are our high-risk mothers, including those who once delivered with C-section and those with other health issues. Even women who do not have specific problems are at risk simply because of our difficult terrain and long distances to the health centre."

Villages are often located far from the facility, and the new park home is intended to provide a safe place for expectant mothers to stay as they approach their due date. This will help ensure that pregnant women arrive at the health centre before labour begins, allowing health workers to monitor them closely and reducing the number of home births.

"As a result, the number of women who deliver babies at home is going to go down," said Chabana.

She expressed gratitude to the health facility management and staff for their efforts to ensure that no woman dies while giving birth, and that no child dies during or after birth.

One parkhome was given to the Mapholaneng health centre for use as a waiting mothers' home, while two others were provided to the Child and Gender Protection Unit (CGPU) within the Mokhotlong Police

Station.

At the CGPU, one parkhome will serve as a temporary emergency shelter for survivors of gender-based violence, offering them a safe place to stay until it is safe for them to go back home. The other park home is furnished one used as an office space for the CGPU.

At both handover ceremonies, the Minister of Gender, Youth and Social Development, Pitso Lesaoana, praised the partnership between the private sector and the government to promote maternal health and protect communities against gender-based violence (GBV).

He singled out the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) and thanked all partners for turning recent pledges into action for women and young people in Mokhotlong.

"This is what partnership for impact looks like," said John Mosoti, UNFPA's Representative to Lesotho, who attended the event. "Our support is helping to create safer spaces, stronger services, and greater opportunities for the people of Mokhotlong."

Senior Assistant Commissioner of Police Khethang Tenane also pledged that the new property would be used as intended, helping to reduce GBV cases in the country.

The Chief Executive Officer of Vodacom Lesotho, Mohale Ralebitso, called on all stakeholders to ensure that communities are protected and served with dignity, making Mokhotlong a peaceful place to live.

On behalf of Lets'eng Diamonds Mine, Sefefo Tiela said the mine's contribution

aims to improve living conditions in local communities by supporting initiatives like the new parkhomes.

The investment in maternal health and community wellbeing has come from a coalition including Vodacom Lesotho, Lets'eng Diamonds, the Ministry of Gender, Youth and Social Development, the Ministry of Health, and UNFPA.

'Maseretse Ratiea, National Programme Analyst for Adolescents and Young People at UNFPA, explained that, a joined fact-finding mission to Mokhotlong was held.

Alongside partners from Vodacom Lesotho, Lets'eng Diamond Mine, Lesotho Highlands Development Authority (LHDA), and relevant government ministries, the group listened to the realities faced by youth in the district.

They found that early and unintended pregnancies, sexual violence, and a lack of access to quality services were among the biggest challenges for young people.

In Mapholaneng, the team visited the adolescent corner of the health centre and saw that the facility served many young people.

At that time, the waiting mothers' home designed for two women was accommodating six, with others sleeping in consultation rooms.

This highlighted the urgent need for more space. Vodacom Lesotho and UNFPA had already provided computers for the adolescent corner, and Lets'eng Diamond Mine stepped in to provide a park home to house at least four pregnant women.

The recent handover officially transferred the park home to the Ministry of Health.

According to research published on ResearchGate about the management of labour by Basotho traditional birth attendants, distance remains one of the biggest hurdles for pregnant women.

Some women still travel for more than eight hours by foot or horseback to reach a health facility. This journey is especially dangerous for women experiencing complications, such as retained placenta, and has led to tragic maternal deaths on the way to care.

Data from the 2023-24 Lesotho Demographic and Health Survey (LDHS) shows that home births in Lesotho have declined as more women deliver in health facilities.

Currently, around 14-15 percent of births take place at home, while the vast majority, about 85-86 percent occur in hospitals, clinics, or health centres.

Nationally, 92 percent of deliveries are attended by a skilled provider such as a doctor, nurse, or certified midwife.

However, home births are usually assisted by traditional birth attendants, relatives, or family members, who lack formal training and equipment to handle emergencies.

The LDHS also highlights persistent disparities. Home births are much more common in remote, mountainous, and hard-to-reach districts like Mokhotlong, Thaba-Tseka, and Qacha's Nek. Urban and lowland areas enjoy higher rates of facility deliveries, thanks to better roads and closer health centres.

Lesotho turns the tide on drug-resistant TB

• *But more work lies ahead*



The Minister of Health 'Mamoketse Ntsekhe at the 14th National Health Research Symposium

Ntsoaki Motaung

Lesotho has achieved a major victory in the fight against one of its biggest health challenges, multidrug-resistant tuberculosis (MDR-TB). According to results from the 4th Lesotho National Anti-Tuberculosis Drug Resistance Survey (2023-2024) shared at the 14th National Health Research Symposium held on Thursday, the country has seen a remarkable 55 percent drop in MDR-TB cases. This is a huge step forward for public health in Lesotho and brings hope to many

families affected by TB. But experts warn that this good news does not mean the fight is over. To keep these gains, Lesotho must continue to carefully monitor drug resistance and focus on helping groups most at risk. The 14th National Health Research Symposium gathered researchers, health professionals, government officials, development partners, and other stakeholders from all over Lesotho and beyond. The main theme was “Advancing Universal Health Coverage”, making sure everyone can get the health services they need without suffering financial hardship.

‘Mamokete Ntšekhe, the Minister of Health, highlighted the importance of research in improving health services. “Research is not just about writing reports or publishing scientific papers,” she said. “It must help us answer important questions, What is working? What is not working? Who is being left behind? What interventions give the greatest health benefit? And how can we deliver these services with the resources we have?” Dr. Lawrance Oyewusi, a clinical researcher and expert on TB and HIV, presented the early results from the latest

anti-TB drug resistance survey. The survey was done to check how well Lesotho’s new TB treatment program is working, especially after the country started using new oral medications in 2018. The study included over 1,100 people with TB from all across Lesotho. Most of the people affected were between 24 and 64 years old, the age group that forms the backbone of the country’s workforce. “The results are encouraging, MDR-TB cases have dropped by more than half over 55 percent compared to previous years. There were no cases of Pre-extensively drug-resistant TB (pre-XDR or XDR-TB) “forms of TB resistant to even more drugs” found among the patients tested. All samples checked for resistance to newer medicines like bedaquiline and linezolid came back as susceptible meaning these drugs are still working well in Lesotho,” he said. Dr.Oyewusi explained, “Lesotho has achieved a significant reduction in MDR-TB rates. Sustaining this progress requires rigorous ongoing surveillance and targeted interventions for key populations. We need to keep testing for drug resistance and use new technologies to catch any new cases early.” Despite the good news, the survey also found some areas that need urgent attention including that, not all health facilities can test for resistance to the newest TB drugs because of shortages in lab supplies and equipment. Some TB cases may be missed if health workers do not test all patients for drug resistance, as required by national guidelines. The biggest risk factors for drug resistance are previous TB treatment, HIV infection, and frequent alcohol use. Oyewusi stressed, “Many times, patients are treated several times before we find out they have a resistant form of TB. We need to test everyone with TB for drug resistance from the start.” The Minister of Health, Ntšekhe, reminded everyone that research must lead to action. “The real value of research is when we turn evidence into better policies, programs, and services. We must use what we learn to strengthen our health system and make sure nobody is left behind,”she said. The Director General of Health Services, Dr. Llang Maama, also praised the work of researchers and all the partners who made the symposium possible. “Universal Health Coverage remains a top priority for Lesotho. To achieve it, we need more than good intentions, we need good evidence and strong partnerships,” she said. The National Health Research and Ethics Committee (NHREC) thanked all the researchers, health workers, institutions, and patients who made the survey and symposium possible. Special thanks went to SolidarMed Lesotho, the University of Basel, and other partners for their technical and financial support. “Without your hard work and dedication, we would not have this important national platform to share and use research,” said Dr. Jill Sanders, co-chair of the NHREC.

Lesotho at 60: Free to govern, unable to provide

By: Kananelo Boloetse

As I write this opinion, my playlist includes Nyamatsana by Khopolo, Bophelo by Peipi, Bophelo by Matsoao, Liphephetso tsa Bophelo by Letheba, and Sello by Mahlanya from La Benya La Khaola 'Mano Three.

It is an unusual way to begin an opinion about Lesotho's independence, but perhaps there is no better way.

