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Ten rogue cops suspended



Lesotho Mounted Police Service (LMPS) Spokesperson Mpiti Mopeli

BONGIWE ZIHLANGU

MASERU – Ten Ha-Matela Police Station police officers who in late July 2019 tortured five suspects and forced one of them to eat his faeces and lick the remnants from the floor with his tongue have been suspended pending investigations into the incidents, Public Eye on Sunday has learnt.

Another victim reportedly died shortly after being released from police custody,

Lesotho Mounted Police Service (LMPS) Spokesperson Mpiti Mopeli confirmed the suspensions on Thursday and told Public Eye on Sunday that in a bid to send the message that the security institution does not endorse the torture of suspects while in police custody, the 10

officers had been issued with letters of suspension pending investigation into the incidents.

“As we speak, the police officers who were involved in the torture incidents at the Ha-Matela Police Station have been issued with letters of suspension pending investigations into the incident,” Mopeli said without clarifying when the officers were issued with the letters.

“The stance of the LMPS is that we don’t endorse the torture of suspects by the police. The expectation by the public, the law and the international community is for us to be cognisant of respecting human rights in the execution of our duties. Police are expected to know that violation of human rights cannot be tolerated.”

Mopeli further told this paper that the LMPS had to institute

disciplinary measures against the officers because “keeping silent and delaying to take action created the impression that the LMPS endorses torture and violation of suspects’ human rights”.

“And for as long as police continue to torture suspects while in their custody, the image of the police service remains tainted. But the truth is that we do take serious disciplinary measures against police officers who torture suspects,” Mopeli said.

“The truth is that we are not here to torture Basotho. Ours is to execute our mandate as the police. That is why where there are reported incidents of torture by the police, we assign delegations to conduct investigations to establish facts and take legal action against

perpetrators.” In late July, five suspects were individually arrested by the Ha-Matela Police and badly tortured at the police station situated at Nazareth about 40 kilometres from Maseru city, such that one Kabelo Ratia was beaten until he soiled himself with faeces, only to be forced to eat his own excreta and lick the remnants from the floor with his tongue.

But worse was yet to come, for shortly after being released from the Queen ’Mamohato Memorial Hospital where he was admitted in critical condition following the assault, another suspect Thabo ’Mei died with a damning autopsy report indicating the primary cause of death as lung contusion resulting from aggravated assault.

The report said ’Mei suffered “chest and neck injuries with extensive lung contusion” which medical sources confirm can be fatal, depending on severity.

The post-mortem was performed a few days after the deceased’s death by pathologist Dr. C.T. Moorosi.

The “chest and neck injury” was listed as the primary cause of death with “extensive lung contusion”, noted as the secondary cause.

According to LearningRadiology.com lung contusion, also known as pulmonary contusion, is a bruise of the lung caused by chest trauma.

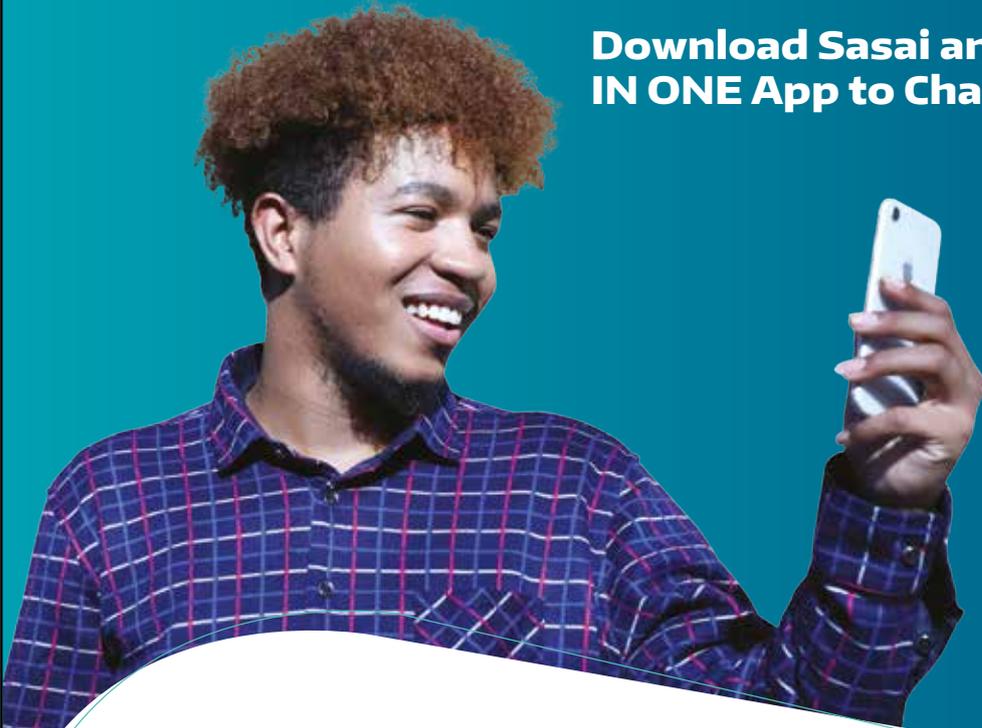
As a result of damage to capillaries, blood and other fluids accumulate in lung tissue. The excess fluid interferes with gas exchange, potentially leading to inadequate oxygen levels known as hypoxia.

