LESOTHO - GENERAL

1989 - 1994

Miners earn 21% more

ARGUS 3/2/89

MASERU — South African gold mines paid about R347-million to Basotho mine workers employed on the gold mines in 1988 — an increase of 21 percent on the previous year's figure.

About R287-million was paid in 1987.

Statistics released by The Employment Bureau of Africa (Teba), which recruits Basotho mine labour for the gold mines, show an increase of 30 percent in remittance payments last year, compared with the figure for the previous year. — Sapa.

More than R400-m paid to Basuto miners

STAR 16/2/90 (168)

The Star's Africa News Service

MASERU — South African gold mines paid out more than R400 million in deferred pay, remittance and other payments to Basuto workers employed on the gold mines in 1989, it has been disclosed

The amount is about R60 million more than the figure for the previous year

Statistics released in Maseru yesterday by The Employment Bureau of Africa, Teba, which recruits Basuto mineworkers for the South African gold mines, show that a total of R408 million was paid out in 1989 as against R347 million in 1988.

The Lesotho manager of Teba, Mr Neil Rae, has attributed the increase in the deferred pay and remmitance payments to the annual wage increases on the gold mines

Visit us, say Lesotho workers to Mandela

168

W/Mail 16/2 - 22/2/90

By MZIMKULU MALUNGA

WORKERS in Lesotho plan to invite Nelson Mandela to their country — even though they know they may wait a long time.

"It does not matter how long it takes as long as we know that he will come to this country and address the thousands of Basotho mineworkers who have contributed a great deal to the South African struggle," said Puseletso Salai of the Basotho Mineworkers Labour Co-operatives (BMLC).

Consequently a National Reception Committee has been established in Lesotho to cater for the contemplated visit.

"We do not want the government to receive him, we want him to be received by the workers," added Salai who said the main reason for their move was the fact that since 1986 the Lesotho government has been discouraging migrant workers to South Africa from participating in trade union activities.

Salai said in addition to the induction course conducted at Chamber of Mines recruiting centres where workers were being discouraged from joining trade unions, the government sent a delegation from the ministry of labour to the South African mines to emphasise the message.

"They said Basotho workers should stop chanting 'Viva Mandela' because he is a *Xhosa* whom they did not even know, but we were surprised that they were among the first to welcome his release," he said.

with De Klerk's reform programme

Even before Mandela stepped out, Thatcher had leapt the queue

THE WORLD SHOWS FEW SIGNS OF FOLLOWING BRITAIN

By ARTHUR GAVSHON in London

EVEN before Nelson Mandela walked out of Victor Verster Prison British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher lifted the ban on new investment in South Africa and other minor voluntary curbs

Hours later, in his first pronouncement as a free man, Mandela urged the continuation of international sanctions until apartheid is completely eradicated

Briefing British journalists the next day, Bernard Ingham, Thatcher's influential press secretary, said unattributably "The truth is that the prime minister is in command in this situation she is leading the world "

The only trouble with Ingham's statement and with Thatcher s perception of world opinion is that few if any, governments share Britain's formal view And none appears to be led by Thatcher

The picture that has emerged in the aftermath of Mandela's release is this

●US President George Bush's administration is bound by law to keep its sanctions programme in place until apartheid ends Bush made this clear to Thatcher in a series of telephonic and other exchanges in recent days

Nor, according to State Department officials, is Bush prepared in a mid-term congressional election year to try to persuade legislators to amend that sanctions law or to influence institutions like the International Monetary Fund to ease its embargo on credits for the South Africa

●All 48 Commonwealth countries are refusing to slacken their sanctions pressure despite Thatcher's written plea to them at the weekend to adopt what she described as a 'more positive" approach to President FW de Klerk's reforms Informally, the British leader has been seeking to reinforce that plea with warnings that De Klerk could be ousted by a far-right backlash if his peace programme is not internationally acclaimed and rewarded

Commonwealth secretary-general Sonny Ramphal has made it privately and publicly clear that neither he nor those Commonwealth countries with which he has consulted will buy the Thatcher line unless and until the State of Emergency in South Africa is lifted, discriminatory legislation repealed, troops pulled out of the townships and negotiations for a new democratic constitution started

●The commission which presides over the 12-nation Community has taken a hard line against easing its collective trade embargo against South Africa no matter what Britain cares to do about it

Manuel Marin, the responsible commissioner, on Monday ruled out any change while the main elements of apartheid remain Marin, who recently visited South Africa, thus heralded a likely clash between British foreign secretary Douglas Hurd and his 11 fellow foreign ministers in the community when they meet in Dublin next Tuesday

In his stance he appeared to be backed by Irish Prime Minister Charles Haughey to whom Thatcher wrote at the weekend as part of her international campaign to achieve an end of the worldwide investment embargo on South Africa

Haughey is the incumbent president of the community and he has signalled his own view that ending sanctions now would be premature

European Community sanctions are not however, unduly significant They cover less than one percent of South Africa s exports at a time of rising trade

The timing and manner of Thatcher's attempt to project herself into a leadership role in the unfolding South African political drama have been assailed editorially in influential British newspapers, politically in the House of Commons, but most significantly in key sectors of the British business community

Lifting of the voluntary ban on investments, for instance, concerns the major banks whose directors report that they were not consulted by the government Their criticism of the Prime Minister is that she may have prematurely raised South African expectations that new lines of credit might become available immediately when that is not the case

The factor that led British as well as US and European credit institutions to refuse to roll over existing loans in 1985 and onwards was the fear of not being repaid Market forces — so often cited by Thatcher as sacrosanct — seemed to make nonsense of her insistence that sanctions have been, and always would be, ineffective

The meaning of all this is that the international lending institutions are unlikely to become available to South Africa while the political landscape remains clouded by uncertainties De Klerk's initiatives have by general consent promised a brighter outlook, but bankers, traditionally, are far more cautious than politicians and they would want to see greater stabilisation before returning to the South African market

Right now the situation is that South Africa has repaid just 15 percent of the $14-billion of frozen debt and has undertaken to work off another 15 percent by 1993 Therefore the general feeling is that banks in Britain at least will want to wait and see more clearly what lies ahead before committing themselves to volunteer any more funds for investment

Thatcher's rush to identify herself with De Klerk's reform programme has constrasted with her foot-dragging approach to the prospective reunion of East and West Germany It also is being seen in Washington, according to US officials, as part of her refusal to display any enthusiasm for the progress the Americans and Russians are making in the field of arms control and cutbacks

In these attitudes one common denominator has become evident her isolation from mainstream strategic and geopolitical thinking in the US and Europe The consequence has been that the Bush administration is paying more attention to West German and French leaders than they are to Thatcher

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(168)

W/Mail 16/2-22/2/90

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VINES SHOULD STRUGGLE

Star 17/4/90

(168)

Basotho miners paid R26-m more in 1990

The Star's Africa News Service

MASERU — The South African gold mining industry paid out more than R109 million to Basotho mine workers during the first quarter of this year, 23,3 percent more than over the corresponding period last year.

Figures released here by the Employment Bureau of Africa (Teba) disclosed that in the first three months of this year a total of R109 082 404 was paid to Basotho mine workers on the gold mines in the form of deferred pay, remittance payment and other payments, compared with a figure of R88 494 614 over the corresponding period last year — an increase of R26 million or 23,3 percent.

The volume of deferred pay (money saved for the miners until they return home) during the first three months of this year totalled R54 062 915 as against R50 161 777 in the same period last year.

The remittance payments (money sent by the miners to their families at home) totalled R48 213 530 in the first quarter of 1990 compared with a figure of R33 256 124 in the same period last year — an increase of 45 percent.

Other payments in the first quarter of this year totalled R6 805 959 compared with R4 986 713 last year.

25 pc increase for Lesotho workers

Star 7/5/90 (168)

MASERU — The Murray and Roberts construction company and the Allied Workers' Union of Lesotho have agreed on a workers' wage increase of 25 percent.

A spokesman in the Ministry of Labour said Murray and Roberts workers went on strike at the Lesotho highlands water scheme at Hadkatsie early in April demanding a wage increase of 66 percent.

He said that after the construction company and the Allied Workers' Union asked the Ministry of Labour to Intervene in the strike as a conciliator, both sides agreed last week to settle for a 25 percent wage increase.

The 25 percent increase covered the lowest category of workers, while a 12,5 percent increase was granted for the rest of the workers.

He pointed out that the increases applied only to Lesotho citizens. — Sapa.

Teachers' strike could affect 250 000 children in Lesotho

Star 30/5/90 (168)

The Star's Africa News Service

MASERU — Lesotho teachers today began a nation-wide strike for better pay and conditions.

The publicity secretary of the National Teachers' Co-ordinating Committee, Motloheloa Khaketla, said in a statement released today that "the strike is in response to the government's insistence on paying teachers salaries which are well below the poverty datum line"

"Many primary school teachers, for example, earn R200 per month or less

"The teachers' demands to the Minister of Education include a drastic revision of the existing salary structure, the granting of gratuities, pensions and car advances, and the recognition of a teachers' organisation," Mr Khaketla said

The acting Minister of Education, Chief Moletsane Mokoroane, said in a radio broadcast today that the strike was illegal and contravened the provisions of Order No 4 of 1986, which banned party political activities

The Minister called on the teachers to ignore the strike call and return to their classrooms.

More than 250 000 children could be affected by the strike, but most went to school as normal today, although they were not taught.

Lesotho teachers on pay strike

Argus 30/5/90 168

Argus Africa News Service

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R200 A MONTH

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W/Mail 15/6-21/6/90

Furious teachers vow to continue Lesotho strike

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By MZIMKULU MALUNGA

MORE than 5 000 Lesotho teachers this week vowed to continue with their strike until their demands were met by the government.

The strike, which started more than two weeks ago, is likely to affect over 250 000 scholars most of whom had not written their half-yearly exams due to the strike

According to a representative of the interim committee elected by striking teachers, the "spontaneous" strike was sparked by severe cuts in their salaries in April.

The representative who did not give his name for fear of victimisation, told *The Weekly Mail* that the teachers' anger, apart from boiling over into industrial action, also highlighted long standing grievances

Teachers' demands included an increase of 300% for the lowest paid category, 200% for the middle category and 100% for the highest paid

Lowest paid teachers earned between R200 to R350 a month The middle group eaned from R400 to R600 whereas the highest category got between R650 and R900

Categories go according to academic qualification The highest group consists of people with university degrees followed by those with diplomas and no qualifications However, some of them had been in the teaching field for more than 20 years

Another long standing grievance was the question of fringe benefits such as pension schemes. Unlike other civil servants Lesotho teachers were not covered by the pension scheme.

"Once you leave teaching you are finished," said one angry striker.

Some of the newly recruited teachers spent as long as seven months without pay. This had resulted in a huge influx of qualified Basotho into South African "homelands"

Teachers were also pressing for education to be subsidised by government to reduce costly school fees — as high as R400/year for tuition and well over R1 500, excluding books and stationery, for boarding school. According to the representative, fees were not consistent from one school to another.

Water scheme site tense after workers strike

Star 20/6/90

(168)

The Star's Africa News Service

MASERU — A tense atmosphere is reported at a construction site of the giant Lesotho Highlands water scheme following a strike by Basotho workers

More than 350 workers are on strike, demanding higher wages from a large French construction company, Spie Batignolles, which is building houses for the main base camp for the Katse dam in the Thaba Tseka district

Ntsasa Nkhahle, publicity secretary of the Construction and Allied Workers' Union of Lesotho, to which the striking workers belong, said the workers were "dehumanised, disregarded and generally ill-treated in the pursuit of other peoples' interests"

Charges

Mr Nkhahle alleged that Spie Batignolles had adopted the attitude that when it arrived in Lesotho it found Basotho working on ploughing the fields and since the company had provided them with jobs they should be satisfied with whatever pay they received

The union says the workers were demanding wage increases and allowances to help them offset accommodation and transport charges, which they claim are exceptionally high for workers in the mountain areas

No comment was immediately available from Spie Batignolles.

Star 4/7/90

168

Lesotho project crucial for civil engineering industry

By Frank Jeans

New civil engineering contracts are few and far between, so that the Lesotho Highlands Water Project is crucial to the wellbeing of the industry, says Peter Clogg, executive chairman of Group Five.

He says "Normally, with such a major project being undertaken close to home, one would expect a substantial amount of work to come the way of South African contractors.

"The government, however, appears to set great store by the possibility of earning large amounts of foreign currency through the involvement of overseas contractors, even though this would certainly involve an escalation of the eventual cost of the project."

Mr Clogg believes this approach could mean that South African companies will play a relatively minor role in Lesotho, despite the fact that South Africa has both the expertise and the capacity to undertake the entire development successfully

"This view has been presented to the government and may have some impact.

"There remains, however, a good deal of support for the idea of large-scale foreign involvement, so we will just have to wait and see"

Meanwhile, Group Five, in common with other major contractors, has gone into partnership with overseas companies to present competitive tenders for the contracts on offer

"Civils" projects are particularly vulnerable to political events and Mr Clogg sees this as a negative factor.

Institutional investors will still put money into shopping centres, office blocks, certain types of housing and other ventures with relatively low risk

"There is even an argument that it is better to spend such money while prices are at an acceptable level, rather than wait and run the risk of a sharp rise in input costs."

The government, on whom "civils" companies rely heavily for a large share of their workload, appears to have a different standpoint.

The authorities have to consider the fact that there could be calls for major expenditure at short notice as a result of the current unrest situation and may thus be reluctant to commit large sums on infrastructural projects which can be mothballed.

Group Five's order book is healthy, with all associate companies having substantial workloads on hand, Mr Clogg says

Police break up student protest

Sowetan 31/7/90

168

MASERU - Police with batons chased several thousand students through Maseru yesterday to stop them from presenting a petition to the Ministry of Education asking for an end to a dispute between the government and teachers.

Students repeatedly gathered, then broke and ran, in different parts of town and did not succeed in reaching the ministry

The government and teachers have been involved in a dispute for several weeks over pay and working conditions

The dispute has sometimes disrupted classes

Complaint

Meanwhile, the Construction and Allied Workers Union of Lesotho have sent a complaint to the director of the Geneva-based International Labour Organisation saying the government is violating the organisation's policy, to which Lesotho is a signatory

The complaint says the violations include police detention without cause of the union's general-secretary on July 20, thereby paralysing the union's activities

The union said other leaders had gone into hiding after police raided their offices in Maseru and that some members had been shot earlier in July during a protest about pay and working conditions at a dam construction site - Sapa-AP.

South Africa's first black most popular shebeen . cently freed Nelson Mandela Theatre.

Winds of change blowing in Lesotho

Star 31/8/90 (168)

Though political activity has been banned in Lesotho since 1970, the kingdom is experiencing a surge of anti-government activism of a kind previously unknown, reports DAWN BARKHUIZEN, The Star's Africa News Service

MASERU — Military Council or no Military Council, Basothos are on the march — of that there's little doubt

In the past month there have been four protest marches in the streets of Maseru — events unprecedented in the history of the country.

A nation-wide teachers' strike — also unprecedented — has brought classes to a halt in most schools in the lowlands Threats by the government to stop paying salaries only added fuel to the fire, and more teachers joined the strike.

Lesotho's first consumer boycott against shop-owner/politician Phoka Chaolane started recently

It began after Mr Chaolane, speaking in the newly formed constituent assembly, said external forces seemed to be behind the teachers' strike, and he made references to the ANC and Cosatu.

Pupils from government schools shut down as a result of the teachers' strike have threatened those still attending classes in private schools

Police recently detained five organisers of the teachers' strike, questioned them on their relations with the ANC and demanded to know why they had gone to South Africa to inform the National Union of Mineworkers of their activities.

