

News from the DLN

You now have the latest news from DLN in front of you. Hope you will enjoy the reading and the photos. Most of them are from the Pitso-Party held 1st August.



'Me' Makokoli at the pitso-party having coffee by Sangstrup Klint

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News from the board

By: Anne Andersen

Summer in Denmark has come to an end while this newsletter is being sent out. Sometimes things are quiet in DLN during the summer, but that has not been the case this year as there has been carried out many different activities. DLN has received a sad message from Rural Self-Help Development Association (RSDA). The chairman of RSDA's board Ntate Makhema Mats'aba has passed away 30th of July after a short period of illness. Ntate Mats'aba visited Denmark in 2012 when DLN celebrated its 10 years anniversary. DLN sent our warmest thoughts and condolences to Ntates Mats'abas family.

In the end of May RSDA handed in an application to Civil Society in Development (CISU) for a Joint Finalisation to submit a new application for the project: *"Improving living conditions among Lesotho small scale farmers through lobby and advocacy"* (2015 – 2017).



Meeting in Phamong

As part of the project RSDA will organise the farmers in a farmers organisation after the Danish model. An organisation that will advocate for farmers rights in front of decision makers and improve the living conditions of the farmers. They will fight for a better life in the countryside through their association. The plan was, if the application was approved,

Nyt fra bestyrelsen

Af: Anne Andersen

Sommeren i Danmark slutter samtidigt med, at dette nyhedsbrev sendes ud. Nogle gange ligger alt stille i DLN hen over sommeren, men det har ikke været tilfældet i år. Tvært imod. Der har været en del aktivitet.

DLN har modtaget en trist meddelelse fra Rural Self-Help Development Association (RSDA). Formanden for RSDAs bestyrelse Ntate Makhema Mats'aba døde 30. juli efter en kort sygdomsperiode. Ntate Mats'aba var med på besøg i Danmark i 2012, og var med til at fejre DLNs 10 års jubilæum. DLN sender tanker til Ntates Mats'aba efterladte og kondolerer.

RSDA-gruppen sendte sidst i maj en ansøgning til Civil Society in Development (CISU) for at få bevilliget en færdiggørelsesrejse til Lesotho for at få et skrevet en ansøgning til et nyt projekt færdig: *"Improving living conditions among Lesotho small scale farmers through lobby and advocacy"* (2015 – 2017). Projektet handler om, at RSDA skal organisere landmændene i landboforeninger med dansk forbillede. Landboforeninger, der kan tale bønnernes sag overfor beslutningstagere, og dermed en vej til at forbedre landmændenes levevilkår. At de selv kan kæmpe for et bedre liv på landet gennem deres forening.

Planen var, at hvis ansøgningen blev godkendt, ville Anders og Signe Hedegaard tage til Lesotho og RSDA en uge i begyndelsen af juli, og de forberedte sig, men lidt forgæves. Der kom afslag! Det var rigtigt surt. Der var gode råd om, hvad der kunne forbedres i ansøgningen, og der var en opfordring til at søge igen. Dette arbejde er lige nu i gang. Forhåbentlig går ansøgningen igennem denne gang.

Development of Peace Education (DPE) var mere heldige. Efter at have fået en "No cost extension" indtil 30. juni 2014 på projekt *Public Participation in Budgetary Processes*, som

that Anders and Signe Hedegaard had planned to travel to Lesotho and visit RSDA one week in July to prepare the project. Unfortunately the application was rejected. However DLN has received input on how to improve the application and was encouraged to apply again later. At the moment the RSDA-group is preparing a new application and we hope it will be accepted next time. Development of Peace Education (DPA) was more fortunate. After a "no cost extension" of the project *Public Participation in Governance and Development* until 30th July followed by a Joint Finalisation visit to Lesotho. The group has secured project funding for a three-year period.



DPE-office staff

The new project is named "*Public Participation in Governance and Development*" and started 1st of July 2014. In the end of June Marie Villumsen and Carole Kouassi went to Lesotho to finalise the former project and started a new project up. DLN was a little worried to send members to Lesotho, as there have been rumours of political instability. Those of us who have experienced political unrest know it can be very dangerous to stay in Lesotho under such circumstances. However, after thorough discussions about the situation it sounded like the risk was not so great after all and they decided to go. Carole also visited DPE in July where she carried out a Baseline Study. Unfortunately both Marie and Carole

kørte i 2013, fortsatte arbejdet med at søge en færdiggørelsesrejse. Det lykkedes, og det er også lykkedes at få bevilliget et 3-årigt projekt. Det hedder: "*Public Participation in Governance and Development*". Det er startet 1. juli, og Marie Villumsen og Carole Kouassi har i slutningen af juni været i Lesotho dels for at afslutte det færdige projekt og starte det nye op. Det var med en vis skepsis, at vi sendte to af sted, fordi rygtet om politisk uro og især rygtet om, at der var kupplaner, havde nået Danmark. De af os, der har oplevet uro i Lesotho ved, at det kan blive seriøst farligt at opholde sig i Lesotho under sådanne omstændigheder. Det blev derfor undersøgt grundigt, hvad der egentlig var på færde. Det lød til, at det almindelige liv gik upåagtet videre i Lesotho, og af sted kom de.

Carole har igen været hos DPE i juli, hvor hun lavede Baseline Study.

Desværre har både Marie og Carole så mange jern i ilden, at de ikke har tid til at skrive om deres oplevelser i Lesotho til nyhedsbrevet – eller se alle billederne igennem, så de kunne bringes i dette nyhedsbrev. Håbet er, at det kan nås til december.

