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DECLARED UNDESIRABLE: THE SILENT VIOLATION OF LESOTHO'S RIGHT TO MOVE



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SAMATU calls for employment of local doctors amid staff shortages

The South African Medical Association Trade Union (SAMATU) has called on government to urgently appoint unemployed South African doctors, saying the public health system remains understaffed despite the availability of qualified local graduates. The union said hiring unemployed doctors would help ease pressure on public hospitals and address what it described as an injustice facing local medical professionals. The call follows concerns raised by ActionSA over the Gauteng Department of Health's reported annual spending of more than R612 million on foreign healthcare professionals. SAMATU general secretary Dr Cedric Sihlangu said local doctors should be prioritised for employment, while stressing that all healthcare professionals legally in the country must be protected under the law.

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Declared undesirable: the silent violation of Lesotho's right to move

RANTAU TLALI MAKHETHA

MASERU-Every morning, at crossings like Maseru Bridge, Ficksburg, Caledonspoort and Van Rooyen's Gate, a quiet but consequential drama unfolds.

Basotho citizens – students heading to lectures, patients seeking treatment unavailable at home, traders carrying goods to market, workers commuting to jobs that keep their families fed – approach South African immigration officials and are, without warning or explanation, turned away. Some are stamped “DECLARED UNDESIRABLE.”

Others receive the blunter “REFUSED ENTRY.” No written reasons are given. No appeal is offered. No official can point to the specific legal provision that justifies the decision. It simply happens, and it happens daily.

This is the picture painted in a public statement issued this week by the Migrant Workers Association of Lesotho (MWA-Ls), signed by its Executive Director, Lerato Nelson Nkhetše. The statement is not merely a complaint; it is an indictment, framed in the precise language of international law, of a system that treats a sovereign state's citizens as inconvenient traffic to be filtered at will.

And it deserves to be read not as the grievance of an aggrieved lobby group, but as a serious legal and diplomatic challenge that South Africa, SADC, and the African Union can no longer afford to leave unanswered.

The facts, as MWA-Ls presents them, are stark in their simplicity. Lesotho is, in the language of international law, a landlocked state – in fact, the only country in the world entirely enclaved within a single other nation.

There is no coastline to fall back on, no alternative border to route around a difficult official, no second path to the sea or to the wider region.

When the frontier with South Africa closes, even partially, even arbitrarily, against a single traveller on a single morning, that traveller's access to healthcare, education, employment or family is not delayed – it is severed.

This is the structural vulnerability that international law was specifically built to address, and it is precisely the vulnerability that daily practice at these border posts appears to ignore.

It is worth pausing on what this enclave status actually means in practical terms, because it is easy for outsiders to underestimate. A Mosotho refused entry at Ficksburg cannot simply try a different port, board a different ferry, or fly around the obstruction. Lesotho's entire external economic and social life – its labour migration

to the mines and farms of the Free State, its students at South African universities, its patients referred to Bloemfontein for specialist care unavailable in Maseru – runs through a single neighbour's discretion. This is not a minor inconvenience born of bureaucratic friction. It is closer to a chokehold, one that a handful of overlapping legal instruments were specifically drafted, over the course of six decades, to prevent.

MWA-Ls catalogues nine distinct instruments that speak to this situation, and the breadth of the list is itself an argument.

The United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea, in its Articles 125 to 131, guarantees landlocked states the right of access to and from the sea and freedom of transit through neighbouring territory, explicitly barring discrimination by transit states.

The 1965 Vienna Convention on Transit Trade exists for the same purpose, promising landlocked nations free transit and simplified procedures.

The General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade, in its Article V, guarantees freedom of transit for both persons and goods without unreasonable delay.

Closer to home, the SADC Protocol on the Facilitation of Movement of Persons, signed in 2005, and the SADC Protocol on Trade and Transport both bind South Africa, as a member state, to visa-free entry, non-discrimination, and the removal of unnecessary barriers to movement for fellow SADC citizens.

The African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights, in Article 12, and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, in its own Article 12, both enshrine freedom of movement as a basic human right, not a discretionary courtesy.

The African Union's Agenda 2063 commits the continent, at least on paper, to a borderless Africa with free movement of people as one of its defining ambitions. And bilaterally, Lesotho and South Africa maintain a 90-day visa-free arrangement that should, in ordinary circumstances, make border crossings a formality rather than a gamble.