Last week there were roadblocks on all the main roads leading into Maseru and police dispersed university students who attempted to stage a protest in sympathy with the teachers, a student said

Strike action, once unheard of in Lesotho, has become commonplace

Government Ministers and some members of the constituent assembly — formed in July to advise the ruling Military Council on how to return Lesotho to democracy — are currently holding political rallies throughout the country, despite a decree still in existence that prohibits political activity

The Military Council, which once "asked" ANC operatives to leave Lesotho because they "could not offer them protection", has invited ANC leader Nelson Mandela to visit the country.

What has sparked the furious political activity in the mountain kingdom?

Political commentators and academics point to a number of reasons

- Events in South Africa are being mirrored in Lesotho
- Increased politicisation of the work force — about 40 percent of the country's workers, between 130 000 and 150 000 men, work in SA mines.
- Some apprehension by the Military Council — which is commonly seen as aligned to Pretoria — at the prospect of increased ANC power in SA
- A decrease in the power held by the securocrats in Pretoria
- Increased pressure on the Military Council by Western countries to democratise Countries supplying aid to impoverished Lesotho have a good deal of clout with the Maseru government
- Scepticism over the constituent assembly (which is purely an advisory body) and the Military Council's pledge to restore democracy by 1992
- Increasing disillusionment with King Moshoeshoe
- Part of the global trend of protest and democratisation

Dr Mafa Sejanamane, chairman of the National University of Lesotho Academics Staff Association, said "Everybody is on the move. People are more conscientised than ever and no longer afraid to stand up."

Asked whether the upsurge in activism had been inspired by forces in South Africa, and particularly the ANC, Dr Sejanamane said Basothos had their own grievances.

"Corruption is rife in the government, the Military Council has shown no commitment to improving services, and the economic situation is deteriorating Every aspect of life is a mess."

Events in South Africa, particularly the unbanning of the ANC, had had a dramatic effect on Lesotho, Dr Sejanamane said

"Pretoria is putting a new complexion on relationships with the ANC It seems as if the Military Council is trying to woo the ANC, but I think they have burnt their bridges"

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are only 1 500 hotel rooms in the country

The Tourist Board is confi- fied woods, history, culture and gambling

TRADITION DIES HARD . . . a horseman is silhouetted against the setting sun

Dying mines kill migrant labour

S/Times 23/9/90

THE WATER project could not have come at a better time for Lesotho because of the large number of migrant labourers returning after being laid off by South African mines

So says Finance and Economic Affairs Minister Evaristus Sekhonyana.

SA mines started to retrench workers some time ago and many Lesotho nationals have been sent home.

Countering this through the provision of jobs in Lesotho would go a long way towards easing the economic blow to both the workers and the nation's economy.

Mr Sekhonyana says. "If I were to answer the question as to Lesotho's main economic occupation, I would have to say it is mining — only it is mining outside our borders"

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Devasating

The importance of migrant labour to Lesotho is shown by the fact that they send home R500-million per year That is exactly the amount Lesotho spends on importing food.

If migrant labour were totally cut, the effect on Lesotho would be devastating, says Mr Sekhonyana

"That that is something we must plan for in the long term If there is equalisation of salaries in post-apartheid, South African blacks will be attracted to mining and we will not be able to count on our income from supplying migrant labour

"We must start now to develop a strategy for our economy which will supplement what we get today in the way of money from the mines

"I think say we are looking at 10 years, but we will start feeling the pinch within five years"

It is thus that the employment opportunities offered by the water project have come at the right time to replace the lost income and jobs of migrant workers

The long-term economic benefits of the project to Lesotho will counter the detrimental effects of future large-scale lay-offs

Work bonanza for Lesotho

THE 30-year construction phase of the Lesotho Highlands Water Project has already resulted in the creation of several thousand jobs Star 18/5/91

N J Matete of the Lesotho Highlands Development Authority(LHDA), says the project's workforce is expected to peak at around 6 500, which would help lessen Lesotho's dependence on South African mines as the major source of work

Many more jobs will be created through tourism, fishing and irrigated agriculture (168)

"The development of infrastructure will be significant and will make a real contribution to regional development and the creation of markets for local produce and job opportunities," he says." — Sapa

Work for 6 500 in Lesotho

(168)

ARGUS 18-5-91

JOHANNESBURG — The 30-year construction phase of the Lesotho Highlands Water Project has already resulted in the creation of several thousand job opportunities

According to Lesotho Highlands Development Authority's (LHDA) NJ Matete, the project's workforce is expected to peak at around 6 500, which would help to lessen Lesotho's dependence on South African mines as the country's major source of work

Strikers close Lesotho banks

Sowetan 25/7/91 (168)

MASERU - The strike at all Standard and Barclays bank branches in Lesotho would continue until the demand for a 40 percent wage increase was met, the Lesotho Union of Bank Employees said yesterday.

The strike began on Monday. Union president Mr Remaketse Sehlabaka said they decided not to negotiate again with the management of Standard and Barclays until the wage increase demand had been met. - *Sapa*

Lesotho craft schools are now bearing fruit for the unskilled

SOUTH 13/6 - 17/6/92

(168)

MS SENATE Noosa commutes 100 kilometres from Mafikeng daily to take her lessons in carpentry at a vocational school run by the Lesotho National Council for Women in Maseru

"I would have liked to continue with my studies," says Noosa, who completed her secondary education last year, "but my parents couldn't afford it So I opted for vocational work in order to generate income

"I make spice racks, tables, chairs and trays After they have been sold, the school deducts the cost of the material and I get the profit"

Noosa, who hopes to open a carpentry workshop, is reaping the fruits of the LNCW vocational school 10 years after its formation

The school was started in an effort to improve the lives of unskilled women by increasing their income-generating potential

Women are taught to be self-reliant and to use local resources for their products

The school's director, Ms Mathabiso Mosala, says to date 30 women have been provided with sewing and knitting machines to help them start their own businesses.

"This has been a great achievement for the school," she says

Before they ventured into business, the women attended a six-month training course

LNCW products have been sold at international fairs by the Lesotho Co-operative Centre, Lesotho Association for Non-formal Education and Basotho Enterprise Development Corporation

According to Mosala, the school — one of five vocational centres run by the LNCW in four of the country's 10 districts — is not totally dependent on the government for funding

"Our efforts aim to complement the government because it cannot do everything We do not want the government to tell the people what to do. The people have to be self-reliant," she emphasises.

With the retrenchment of some 16 000 Basotho mineworkers from the gold mines in South Africa, the LNCW is working with the Miners and Dependents' Welfare Association to build a rural skills centre

— AIA

Demand for a police pay increase

Shops looted as cops strike

Sowetan 11/5/94

MASERU — A mob of about 300 people looted shops in Maseru yesterday after police went on strike in the Lesotho capital of Maseru

They said the mob smashed windows and seized clothing and electrical equipment from shops owned mainly by Indians and South Africans (168)

The situation was brought under control after about an hour, mainly by guards from private security firms

Soldiers who mutinied over pay last month and killed the deputy prime minister did not get involved Some stood back and just watched the looting, witnesses said

Demand increase

Western diplomats said the night shift at the police central charge office in the town centre went on strike on Monday evening demanding a 60 percent pay increase and other benefits

The strikers then persuaded the police on Tuesday morning shift to join them and it appeared about 300 men out of the 2 000-member force were involved, the diplomats said.

"At the moment most other police stations are working normally but the strike could spread," one diplomat said.

Diplomats believed the government was in touch with the strikers who had cordoned off Constitution Road around the charge office and the main police station opposite.

The strike was the latest crisis to hit the government of ailing Prime Minister Ntsu Mokhele (75).

Mokhehle led his Basotholand Congress Party to a sweeping victory in March last year in the first democratic elections in two decades.

The military has precipitated crises twice this year, the first in January when there was fighting between two army factions during which Maseru came under fire and again earlier this month during the short-lived mutiny over pay.

— *Sapa-Reuter*

Mob loots shops as Lesotho police strike

(168) CT 11/5/94

MASERU — A mob of about 300 people looted shops here yesterday after police went on strike, eyewitnesses said

They said the mob smashed windows and seized clothing and electrical equipment from shops owned mainly by Indians and South Africans

The situation was brought under control after about an hour, mainly by guards from private security firms

Lesotho soldiers took control of central Maseru

Witnesses saw soldiers chasing looters into outlying townships in an effort to recover goods seized from shops

Soldiers who mutinied over pay last month and killed the deputy prime minister did not get involved Some stood back and just watched the looting, witnesses said

Western diplomats said the night shift at the police Central Charge Office in the town centre went on strike on Monday evening demanding a 60% pay increase and other benefits

The strikers then persuaded the police on yesterday's morning shift to join them and it appeared about 300 men out of the 2 000-member force were involved, the diplomats said

"At the moment most other police stations are working normally but the strike could spread," one diplomat said

The strike was the latest crisis to hit the government of ailing Prime Minister Mr Ntsu Mokhele, 75 — Sapa-Reuter

NEWS Anger over Mokhehle's hardline speech

Strikers debate their next move

Sowetan 18/5/94

■ WAGE DEMANDS Cops and warders want 60-percent increase:

STRIKING LESOTHO POLICE AND prison guards debated their next move yesterday after a hardline speech by Prime Minister Ntsu Mokhehle rejecting their wage demands

About 2 500 policemen below the rank of captain in the country's 3 000-strong force started a strike on Monday last week demanding a 60-percent pay increase They were joined by junior prison guards

Mokhehle in a national radio broadcast on Monday night rejected the pay demand and told the strikers — who had also been demanding immunity from prosecution — it would be "very unfortunate" if they did not return to work

He said all civil servants had received a 10 percent wage boost at the start of the 1994 financial year and there was no more money available.

Western diplomats said they had heard the strikers were "angry and frustrated" with the prime minister's response (168)

Latest crisis

The strike is the latest crisis to hit the small mountain kingdom of 1,8 million people

Fighting between two army factions in January and an army mutiny last month in which dissident soldiers shot dead the deputy prime minister rocked Mokhehle's Basotholand Congress Party, which won a sweeping victory in March last year in the country's first multiparty elections in 20 years.

The army has so far kept out of the latest crisis and soldiers are patrolling the streets of Maseru and other areas to prevent looting.

Mobs went on a looting rampage after the strike started last week, targeting shops owned by Indians and Chinese.

Local residents told *Reuters* shops were looted and burned in Leribe and Butha Buthe in the north and in Mafeteng in the west, as well as in the capital Maseru. — *Sapa-Reuter*

Ball is in Lesotho strikers' court

Star 18/5/94

Maseru — Striking Lesotho police and prison guards debated their next move yesterday after Prime Minister Ntsu Mokhehle rejected their wage demands

About 2 500 policemen below the rank of captain in the 3 000-strong force started a strike last week, demanding a 60 percent pay increase They were joined by junior prison warders

On Monday, Mokhehle rejected the pay demand, saying there was no money for it He told the strikers it would be "very unfortunate" if they did not return to work — Sapa-Reuter

(168)

Situation in Lesotho deteriorates

MASERU — Lesotho's political crisis deepened yesterday after a meeting of leaders failed to end a police and prison guards strike and the main opposition party walked out of the emergency talks. B/Day

Prime Minister Ntsu Mokhehle called the meeting in an effort to end the strike of police and prison guards which started on Monday last week. 20/5/94

Main opposition party leader Chief Retselisitsoe Sekhonyana led a walk-out of his Basotholand National Party (BNP) after Mokhehle accused the BNP of complicity in the strike.

Mokhehle said his information of BNP involvement in the strike came from the government's intelligence office

His Basotholand Congress Party (BCP) won a sweeping victory over the BNP in March last year in the first democratic election in 20 years.

About 2 500 policemen in the country's 3 000-strong force started the strike demanding a 60% pay increase. They were joined by junior prison guards

Mokhehle last Monday rejected the pay demand

The remaining eight opposition parties agreed that the government should reopen negotiations with the strikers as Lesotho was facing a situation which could lead to civil war.

The government said another meeting would be called but no date had been agreed. (168)

The police and prison guard strike is the latest crisis to hit the government this year. Rival army factions fought across Maseru in January, while rebellious troops killed the deputy prime minister last month.
— Sapa-Reuter

Striking Lesotho police release kidnapped minister

(168) ARG 24/5/94

Argus Africa News Service

MASERU — Striking Lesotho policemen have released Finance Minister Mpho Malie after kidnapping him yesterday and holding him for five hours "for interrogation"

While this eased the tension gripping the nation, there was still no sign of an end to the strike by most of the Lesotho police force as it entered its third week today

There is now open speculation in Maseru that the strike, ostensibly over a demand for a salary increase, is actually politically motivated and aimed at undermining the Basotholand Congress Party government of Prime Minister Ntsu Mokhehle

Mr Malie was ambushed and abducted while returning from an urgent ministerial meeting called by Mr Mokhehle to discuss the strike He was released unharmed

There is growing public concern, especially among the business community, over the strike, which is continuing despite a statement by the prime minister that the country cannot afford to meet the police demand for a 60 percent salary increase

Lesotho police settle pay row

Sowetan 27/5/94

AGREEMENT was reached yesterday between the Lesotho government and striking police for an increase in a series of police allowances

The agreement, however, did not include the 60 percent salary increase demanded by the striking police

The parties agreed most of the allowances would be doubled.

The risk allowance had been doubled from R50 to R100, special duty and plainclothes allowance from R25 to R50, and mountain allowance from R17 to R25

It is believed that the leaders of the police strike will reach a compromise agreement with the government which will also affect the same categories of officers in the army

It has been announced that an independent salary commission will be established to review the salary structure for all civil servants

'The parties agreed most of the allowances would be doubled'

Meanwhile, Lesotho's Natural Resources Minister, Mr Monyane Moleleki, has resigned, according to an announcement broadcast by Radio Lesotho yesterday (168)

Moleleki's department was responsible for the implementation of the Lesotho Highlands Water Scheme which will provide water to South Africa

Moleleki fled into neighbouring Orange Free State last week and is now believed to have travelled to Johannesburg — *Sapa.*

Lesotho police pay strike settled

(168) ARG 8/6/94

JASPER MORTIMER
Argus Africa News Service

MASERU. — Lesotho's police have returned to work, ending a 23-day strike that featured several kidnappings, widespread looting and shooting at a cabinet minister's house.

Lieutenant Phakiso Molise, the desk officer at Maseru police station who led the strike, called yesterday's settlement a "good compromise"

"We didn't get 60 percent," Lieutenant Molise said, referring to the pay rise demanded. "But the lowest person gets a 46 percent increase."

Home Affairs Minister Lesao Lehohla said the strike's end was a "welcome relief"

Lieutenant Molise said the main reason for returning to work was that "the Basotho nation is suffering".

He denied the police had lost public support. But callers to Radio Lesotho's daily phone-in had repeatedly criticised the strike, during which there was widespread looting of shops.

The government agreed to raise salaries for all ranks between constable and major by 12 to 46 percent In addition, most allowances were doubled.

Differences remain over the scope of the government's indemnity for the illegal strike Lieutenant Molise said it covered those police who had seized the acting finance minister, the governor of the central bank and three other senior civil servants

The kidnappings, in which each hostage was questioned for several hours and then released, seriously embarrassed the government

But Mr Lehohla said the indemnity applied to the strike, not to criminal acts

"My house was attacked by police. It was not the intention of the indemnity to condone that," he said

Wage strike by police in Lesotho ends

Star 11/6/94

Maseru — A three-week strike by Lesotho police for higher salaries ended yesterday when agreement was reached between the government and a committee representing the police

Police spokesman Lieutenant Phakiso Molise said police had decided to return to work "in the best interests of the Basuto nation" (168)

Police were striking for 60 percent salary increases and 100 percent increases in several allowances

Agreement was reached last week, sanctioning increases in police allowances, many of which were doubled.