Som det fremgik af sidste nummer af Lumela.dk, skulle 'Me' Makokoli, der var sesotho-lærer for Mellemfolkeligt Samvirke, komme til Danmark. Derfor blev det hurtigt besluttet, at der skulle arrangeres en pitso-fest.



Kaffen indtages foran det lille fiskerhus

have been too busy to write about their experiences in Lesotho for the newsletter. Hopefully they will write an article for the next newsletter in December.



'Me' Makokoli and Hans Jørgen at Sangstrup Klint

As mentioned in the last edition of Lumela.dk 'Me' Makokoli, who was the Sesotho-teacher for Mellemfolkeligt Samvirke (MS) was coming to Denmark. It was decided to arrange a Pitso-party during the summer. 1st August it was real. The smell of stew, papa and morotho filled the air at the tip of Djursland in Denmark. You can read more about the Pitso and see the lovely pictures in this newsletter. The website has crashed for the second time. Luckily the content of the website was stored after the first crash. Therefore the new communication group in DLN has found a new host with better security and renewed the site. If you have not seen it yet, you should look for Denmark Lesotho Network on Facebook (<https://www.facebook.com/denmarklesothonetwark?fref=ts>). Louise Bau Jensen and Mette Damsgaard Jørgensen are responsible for the site. In addition there has been formed a group to plan a new culture/nature trip to Lesotho Autumn 2015. See the advertisement elsewhere in this newsletter (in Danish). Hereby it is the hope that a golden Autumn in Denmark and a fruitful Spring in Lesotho is waiting for you.

Det var et arbejde, der også foregik hen over sommeren. 1. august var det en realitet. Duften af stew, papa og moroho bredte sig på den yderste spids af Djursland. Læs mere om dette et andet sted i nyhedsbrevet og se de dejlige billeder.

Hjemmesiden gik ned for anden gang. Heldigvis var det meste af det, der blev genskabt første gang, den gik ned, gemt. Derfor har der også været arbejdet på dels at få en ny og mere sikker host, på at genskabe siden – og peppe den lidt op. Den nye kommunikationsgruppe har nemlig været i arbejdstøjet.

Hvis du endnu ikke har set det, så kig lige efter Denmark Lesotho Network på Facebook. Det er Louise Bau Jensen og Mette Damgaard Jørgensen, der sørger for at der sker noget på den.

Der er nedsat en gruppe, der arbejder med at arrangere en ny kultur/naturerejse til Lesotho i efteråret 2015. Se opslaget et andet sted i nyhedsbrevet.



Fra Sehlabathebe National Park

Til slut et ønske om, at der venter jer alle et gyldent efterår i Danmark og et frugtbart forår i Lesotho.

Pitso party: Coffie and refreshment with a view to Kattegat.



Pitso in summer landscape.....

By: Bodil Mathiasen

On the 1st day of August DLN hosted a pitso/party in a very beautiful part of Denmark: Djursland by the sea.

This summer Denmark has enjoyed almost

Pitso/fest i sommerlandet...

Af: Bodil Mathiasen

Den første dag i august holdt DLN en pitso/fest i en meget smuk del af Danmark : Nord Djursland ved kysten.

Den danske sommer har jo nærmest budt på

tropical temperatures and this Friday evening was no exception.

The occasion of the Pitso was to welcome dear guests from Lesotho.

'M'e Makokoli - former training officer/programme officer of MS Lesotho has spent several weeks in Denmark this summer. Present was also Masina from Maseru. Masina used to attend Machabeng High school with children of Development workers in 1996 - 1998.

The party started by the sea, a very beautiful spot - Sangstrup Klint - with coffee and refreshments.

For dinner we met at the Community hall in the village..... and dinner was prepared through joint cooperation, we had persuaded our Basothos guests to prepare the papa and moroho and the result was perfect.

Old friendships and new acquaintances were refreshed and we all enjoyed the summer evening remembering good times and good people in Lesotho.

tropiske temperaturer i år, og denne fredag aften var ingen undtagelse.

Anledningen til festen var, at DLN gerne ville byde gæster fra Lesotho velkommen i Danmark.

Me Makokoli - tidligere sproglærer/programme officer i MS Lesotho har tilbragt flere uger i Danmark i sommerferien.

Til stede var også Masina fra Maseru. Masina gik på Machabeng High School med børn af MS udviklingsarbejdere fra 1996 - 1998.

Festen startede med kaffe ved havet, stranden ved Sangstrup Klint, en meget smuk lokalitet.

Senere fortsatte vi i byens forsamlingshus, der dannede perfekte rammer til festen. Middagen var et resultat af eksemplarisk samarbejde, rigtig mange gav en hånd, og vores Basotho gæster sørgede for, at papa og moroho var så originalt som muligt!

Gamle venskaber og nye bekendtskaber blev genopfrisket, vi nød den lyse sommeraften og historier om gode folk og begivenheder i Lesotho.

Pitso party: At the Community Hal



'Me' Makokoli in the kitchen



Refreshment





Food is Ready





DLN is currently planning a trip to Lesotho in the autumn of 2015. It will be an active trip of enjoying and exploring the fascinating culture and unique nature of Lesotho finishing up with a couple of days in the pulsating life of Durban. More details will follow in the beginning of 2015.



Lesotho venter: sæt kryds i kalenderen i efteråret 2015!

Denmark Lesotho Network (DLN) arrangerer endelig endnu en rejse til Lesotho!

Så hvis du - som os - brænder for Lesotho, er det nu du skal sætte kryds i kalenderen og begynde at grave sparepengene frem fra madrassen.