Taken together, this is not a thin legal argument. It is a dense, overlapping web of binding and quasi-binding commitments, several of which South Africa has itself ratified and championed as evidence of its regional leadership.

And yet, according to MWA-Ls, the daily reality at the border bears almost no relationship to any of it. The organisation cites the case of a named individual – identity withheld out of evident caution – turned back on 27 December 2023, describing it as merely one visible instance of a



crisis that recurs, unremarked and largely undocumented, every single day. That specificity matters.

It is easy for institutions to treat systemic failure as an abstraction until a name and a date are attached to it, and MWA-Ls has clearly made a deliberate choice to anchor its appeal in lived consequence rather than statistics alone.

What makes this a governance story, and not simply a border-post story, is the absence of due process. MWA-Ls is not principally arguing that Basotho citizens should never be refused entry into South Africa; reasonable, lawful refusals – properly documented, subject to appeal, grounded in genuine security or health concerns – are not what is being condemned.

The complaint is structural: refusals issued with no written reasons, no mechanism to contest them, and apparently no consistent standard applied by officials on the ground.

That is not border management. That is the exercise of unaccountable discretionary power against people who, under the very instruments South Africa has signed, are entitled to something better.

When a state signs a protocol guaranteeing non-discrimination and simplified procedure, and then administers its actual border in a manner indistinguishable from arbitrary exclusion, the gap between commitment and conduct becomes the story.

There is also an economic dimension that risks being overlooked in a discussion framed primarily around rights. Lesotho's economy remains deeply intertwined with South Africa's through remittances, cross-border labour, and trade routed through South African ports.

Every trader turned back at Maseru Bridge on a market day is a transaction that does not happen, income that does not reach a household, and – multiplied across a population

where a significant share of families rely on some form of cross-border economic activity – a quiet drag on an already fragile economy.

The SADC Protocol on Trade and Transport was drafted precisely because regional integration architects understood that arbitrary border friction imposes costs far beyond the individual traveller turned away; it undermines the entire logic of a regional common market that SADC has spent decades trying to build.

MWA-Ls has translated its concerns into four concrete demands directed at the Government of South Africa, SADC, the African Union, the United Nations and the European Union.

First, that these bodies reaffirm and enforce the binding obligations already agreed to under UNCLOS, the SADC protocols and the African Charter – in other words, that existing law be applied rather than reinvented.

Second, the establishment of a joint Lesotho-South Africa monitoring mechanism, paired with a fast-track appeals process for entry refusals, so that a rejected traveller has somewhere to turn other than simply going home.

Third, mandatory training and sensitisation for border officials on the special legal status afforded to landlocked countries and their citizens – a modest, low-cost intervention that speaks to how much of this crisis may be attributable not to policy but to plain unfamiliarity with the law among frontline staff.

Fourth, an end to what the statement calls “the daily harm”: the routine separation of families and denial of transit rights that, cumulatively, amount to a slow erosion of Basotho mobility.

There is a broader continental resonance here that regional bodies would do well to notice. Africa has, for more than a decade, marketed the promise of free movement as central to

its integration project, from the African Continental Free Trade Area to Agenda 2063's rhetoric of a borderless continent. Landlocked states – and Africa has more of them, proportionally, than any other continent – are the litmus test of whether that promise is real or merely aspirational.

Zambia, Botswana, Zimbabwe, Malawi and eSwatini all share some version of this vulnerability, dependent on neighbours' goodwill for access to ports and markets.

But Lesotho's case is uniquely acute: it is not merely landlocked, it is entirely surrounded, with no second or third neighbour to fall back on if relations with the primary transit state sour, even briefly, at a single checkpoint on a single day.

If a country as small, as peaceful, and as legally compliant as Lesotho cannot secure reliable, lawful transit through its only neighbour, the credibility of every grander integration ambition on the continent is called into question. MWA-Ls frames this pointedly: “Lesotho did not choose geography. But we did choose peace, cooperation, and respect for international law.” It is a line calculated to embarrass, and it should be.

None of this absolves South Africa's border officials of legitimate security concerns, nor does it suggest open borders without any form of screening. Sovereign states retain the right to manage who enters their territory, and nothing in the instruments MWA-Ls cites strips South Africa of that authority.

But the distance between screening and arbitrary exclusion is exactly where due process is supposed to live, and it is precisely that space MWA-Ls insists has collapsed.