A notice that raises questions

The music reminded me of a notice I recently saw inviting young people between 18 and 30 to apply for police constable positions in the Lesotho Mounted Police Service (LMPS). I want to start there because the notice raises questions that go to the heart of what independence is supposed to mean.

Among other requirements, the notice says applicants must not be members of criminal gangs or banned Blanket (Famo) groups. How will the police determine who a member of Terene or Seakhi is? Does the LMPS have a database of bona fide members? What constitutes membership?

Is it self-identification, association with known members, attendance at particular gatherings, listening to particular music, wearing particular blankets or some intelligence database against which applicants will be checked?

I would genuinely like to know.

Without clear and objective criteria, such a requirement can easily become a tool for arbitrary exclusion. A young person could be denied an opportunity to become a police officer because of who they associate with, the music they listen to or the clothes they wear, without ever having committed a crime.

I am listening to Famo music as I write this. Does that make me a member of a banned group? If I wear a particular blanket by Aranda, sold freely across the country, does that make me a member of a Famo group?

I know people whom I like very much who, every Friday without fail, post short videos from Famo music videos under the hashtags #LabohlanoLaFamo and #LabohlanoLaMakhele. They post music by all artists, including artists who identify with Terene and those who identify with Seakhi, because they regard the music as part of our heritage.

I wonder whether those people are free to apply.

Would their social-media posts be interpreted as evidence of membership? Would celebrating music associated with a particular group make them ineligible to serve in the police? If so, where exactly does cultural appreciation end and group membership begin?

The notice also excludes applicants who have pending criminal cases. Excluding someone who has been convicted is understandable. Excluding someone who has merely been charged is not. The

Constitution is clear: "Every person who is charged with a criminal offence shall be presumed to be innocent until he is proved or has pleaded guilty."

Why does the LMPS exclude people whom the Constitution presumes innocent?

The notice also excludes applicants with writings or tattoos "anywhere on the body". There may be legitimate reasons for regulating tattoos in a police service. Gang symbols, offensive markings or markings that undermine the professional appearance of an officer could reasonably be regulated.

But a blanket prohibition is different. Consider a young person whose parent died when they were very young and who later has the name of that parent tattooed on their body. Does that make them unsuitable to serve as a police officer? Does the name of a dead mother on someone's chest make that person less honest, less disciplined or less capable of protecting the public?

Pregnant applicants are also excluded. Only women can be pregnant, so the criterion raises serious questions about discrimination and compliance with Lesotho's obligations under CEDAW and the Maputo Protocol.

If the legitimate concern is that police training is physically demanding, why not defer commencement of training until an applicant is medically able to participate rather than exclude her from applying?

And how will the police know an applicant is

pregnant? By looking at her? Will pregnancy tests be administered, and if so, on what legal basis, with what consent and with what safeguards for dignity and privacy?

I have never seen recruitment criteria that limit fundamental rights this much. The Police Service exists to protect the rights of everyone in Lesotho. It must set an example in respecting them.

This is not the main subject of my opinion, but it is not unrelated. These applicants are the generation I want to write about. In a country where young people graduate into unemployment, a recruitment notice is a rare door to a livelihood. How that door is guarded says a great deal about how the state regards its young citizens at sixty.

Which brings me to Lesotho's independence.

It began with rice

On April 28, 2025, we gathered in Maseru for what we called a Youth Dialogue on Economic Independence.

At the time, we did not know quite how far that conversation would travel.

The idea had been triggered by something that, on the surface, appeared rather ordinary: reports towards the end of 2024 that Lesotho had received bags of rice from India.

But there was nothing ordinary about the

Continues to page 13...

By: Dr. Theko Tlebere

As Lesotho moves closer to another general election, the country is entering that familiar season when political temperatures begin to rise.

Parties are organizing, politicians are positioning themselves, supporters are choosing sides and social media is becoming increasingly political. The arguments will become louder, the promises bigger and, inevitably, some political disagreements will become personal. This is precisely when Lesotho needs something that is often discussed but poorly practised: political tolerance.

Political tolerance does not mean agreeing with everyone. It does not mean accepting bad governance, remaining silent when leaders make mistakes, or abandoning one's political principles. It simply means accepting that another person has the right to hold political beliefs that are different from yours, and that they remain a fellow citizen despite that difference.

That distinction is important. An English philosopher John Locke argued that society must learn to live with differences in belief because human beings cannot reasonably be expected to think alike. His argument was developed primarily around religious tolerance, but its lesson is equally relevant to politics: a peaceful society cannot depend on everybody believing the same thing.

Another philosopher that I like so much, John Stuart Mill takes the argument further. In On Liberty, Mill warned against the danger of suppressing opinions merely because they are unpopular. For Mill, even an opinion we believe to be wrong can force society to examine why it believes what it believes.

There is a lesson here for Lesotho. If my uncle in Ha Khohlopo supports one political party while his neighbour supports another, neither has become less Mosotho. If one brother supports the government while another supports the opposition, the political disagreement should not destroy the family relationship.

If a village chief, civil servant, businessman, teacher or student holds a political opinion different from ours, that person does not suddenly become an enemy. Democracy is precisely the arrangement that allows us to disagree without destroying one another.

Lesotho's political history reminds us why this matters. Our democracy has repeatedly been tested by disputes between political parties, internal party

Political Tolerance: The Virtue Lesotho Needs Before the Next Election

divisions and disagreements about elections and political power. Scholars of Lesotho's democratization have long argued that a culture of political tolerance is particularly important in a country where electoral outcomes and political transitions have often generated serious tensions.

As we approach the next election, therefore, tolerance should not be treated as a nice word for political speeches. It should become a practical principle guiding political decision-making. This is particularly important for politicians. A government must be able to listen to opposition voices without interpreting every criticism as an attempt to overthrow it. An opposition party must be able to criticize government without treating every government decision as evidence of corruption, treason or maladministration. Political parties must also learn that losing a debate does not necessarily mean losing one's dignity.

Another philosopher Karl Popper famously argued for what became known as the "paradox of tolerance", a society that tolerates everything, including forces determined to destroy tolerance itself, may eventually lose its freedom. The point is not that democracy should tolerate violence or intimidation.

The point is that tolerance must operate within democratic rules. We should tolerate political differences, competing ideas, criticism and peaceful mobilization. We should not tolerate threats, political violence, intimidation or the destruction of another citizen's democratic rights.

Hannah Arendt, writing about politics and public life, emphasised the importance of people appearing before one another in a shared public space. Politics, in this sense, exists because human beings are different. If we were all identical in our opinions, there would be little need for politics. That is perhaps one of the most important lessons for our election season.

Difference is not the problem, The problem is what we do with difference. Lesotho has many political

parties. The Independent Electoral Commission currently lists a large number of registered parties, reflecting the diversity and fragmentation of our political landscape. The existence of many parties should therefore not frighten us. What should concern us is whether these differences can be managed peacefully and democratically.

Another important lesson is that Political tolerance must also extend beyond political leaders to ordinary citizens. The danger is that politicians sometimes leave the political rally and return to their homes as neighbors, while their supporters remain behind fighting one another.

A politician can exchange harsh words with another politician today and share a parliamentary corridor with that same person tomorrow. But ordinary Basotho can allow political arguments to destroy friendships, marriages, businesses and family relationships. We must know where politics ends and citizenship begins.

The ballot paper should determine who governs. It should not determine who deserves respect. This is also why political tolerance is important in decision-making at this particular moment. Electoral reforms, constituency boundaries, voter registration, electoral laws and other institutional questions require decisions that enjoy public confidence.

Lesotho is already engaged in discussions about electoral reforms ahead of the next elections, with political parties and other stakeholders participating in dialogue. Such decisions cannot be made properly when political actors approach every proposal with the assumption that the other side is acting in bad faith.

Tolerance creates room for compromise, and compromise is not betrayal. In a democracy, compromise is often the mechanism through which competing interests find a common national interest. A political leader who changes his position after

hearing a convincing argument has not necessarily become weak.

He may simply have demonstrated the intellectual maturity that democracy requires. A French writer Voltaire, is often associated with the defence of freedom of expression, although the famous statement attributed to him about defending another person's right to speak was actually written later by his biographer Evelyn Beatrice Hall. The broader principle, however, remains useful: democratic politics requires us to defend the space in which disagreement can occur.

