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ABC BLEEDS FIVE NEC MEMBERS IN A WEEK AS KABI'S LEADERSHIP FACES ITS GRAVEST TEST



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Persons with disabilities to get better access to justice

Persons with disabilities are set to have improved access to justice following a partnership between the Persons with Disability Advisory Council (PWDAC) and the Law Society of Lesotho (LSL).
The two institutions signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) in Maseru on Monday, paving the way for the Law Society to represent persons with disabilities in disability-related cases referred through PWDAC.
The Law Society of Lesotho Deputy President Advocate Mokhorro Makara said the agreement would allow the Society to use its legal mandate to represent persons with disabilities. "As LSL, the law allows us to appear before the courts of law, so through this MOU we will represent people with disabilities" Makara said.
He said the Law Society was proud of the initiative, describing the agreement as an important step towards supporting persons with disabilities.

Read the full story: <https://maserumetro.com/2026/09/16/persons-with-disabilities-to-get-better-access-to-justice/>



ABC bleeds five NEC members in a week as Kabi's leadership faces its gravest test

RANTAU TLALI MAKHETHA

MASERU-The All Basotho Convention (ABC) suffered the most damaging week of its 20-year existence after five members of its National Executive Committee (NEC) walked away from the party in the space of seven days, culminating in a single day, Monday, September 21, 2026, on which the deputy leader, the deputy chairman and the deputy secretary general all resigned within hours of one another.

Deputy Leader Samonyane Ntsekele, Deputy Chairman Lebakeng Mpana and Deputy Secretary General Tšolo Khechane submitted their resignations on Monday, a week after Secretary General Thebe Mokoatle stepped down, and days after party chairman Kemiso Mosenene had already quit the NEC with immediate effect. The departures leave the executive bench of a party that once governed Lesotho stripped of five of its most senior office-bearers.

Twenty years of service ended by conscience

In his resignation letter addressed to the ABC's National Executive Committee, the Women's League and Youth League national executive committees, constituency and branch committees, and all members of the party, Ntsekele said he had reached the decision "after deep reflection" and that it took effect immediately.

He recalled that he had served the ABC since its formation on October 17, 2006, first as Secretary General between 2014 and 2019 and thereafter as Deputy Leader,



describing the 20 years as a period of "loyalty, conviction, respect, and wholehearted commitment."

He said the decision had not come easily. "I leave with a heavy heart and deep pain after serving this party for so many years," he wrote, adding that he had faced "intimidation" over the years but had remained committed to the leadership of the ABC and to the membership and principles that brought the party together.

Ntsekele was, however, unambiguous about what had finally driven him out. He pointed to "recent differences with the Leader on matters of principle concerning the party's Constitution, its direction, and how we treat one another," which he said had become "irreconcilable."

He said he had raised his concerns internally within the NEC "with honesty and respect" but had concluded that he could "no longer serve effectively in this office while remaining true to my conscience." He was careful to frame the move as a departure from a position and not from the ABC's founding cause.

"This is not a resignation from our struggle as a nation," he wrote, thanking

branch, constituency and National Executive members and wishing the party well.

A feud that had been building since August

The resignations cap a public falling-out at the top of the ABC that first surfaced publicly on August 25, when party leader Nkaku Kabi issued a circular accusing Ntsekele and Mokoatle of "deliberately destabilising" the party. According to the Sunday Express, Kabi's circular cited a rally in the Leribe constituency that went ahead in Matlakeng instead, against the NEC's decision, a similar dispute over a rally venue in Lithabaneng, and a renewal of the lease for the party's offices that Kabi said Ntsekele had signed without the committee's knowledge, binding the ABC to twelve months' notice.

The Sunday Express also reported that, weeks before the circular, Mokoatle had been physically confronted by Kabi's bodyguards during a sitting of the NEC, with the guards saying they were acting out of concern for the leader's safety.

Mokoatle rejected the allegations in Kabi's circular as fabricated in their entirety, and Ntsekele said at the time

that he was surprised by the accusations levelled against him.

Mosenene, for his part, gave no reasons in the resignation letter he submitted to Mokoatle on September 15, according to the Lesotho Times.

He told the newspaper only that long-standing disunity within the NEC had made his position untenable.

"There is no unity at all," he was quoted as saying. No public statement setting out reasons for Monday's three resignations had been issued by Kabi or by the remaining executive by the time of publication, meaning the direct link between the August circular and this week's departures remains a matter of informed inference rather than an established fact on the public record.

From a landslide majority to eight seats

The scale of the party's collapse in recent years explains why this week's exodus matters beyond internal ABC politics.

Founded in October 2006 by former Prime Minister Tom Thabane after he broke away from the Lesotho Congress for Democracy, the ABC entered government for the first time in the 2012 general election with 30 seats, before

winning a landslide 51 constituencies in 2017 and leading the coalition government that followed.

That dominance evaporated in the October 2022 general election, in which the ABC failed to win a single constituency and was reduced to eight proportional representation seats as the newly formed Revolution for Prosperity swept to power.

Kabi, who had been elected ABC leader in February 2022 by a narrow 723 votes to 609 over Moeketsi Majoro, had been attempting to rebuild the party's structures ahead of the next election.

This week's resignations strip that rebuilding effort of the deputy leader, the chairman, the secretary general, the deputy chairman and the deputy secretary general in the space of a single week.

The ABC's history is not short of turbulence at its summit. Thabane himself relinquished the premiership in 2020 after police named him a suspect in the 2017 killing of his estranged wife, Lipolelo Thabane, a case in which his current wife, 'Maesaiah Thabane, was formally charged in early 2020; both have denied wrongdoing.

Thabane subsequently handed the party leadership to Kabi in 2022, citing his age and health.

What remains unresolved is what happens next: whether Ntsekele, Mpana, Khechane, Mokoatle and Mosenene will contest positions at the party's next elective conference, how the NEC intends to reconstitute a quorum with five fewer senior office-bearers, and whether Kabi's leadership can survive an exodus of this scale.