A refusal with a written reason and a right of appeal is border management.

A refusal stamped without explanation, with no recourse, is something closer to the exercise of naked power against people who have no meaningful way to contest it.

Whether the Government of South Africa, SADC's secretariat, or the African Union's institutions choose to respond with the urgency the statement demands remains to be seen.

Diplomatic appeals of this kind are easily filed away, especially when they concern a small country with limited leverage over a far larger neighbour.

But what is harder to dispute is that the legal architecture MWA-Ls cites already exists, was already signed, and is already being tested daily against the experience of ordinary Basotho travellers at the border.

The question now is not whether the law is adequate. It is whether anyone intends to enforce it – and how many more mornings will pass, at Maseru Bridge and Ficksburg and Caledonspoort, before someone does. **Want to be notified when Claude reports?**



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LESOTHO BE SHARP, NOT FOR PERSONS UNDER THE AGE OF 18.



Cracks widen in Basotho development front as four constituency chairs threaten court action

- Legal letter accuses party leader Bothata Mahlala of dissolving executive without quorum
- Advocate Fusi Sehapi demands elections within 37 days or High Court showdown looms
- Dispute centers on fate of Interim National Executive appointed over a year ago

RANTAU TLALI MAKHETHA

MASERU- The Basotho Development Front (BDF), one of the newer entrants on Lesotho's crowded political landscape, is facing an internal legal challenge from within its own ranks after four constituency committee chairpersons instructed lawyers to demand the reinstatement of the party's original Interim National Executive Committee and the convening of a long-overdue national conference.

In a letter of demand dated July 8, 2026 and addressed to the BDF's National Executive, Maseru-based law firm Goldman Mustard Inc, acting on behalf of Napo Taole, Malefetsane Tlali, Thabang Mokoena and Khotso Janki, has given the party seven days to issue a circular calling a Special General Meeting for the election of a properly constituted National Executive Committee, with elections to follow within 37 days of that notice.

Failing compliance, the four say they are prepared to approach the High Court.

The complainants describe themselves as chairpersons of the party's Qoaling No. 37, Khubetsoana No. 28, TY No. 24 and Koro-Koro No. 46 constituency committees respectively. A list attached to the letter also names Keneuoe Jane and Mpolai Mopeli, secretaries general of the Likotsi No. 36 and Peka No. 17 constituency committees, as concerned members aligned to the cause.

A party in turmoil since its founding

According to the letter, penned by Advocate Fusi Sehapi, the BDF was established and registered around April or May 2025, with party leader Bothata Mahlala appointing an Interim National Executive comprising roughly 17 portfolios.

That structure, the complainants say, was always meant to be temporary a stopgap arrangement to keep the party running until its first Annual General Meeting or Special General Meeting, at which a substantive, elected National Executive Committee would take over.

More than a year later,



that election has still not happened, and the interim arrangement has instead deepened.

The letter states that internal divisions prompted Mahlala to dissolve both the National Executive and the party's Youth League, leaving only about seven members on the National Executive and suspending all Youth League committee members bar the League's president.

The complainants argue that seven members cannot constitute a quorum for a body of roughly 17 portfolios, and that the party is therefore unable to function or execute its mandate.

They attribute the ongoing turbulence to what the letter calls selfish jockeying for power by some members, compounded by the absence of a properly and democratically elected executive.

The letter also takes aim at the creation of positions the complainants say do not exist in the BDF constitution, singling out a Deputy Chief Publicist role occupied by one 'Matlotliso Lebajoa, whom they accuse of stoking internal division.

Constitutional grounds cited

Sehapi's letter leans heavily on the BDF's own founding document to make its case. It cites Article 12.3(b), read with Article 5.2(c)(x) of the party constitution, as establishing that a quorum for the National Executive Committee requires a simple majority 50 percent plus one of its members.

On that reading, the remaining seven-member rump falls well short, and the letter contends that Mahlala has no constitutional power to dissolve and reconstitute an interim committee at will.

The letter further invokes Article 9.15, which it says obliges the Secretary General to convene an Annual General Meeting in the last week of every financial year, at which the party would be expected to review the interim committee's operations and decide whether to hold elections or extend the interim arrangement.

The BDF's financial year closed on 31 December 2025, according to the letter, yet no such meeting was called.