As we approach the next election, Basotho therefore need to ask themselves a simple question: Can I disagree with you politically and still respect you as a Mosotho? If the answer is yes, then democracy still has fertile ground. If the answer is no, then the problem is bigger than political parties. It is a problem with our democratic culture.

And we should not forget that Elections are temporary. Governments change. Ministers come and go. MPs lose constituencies and sometimes return to Parliament. Political parties rise, split and disappear. But the nation remains. Our political opponents are therefore not enemies of Lesotho simply because they want a different government.

They are fellow citizens competing for the same national future. That is why political tolerance is not merely a philosophical concept for university classrooms. It is a practical necessity for Lesotho that we must all adhere to.

As the election approaches, let us argue fiercely about ideas, policies and leadership. Let us question those in power and scrutinise those seeking power. Let us defend our political convictions. But let us also remember that after the speeches, the rallies, the posters and the ballot boxes, we will still be neighbors. And the Kingdom of Lesotho will still belong to all of us. The Future is NOW!

... Continued from page 12

question it raised. How, after almost six decades of independence, could a country still be dependent on food donations from other countries?

Not long afterwards, Donald Trump was inaugurated as President of the United States in January 2025. The new administration subsequently cut some of the foreign assistance provided by the United States, and Lesotho, for obvious reasons, became one of the countries affected.

For us, these developments were not unrelated. They were reminders of a reality that Basotho have lived with for generations: political independence without economic independence remains an incomplete liberation.

We already knew this. The rice donation simply made it visible. The reduction in foreign assistance made it impossible to ignore. So we began asking a more difficult question: if we know that Lesotho is not economically independent, what are we going to do about it?

We believed then, as we believe now, that the solutions will require the younger generation to take responsibility. But we did not believe that young people should pretend to have all the answers. Our grandparents did what they could with what they had during their time. They inherited their own challenges and fought their own battles. The struggle did not end with them.

It continues. Our responsibility is to take the baton from where previous generations left it, learn from what they got right and what they got wrong, and run with it. That was the thinking behind the Youth Dialogue on Economic Independence.

An intergenerational mission

We decided that the April gathering would be a soft launch ahead of a larger dialogue around Africa Day, May 25. We invited Dr Moeketsi Majoro, a former Prime Minister who had also served as Minister of Finance and Minister of Development Planning, among other responsibilities.

On Friday, 23 May 2025, because Africa Day fell on a Sunday, we held the main dialogue with the Speaker of the National Assembly, Mr Tlohang Sekhamane, a former government secretary and former minister of foreign affairs and of finance.

We invited them deliberately. We believe the solutions will come from young people, but an economically independent Lesotho must be an intergenerational mission. Young people need to know where we come from as a nation before they can say where they will take it.

I was reminded of Alan Paton's South Africa and Her People, in which he recounts a message attributed to Paul Kruger shortly before his death: "Take the best from the past, and build your future on it."

That principle captured what we were trying to do. The past should not be worshipped. Neither should it be discarded. We must take the best from it and use it as the foundation upon which to build the future.

Then something unexpected happened

After the May dialogue, young people in the districts asked for permission to host similar dialogues of their own. That was when we realised this was bigger than we had imagined. We resolved to hold Youth Dialogues on Economic Independence in every district of Lesotho.

From those conversations, we would develop a Youth Charter on Economic Independence and launch it in October 2026, as part of the commemoration of Lesotho's 60th anniversary of independence.

There was one obvious problem. We had no money. What we had was determination, time and a conviction that young people should not merely complain about the state of their country but should participate meaningfully in shaping its future.

Finances matter. Anyone who has organised anything knows this. But we decided that lack of money could not be allowed to become an excuse for lack of action. We started in Mohale's Hoek. Then came Mafeteng, Berea, Leribe and Qacha's Nek, until we had taken the conversation across all of Lesotho's districts.

The conversations were different from place to place, but the underlying message was consistent. Young Basotho have ideas and ambitions, and know what is wrong with their country.

More importantly, they have a fairly clear idea of what kind of country they want to inherit, and what kind of country they are prepared to work to build.

In January 2026, the organising team met in Maseru to assess how far we had come and what remained to be done. We agreed that the district dialogues should continue while preparations began for a Youth Assembly in October, where the Charter would be launched. But if this was genuinely going to be an intergenerational project, we needed to do more.

We then decided to invite all living former Prime Ministers of Lesotho and former Deputy Prime

Lesotho at 60: Free to govern, unable to provide

Ministers to the October Assembly. We travelled to Leribe to meet Dr Majoro and extend the invitation personally.

We went to former Deputy Prime Minister Kelebone Maope's home, spoke to him about the project and asked him to help us reach others.

We went to Parliament to extend an invitation to Mr Sekhamane. We were trying to build bridges across generations, political administrations and experiences. With a shoestring budget, it was not easy, but we kept going.

By July, the district dialogues had been completed. In August, we held a bonus dialogue in Maseru, specifically targeting youth groups that are often marginalised and might not ordinarily have participated in the district process.

Everything was coming together.

The Charter, which we also intended to call Agenda 2066, was designed around a simple proposition: what if Basotho today committed themselves to building the Lesotho they want to see when the country celebrates 100 years of independence in 2066?

Forty years is a long time, but it is also the length of a generation.

The young people we spoke to wanted to imagine the country they would like to live in at 100 years of independence and then commit themselves to spending the next four decades building it.

The month before independence

Then, on September 5, everything changed.

A month before the 60th anniversary of independence, I was abducted from my home in Katlehong, Maseru, by armed men. My hands were tied with a cable tie, my mouth was gagged with masking tape, and I was driven away from my home to an unknown location, assaulted and eventually abandoned on a pile of rubbish near a river.

I later learnt that the place was Thaba Bosiu, more than 20 kilometres from my home.

I reported the matter to the police and went into hiding because my abductors had been explicit that if they heard I had spoken about the abduction on radio or social media, they would come back and kill me.

I chose to protect my life. I did so because I value life, and because I have an appointment with Lesotho in 2066.

As I write this, I am still in hiding.

What has happened since my abduction has been almost as painful to watch as the abduction itself.

I have watched the Commissioner of Police, Mr Borotho Matsoso, publicly portray me as uncooperative and as a fugitive. Since then, the public narrative surrounding me has at times made me feel as though I am wanted like Osama bin Laden.

If one listened only to the public statements coming from Lesotho's authorities, one could easily be forgiven for thinking that I had invented an abduction and disappeared to frustrate the investigation.

That is an extraordinary inversion of what happened.

I am the person who says he was abducted, assaulted, threatened with death and abandoned in the dark. I reported the matter to the police, engaged with investigators and provided information. I have a legitimate interest in knowing what is being done to identify and prosecute the people who abducted me.

Yet somehow, the public conversation has increasingly become about my conduct rather than that of the people who abducted me.

The Minister of Police and Home Affairs, Voeswa Tsheka, has also appeared to follow the line established by the Commissioner, contributing to a narrative in which I am portrayed as somehow responsible for the lack of meaningful progress.

When Prime Minister Sam Matekane spoke to the media on Wednesday, September 30, I listened. I wanted to hear what the government had done to ensure that the people who abducted and assaulted me would be identified, arrested and prosecuted.

Instead, once again, I heard my conduct placed at the centre of the discussion.

There is something profoundly wrong when the victim of a violent crime finds himself having to defend his own credibility while the perpetrators remain at large.

A muted anniversary

I had hoped the Youth Dialogue team would continue the work in my absence. But we have to be honest with ourselves. A team member cannot be abducted and severely assaulted a month before a major national undertaking and expect everyone around that person to continue as though nothing has happened.

The Youth Charter was not launched.

On Sunday, October 4, I watched the independence celebrations on television, from a distance, helpless and heartbroken. The project we had spent so much time preparing for could not happen.

I vividly remember the fortieth anniversary in 2006 and the fiftieth in 2016. They were many times better than this year's, in scale, public participation and national excitement.

The underwhelming nature of the 60th anniversary celebrations should not simply be dismissed as poor organisation. It should make us uncomfortable.

What happens to a country when its people become increasingly disconnected from national occasions? What happens when patriotism is demanded from citizens who feel that their country has given them very little in return?

It is easy to tell Basotho to love their country, but patriotism cannot survive on speeches alone. For people to feel patriotic, their country must give them reasons to believe that their lives matter.

Hundreds of thousands of Basotho live in poverty and squalor. Many have left for South Africa because they see greater economic opportunity there. Young people graduate into unemployment. Businesses struggle. Public institutions are under pressure.

