

## MAIN STORIES

### Majoro Loses ABC Election

### LMPS Accused of Torture

### Abrahams and Chaos in Treason Trial

### Coronavirus

## HIGHLIGHTS

- The Member of Parliament (MP) for Qeme constituency, Nkaku Kabi, was elected as the new leader of the ruling All Basotho Convention (ABC) on 29 January 2022, beating deputy leader and Prime Minister Moeketsi Majoro by 723 votes to 609. Majoro resigned from the ABC National Executive Committee (NEC), saying he will continue as prime minister of the country.
- The Lesotho Mounted Police Service (LMPS) Special Operations Unit (SOU) reportedly detained and tortured Napo Mafaesa, a human rights lawyer, after a client of his, Liteboho Makhakhe, allegedly lied that he had handed over an illegal firearm to the advocate for safekeeping. Mafaesa was released only after another prominent lawyer, Kabelo Letuka, filed an urgent habeas corpus application for his release. Letuka was allegedly threatened with death by the same police officers who arrested Mafaesa. Chief Justice Sakoane Sakoane ordered the Director of Public Prosecutions (DPP), Hlalefang Motinyane, to immediately prosecute the police officers who tortured Mafaesa and threatened to kill Letuka.
- At the end of January 2022, South African advocate Shaun Abrahams, forced from his top prosecution job in South Africa, was hauled over the coals by Chief Justice Sakoane for his behaviour in the trial of former army commander, Tlali Kamoli and others, charged with treason, murder and assault. Abrahams has been barred from further participation in the matter.
- The Basotho Action Party (BAP), a splinter party from the ABC, led by Nqosa Mahao, will hold its elective conference on 25 and 26 February 2022.
- The National Reforms Authority (NRA's) Parliamentary Reforms Committee recommended five Commissioners for the Independent Electoral Commission (IEC), up from three. The Committee said changes would be made in the Commissioners' terms of office, including the introduction of transparent and merit-based criteria for their recruitment.



- The NRA's Constitutional Reforms Technical Committee tabled a report which recommends the dismantling of the Office of the First Lady.
- According to Police spokesperson Mpiti Mopeli, although the LMPS does not condone police brutality, there are instances where police officers have to employ force to deal with "uncooperative" crime suspects.
- The army was called in to help stop a spate of murders that have rocked the Matelile area in the Mafeteng district.
- Students at the National University of Lesotho (NUL) issued an ultimatum to the National Manpower Development Secretariat (NMDS) to sponsor all students, or they will sue the government. They have also threatened to call a strike.
- Teachers are mulling a fresh strike to press the government to address a litany of grievances.
- Lesotho is ranked 96 out of 180 countries in Transparency International's 2021 Corruption Perceptions Index (CPI: 1=clean; 180=highly corrupt). Lesotho was ranked 83 out of 180 countries in 2020.
- As of 7 February 2022, Lesotho had 32,258 coronavirus cases, 22,054 recoveries and 694 deaths. The government decided to lift the lockdown restriction as of 25 January 2022 to allow the country to improve its economy, Majoro said.
- The World Bank said in its January 2022 Global Economic Prospects (GEP) that the economy was projected to grow by 3.0% in 2022, down from 3.1% predicted in June 2021.
- The Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) decided to increase the Central Bank of Lesotho (CBL) rate from 3.75% per annum to 4.00% per annum.
- During the third quarter of 2021, the current account registered a deficit equivalent to 7.4% of GDP, following a deficit of 10.2% of GDP observed in the second quarter





- The Government budgetary operations recorded a surplus equivalent to 5.0% of GDP during the last quarter of 2021 compared to a deficit of 11.7% of GDP in the previous quarter.
- The construction of permanent housing, a visitors' lodge and associated infrastructure at the Polihali Village started in January after the Lesotho Highlands Development Authority (LHDA) awarded the construction tender to the Polihali Village Joint Venture (JV), comprising Lesotho-based LSP Construction and South African construction firm WBHO.
- Nurses hired by the Ministry of Health went for six months without being paid in 2021.
- According to the results of the Integrated Food Security Phase Classification (IPC) Acute Food Insecurity analysis, from January to March 2022, around 338,000 people (23% of the population) are projected to be in IPC Phase 3 or above (Crisis or worse) and require humanitarian action to reduce food gaps.
- Gem Diamonds declared payment of US\$3.9 million in dividends to the Government.
- The NRA is pushing for greater independence of the Central Bank of Lesotho (CBL) by including it in the constitution, arguing it will inspire international confidence in governance quality.
- The European Union (EU) Ambassador to Lesotho, Paola Amadei, condemned the police for subjecting civilians to acts of brutality, including torture.
- Some South African citizens are threatening to kick out Basotho living in that country, claiming that they, along with other foreigners, are occupying most of 'their' jobs.
- Lesotho Defence Force (LDF) troops could be forced to prematurely return home from their Mozambique tour of duty because the government has no money to continue funding the mission.