A contusion happens when an injured capillary or blood vessel leaks blood into the surrounding area. Contusions are a type of hematoma, which refers to any collection of blood outside of a blood vessel and any injury to this tissue can cause one or more blood vessels to leak blood.

It occurs that 30 to 75 percent of severe chest pains accompanied by other injuries result in death. Although all associated injuries are often the cause of death, pulmonary contusion is thought to cause death directly in a quarter to half of cases.

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News

Judge Lebotse blasts prosecution

... *Khetheng murder suspects await trial 2 years on*

RELEBOHILE TSOAMOTSE

MASERU - Acting High Court judge, Justice Kabelo Lebotse has criticised the prosecution for delaying the murder case involving Police Constable Mokalekale Khetheng.

He said the two-year period that suspects in the criminal case had spent in custody awaiting trial is too long and demanded answers from the prosecution which the complainant blames for the delay.

The judge made the remarks at a bail hearing of one of the accused persons, Senior Superintendent Thabo Tšukulu on Thursday.

This was Tšukulu's second attempt to be freed on bail after Justice Semapo Peete dismissed the initial bail application in 2016.

During the hearing on Thursday, Justice Lebotse asked the prosecution why the trial still had not started after two years after Tšukulu's lawyer complained that seeing his client to spend two years awaiting trial means the interests of justice had not been served.

Advocate Karabo Mohau (KC) told the court that Tšukulu had always been ready to answer his charges but would repeatedly be told that his case had been allocated to a foreign judge who was yet to arrive in the country.

In motivating Tšukulu's release on bail, Mohau said two years is not a reasonable time to detain suspects without trying them and that the prolonged detention is against section 12 of the Constitution which provides that a person charged with a criminal offence shall be tried within a reasonable time.

"At most, a suspect can be detained for 90 days," Mohau said. Further Mohau submitted that section 6 (5) of the Constitution provides that any person arrested on suspicion of committing an offence shall be tried within a reasonable time and that where this does not happen, they shall be released conditionally or unconditionally.

"We are alive to the fact that according to section 109 of the Criminal Procedure and Evidence Act, we have a duty to persuade this court that



Acting High Court judge, Justice Kabelo Lebotse

exceptional circumstances that warrant the release of our client on bail exist, to which we say it is in the interest of justice that he be released on bail."

Mohau told the court that his client stands to suffer prejudice if he is kept in jail because he is unable to prepare for his trial, adding that the client was denied access to documents that are essential for the trial since some of the documents are not allowed at the correctional facility.

According to Mohau, denying his client access to documents contributes exceptional circumstances that warrant his release on bail so that he may be able to prepare for his trial.

"We submit that denying him bail could mean that he is not able to prepare for the trial meaningfully which is against section 12 of the Constitution - the right to be given adequate time and resources to prepare for the trial and right to counsel".

