



IN TRANSFORMATION
INITIATIVE

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MONTHLY UPDATE

LESOTHO



MAIN STORIES

Controversy over
Water and Hydrogen
Conference

Global Organised
Crime Index

Relations with South
Africa

HIGHLIGHTS

- The opposition accused the government of ‘weaponizing’ security agencies to harass and intimidate their Members of Parliament (MPs).
- The Revolution for Prosperity (RFP) Thaba Moea MP, Puseletso Lejone, alleged that Democratic Congress (DC) leader, Mathibeli Mokhothu, offered him a M2.2 million bribe to support the opposition’s motion to oust Prime Minister Sam Matekane.
- Local government elections on 29 September saw the RFP winning 445 council seats, followed closely by the main opposition Democratic Congress (DC) with 421 seats. Turnout was 26.4%, down from 29% in 2017.
- The Water and Hydrogen in a Digital Future Conference started on 12 October after efforts to get it postponed. The Ministry of Natural Resources and Metsi ke Bophelo, of which SA businessman Mashudu Elias Ramano is a director, organised the conference. Attorney General, Rapelang Motsieloa, advised that the conference should be postponed because the agreement with Metsi Ke Bophelo was signed on 25 August 2023 before the company was registered in Lesotho. Mashudu has strong ties to the African National Congress (ANC).
- The Public Accounts Committee (PAC), which is scrutinising irregularities related to the funds earmarked for COVID-19 in 2020, heard that the National Emergency Command Centre (NECC) blew M22 million on lunches for NECC staff over six months.
- The Global Initiative Against Transnational Organised Crime said in its Global Organised Crime Index – 2023 that financial crimes are increasing in Lesotho.
- Lesotho ranks 124 out of 165 countries (1=best; 165=worst) and territories included in the Economic Freedom of the World: 2023 Annual Report produced by Canada’s Fraser Institute.
- The Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) of the Central Bank of Lesotho (CBL) decided to leave the CBL rate unchanged at 7.75%. Inflation increased to 5.2% in August 2023 from 4.5% in the previous month.



- Minister of Finance and Development Planning, Retšelisitsoe Matlanyane, slashed the Tobacco and Alcoholic Products Levy (TAPL) by 50%.
- Transport operators who rented their vehicles to the government have threatened to withdraw them over non-payment for 10 months.
- President Cyril Ramaphosa hosted Prime Minister Sam Matekane who was in Pretoria for the inaugural session of the South Africa-Lesotho Bi-National Commission.
- At the 78th meeting of the United Nations (UN) General Assembly Matekane called for the uplifting of the economic embargo against Cuba and the remaining sanctions against Zimbabwe.
- Only one MP attended the civil-military relations and security sector transformation seminar organised by the United States (US) embassy in Maseru. Retired US Brigadier General Russ Howard expressed his disappointment at the turnout.
- Lesotho soldiers deployed to Mozambique's Cabo Delgado region, as part of the Southern African Development Community (SADC) joint force, are reportedly going hungry because of inadequate food rations.
- The Lesotho Highlands Development Authority (LHDA) has been sued for withholding vital socioeconomic data pertaining to communities impacted by the Lesotho Highlands Water Project (LHWP) Phase I and II.