None of those questions had been answered publicly as Metro went to press.



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RANTAU TLALI MAKHETHA

Rights group questions LMPS account of contact with Boloetse

MASERU – The Advocates for the Supremacy of the Constitution (SECTION 2) has questioned the consistency of statements made by the Lesotho Mounted Police Service (LMPS) regarding its contact with Kananelo Boloetse, the man who was abducted, tortured and threatened with death earlier this month.

In a statement issued last week, SECTION 2 said it was placing on record a timeline of contact between Boloetse and the police since he reported the ordeal, saying the public record did not appear to match public statements made by police officials over the past ten days.

Timeline set out

According to the SECTION 2 statement, Boloetse first spoke with the police on September 9, 2026. The following day, Chief of Police Advocate Borotheo Matsoso told the public that Boloetse was unreachable and appealed to journalists to advise him to come forward.

The statement says that a few moments after those remarks were made public, Boloetse spoke with another police officer.

Two days later, on Friday, 11 September, he spoke directly with Matsoso.

On Wednesday, September 16, according to the timeline, Boloetse spoke for more than two hours, from around midday, with the head of the team investigating his case.

The following morning, Thursday, September 17, an LMPS spokesperson Superintendent Thabo Mohai told MoAfrika FM listeners that Boloetse had never spoken with investigators at all.

SECTION 2 said it was setting the timeline out “plainly” and inviting the public, the media and the LMPS itself to reconcile it, saying it showed a pattern in which contact between Boloetse and police was consistently followed, within a day, by public statements suggesting the opposite – that he was unreachable, uncooperative or absent from the investigation.

Group stops short of alleging coordination

The organisation was careful to distinguish between the pattern it says it has observed and any conclusion about its cause.

It said it was not, at this stage, alleging that the pattern was the product of a coordinated institutional decision, nor was it naming individual officers as responsible.

Its position, it said, was that the pattern itself was a matter of legitimate public concern that had repeated often enough to no longer be dismissible as isolated miscommunication, and that the LMPS owed the public a clear and honest account of the contact that had actually taken place.



SECTION 2 also said it had received information, which it described as reliably received but not yet confirmed, that the search for Boloetse had extended to the northern districts of the country, including Botha-Bothe.

The organisation asked why a search of that scale would apparently be under way for a man who, by its own timeline, had spoken with the Commissioner of Police and with the lead investigator on his case for more than two hours.

Boloetse’s silence “deliberate” The statement said Boloetse had not commented publicly on the matter since first reporting his abduction, torture and death threats to police, and that his silence had been a deliberate choice made in good faith to give investigators an undisturbed opportunity to do their work.

SECTION 2 said he did not regret that decision and continued to believe it was the right one.

The organisation said its concern extended beyond the individual case. If a matter that has drawn attention from local and international media, civil society organisations and foreign missions could be handled with this degree of inconsistency, it asked what confidence an ordinary Mosotho could have walking into a police station alone, without that scrutiny behind them.

Support for #JusticeForBoloetse

SECTION 2 said it fully supported the #JusticeForBoloetse campaign, which it noted had been started by members of the public rather than by SECTION 2 itself, a development it described as significant and encouraging.

It said it understood the campaign to represent an opportunity to examine and correct



how victims are treated at the first point at which they seek justice – the police station and the officers meant to protect them.

The organisation called on the LMPS to publicly clarify, with dates and details, the full record of contact between its officers and Boloetse since 6 September 6, and to explain the discrepancy between that record and the statements made publicly by police officials.

It also called on unnamed oversight bodies to take note of the pattern it had described, and urged Basotho, regardless of their views on SECTION 2 or on Boloetse individually, to use the moment to press for a justice system that treats every citizen’s report with consistent seriousness.

Wider implications for policing

SECTION 2’s framing of the matter goes beyond the specific question of who is telling the truth about contact with Boloetse.

The civic group has positioned the case as a test of how the LMPS communicates with the public during an active investigation into a serious crime, and of the extent to which official statements can be relied upon when they touch on the whereabouts and cooperation of a complainant.

The organisation’s statement notes that the case has already drawn a level of scrutiny that is unusual by local standards, citing attention from local and international media, civil society organisations and foreign missions.

It argues that this scrutiny is precisely what has allowed the inconsistencies in the public record to surface at all, and that the same inconsistencies would likely go unnoticed in a case involving a complainant without similar visibility.

Police yet to respond

Metro sought comment from the LMPS on the timeline set out by SECTION 2, on the discrepancy between the statements attributed to Matsoso and the LMPS spokesperson on MoAfrika FM, and on the reported search of the northern districts, including Botha-Bothe.

Police spokesperson Superintendent Mohai was not available for comment by the time of publication.

This publication will update this story should the LMPS or the office of the Commissioner of Police respond to the questions raised by SECTION 2.

Background

Boloetse’s case has drawn sustained attention since he came forward with allegations that he was abducted, tortured and threatened with death.

The matter has been followed closely by sections of the media, civil society formations and, according to SECTION 2, by foreign missions in the country.

The circumstances of the alleged abduction and the identity of those said to be responsible have not been independently established by this publication.

The LMPS has, at various points over the past ten days, made public statements characterising the extent of its contact with Boloetse, including the remarks attributed above to Matsoso and to an LMPS spokesperson on MoAfrika FM.

SECTION 2’s statement is the first attempt by an outside organisation to lay out, in sequence, the full run of contact it says took place between Boloetse and the police since September 9.

Whether the LMPS will respond directly to the timeline, or to SECTION 2’s request for a full public account of contact since September 6, remained unclear at the time of going to press.