For their part, the prosecution said despite the matter being ready for prosecution, an administrative decision had been taken by the courts that the criminal trial would be presided over by a foreign judge.

Advocate Motene Rafoneke, on behalf of the prosecution, said the appointment of judges

to preside over Tšukulu's case was in progress, adding the court felt it was necessary to engage a foreign judge in the said case and similar ones.

Rafoneke also said the cases failed to proceed following the arrival of the judges because Tšukulu, along with others, instituted a court application challenging the pro deo fees that the state has agreed to assist them with.

Tšukulu is charged along Former Commissioner of Police, Molahlei Letsoepa, Lesotho Congress for Democracy (LCD) deputy leader, Tšeliso Mokhosi and three other police officers for the murder of Police Constable Mokalekale Khetheng in March 2016. The police officers are Senior Inspector Mabitle Matona, Sub Inspector Haleokoe Taasoane and Inspector Mothibeli Mofolo.

Khetheng, who was stationed in Mokhotlong, disappeared on March 26, 2016 after he was earlier that day arrested by Leribe Police in connection with an arson incident that allegedly occurred at Hlotse Police Station.

It was alleged that instead of duly booking him, Hlotse police handed him over to their colleagues from Maseru who were in the company of members of the

Lesotho Defence Force (LDF).

His disappearance then prompted his father Thabo Khetheng to lodge an application before the High Court on July 18, 2016 demanding that he be produced in court dead or alive.

But police authorities defended the matter in court, contending Khetheng had absconded from duty and his whereabouts were unknown.

Police also accused Khetheng's family of deliberately omitting crucial information in his court papers. Makotoko, one of the police officers that arrested Khetheng at his home in Sebothoane, Leribe later testified against her superiors when the matter continued in court.

She told the court she arrested Khetheng along with Constables Mphutlane and Ntoane before handing him over to their superior officer, Inspector Mofolo who headed the Criminal Detective Division (CID).

On August 11, 2017, Khetheng's body was exhumed at the Lepereng Cemetery in Maseru. As part of the investigations, three employees of the Lesotho Funeral Services were also detained and interrogated by police.

The body was then reburied in Mokhotlong on August 26, 2017.

Phori breathes fire over wool testing

‘SA testers sabotaging Lesotho sales’



*Minister of Small Business, Co-operatives and Marketing
Chalane Phori*

MATHATISI SEBUSI

MASERU - Lesotho will be forced to spend a fortune to test its wool and mohair in New Zealand since Wool Testing Bureau South Africa (WTBSA) stopped testing its fabric alleging the Stone Shiled Thaba Bosiu wool centre does not meet International Wool Textile Organisations' standards.

This was revealed by a committee investigating the buying and selling of wool and mohair in the country after their tour to Port Elizabeth where the testing bureau is situated.

Chairperson of the ad hoc committee, Kimetso Mathaba, said WTBSA alleged the methods of sampling wool and mohair in Lesotho are below standard as Thaba Bosiu Wool Centre does not have certified, calibrated scales and machines to take samples in the correct manner.

The Wool Testing Bureau South Africa stopped testing Lesotho fabric after the enactment of agricultural wool and mohair regulations of 2018

which prohibited the sale of the fabric outside the country.

Its refusal to test Lesotho's fabric was allegedly influenced by people who wanted to sabotage the wool and mohair regulations of 2018.

The ad hoc committee revealed this week in parliament after Minister of Small Business, Co-operatives and Marketing, Chalane Phori alleged that WTBSA has been influenced by some politicians, BKB members and farmers that want to see the regulations fail.

Phori said during the pilot project of the wool and mohair regulations of 2018, they took their fabric samples and got these tested at Wool Testing Bureau South Africa without any problem.

"If our sampling method is the problem, why did they test the fabric in the past," he asked.

He said the refusal has nothing to do with the sampling method but is caused by influence from those against wool and mohair regulations of 2018.

Before the regulations, Lesotho farmers sold their wool

and mohair to BKB based in Port Elizabeth which tested samples at WTBSA.

Teboho Sekata, a member of the ad hoc committee, demanded that Phori present before the committee supporting documentary evidence showing that WTBSA was influenced to refuse testing Lesotho's fabric.