Then we tell these people to be patriotic, and sometimes we sound completely out of touch.

A country cannot continually ask its people to sacrifice for an idea of Lesotho while failing to create the material conditions that make that idea meaningful.

What economic independence means

Economic independence is therefore not merely an economic question. It is a question of dignity and national confidence.

It asks whether a country can feed its people, create opportunities for its young people, retain its talent, support its businesses and make decisions without being excessively vulnerable to the decisions of others.

The rice donation from India was not the problem. Foreign assistance is not the problem. Countries cooperate, nations receive assistance, and there is no shame in accepting help when help is needed.

The problem is when dependence becomes a permanent condition rather than a temporary bridge to self-reliance.

The United States' decision to cut assistance was not the problem either. The problem is what it revealed about our vulnerability.

Sixty years after independence, we cannot keep treating economic dependence as somebody else's problem. It belongs to all of us. Perhaps most importantly, it belongs to the generation that will still be alive in 2066.

Responsibility, not speeches

The Youth Dialogues were never meant to be another conference where people sit in a room, make speeches, take photographs and go home.

They were meant to begin a conversation about responsibility: that of government, business, civil society, communities and, especially, young people.

We cannot demand that young people build Lesotho while excluding them from the decisions that determine its future. But young people also cannot demand a better Lesotho while waiting for someone else to build it for them.

That is why Agenda 2066 matters.

It asks us to think beyond the next election, the next budget, the next political appointment or the next five-year development plan. It asks us to imagine the country we want our grandchildren to inherit and then work backwards.

What must we change today to make that country possible?

What kind of education system do we need? What must we produce? How do we transform agriculture from subsistence into a productive economic sector? How do we build industries that create jobs rather than export our young people? How do we use our water resources responsibly and profitably? How do we create an environment in which Basotho businesses can grow and retain our brightest young people? How do we build institutions that are trusted, and ensure that political power advances the public interest rather than private patronage?

These questions do not belong to one political party. They belong to the nation.

The generation that fought for independence could not have known what Lesotho would look like in 2026, and we cannot know what it will look like in 2066.

But we can decide what we want it to become.

The baton

Our grandparents carried the baton. They ran their race and handed it to us.

We have stumbled. Some of us have fallen. Some of us have been pushed.

But the race is not over.

The answer to our national difficulties cannot be despair. It must be determination, organisation and imagination, and, above all, a willingness to accept responsibility for the country we want.

I still believe Lesotho can become economically independent. I still believe young Basotho can build a country in which they do not have to cross the Mokare River to find dignity. I still believe the hundredth anniversary of independence can be different from the sixtieth.

But belief alone is not enough.

We need a national project and an intergenerational compact. We need to stop asking only what Lesotho can do for us and start asking what we are prepared to do for Lesotho.

It began as a conversation about bags of rice, became a conversation about foreign aid, then about economic independence, and eventually a national conversation involving young people in every district.

It was supposed to culminate in a Youth Assembly and the launch of Agenda 2066 on the 60th anniversary. That did not happen.

But perhaps the work should not be judged by whether we managed to hold one event, but by whether we have started something that can outlive any one of us.

I hope we have. Lesotho cannot afford another sixty years of simply surviving. We have to start building, and we have forty years to prove that we can.

To those who stood with me

It would be remiss of me to end this long opinion without saying thank you.

Basotho have supported me individually and as groups, organisations and media houses. This overwhelming support has kept me going amid the trials and tribulations of the past weeks.

I have seen the hashtags, #JusticeForBoloetse and #JusticeForKaneloBoloetse, and they fill me with strength. If the sky were a sheet of paper and the waters of the oceans were ink, I still would not be able to express how grateful I am.

Support has also come from beyond our borders, and I am grateful to the regional and international community that has taken notice.

To the friends, colleagues, press freedom and human rights organisations, and partners abroad who have spoken out, thank you.

Lesotho is a member of the African Union (AU), the Southern African Development Community (SADC) and the United Nations (UN), and it has committed itself to the rights those bodies exist to protect.

I respectfully urge them to keep calling, keep asking questions, and **support the work for an independent commission of inquiry into the circumstances surrounding what was done to me.**

I also want to say something about what all this support means. Boloetse is just one of you: a citizen, a brother, an employee, a member of the Katlehong football team, Team Shampopo.

Justice for him means justice for every Mosotho.

A country in which a citizen can be seized from his home and threatened into silence is a country in which no one is safe.

A country that answers such an act with solidarity, and then insists on accountability, is a country that has not given up on itself.

That solidarity is the best evidence I have that the work I described in this article can continue. The same people who raised their voices for one citizen can raise them for the Lesotho we want in 2066.



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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



**NOTICE OF SALE –
RESIDENTIAL VILLA IN
MASERU WEST**

The European Union is selling its former staff accommodation in Maseru West and inviting individuals or entities interested in buying this property to submit an offer. The property is a residential villa of 472 m² on a 5 738 m² plot of land situated at [215 Tona-Kholo Road Maseru West](#).

The deadline to submit an offer is on 12 November 2026 at 23.59, local time.

Further information concerning the sales' conditions and visits to the property can be found on the following EU Delegation's webpage: <https://www.eeas.europa.eu/delegations/lesotho/n-lesotho>

**NOTICE OF SALE –
RESIDENTIAL VILLA IN
MASERU WEST**

The European Union is selling its former staff accommodation in Maseru West and inviting individuals or entities interested in buying this property to submit an offer. The property is a residential villa of 264 m² on a 4 642 m² plot of land situated at [216 Tona-Kholo Road Maseru West](#).

The deadline to submit an offer is on 12 November 2026 at 23.59, local time.

Further information concerning the sales' conditions and visits to the property can be found on the following EU Delegation's webpage: <https://www.eeas.europa.eu/delegations/lesotho/n-lesotho>



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).
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Signature:
Name:
Position of Authorised Official:

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 lihlaisoa 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 lihlaisoa 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

Expo seeks innovation as material costs threaten construction sustainability

Seabata Mahao

Lesotho's road construction industry must embrace innovative materials, technologies and construction methods as conventional sources of road-building materials become increasingly scarce and expensive, the Director General of the Roads Directorate, Linehella Ntšere, has said.

Ntšere made the remarks ahead of the Roads Construction Materials EXPO, which is scheduled for October 14 to 16, 2026 and will bring together government, road agencies, contractors, consultants, suppliers, manufacturers, researchers and academia.

The three-day event will feature conference presentations and stall exhibitions aimed at sharing knowledge, showcasing emerging technologies and creating opportunities for collaboration within the road construction sector.

Ntšere said the EXPO comes at a time when the industry is facing increasing pressure from the depletion of conventional sources of aggregates, gravel, suitable soils and other materials used in pavement construction.

According to him, materials that were once readily available are becoming more difficult and costly to source because of continuous extraction, development and growing demand. The commercialisation of construction materials, coupled with the cost of transporting suitable materials over long distances, is also pushing up road construction costs.

"This presents a challenge to the sustainability and affordability of road construction and maintenance programmes and requires us to think differently about how we construct and maintain our roads," Ntšere said.

He said the industry could no longer depend exclusively on traditional materials and construction methods when their availability was becoming increasingly constrained.

Instead, he called for greater exploration and testing of alternatives such as improved soil stabilisation, alternative binders, recycled materials, geosynthetics and modified bituminous materials.

However, Ntšere cautioned that innovation should not mean adopting new products simply because they have worked elsewhere.

He said new technologies must demonstrate

technical suitability, durability, economic viability and environmental sustainability under Lesotho's own conditions.

Ntšere stressed that research must accompany innovation, arguing that technologies that perform well in other countries may produce different results under Lesotho's climate, geology, traffic and environmental conditions.

He said the Roads Directorate, research institutions, universities, consultants and industry players should work together to test and validate new technologies locally.

The assessment of innovative solutions should, among other factors, consider technical performance, durability, cost-effectiveness, constructability, environmental impact and long-term maintenance requirements.

"Our approach should therefore be to move from innovation based on claims to innovation based on evidence," he said.

The EXPO is therefore expected to serve as more than a showcase for new products. Ntšere said the ultimate objective was to move promising technologies from exhibition stands into laboratories, pilot projects and eventually practical application where they are proven successful.

