



MAIN STORIES

Elections

Plans to Recall Government as Parliament Fails to Pass Reforms

Defections Ahead of Polls

RFP: Internal Dissatisfaction Continues

HIGHLIGHTS

- Lesotho plans to hold general elections on 7 October. On 8 August, the Constitutional Court upheld the Independent Electoral Commission (IEC's) delimitation of the constituencies exercise. However, Judge Realeboha Mathaba directed the IEC to take corrective measures on the 20 constituencies that were invalid and said that elections could not take place before the problem had been addressed.
- According to the results of a survey by Afrobarometer, published on 27 July, among respondents willing to declare a voting preference in a hypothetical election, the Democratic Congress (DC) leads the field with 42%.
- The outgoing parliament failed to pass the Omnibus Bill on reforms aimed at ending political volatility. The government's plan to use state of emergency powers to recall parliament to pass the reforms faces resistance from the opposition.
- A delegation from Lesotho came under attack at an Ordinary Meeting of the Ministerial Committee of the Southern African Development Community (SADC) Organ on Politics, Defence and Security Cooperation in Pretoria for failing to pass the Omnibus Bill. President Cyril Ramaphosa's envoy to Lesotho, Justice Dikgang Moseneke, is said to have been enraged after hearing of the fiasco in parliament when the Bill was not passed. Ramaphosa was forced to cancel his trip to Lesotho to celebrate the reforms.
- The United States (US) Ambassador to Lesotho, Maria Brewer, said parliament's failure to pass the Omnibus Bill does not have a direct and immediate impact on the prospects for the upcoming Millennium Challenge Corporation (MCC) Compact.
- The Political Officer of the European Union (EU) in Lesotho, David Healy, said he still has faith that the Omnibus Bill will be adopted.
- Finance Minister Thabo Sophonea has dumped the governing All Basotho Convention (ABC) for opposition leader Nqosa Mahao's Basotho Action Party (BAP).
- Former cabinet minister and outgoing Member of Parliament (MP), Tlohelang Aumane, ditched the Sam Matekane-led Revolution for Prosperity (RFP) for the Socialist Revolutionaries (SR) led by Teboho Mojapela.



- ABC leader, Nkaku Kabi, hailed Famo gang leader, Sarele Sello, for allegedly recruiting 46 003 new members to join the party. Sello threatened to “deal” with Prime Minister Moeketsi Majoro for failing to attend the ABC’s rally in Mohale Hoek alongside Kabi.
- Lesotho has dropped murder charges against former Prime Minister Thomas Thabane and his wife for the 2017 killing of his estranged wife Lipolelo. Prosecutors told a court hearing the decision was taken as they could no longer locate a key witness in the case.
- The government deployed security forces to help police quell the rising crime in the country, Majoro announced.
- A well-organised syndicate of robbers has been targeting affluent suburbs, retailers and filling stations in Maseru. Although crime is generally rife in Maseru, especially in the villages, robbers now appear to be also targeting rich suburbs and gated communities.
- The National Manpower Development Secretariat (NMDS) lost M1,519 790.55 which was meant to help with the sponsorship of Basotho students in the past year, due to the fraudulent activities of some of its employers.
- The Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) of the Central Bank of Lesotho (CBL) on 26 July decided to increase the CBL Rate by 75 basis points from 4.75% to 5.50% per annum.
- The MPC stated that domestic economic activity is estimated to have grown by 2.1% in May 2022 compared to a growth rate of 1.4% recorded in April 2022.
- Inflation accelerated from 7.8% in May to 8.8% in June 2022.
- Fitch Ratings revised the Outlook on Lesotho's Long-Term Foreign-Currency (LTFC) Issuer Default Rating (IDR) to Stable from Negative and affirmed the IDR at 'B'.
- Fitch expects Lesotho's economy to grow around 2.5% in 2022.





- A new report by the Lesotho Bureau of Statistics with the support of the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) reveals that Maseru, which accounts for only 17% of the country's population, generates about half of the country's annual GDP.
- A controversial law reserving certain businesses for indigenous Basotho came into effect on 1 August 2022.
- The National Assembly has finally approved the controversial Tobacco and Alcohol Levy Bill, 2021. The proposed law will result in the implementation of a 30% levy on tobacco products and a 15% levy for alcohol.
- The Lesotho Highlands Development Authority (LHDA) selected Italy-based Webuild; South African firms Raubex Construction and Enza Construction; and Lesotho-based Sigma Construction, collectively forming the WRES Senqu Bridge Joint Venture (JV), to undertake the three-year construction of the 825-m-long, 90-m-high Senqu bridge.
- According to the latest Lesotho Vulnerability Assessment Committee (LVAC) report, 22% of the rural population are expected to face IPC Phase 3 (Crisis) acute food insecurity between October 2022 and March 2023, compared to 15% between July and September 2022.
- Majoro wrote a letter of apology to Ramaphosa expressing regret over criminal acts committed by Basotho in South Africa with his government even offering to foot the bill for the prosecution of those implicated.
- The European Union (EU) ambassador to Lesotho, Paola Amadei, denied allegations by Transformation Resource Centre (TRC) director, Tsikoane Peshoane, that she pressured the Director of Public Prosecutions (DPP) to charge him with sexual abuse.
- The US government upgraded Lesotho to Tier 2 on its human trafficking index report for 2022 from Tier 3. This is in recognition of "significant efforts" by the government to combat trafficking in the past year.





- The government was pressured to release a statement reaffirming its position on the One-China principle after the Chinese embassy suspected that a Taiwanese minister had been invited to visit Lesotho.
- Frazer Solar denied allegations that its managing director, Robert Frazer, fraudulently entered into a M1,7 billion solar energy deal with the previous Thomas Thabane administration. Earlier, the Directorate on Corruption and Economic Offences (DCEO) revealed that it had secured a warrant for Frazer's arrest for alleged fraud.

