

MONTHLY UPDATE

IN TRANSFORMATION
INITIATIVE

10 MAY • NO 5/2021



MAIN STORIES

ABC Splits

Dissatisfaction
with Moseneke

New Judges

Alleged Abuses at
Hippo Knitting

Controversy over
Ramakoae's Remarks

Discussions with
the EU

Coronavirus

HIGHLIGHTS

- The long-running infighting within the ruling All Basotho Convention (ABC) finally resulted in a split with deputy leader Nqosa Mahao breaking away to form a new party called the Basotho Action Party (BAP). The Democratic Congress (DC), the ABC's main coalition partner, threw its weight behind the ABC.
- Subsequent to Mahao forming the new party, Prime Minister Moeketsi Majoro dismissed him as justice minister on 22 April 2021. Majoro also dismissed police minister, Mamoipone Senauoane; forestry minister, Motlatsi Mapelepo; and deputy health minister, Nto Moakhi.
- Agriculture Minister Tefo Mapesela was dismissed on 20 April 2021. Mapesela's dismissal was the result of his strained relationship with Majoro after he declared that the premier had no chance of ever leading the ABC. Mapesela has now formed his own political party, the Basotho Progressive Party (BPP).
- The family of slain former army commander, Lieutenant General Maaparankoe Mahao, and other victims of human rights violations are livid with the head of the Southern African Development Community (SADC) facilitator in Lesotho, Dikgang Moseneke. They accuse him of working to save politicians as well as serving and former members of the security agencies from being tried for murder and other serious crimes.
- The government could be losing as much as M200 million every year through an intricate scam at the Old Age Pension Office in the Ministry of Finance. Finance Minister Thabo Sophonea described it as the "biggest scandal and rot this country has ever seen".
- Fabletics, the sportswear company owned by actress Kate Hudson, has launched an investigation into allegations that garment workers have been suffering sexual and physical abuse at Hippo Knitting, a Taiwanese-owned factory in Maseru.

LESOTHO

- Lesotho is ranked 88 out of 180 countries (1=best; 180=worst) on the 2021 World Press Freedom Index, published by Reporters Without Borders, down from 86 in 2020.
- As of 10 May 2021, Lesotho had 10 773 coronavirus cases, 6 427 recoveries and 319 deaths. On 4 May 2021, Majoro extended the state of emergency to 30 October 2021.
- The World Bank said in its April 2021 economic report that the economy is expected to rebound and grow by 2.9% in 2021. Economic growth is expected to gradually recover to 3.1% in 2022.
- The Basotho Post quoted Foreign Affairs Minister 'Matšepo Ramakoae as saying that he wants Lesotho to dump the West and strengthen its ties with China. The ministry of foreign affairs subsequently issued a statement saying that the article was misleading and misrepresented what Ramakoae said.
- The United States (US) government has lifted the economic and travel sanctions which were imposed on Lesotho national, Phakiso Mochochoko by the previous Donald Trump administration. Mochochoko is employed by the International Criminal Court (ICC).
- Regional integration and trade, COVID-19 recovery and national reforms were among the issues discussed during the annual Lesotho-European Union (EU) Political Dialogue.