In terms of the agreement, a salary review commission will be established to look into the salary structures of the entire civil service — Sapa.

Protest over newspaper boss

ARG 15/6/94 (168)

JOHANNESBURG — Staff of Swaziland's leading newspaper have protested against a government order that the owner should leave the kingdom.

Douglas Loffler, a Briton who has owned the Times of Swaziland for almost 20 years, was ordered to leave by the end of the month

About 100 staff members met Minister of Home Affairs Prince Sobandla Dlamini in the capital Mbabane yesterday to express concern about the newspaper's future.

They handed the minister a three-page petition and a senior journalist at the meeting said the prince told Times employees the matter would be reviewed

The Times, Swaziland's largest-selling newspaper, is a frequent critic of the government and has often called for accountability and transparency

Prince Sobandla indicated that although he personally had nothing against Mr Loffler there were influential people in the kingdom who did. — Sapa.

Lesotho heeds call for a return to work

ARG 24/8/94 (168)

☐ Streets come to life after two day stayaway

ANDRE JURGENS
The Argus Foreign Service

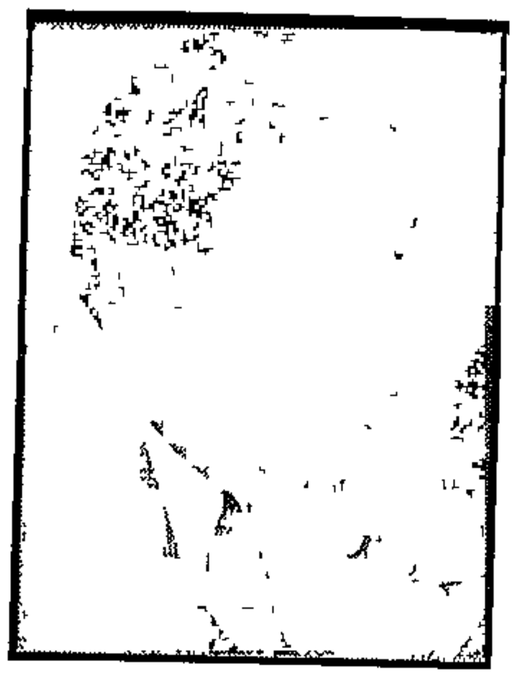
MASERU. — Thousands of people wrapped in blankets against biting cold poured into the city in taxis and buses today, heeding calls from the new disputed Lesotho authorities to return to work after a peaceful two day stayaway.

Streets echoed to a cacophony of blaring hooters summoning passengers to taxis at the height of the morning rush hour in stark contrast to the eerie silence of the past two days.

Notably absent amid the bustle were the police and soldiers with automatic weapons who had been deployed on the streets of the capital during the strike

In spite of political differences, rival organisations had made repeated calls on the security forces to exercise restraint during the stayaway, fearing a repeat of last week's shooting when four people protesting in support of the ousted government of Prime Minister Ntshu Mokehle were shot dead outside the royal palace

Before shops opened their doors today, hundreds of street vendors selling fruit and cooked breakfasts did a roaring trade from makeshift pavement stalls Food vanished from tables and shelves as people, many of whom had not been able to buy fresh bread, headed for work and school



Lesotho's King Letsie III ponders his future.

And suppliers of goods from South Africa started trickling through the border post again

Most people were adamant, when asked, that they would be paid by employers for their absence from work during the two-day strike

Meanwwhile, strong calls for a Codesa-type national conference of political groups and civil society to thrash out once and for all Lesotho's political power struggles and constitutional deadlocks have been made here as King Letsie III prepares to meet President Mandela in Pretoria tomorrow.

Speaking from Gaborone yesterday, Mr Mandela said he would host a meeting of the key players in the Lesotho crisis

He said King Letsie and the head of the government he was trying to oust, Mr Mokhehle, would attend along with presidents Quett Masire of Botswana and Robert Mugabe of Zimbabwe

On his return Mr Mandela told a media conference at Pollsmoor Prison that the elected government of Mr Mokhehle had to be reinstated.

Mr Mandela said the king's action in deposing Mr Mokehle was unconstitutional "and we find it unacceptable that he should have taken that step"

Strike brings Lesotho to halt

MASERU — Lesotho was brought to a standstill yesterday by a general strike called by the Basotholand Congress Party (BCP) of Prime Minister Mr Ntsu Mokhehle, ousted by King Letsie III.

Shops and offices were closed and public transport shut down in the normally bustling capital

(168) CT 6/9/94

The BCP called the strike to step us pressure on King Letsie — Sapa

Lesotho protest stayaway planned

(168) ARG 7/9/94

□ Pressure on efforts to reinstate government

MASERU. — The National Crisis Committee in Lesotho is planning a stayaway tomorrow and on Friday to put pressure on diplomatic efforts to reinstate the deposed Lesotho government.

Crisis committee communications secretary Sobuza Sopeng said today that his organisation was unhappy with the way the shuttle diplomacy between South Africa, Botswana, Zimbabwe and Lesotho was being handled.

He said two deadlines had passed, the last one on Monday, but nothing had happened to resolve the issue. Instead, King Letsie appeared to be setting conditions over handing power back to the democratic government of Ntsu Mokhehle.

Mr Sopeng said they were not being informed of new developments He said the stayaway would be supported by businessmen, trade unions, taxi associations and other organisations.

The stayaway threat came after Lesotho's interim government, appointed less than a month ago and facing imminent removal, hit out at South African and other mediators trying to end the crisis in the kingdom

The government was named by King Letsie, who sacked the elected government of Prime Minister Ntsu Mokhehle on August 17, angering his neighbours, aid donors and his own subjects

In a show of defiance, a statement by the administration read on government radio focused on South African mediator Rusty Evans, who said in Cape Town yesterday that he hoped an agreement to reinstate the Mokhehle government would be signed later in the day.

Referring to previous forecasts that the return of Mr Mokhehle was a foregone conclusion, the interim government's statement said: "These announcements are false and devoid of all truth on what has been discussed."

"The nation is entitled to know that all announcements in relation to the present situation in Lesotho will be made by His Majesty the King and not officials of certain governments who describe themselves as mediators," the statement said

Mr Evans said on Monday that an accord between Mr Mokhehle and King Letsie was binding and would result in the reinstatement of Mr Mokhehle and his government.

Mr Evans is spokesman for envoys from South Africa, Botswana and Zimbabwe, which have intervened in the crisis and have raised the prospect of sanctions if King Letsie, 34, does not come to heel. — Sapa-Reuter.

Nigerians face clamp

(826) ARG 7/9/94

Pledge over reprisals

Zaire money forgers face

Lesotho brought to a halt by stayaway

ARG 8/9/94 (168)

□ Pressure on king to restore sacked government

MASERU. — A strike called to put pressure on Lesotho's King Letsie to restore the elected government that he sacked has brought the country to a halt

Shops, banks and offices were closed across the mountainous kingdom of 1,6 million people. Most government workers stayed at home, in spite of a threat of tough action if they heeded the strike call.

State-owned Lesotho Airways, the country's sole airline, cancelled all flights. "We do not know when we will have flights because most workers haven't turned up," said an airline spokeswoman

But the police, who were out on the streets of the capital Maseru in force, and the armed forces — which support King Letsie — remained on duty

The two-day strike was called by the Lesotho Council of Non-Governmental Organisations, a human rights and pro-democracy group

"We are heartened by the people's response to our stayaway," said a spokesman.

The 34-year-old king has drawn protests at home and from his Southern African neighbours for firing, on August 17, the government of Prime Minister Ntsu Mokhehle, who came to power in 1993 after Lesotho's first multiparty elections in two decades

Vigorous mediation led by South Africa, which encircles Lesotho, brought an end to the crisis within sight, but the sudden death of the king's sister yesterday halted negotiations

The interim government appointed by the king after he removed Mr Mokhehle issued a statement last night ordering all workers to report for duty

In particular it warned state employees that "appropriate action" would be taken against them if they failed to go to work

But the threat appearad to have little effect.

In Maseru few people were on the streets except for well-armed police in brown military fatigues

A bank worker who ventured into the streets said "We are sick and tired of the King's delaying tactics." — Reuter.

Lesotho strike on despite death

CT 8/9/94 (168)

MASERU. — The proposed two-day strike by groups loyal to ousted Lesotho Prime Minister Mr Ntsu Mokhlehle will go ahead as planned despite the sudden death yesterday of King Letsie III's sister, Princess Ma-Seeiso, a Lesotho National Crisis Committee spokesman said

Mr Kenneth Sello said here yesterday the stayaway would begin today as conditions in the country were "very tense"

The stayaway is aimed at forcing King Letsie to reinstate Mr Mokhlehle's government which he ousted on August 17

Mr Sello said Lesotho had reached a stage where "things could go either way"

He said the crisis committee was convinced workers should stay away from work

"If people stay at home, we will be able to save lives,"

Mr Sello said although negotiations between Southern African mediators, King Letsie and Mr Mkhlehle had reached an advanced stage, the situation in Lesotho, together with "another factor" which he declined to name, made it imperative the stayaway go ahead.

He said three Southern African envoys had suspended their talks for 48 hours to brief their principals after the death of the 26-year-old princess

It was not clear when negotiations would resume According to Basotho custom the period of mourning in the royal household may last a month. — Sapa

Strike paralyses troubled Lesotho

Sowetan 9/9/94

MASERU — A strike called to put pressure on Lesotho's King Letsie III to restore the government of Prime Minister Ntsu Mokhehle, which he deposed last month, brought the country to a standstill yesterday

Shops, banks and offices were closed across the country and most government workers stayed at home despite a threat of tough action if they heeded the strike call

State-owned Lesotho Airways cancelled all flights "We do not know when we will have flights because most workers haven't turned up," an airlines spokesman said However, the security force members — who are supporters of Letsie — who were out in force on the streets of Maseru.

The two-day strike was called by the Lesotho Council of Non-Governmental Organisations, a human rights and pro-democracy group "We are heartened by the people's response to the stayaway," a spokesman said

Letsie (34) has drawn protests at home and from his southern African neighbours for firing the government of Mokhehle on August 17 Mokhehle came to power last year after Lesotho's first multi-party elections in two decades

Vigorous mediation led by South Africa raised hopes that the crisis would soon be brought to an end, but the sudden death of the king's sister on Wednesday halted negotiations

The interim government appointed by the king after he removed Mokhehle issued a statement on Wednesday night ordering all workers to report for duty. (168)

In particular, it warned government workers that "appropriate action" would be taken if they failed to go to work In Maseru, few people were on the streets except for armed police in brown military uniform

A bank worker said "We are sick and tired of the delaying tactics of the king" — *Sapa-Reuter*

LESOTHO – GENERAL

1994

Race to tap extra water for PWV

By CIARAN RYAN

THE next phase of the Lesotho Highlands project is to be accelerated because of revised projections of water use and return to drainage systems in the Pretoria-Witwatersrand-Vereeniging area.

Water use in the PWV, now 2-billion cubic metres a year, is estimated to grow at between 3,5% and 4% a year. S/Times

Phase 1B of the project, costing R2-billion, will begin in 1995, a year ahead of schedule. It includes the construction of a second dam at Mohale, between Katse and Maseru, and additional transfer tunnels to Katse dam. 9/11/94

Phase 1A involves the construction of Katse dam in the central Lesotho mountains, two lengths of transfer tunnel and three of delivery, totalling 85km, infrastructural development and a hydro-electric power station. (167)

The two phases will more than double the PWV's water supply.

Construction of Phase 1A is at the halfway stage and the first water will be delivered in 1997. [BUSS]

The cost of Phase 1A will be nearly R1-billion below the original projection, thanks to design improvements and falling inflation and interest rates. The final tab, including finance charges of R3-billion, is likely to be R9,2-billion.

A further two phases are likely to be advanced as a result of revised water demand figures on the Reef.

Diversion of Orange River water to the Reef is also being investigated. But the water would cost twice as much as that from Lesotho.

The R1,4-billion raised by levies on Vaal River water users reduces the cost of the Highlands project by two to three times, according to Paul Roberts, managing engineer of planning for the project. Total debt will peak at R20-billion in 2010. But pre-financing saves many millions

Dr Roberts says the growth in water use is within levels projected in the 1980s (167)

"We now have better models to simulate demand and assess the risk of shortage. This is why we are accelerating the project Studies have begun on future phases of the project."

SA starts paying royalties to Lesotho in 1997, but the project will become cash positive only in the next century Roughly half the project cost is finance charges

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Phase 1A involves the construction of Katse dam in the central Lesotho mountains, two lengths of transfer tunnel and three of delivery, totalling 85km, infrastructural development and a hydro-electric power station. (167)

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SA starts paying royalties to Lesotho in 1997, but the project will become cash positive only in the next century. Roughly half the project cost is finance charges.

Lesotho pay row sparks troop clash

(167)

CT 15/1/94

MASERU — A demand by some members of the Royal Lesotho Defence Force (RLDF) for a 100% pay increase apparently sparked off a clash between two rival military factions outside this city yesterday in which an officer was wounded

South African Foreign Affairs Minister Mr Pik Botha said Lesotho Prime Minister Mr Ntsu Mokhehle had confirmed to him yesterday that the situation in his country was "volatile and tense"

He had therefore alerted the SADF and the SAP to ensure the situation on South Africa's borders with Lesotho remained stable

Lieutenant-Colonel Patrick Majare, commander of the RLDF's air wing at the Makhoayane military base, was admitted to hospital where his condition was described last night as "critical".

Sources described the situation later yesterday as "uneasy but calm" and "tense and volatile".

According to reports, Mr Mokhehle, in his capacity as Minister of Defence, received an unsigned letter from the RLDF on Monday demanding the increase

The letter also demanded he respond before January 24

He said he would meet the soldiers. — Sapa, Staff Reporter

Maseru tense after battle between rival army units

ARGUS 15/1/94 (167)

MASERU. — Fighting broke out between rival army units in the Lesotho this week and the situation is still volatile according to Lesotho and South African officials.

The army appeared to have split along political lines but the precise cause of yesterday's clashes was unclear, the South African ambassador to Lesotho Mr G Visser said

Lesotho Prime Minister Ntsu Mokhehle urged soldiers to lay down their arms and negotiate.