Kultur- og naturrejse: en aktiv oplevelsesferie

Vi er i fuld gang med planlægningen af rejsen til Lesotho. Hovedoverskriften er en aktiv kultur- og naturrejse, hvor vi skal møde de lokale, høre om Lesothos historie, se og opleve enestående natur og fascinerende kultur. Og så slutter vi af med et par dages besøg i det pulserende Durban i Sydafrika.

Vi skal naturligvis slappe af, nyde lækker lokal mad og betragte de smukke udsigter, når vi bevæger os rundt i Lesotho. Men rejsen vil også indeholde spændende aktiviteter, der går ud over hvad en 'normal' eksotisk ferierejse tilbyder.

Vi skal blandt andet:

- besøge DLN's samarbejdspartnere og se/høre om vilkårene befolkningen i Lesotho
- møde toneangivende personer fra Lesothos civilsamfund, der kan fortælle en masse om, hvordan den politiske og samfundsmæssige situation ser ud i Lesotho, og hvordan fremtiden ser ud for Basotho-folket
- spise middag på en lækker indisk restaurant i Durban

Kort og godt:

- Vi rejser midt i oktober 2015 (uge 41 og 42)
- Prisen bliver ca. kr. 15.000,-. Inkluderet i prisen er flybilletter, fælles transport, udflugter, overnatning og udvalgte måltider
- Vi skal være min. 10 og max 20 personer for at rejsen bliver en realitet

Starten af 2015 byder på et mere udførligt program, og her vil det også være muligt at tilmelde sig og samtidig betale et mindre depositum.

På gensyn!



News from Lesotho:

Most news in the papers and internet has been about the political situation the last months. The latest came 30th August. Hereby some articles brought by the Medias:

From:

BBC News Africa

30 August 2014 Last updated at 11:17 GMT

Lesotho 'coup' forces PM Thabane to South Africa

The prime minister of the southern African kingdom of Lesotho has fled to South Africa, alleging a coup by the army and saying his life is in danger.



Thomas Thabane said he would go back to Lesotho and would step aside if he loses the next election

Speaking to the BBC, Thomas Thabane said he was in neighbouring South Africa and would return "as soon as I know I am not going to get killed."

Reports from Lesotho say the capital, Maseru, is now calm after soldiers seized key buildings.

Lesotho has seen a series of military

coups since independence in 1966.

Mr Thabane has headed a unity government since but suspended parliament in June amid feuding in his coalition.

'Illegal coup'

"I have been removed from control not by the people but by the armed forces, and that is illegal," Mr Thabane said.

"I came into South Africa this morning and I will return as soon as my life is not in danger.

"I will not go back to Lesotho to get killed."

However, an army spokesman said the military "supports the democratically elected government of

the day," Reuters news agency reported.

Earlier, troops were seen on the streets of Maseru and there were reports of gunfire.

Radio stations were taken off air and phone lines were cut, although later reports suggested they were back working.

Sports Minister Thesele Maseribane told AFP news agency that troops had surrounded State House, a key government building.



30 August 2014 Last updated at 14:53 GMT

At the scene: Basildon Peta, Maseru, Lesotho

This whole thing started around 03:00. There were gunshots since early morning. The city is currently calm. People are playing it safe within their homes, but there is basically a media blackout.

To all intents and purposes it is a military coup with the aim of ousting the prime minister. There can be no other reason of soldiers behaving the way they have been behaving other than to seize power.

So far we have no reports of killings. It would be correct to call it a bloodless coup attempt. But I am not going to stick around. The chances are the situation may deteriorate. One does not know what is going to happen.

Basildon Peta is the publisher of the Lesotho Times

The army is understood to have acted after the prime minister attempted to remove its chief, Lt Gen Kennedy Tlai Kamoli.

The army said the general was still in charge, saying the military "supports the democratically elected government of the day," Reuters news agency reported.

A spokesman, Maj Ntlele Ntoi, denied staging a coup, saying: "There is nothing like that, the situation has returned to normalcy... the military has returned to their barracks."

Earlier, troops were seen on the streets of Maseru and there were reports of gunfire.

Radio stations were taken off air and phone lines were cut, although later reports suggested they were working again.

From: Sunday Express

Lesotho in turmoil

By thabo On 30 Aug, 2014 At 11:10 PM |

...as Prime Minister Thomas Thabane flees to South Africa

Staff Reporters

ANARCHY reigned in Lesotho yesterday after Prime Minister Thomas Thabane fled into South Africa as the Lesotho Defence Force (LDF) staged what the premier has since described as a *coup d'état*.

On a day of high drama, many nervous Basotho, including ministers and senior government officials, could be seen streaming into South Africa while supermarket-shelves emptied quickly as citizens engaged in panic-buying, uncertain of the future in light of the power-vacuum created by the premier's retreat.

Dr Thabane yesterday told the *Sunday Express* he had appealed to South Africa's President Jacob Zuma for direct military intervention to help stabilise the situation in Lesotho and was awaiting the Southern African Development Community (SADC)'s response and decision on the matter.

“I have asked President Zuma for troops to help us with the situation in the country. President Zuma is now seized with the matter as chairman of the SADC Organ on Defence and Security.....,” said Dr Thabane in an interview, blaming the Lesotho Defence Force (LDF) Commander, Lieutenant General Tlali Kamoli, for “leading a mutiny to try and overthrow a legitimate government”.

Lesotho’s immediate future remained uncertain yesterday after Dr Thabane said he had fired Lt General Kamoli, who however, told the *Sunday Express* that he remained in charge of the LDF.