Beautiful Maseru must also be a safe Maseru

LIAPENG RALIENGOANE

There is something encouraging about seeing Maseru becoming greener and more beautiful. The planting of flowers and trees in the city is a welcome development. For too long, parts of Maseru have looked neglected and efforts to beautify the capital should be commended. A clean, green and attractive city is good for residents, visitors and businesses. As we beautify Maseru, we must also make sure that we do not create new dangers in the process. One particular area



that concerns me is the stretch between Lesotho Funeral Services and Maseru District Hospital, where trees are obstructing the view of pedestrians and motorists. This may appear to be a small issue, but it is one that deserves attention. When pedestrians cannot

clearly see approaching vehicles and motorists cannot clearly see people intending to cross or walking along the road, the risk of an accident increases. We should not wait for someone to be knocked down before we realise that something needs to be done.



The solution does not have to be the removal of the trees altogether. Perhaps they can be trimmed, relocated or maintained in a way that preserves both the beauty of the area and visibility for road users. This is where proper urban planning and regular maintenance

become important. Beautification should never be separated from safety. Maseru can have flowers, trees and attractive public spaces while still ensuring that pedestrians and motorists can see each other clearly. Let us commend the effort to make our capital beautiful and let us also ask the responsible authorities to look at this particular area before tragedy forces us to act. We should not wait for a disaster to tell us that prevention was necessary. A beautiful Maseru is good, a beautiful and safe Maseru is even better.

RETHABILE MALEFANE

MASERU - Every Sunday after church, 15 people gather in a hall at Ha Mabote. Each brings M300, a pen and a notebook. There is no board, no donor, no logo and by noon, the money has been counted, loans have been approved and the ledger has been signed. Then they share pap and vegetables before returning home. Since January 2026, that modest ledger has paid for primary school uniforms, for five children, bought a second-hand deep freezer for a potato chips vendor near the main road and financed a M10 000 interest-free loan for a member launching a broiler farming business. The group calls itself Re Fenya Tlala ("We Defeat Hunger") All 15 members identify as LGBTQI+.

Informal savings groups are nothing new in Lesotho. What is unusual is who is running this one and what its handwritten ledger reveals about the state of social welfare in 2026. "I tried a local bank in 2024," says 32-year-old *Ntsene, who operates

Lesotho's Queer People Feeding Families



the potato chips business. "They wanted payslips and a wife's signature. I had neither. The freezer cost M1 800. I saved through the group for three months and they helped me cover the balance. Now I make up to M400 on a good day." *Ntsene's experience is far from unique. According to the 2025 Household Budget Survey, social grants reach fewer than a quarter of the country's poorest households. Meanwhile, commercial banks continue to require collateral and formal employment, conditions many queer Basotho, particularly transgender and gender non-conforming people, cannot meet. Rather than wait for

the system to change, these 15 people built one of their own. In just six months, the group has circulated M36,000 without recording a single default, according to the ledger reviewed by this reporter. The largest loan so far went to 24-year-old transgender man, who borrowed M10 000 in March to purchase 100 broiler chicks, feed and a cage. "The bank asked for a title deed," he says. "My family chased me out when I was 17. I have no title deed." His first batch sold out within six weeks. Repaying M2 500 each month, he cleared the loan by June and now employs his younger cousin. Lesotho's National Strategic Development

Plan (NSDP II) promises inclusive finance and support for vulnerable groups. The Ministry of Trade, Industry and Business Development operates an MSME grant programme, while the Ministry of Gender and Youth, Sports, Arts and Culture administers assistance for orphans and vulnerable children. The Ministry of Trade, Industry and Business Development stated by the public relations office, 10 June 2026 that its programmes "are open to all Basotho regardless of gender" but could not provide data showing how many LGBTQI+ applicants received funding during 2026, as such data is not collected. "If we die tomorrow, the government will say we contributed nothing,"

*Karabo says as he closes the ledger. The final entry, dated Sunday, 22 June 2026 records M4 500 collected, a M1 200 emergency loan issued to a member whose shack roof was blown off and a remaining balance of M7 300. He slips the notebook back into its plastic bag. "But we buried four people this year. We fed seven children. We built a business. That book proves we were here." Until the rules change, the notebook will continue to serve its purpose. Next Sunday, the same 15 people will arrive with M300 each. They will count the money, sign the ledger and share a meal. In a country still debating who belongs, they have already found their answer. They belong to one another. For now, that is enough to keep 15 families fed.

***Names have been changed to protect identities. Business details and amounts have been verified against the group's ledger. Some locations have also been altered for security reasons.**

Court of Appeal orders NUL to reinstate Mosito as Acting Vice-Chancellor

RANTAU TLALI MAKHETHA

MASERU-The Court of Appeal has ordered the National University of Lesotho (NUL) to recognise Associate Professor Kananelo Mosito as the substantive Pro-Vice-Chancellor and to permit him to exercise the functions of Acting Vice-Chancellor, reversing steps the University Council took last month to strip him of both roles.

The order was handed down in the matter of Associate Professor Kananelo E. Mosito v The Council of the National University of Lesotho & 8 Others, C of A (CIV) APN 242/2026, and requires the University to comply within 48 hours of service of the judgment.

The ruling brings to a head months of legal wrangling over who holds authority at the top of the country's oldest public university, at a time when NUL has been without a substantive Vice-Chancellor and has had to rely on acting arrangements to keep its governance structures running.

In a statement issued on September 16, 2026, the Council said it would abide by the ruling. "The University wishes to place on record that, as a public institution and an institution governed by the rule of law, it will comply with the order of the Court of Appeal," the statement read.

According to the Council, the order directs NUL to recognise Professor Mosito as substantive Pro-Vice-Chancellor and to allow him to act as Vice-Chancellor under section 17(4) of the National University of Lesotho Act, despite his earlier precautionary suspension.

The Council said this is without prejudice to the determination of that suspension by the Labour Court, where the matter is still pending.

Roots of the dispute

The Council's statement traces the dispute back to Professor Mosito's appointment to a second fixed term as substantive Pro-Vice-Chancellor, which began on 1 November 2023 and was due to run until 31 October 2027.