Sehapi frames the

prolonged life of an unelected interim structure as offensive to basic democratic principle, arguing in the letter that authority in a constitutional democracy resides with the party's members and voters, not with an appointed committee left in place indefinitely.

The complainants say they have raised these grievances with the party leadership on several occasions, including writing directly to the National Executive and summoning Mahlala to meetings.

At one such meeting, the letter states, Mahlala indicated he would consider their requests only for the National Executive to later determine that the constituency committees lacked the standing to correspond with the leader in the first place, a decision the complainants say explains why their concerns were never addressed.

What the complainants are demanding

The letter sets out three specific demands under Article 5.2(c) of the BDF constitution:

That the party issue a circular or memorandum within seven days of receiving the letter, calling a Special General Meeting for the election of the National Executive Committee; that an Ad Hoc Elections Committee be established as provided for in the constitution; and that elections for the National Executive be held within 37 days of that circular being issued.

Should the party fail to comply, the complainants have indicated through their attorneys that they will approach the High Court seeking a series of orders.

These include a declaration that the dissolution of the original Interim National Executive was unlawful and void from the outset; a declaration that the newly constituted interim structure is itself unconstitutional and void; and an order reinstating the original interim committee as it stood when registered with the Law Office and the Independent Electoral Commission.

The complainants also want any reinstated

committee legally confined to the narrow task of organising elections, rather than exercising the fuller decision-making powers an interim executive might otherwise claim.

Further prayers sought include a court-ordered timeline mirroring the one set out in the letter of demand a memorandum within seven days of any order, and a Special General Meeting within 37 days of that memorandum as well as a standing interdict barring the appointment of any future committee outside a democratic election process.

A test for a young party

The dispute lands at a delicate moment for the BDF, which registered only last year and has yet to establish the kind of settled internal governance culture that older, more established parties in Lesotho's political arena have developed – often, it must be said, through their own bruising succession battles.

How Mahlala and the National Executive respond to the seven-day ultimatum will likely shape perceptions of the party's internal democratic credentials going into whatever electoral contests lie ahead.

Neither the BDF's National Executive Bothata Mahlala had responded to the letter of demand at the time of going to print. This publication has sought comment from the party and will update this report with any response received.

The matter also raises broader questions that recur across Lesotho's newer political formations: how founding leaders balance the practical need for a functioning interim structure against the constitutional obligation to submit to member-driven elections within a reasonable time, and what recourse rank-and-file structures in this case, constituency-level committees have when they believe that balance has tipped too far in the leader's favour.

For now, the clock set out in Goldman Mustard Inc's letter is running. Whether the BDF leadership moves to convene the demanded Special General Meeting, or the dispute proceeds to the High Court as threatened, should become clear well within the 37-day window the complainants have set for elections to be held.

Women leaders unite for peace in Lesotho



to remain committed to their mission of creating lasting change within their communities.

The event also celebrated peace through culture, with performances by local artists including a choir and spoken-word artists whose presentations reflected themes of unity, reconciliation and hope.

The performances highlighted the power of arts and culture in inspiring dialogue and bringing communities together.

Throughout the day, participants engaged in networking sessions that allowed representatives from different organisations to explore opportunities for future collaboration.

Many attendees welcomed the opportunity to learn from one another and expressed appreciation for IWPG's practical approach to peacebuilding, which combines education with community engagement and partnerships.

The forum also reinforced the growing recognition of women's contribution to peacebuilding, particularly at community level where they often serve as mediators, mentors and advocates for social harmony.

IWPG is an international non-governmental organisation registered with the United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) and associated with the United Nations Department of Global Communications. The organisation works with women across the world to promote peace education, solidarity and cooperation while advocating for sustainable peace and an end to war.

LIAPENG RALIENGOANE

MASERU – Women have been encouraged to take a leading role in promoting peace and strengthening communities as the International Women's Peace Group (IWPG), Global Region 6, hosted its Women's Peace Leadership Forum and Partnership Launch in Maseru on Monday.

The forum, held under the theme "Women Leading Peace – Building Sustainable Communities Through Education, Partnership and Action," brought together women leaders, civil society organisations, peace advocates and community stakeholders to discuss how collaboration, education and community action can contribute to sustainable peace in Lesotho. Delivering a presentation on IWPG and its Peace Lecturer Training Education (PLTE) programme, Johannesburg Branch Manager Faith Van Wyk said peace is not achieved through government

intervention alone but through the active participation of ordinary citizens.