"I appeal to all members of the army, even those outside Maseru, to stay where they are and keep calm in the interest of peace and stability in Lesotho," said Mr Mokhehle

Witnesses said armoured cars were stationed on the three main hills overlooking the capital Maseru

In November, Information Minister Mpho Malie accused National Party leader Evaristus Sekhonyana of making "irresponsible and seditious speeches" after he urged his supporters to arm themselves

Lesotho has been ruled by the Basotholand Congress Party since its first free elections in March last year, but the country has a history of military coups

South Africa's Foreign Minister Pik Botha said "In a telephone conversation the prime minister of Lesotho confirmed to me that the situation in his country is volatile and tense

"A skirmish between two factions occurred at the Makhoayane military camp in which Lieutenant Colonel Patrick Majare was seriously wounded," he said

Four military helicopters had flown to South Africa and would be held until the situation had been clarified, said Mr Botha. — Sapa-Reuter

Pik helps defuse Lesotho crisis

C/Press 16/11/94

FEARS of a possible coup in Lesotho by rebel soldiers were quashed yesterday with the help of Foreign Minister Pik Botha

However, Botha warned at the end of a one-day visit to the mountain kingdom SA would not recognise any Lesotho govermment which came to power by force – and nor would a new SA government

Botha said he was leaving the enclave confident that the critical situation had been defused, having received a commitment from the two opposing defence force factions which clashed on Friday that they would negotiate a truce

The cause of the clash supposedly was a demand by the rebel group for a doubling of army salaries

Botha said he had been assured Lesotho Air Force commander Col Majare, injured in Friday's clash, was in a satisfactory condition in hospital in the capital, and there was no need to accept a SA Government offer to have him treated in Bloemfontein. (167)

The commander, who was still being held hostage by the rebels on Saturday afternoon, was reportedly shot in the shoulder A civilian doctor operated on him. – Sapa

NEWS Possible coup attempt by soldiers quashed in

Maseru reported calm after clashes

Sowetan 17/1/94

MASERU — Maseru was calm for a second day running yesterday following Friday's clash between two armed factions of the mountain kingdom's defence force

Sporadic firing was heard on Saturday night but, according to reports, it wasn't serious

The shots came from the Makoanyane military base about 11km outside the capital, home of the faction whose demand for a doubling of army salaries led to the clash

Residents nearby said yesterday it appeared the shots had been fired into the air, and there were no reports of injuries

Members of the Royal Lesotho Defence Force's reccie unit — the other faction which is believed to be loyal to the government — remained stationed in the mountains on the outskirts of Maseru yesterday

Fears of a possible coup in the tiny enclave were quashed on Saturday with the help of South African Foreign Minister Mr Pik Botha

■ PEACE BROKER Botha rushes to Lesotho to help cool tempers:

167

He flew in at the request of the Lesotho government, met separately with all the parties involved and brokered a truce

However, Botha told his guests South Africa would not tolerate a Lesotho government which came to power by force, and vowed to bring it to its knees

Lesotho and South African government officials confirmed to *Sapa* the pay issue was believed to be a smokescreen for political opposition to the ruling Basotholand Congress Party, which swept to power in elections last year

Botha also met the leader of the main opposition Basotho National Party during his one-day visit. — *Sapa.*

Pik Botha

French minister on three-day visit to SA

ARG 17/1/94

□ Juppe to meet leaders and see Franschhoek

JOHANNESBURG — French Foreign Minister Alain Juppe has arrived in South Africa for a three-day visit during which he is to hold talks with some of the country's top political figures.

Mr Juppe is the first French foreign minister to visit South Africa in 18 years

He will meet President De Klerk at the Union Buildings today and will also hold talks with his South African counterpart, Pik Botha, before touring Soweto

Mr Juppe's visit takes place just before the Zulu monarch, King Goodwill Zwelithini, is due to meet Mr De Klerk, and the French minister will witness the spectacle of tens of thousands of Zulus with traditional weapons marching outside the Union Buildings.

The talks between Mr De Klerk and King Goodwill will include discussions on the constitutional position of the Zulu monarch.

Tomorrow, Mr Juppe will meet African National Congress president Nelson Mandela and the organisation's secretary-general, Cyril Ramaphosa.

He will also meet Inkatha Freedom Party leader Mangosuthu Buthelezi. He will address a news conference at the French Consul's offices in Johannesburg tomorrow.

Before leaving for Egypt on Wednesday afternoon, Mr Juppe is to visit Franschhoek, where Huguenots settled after fleeing religious persecution in France in the 17th century.

A French embassy spokesman said Mr Juppe's visit was intended to mark French support for the transitional process and to improve relations with South Africa. — Sapa-AFP.

AWB leader hails Natal supporters

The Argus Correspondent

MARITZBURG. — Afrikaner Weerstandsbeweging leader Eugene Terre'Blanche has done a "military assessment" of the organisation's Natal "forces" and has found them and the support for the AWB in Natal exceptional, claims the movement's Natal leader Nick Fourie.

ARG 17/1/94

He would not say today how many people attended a camp near Manderstam, south of Maritzburg

AWB members in camouflage, some with weapons, took part in the parades in the area as AWB flags flew Volkstaat signs were pasted over road signs

Mr Fourie said Mr Terre'Blanche wanted to see support for the AWB in Natal and preparedness for any events that might involve the movement

"We are doing our final preparations for what is needed The preparations are important In spite of our very reasonable claims, we are being ignored"

A resident of the area said "I am not a member of the AWB and did not attend But if they can reduce crime we support them"

Maseru calm for second day after army factions clash

(167)

ARG 17/1/94

MASERU. — Maseru was calm for a second day running after Friday's clash between two armed factions of the mountain kingdom's defence force.

Sporadic firing was heard on Saturday night, but according to reports it wasn't serious.

The shots came from the Makoanyane military base, about 11km outside the capital, home of the faction whose demand for a doubling of army salaries led to the clash.

Residents nearby said yesterday that it appeared the shots had been fired into the air. There were no reports of injuries.

Members of the Royal Lesotho Defence Force's reccie unit — the faction which is believed to be loyal to the government — remained stationed in the mountains on the outskirts of Maseru yesterday.

Fears of a possible coup in the tiny enclave were quashed on Saturday with the help of South African Foreign Minister Pik Botha.

He flew in at the request of the Lesotho government, met separately with all the parties involved and brokered a truce.

But Mr Botha told his guests South Africa would not tolerate a Lesotho government which came to power by force, and vowed to bring it to its knees.

Lesotho and South African government officials confirmed the pay issue was believed to be a smokescreen for political opposition to the ruling Basotholand Congress Party, which swept to power in elections last year.

Mr Botha also met the leader of the main opposition Basotho National Party during his one-day visit.

The commander of the Lesotho Air Force, Lieutenant-Colonel Patrick Majare — who was wounded in the skirmish — was flown to Ladybrand in the Free State with the help of the South African consulate in Maseru. — Sapa.

Fighting follows assassination bid

Lesotho rebels hit barracks

Star 19/1/94

BY CHRIS WHITFIELD and STAR AFRICA SERVICE

The fragile peace in Lesotho was shattered yesterday by an assassination attempt on a former member of Lesotho's Military Council and the shelling of an army barracks by rebel soldiers

Witnesses reported no casualties and Maseru was quiet this morning

Sources in the Lesotho capital said the rebels, whose demand for a 100 percent pay rise first sparked fighting on Thursday, now appeared intent on overthrowing the government of Prime Minister Ntsu Mokhehle

Last night South African Foreign Minister Pik Botha — who had been in contact with the Lesotho government during the day — warned in a message to the United Nations that the situation in Lesotho might deteriorate

He also said South Africans should avoid travelling to Maseru until "greater clarity" had been obtained

Yesterday's incidents have again raised fears of a coup.

Botha said in a statement that a former commander in the Royal Lesotho Defence Force (RLDF), Lieutenant-Colonel Paepae Mothakathi, and his son were shot and wounded while travelling in the lieutenant-colonel's car

THE situation may quickly deteriorate and South Africans are advised not to travel to Maseru

(167)

Mothakathi was shot in the arm and his son in the thigh and both were this morning reported to be "fine"

After the shooting the headquarters faction of the RLDF — which supports Mothakathi — began preparing for a retaliatory attack.

Botha was contacted by Lesotho government officials "alarmed at the serious deterioration of the situation"

He arranged for medical treatment in South Africa for Mothakathi and his son, and obtained a commitment from the former Military Council member to urge his supporters to cease armed activities.

But at 3 pm yesterday several shells were fired from the RLDF headquarters in the direction of the Makhoanyane barracks.

An army sergeant who was in the camp at the time of the attack said it was shelled with 81 mm mortars which missed their mark, hitting civilian areas instead

• A leper colony, an SOS Children's Village under construction, a mental institution and a Ministry of Works camp were slightly damaged

No reports of deaths or injuries have been received

Mokhele is to meet leaders of various opposition groups in Lesotho today in a bid to defuse the situation

Expatriate families staying in the vicinity of the Makoanyane barracks have been warned they would be evacuated if the situation deteriorated Aid workers have also been advised to cancel all field trips.

Sapa-Reuter reports that Maseru residents said mutineers were forcing their way into shops and homes near their barracks yesterday to demand food and drink. Rebels appeared to outnumber loyal troops.

Lesotho has been ruled by the Basutholand Congress Party since elections in March last year The small kingdom has a history of military coups since independence from Britain in 1966

Gunfire in Maseru

MASERU — Mutinous soldiers in Lesotho and troops loyal to the government exchanged gunfire in the capital Maseru for an hour yesterday. No casualties were reported

Witnesses said the rebels, whose demand for a 100 percent pay rise first sparked fighting last Thursday, now appeared intent on overthrowing the government of Prime Minister Ntsu Mokhehle Sowetan

Rebels at a base on the outskirts of Maseru opened fire with rifles yesterday on loyal troops stationed on a hill overlooking their barracks, the witnesses said 19/1/94

Maseru residents said mutineers were forcing their way into shops and homes near their barracks to demand food and drink — *Sapa* 167

UN man sees Lesotho PM

MASERU — United Nations representative Mr Aldo Ajello met top Lesotho officials yesterday to discuss military clashes and fears of a coup

Mr Ajello is the UN secretary-general's special representative in Mozambique

Two soldiers died yesterday in a skirmish between rival military units on Maseru's outskirts

Prime Minister Mr Ntsu Mokehle held a crisis summit with top political leaders, who gave him "wholehearted backing", said Mr Seeiso Serutla, principal secretary for information

Mr Serutla said only the main opposition Basotho National Party (BNP) had not met the prime minister, an omission he said was "significant

"It is quite a bizarre experience we are having here," Mr Serutla added CT 20/1/94

But government sources said a coup attempt was unlikely

● The National Union of Mineworkers (NUM) asked Lesotho's army to respect its democratically-elected government Many migrant workers from Lesotho are NUM members — Sapa-Reuter (218) (167)

Lesotho ignores UN calls for peace as two die in fighting

(167)

ARG 20/1/94

Argus Africa News Service

MASERU. — More shooting has been reported in the capital of Lesotho only hours after calls by the United Nations and the National Union of Mine Workers for a peaceful resolution of the conflict between two factions of the Lesotho Royal Defence Force

The conflict has so far claimed the lives of two soldiers, while five people, among them two children, have been injured One of the youths has been identified as Tsepo Monyane

Late yesterday, it was confirmed that a Captain Maqeleke was shot and killed near the Makoanyane barracks, where rebel soldiers have holed up since the outbreak of clashes between the rebels and troops loyal to Prime Minister Ntsu Mokhehle

Yesterday UN envoy Aldo Ajello held a meeting with the government, where he appealed for a peaceful resolution to the conflict He also met the heads of UN agencies operating in Lesotho

A spokesperson at the UN offices in Maseru said Mr Ajello hopes to meet all the leaders of political parties today

Prime Minister Ntsu Mokhehle yesterday said in a statement before meeting leaders of some opposition parties that the salary increase demanded by the rebel soldiers was not the real reason behind the disturbances within the armed forces

Nine political party leaders attended the meeting, but the two major opposition groups, the Basotoland National Party and the Marematlou Freedom Party, did not attend Instead, the two parties issued statements calling on the armed forces to lay down arms so that peace and stability can be restored

Meanwhile the National Union of Mineworkers, which represents the thousands of Basothos who work on South African mines, has called on "all Num members and the community at large to work tirelessly to assist in resolving the present crisis in Lesotho"

LESOTHO

Struggling to shake off military culture

For six years up to last year, Lesotho was ruled by the military. It was inevitable that a civilian government would face growing resentment from the military when they did not get their way. JOE LATAKGOMO of The Argus Africa News Service reports.

ARG 20/1/94 (167)

JUST before he was ousted from power, Lesotho's military council chairman General Justin Lekhanya warned that "whoever takes over (government of the country) will inherit a tattered economy"

Ten months into power since winning the March elections last year, Ntsu Mokhehle's Basutoland Congress Party is finding that not only is the economy in tatters, they also have to deal with a restive military used to getting their way during years of military rule of the mountain kingdom

The white-wash electoral victory of the BCP had suggested that the politically volatile electorate had put their confidence in the party, and it was hoped that a new regime would bring better economic and social prospects

While there have been rumblings of discontent because of the perception that the government, having taken power, was not delivering on its election promises, it is the discontent in the military that has been of more serious concern

During the days of military rule, power rested firmly with the soldiers They could demand increases, and get them They swaggered around the streets of Maseru, much to the chagrin of civilians And when elections came last year, they brought with them the obscurity of the barracks for the troops

In October, junior officers of the Lesotho Royal Defence Force forced their seniors to resign, claiming they had links with the Lesotho Liberation Army (LLA), which was the military wing of the BCP during its campaign against the government of Leabua Jonathan

There were claims both within the military and by opposition parties, most notably the Basotho National Party of Evaristus Sekhonyana, that the BCP was keeping the LLA operative under the guise of a company called Lesotho Security solely to be able to call on it in the event of being ousted from government.

The government seemed to give in to pressure from the soldiers at the Makoanyaneng barracks when it was announced that the senior officers had resigned from the force

Having achieved victory, it was inevitable that the soldiers would detect a sense of vulnerability in the government and press for further concessions

Lesotho had developed a culture of military rule since General Lekhanya seized power in a coup on January 15, 1986 It is significant that the rebel soldiers' putsch took place in the week of the anniversary of that first military take-over

In all the years of military rule since then, the military had favoured status in both salaries and perks Indeed, General Lekhanya's removal from the chairmanship of the military council in April 1991 by Brigadier Elias Phitsoane Ramaema was viewed as being because of pressure from within the military for more and more handouts for the military at the expense of national interests and development

In June the same year, 20 officers were dismissed from the RLDF for attempting to overthrow Brigadier Ramaema and reinstate General Lekhanya

The six years of military rule, plus 16 years of one-party dictatorship which was underpinned by what was then a paramilitary unit, nurtured the military culture that the Mokhehle government is now trying to work out of the political system

But clearly, the fact that members of the LLA are being kept as a unit is indicative of how wary the government is of the military

Opposition parties like the BNP under Sekhonyana are old hands at dealing with the military General Lekhanya in fact stood as a candidate for the BNP in the last elections, and in various statements last year, Sekhonyana consistently played up the LLA issue, stirring up dissatisfaction within the RLDF

An astute politician, Sekhonyana knows the value of being on the right side of the military, and this strategy seems to have worked well for him

But support for the military's actions has been thin on the ground among civilians who question the reason given for the latest confrontation which has so far claimed the lives of two soldiers The rebels have demanded a 100 percent pay increase, which many describe as a smokescreen for broader political goals, including the overthrow of the Mokhehle government.