On 22 April 2026, the Council placed him on precautionary suspension pending investigation into what it described as serious allegations of misconduct.



Professor Mosito challenged the suspension before the Labour Court, and that case remained unresolved when the former Vice-Chancellor's term of office came to an end.

A separate dispute, over the process the University followed to recruit a new Vice-Chancellor, was also before the High Court, with related interlocutory applications reaching the Court of Appeal.

The two disputes, though distinct, became intertwined once it emerged that the Pro-Vice-Chancellor's position was constitutionally linked to the question of who would take charge of the University once the substantive Vice-Chancellor's term lapsed.

On 1 June 2026, Musonda AJA issued an interlocutory order staying the recruitment process for a new Vice-Chancellor. That order declared that, once the office of Vice-Chancellor fell vacant, section 17(4) of the NUL Act would automatically take effect, with the Pro-Vice-Chancellor assuming the functions of Acting Vice-Chancellor.

The order also barred any conduct calculated to circumvent that outcome. The Council said it did not accept that this interlocutory order finally settled the issues in dispute, and it filed papers seeking reconsideration and review of parts of it. Those proceedings had not been determined by the end of July.

The stand-off of July and August

When the former Vice-Chancellor's term expired on 31 July 2026, Professor Mosito presented himself at the University to assume the functions of Acting Vice-Chancellor. According to the Council, he was not permitted onto the campus because his precautionary suspension remained in force.

Two days later, on August 2, 2026, the Council convened a Special Meeting to consider the events of 31 July and a memorandum from Professor Mosito titled 'Assumption of Duty as Acting Vice-Chancellor'.

At that meeting, the Council terminated Professor Mosito's substantive appointment as Pro-Vice-Chancellor and resolved that section 17(4) of the Act should instead be operationalised through the Acting Pro-Vice-Chancellor, Professor Motlatsi Molati, who then assumed the role of Acting Vice-Chancellor.

It is this sequence of decisions that the Court of Appeal has now found to be inconsistent with its earlier order, and which it has directed the University to reverse.

The Council's account presents the events of 31 July and 2 August as the immediate trigger for the latest round of litigation, with Professor Mosito's exclusion from campus on 31 July prompting the Special Meeting five days later at which his substantive appointment was terminated and Professor Molati installed as Acting Vice-Chancellor.

That installation is now set to be undone.

University says it will comply, but will keep fighting

The Council said its compliance with the judgment should not be read as an abandonment of the legal positions it has taken in the broader litigation, or as an acceptance that all outstanding issues have been finally decided.

It said it intends to continue pursuing the related proceedings, including the review application and the precautionary suspension matter still before the Labour Court, through the appropriate legal channels.

The statement noted that the Court of Appeal's order requires the outstanding review proceedings to be placed before a senior judge other than Professor Mosito, a safeguard the Council said it welcomed.

"The University believes that justice must not only be done but must also remain visibly insulated from circumstances capable of generating reasonable questions about institutional independence, impartiality and public confidence in the judicial process," the Council said.

Focus now on an orderly handover

The Council said its immediate priority was to ensure that the transition ordered by the court takes place peacefully and professionally, with minimum

disruption to the University's academic, administrative and governance functions. It said it would facilitate implementation of the order within the prescribed 48-hour period while continuing to serve its students, staff, Council, Senate, Government and the wider public.

NUL called on all parties to respect the judicial process, to refrain from unnecessary public confrontation, and to allow the remaining court proceedings to run their course.

The Council said further details on the practical arrangements for implementing the order would be released once finalised.

For now, the practical effect of the judgment is that Professor Mosito is to be restored to the office of Pro-Vice-Chancellor and permitted to exercise the functions of Acting Vice-Chancellor under section 17(4) of the NUL Act, while Professor Molati's tenure in the acting role comes to an end.

The Council has not indicated whether it intends to seek any further recourse against the Court of Appeal's order itself, and has confined its stated intentions to pursuing the still-pending review and Labour Court proceedings.

The statement was issued by the Council of the National University of Lesotho and dated 16 September 2026. It leaves unresolved two matters that will continue to be watched closely on campus and beyond: the Labour Court's eventual ruling on the lawfulness of Professor Mosito's suspension, and the outcome of the review proceedings over how his substantive appointment was terminated and how a new Vice-Chancellor is ultimately to be recruited.

Until those matters are finally determined, the University's leadership arrangements will remain provisional, with Professor Mosito exercising the functions of Acting Vice-Chancellor under a court order rather than through a settled recruitment process.

How smoothly that handover takes place in the coming days is likely to be the first practical test of how far this week's ruling has actually settled the standoff between the Council and its suspended Pro-Vice-Chancellor.

Lesotho, China highlight new areas of cooperation



LIAPENG RALIENGOANE

MASERU - Lesotho and China have reaffirmed their commitment to deepening bilateral cooperation, with both countries highlighting infrastructure, agriculture, health, energy, trade and human capital development as key areas for future collaboration.

The commitment was made in Maseru on Monday during a celebration marking the 77th anniversary of the founding of the People's Republic of China.

Speaking on behalf of the minister of Foreign Affairs and International Relations Hon. Richard Ramoeletsi said the relationship between the two countries had grown steadily since diplomatic ties were resumed in January 1994. He said the partnership had produced tangible projects in sectors including infrastructure, healthcare



and energy.

Among the projects highlighted was the Mpiti-Sehlabathebe Road, which he said had improved connectivity between rural communities and urban centres, facilitating trade, access to services and tourism. China has also supported the Maseru District Hospital with equipment including CT scanners, digital X-ray machines, an intensive care unit and a pathology laboratory.

Ramoeletsi also pointed to the ongoing construction of the Maseru Fire Station and

provision of a fire engine, as well as the Mafeteng Solar Power Plant Phase I, which has an installed capacity of 30 megawatts.