She explained that IWPG's peacebuilding model follows a two-track approach by working simultaneously with government institutions and grassroots communities. According to Van Wyk, this strategy creates an environment where peace is promoted at both policy and community levels, allowing lasting solutions to emerge from cooperation rather than conflict.

She noted that education remains one of the most effective tools for building peaceful societies, as it equips people with the knowledge and skills needed to resolve disputes through dialogue and mutual understanding instead of violence.

Van Wyk also highlighted the role women play as educators, caregivers, community organisers and leaders, saying they are uniquely positioned to influence future generations and



foster a culture of peace within families and communities.

A highlight of the forum was the testimony shared by members of the Lesotho Peace Committee, who reflected on the committee's journey since partnering with IWPG.

Members described how peace education programmes and community outreach activities have continued to grow, reaching more people with messages promoting dialogue, understanding and social cohesion.

Their experiences demonstrated how grassroots initiatives can create meaningful change by encouraging communities to resolve

differences peacefully and work together towards common goals.

Adding an international perspective to the discussions, the IWPG Global Region 6 Director commended the Lesotho Peace Committee for its commitment and perseverance in advancing peace despite challenges.

The Director encouraged members not to lose hope or become discouraged, reminding them that every conversation held, every workshop conducted and every partnership formed contributes to building a more peaceful society.

"Every effort you make towards peace matters," the Director said, urging participants

Research highlights Basotho wisdom in climate change response



LIAPENG RALIENGOANE

As climate change continues to disrupt rainfall patterns, threaten food security and increase the frequency of extreme weather events, a Mosotho researcher is calling for indigenous knowledge to be recognised as an important part of Lesotho’s climate adaptation efforts.

In a study titled *Basotho Culture and the Prayers for Rain: Where Climate Change Converges*, researcher Lineo R. Johnson of the University of South Africa argues that Basotho communities have understood and responded to changing climatic conditions for generations through indigenous knowledge, cultural practices and environmental observation.

Published in the *Southern African Journal for Folklore Studies*, the research explores how traditional rainmaking ceremonies and prayers reflect Basotho people’s long-standing relationship with the environment and their understanding of

climate variability. Johnson notes that while climate change is often regarded as a modern global phenomenon, many Basotho communities, particularly those in rural areas, have historically experienced and interpreted changing weather patterns through their own cultural lens. “The study concludes that African communities, in this context the Basotho, have been engaged in climate change discourses in their own indigenous ways over time and for them, climate change is not a new phenomenon,” she writes.

According to the study, rain has always occupied a central place in Basotho society because of its direct link to agriculture, livestock production and food security. During prolonged droughts, communities organised ceremonies involving chiefs, elders, women, men and young people, each playing distinct roles in prayers for rain.

Johnson explains that these ceremonies were deeply embedded

in Basotho culture and represented more than spiritual practices. They also demonstrated community solidarity and collective responsibility during times of environmental hardship.

The research documents several traditional practices, including *Molutsoane*, a hunting ceremony performed by men and *Lesokoana*, a cultural activity in which women and girls participated as part of prayers for rain. While these customs may no longer be widely practised, Johnson argues they provide valuable insight into how Basotho communities understood environmental change and responded collectively to climate-related challenges.

The study also highlights the important role played by indigenous weather observers, including herdboys, traditional healers and community elders.

Their observations of animal behaviour,

seasonal changes and natural indicators were used to anticipate weather conditions and guide farming decisions.

Johnson argues that such indigenous knowledge should not be dismissed in favour of science alone. Instead, she suggests it can complement modern meteorology and contribute to climate adaptation strategies.

Her findings align with broader international efforts to recognise indigenous knowledge in addressing climate change.

The study cites examples from other African countries where traditional environmental knowledge is increasingly being incorporated into climate planning and adaptation policies.

Lesotho remains among the countries most vulnerable to climate change.

According to the research, rising temperatures, erratic rainfall, environmental degradation and recurring

droughts continue to threaten livelihoods, particularly in rural communities that depend on rain-fed agriculture.

Johnson further argues that climate adaptation policies should involve traditional leaders, rural communities and custodians of indigenous knowledge alongside scientists, policymakers and development partners. She believes their lived experiences can strengthen national efforts to build resilience against climate change.

The researcher concludes that understanding Basotho history and cultural practices offers an opportunity to enrich contemporary climate discussions rather than replace scientific approaches.