Lesotho has been in turmoil amid infighting in the coalition government and after Dr Thabane suspended Parliament on 10 June 2014 to forestall a bid by coalition partner, the Lesotho Congress for Democracy (LCD) led by Deputy Prime Minister Mothetjoa Metsing, to push for a no-confidence vote against him and bring back former Prime Minister Pakalitha Mosisili of the Democratic Congress (DC) into power.

However, yesterday’s chaos started when soldiers loyal to Lt General Kamoli stormed the Maseru Central Police Station, Police Headquarters and Ha-Mabote Police Stations in armoured tanks and disarmed police officers, before some allegedly headed for State House looking for Dr Thabane who had already skipped into South Africa.

Apparently, Dr Thabane was due to announce Lt General Kamoli’s dismissal as army commander yesterday and replace him with Brigadier Maaparankoe Mahao. It’s that decision by Dr Thabane to fire Lt General Kamoli which seems to have propelled the army commander into action.

Lt General Kamoli’s “coup attempt” started around 3am yesterday when armoured tanks moved into the three police stations, resulting in the disarmament of the police and seizure of arms kept at the police stations.

One policeman was killed and several injured during clashes which erupted during the operation.

LMPS spokesperson, Senior Inspector Lebona Mohloboli confirmed the death, but could not give further details, as he told the *Sunday Express* that he, and other senior officers, were in hiding following the army’s takeover of the three nerve-centres of police operations.

Lt General Kamoli vowed to remain in his seat as army commander last night, creating room for further chaos.

“As far as I am concerned, I am still the army commander and in full control of all Lesotho Defence Force instruments. You can even come by my office now at *Ha Ratjomose* Barracks and see for yourself that I am still in office and in full charge,” said Lt General Kamoli in an interview with the *Sunday Express*.

He refused to talk about the army's activities and whether or not he had seized power, only preferring to say his only aim in giving the interview was to debunk a radio announcement by Dr Thabane's spokesman, Thabo Thakalekoala, that he had been sacked as army chief.

But Dr Thabane told the *Sunday Express* he had decided to fire Lt General Kamoli because of "actions by the army commander that offended the rule of law."

This was in reference to Lt General Kamoli's refusal to hand over to the police, eight soldiers who were earlier this year accused of bombing houses belonging to the premier's partner Liabiloe Ramoholi, and Police Commissioner Tsooana soon after the latter's appointment. Commissioner Tsooana and Lt General Kamoli don't see eye to eye.

It is suspected Dr Thabane was the target of the attacks as he was known to frequent his girlfriend's house.

Dr Thabane yesterday said the commander's actions in refusing to handover the eight army suspects to the police were unacceptable, and insisted Lt General Kamoli was no longer head of the defence force. Asked about Lt General Kamoli's insistence that he was still head of the LDF, Dr Thabane said, "I am not going to worry about that," before terminating the call to take another call from President Zuma.

Dr Thabane earlier in the interview also attributed the "coup" to the rifts in his coalition and his anti-corruption drive that has netted Deputy Prime Minister Metsing and several other government ministers and officials.

"Corruption has become a major problem and I think we need to do everything to weed it out.....It is sad that some in the coalition don't agree with my tough stance against corruption.....," he said.

LCD cancels anti-prorogation march

By [thabo](#) On 30 Aug, 2014 At 11:15 PM |

Keiso Mohloboli

THE LESOTHO Congress for Democracy (LCD) Deputy Secretary General, Tšeliso Mokhosi, yesterday said the LCD-led march which had been earmarked for tomorrow has since been cancelled.

The march was aimed at putting pressure on Prime Minister Thomas Thabane to lift the nine-month suspension of parliament which he effected on 10 June 2014 at the height of his disagreement with Deputy Prime Minister Mothetjoa Metsing.

Mr Mokhosi told the *Sunday Express* that the Lesotho Defence Force (LDF) had advised the party to heed warnings from various stakeholders that the march would cause instability in the country.

"The LDF also advised us to consider peaceful dialogue instead of a march," said Mr Mokhosi, who is also the Minister of Energy, Meteorology and Water Affairs.

“The march is cancelled as per the advice of the army. The LCD Women’s League conference was also scheduled to start today and end tomorrow but because of security concerns, it has also been cancelled.”

Meanwhile, Mr Mokhosi also told the *Sunday Express* that Prime Minister Thomas Thabane had proved he was not interested in involving his coalition partner and LCD leader, Deputy Prime Minister Metsing, in decision-making. The LCD, ABC and Basotho National Party (BNP) led by Sports Minister Thesele Maseribane, formed a coalition government after the 26 May 2012 general election had failed to produce an outright majority winner.

“Mr Metsing and I are cabinet members and we had never been informed of the Government Gazette Legal Notice Number 64 (which announced the sacking of Lesotho Defence Force (LDF) Commander Lieutenant General Tlali Kamoli and his replacement by Lieutenant General Maaparankoe Mahao),” said Mr Mokhosi.

“I am shocked and baffled by how Thabane handled the issue of Lieutenant General Kamoli’s dismissal if ever it is true.”

Mr Mokhosi said he still believed Lieutenant General Kamoli’s dismissal might not be true because he had heard about it for the first time on local radio when the premier’s Press Secretary, Thabo Thakalekoala, announced Lt Gen Mahao was the new army commander.

Meanwhile, LDF Spokesperson, Major Ntlele Ntoi, yesterday confirmed that the army had advised the LCD to cancel tomorrow’s march, which the police had earlier refused to sanction.