Agriculture remains another major area of cooperation. In 2025, China donated 148 pieces of agricultural machinery valued at M36 million and handed over the Maseru Agricultural Storage and Logistics Infrastructure to strengthen post-harvest management and market linkages.

Ramoeletsi said Lesotho was also looking forward to the next

phase of cooperation on Juncao technology, while a further M250 million in humanitarian food aid was expected to be handed over in the coming month.

The ambassador of the People's Republic of China to Lesotho His Excellency (H.E) Yang Xiaokun said China's cooperation with Lesotho is also expanding through trade, agriculture and new areas of international cooperation.

He highlighted the signing of a protocol on the export of Lesotho wool to China and said the resumption of wool and mohair trade following

the foot-and-mouth disease outbreak had created an opportunity to further expand market access.

China has also implemented zero-tariff treatment for 53 African countries with diplomatic relations with China, including Lesotho. H.E Xiaokun said the policy could create opportunities for Basotho farmers, businesses and workers to increase exports to the Chinese market.

Both sides also highlighted education and skills development. More than 270 Basotho travelled to China for study and training in 2026, while Chinese medical teams continued to support the country's health sector.

Looking ahead, the Lesotho government identified value addition and agro-processing, renewable energy and rural electrification, health systems, scholarships and technical training, and increased Chinese investment as priority areas.

The two countries also intend to strengthen cooperation in emerging fields, including artificial intelligence and digital transformation.

H.E Xiaokun said China was ready to work with Lesotho to make greater use of existing bilateral cooperation mechanisms and expand practical cooperation for the benefit of both peoples.

The two countries are entering a significant period, with China implementing its 15th Five-Year Plan while Lesotho celebrates six decades of independence.

2026 marks 32 years since the resumption of diplomatic relations between China and Lesotho.



District planning workshop tackles maternal health, GBV and Youth

LIAPENG RALIENGOANE

THABA-TSEKA - The United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) in collaboration with the Ministry of Finance and Development Planning, has brought together District Administrators and District Economic Planners from across Lesotho for a five-day workshop aimed at strengthening district planning, budgeting and implementation.

The workshop, which kick-started on Monday and is ongoing until Friday in Thaba-Tseka seeks to improve coordination among districts and ensure that development plans

and budgets respond more effectively to the needs and challenges facing communities.

Child marriage, adolescent pregnancies and Lesotho's high maternal mortality are among the issues receiving attention, with officials stressing the importance of evidence-based planning and adequately resourced interventions.

The emphasis on evidence-based planning comes at a time when new national data is highlighting both progress and persistent gaps in addressing gender-based violence.

The 2025 Lesotho

GBV Indicators Follow-up Study, launched in August, found that lifetime GBV among women had declined from 86 percent in 2013 to 66.7 percent in 2025.

However, the study also found that 9 in 10 women who experience intimate partner violence do not report it to the police, pointing to continued gaps in access to protection and justice.

UNFPA Representative to Lesotho John Kennedy Mosoti said the workshop provides an opportunity for district officials to share experiences and identify practical

ways of making planning and budgeting more responsive to communities.

He said better use of data and resources is essential to ensuring that development commitments translate into tangible results.

Mosoti also called for greater investment in young people, saying creating opportunities for them to develop their talents and realise their potential would enable them to contribute meaningfully to national development.

"When we plan better, invest smarter and put young people at the centre, we create pathways for healthier

families, stronger communities and a more prosperous Lesotho," he said.

Present at the event on Monday, were Thaba-Tseka Member of Parliament (MP) 'Mamamello Holomo and District Administrator Tlali Mphafi.

They emphasised the importance of planning that is informed by the realities communities face. This workshop is expected to strengthen coordination between district authorities and planners while promoting a more responsive approach to allocating resources towards development priorities.

Chakwera breaks silence on Malawi’s power crisis: ‘Prices have been stolen from farmers’



Malawi’s former president Lazarus Chakwera has broken his silence on the country’s ongoing power crisis and the collapse of crop prices, delivering a blunt assessment of the hardship facing farmers to a crowd he stumbled upon while travelling home from a funeral.

Chakwera, who led Malawi as president from 2020 until his defeat in the 2025 election,

made the remarks after stopping at Chimbiya market in Dedza, as he made his way back from the burial of Professor Zimani Kadzamira.

Speaking to those gathered, the former president did not hold back on the state of the electricity supply.

“Electricity is unreliable. Here at Chimbiya, people used to come to trade – but this year they’ve simply been robbed... prices for crops

have been stolen from them. A farmer doesn’t know what his future holds, ndi zedi eti,” he said.

He went further, turning his attention to the plight of small-scale traders and farmers left without power to run their businesses.

“We want farming to benefit you. You who run small businesses should be profiting, without power cuts getting in your way. But it seems

this has fallen into the wrong hands,” he said.

The former president struck a more conciliatory note as he closed his remarks, appearing to acknowledge the political weight of speaking out.

“This visit is simply about seeking forgiveness from one another, because we did not always agree, we did not always understand each other. If you do not forgive, then God will

not forgive us either,” Chakwera said.

The comments mark a rare public intervention from the former leader, whose Malawi Congress Party lost power at the polls last year, as the country continues to grapple with chronic electricity shortages and mounting frustration among farmers over crashing produce prices.

- NYASA TIMES

Dangote IPO: Jollof jackpot or just another cunning stunt?