The intervention of South Africa's Foreign Minister Pik Botha does not seem to have done much to defuse the situation

Years of military rule in Lesotho ensured that civilian leaders would face resentment if the army did not get its way, reports ***Joe Latakgomo***

Military menace dogs Lesotho govt

Star 21/1/94

(167)

Just before he was ousted from power, Lesotho Military Council chairman General Justin Lekhanya warned that "whoever takes over (the government of the country) will inherit a tattered economy"

Ten months into power since winning the March elections last year, Ntsu Mokhehle's Basutoland Congress Party is finding that in addition to an economy in tatters, his government also has to deal with a restive military, used to getting its way during the years of military rule in the mountain kingdom

The whitewash electoral victory of the BCP had suggested that the politically volatile electorate had put its confidence in the party, and hoped a new regime would bring them better economic and social prospects

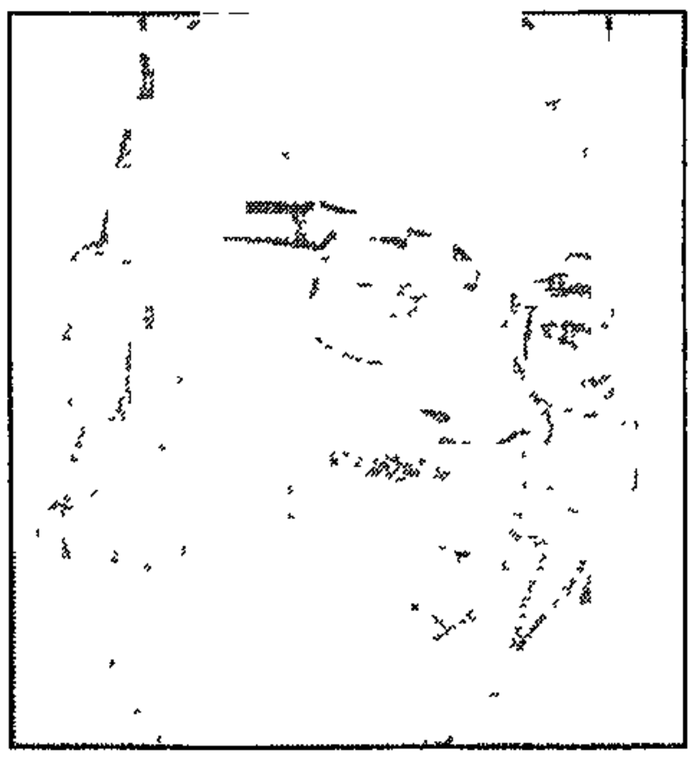
While there have been rumblings of discontent because of the perception that the government, having taken power, was not delivering on its election promises, it is the discontent in the military that has been of more serious concern for the current rulers

During the days of military rule, power rested firmly with the soldiers They could demand increases, and get them They swaggered around the streets of Maseru, much to the chagrin of civilians But when elections came last year, they brought the obscurity of the barracks for the troops

In October, junior officers of the Lesotho Royal Defence Force forced their seniors to resign, claiming they had links with the Lesotho Liberation Army (LLA), which was the military wing of the BCP during its campaign against the government of Leabua Jonathan

There were claims both within the military and by opposition parties, most notably the Basotho National Party of Evaristus Sekhonyana, that the BCP was keeping the LLA operative, under the guise of a company called Lesotho Security, solely to be able to call on it in the event of being ousted from power

The government seemed to give in to pressure from the soldiers at the Makoanyaneng barracks when it was announced that the



Jonathan . . died in 1987.

senior officers had resigned from the force Having achieved victory, it was inevitable that the soldiers would detect a sense of vulnerability in the government and press for further concessions

Lesotho had developed a culture of military rule since Lekhanya seized power in a coup on January 15 1986 It is significant that the rebel soldiers' putsch took place in the week of the anniversary of that first military takeover

In all the years of military rule since then, the defence force had favoured status in both salaries and the handing out of perquisites

Indeed, Lekhanya's removal from the chairmanship of the military council in April 1991 by Brigadier Elias Phitsoane Ramaema was viewed as being due to pressure from within the military for more and more handouts at the expense of national interests and development

In June of the same year, 20 officers were dismissed from the RLDF for attempting to overthrow Ramaema, so as to reinstate Lekhanya.

The six years of military rule, plus 20 odd years of one-party dictatorship which was underpinned by what was then a paramilitary unit, nurtured the military culture that the Mokhehle government is now trying to work out of the political system But clearly, the fact that members of the LLA are being kept as a unit is indicative of how wary the government is of the military

Opposition parties, like the BNP under Sekhonyana, are old hands at dealing with the military Lekhanya in fact stood as a candidate for the BNP in the last elections

And in various statements last year, Sekhonyana consistently played up the LLA issue, stirring up dissatisfaction within the RLDF An astute politician, he knows the value of being on the right side of the armed forces, and this strategy seems to have worked well for him — at least as far as the military is concerned

But support for the military's actions has been thin on the ground among civilians who question the reason given for the latest confrontation, which has so far claimed the lives of two soldiers The rebels have demanded a 100 percent pay increase, which many describe as a smokescreen for broader political goals, including the overthrow of the Mokhehle government

The intervention of South African Foreign Minister Pik Botha does not seem to have done much to defuse the situation, and the rebels do not seem to have fully considered the implications of the threat by Botha that his government would not support a coup, or recognise a government coming to power through such a coup

South Africa is capable of squeezing Lesotho economically, as the government of Jonathan found out just before the 1986 military takeover Added to that, wage income remittances from South African mines make up more than half of the country's Gross Domestic Product

For now, however, Lesotho remains gripped by political uncertainty

Role for king urged in Lesotho crisis

Argus Africa News Service and Sapa-Reuter

MASERU — The leader of Lesotho's main opposition party, the Basotho National Party, has called on the government to seek the intervention of King Letsie III to end the conflict between the two warring factions of the Royal Lesotho Defence Force

In a statement, Evaristus Sekhonyana and his counterpart in the United Democratic Party, C D Mofeli, said the fact that they did not attend the talks with Prime Minister Ntsu Mokhehle yesterday did not show "lack of appreciation for the significance of peace in Lesotho"

They had hoped that the prime minister, as minister of defence, would take the initiative to intervene in the conflict, with the other political parties playing a supportive role

"We appeal to all sides in the conflict to be calm and to lay down their weapons so as to create an environment conducive to positive intervention by his majesty the King of Lesotho and the Council of State," said the statement

The leaders "frowned" on initiatives "from outside the sovereign structures of Lesotho" — a clear reference to intervention by South African Foreign Minister Pik Botha and United Nations representative Aldo Ajello

Mr Ajello left Maseru yesterday after talks with UN agency heads and government officials ARG 21/1/94

The sub-council on foreign affairs of the Transitional Executive Council said it supported all attempts, including those of the South African government, to defuse the Lesotho crisis

"The sub-council believes that any attempt to replace the government of Lesotho by force would be unacceptable to South Africa"

In London, Commonwealth Secretary-General Emeka Anyaoku said he was concerned about "troubling developments" in Lesotho, adding that he had spoken to Mr Mokehle

But diplomats said Lesotho had been "very quiet" since two soldiers were killed in the fighting on Wednesday

(167)

Near-miss for leper colony

STIMES 23/1/94

By JAMES BRITTAIN

SHELLS fired by Royal Lesotho Defence Force artillery across Maseru during faction fighting this week are thought to have fallen short of their target, narrowly missing a leper colony and mental hospital.

No one was killed, but buildings near the Makoanyane military base are believed to have been damaged

Diplomatic sources said a 150-strong faction of the Royal Lesotho Defence Force fired about 10 rounds at an opposing group 17km west of the capital

Further skirmishes between rival military factions were reported on the outskirts of Maseru on Friday night, with one soldier killed and another wounded near an army barracks.

The latest death brings to four the number of soldiers believed to have been killed since the sporadic conflict broke out last week, apparently over a soldiers' wage dispute with the ruling Basotholand Congress Party

SA deputy director-general of foreign affairs Derek Auret said the situation in the mountain kingdom's capital remained tense. However, there were no plans for the SADF to intervene in the conflict, despite official requests from Lesotho Prime Minister Ntsu Mokehle to do so.

SA's ambassador in Maseru, Mr Gerhard Visser, said troops from the faction within the city killed one soldier from Makoanyane on Wednesday while he was filling a vehicle with petrol just outside Maseru (167)

He said another was killed in an ambulance on the way to hospital the same day after being shot in the thigh

Another was killed on the way home from Makoanyane on Wednesday evening, he said

UN special envoy to Mozambique Aldo Ajello left Lesotho on Friday, having spent three days talking to the political parties in an attempt to defuse the conflict.

Meanwhile, despite the tension, Maseru was quiet yesterday, with shops open and people going about their business as usual

Put down soldiers' rebellion, prime minister asks after day of heavy fighting

Lesotho seeks SA help

Star 24/1/94

■ BY JOE LATAKGOMO and CHRIS WHITFIELD

Maseru — The Lesotho goverment has appealed for South African military intervention to help end the fighting between two factions of the Royal Lesotho Defence Force.

A government spokesman said that Prime Minister Ntsu Mokhehle had asked the South Africans to put down the rebellion which has led to the death of at least four soldiers, and the injury of about 11 civilians since the fighting first broke out 10 days ago

Life returned to relative calm in the capital this morning after heavy overnight fighting. Heavy shelling was reported overnight, and residents around the ridge near the barracks which houses the "loyalists" were evacuated as fears rose that the fighting may resume and escalate.

Automatic gunfire was heard in the streets and radio broadcasts by the state-controlled Radio Lesotho warned residents to remain indoors Among those who were evacuated were the Star's Afica Service correspondent in the capital, Nomakhosi Jeness and her family

Fighting resumed on Saturday after a lull on Friday, and intensified last night. Casualty figures are difficult to obtain, but reports say at least two more soldiers have died in the fighting and five civilians were injured. It was not clear on which side the casualties were.

The rebel soldiers, who are said to outnumber the "loyalists" about three to one, were apparently trying for a final push to dislodge the loyalists last night, but are reported to be low on ammunition.

This morning, taxis were back on the road, and people seemed to be going about their

CIVILIANS either fled, were evacuated or cowered at home as gunfire boomed across the streets

(167)

daily activities, although there was a massive presence of soldiers on the streets.

Meanwhile, all non-essential staff and dependants at the South African embassy in Maseru are being evacuated.

A Foreign Affairs spokesman in Pretoria said today that Foreign Minister Pik Botha had had a long talk to Commonwealth Secretary General Chief Emeka Anyaoku South Africa was trying to "internationalise" the situation in Lesotho.

UN special representative in Mozambique Aldo Ajello had visited Lesotho He is to report back to UN Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali.

South Africa's ambassador in Lesotho Gerhard Visser said today there had been a heavy rainstorm throughout the night and rifle and mortar fire had stopped early last night.

The Department of Foreign Affairs has advised South Africans not to travel to Lesotho

Visser said at one stage the troops had been "out of control" and the United States embassy had warned people to vacate the capital.

Asked if the grave situation in the tiny kingdom could lead to a coup, Visser added it appeared the dispute was more an internal one between the factions than one with political overtones.

Yesterday's fighting was the most prolonged since the outbreak of hostilities between the two groups. That followed a dispute over pay rises.

A director's dream

Top of the list . . Steven Spielberg won a Golden Globe on Saturday for directing the film *Schindler's List*. ▶ Spielberg triumphs — Page 4 PICTURE. AFP

'Freeze public service pay rise'

Star 24/1/94

■ BY ESTHER WAUGH
POLITICAL CORRESPONDENT

The ANC is to ask the Transitional Executive Council to freeze pay increases to public servants.

It is also to request the TEC subcouncil on finance to review public service salary structures.

The ANC noted that recent increases — as high as 20 percent in some cases — would affect civil servant pensions guaranteed by the Interim Constitution.

The organisation further noted that thousands of State employees had been given 5 percent increases and top government officials granted 20 percent salaray raises.

But Minister responsible for the Commission for Administration Sam de Beer last night defended the 20 percent increase as necessary to guarantee that upper management played a "central role to ensure a stable public service"

The boost to the upper echelon had become necessary to maintain the salary and wage gap between top officials and the rank and file, he said.

A programme to lift the wage scales for workers on the lowest levels had seen their wages increase by a total of 251 percent since 1989 while top bureaucrats' salaries had "only" increased by 53 percent.

De Beer said the increase at the top had not been enough to allow civil bureaucrats' salaries to catch up with those of their private-sector counterparts.

The decision to reject the pay increases was taken at the ANC's Reconstruction and Development Conference yesterday

The ANC resolution said the increases were "nothing less than a misappropriation of public funds"

ANC national executive member Cheryl Carolus told a press conference yesterday that part of the subcouncil on finance's brief was to ensure that no wasteful expenditure took place

She said her organisation would want to see the Government justify "this misappropriation or wasteful expenditure"

SA Communist Party central committee member Jeremy Cronin said that the TEC had to ensure that these "exorbitant raises" were frozen.

The largest increases — just three months before a new government is to take power — went to 37 directors-general. They are set to receive up to 20 percent more.

Directors, chief directors and deputy chief directors — almost 1 950 civil servants — stood to receive increases of between 17 and 19 percent.

While policemen had been given a 3 percent raise, senior officers had received 18 percent increases, he said.

▶ More reports – Pages 3 and 14

Lesotho civilians wounded in fighting

MASERU — Several civilians were wounded in street fighting which erupted after a faction of heavily armed soldiers tried to storm a rival barracks in the Lesotho capital yesterday, diplomats said.

The wounded were taken to hospital when fighting, which began at dawn, died down during late afternoon.

SA Foreign Minister Pik Botha advised South Africans not to travel to Maseru or its surrounding areas.

Details of the fighting were sketchy as residents huddled in their homes throughout the day, listening to sporadic gunfire

In repeated broadcasts, state-controlled Radio Lesotho warned residents of villages near army barracks at Makoyane and Ratjomodise to stay indoors to avoid stray bullets B/Day 24/1/94.

The station also broadcast an appeal for leaders of all political parties to meet a high-powered OAU delegation at the offices of Prime Minister Ntsu Mokhehle.

The OAU mission arrived in Maseru on Saturday to try to defuse the tense situation Tensions began when an army faction demanded a 100% salary increase. Many of the dissatisfied soldiers support the Basuto National Party which lost last year's elections to the Basutoland Congress Party. — Sapa-Reuter. (167)

2 killed in Maseru fighting

Sowetan 24/11/87

MASERU — At least two soldiers were reportedly killed as rival Lesotho army factions shelled each other in fierce fighting in Maseru yesterday

The clashes erupted shortly after dawn and one diplomat said "ferocious shooting" lasted about 35 minutes, followed by two hours of sporadic gunfire, interspersed by mortar bombs (167)

To date, four soldiers have been killed

Several civilians were also reported injured when a minibus taxi was caught in the crossfire

The United States embassy warned people to vacate Maseru, saying further heavy fighting between the two groups was expected later

Radio broadcasts warned Maseru residents to stay indoors. South African Foreign Minister Mr Pik Botha advised people not to travel to Maseru because of the clashes between loyal and rebel army troops — *Sapa*

Shells fired over capital of Lesotho

(167)

CT 24/1/94

MASERU — Artillery shells whistled over the Lesotho capital at dusk yesterday after heavy fighting between rival army factions earlier in the day.

Witnesses saw flashes as shells fired over the city exploded on a mountain ridge above a military barracks

The loyalists were grouped on a hill near here, while the more numerous rebels were trying to dislodge them

Earlier in the day at least two rebel soldiers died when fierce fighting erupted, a diplomat said

The clashes had erupted shortly after dawn and "ferocious shooting" had lasted about 35 minutes, followed by two hours of sporadic gunfire, interspersed with mortar bombs

The US embassy warned people to leave the capital, saying further heavy fighting between the two groups was expected

Radio broadcasts warned Maseru residents to stay indoors and South African Foreign Minister Mr Pik Botha warned people not to travel to Maseru

The British Foreign Office told its citizens in Lesotho to stay indoors yesterday

At least two rebel soldiers were killed in Sunday's shootout, adding to the two others killed in earlier clashes last week

The conflict was apparently sparked by a demand by the rebel soldiers for a 100% pay rise.

Diplomats do not believe the uprising is related to dissatisfaction with the six-month-old government of Prime Minister Mr Ntsu Mokhehle

Defuse

"The soldiers are not fighting the government, they are fighting among themselves," one diplomat said

The loyalists were grouped on a hill near Maseru, while the more numerous rebels were trying to dislodge them from their vantage point, a diplomat said

The OAU called a meeting of all parties yesterday, but it was not clear whether the meeting had been held

The United Nations and the Organisation of African Unity have sent representatives to Lesotho in a bid to defuse the situation — Sapa-AFP

Maseru seeks international help after Pretoria refuses to send in troops

SA rejects Lesotho plea

Star 25/1/94

REBEL deadline for the doubling of army pay expires, but the streets of the capital remain quiet

(167)

STAR AFRICA SERVICE

Maseru — The Lesotho Cabinet held a crisis meeting late yesterday to try to find ways of ending the 11-day clash between two factions of the Royal Lesotho Defence Force

The capital was quiet last night after weekend clashes which left one soldier dead and at least five civilians injured. At least one house was hit by a mortar during Sunday night's shelling, the heaviest since fighting broke out.