“We advised the LCD to cancel the march and are confident they will listen because most of the time, when we advise people, they listen.”

The LCD had invited its supporters and leaders of other congress political parties, namely the Democratic Congress, Basotho Congress Party, Lesotho People’s Congress and Basotho Batho Democratic Party, to join in the protest march.

Cop shot dead as army, police clash

By [thabo](#) On 30 Aug, 2014 At 11:12 PM |

Lekhetso Ntsukunyane

A Lesotho Mounted Police Service (LMPS) sub-inspector was shot dead, while three constables were seriously injured during yesterday’s clashes between the police and members of the Lesotho Defence Force (LDF).

The violence, which took place at Maseru Central Police Station, Police Headquarters and Ha-Mabote Police Station, started at around 3am and resulted in the LDF taking over the three police stations for the better part of yesterday morning in what Prime Minister Thomas Thabane has since said was an attempted coup d’état.

To add to yesterday’s confusion, local radio stations suddenly went off-air at around 5am, and only resumed broadcasting at 10am, while the home of newly promoted LDF Commander, Lieutenant General Maaparankoe Mahao, was attacked by unknown gunmen at around 4am.

When the *Sunday Express* crew drove around Maseru beginning 7am yesterday, the streets were uncharacteristically empty of vehicles, while heavily armed soldiers could be seen patrolling Maseru Central, Police Headquarters and Ha-Mabote Police Station, with no LMPS officials in sight.

The soldiers only left the three stations at around 10:15am, but the police could still not enter the premises, fearing the LDF personnel would return and subject them to even more embarrassment, some of the LMPS officials later told the *Sunday Express*.

However, the police later entered the stations at around 11am and started taking stock of the damage, which had been caused by the morning's clashes. The police officers were, however, in plainclothes and told the *Sunday Express* that they were afraid of being identified and attacked by the LDF members should they wear their uniform.

It was during the inspection of the Police Headquarters that the police decided to release suspects who had been in holding cells, telling them, in the presence of this reporter, that the situation was no longer conducive for them to remain in custody.

LMPS spokesperson, Senior Inspector Lebona Mohloboli, confirmed the death and injury of the police officers, but would not give further details as he told the *Sunday Express* that he was also in hiding and fearing for his life.

The *Sunday Express* was also later told by police sources that LMPS Commissioner Khothatso Tšooana, and other senior officers had also gone into hiding, after learning that they were being allegedly hunted by the soldiers yesterday.

A police officer who was present when the Police Headquarters came under heavy gunfire yesterday, told the *Sunday Express*: "The soldiers stormed this station at around 3am and started assaulting our members who were on duty.

"They kept demanding some information about certain dockets, and when they couldn't get them, they became angry and started shooting at the building. It was during this confusion that the sub-inspector was shot dead, while three other officers were seriously injured.

"We were then locked up in the offices, and told to stay there while the soldiers patrolled the Police Headquarters.

"We were only released by our fellow officers when the soldiers had left just now at around 10:15am, after taking two of our senior officers hostage," said the officer.

The *Sunday Express* was still at Police Headquarters when the Military Police (MP) brought back two injured police officers the soldiers had allegedly "abducted"

The *Sunday Express* heard the soldiers being asked about the condition of the injured police officers.

"We were only sent to deliver them, and anything else, you should ask our bosses," said one of the MPs.

Meanwhile, the LDF spokesperson, Major Ntlele Ntoi yesterday described the soldiers' actions as "merely a military raid to disarm members of the police following a tip-off that they were going to use their armory to beef-up an illegal demonstration against the government on Monday (tomorrow)."

The Prime Minister's Press Secretary, Thabo Thakalekoala, on the other hand, yesterday told the *Sunday Express*: "What the army did was an attempted coup, period."

From:

Lesotho Times

Coalition leaders taking nation for granted

August 15, 2014 Lestimes



Lesotho's feuding ruling parties look set to miss today's deadline to remove barriers which have stalled progress in their efforts to find a lasting solution to their differences.

The three parties, namely the Lesotho Congress for Democracy (LCD), All Basotho Convention (ABC) and Basotho National Party (BNP), signed an agreement before Namibian President Hifikepunye Pohamba last week, undertaking to have made certain concessions by today, paving the way for the normalisation of their relationship.

According to the agreement, which has been dubbed the Windhoek Declaration, the LCD should have terminated the agreement it signed with the main opposition Democratic Congress (DC) on 11 June this year, while ABC leader, Prime Minister Thomas Thabane, had taken steps to end the nine-month suspension of parliament he imposed two months ago.

However, only the LCD appears likely to beat the deadline, while only a miracle would see the ABC fulfilling its end of the bargain by the set timeline, based on pronouncements made by the leadership of the two parties elsewhere in this issue.

Yet it is not just the failure to meet their self-imposed deadlines that is disconcerting but also the casual manner the three parties are taking the whole issue, despite its potential to plunge this country into turmoil.

The message the parties' leadership has repeatedly passed in successive interviews is that none of

these agreements is binding, despite their being overseen or endorsed by mediators, some of whom would have travelled long distances from their countries.

Yet the fact that the Windhoek Declaration, which came following a meeting between the three coalition leaders — Dr Thabane of the ABC, Mothetjoa Metsing of the LCD and Joang Molapo of the BNP — and President Jacob Zuma of South Africa, has not been fulfilled, hardly comes as a surprise to those who have closely followed the drama.