Here we go again: Harnessing hype and wishful thinking to make the wealthy wealthier



SEKINAT OJENIYI

On Monday, Aliko Dangote launched the continent's largest share sale with the initial public offering (IPO) of his oil refinery. He plans to raise \$2.1-billion by offering up roughly 3% of the company. Dangote needs \$14.3-billion to expand the refinery's production capacity from 700,000 barrels per day to 1.4-million by 2029. The refinery is currently benefiting from a boom in sales of refined petroleum to Western countries as a result of higher demand due to global disruption caused by the US-Israeli strikes

on Iran. Africa's richest man described it as the people's IPO and has urged ordinary Nigerians to invest as he doesn't "want to be the only one enjoying". He said he wants this IPO to be like Amazon's, today, you could become a millionaire in the years to come". Whether this is possible depends on the refinery's earnings, dividends and share price, alongside inflation, the naira's performance and global oil prices. "The question is less whether significant capital appreciation is possible than how long investors are prepared to wait and whether the business

remains profitable enough to reward them for doing so," financial analyst Kalu Aja told The Continent. Olumide Adesina, a senior accountant and capital markets analyst, said while this is possible, it would take a long time for that to materialise. "[The] minimum investment of N5,250 would need to grow by approximately 190 times to reach N1-million," he told The Continent. Those highly likely to make millions are those already within the billionaire's inner circle. In July, Dangote raised \$2.5-billion in a 6% private sale. Private investors bought their stakes in the company

at a discount as the deal valued the company at \$40-billion. Among them was his long-term billionaire friend, Femi Otedola, who liquidated his entire stake in Geregu Power Plc to invest \$100-million. The public IPO was launched at a valuation closer to \$49-billion. "where if you invest thousands of dollars The structure of the sale is also significant. Retail investors will have the same ordinary shares as other shareholders, but they will collectively own a small slice of a company in which Dangote retains overwhelming control, with 87% ownership.

Adesina told The Continent that everyday investors should pay close attention to how the company handles payouts, debt and future fundraising. Since the main owner still controls the vast majority of the company, regular investors will have "limited influence" in these important financial decisions. Beyond the financial return, the project is perceived as a vote of confidence in Nigeria. The refinery was built at a reported cost of about \$20-billion, and according to Aja, it demonstrates the country's ability to "deliver a project of this scale and sophistication". But whether the refinery has bettered the lives of Nigerians is still in question. While it has helped to maintain energy security and create jobs since it began operations in January 2024, it has not eased the cost of fuel for Nigerians. Oil marketers have accused Dangote of stifling competition and aiming for a monopoly, which has raised the price of fuel. He has taken legal action to stop or limit fuel import licences being issued to rival companies. High fuel prices, inflation and global oil-price movements have also limited the effect on household purchasing power. "The IPO can expand Nigerians' participation in the refinery's financial gains, but it may not directly reduce fuel prices or raise living standards," Adesina said. The longer-term outcome, he added, will depend on profitability, dividends and corporate governance.

- THE CONTINENT

When the Police chief blames the victim: Matsoso is fumbling the Boloetse case

RANTAU TLALI MAKHETHA

On the night of September 5, three armed men forced their way into the Katilehong home of Kananelo Boloetse, editor of Newsday Media and a former chairperson of the Media Institute of Southern Africa (MISA) Lesotho.

They handcuffed him, sealed his mouth with duct tape, bundled him into a car and interrogated him about his journalism and human rights work as they drove.

He was beaten inside that vehicle, threatened with death should the attack ever be reported, and dumped, badly injured, some twenty kilometres away in Thaba-Bosiu.

He survived only because he regained consciousness, dragged himself to a road, and was picked up by a passing motorist. That is not a dispute between two parties. It is a crime scene, and Kananelo Boloetse is its victim.

Two weeks on, the man who should be leading the search for his attackers, Chief of Police Advocate Borotho Matsoso, has instead used his press conferences to put Boloetse and his employer in the dock.

At a briefing at Police Headquarters, Adv Matsoso complained that Newsday was “withholding” the location where its terrorised editor had gone into hiding, and told reporters that the investigation could not move forward because Boloetse himself would not come forward to answer further questions.

“Ask your brother to come forward,” he said, addressing MISA and, by extension, the press corps. It is worth pausing on what that sentence does. It quietly recasts a torture survivor, hunted by armed men who have already threatened to kill him if he talks, as the obstacle to his own case.

It shifts the burden of proof from the state, which is constitutionally obliged to protect its citizens and investigate crimes against them, onto a man who is still recovering from being handcuffed, gagged and beaten in the back of a car.

Let us be precise about who owes whom an explanation here.



Boloetse gave a statement to police the day after the attack. He identified the area where he was held, described his abductors' questions about his investigative work, and told officers he had been threatened with death if the assault became public.

He is in hiding for the same reason any torture victim who has been warned that speaking will cost him his life goes into hiding: because the men who did this to him remain free, and because the institution meant to guarantee his safety has, by its own admission, made no arrests.

Under those circumstances, demanding that the victim expose his location to a police service that has not caught a single suspect is not an investigative strategy. It is a demand that he gamble his life to spare the Commissioner an awkward press conference.

Meanwhile, the leads that a competent, motivated investigation would already have exhausted sit unexplained. Witnesses reported a silver Toyota Starlet, registration A 887 BBC, making suspicious movements around Boloetse's home in the hours before the abduction.

Newsday has reported that his house appeared to have been under surveillance in the days before the attack. MISA Lesotho, in its statement condemning the assault, explicitly called on the Commissioner to “thoroughly

track” that vehicle and to investigate, without prejudging the outcome, whether state security personnel had any hand in the operation.

Two weeks later, Adv Matsoso's own public position is that police are “still investigating” the ownership of that car. A registration plate is not a mystery that requires the victim's cooperation to solve; it requires traffic and licensing records that the police service controls.

If the Chief of Police cannot tell the country who owns that vehicle after a fortnight, the failure belongs to his detectives, not to a man recovering from torture.

This matters beyond the fate of one editor, because the pattern is now familiar. Newsday's investigative reporting on education financing preceded a cyberattack that disabled its website and email systems.

That reporting, and Boloetse's long record of pressing government on accountability and the rule of law through his work with The Advocates for the Supremacy of the Constitution, is precisely the kind of journalism that made him a target in the first place, according to Newsday's own account of what his abductors asked him.