He said demonstration projects would be particularly important in building confidence among road agencies, consultants and contractors.

For local contractors, Ntšere said exposure to new technologies could provide opportunities to reduce construction costs, improve productivity, address shortages of suitable materials and reduce transportation distances.

It could also improve the quality and durability of roads while helping contractors develop new technical capabilities and compete for more specialised projects.

He encouraged contractors to use the EXPO to engage directly with technology providers rather than merely viewing the products on display.

"Ask questions, engage with technology providers and identify solutions that can be practically applied in Lesotho," he said.

Consultants, he added, could benefit from gaining access to a wider range of engineering solutions and material options, particularly where conventional materials are unsuitable, unavailable or prohibitively expensive.

The interaction between consultants, manufacturers

and technology providers could also improve understanding of the design requirements, limitations and appropriate applications of emerging products.

Minister of Public Works and Transport Neo Matjato Moteane said the EXPO comes at an important time for Lesotho's infrastructure sector, with the Roads Directorate allocated M1.861 billion for the expansion and asset recovery of the country's road network.

He said government was also focusing on airports and other ports of entry, while energy projects were creating additional opportunities for Basotho to participate in the growing infrastructure sector.

Moteane described the Construction EXPO, Exhibition and Conference as a platform that brings together the different players in construction and infrastructure development.

Reflecting on last year's inaugural event, he said it provided an opportunity for buyers to meet suppliers, innovators to meet consumers and teachers to interact with students.

He said the event also bridges the gap between government ministries and parastatals responsible for decision-making and contractors and suppliers responsible for implementation.

For young Basotho considering careers in the construction industry, Moteane said the EXPO could expose them to the wide range of professions supporting the sector, including architecture, electrical work, insurance, bricklaying, paramedic services and specialised areas such as yellow plant operation.

Ntšere said innovation in road construction could generate economic benefits beyond individual infrastructure projects.

Where suitable local alternatives exist, reducing dependence on imported materials and technologies could help retain more value within the domestic economy.

He said the development of local expertise could create opportunities for small and medium enterprises, manufacturers, material suppliers, local businesses and skilled professionals.

Moteane similarly called for stronger cooperation between government and the private sector, particularly in improving access to finance for local contractors.

He said partnerships should continue beyond the EXPO and help local contractors complete projects on time and to the required quality.

"Government and the private sector must work hand in hand to help this sector grow," Moteane said.

The Roads Directorate chief also highlighted the growing importance of sustainability in road construction.

He said the industry needed to reduce its consumption of natural resources and environmental impact while maintaining technical performance and value for money.

Innovative approaches could enable greater use of marginal or locally available materials, recycling of existing materials and reduced transportation of construction materials over long distances.

He said the EXPO should ultimately encourage partnerships that result in research, pilot projects, demonstrations and implementation.

"No single institution can solve the challenges facing the road construction industry on its own," Ntšere said.

He urged technology providers and manufacturers to bring credible and tested solutions, while contractors and consultants should remain open to trials and demonstrations.

Academic and research institutions, he said, should strengthen collaboration with industry, while road agencies should share experiences so that successful innovations can be scaled up.

For Ntšere, the measure of success will not simply be the number of products displayed or presentations delivered during the three-day event, but the partnerships created, technologies tested, knowledge shared and innovations eventually implemented on Lesotho's roads.

"The ultimate objective is not simply to construct more roads, but to construct better, more durable, cost-effective and sustainable roads," he said.

Moteane, meanwhile, linked the development of the construction industry to one of Lesotho's biggest socio-economic challenges – unemployment.

He said government and industry must work together to create lasting opportunities, arguing that government alone could not address unemployment or build the infrastructure and economic opportunities the country needs.

The Roads Construction Materials EXPO will therefore seek to position innovation not as a replacement for proven construction practices, but as a means of finding more affordable, durable and sustainable ways of building and maintaining Lesotho's road network.



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.



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Transport Admin Clerk

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Premier FMCG is at the heart of South Africa's FMCG industry, delivering trusted, iconic brands across our Bakery, Milling, Confectionery, Home & Personal Care and Culinary divisions. We are driven by innovation, collaboration, and a high-performance growth culture. We empower our people to strive for excellence ensuring that our products and people make a difference in the everyday lives of our consumers.

Job Purpose

To complete all administration, capture all transport related data for input to KPI reports, assist on site in the absence of the transport controller and to log vehicle breakdowns to the FML call Centre.

Key Responsibilities

The core functions define the key areas of responsibility for this role, reflecting the accountabilities and expected outputs outlined in the competency-based profile. These are the primary activities through which the role delivers value to the business.

- Maintenance and servicing of fleet • Fleet control
- Fleet returns • Fleet utilisation
- Tyre stock control
- Insurance claims
- Creditors
- Fines and traffic violation control
- Capturing of vehicle fuel consumption
- Ordering and generate order numbers from system
- Ensure Traffic Fines are redirected to drivers' name
- Prepare Invoices for payment
- Report vehicle accidents timelessly
- Ensures monthly kilometres remain within contractual limits
- Maintain Co-Driver information system and extract relevant information
- Maintains cleaning register and ensures vehicle cleaning in terms of outsourced contract

Experience and Qualifications

To perform effectively in this role, the following minimum qualifications and work experience are required:

- Grade 12 with numerical skills
- Technical (Diesel Mechanic) experience
- Driver's Licence code C with five years' experience
- PRDP- Public of three years' experience will be beneficial to the department

Skills and Competencies

To succeed in this role, the following capabilities—both technical and behavioural—are essential. These are drawn from the skills and competencies outlined in the role's competency-based profile:Dispatch standard operations and procedures for fresh products

- Good communication skills (verbal and written)
- Attention to detail
- Good listening skills
- Analytical thinker
- Deadline driven
- Proficiency in MS Office Excel and Word

Working Conditions

This role requires the incumbent to operate in the following environments and manage specific physical or operational demands:

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Location: Lesotho Bakery

Division: Bakery

Reporting To: Transport: Controller

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- Engage and make a difference
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Alternatively, applications can be delivered at Blue Ribbon Offices, Thetsane Industrial, Maseru.

Closing Date: 16 October 2026



Lesotho independence at 60: A nation divided or just disappointed?



Picture Credit: Aorae

Thoboloko Ntšonyane

Lesotho's 60th independence anniversary has exposed a divide in how Basotho feel about their country. While some celebrated, others stayed away from the public festivities, most visibly at the main celebration at Setsoto Stadium on 4 October.

On social media and radio call-in programmes, critics took their grievances to the government, accusing it of rampant corruption, high youth unemployment, nepotism and poor service delivery, among other things.

On the eve of the anniversary, scores of people, particularly children and youth, went to the main roundabout to watch the fireworks.

On 4 October itself, however, the official celebration at Setsoto Stadium failed to draw large crowds. The historic occasion had been expected to ignite patriotism and strengthen social cohesion.

King Letsie III declared that, as the country celebrates 60 years of independence, those serving it should say "Lesotho, we love you; we will die for you".

He called on Basotho to treat the anniversary as a moment to honour those who have contributed to the country's journey and to renew their collective determination to build a more peaceful, equitable, resilient and prosperous nation. He also warned against spreading lies, saying they could fuel conflict within the nation.

The Monarch urged Lesotho to look to the future by strengthening cooperation and partnerships in youth leadership, climate action, sustainable security, renewable energy, digital transformation and

wider development.

He said future efforts should be guided by a shared commitment to addressing contemporary challenges and seizing opportunities. The anniversary, he added, was also a celebration of the friendships and partnerships that had empowered Lesotho and its people.

Delivering a message of solidarity, Eswatini's King Mswati III called for stronger cooperation between the two countries, stressing peace, regional integration and a shared commitment to the African Union's Agenda 2063 and the Southern African Development Community (SADC) Vision 2050.

He paid tribute to Lesotho's role in supporting South African refugees and exiles during the struggle against apartheid, including by providing access to education. He also noted the country's contributions through the Lesotho Highlands Water Project, soil and water conservation initiatives and its textile industry.

Describing Lesotho and Eswatini as "sister monarchies", King Mswati III pointed to their longstanding historical, cultural and royal ties. He paid tribute to King Moshoeshe I, saying Lesotho was founded on the principles of peace, diplomacy, unity and refuge, and shared that Eswatini has named a street after King Moshoeshe II.