Residents had braced themselves for an escalation of the fighting as yesterday was the final day of the ultimatum issued by the rebel troops to Prime Minister Ntsu Mokhehle to announce 100 percent pay rises for troops

There were fears the fighting might spread into the city, but by late last night, it was clear a showdown would not materialise

The South African Government has turned down an appeal by the Lesotho government to send in troops to put down the rebellion. But SA security forces were on the alert on Lesotho borders

SA ambassador to Maseru Gerhard Visser said yesterday "there was no talk of intervention" He added that Lesotho was a member of the Commonwealth and could approach that body for help "Under the present circumstances, we have our own troubles We have offered to give logistical support to another country if they want to take the job," Visser said.

And Minister of Foreign Affairs Pik Botha said on SABC-TV last night that South Africa would consider using sanctions against a government that took power by force Sanctions would include the closure of borders and suspension of customs union payments.

Botha also announced in Pretoria that a peace initiative was being launched by the Frontline states Zimbabwe, Zambia, Tanzania, Botswana and Mozambique.

The Lesotho government was reported to have held talks with both the rebel troops holed up at the Makoanyane barracks, and the troops loyal to Mokhehle The talks were said to have been brokered by Botswana, and were seen as a major breakthrough towards ending the impasse

Talks between the Lesotho government and the Commonwealth are also due to be held today, when the question of military intervention is expected to be discussed. The principal secretary in the ministry of information, Seelso Serutla, said yesterday that the government was "talking to the international community about how to solve the situation." He admitted that the government had no control over the two factions.

Diplomacy first as SA keeps a cautious eye on Lesotho conflict

BIDAY 25/1/94

JACQUIE GOLDING

SA WOULD not send troops into Lesotho unless its own citizens were in real danger, a Foreign Affairs official said yesterday.

Sapa reports that Foreign Minister Pik Botha said security forces on the border were keeping watch on events, but would not be ordered to intervene. SA wanted to pursue diplomacy and a process of negotiations in the conflict in Lesotho

A Frontline States initiative was being launched to bring the factions together. SA was discussing the situation with the OAU, UN, the British High Commissioner and Commonwealth secretary-general Chief Emeka Anyaoku, who had sent delegations to Maseru. Botha hoped the international community could resolve the crisis, and was trying "to make sure that they realise the situation may deteriorate and we may eventually land up with another Somalia. Should things really get out of hand I will take the matter to the TEC," he said.

Foreign Affairs spokesman Awie Marais said SA would look at any request from the UN or Commonwealth to send in troops.

Botha said SA would withhold Southern African Customs Union money due to Lesotho should there be a coup d'etat.

Sapa-Reuter reports that after a crisis cabinet meeting in Maseru yesterday, a government spokesman said Lesotho had considered asking SA to send in troops, but had not yet made any such request. (167)

Diplomatic sources said intervention by SA would be feasible militarily, but disastrous politically. The situation was still unstable and foreigners were warned to stay out of Maseru.

Sapa-AFP reports that many foreign nationals quit the Lesotho capital amid rumours that rebel troops were preparing for a new offensive against loyalist military positions. Embassies were evacuating non-essential staff and dependents to SA after Sunday's fierce fighting Scores of families were seen fleeing Maseru. Soldiers said the dispute, which began over wages, had turned into a political showdown.

An SA embassy spokesman said Lesotho was calm yesterday Heavy rain had led to a lull in the fighting between rival factions.

While businesses in Maseru resumed trading and commercial traffic was flowing through the reopened border post, the education ministry ordered schools closed, and most people heeded a Radio Lesotho warning to remain indoors.

A soccer match, the CAF Cup first leg preliminary round match between Lesotho's Linare and Reunion's St Denis, which had been cancelled, was to go ahead at the national stadium last night.

Five soldiers have been killed since fighting began 10 days ago. At least two soldiers were killed and four civilians wounded on Sunday when the two sides traded artillery and mortar fire across the outskirts of the city.

Now Lesotho seeks help as factions clash

Sowetan 25/1/94

(167)

MASERU — The Lesotho government last night acknowledged it had no control over two rival army factions which are currently fighting each other in the mountain kingdom

The government said it was seeking international assistance to resolve the crisis

Mr Seeiso Serutla, principal secretary of the Information Ministry, said· "The Lesotho government is talking to the international community about how to solve the situation in Lesotho "

Describing the situation as an "impasse", Serutla said the government currently had no contact with either faction and was uncertain of their actions

Diplomatic sources in Maseru said the United Nations, Organisation of African Unity and the Commonwealth were trying to mediate a solution after the government failed to get leaders of the two factions to meet.

At the same time, South African Foreign Minister Mr Pik Botha disclosed in Pretoria that a peace initiative was being launched by the Frontline States — Zimbabwe, Zambia, Tanzania, Botswana and Mozambique

South Africa was among the nations being consulted

Serutla denied that the Lesotho administration was in danger of being overthrown

"The government is far away from collapsing," he said

Government officials disclosed yesterday that five soldiers had been killed since the skirmishes broke out 10 days ago — *Sapa-AFP*

Lesotho's warring factions agree to lay down their arms

MASERU — Botswana's Foreign Minister Legwaila waLegwaila has negotiated a truce between Lesotho's warring army factions, Prime Minister Ntsu Mokhehle said today

The two sides have "agreed in principle to lay down their arms," Mr Mokhehle said, but acknowledged that the situation had not yet been "fully resolved"

Mr Legwaila, who was in the Lesotho capital on behalf of the Organisation of African Unity (OAU), had returned to Gaborone, officials said

Calm after heavy fighting over the weekend held into yesterday Business, labour and church organisations called for a national stay-away from work tomorrow

They said the action aimed to protest against the deaths of three civilians in the clashes and against what one opposition leader, Vincent Malebo of the Maremat-lou Freedom party, called government "mishandling" of the crisis

The fighting that began over a 100 percent pay rise demand by some troops later became a political face-off between forces loyal to the governing Basotholand Congress Party and those backing the opposition Basotho National Party

No gunfire was heard in Maseru overnight, although the rival factions were still believed to be holding on to their respective positions on the hills overlooking the capital of the mountain kingdom — Sapa-AFP (167) ARG 25/1/94

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Lesotho admits army out of control

MASERU — The Lesotho government acknowledged last night that it had no control over two rival army factions currently fighting with each other and said it was seeking international help in resolving the crisis

The acknowledgement came after a crisis cabinet meeting

A government spokesman said Lesotho had considered asking South Africa to send in troops but had not yet made any such request

South African security forces on the Lesotho border were last night keeping watch but would not be ordered to intervene South African Foreign Minister Mr Pik Botha said

Mr Botha said his government wanted to pursue diplomacy and a process of negotiations in the conflict in Lesotho

Principal secretary of the Lesotho Information Ministry, Mr Seeiso Serutla said "The Lesotho government is talking to the international community about how to solve the situation in Lesotho"

Describing the situation as an impasse" he said the government currently had no contact with either faction and was uncertain of their actions

But he denied that the Lesotho administration was in danger of being overthrown The government is far away from collapsing he said

Mr Botha disclosed that a frontline states initiative was being launched

He said his government had already conferred with the Organisation of African Unity, the United Nations and Commonwealth secretary general Chief Emeka Anyaoku who had sent delegations to Maseru

Foreign Affairs spokesman Mr Awie Marais said South Africa would consider any request from the UN or Commonwealth to send in troops

"The day has been spent in efforts by diplomats to persuade the government it had to talk to both sides involved a diplomatic source said

Prime Minister Mr Ntsu Mokhehle appeared to backtrack on reported requests to South Africa for military intervention

He said through a spokesman no decision had been taken on such a request.

The capital Maseru was tense yesterday, but shops and businesses opened

"There is a break in the fighting, but both sides are still dug in and one or the other will renew the attack," a diplomatic source said

Five soldiers have been killed since fighting began 10 days ago At least two soldiers were killed and four civilians wounded on Sunday when troops from two barracks traded artillery and mortar fire

A Lesotho Defence Force paratrooper said the troops from one barracks wanted to install the main opposition Basotho National Party

Diplomatic sources said there was no firm indication of BNP involvement in the crisis There was also no suggestion that a coup was in the offing

Many foreign nationals quit Maseru yesterday following warnings from their embassies which were also evacuating non essential staff CT 25/1/94

Scores of expatriate and local families were seen fleeing Maseru

The education ministry ordered schools to close yesterday — Sapa-Reuter-AFP Own Correspondent (167)

FW, Mandela on Lesotho peace mission

Star 26/1/94

BY CHRIS WHITFIELD
POLITICAL CORRESPONDENT

Gaborone — President de Klerk and ANC president Nelson Mandela flew separately into Botswana this morning under a cloak of secrecy on a mission to bring peace to strife-torn Lesotho.

The undertaking will bring De Klerk face-to-face with Zimbabwe Premier Robert Mugabe for the first time

Mandela's presence is a potent symbol of the shift of power in South Africa.

It seems unlikely the meeting would have gone ahead without his attendance or approval, and it effectively signals an early beginning to the concept of a government of national unity (167)

De Klerk landed in Gaborone soon after 8.30 am and Mandela was scheduled to arrive at 9 am

Sources believe the meeting of regional leaders, under the auspices of the Southern African Development Co-ordinating Conference, may lead to intervention by the SADF in the Lesotho crisis.

Also present were Botswana President Quett Masire and foreign ministers from other southern African countries

De Klerk and Mugabe have never met before, and their encounter signals yet another step back into the international community by the Republic.

The South African Government has refrained from direct intervention in Lesotho thus far but Foreign Minister Pik Botha has warned that the

▶ To Page 3

FW, Mandela meet Mugabe on Lesotho peace mission

Star 26/1/94

◀ From Page 1

Republic recognised the democratically elected government of Prime Minister Ntsu Mokhehle and would not tolerate a coup.

Botha also disclosed yesterday that a peace intiative was being launched by the Frontline states — Zimbabwe, Zambia, Tanzania, Botswana and Mozambique. It is understood that this initiative gave rise to today's meeting.

Certainly the approval of the gathering here would lend legitimacy to any South African intervention.

Given the delicate nature of South African politics at the moment, the Government is only likely to move with such tacit approval.

The fighting in Maseru has pitted two factions of the Royal Lesotho Defence Force against one another and was sparked by a row over pay increases

But it has reportedly developed into a political showdown between supporters of the 10-month-old Basotholand Congress Party and those of the ousted Basotho National Party.

Reports from Maseru have indicated that a small core of elite, loyalist troops are fighting against several rebel companies in the hills north of Maseru.

The **Star Africa Service** reports from Maseru today that a meeting of the warring factions togehter with Prime Minister Ntsu Mokhehle ended without agreement last night, but leaders are due to continue their talks today

There has been no new fighting, and life in Maseru is returning to normal. (167)

Most of the people who moved out of threatened areas have returned to their homes.

Principal Secretary for Information Seeiso Serutla confirmed this morning that a meeting between delegates from the two factions with Prime Minister Mokhehle and the chief of Lesotho's armed forces had taken place, "but unfortunately they did not conclude anything".

In spite of an agreement to halt hostilities and to hold talks, soldiers at the Makoanyane barracks were preparing by late afternoon yesterday for a possible attack by the rival group, based at the RLDF headquarters on the other side of the town.

An officer at Makoanyane, who did not want to be identified, said his brother was based with the rival group He insisted that they were not interested in taking over the government and that he did not want to fight his brother. He said the headquarters group had already received higher salaries and that the Makoanyane group also had to get a raise.

Serutla said the government had not changed its response to the original 100 percent demand. "The government is currently looking at the conditions of service of civil servants The armed forces will not get differential treatment," he said.

Lesotho factions to disarm for talks

MASERU — Warring army factions in Lesotho had agreed to lay down their arms and hold talks with Prime Minister Ntsu Mokhehle's government, a spokesman said yesterday. B/DAY 26/1/94

Seeiso Serutla said representatives of the two sides, which totalled about 750 men, would meet government for talks expected to last several days. (167)

At a special meeting of the military commission it was agreed that the different fighting factions of the armed forces would cease their activities and join the prime minister in discussions," he said.

Two Commonwealth officials who arrived in Masuru yesterday would also attend the talks Serutla said an OAU mediator, Botswana's Elijah Legwaila, had mediated a ceasefire agreement between the two sides on Monday.

As far as government was concerned the crisis was over government's refusual of soldiers' demands for a 100% pay rise. The fighting had broken out between army factions accepting or rejecting the government position

Serutla flatly rejected reports referring to "rebels" in one faction. "In the Royal Lesotho Defence Force we do not have rebels, we have a unit of state power — the army. There was a split in that"

There had been no talk of court martialling the troops involved in the fighting, he said — Sapa-Reuter.

Lesotho factions 'to lay down arms'

(167) CT 26/1/94

MASERU — Warring army factions in Lesotho have agreed to lay down their arms and hold talks with the government, a government spokesman said yesterday

Mr Seeiso Serutla told a news conference that representatives of the two sides, which totalled about 750 men, would meet the government for talks he expected to last several days

"At a special meeting of the Military Commission it was agreed that the different fighting factions of the armed forces would cease their activities and join the prime minister in the discussions," he said

Two Commonwealth officials who arrived in Lesotho yesterday to assess the crisis would also attend the talks

Heavy fighting involving artillery and mortar fire between the two sides on Sunday had cast a pall of fear across the city of 500 000 in case battles spread to Maseru's streets

Two soldiers were killed and four civilians wounded in Sunday's fighting, bringing the total of casualties since the crisis erupted last week to five soldiers dead and 11 civilians wounded

Mr Serutla said a mediator from the Organisation of African Unity, Botswana's Mr Elijah Legwaila, had mediated a ceasefire agreement between the two sides on Monday

A UN special envoy had also visited the country, while Foreign Minister Mr Pik Botha had made a fleeting trip to urge all sides to reach agreement

The crisis brought fresh criticism of Prime Minister Mr Ntsu Mokhehle's government — Sapa-Reuter

FW, Mandela in joint Lesotho mission

Political Staff (167) ARG 26/1/94

GABORONE — President De Klerk and ANC president Nelson Mandela flew into Botswana today amid a cloak of secrecy for a joint mission to bring peace to strife-torn Lesotho

The mission will bring President De Klerk face-to-face with Zimbabwe prime minister Robert Mugabe for the first time

In a potent symbol of the shifting of power in South Africa, Mr Mandela will also be at the historic gathering today

Sources believe the meeting of regional leaders may lead to South African Defence Force intervention in the Lesotho crisis

The meeting here — details of which were kept secret until the last moment — is being held under the auspices of the Southern African Development Co-ordinating Conference

Also present will be Botswana President Quett Masire

The main thrust of the meeting will be the fighting in Maseru, the Lesotho capital

President De Klerk and Mr Mugabe have never before met and their encounter signals yet another step back into the international community by South Africa

Mr Mandela's presence will be highly significant. It seems unlikely that the meeting would have gone ahead without his presence or approval, and it effectively signals an early beginning to the government of national unity concept

● See page 4

INESS P20, P21 RACING P22 SPORT P23, P24

Lesotho marchers urge end to rivalry in army

(167)

ARG 26/1/94

Argus Africa News Service

MASERU — Nearly 2 000 people marched through the streets here today demanding an end to rivalry between factions in the armed forces

The march was organised by the Lesotho Council of Non-Governmental Organisations

A petition taken to the office of Prime Minister Ntsu Mokhehle called on the soldiers to lay down their arms and appealed to the government not to rely on outside help to resolve the issue

It also called for an amnesty for the opposing factions

Receiving delegates from the organisation, Mr Mokhehle said the petition "would be attended to", but he expressed annoyance at not being notified of the march

He refused to answer journalists' questions about the continuing crisis

Meanwhile, there is uncertainty about a meeting, announced yesterday by the principal secretary for information, involving leaders of the rival factions, Mr Mokhehle and the commander of Lesotho's armed forces, Makhula Mosakeng The meeting was to have begun yesterday and to have continued today

Principal Secretary for Information Seeiso Serutla said that representatives of the Commonwealth would be meeting Major-General Mosakeng later today

The prime minister would not attend the meeting, but it was possible that the faction leaders would do so

The situation remains quiet but tense in the Lesotho capital

2 000 in Maseru peace march

Star 27/1/94

BY HANS-PETER BAKKER
STAR AFRICA SERVICE

Maseru — Nearly 2 000 people marched through the streets of Maseru yesterday morning demanding an end to rivalry between factions in the Lesotho armed forces. (167)

The march, organised by the Lesotho Council of Non-Governmental Organisations, carried a petition to the office of Prime Minister Ntsu Mokhehle

The petition called on soldiers to lay down their arms and appealed to the government not to rely on outside assistance to resolve the issue. It also called for a general amnesty to be extended to the opposing factions.