When the institution responsible for protecting journalists responds to an attack on one of them by publicly

interrogating the victim's conduct rather than the assailants', it sends every other reporter in this country a message: raise the wrong subject, and you may be left to fend for yourself, then blamed for not doing more to help catch the men who came for you.

Adv Matsoso cannot claim he was not told what a serious response looks like. MISA Lesotho, Amnesty International, the International Federation of Journalists and Front Line Defenders have all published detailed, specific demands: track the vehicle, secure the physical evidence at the abduction and dump sites, investigate the surveillance reports, examine the possibility of state involvement without prejudging it, and guarantee Boloetse and his family concrete protection.

None of that requires Boloetse to reveal his hiding place. None of it depends on him answering further questions before his abductors are identified. It depends on the Commissioner directing his officers to do the unglamorous work of tracing a number plate, canvassing the neighbours Newsday says it has already managed to locate, and pulling together the surveillance evidence Newsday and rights groups have pointed him toward.

The Cgief of Police owes Parliament and the public a different kind of statement than the one his press conferences have offered so far.

He should say plainly, and on the record, whether the Toyota Starlet's owner has been identified, whether CID detectives rather than a lower-capacity unit are leading this investigation, and what concrete protection his service has offered Boloetse and his family, given the explicit death threats attached to this case.

He should stop suggesting, in any form, that the absence of arrests is a consequence of Boloetse's caution rather than his own service's performance. And he should remember that when a journalist is dragged from his home, tortured for the questions he asked in his work, and abandoned on a hillside to see if he survives, the person who owes the country an account of what has been done to find the culprits is the Chief of Police – not the man they tried to silence.

Even Parliament has recognised that this case cannot be left to a Commissioner's press briefings alone.

When the matter was raised in the House, the Leader of the House acknowledged that the attack had tarnished the country's image and that government owed the nation an explanation of the steps taken to resolve it.

That acknowledgment from the political leadership only sharpens the question hanging over Adv Matsoso's own conduct of the case: if the executive accepts that Lesotho's standing is on the line, why does the officer actually running the investigation keep training his public remarks on the victim's whereabouts rather than on the suspects police have yet to name?

A Chief of Police genuinely determined to solve this case would be using his press conferences to report progress on the vehicle, the surveillance evidence and the identities of the three attackers, not to relitigate why a traumatised man in hiding will not tell reporters where he is sleeping.

Boloetse is not a suspect, not a witness who is being difficult, and not the source of the delay in this case. He is a torture survivor. Adv Matsoso should start treating him like one.

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HEALTH

MPs raise alarm over child marriage in Thaba-Tseka

them from using contraceptives.

She said some women end up having many children because they are unable to make decisions about contraception, adding that this can affect the children's upbringing and the attention and care they receive.

The concerns raised by the community are reflected in findings from the 2023-24 Lesotho Demographic and Health Survey which show that Thaba-Tseka faces significant reproductive health challenges.

The survey found that 32% of girls aged 15-19 in the district had ever been pregnant compared with 17% nationally. The district also recorded the country's highest total fertility rate at 3.6 children per woman while 17% of currently married women in the district had unmet need for family planning.

This public hearing was supported by SADC-PF as part of efforts to strengthen Parliament's engagement with communities on issues affecting women and children.

The platform allows parliamentarians to hear directly from communities about challenges such as child marriage, GBV, early and unintended pregnancy and school drop outs.

They will use the concerns raised to inform parliamentary discussions and interventions.

Women's Caucus is a parliamentary body comprising women legislators from different political parties who unite on issues of national importance affecting women and vulnerable populations.



LIAPENG RALIENGOANE

THABA-TSEKA - Members of Parliament from Women's Caucus have raised concern over child marriage, teenage pregnancy, school dropouts and gender-based violence during a public hearing held with communities in Mashai, Panteng, Ha Monyollo yesterday.

The public hearing supported by Southern African Development Community Parliamentary Forum (SADC-PF) brought Women's Caucus closer to community members to hear directly about challenges affecting families, particularly women and children.

Chairperson of the Women's Caucus, 'Mamamello Holomo said Parliament is concerned about the growing challenges

of child marriage, children dropping out of school and gender-based violence. She said parliamentarians decided to visit communities to listen to their concerns and understand the challenges they face.

"We are worried about child marriage, children dropping out of school and gender-based violence.

That is why, as parliamentarians, we decided to come to the communities and hear from you about the challenges you are facing," Holomo said.

Lesotho Mounted Police Service (LMPS) Thaba-Tseka, Child and Gender Protection Unit (CGPU) Detective Lance Sergeant Lintle Mankoe said one of the challenges reported in communities is the practice of marrying off girls after they fall pregnant.

She warned parents

that marrying off an underage girl because she has fallen pregnant is a crime.

Mankoe urged parents and community members to seek advice from the police when faced with such situations rather than arranging marriages for children.

She also raised concern about another challenge of older women who sexually violate young boys in the name of being their "sugar mummies".

Panteng Acting Chief Thabo Molato pledged to work with other traditional leaders to prevent child marriages in the community.

He said chiefs would ensure that traditional practices, including the slaughtering of sheep as part of marriage arrangements, were not used to facilitate the marriage of children.

Molato urged other

chiefs and community leaders to work together with the police to protect children from child marriage.

Meanwhile, community member Bokang Sennenne expressed relief after learning more about the rights and responsibilities of parents.

Sennenne said some parents had stopped reprimanding their children because they believed doing so could result in them being arrested for violating children's rights.

He said the information provided during the hearing helped clarify what parents are legally allowed to do when disciplining their children.

Another community member 'Manthabiseng Peka raised concerns about women whose husbands prevent



SOCIETY

Female athletes accuse Sydney Sweeney ad of sexualizing women in sports

An ad campaign featuring actor Sydney Sweeney has sparked backlash from female athletes who say it sexualizes women in sports



CARLOS RODRIGUEZ

An advertising campaign featuring American actor Sydney Sweeney has sparked widespread backlash from female athletes who say it is sexualizing women in sports.