Despite Dr Pohamba being the chairperson of the Southern African Development Community (SADC) Organ on Politics, Defence and Security Cooperation, none of the three ruling parties appears to have taken his intervention in trying to help them end their differences, which nearly saw the coalition government collapsing two months ago, seriously.

For instance, since returning from Namibia, the three parties have never bothered to officially update Basotho on what they agreed upon in Windhoek and what steps they would take to ensure the normalisation of their relationship, which started with such promise in June 2012.

The ruling parties have also not been in a hurry to implement recommendations made a Commonwealth envoy, Dr Rajen Prasad, which are also meant to normalise relations between the three parties.

The recommendations are also meant to ensure a stable government in Lesotho, but Dr Prasad's report has remained unimplemented more than a month after the New Zealander handed it over to the three partners.

This lack of urgency and apparent lack of care for the wellbeing of the nation by the three parties in government should come to an end as the impasse can only negatively impact on the country's economic and social wellbeing.

Only the very naïve cannot see that the uncertainty between the governing party leaders has pegged back Lesotho's development and held back many development projects as donors have increasingly become jittery at the continued impasse.

The coalition leaders must show that they are true representatives of the people and that they are not in government to serve their own selfish interests but the nation, by fulfilling promises they would have made at each and every forum.

Better parliaments for stronger democracies

August 15, 2014

ALL those democrats of the 7th Parliament, under the Congress government, who took the parliament of Lesotho to new heights to be a member of the Inter Parliamentary Union (IPU) deserve some decoration by His Majesty.

The IPU is a forum of world democratic parliaments. To be a member, a national parliament and the State have to indeed be democratic. The role of the IPU is to promote and defend democracy as well as help towards building strong parliamentary institutions. It even represents parliamentary interests in the work of the United Nations. Members of Parliament are under constant pressure to improve their performance in matters of parliamentary democracy. Inclusion of MPs in State delegations to the UN sessions is another IPU yardstick of measuring how parliament relates with the executive it has to oversee. Lesotho's parliament ought to take the initiative to ensure that it gets included in delegations to the UN. That would be an achievement before the IPU.

One feature which distinguishes the IPU from other world parliamentary organisations is the



frequency of changes in the number of its member parliaments. In 2009, it had 151 member parliaments; in 2010 it had 155 while in 2012 it had 162. These statistics signify the growth of democracy. The decline in numbers is largely due to disqualification of members failing democratic codes and norms or to pay annual subscriptions. Disqualified

parliaments have to re-apply for re-affiliation and convince the IPU that they have mended their undemocratic ways. The IPU does not compromise standards or condone undemocratic actions by member parliaments.

Currently, the IPU has a strategy for the 2012-2017 period, adopted in September 2011, with delegates from Lesotho also in attendance. By default, this corresponds with the term of the 8th Parliament. One of the key objectives is to strengthen democracy through parliaments by engaging member parliaments to improve their structures and performance. IPU holds bi-annual meetings of members where each member parliament shares its experiences and also learns from others. All the forgoing mention is intended to be a challenge to Lesotho to assess the current state of affairs of the 8th Parliament. How is it working towards the attainment of the above IPU objective to strengthen democracy through parliament? One indicator of an effective parliament is how it exercises oversight over the executive. The previous parliaments established portfolio committees to improve oversight.

Prorogation of parliament has now caused this mechanism to miscarry. This is a set back. Prorogation is not designed to choke a system. Until February 2015, Lesotho parliament shall not be functional; while the executive shall remain a lone runner in this nine month marathon. Meanwhile, the important business of parliament, which was pending, has been killed by this prorogation. Every cloud has a silver lining. The current generation of voters are watching. They saw the coalition government emerge with all that goes with it; they now see an unprecedented nine month prorogation. They are watching whether or not the Namibia muti will shorten it. In the event it ends

in February 2015, as gazetted, we expect to see whether or not what necessitated this prorogation shall have not deepened its roots. Chances are, at that point, it may be extended, and that will be sad.

This is the kind of Lesotho parliament under the first coalition government. The begging question is whether the electorate is to blame for this chaos or the 8th Parliament. Maybe the blame should lie with another entity. Chances are the electorate will have the final say, at the appropriate time. One good aspect or lesson of the 8th Parliament is its success in enlightening the nation about coalitions which the constitution provides for. This is especially after the New Zealand lessons where coalitions support the most popular party and not vice versa. Ours is a clear example of an experiment gone wrong. Deliberate exclusion of the powerful has proved to be a joke.

Democracy is not a game of jokes, chess or scrabble. The current mess or good, depending on who the on-looker is. It is a potential subject of debate by the Association of Secretaries General of Parliaments (ASGP) as an IPU think-tank which member parliaments may tap to obtain best practices to improve home parliaments. The onus should not to be on members of parliament alone. The addition of good human resources can better a parliament. Staff could be better positioned to continuously orient MPs on new parliamentary trends to better their parliament for strong democracy in Lesotho. Honourable Makhabane Maluke is the Bobatsi Number 80 Constituency Member of Parliament and belongs to the main opposition Democratic Congress.

It's business as usual, says Thabane

Published on June 13, 2014

SECHABA MOKHETHI

MASERU-Prime Minister Dr Motsoahae Thabane yesterday declared it was business as usual for government, citing any suggestions indicating the coalition had **collapsed were misplaced**.



The prime minister made this bold statement following a Lesotho Congress for Democracy (LCD) declaration that they no longer wanted to continue subscribing to the tripartite coalition with the All Basotho Convention (ABC) and the Basotho National Party (BNP). Speaking from the State House, Thabane also addressed issues of governance that were raised by the LCD during a media briefing in Maseru on Wednesday this week. He indicated last Friday he wrote to King Letsie III asking him to exercise his constitutional powers

(Section 83 (1) and 83 (4) read together with 82 (1) (a)) to prorogue the 8th parliament of Lesotho.