The muted turnout has also raised questions about how the celebrations were planned and prepared. There were no billboards in towns and urban centres reminding people of the anniversary, and the limited publicity suggested the celebrations were not widely promoted, either

by the organising committee or by the Lesotho Tourism Development Corporation (LTDC).

The Central Bank of Lesotho (CBL) has also not issued a commemorative coin or banknote, and it is not immediately clear whether one will be launched. Some have also asked what message those who stayed away sent to the outside world about how patriotic Basotho are, and whether they pursue a common purpose for their country.

Sixty years on, how does Lesotho's journey compare with those of its neighbours, Botswana and Eswatini, formerly Swaziland? Lesotho gained independence in 1966, the same year as Botswana, while Eswatini followed two years later, in 1968.

Today the three countries present different development trajectories, particularly in their economies and higher-education systems. Economists have reported that Eswatini's economy is three times bigger than Lesotho's, while Botswana's is about seven times bigger.

There was a time, however, when the three were closely bound together through higher education. The University of Basutoland, Bechuanaland and Swaziland (UBBS), established at Roma in 1964, became the University of Botswana, Lesotho and Swaziland (UBLS) after the countries gained independence.

It served students from all three countries, with Basotho, Batswana and emaswati studying under the same university system.

In 1975, the Roma campus withdrew from the arrangement and became the

National University of Lesotho (NUL). Lesotho has had one public university since. The remaining University of Botswana and Swaziland (UBS) gave way to separate national universities in 1982.

The University of Botswana was formally inaugurated in October that year, and the University of Swaziland, now the University of Eswatini, was established as an independent institution.

The contrast today raises an uncomfortable question: how did countries that once shared a university, and whose citizens studied together under the same system, arrive at such different levels of institutional development?

Botswana now has three public universities, while Eswatini has expanded beyond its historic national university to a number of private universities and other tertiary institutions. Botswana also has a medical school and no longer relies heavily on training its people abroad.

For Lesotho, establishing a medical school remains a long-standing aspiration. A recent assessment by the Bertelsmann Stiftung offers a wider view. Its Lesotho Country Report, part of the Bertelsmann Transformation Index (BTI) 2026, assessed Lesotho's political transformation, economic transformation and governance for the period from 1 February 2023 to 31 January 2025.

The report says Lesotho has made some progress in democracy, with peaceful and transparent elections and active participation by civil society and trade unions. However, political patronage, a fragmented party system and weak implementation of reforms continue to undermine good governance.

The report also raises concern about the selective application of the law and alleged misconduct by security forces, saying these problems have weakened public trust in state institutions. It argues that completing constitutional reforms and strengthening oversight institutions will be important for improving political stability and accountability.

Economically, it describes growth as modest and heavily dependent on infrastructure projects such as the Lesotho Highlands Water Project Phase II. It points to weaknesses in manufacturing and agriculture, and says high unemployment and dependence on foreign aid remain major obstacles to sustainable growth.

Although government finances improved, partly because of higher Southern African Customs Union (SACU) revenues, inflation and external economic pressures remain concerns.



Towering Kenyan influencer falls for Lesotho

Chris Theko

Kenyan influencer who widely recognised Africa's tallest man, Bradley Marongo, has been exploring Lesotho over the past several days, turning his visit into an opportunity to showcase the Mountain Kingdom to audiences beyond its borders.

Marongo arrived in Lesotho over the weekend and, since Saturday, has been touring different parts of the country, documenting his experiences and sharing glimpses of Lesotho, its people, landscapes and attractions with his followers.

Although he was unable to grant an interview before returning to Kenya, Marongo reflected on his Lesotho experience in a heartfelt message shared on his Facebook page.

Describing the trip as an "incredible experience", Marongo said he had the "best time" in Lesotho, praising the country's landscapes, culture and, particularly, the hospitality he received from Basotho.

"You welcomed me like I was not a visitor, but one of your own," Marongo said in his message.

He also acknowledged the large number of Basotho who came out to meet him during his stay, saying their enthusiasm left a lasting impression.

"I came to Lesotho thinking I would entertain you, but you ended up entertaining ME!" he wrote.

His visit is not simply a personal trip. It is also the result of a connection made thousands of kilometres away in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, where Marongo met Basotho influencer Mavele during the inaugural African Social Media Influencers Summit (ASMIS) in May 2026.

Held from May 7 to 8, ASMIS brought together digital creators, influencers and media personalities from across Africa to discuss the growing power of social media in shaping the continent's narrative. The summit was specifically positioned as a platform for African creators to collaborate, share experiences and promote a more authentic image of Africa.

Among the relationships formed during the gathering was the one between Ma-

rongo and Mavele.

Marongo said the memories he created during his visit would remain with him for a lifetime.

"I came as a visitor, but I am leaving with a piece of Lesotho in my heart," he said.

He also hinted that his relationship with the Mountain Kingdom may not end with this visit, telling Basotho that the country was "not getting rid of me that easily."

The visit comes at a time when social media influencers are increasingly becoming important players in destination marketing, with their ability to showcase places directly to audiences across national borders.

What began as a meeting between two content creators from different parts of the continent has now developed into an opportunity for Marongo to experience Lesotho firsthand.

For Mavele, bringing Marongo to Lesotho also creates an opportunity to introduce one of Kenya's recognisable digital personalities to a country that is often still relatively unfamiliar to audiences elsewhere on the continent.

During his stay, Marongo has been touring the country and creating content around his experiences. His presence has generated interest among Basotho, with many people taking the opportunity to meet, take photographs and interact with the towering Kenyan personality.

Beyond the novelty surrounding his height, however, Marongo's visit highlights the increasingly important role that African influencers can play in tourism promotion and cross-border cultural exchange.

The idea is consistent with the broader objectives discussed at ASMIS, where participants emphasised that social media has become a powerful tool through which Africans can tell their own stories, promote tourism and challenge long-standing stereotypes about the continent.

The inaugural ASMIS brought together influencers from dozens of African countries, creating opportunities for creators to establish relationships that extend



Bradley Marongo

beyond the summit itself. Organisers described the gathering as a platform for building partnerships among influencers and developing a shared African voice.

Marongo's Lesotho trip is a practical example of what such connections can produce.

Instead of simply meeting at a conference and returning home, the relationship between Marongo and Mavele has resulted in a cross-border visit that is now exposing Lesotho to another African digital audience.

For a country whose dramatic mountains, cultural heritage and tourism attractions remain some of its strongest assets, such exposure can be significant.

Marongo's visit also demonstrates how

the African creator economy is increasingly becoming less confined by national borders. Influencers are not only collaborating online; they are travelling, experiencing one another's countries and using their platforms to introduce their audiences to new destinations.

From Addis Ababa to Maseru, a meeting at an African influencer summit has therefore evolved into something much more tangible: a Kenyan creator experiencing Lesotho and helping tell the country's story to a wider African audience.

It is perhaps one of the clearest examples of the power of digital connections, when a handshake at a conference can eventually turn into a journey across borders.

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From 8 wine producers to 52: The making of Lesotho Wine Festival

Chris Theko

What began 13 years ago as a small gathering of fewer than 100 wine enthusiasts has grown into one of Lesotho's most anticipated lifestyle and hospitality events, with the Lesotho Wine Festival preparing for another major edition this year.

Founded by wine industry veteran Paulo Feliciano De Freitas, the festival started at the then Maseru Cabanas with just eight wine producers. Today, De Freitas says the event has grown to feature 52 wine farms and more than 380 wines, attracting wine enthusiasts, corporate executives, food lovers and people simply looking to discover the world of wine.

The festival has also entered a new chapter this year, moving to the larger Part of Maseru Club grounds, with organisers maintaining attendance at around 1,000 guests despite the expanded venue.

For De Freitas, the origins of the festival are closely linked to his family's long-standing involvement in the wine business.

"My family business has been in the wine industry for the last 40 years," he explains, adding that he has personally been involved in the industry for more than two decades.

The idea behind the festival was born from De Freitas' relationships with wine producers in the Western Cape. Many of these producers would visit Lesotho to see him and taste wines with his customers, creating an opportunity to bring them together with a wider audience.

"We decided to invite a couple of friends down to do a little bit of a trip, but at the same time present some of their wines," he says.

The concept proved successful, and what began as an intimate tasting experience steadily expanded.

De Freitas attributes much of the festival's longevity to the community built around his wine business, including customers, hotels, restaurants and the broader corporate community.