In the ad for the sports prediction market platform Novig, Sweeney appears with little or no clothing, covering parts of her body with strategically placed footballs and other sports apparel.

Many female athletes criticized the ad on social media and called it disrespectful to women.

"I can't describe how infuriated I feel when I watch this," four-time Olympic swimming gold medalist Ariarne Titmus wrote on Instagram. "How do we live in a world where monetizing a woman's body and sexualizing women's sport is still a thing?"

British sprinter Amy Hunt addressed the actor in a post-race interview with the BBC on Sunday after finishing fourth in the 200 meters at the Ultimate Championship in Budapest, Hungary.

"Sydney Sweeney, this is what women in sport look like," she said, looking at the camera. "Muscles, hard work, sweat, blood, tears."

Former U.S. gymnast Gracie Kramer called the ad infuriating.

"I've spent my entire life competing in a sport where female athletes have been oversexualized, reduced to our bodies, and forced to fight to be taken seriously for what we can actually do," she said on Instagram.



Kramer posted stories featuring female athletes training with the caption: "What a woman in sports looks like."

Sofie Fella, a Chinese-German rugby player, said female athletes can be role models for girls and women because they manage to "untangle" from society's ideals of beauty and femininity.

"And that's why that Sydney Sweeney ad is so disrespectful to every female athlete in the world," she said in an Instagram

post.

Novig didn't immediately answer an email seeking comment. A publicist for Sweeney also didn't immediately respond to a request for comment.

In an apparent reference to the criticism, Sweeney over the weekend posted a series of covers from ESPN The Magazine's "Body Issue," an annual special edition that showed athletes posing nude or semi-nude in a celebration of the

diversity of bodies.

Sweeney, a two-time Emmy nominee, starred in and produced last year's "Christy," a biopic of American professional boxer Christy Martin.

This is not the first time her brand partnerships have sparked debate; her 2025 American Eagle campaign, which played on the homophones "jeans" and "genes," previously triggered widespread online discussion.

- ABC

Sundowns beat Al-Ahli to win African-Asian-Pacific Cup



ISSA SAID

Mamelodi Sundowns defeated Saudi Arabian side Al-Ahli 2-1 at a packed Loftus on Saturday to win the African-Asian-Pacific Cup and move closer to a possible Fifa Intercontinental Cup final against Paris Saint-Germain.

Nuno Santos scored both goals in a powerful second-half performance, with the

result strengthening Sundowns' growing reputation beyond Africa. They will now face the winner of the Derby of the Americas between Mexico's Toluca and the winner of the Copa Libertadores.

Victory in that match would send Sundowns into a final against European champions Paris Saint-Germain later in the year.

The celebrations at the final whistle reflected the importance of the occasion, although

this is not the first time Sundowns have impressed on the global stage. They featured in the Fifa Club World Cup last year and earned widespread praise for their performances.

Santos was the standout player, scoring twice after receiving his first start of the season in midfield. He operated alongside Teboho Mokoena and Marcelo Allende, while debutant Thabang Matuludi also made a major contribution by providing

the assist for the winning goal.

Coach Miguel Cardoso's selection decisions proved decisive. He handed Matuludi his Sundowns debut only two weeks after the defender completed his move from Polokwane City. The Bafana Bafana international played at right-back, despite not having appeared competitively since the end of last season when he was unused at the 2026 Fifa World Cup.

Grant Kekana, Khulunam Ndamane and Aubrey Modiba completed the defence, with experienced player Thapelo Morena used in an attacking position. Cardoso also left early-season standouts Fawaaz Basadien, Malibongwe Khoza, Siyanda Ndlovu and Cassius Mailula on the bench.

Al-Ahli arrived with established internationals including Edouard Mendy, Merih Demiral, Francisco Trincao and Ivan Toney, but their recent form had been

inconsistent. They had lost three, drawn one and won two of their previous six matches, leaving them in mid-table in the Saudi Pro League.

Sundowns, by contrast, had won five and drawn one of their previous six games in all competitions. That run had taken them to the top of the league and into the MTN8 final against Orlando Pirates next month.

Sundowns opened the scoring after 17 minutes when Santos rose above Valentin Atangana to head in a dangerous cross from Mokoena. Al-Ahli levelled soon afterwards when Firas Al Buraikan's effort forced Ronwen Williams to push the ball into his own net after a defensive lapse.

Williams then denied Trincao with a close-range header shortly before half-time, having earlier received treatment after taking a blow to the head.

Al-Ahli increased the pressure after the interval and Sundowns made several mistakes, but Trincao, Eduard Spertsyan and Al Buraikan could not take advantage. Kekana injured himself while attempting to clear the danger around the hour mark and was replaced by Khoza.

Ndamane headed over from Marcelo Allende's free-kick after 65 minutes, before Sundowns regained control. Matuludi's precise cross found Santos in the 78th minute, and his powerful header gave Mendy no chance.

South African 100m sprint star Akani Simbine presented the trophy before kick-off, while musician Sjava performed for the crowd.

- AFRICA SOCCER

		PLD	GD	PTS
1	Man City	5	+8	15
2	Arsenal	5	+4	12
3	Brighton	5	+11	10
4	Brentford	5	+6	9
5	Leeds	5	+4	9
6	Liverpool	5	+3	9
7	Everton	5	+3	9
8	Hull	5	+2	8
9	Newcastle	5	0	8
10	Chelsea	5	-2	7
11	Ipswich	5	-4	6
12	Man Utd	5	0	5
13	Nott'm Forest	5	-1	5
14	Sunderland	5	-4	4
15	Crystal Palace	5	-5	4
16	Aston Villa	5	-5	4
17	Bournemouth	5	-2	3
18	Coventry	5	-9	3
19	Fulham	5	-3	2
20	Spurs	5	-6	2

