



IN TRANSFORMATION
INITIATIVE

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MONTHLY UPDATE

LESOTHO



MAIN STORIES

**Claiming Territory
from South Africa**

**Government Reflects
on 100 Days'
Achievements**

Targeting Muslims

HIGHLIGHTS

- Tsepo Lipholo, the sole Member of Parliament (MP) of the Basotho Covenant Movement (BCM), got lawmakers in the National Assembly on 29 March to debate his motion seeking the return of vast tracts of land from South Africa (SA). Lipholo's motion received the backing of Nkaku Kabi, the leader of the All Basotho Convention (ABC) and Basotho National Party (BNP) leader Machesetsa Mofomobe. Leader of the House and Deputy Prime Minister, Justice Nthomeng Majara, said relations with SA should not be jeopardised and it was decided to establish an ad-hoc committee to deal with the matter.
- Prime Minister Sam Matekane said on 5 April during the presentation of his report on his government's performance in its first hundred days in office that the government, amongst others, paid debts to service providers and village health workers and met with donors. In reaction, opposition parties said Matekane spoke about things he had never promised, leaving behind issues he had promised to tackle during his inauguration speech.
- Local Government Minister Lebona Lephema, speaking at an indaba with principal chiefs, said the government is deeply concerned with the influx of Asians into Lesotho who end up getting citizenship and buying large tracts of land on the cheap, adding that they are taking over the country. Lephema also said the mosque in Maseru West was a national security risk because one could see State House from its roof. He went on to say that the Muslim religion "often takes the youth to fight as terrorists" and that Muslims must be stopped because Lesotho is a Christian country.
- Matekane said dissenting Revolution for Prosperity (RFP) members who are pushing for an elective conference "lost focus on the bigger picture," namely, to develop the country.



- Democratic Congress (DC) leader, Mathibeli Mokhothu, told a rally that four months after voting for Matekane's RFP, it was now slowly dawning on Basotho that they had been hoodwinked. He predicted that a new government would soon be in place to pass the reforms as Matekane had failed.
- ABC leader Nkaku Kabi told a rally that some people who voted the government into power were already regretting their decision. He added that while his belief that his party would bounce back into government might sound outlandish, he remained convinced that "history will soon repeat itself."
- The US Department of State's 2022 report on Human Right Practices, released in March 2023, states that significant human rights issues included credible reports of unlawful or arbitrary killings, torture by security forces and serious government corruption.
- On 27 March, Amnesty International released its Report 2022/23: The State of the World's Human Rights. It states that police brutality, including allegations of torture remained a serious concern.
- According to the 2023 Global Terrorism Index (GTI), produced by the Institute for Economics & Peace (IEP), Lesotho is ranked 93 out of 163 countries (1=worst; 163=best), indicating no impact from terrorism, with a score of 0.000 out of 10 (1=low number of incidents; 10=high number of incidents).
- The government is on the verge of purging more than 6 000 workers who were illegally hired by the previous regime. Most of those people were reportedly political party functionaries. The illegally hired employees are not part of the suspected hundreds of ghost workers that government employees are alleged to be using to siphon millions of maloti from state coffers.





- Two top National Security Services (NSS) officials, Tau Makhalemele, and Teboho Liau were charged for fraudulently hiring 86 secret agents and four information officers in 2016. As a result of the unlawful recruitment, the government lost M6.4 million.
- The government has established an 11-member task team to investigate and reclaim all state assets acquired fraudulently.
- The World Bank's April 2023 Macro Poverty Outlook states that real GDP is projected to grow by 2.6% in 2023, with a faster expansion of 3.1% in 2024 and 3.3% in 2025.
- The International Monetary Fund (IMF) said in its April 2023 World Economic Outlook (WEO), published on 11 April that the economy would grow by 2.2% in 2023. It predicts growth of 2.3% in 2024 and 1.1% in 2028.
- On 4 April 2023, the Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) of the Central Bank of Lesotho (CBL) decided to increase the CBL Rate by 25 basis points; from 7.25% per annum to 7.50% per annum.
- Domestic inflationary pressures heightened in February 2023 mainly driven by increasing food prices. Inflation rose to 7.4% in February compared to 6.8% observed in January 2023.
- The fiscal balance was estimated to have recorded a deficit equivalent to 14.8% of GDP in February 2023, compared to a deficit of 1.2% of GDP in January 2023. The stock of public debt was estimated to have increased to 54.2% of GDP in February 2023, compared to 52.3% of GDP recorded in January 2023, the MPC said.
- Trade unions rejected the 6% increase proposed by the government's Wages Advisory Board. Unions say they will not accept anything less than 20%. Sam Mokhele, the secretary general of the National Clothing, Textile and Allied Workers' Union (NACTWU) said during his campaign, Matekane promised factory workers a minimum wage of M4 000, new houses, schools close to their residences and free transport to work but he had failed to deliver on all those promises.





- A Lesotho aviation charter company, Mohahlaula Airlines, is suing the Lesotho government for damages because mines in the country do not use its services to transport diamonds to South Africa. It claims that the Lesotho government is breaching the country's mining law, which stipulates that local services should be used, if available, over similar outside services.
- Lesotho has a critical shortage of medicines for chronic diseases because of the Ministry of Health's failure to process permits for pharmacies to import medicines from South Africa.