"Talks to bring stability between coalition partners forced me to take this rare decision, but it should be noted that the coalition government still exists and we are working together," Thabane said.

He guaranteed his government would not do anything that contravenes the law at 'this critical time', adding the prorogation was only meant to give talks towards reconciliation between coalition partners a chance.

"This (suspension) will not affect positions and remuneration of anyone in government, including Members of Parliament."

Thabane explained parliament's prorogation was provided for by the constitution and would, in no way, shake democratic pillars of peace and stability.

Asked to give his impressions on the prime minister's remarks, the LCD Elders Committee chairman Mpho Malie declined to comment.

"I have not listened to the speech. And I cannot comment on something I did not listen to," Malie said.

The Democratic Congress (DC) was also not in a position to react to Thabane's short speech, with the party's secretary general Ralechate 'Mokose indicating he could not form an opinion because he had not listened to the speech.

The LCD on Wednesday announced that "...we cannot continue to be party to such a coalition where the powers and offices of the people are becoming tools to persecute, purge and instil fear to the citizenry."

The party's deputy leader, Dr Motloheloa Phooko added: "As the LCD, We have decided that we can no longer endure the humiliation that the Honourable Thabane is inflicting upon our party by his unilateral and undemocratic conduct".

He accused Thabane of writing two faceted letters, one to the LCD begging for peace talks of coalition parties' executive committees, while another contradictorily advised the King to prorogue parliament.

"One would regard a request for a meeting of executive committees as a peace offering, but while we were shaking hands with them, they were stabbing us at the back with an ill-conceived prorogation," Phooko charged.

He also cited Thabane's decision to advise the King to suspend parliament was done without consulting fellow coalition partners.

According to Phooko, the prime minister acted as if he was part of single party majority while in fact he was leading a coalition of parties.

"The LCD has decided that it is right to accept that the Prime Minister has cancelled and rendered trivial, the strength and existence of the Coalition by refusing to observe and adhere to the "good faith" and democratic principles," he said.

Meanwhile, LCD leader Mothetjoa Metsing told the same media gathering that they were still part of the coalition government, adding ministers from the party would not resign from cabinet.

Metsing also indicated as coalition partners, they all encouraged changes in government towards the 2012 general election, but after two years of coalition governance, the LCD was now clear the types of changes they longed for were not the same with those of their ABC partners.

He observed: "We are aware that Thabane loathes the coalition and has never loved it from the beginning," adding the coalition partners were supposed to have met with Christian Council of Lesotho (CCL) last week but this did not take place because some government officials were away on trips.

Metsing further noted he had requested the CCL to ask Thabane to desist from "whatever he has been doing without partners' consultation and any undertakings, and I was told he agreed."

However, Metsing, who is also the deputy prime minister, said he was shocked to hear on Saturday that a letter requesting the King to prorogue the parliament had already been written.

He underlined the government was only complete when its three arms – the legislature, the executive and the judiciary – were effectively operational.

The prorogation of parliament meant all Bills would be thrown away and not be enacted into law and any signing would be unlawful.

Metsing was quick to add that there were a lot of parties willing to work together with the LCD to carry on with government.

"If the LCD goes out to lure other parties, I wonder if a real democrat at heart would consider himself to be a Prime Minister with mere 28 seats?" he quipped.

From: Mail & Gardian

Parliament suspended amid fears of a coup in Lesotho

19 Jun 2014



Emergency talks have been underway to determine the future of Lesotho's fragile coalition government, amid suggestions of a coup.

Emergency talks were underway on Thursday to determine the future of Lesotho's fragile coalition government, amid suggestions of a possible coup and fears the country may be

plunged back into political violence.

With the two-year-old coalition government teetering on the brink, the three major parties in the grouping held crisis talks in the capital Maseru mediated by the Christian Council of Lesotho.

Junior partner, the Lesotho Congress for Democracy has vowed to forge a new coalition, one that would oust Prime Minister Thomas Thabane.

In response the premier has temporarily suspended Parliament, with the blessing of the king, allowing him to dodge a vote of no confidence.

The stand-off has raised the political temperature and prompted a warning from South Africa, which surrounds the tiny mountain kingdom.

"The South African government notes with concern the unfolding political and security situation in the Kingdom of Lesotho which has resulted in the prorogation of the country's Parliament,"

Pretoria said in a statement on Thursday.

‘Grave concern’

“The South African government has further noted with grave concern the unusual movements of the Lesotho Defence Force Units in the capital, Maseru.”

South Africa said it “will not tolerate any unconstitutional change of government in the region and continent”.

An AFP reporter in Maseru said the situation on the streets was calm, with people going about their normal business.

Lesotho is no stranger to political crisis or intervention from its neighbours. In 1986 South Africa’s apartheid government instigated a coup in Lesotho to prevent the country being used as a base by the ANC and other activists. In 1998, following election riots, South Africa and Botswana embarked on an ill-fated invasion that reduced the capital to rubble.