He describes the festival as a way of giving back to customers who have supported the business over the years.

The event has also developed into an important corporate networking platform. Rather than positioning itself as a conventional entertainment event dominated by loud music, the festival focuses on creating an environment where people can eat, taste wine, socialise and conduct business.

"We don't play loud music. We don't try and cram everybody into uncomfortable spaces," De Freitas says.

This year, the organisers are retaining the 1,000-guest capacity despite having access to a larger venue. The event will include different hospitality spaces, including an FNB marquee accommodating approximately 400 guests, a VIP section for about 600 guests and a smaller regular area.

A new addition this year will be a Moët & Chandon lounge, alongside the launch of what De Freitas describes as a first for Africa — a limited-edition Moët & Chandon Ice bottle experience.

The festival will also put considerable emphasis on food and live entertainment.

Working with local chef Joba of Cater Care, organisers are preparing a gourmet experience featuring harvest tables from midday followed by a four-course offering, with the full menu to be released ahead of the event.

The entertainment programme is also being reshaped. Instead of relying heavily on DJs, organisers have opted to focus on live performances, with around eight local live acts expected to perform alongside two international artists.

For wine newcomers, De Freitas believes the festival offers an opportunity to discover and develop their own appreciation for wine without feeling intimidated by the expertise associated with the industry.



With wines from close to ten countries and more than 100 varieties represented, guests can explore different styles while interacting directly with the people who produce them.

"You get to meet the people that make the wine and tell you their story," he says.

At the same time, the festival's appeal extends beyond wine.

This year, FNB Lesotho is supporting ap-

proximately 30 arts and crafts vendors by covering their vendor fees, creating a platform for local entrepreneurs to showcase their work to festivalgoers.

De Freitas says the organisers are also working to create opportunities for local artists and craftspeople beyond the festival itself, including through an online store and support for participation in other events.

Perhaps one of the most significant, but less visible, contributions of the festival is employment.

According to De Freitas, approximately 550 people are employed during the week of the event, covering various aspects of production and service delivery.

For him, this is central to the festival's long-term purpose.

He wants the event to demonstrate to young Basotho that hospitality and tourism can provide meaningful careers rather than being viewed simply as temporary employment.

"The festival is a lifestyle event and it's all about hospitality," he says.

"We're just trying to set a higher standard for everybody to show them that you can make a living out of this."

However, staging an event of this scale in Lesotho is not without challenges.

De Freitas says one of the biggest difficulties is finding local service providers with sufficient capacity to handle a large-scale event. He also identifies the movement of goods through the country's borders as a major challenge for businesses.

Despite these obstacles, the festival continues to grow.

Its evolution from eight wine producers and fewer than 100 guests to 52 wine farms, hundreds of wines and hundreds of temporary jobs reflects not only the growth of the event itself, but also the potential De Freitas sees in Lesotho's hospitality, tourism and lifestyle sectors.

And as the 13th edition approaches, his ambition extends beyond creating a successful annual wine event.

For De Freitas, the bigger objective is to demonstrate what is possible when hospitality is treated as a serious industry, one capable of creating careers, supporting entrepreneurs, attracting visitors and bringing people together.

The Lesotho Wine Festival, he believes, is ultimately about much more than wine.

It is about building an experience, creating opportunities and raising the standard of hospitality in Lesotho.



Nkanda, Makhakhe crowned Independence Rankings Cup champions

Seabata Mahao

Lindiwe Nkanda and Neo Makhakhe emerged as the respective champions of the Independence Rankings Cup following a three-day tennis tournament held at the Maseru Tennis Courts over the weekend.

The tournament, which began on Friday, was organised by the Lesotho Lawn Tennis Association (LLTA) as part of activities marking Lesotho's 60th Independence Anniversary.

Despite players being given a relatively short period to register, the competition attracted a strong field, including players based in South Africa who travelled to Lesotho to

take part.

In the women's open category, 'Mankopane Seapei finished as runner-up to Nkanda and collected the silver medal, while Tumeliso Lepota claimed bronze.

In the men's open category, Makhakhe took the top honours, with Khetla Khetla finishing second and Kamohelo Mathibela securing the bronze medal.

Beyond the senior competition, the tournament placed significant emphasis on developing the next generation of tennis players, with junior categories providing young athletes with an opportunity to compete and gain valuable experience.

In the girls' Under-10 category, Lehakoe

Hloma won gold, while Thoahlane emerged victorious in the boys' section.

Kamohelo Sholu claimed the girls' Under-12 title, with Naleli Thejane taking the boys' crown.

The Under-14 titles went to Leseli Ramaile in the girls' category and Kabelo Setai in the boys' category.

In the Under-16 competition, 'Mamphosi Molumo won the girls' title, while Letlotlo Se-koati finished first in the boys' category.

The LLTA continues to use tournaments such as the Independence Rankings Cup not only as competitive events but also as an important pathway for talent identification and development.

For junior players, the competition offered much-needed match exposure, allowing them to test their skills against opponents of different levels while gaining experience in a competitive environment.

The participation of players from South Africa also added an international dimension to the tournament, giving local players an opportunity to compete against athletes from outside Lesotho.

With the Independence Rankings Cup combining celebration, competition and talent development, the tournament provided a fitting sporting contribution to Lesotho's 60th anniversary celebrations while strengthening the country's tennis development pipeline.

No Independence Cup for diamond jubilee: Someone dropped the ball

Seabata Mahao

Lesotho Independence turned 60 this month, yet a tournament that puts football at the heart of independence celebrations was missing from the calendar.

The country gained independence from Britain on 4 October 1966, and the Independence Cup was designed as part of the celebrations marking that milestone, played by the clubs that finished the previous league season in the top four. In recent years it became one of the most coveted trophies in domestic football.

Its modern life owes much to corporate backing. Standard Lesotho Bank revived the competition in 2011 when the bank joined forces with the football family. Metropolitan Lesotho and Standard Lesotho Bank put up M200,000 for that edition, and Metropolitan's managing director said the aim was to help unite the nation over the independence holidays.

By 2015, the two companies were bankrolling the tournament to the tune of M600,000, with the winner collecting M110,000. Standard Lesotho Bank promised that the 50th anniversary edition would make every Mosotho proud.

Even in lean times, the tournament survived. When Metropolitan announced its departure, organisers cancelled one edition in October for lack of a sponsor, only for it to be revived for December at Setsoto Stadium. New backers including Econet Telecom Lesotho, Maluti Mountain



Cement and Builders City came on board, and Metropolitan returned. If a cup could be rescued late for an ordinary year, why not for the diamond jubilee?

Sixty years of independence is a once-in-a-generation moment for a brand to be part of the national story. The banks, telecoms, insurers and builders that spend on advertising throughout the year should have been queuing to attach their names to this.

Instead, they stayed away, or were never asked. We do not know which, and the Premier League Management Committee (PLMC) and the Lesotho Football Association (LeFA) will say whether anyone was approached.

The calendar was not an excuse. Likuena

completed its international duties early, leaving ample room for a two-day tournament. Yet supporters got ordinary league fixtures. The 2025/26 season ended with Lijabatho champions, followed by Lifofane, Bantu and Matlama in the top four; a ready-made line-up for a jubilee showdown.

The cost of that omission goes beyond football. As this paper has reported, the main celebrations at Setsoto Stadium struggled to draw crowds. Football is one of the few things that still brings Basotho of every political stripe and every district into the same stadium.

A tournament in the independence week, with flags, a festive atmosphere and a

sponsor-backed prize pot, could have given families a reason to come out and mark the day.

Responsibility is shared. Corporate Lesotho missed a chance to be remembered. PLMC and LeFA should have started planning for a date they have known about for six decades, and should have gone looking for backers early. A tournament should never depend on last-minute rescues.

Lesotho will not turn 60 again. There is still time to ensure the 61st anniversary, and every one after it, has football in it. The Independence Cup should return, with sponsors who understand that this is more than a marketing line.

Seabata Mahao

Lesotho's next generation of sporting talent is taking centre stage as the fourth edition of the National Youth Games gets underway across Maseru and Mafeteng.

The Games which played from October 2 to 3, brought together young athletes from different parts of the country, opened over the weekend with competition spanning a range of sporting disciplines. The annual event provides a platform for youth athletes to compete, gain experience and attract the attention of national federations and coaches.

