



## MAIN STORIES

**Spat Over Reforms  
Continues**

**Killing of a Journalist**

**Computer Crime and  
Security Bill Under  
Discussion Again**

**New World Bank  
Programme**

## HIGHLIGHTS

- In preparation to resume with the national reforms, Prime Minister Sam Matekane met with the leaders of political parties on 5 June. Just before the meeting, tempers flared in parliament as the opposition allegedly gave the government an ultimatum: stop firing Principal Secretaries or they would not support the Omnibus Bill which needs a two-thirds majority. The government is now seeking a mediator to break the impasse with the opposition.
- On 18 May, the European Union (EU) ambassador, Paola Amadei, said the EU was worried by the slow progress in implementing the reforms.
- Some civil society organisations (CSOs) and members of parliament (MPs) warned the government against holding local elections in September 2023 in the face of unresolved political squabbles over national reforms.
- On 14 May, an unknown number of people shot journalist Ralikonelo 'Leqhashasha' Joki in the head once and body at least 13 times as he left the privately owned radio station Ts'enolo FM in Maseru. In response to Joki's murder, the government imposed a country-wide curfew beginning on 16 May. The curfew was lifted on 26 May 2023.
- The National Security Service (NSS) has fingered Basotho National Party (BNP) leader, Machesetsa Mofomobe in Joki's murder. Mofomobe earlier in 2023 said Joki should be "dealt with" in a Facebook post.
- Matekane must move swiftly to honour his promise to ensure the realisation of human rights, including tackling entrenched impunity for violations such as torture and killings by members of the security forces, Amnesty International said on 26 May.
- Some disgruntled Revolution for Prosperity (RFP) members allegedly planned a protest against government during the past week but it seems not to have materialised. The RFP members accused the government of breaking its promises to curb spending, hire on merit and suspend a M5 000 fuel allowance for MPs.



- The World Bank Group Board of Executive Directors endorsed a new Country Partnership Framework (CPF) for Lesotho. The five-year CPF is centred around increased employment in the private sector, improved human capital outcomes and strengthened climate resilience.
- Inflation fell to 6.7% in April 2023, from 6.8% in the previous month.
- The fiscal balance is estimated to have recorded a deficit equivalent to 13.3% of GDP in the last quarter of 2022/2023 fiscal year compared to a surplus of 3.0% of GDP in the previous quarter.
- An International Monetary Fund (IMF) team led by Aqib Aslam held meetings in Maseru with the authorities. According to an IMF statement, the authorities set out a bold reform agenda but the current government-driven economic model continues to present challenges for growth and private sector development. The outlook points to muted growth of just over 2% over the medium term.
- The second National Strategic Development Plan (NSDP II) time frame has been extended to 2027, instead of developing a new strategy, following its implementation failure over the past three years.
- The government will pilot a block farming project on a 1564-hectare land in Leribe in partnership with farmers and other stakeholders in an effort to revive the ailing national food production, Matekane said during the launch of the winter cropping season.
- Lesotho's biggest mobile network operator, Vodacom Lesotho (VCL), lost about 171,000 subscribers in the period between April 2022 and March 2023, according to its financial results. M-Pesa subscribers increased by 8.6% from 992,000 in 2022 to 1,077,000 in 2023.





- Phase 2 of the Lesotho Highlands Water Project (LHWP) has broken ground, with President Cyril Ramaphosa, King Letsie and Matekane attending the sod turning ceremony.
- The government signed three new financing agreements with the European Union (EU) worth EUR29 million. The agreements are meant to support Lesotho in the areas of renewable energy, social protection and inclusive governance.
- Russia Sputnik newspaper reported that Lesotho's Ambassador to the United States (US), Tumisang Mosotho, stated that he hopes his country's representatives will attend the upcoming Russia-Africa summit in St. Petersburg. Mosotho reportedly told Sputnik that Lesotho is willing to expand its cooperation with Russia.
- The Ambassador of the United Arab Emirates (UAE) to Lesotho, Mahash Saeed Alhameli, expressed the UAE's interest in providing support and technical expertise to enhance aviation infrastructure.
- The United Nations World Food Programme (WFP) and the Government launched an geospatial platform worth US\$1.1 million, that will enhance governance, and evidence-based decision-making on national concerns.