“In order for Basotho to make sense of climate change,” she concludes, “they should revisit their historical experiences and build these into future knowledge.”

B BUSINESS

Strength and growth come only through continuous effort and struggle."
- Napoleon Hill, author

Out of your vulnerabilities will come your strength." - Sigmund Freud, neurologist and founder of psychoanalysis

SLB introduces cross border payment system between Africa and China



NEO SENOKO

MASERU-Standard Lesotho Bank has launched the Cross-Border Interbank Payment System (CIPS), becoming the first bank in Lesotho to offer clients access to this pioneering payment capability that facilitates direct Renminbi (RMB) transactions between Africa and China.

CIPS is China's global payment infrastructure for the clearing and settlement of cross border Renminbi transactions. The system enables participating financial

institutions to process RMB payments more efficiently, securely and transparently, supporting growing trade and investment flows between Africa and China. Standard Bank was the first African bank authorised to participate in CIPS, reinforcing its position as a leading facilitator of Africa-China trade and investment.

The launch marks a significant milestone in the Bank's commitment to enabling international trade, supporting economic growth and providing innovative payment solutions for businesses that trade

with one of the world's largest economies. "China remains one of Africa's most important trading partners, and many Basotho businesses rely on imports, equipment, machinery and goods sourced from China. By introducing CIPS to the Lesotho market, we are providing our clients with a more efficient payment solution that supports their growth ambitions while strengthening trade connectivity between Lesotho, the continent and the global economy," said 'Matsepo Mohapi, Head of Corporate and Investment Banking at Standard Lesotho Bank. Through

Standard Lesotho Bank, local businesses can now access this capability for payments with Chinese suppliers and other participating institutions within the CIPS network, helping to simplify international transactions and improve operational efficiency.

The launch comes at a time when trade between Africa and China continues to expand, creating increased demand for efficient and dependable cross-border payment solutions. Standard Bank research has shown growing business engagement with China across the

continent, highlighting the importance of payment infrastructure that supports seamless international commerce

As a member of the Standard Bank Group, Standard Lesotho Bank is leveraging the strength of Africa's largest banking group by assets and its extensive international network to bring world-class banking solutions to the Lesotho market.

The introduction of CIPS further strengthens Standard Lesotho Bank's position as a partner of choice for businesses seeking to expand their participation in regional and international trade.

Progress made under Regional Value Chains programme



NEO SENOKO

MASERU-Ministry of Trade, Industry and Business Development (MTIBD) has recorded a significant progress under the Regional Value Chains Lesotho Plus (RVCL+) programme, reaffirming its commitment to strengthening enterprise competitiveness, creating employment opportunities, and expanding market access for Basotho businesses.

Through targeted interventions, the programme has contributed to the growth of local enterprises through technical support, infrastructure development, capacity building and improved access to regional and

international markets.

Among other things, the programme has been able to create 122 permanent jobs within supported enterprises, with an additional 200 employment opportunities emerging through the Duck and Geese value chain. It has also provided technical support to over 100 Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) operating in sectors including natural cosmetics, herbs and spices, essential oils, seed oils and apparel.

The RVCL+ programme, co-financed by the European Union (EU) and the Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) supports the development of competitive value chains in agro-processing

and light manufacturing.

The programme has also been implemented in partnership with the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH.

Furthermore, a total of five Business Hubs in Essential Oils, Seed Oils, Herbs and Spices, Natural Cosmetics and Apparel has also been established under the programme under the management of BEDCO to provide shared production facilities and strengthen industrial capacity.

The ministry has shared that it recognizes challenges affecting enterprise growth, including certification requirements, access to finance, production capacity gaps and export logistics.

In collaboration with

implementing agencies, including the Lesotho National Development Corporation (LNDC) and the Basotho Enterprises Development Corporation (BEDCO), the ministry continues to support interventions aimed at addressing these bottlenecks and improving the competitiveness of Basotho enterprises.

“The progress achieved through the RVCL+ Programme demonstrates our commitment to building a resilient, inclusive and competitive economy that creates opportunities for basothoenterprises. Through continued collaboration with our partners, we remain focused on addressing barriers to growth and strengthening Lesotho’s position in regional and

international markets,” Minister of Trade, Industry and Business Development Motlasi Magelepo said.