"Present before the committee supporting documents that the testing facility in Port Elizabeth was influenced by people who want the regulations to fail because as far as this committee is concerned, that is untrue.

"We took a tour to WTBSA and were told that Lesotho does not follow proper procedures of wool testing as it does not have certified calibrated scales and machines to take samples in the correct manner.

"We even went to the Thaba Bosiu Wool Centre to see if the allegations were true and found out that they have no sampling facilities but use their hands to pick samples," Sekata said.

Phori dismissed the allegations noting that even though they have no electronic sampling equipment, they still sample the fabric using a spear.

"The fact that we have no electronic sampling equipment does not mean that we do not take correct samples.

"We have our ways of sampling our fabric; we use a spear to perform the exact work done by the electronic sampling machines.

"These machines are not available in the country because they can only be bought in Port Elizabeth at the testing centre. However, they refused to sell us one," Phori said.

He said the Lesotho government enacted the regulations because it came to realise that the fabric benefited brokers more than Basotho farmers as they were being charged for transport, tax and dipping levy while, on the other hand, BKB was not paying any tax to Lesotho.

Phori said selling the fabric in the country cuts costs for farmers as buyers pay for transportation of their wool and mohair and Lesotho gets to gain international currency as forex unlike BKB which paid farmers in local

currency after converting the foreign currency.

In July this year, BKB came before the ad hoc committee and alleged that Lesotho does not have what it takes to sell wool and mohair in the country and, as a result, wool and mohair farmers are suffering.

BKB Director Isak Stats alleged the Lesotho Wool Centre is not a wool facility but just a big warehouse.

"The Lesotho Wool Centre is not a wool facility but a big warehouse which lacks technical knowledge, administrative and sampling capabilities," Stats said.

Thaba Bosiu Wool Centre Public Relations Officer Manama Letsie told this paper that even though he cannot disclose the exact amount they spent to test wool and mohair in New Zealand, it cost the centre a lot of money to test wool and mohair in New Zealand. They decided to test the fabric in New Zealand because WTBSA refused to test their fabric after being influenced by two of its directors are alleged to be BKB's shareholders.

"The testing centre was influenced to stop testing Lesotho's wool and mohair by two of its directors who are said to be BKB's shareholders so that Lesotho would be unable to sell the fabric.

"We are still not sure of their motive but we believe that they want the country to fail selling the wool and mohair so that farmers can fight," Letsie said.

The Parliament established the committee following the outcry by wool and mohair farmers who petitioned the Government to remove wool and mohair regulations of 2018 complaining that the Government was ruining them by the regulations that prohibit them from selling their fabric to South Africa.

However, a fortnight ago the government abolished the monopoly in the wool and mohair industry that farmers have been complaining about and issued five wool and mohair trading and brokering licenses to five companies of which three are Lesotho companies while two are South African companies which will all be operating from the country.

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Botha-Bothe students speak for striking teachers



Botha-Bothe students at the youth dialogue

‘MAPALO NKHELOANE

MASERU - Transformation Resource Centre, in partnership with the US Embassy on Friday held a youth dialogue with students from three Botha-Bothe-based high schools.

Dubbed “Youth in National Reforms”, the discussion is, according to TRC’s Civic and Electoral Education Officer, Monts’eng Mohapi, aimed at providing the youth with a platform to discuss issues affecting them that they want included in the on-going National Reforms for the Lesotho they want.

The three schools are Qalo, Botha-Bothe, and Botha-Bothe

Community high schools.

The same dialogue also took place at schools in other districts like Mokhotlong, Mafeteng, Maseru, Leribe and Botha-Bothe is the last district.

Mohapi told Public Eye that the youth dialogues are a build-up to the upcoming students parliament scheduled to take place in early October.

She noted that the students will be given a platform to present their issues in parliament before the social cluster in a form of motion so that their voices would be heard.

This, Mohapi said, will also give the students a feel of how it is like to be a parliamentarian thereby inspiring those among them who aspire to be MPs.