The 2026 edition follows the continued expansion of the Games in recent years. The 2025 edition featured athletes aged between 14 and 19 and 15 sporting disciplines, underlining the growing role of the Games as a talent-identification platform for Lesotho.

Athletics got underway at Leshoboro Stadium in Mafeteng, where the events were officially opened by Federation of Athletics Lesotho president Tseliso Pheta.

The stadium has since been a hive of activity, with young athletes battling for medals across various track and field events. The athletics programme has provided an early opportunity for emerging runners, jumpers and field-event athletes to demonstrate their potential.

Meanwhile, Rugby 7s was staged at Mabote Grounds in Maseru, featuring both boys' and girls' competitions.

The performances highlighted the depth of young rugby talent in the country, with the Federation of Lesotho Rugby continuing to use youth competitions as an avenue for developing players who could eventually progress to senior national teams.

Cycling has also formed part of the Games programme, with riders competing in boys' and girls' road race criterium events as well as BMX Freestyle.

The cycling programme was officially opened by Lesotho National Olympic Committee (LNOC) Board Member Makara Thibinyane. One of the memorable moments came when riders in the sub-junior category received an unexpected boost as Prime Minister Sam

Youth Games: Where Lesotho's future gems shine



Maseru National Youth Games

Matekane joined them during the activities.

The Games have also taken competition beyond traditional track and field sports.

Aquatics featured both indoor and open-water swimming, with events held at The Lehakoe Club and Lesotho Durham Link. The swimming programme gave young athletes an opportunity to test themselves in different aquatic disciplines while gaining valuable competitive experience.

Beach volleyball returned for the second consecutive edition of the National Youth

Games, further broadening the sporting opportunities available to young Basotho athletes.

At CRC Hall, taekwondo provided another highlight of the Games. The martial arts competition showcased discipline, technical ability and determination, with young competitors demonstrating the potential available within the sport.

The range of disciplines featured at the Games reflects the LNOC's broader objective of creating opportunities for young athletes beyond the country's traditionally dominant sporting codes.

The National Youth Games have increasingly become an important part of Lesotho's sporting development pipeline, allowing federations to identify promising athletes at an early age and give them exposure to organized competition.

The 2025 Games, for instance, expanded to 15 sporting disciplines, including athletics, swimming, boxing, chess, cricket, cycling, mountain biking, rowing, women's rugby, table tennis, taekwondo, tennis, beach volleyball, Baseball5, badminton and judo.

The 2026 Games are therefore took place against a backdrop of growing attention towards youth development in sport. Beyond the medals, the competition is expected to help young athletes develop confidence, discipline, competitive experience and an understanding of what is required to progress to higher levels.

LDF Ladies make flying start to WSL title defence

Seabata Mahao

LDF Ladies have wasted no time reminding their rivals of their championship credentials after opening their Women's Super League (WSL) campaign with a convincing 5-1 victory over FC Stoko at the weekend.

The defending champions produced the biggest result of the opening round, putting five goals past Stoko in a dominant display that underlined their attacking strength and determination to retain the title.

The victory gives LDF an early boost in the title race and will provide confidence to the players and technical team as they prepare for another test against Bokamoso C Ladies this weekend.

LDF's title defence comes after another appearance on the international stage, with the champions recently competing in the COSAFA Women's Champions League for the third time. The experience of facing some of the region's leading clubs could prove valuable as they seek to dominate the domestic competition once again.

While the continental campaign may have brought its share of lessons and setbacks, LDF will be hoping to use that experience to strengthen their bid for another WSL crown and a return to the international stage next year.

FC Stoko, meanwhile, will have little time to dwell on their heavy defeat. They face



LDF Ladies FC squad

another difficult assignment against Berea Ladies, who also made a strong start to the campaign.

Berea Ladies opened their account with an impressive 4-1 victory over PK Stars Ladies. Their commanding performance immediately placed them among the teams expected to challenge for honours this season.

A victory over Stoko would allow Berea to maintain their momentum and keep pace with the early leaders.

Kick4Life Women, who surrendered the championship to LDF last season, also announced their intentions with a 4-1 win over Mphaki HS Ladies.

The result puts Kick4Life among the early pace-setters alongside LDF and Berea, although they will need greater consistency if they are to mount a serious challenge for the title this season.

The opening round was largely characterised by attacking football and goals, with every match producing goals except the encounter between Bokamoso C Ladies and LMPS Ladies, which ended in a goalless draw.

The stalemate was a sharp contrast to the other fixtures, with both teams settling for a share of the points.

Lijabatho Ladies and Emmanuel Queens did not feature in the opening round but are expected to get their campaigns underway this weekend.

With matches coming thick and fast, teams will have little opportunity to recover from poor results. The early stages of the season have already highlighted the importance of consistency, fitness and the ability to bounce back quickly.

For LDF, Berea and Kick4Life, the challenge will be to maintain their strong starts throughout the campaign rather than allowing their early momentum to fade.

The next round promises another opportunity for the contenders to strengthen their positions, while those who suffered defeats will be looking to respond immediately.

WSL fixtures – Sunday: Emmanuel Queens vs LMPS Ladies — FSC Stadium, 10:00, Berea Ladies vs FC Stoko — FSC Stadium, 12:30, Kick4Life Women vs PK Stars Ladies — FSC Stadium, 15:00, Bokamoso C Ladies vs LDF Ladies — Pitso House, Quthing, 11:30, and Mphaki HS Ladies vs Lijabatho Ladies — Pitso House, Quthing, 14:00.



In-form Bantu eye fifth win against Lifofane



Bantu FC squad

Seabata Mahao

Vodacom Premier League (VPL) log leaders Bantu FC will look to extend their strong start to the season when they take on Lifofane at Bambatha Tšita Sports Arena on 10 October.

Bantu have won four of their five matches this season and drawn the other, giving them 13 points and the top spot on the log. They are yet to taste defeat. The match kicks off at 15:30 and closes a quadruple-header at Bambatha Tšita.

The league leaders come into the fixture in confident mood after a 4-1 win over Mzamane FC at Ratjomose Stadium on

October 3, their first match since the three-week international break.

The day's action at Bambatha Tšita begins at 09:30, when Machokha take on Mzamane, who sit 15th with three points from five matches. Lioli face Majantja at 11:30, followed by Limkokwing University against Matlama at 13:30. Bantu and Lifofane then bring the programme to a close at 15:30.

Four matches follow on Sunday, all kicking off at 15:00. LCS FC host LDF FC at LCS Ground, while Lijabatho welcome Members at Bambatha. At Liraoeleng Ground, Villa FC face LMPS FC, and Linare

FC host Manonyane at the S. Thejane Technical Centre in Maputsoe.

Bantu coach Motheo Mohapi said his players had to handle considerable pressure against Mzamane but delivered the three points that put them top of the table.

"The players were under a lot of pressure during this match, but I am very happy to have secured these three points, which have placed us at the top of the table," Mohapi said.

The sides were evenly matched in the first half, but Moeketsi Sekola broke the deadlock for Bantu shortly before the

interval. Substitute Itumeleng Falene doubled the lead in the 70th minute, and Thabo Mafatle added a third soon afterwards.

Mzamane pulled one back two minutes later, but Tšeliso Botsane restored the three-goal cushion with Bantu's fourth.

Mohapi said his team would keep working hard as they chase the title. On his part, Mzamane coach Monyane Mohlomi admitted his side had problems but took encouragement from their ability to score.

"We almost achieved what we had planned, but, honestly, our team experienced problems here and there, which is why we conceded so many goals. However, the result shows that our team is still improving," he said.

Elsewhere on Saturday, Linare FC came from behind to draw 1-1 with Limkokwing University FC at Ratjomose, with forward Mofihli Mabokoane equalising in the 80th minute.

Limkokwing had taken the lead in the 50th minute and controlled much of the second half, with Linare struggling to break down their organised defence. Mabokoane's strike with 10 minutes left denied the visitors all three points.

Limkokwing coach Ntlaloe Ntlaloe blamed recklessness for the dropped points. "We had three points in our hands, but we let it slip due to recklessness," he said. He also pointed to missed first-half chances and admitted that his substitutions cost the team its shape.

Linare assistant coach Pusetso Mohapi praised his players' fighting spirit. "We showed great fight against Limkokwing even though we didn't get all the three points," he said. The draw preserved Linare's unbeaten home record.



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