Going forward, Magelepo added that the ministry will continue prioritizing certification support, enterprise development, market access, capacity building and digital transformation initiatives to enhance productivity, innovation and sustainable business growth.

The programme has further managed to expand market opportunities for local businesses, with 102 companies currently participating in eight international trade fairs and Basotho products accessing markets in Europe, Japan and South Africa.



HEALTH

‘Matheko Vocational School tackles youth health challenges through skills development



LIAPENG RALIENGOANE

THABA-TSEKA – As the district continues to grapple with high rates of early and unintended pregnancies and child marriage, Matheko Vocational School is using vocational and digital skills training to keep young people engaged while preparing them for healthier and more productive futures.

The school, which offers programmes in sewing, knitting, agriculture, home economics, building, life skills and business education, is increasingly positioning itself as a youth resource centre where both in-school and out-of-school young people can access opportunities to learn.

Senior Instructor Lerato Motlalane, who has served at the institution since



2012 said the school has transformed the lives of many young people, with former students establishing successful sewing businesses, catering companies, building enterprises and plumbing businesses.

A major boost came in 2025 when the Vodacom Lesotho Foundation equipped a computer laboratory with

20 computers to improve young people's access to digital skills.

Motlalane said the computer laboratory was intentionally established to benefit both students enrolled at 'Matheko Vocational School and out-of-school youth from surrounding communities.

"The computer lab is open from Monday to Friday

for both our students and any young person from the community who wants to use it. We want all young people to have access to digital skills, regardless of whether they are enrolled here."

She said the initiative is part of efforts to address social challenges affecting young people in Thaba-Tseka. "We are experiencing high

rates of early and unintended pregnancies and child marriages. The computer laboratory was created to keep young people engaged, help them gain practical digital skills and provide positive opportunities for their future," she said.

Despite the investment, Motlalane said the school currently lacks a qualified computer instructor.

"Many young people who come here have little or no computer knowledge, yet we do not have a computer skills teacher. That is one of our greatest needs."

She added that the school also requires a professional counsellor to provide psychosocial support to young people facing personal and social challenges.

These issues emerged during a three-day mission by the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), the Ministry of Gender, Youth and Social Development, the Vodacom Lesotho Foundation and other partners, who visited youth resource centres across Thaba-Tseka to assess how they can be revived to better serve young people.

Wrapping up the mission, UNFPA Country Representative John Kennedy Mosoti said the visits were aimed at strengthening youth resource centres as safe spaces where young people can access information, life skills and opportunities.

He said the mission also focused on supporting women and girls, preventing gender-based violence, engaging men and boys, visiting health facilities, distributing winter packs to herd boys and engaging communities on issues affecting young people.

Mosoti said UNFPA and its partners will continue working together to revive youth resource centres so they can play a greater role in improving the health, wellbeing and future prospects of young people in Thaba-Tseka.



SOCIETY

Metro

Brandy reassures fans after health scare on tour



Metro

NYANISA TELE

R&B legend Brandy Norwood has fans talking for two very different reasons. While many are praising her stunning fashion choices during The Boy Is Mine Tour with Monica, others have been concerned about her health following a scary moment on stage.

During a recent

concert in Chicago, Brandy suddenly walked off stage in the middle of a performance, leaving Monica to finish the song alone. The unexpected moment sparked concern online, with fans wondering if something serious had happened.

Brandy later addressed the incident on social media, apologizing to fans and explaining that she had become severely dehydrated

after weeks of intense rehearsals and touring. She said she suddenly felt lightheaded and thought she might faint.

Although she initially tried to return to the stage, Brandy explained that it wasn't possible because of the technical adjustments needed for the show. Instead, she chose to get medical attention and focus on recovering. She also assured fans that she's

taking the necessary steps to make sure it doesn't happen again.

Away from the health scare, Brandy has also been making headlines for her bold fashion choices. At events like the Roots Picnic, she has embraced a nostalgic style, rocking a vintage-inspired Cross Colours denim outfit and a stylish auburn bob hairstyle.

While many fans have praised her confidence,

beauty and timeless style, others have expressed concern that the pressures of touring and constant public attention may be taking a toll on the singer.

Despite the worries, one thing is clear: fans around the world continue to support Brandy and are encouraging her to slow down, take care of herself and put her health first.