Receiving delegates from the organisation in his office, Mokhehle said the petition "would be attended to", but he expressed annoyance at not being notified of the march.

"The first I heard about it was a noise outside. It is embarrassing," he said. He refused to answer journalists' questions about the ongoing crisis.

Principal Secretary for Information Seeiso Serutla said yesterday morning that representatives of the Commonwealth would be meeting the chief of the armed forces Major-General Makhula Mosakeng later yesterday.

The prime minister would not attend the meeting, he said, but "it is possible that the faction leaders will also attend the meeting".

The situation remains quiet but tense in the Lesotho capital.

No military intervention yet

SA helps set up task force for Lesotho

B/Day 27/1/94

(167)

TIM COHEN

GABORONE — The Lesotho crisis brought leaders from the Frontline States together for a historic mini-summit yesterday, with "four presidents" deciding jointly against immediate military intervention

The hastily arranged meeting brought together President F W de Klerk and ANC president Nelson Mandela with Zimbabwe's Robert Mugabe and Botswana's Quett Masire It was the first time De Klerk and Mugabe had met

The southern African statesmen, referred to by Mugabe as "the four presidents", were joined by Lesotho Deputy Prime Minister Selometsi Baholo for the three-hour meeting.

As Lesotho's immediate crisis seemed to have passed, the summit decided against setting up a limited peacekeeping force with SA logistical support to keep the peace between the rival factions in the Royal Lesotho Defence Force

But they decided to appoint a task force to examine all aspects of the situation and advise the four leaders on future action It would probably meet in SA today Mugabe said the task force would visit Lesotho before making its recommendations.

The make-up of the task force was not decided, but De Klerk said the SA delegation would fall under the TEC's authority

The option of a peacekeeping force entering Lesotho was not ruled out The task force is likely to focus on the long-term problem, which some officials believe was partly caused by the army being too large for a state without enemies

SA officials said privately that SA was reluctant to commit troops, badly needed at home, and wanted to avoid getting involved in a "quagmire" in Lesotho

Mugabe, currently chairman of the Frontline States, organised the mini-summit after speaking to Commonwealth chief Emeka Enyokou on Sunday

Mugabe said he had consulted Masire, head of the Southern African Development Conference, and both decided it would be convenient to hold the mini-summit in Gaborone where an SADC foreign ministers' meeting is being held

After the summit, the leaders commented on its significance, with De Klerk saying it was a historic occasion that augured well for southern African co-operation

Mugabe said the meeting with De Klerk "should have happened long ago", adding that SA's apartheid policies had prevented the meeting far too long

Mandela said it was the first time both he and De Klerk had left SA together to meet "our African brothers" and discuss matters of mutual concern "We feel that solidarity very intently and it gives us a great deal of inspiration to be part and parcel of the SA delegation and leave behind our domestic quarrels"

De Klerk said. "I think it is appropriate that SA leaders rise above their differences on an occasion like this. SA as a country is destined to play a positive and constructive role in the region, and we stand ready to play that role."

In Maseru yesterday the major opposition parties signed a joint statement asking the SADC to allow Lesotho to solve its own problems through domestic mediation.

And thousands of protesters marched

To Page 2

Lesotho

B/Day 27/1/94

From Page 1

through Maseru's main street to present a petition to the prime minister The peaceful march was organised by the Lesotho Council of Non-Governmental Organisations. The petition called for a general amnesty, pardoning all factions of the warring army.

(167)

Sapa reports that two Commonwealth emissaries said there was no guarantee yet that the army factions had stopped fighting The diplomats from the Commonwealth secretariat, Ghana's Moses Anafu and Australia's Maxwell Gaylard, held discussions with Prime Minister Ntsu Mokhehlie, political parties and church leaders and the army factions.

Gaylard said the Lesotho government wanted the Commonwealth to assist it in resolving the crisis.

Meanwhile, Sapa-Reuter reports that Lesotho's central bank governor, Anthony Maruping, said the clashes had damaged the economy which, like much of southern Africa, was recovering from several years of drought. But, stressing that stability was urgently needed to get the economy back on track, he remained optimistic that Lesotho could still achieve growth of between 3% and 5%.

NEWS Historic task force set up ● Azapo concernec

Joint effort to end Lesotho rebellion

Sowetan 27/1/94

By Mathatha Tsedu
in Botswana

A TASK FORCE comprising South Africa, Zimbabwe and Botswana has been set up to investigate ways of intervening in the Lesotho crisis

The task force was appointed at a historic meeting in Gaborone yesterday and consists of the heads of the three countries and the president of the ANC, Mr Nelson Mandela

Addressing a Press conference at the end of the meeting, Frontline chairman and Zimbabwean president, Mr Robert Mugabe, said the task force would meet in South Africa probably today and report back "urgently"

Mugabe said the meeting was the result of a request by Lesotho to the Commonwealth to quell the rebellion by soldiers demanding wage increases

■ JOINT EFFORT Commonwealth request prompts regional action:

167

They were also briefed by the deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance of Lesotho, Mr Selometsi Baholo, who declined to answer questions from the media about the situation in Lesotho

Regional problems

Also addressing the conference, State President FW De Klerk said it was historic that the Frontline States and South Africa had come together to solve regional problems

However a similar task force would not be necessary to quell the violence raging in the East Rand he said

"The South African Government has the capacity to deal with the problem," he said Asked why that capacity had not been used to date, De Klerk said it was not easy to end violence

He said detailed announcements relating to joint efforts by himself and Mandela to deal with the East Rand violence may be revealed towards the end of this week

The meeting provided the first opportunity for Mugabe to meet De Klerk Responding to questions, Mugabe said he was " very happy" to have met De Klerk

' It is an historic occasion that should have happened long ago but was delayed by those who support apartheid," Mugabe said

Lesotho conflict: Peace 'task force' meets

PRETORIA — An international task force, appointed to investigate ways of resolving the conflict in Lesotho, meets in South Africa today.

Two representatives from Botswana and two from Zimbabwe have already arrived, Foreign Ministry spokesman Awie Marais said

The force was appointed after a Lesotho government delegation asked for help from Zimbabwe, Botswana and South Africa at a top-level meeting in Gaborone yesterday (167) ARG 27/1/94

Zimbabwean president and chairman of the Frontline States Robert Mugabe raised the possibility of a symbolic peacekeeping force being sent.

But Lesotho's major political parties asked the Southern African Development Community to allow Lesotho to solve its own problems — Sapa

Appeal for regional military force to help Lesotho democracy

WM 28/1-3/2/94 (167)

Chris McGreal

THE last time Lesotho appealed for foreign intervention, South African troops sealed off the tiny kingdom while Pretoria engineered the overthrow of a government sympathetic to the then-banned African National Congress Eight years later, South African troops have again gathered behind the mountains that line the border close to the capital, Maseru.

On this occasion, however, the Lesotho government and some of South Africa's neighbours are urging them to cross President FW de Klerk and the man almost certain to succeed him after April's elections, Nelson Mandela, were in Botswana on Wednesday to hear unprecedented appeals for South Africa to join a regional military force to help shore up Lesotho's fledgling democracy

But, on the same day, Lesotho's major opposition parties asked the South African Development Community not to interfere. "Their action will be construed by the Basotho and the sovereign Lesotho as naked interference, and a rape against our nationhood," said the parties

The request from the Zimbabwean leader, Robert Mugabe, and the Botswanan leader, with the backing of the Lesotho government, marks a radical change in regional attitudes to Pretoria's security role The three presidents and Mr Mandela agreed to set up a team to consider what kind of intervention is appropriate.

It was due to meet on Thursday while the Lesotho government negotiates with rival army factions that have been fighting over demands for a doubling of their pay, widely seen as an attempt to overthrow Lesotho's first democratic administration since independence

Mr Mugabe appealed for South African troops to join his soldiers and those from Botswana, but Pretoria is reluctant to take so prominent a role when it has its own internal security problems to address.

Instead, it has offered logistical support, such as transport. But the talks reveal the extent to which other countries in the region are for the first time looking to South African leadership. "It is possible to open themselves up to the rest of the world and the rest of the world to open itself up to South Africa, and that is what has happened now," said Mr Mugabe, once one of the most hostile of Pretoria's critics

After Mr de Klerk took the first steps to abolishing apartheid four years ago, he pulled South Africa back from its heavy-handed involvement in neighbouring states The military continued supplying Renamo rebels in Mozambique at least until 1992 Security force elements have slso been tied to continuing support for Angola's Unita guerrillas But in general Pretoria has preferred to retreat to the sidelines and attempt to build better relations with the frontline states

Now South Africa has taken its first step toward regional leadership that Richard Cornwell, director of the Africa Institute in Pretoria, says is a move toward establishing the defence of democracy and stability as a priority now that South Africa has an interest in it.

"There's a sign of reconciliation and an awareness that South Africa is going to have to play a role in the region in putting fires out, because the United Nations isn't going to do it. At least with South Africa they know that they've got a country which has certain capabilities that they've previously had to depend on outside powers for, such as airlifts I think also they want the South Africans to play a more constructive role in Angola and Mozambique," he said.

Although Mr Mugabe's meeting with the South African president was his first, it was the presence of Mr Mandela that marked the changing relationship In any case, Mr de Klerk no longer has a free hand to dispatch troops as he did late last year to the nominally independent Transkei homeland to raid Apla guerrilla safe houses.

Now the government must consult the Transitional Executive Council before any such move, and the TEC would not approve any unilateral involvement

But it did issue a statement at the weekend supporting foreign backing for Lesotho's democratic government and warned that any attempt to replace it by force would be unacceptable to South Africa

Lesotho itself is a good example of how things used to be Pretoria has consistently meddled in the affairs of the tiny nation, bound entirely within South Africa and reliant on remittances from Lesotho workers on the South African mines for more than half its gross national product.

Pretoria regularly put pressure on Lesotho over ties to the ANC In 1982, it raided Maseru in search of the ANC, killing 42 people

Four years later, blockaded the kingdom in 1986, shutting off the flow of supplies and mine remmitances Within days Major General Justin Lekhanya overthrew the civilian government after returning from "security consultations" in Pretoria, and expelled the ANC

Uneasy calm in Maseru, page 22

Lesotho task force meeting in Pretoria

167

PRETORIA. — The Department of Foreign Affairs has confirmed that the task force of three southern African countries, established to address the unrest situation in Lesotho, has met here

The task force comprises representatives from South Africa, Zimbabwe and Botswana

ARG 28/1/94

The department said in a statement last night that the delegates would report back to their respective governments and that there would be no further comment at this stage

It is believed the task force aims to reinforce a fragile peace in Lesotho following clashes between rival army factions two weeks ago

Yesterday's talks came in the wake of a summit in Botswana's capital Gaborone on Wednesday involving the presidents of South Africa, Zimbawe and Botswana — Sapa.

Lesotho is avoiding the issues

Star 29/1/94

ROUND-THE-CLOCK efforts are being made to get Lesotho's mutinous soldiers to return to their barracks, but even if they do go back, the government will not be able to ignore the longer-term threat posed by an army created for military rule. HANS-PETER BAKKER of the Africa News Service reports.

The church has cooled tempers

(167)

MASERU — As long as rival soldiers are dug in on the hills and ridges around the capital, no one in Lesotho will breathe easily

The hostilities between two groups in the Royal Lesotho Defence Force (RLDF) — which have led to the deaths of at least three soldiers, and 11 civilians being injured — is not over yet

A wide range of diplomatic initiatives are under way to get the soldiers back into their barracks. Only once fingers have lifted from triggers can the task of resolving their problems begin.

Neither Basotho civilians and politicians nor Western diplomats in Maseru fully understand what caused soldiers to begin shooting at each other two weeks ago

For privates and low-ranking soldiers, the issue is relatively simple more money But further up the ranks, in the military and the government, the problem is more complex

Junior officers said they were fighting because soldiers at another base had allowed themselves to be 'bought'.

Junior officers at the Makoanyane base said they were fighting because soldiers at another base had allowed themselves to be "bought" by the government and because the government wanted to lay off some to make way for troops from the Lesotho Liberation Army (LLA), the ruling party's armed wing.

Diplomatic and government sources believe the problems are more broadly based, including dissatisfaction over military leadership, power struggles in the Cabinet and the deposed king's efforts to return to the throne

Lesotho held an election at independence in 1966, but the political culture of the next 27 years was determined by no fewer than three coups

Complicated

The military was accustomed to preferential treatment and higher salaries than other public servants Until last year's elections, in which Ntsu Mokhehle and his Basutoland Congress Party (BCP) made a clean sweep of the parliamentary seats, soldiers held undisputed sway in Maseru.

The political culture was further complicated by South African interference and a monarch whose power vacillated regularly The former king, Moshoeshoe II, dabbled in politics until his fall in 1990

He fled the country and his son reluctantly agreed to being sworn in as King Letsie III

Moshoeshoe returned from exile in 1992 The king has indicated repeatedly that he would happily relinquish the crown in favour of his father

The military government avoided the issue, saying it would have to be dealt with by the new government.

When the BCP came to power last year it had to face a deeply entrenched and unsympathetic military as well as the sticky issue of the monarchy

Instead it sat back to enjoy the fruits of political victory, with parliamentarians happily increasing their salaries but avoiding confronting the looming crisis

In October, junior officers forced four senior officers to resign, claiming they were sympathetic to the LLA Encouraged by their victory and angered by the large salary increases parliamentarians had awarded themselves, the troops demanded that their pay be doubled

Limited

A regular soldier receives about R600 a month, while low-ranking civil servants get between R400 and R500 a month

The RLDF is made up of about 2 500 soldiers, half of whom are stationed in two barracks on the outskirts of Maseru

The largest group — between 600 and 1 000 regular foot soldiers — is based at Makoanyane, while about 200 specially trained, well-armed troops stay at the RLDF headquarters on the other side of town

To date the fighting has been limited to exchanges between the two Maseru bases

One senior diplomat said "It would be a relief if this forced the government to confront the issue of the military"

Opposition politicians and diplomats criticise Mokhehle for failing to use all possible means to resolve the crisis He had wasted no time in calling for international help, but had not yet met senior opposition leaders

The prime minister, possibly fearing the monarchy, has also avoided using the RLDF's commander-in-chief, King Letsie III, to mediate, and has refused to call for an emergency meeting of the National Assembly

A senior Western diplomat in Maseru said: 'It would be a relief if this forced the government to confront the issue of the military.'

The Basotho are becoming increasingly irritated by Mokhehle's dependence on outsiders and his failure to face the problem squarely.