Among the issues the

students outlined was the current strike by their teachers which they emphasised affects their academic work terribly. The students strongly appealed to the government to settle issues with teachers.

Satisfied teachers mean better performing students, they urged, adding failure to attend classes consistently seriously jeopardises their future and is a recipe for disaster.

They said they believe teachers are responsible enough not to fight for what is not rightfully theirs so the least the government could do is meet them half-way and address their grievances.

Still on the matter of the education system of Lesotho, the students said the fact that

some subjects are prioritised while others are not was unfair.

Puleng Mafereka from Botha-Bothe High School said it does not make sense that a student who gets an A in Mathematics is considered a genius, while the one who gets an A in Agriculture is not yet the government always preaches the message that farming is the greatest endeavour for Basotho.

“This sadly starts in our schools. A student with an A in Maths is granted awards and the one with a A in Agriculture or Home Economics is not. This sadly demotivates some of us,” Mafereka said.

The student further said even students who are awarded scholarships to study abroad are those who did well in physical sciences and maths only which is not fair. The surprising part, Puleng said, is that when those “brilliant” students come back to Lesotho they find positions they are supposed to occupy being occupied by foreigners.

“How do you send a Mosotho student to Cuba or anywhere else to study medicine then hire a Chinese doctor? How do you send Basotho to study engineering then award tenders to foreigners?,” she asked.

They students also stressed on the issue of nepotism which they implied is the root cause of many problems in Lesotho. They indicated hiring of people, especially in government positions, should be done fairly not on the basis of family favours. It is high time the government considered talent as one of the tools the youth could use to make a living out of, the students suggested.

They emphasised that not every child is meant to take an academic route but that does not mean the person is stupid. They therefore said the government should be responsible for uplifting such people’s talents especially considering that today an academic qualification is just a paper that does not benefit graduates.

Botha-Bothe High School teacher, Makhalane Motsamai, thanked TRC and the US Embassy for initiating the dialogue.

He said he was impressed by how students were informed and how they expressed very strong views.

Motsamai said he hoped their voices would be heard so that Lesotho’s reforms would be all-inclusive.

Sport

THE BEST SUNDAY READ



Back-to-back World Cup tie for Likuena

NTHAKO MAJORO

MASERU - Lesotho senior national team Likuena today host Ethiopia national team Walias in an explosive back-to-back 2022 World Cup qualifying tie at Setsoto Stadium.

The two teams played to a goalless draw in a first leg of the qualifiers at Bahir Dar Stadium in Ethiopia this past Wednesday,

which makes the second leg tougher for both of them.

Today's match will be the fourth meeting between Likuena and Walias in five years, with the latter yet to lose against the Lesotho side after a 2-1 victory twice in the Africa Cup of Nations (AFCON) qualifiers in 2014. Likuena's last Wednesday match was the first official game they played since their newly appointed South African coach, Thabo Senong joined them a

fortnight ago.

Likuena arrived home from Ethiopia on Thursday afternoon, just a day after the first leg encounter, while Walias arrived in the country for the return leg on Friday morning.

"The Lesotho Football Association has made everything in their power to make sure the team came back home as early as possible," said the Lesotho Football Association (LeFA) Information Officer, Mikia Kalati.

"The team left Bahir Dar immediately after the game and slept in Addis Ababa before taking a flight to Johannesburg (in South Africa) early on Thursday morning."

The next match for Likuena will be the African Nations Championship (CHAN) qualifier against the Warriors of Zimbabwe away from home

between September 20 and 22 as the first leg of the last round, while the second leg will be between 18 and 20 October at Setsoto Stadium.

Likuena knocked South Africa's Bafana Bafana out of CHAN with an aggregate of 6-2 following a 3-2 home win and a 3-0 away victory, while the Warriors were eliminated with the aggregate of 7-1 after a 4-0 first leg defeat and 3-1 return leg win respectively.

Likuena are also pitted in the Group L of the 2021 AFCON qualifiers against Nigeria, Benin and Sierra Leone.

The Lesotho team will begin its campaign in the qualifiers with a game against Sierra Leone in November.

Likuena have never qualified for either the AFCON or World Cup before, including the CHAN competition.