- ENTERTAINMENT SA

South Africa midfielder Jayden Adams dies at age 25, weeks after World Cup appearance

Metro

WEDNESDAY, JULY 15, 2026

SPORT

LEONARD SOLMS

South Africa and Mamelodi Sundowns midfielder Jayden Adams, who featured in Bafana Bafana's run to the World Cup round of 32, has died, the South African Football Players Union confirmed Saturday. He was 25.

Adams started two of South Africa's three group games and came off the bench in a 1-0 win over South Korea that sealed their place in the knockout rounds for the first time in their history on June 24.

He was an unused substitute when South Africa were knocked out of the tournament by Canada on June 28.

"Jayden had only recently represented South Africa at the FIFA World Cup, carrying the hopes of the nation with pride, courage and distinction," the South African Football Players Union said in a statement. "His passing is an immeasurable loss to his family, teammates, clubs, the football fraternity and the



country at large.

"We extend our deepest condolences to the Adams family, Mamelodi Sundowns, Stellenbosch FC, Bafana Bafana and all those whose lives he touched.

"South African football has lost a gifted player, a proud servant of the game and a young life that still had so much to offer."

Further details of his death were not given.

"Cape Town Central police registered an Inquest for investigation following the discovery of the body of a 25-year-old male on Saturday, 2026-07-11 at 11:06 at a premises in Military Road, Scotscheskloof," Western Cape South African Police Service spokesperson F.C. van Wyk told ESPN.

"Circumstances surrounding this incident are under investigation."

Adams started South Africa's 2-0 loss to Mexico and 1-1 draw with Czechia, playing in the latter game despite the death of his grandmother, Marianna Adams, the previous day.

Adams then came off the bench in the 1-0 win over South Korea, which proved to be his final game.

"When I reached out to Jayden [following the death of his grandmother]

to offer my condolences and encouragement, I shall carry forever the humble, appreciative response he gave me," Minister of Sports, Arts & Culture of South Africa Gayton McKenzie said in a Saturday statement.

"That he chose to wear the national jersey and give his all for his country in that moment speaks to a depth of character and professionalism well beyond his years, and it reflects the caliber of young man South Africa has lost."

A moment of silence in memory of Adams was held before Saturday's World Cup quarterfinal between Norway and England.

"It is so incredibly sad to hear that South Africa midfielder Jayden Adams has passed away just weeks after featuring in his nation's historic FIFA World Cup campaign," FIFA president Gianni Infantino said in a statement posted on social media.

"My thoughts and condolences, as well as those of everyone at FIFA and the global football community, are with his family, friends and team-mates. The Bafana and Mamelodi Sundowns star will be sorely missed. May he rest

in peace."

Adams played several seasons for Stellenbosch before joining Mamelodi Sundowns last year.

Adams won the CAF Champions League with Mamelodi Sundowns in May and dedicated his winners' medal to Oshwin Andries, a former Stellenbosch teammate who died in 2023 after a stabbing.

Mamelodi Sundowns said they were "devastated by the tragic passing of Jayden Adams."

"We pray that the Almighty God comforts and strengthens the Adams family, his friends and everyone that knew him," the club added.

"Sundowns respectfully ask that the family's privacy be honoured as they grieve this profound loss."

Adams and Andries came up the ranks at Stellenbosch together, and the club suffered the loss of another young player early in 2026 with the death of Jeandre Gaffoor.

- ESPN



Why Argentina requested to wear navy blue against England in 2026 World Cup semi-final

When Argentina takes on England in the 2026 Fifa World Cup semi-final at Atlanta Stadium tonight, fans will notice one big change before the first whistle. Lionel Messi and his teammates will swap their famous sky-blue and white stripes for their navy-blue away kit. The decision is not about fashion. It is about history, belief and a touch of football superstition.

Argentina requested permission from Fifa to wear their alternate kit against England, even though they are known worldwide for their traditional colours.

The request was approved, and it has sparked plenty of conversation among supporters who believe that the navy shirt carries a little extra magic. The decision is rooted in the Argentine tradition of "cábala", a belief that repeating certain routines or choices can bring good luck. In football, where rituals are common, many players and fans believe history has a way of repeating itself.

For Argentina, the blue shirt is closely linked to two unforgettable World Cup victories over England.

The first came in the 1986 quarter-final in Mexico. Wearing the navy kit, Diego Maradona produced one of the most famous performances in football history. He scored the controversial "Hand of God" goal before following it with the stunning solo effort later named the "Goal of the Century" as Argentina won 2-1. -iol



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