In recent decades there have been a series of attempted political assassinations. But the last elections in 2012 passed off relatively peacefully, with three major parties forging a coalition. – AFP

From: Google Alert - Lesotho



Seeiso Bereng Seeiso

His Royal Highness, Prince of Lesotho

Rebuilding Lesotho's Missing Generation

Posted: 06/18/2014 9:56 am EDT Updated: 06/18/2014 6:59 pm EDT

As a boy during the school holidays, I would accompany my late father on horseback up into the most remote areas of Lesotho's highlands, helping tend his cattle, sheep, goats and horses. We travelled for miles through small villages and across the harsh terrain on our sure-footed four-legged friends to reach the cattle-posts where we met up with the Basotho men whose job it was to look after the animals. The extreme poverty we encountered along our way was eye opening, and I suppose this was my father's way of showing me what life was like for many other children my age.

Up in the cattle-posts the conditions we lived in were not comparable to other cattle-posts, where boys as young as 10 years old could be found tending livestock as a way to earn money for their families; my father was very sensitive not to employ under-aged persons.

Undoubtedly, the mining boom in Kimberly led many men into South Africa to find work and income for their families, leaving the wives behind to care for their children, and sons being pulled out of school to take over their father's work as a herder in the mountains. Over the years, as the migration back and forth across our borders increased, so did the spread of HIV/AIDS. Ill educated and equipped to manage the spread of this disease, Lesotho now has the third highest infection rate of HIV in the world -- a harrowing statistic for a country with a population of just over two million people. This epidemic has wiped out a generation leaving

one in three children orphans and without the love and care of parents to guide them through the early days of their lives.

It was in 2004, when a young Prince Harry during his gap year arrived in my country. We spent time visiting a number of orphanages and children who had been affected by HIV/AIDS and extreme poverty. Mpolokeng is one of the children we met.

At the young age of six years old, Mpolokeng's mother was bedridden by HIV/AIDS-related illness. Her father was busy working trying to provide for his family. Struggling to come to terms with her mother's disease and fending for herself and her siblings, life for Mpolokeng was tough and her outlook bleak. Sadly, her mother died a few months later. M'e Ma Bereng Seeiso (my wife) took it upon herself to support Mpolokeng and her siblings.

And so, as I had once travelled to the highlands with my father as a boy, I took Prince Harry to one of our cattle-posts. It was there that we hatched the plan to give the less privileged and often forgotten vulnerable children a chance of some schooling -- and thus a ray of hope for a better future.

In 2006, Sentebale was born, which means 'forget me not' in Sesotho. It was set up in memory of both our mothers, but also as a reminder not to forget the children of Lesotho. Today, we are working in partnership with a number of community-run organisations, government ministers and other NGOs to provide healthcare and education to some of the most vulnerable children in Lesotho. Thanks to Sentebale's support, Prince Harry's determination and commitment to helping vulnerable children in Lesotho and my dear wife, life for children like Mpolokeng's has been turned around. Since Sentebale's inception we have provided care and education to Mpolokeng, and she currently receives a bursary from Sentebale to attend secondary school.

Step by step, we are working to support those effected by the missing generation and rebuild Basotho society, by giving children and their caregivers the skills and knowledge they need to rebuild their lives through sustainable means. Our Mamohato programme, is addressing the crux of the crisis -- the stigma attached to HIV/AIDS. In addressing the psychosocial needs of an HIV-positive person, they and their caregivers realize the disease is no longer a death sentence and that there is a chance to lead a perfectly healthy, long life if they know how to take their medication correctly.

The power of this programme is that these people receiving the psychosocial support return to their villages feeling empowered and confident. And so, the ripple effect begins, as they become spokespeople within their own communities, encouraging others to come forward and be tested for HIV and other diseases. The difference I see in the children receiving this care is enormously motivating and encouraging.

Our goal is now to scale up our work to reach more children in Lesotho. Sentebale is currently building the Mamohato Children's Centre on a plot of land, kindly donated by my brother, His Majesty King Letsie III. The centre will house the Mamohato programme and provide a hub for all our work with vulnerable children in Lesotho. The idea is to create a safe zone where young people can come together and through activities and sport (especially football) address their psychological needs, sharing their fears, hopes and dreams for the future.

Our work is starting to change the demographic of Basotho society, but there is a lot more to be done. One local governmental department operating alone does not have the power to alleviate this issue, it requires all of the ministerial departments and organisations operating within this sphere of work to come together and address the problem in a holistic and sustainable fashion.

I for one, and my friend Prince Harry are committed to this cause and seeing the landscape of Lesotho change for the better.

This post is part of a series produced by The Huffington Post and Kick4Life, which is a non-profit that uses soccer as a vehicle to address social disadvantage and transform the lives of youth in the nation of Lesotho. To see all the posts in the series, read [here](#). To learn more about Kick4Life and their World Cup Challenge on Crowdrise, read [here](#).

What is Denmark Lesotho Network?

The NGO Denmark Lesotho Network (DLN) was founded in 2002 by former Danish development workers in Lesotho and other good friends of the tiny mountain kingdom in Southern Africa. DLN aims at supporting NGO's in Lesotho in their work to develop civil society. DLN uses its network of people and organisations in Lesotho to pinpoint beneficiaries of DLN's support – and to keep an eye on that funding is used according to agreements made. DLN wishes to enhance knowledge of the living conditions in Lesotho and to seek funding from foundations, business enterprises and organisations for actual projects in Lesotho.

Membership of DLN

Anyone, who can support the aims of DLN, can achieve a membership. Members contribute to support initiatives in Lesotho that develop and better living conditions in the country. Members will receive an electronic newsletter four times a year and be invited to DLN's annual general assembly. The cost of a membership is 100 Danish kroner yearly. For membership contact cashier Karen Steffensen, tel.: +45 98677185, cell: +45 23880099, e-mail: karen.steffensen@mail.dk
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