Efforts by local church leaders and international emissaries appear to have cooled tempers If they manage to bring about a return to the barracks and disarm the factions, the ball will again be in the government's court It will have to find long-term solutions

Lesotho: Team flies in for talks

(167)

MASERU — A Southern African mediation mission flew to Maseru yesterday to help settle a military crisis in Lesotho where army factions fought mortar and artillery battles last weekend CT 29/1/94

Officials from Zimbabwe, South Africa and Botswana met Prime Minister Mr Ntsu Mokhehle following their arrival, diplomats said

The 10-member team was set up on Wednesday — Sapa-Reuter

Why Lesotho won't get troops from SA

S/Times 30/11/94

By TENDAI DUMBUTSHENA

THE Lesotho government's plea to its neighbours for help to quell army unrest has been turned down until internal rifts can be healed

Sources close to talks held in Gaborone on Wednesday said ANC leader Nelson Mandela strongly opposed the deployment of troops from the frontline states.

Mr Mandela attributed the army in-fighting to the failure of Prime Minister Ntsu Mokhehle to integrate Lesotho's army with his Lesotho Liberation Army (167)

Zimbabwean president Robert Mugabe and his South African and Botswana counterparts, Dr Quett Masire and Mr FW de Klerk, agreed to establish a task force before sending in troops

The task force met in Pretoria on Thursday and will report to the governments of South Africa, Zimbabwe, and Botswana after a fact-finding mission to Lesotho

Mr Mandela, who was accompanied by former MK commander Joe Modise, was reported to be suspicious of Mr Mokhehle's eagerness for South African military intervention to forestall a possible coup.

The ANC believes Pretoria orchestrated the coup against Chief Leabua Jonathan in 1986 because of his covert support for MK military activity in Lesotho

Ministers discuss Lesotho

HARARE — The foreign ministers of South Africa, Botswana and Zimbabwe are to meet in Pretoria today to review the crisis in Lesotho, it was reported yesterday

CT 31/1/94 (167)

The government-controlled Sunday Mail reported that foreign ministers Mr Pik Botha of South Africa, Mr Nathan Shamuyarira of Zimbabwe, and Mr Gaotsiwe Chiepe of Botswana would meet the six-member fact-finding group set up at last week's summit in Gaborone in the wake of clashes between factions in Lesotho's army — Sapa

'Lesotho should solve own conflict'

(167)

CT 1/2/94

PRETORIA — The Basotho people should solve their own political and military problems, although South Africa, Zimbabwe and Botswana were prepared to assist in resolving Lesotho's conflict

This is the essence of the findings of the task force which investigated the Lesotho situation and briefed senior representatives from Botswana, Zimbabwe and South Africa here yesterday

The three countries' heads of state met in Gaborone last week and, following an appeal for assistance from the Lesotho government, instructed the task force to investigate fighting among factions of the country's defence force Foreign Affairs Minister Mr Pik Botha and Zimbabwean Foreign Minister Mr Nathan Shamuyarira attended yesterday's meeting at Pretoria's State Guest House

Mr Shamuyarira told a news conference the task force's report would be presented to the Botswana, Zimbabwe and South African heads of government. He said they were "trying to assist the Basotho people to solve their own political and military problems" — Sapa

Faction fighting dilemma for PM

Sowetan 1/2/94

By Mzimkulu Malunga

■ AILING NATIONALIST *Leader inherited an army used to easy living:*

(167)

FACTION FIGHTING among Lesotho's army ranks illustrates the dilemma that has confronted Prime Minister Ntsu Mokhele's government since a landslide election victory in March last year

The issue of the military is one of those which remained unresolved when the Basotholand Congress Party's first administration since independence came into being

First Mokhehle inherited an army which since its inception was aimed at haunting him and his supporters But this ailing Lesotho nationalist was careful not to offend 2 000 men who have a tendency to storm out of barracks and assume power at gunpoint

Feared takeover

Secondly, the BCP did not know what to do with its military wing — the Lesotho Liberation Army — as there was already apprehension in army ranks which feared a possible LLA takeover under a BCP government

On the other hand the LLA cadres were expecting compensation for sacrifices made for the BCP

Also, party supporters in the villages also expected miracles under Mokhehle's government despite his repeated warnings that the economic situation had deteriorated to an extent where the national aspirations could not be immediately realised

Mokhehle, for the sake of reconciliation, in an attempt to heal old hatreds caused by 23 years of bloody conflicts and instability, had promised not to fire the BNP dominated civil service in favour of BCP personnel He seems to be keeping his promise

Thirdly, the soldiers have become used to a relatively easy life since January 1986 when former military strongman General Metsing Lekhanya toppled the then prime minister Leabua Jonathan

In the seven years that the army ran the country, many of the senior officials became tycoons with army wages escalating virtually overnight, while other civil servants were asked to make "*mala masesane*" (sacrifice) because things would get better in the long run

In its tightrope walking, the BCP government allowed itself to fall into a trap that has made past regimes highly unpopular

In less than a year in power it gave huge increases to ministers and MPs Many estimated that the pay hikes amounted to over 300 percent

Soon after, the army that had become used to regular pay hikes became restless Coupled with their suspicion of the current government, the soldiers demanded that their salaries be doubled.

Troops had earlier sent an unsigned letter to the prime minister demanding their pay be doubled

Mokhehle's response was that the salaries of the entire civil service were being reviewed and that there would be no discrimination

Apparently this reply did not go down well among troops, particularly those based at the Makoanyane barracks, hence allegations of a plot to overthrow the government

Soon after, troops based in Makoanyane and Haratjomose barracks took to the mountains to fight it out

It is still not clear what sparked off factionalism in the army, as the unsigned letter was taken to the prime minister by the new head of the Royal Lesotho Defence Force, Major General Makhula Mosakeng

On the other hand, the labelling of the two sides involved in the skirmishes as "rebels" and "loyalists" appeared to unsettle the government because in reality they had no control of either of the factions

At first the Lesotho government was quick to speculate on plots to unseat it but when it appeared the two factions were more interested in cutting each other's throats than overthrowing the BCP regime, officials started playing down the issue of "loyalists" and "rebels"

They even accused the foreign media of having coined the terms, whereas in the initial stages of the fighting, Qhobela said the pay hike issue was just a "smokescreen"

The government's attitude prompted a scathing attack from the six opposition parties — including the BNP — who accused the Mokhehle regime of "insensitivity and indifference" in its handling of the situation

"We repeat — the true intention of the government is to demobilise both camps and replace them with BCP militants, which is why the government has been obstinate and obstructionist to initiatives of Political Party Leaders' Crisis Committee to intervene between the sides in the army," said a statement released by the organisations involved

Local mediation

The statement objected to outside involvement, particularly that of South Africa, in the crisis until local mediation efforts had been exhausted

Ironically, early reports from Maseru suggested that the BNP was behind attempts to unseat Mokhehle, particularly since its leader, Retselisitsoe Sekhonyana, is said to be a "regular visitor" to the army barracks

Sekhonyana has always been quick to exploit the army's fear of a possible LLA takeover under a BCP administration whenever an opportunity presented itself.

Strengthening the allegation was Sekhonyana's ambiguous response when asked whether he would support a military government should the soldiers topple the BCP from power

"The government should not think that it can do what it likes for five years just because it says it was elected by the people," was his response in an interview broadcasted on Radio Lesotho

Another issue which gives impetus to the coup plot allegations is the fact that four senior army officers were forced out last November after accusations that they were pro-government

It is this situation that the newly formed task force of the four southern African states will wade into

Prime Minister Ntsu Mokhehle ... facing a dilemma.

Lesotho troops to lay down arms

Star 1/2/94

STAR AFRICA SERVICE and STAFF REPORTER

Maseru — The warring factions of the Lesotho armed forces will today lay down their arms to end fighting which started 18 days ago.

The Commonwealth special envoys to Lesotho, Max Gaylard and Dr Moses Anau, told journalists at a press conference yesterday that the two factions had agreed in principle to end hostilities.

According to the envoys, the exercise, which entails returning of heavy weapons and mortars at Makoanyane barracks and Royal Lesotho Defence headquarters this morning will be overseen by the British army training team in Lesotho.

Asked whether they thought their mission had now been accomplished, the Commonwealth delegation said: "We cannot say so, but we are confident and optimistic that they will keep their word."

Five soldiers died during the fracas, allegedly caused by a demand for a 100 percent salary increase.

No fighting has occurred since the fierce battles which involved exchange of mortars, AK-47s and other heavy weaponry eight days ago.

Lesotho's problems must be solved by the Basotho people themselves, says a task force established by South Africa, Zimbabwe and Botswana to look into recent unrest in that country. (167)

This was told to journalists in Pretoria yesterday by Zimbabwe Foreign Minister Nathan Shamuyarira after a meeting attended by South African Foreign Minister Pik Botha and Botswana's Deputy Foreign Secretary M N Nasha and the task force.

The task force was established by Zimbabwe President Robert Mugabe, President de Klerk and Botswana's President Quett Masire at a meeting last week called to assist in solving Lesotho's deteriorating political situation.

Shamuyarira, making his first official visit to Pretoria, said the task force had put together "a very good report, which we have accepted for consideration by the three heads of government".

Child welfare cash crisis

B/Day 1/2/94

KATHRYN STRACHAN

A DECLINING state subsidy and increased competition among welfare organisations for corporate social funds had left the SA National Council for Child Welfare in a financial crisis, director Helen Starke said yesterday.

If the organisation could not increase its income dramatically, it would have no option but to cut staff costs, she said.

The poor economic climate had meant that corporations had less money available for social spending, she said, while the recession had led to an increase in demands for welfare services.

The proportion of the council's income received from the state had fallen from 45% in 1989 to 23% in the coming financial year.

With a total expenditure of R8,9m against an income of R7m, the council was left with a deficit of R1,9m in 1993. Companies also wanted to see the fruits of their donations, which meant the council could not build up reserves to fall back on in times of recession.

Lesotho factions kiss and make up

B/Day 1/2/94

ADRIAN HADLAND

PRETORIA — The two factions of the Royal Lesotho Defence Force whose rivalry had threatened to plunge the mountain kingdom into civil war hugged and kissed each other at a tea party in Maseru at the weekend.

Organised by the Commonwealth mediation team, Sunday's party at the Lesotho Sun Hotel was attended by 10 representatives from both factions, diplomatic sources said.

The tea party was the first time the two factions had been brought face to face since the outbreak of hostilities earlier this month in which several soldiers were killed and artillery and mortar shells arced over Maseru.

The party was emotional, one diplomat said. "There was a lot of hugging, smiling and kissing."

Since its arrival in Maseru a week ago, the Commonwealth team of Max Gaylard and Moses Anufu had met both sides separately several times but succeeded in bringing them together for the first time only at the weekend.

The diplomat added that while the rivals had met at last and Maseru had begun to return to normal, troops remained dug in at strategic points on the hills surrounding the capital. "Things will remain tense until the soldiers return to their barracks."

Diplomats suggested a power struggle exacerbated by salary demands was at the heart of the quarrel.

With no fighting in Maseru for more than a week, observers were confident the conflict had been defused, if not resolved.

Maseru residents, however, remained nervous. "It just takes a car to backfire for everyone to dive to the ground," the diplomat said.

Meanwhile, in Pretoria, a task team of officials from Botswana, SA and Zimbabwe presented their report on Lesotho's military unrest to their respective foreign ministers, Gaositwe Chiepe, Pik Botha and Nathan Shamuyarira.

The team returned from a three-day fact-finding mission to Lesotho on Sunday.

Sapa reports that the essence of the task force's findings was that the Basotho people should solve their own political and military problems, although SA, Zimbabwe and Botswana were prepared to help resolve the conflict.

Shamuyarira told a news conference in Pretoria the team's report would be presented to the Botswana, Zimbabwe and SA heads of government.

The report had emphasised, he said, that the conflict was "a Basotho problem that must be solved by the Basothos".

Lesotho troops lay down arms

CT 2/2/94 (167)

MASERU — Rival army factions in Lesotho have agreed to lay down their arms and return to barracks under an agreement announced yesterday by the Commonwealth

The troops also agreed to turn in their heavy weapons at designated armories

The army units began withdrawing from dug-in positions on hilltops overlooking Maseru late yesterday

"The diplomatic community, along with church leaders, witnessed the withdrawal of both parties from high ground around Maseru," a senior Western diplomat said

"One of the factions came down from positions above the Maseru Sun (hotel) with at least six armoured cars The soldiers were waving white flags as a symbol of peace" he said

The peace deal was brokered by Commonwealth mediators who flew to Maseru last week after at least five soldiers were killed in clashes sparked by differences over a pay demand which took on political overtones

Several soldiers were killed during two weeks of intermittent clashes — Sapa

Armed forces end conflict in Lesotho

(167) ARGUS 2/2/94

Argus Africa News Service

MASERU — Hostilities within Lesotho's armed forces ended when the two warring factions descended from the hills around Maseru to hand in their arms and return to their barracks

The occasion was marked yesterday by a solemn ceremony at the Makoanyane barracks, scene of much of the fighting which began about two weeks ago and has left at least five soldiers dead and a number of civilians injured

Representatives of the factions, Commonwealth envoys who brokered the meeting, foreign diplomats and church leaders attended the ceremony

The arms were collected by British army officers, who are in Lesotho to help train the armed forces.

A spokesman for one of the factions said the laying down of arms and the return to barracks was only the first step towards peace and stability

The peace moves were welcomed with enthusiasm in Lesotho Thousands of people lined the main road through Maseru, dancing and ululating as a convoy of armoured vehicles passed by, carrying cheering soldiers waving white flags

Foreign minister Molapo Qhobela, speaking on behalf of Prime Minister Ntsu Mokhehle, said he was overwhelmed with happiness.

"This is the beginning of great things to come in our endeavours to achieve lasting peace

"The next move will be for the prime minister to meet the army leadership to hear their grievances and attempt to find solutions"

Opposition leader in court

(167) CT 5/2/94

MASERU. — Lesotho's main opposition leader, Mr Everistus Sekhonyane, appeared in court here yesterday charged with sedition, after he allegedly incited the southern African kingdom's soldiers to revolt

The Basotho National Party leader was granted bail and the case was postponed until February 18

Mr Sekhonyane allegedly told a gathering in Maseru in November that soldiers needed to arm themselves and beware of the 10-month-old government of Prime Minister Mr Ntsu Mokhehle, claiming the ruling Basotholand Congress Party planned to disband the defence force — Sapa-AFP

focus on LESOTHO

Sowetan 7/2/94

Although the soldiers who recently fought each other in Lesotho have laid down their arms and returned to barracks, the underlying causes of the trouble remain unresolved, says **Joe Molefi**, reporting from Maseru for *Sowetan Africa News Service*: (167)

MASERU — What seemed like a happy ending turned sour when two factions of Lesotho's army that had been fighting each other handed their weapons to the authorities and returned to the barracks this week.

Suddenly, one of the factions complained that its demand for a 100 percent pay increase had not been met. It became clear that the issue which had started the fighting — in which five soldiers were reported killed and 11 civilians wounded — remained unresolved.

An officer at the Makoanyane barracks rejected Radio Lesotho reports of concessions in the wage dispute and said the request for the pay increase and for a R20 patrol allowance was in the hands of the Prime Minister and Minister of Defence, Mr Ntsu Mokhehle.

Main opposition party

The officer, Lieutenant Malefetsane Maboloka, spoke on behalf of the faction at Makoanyane barracks, where many of the troops supported the main opposition party, the Basotho National Party.

The other faction, based at Ratjomose barracks, was loyal to the government of Mokhehle's Basotho Congress Party. Some of them were reported to have joined the Makoanyane faction but to have since returned to Ratjomose.

According to political sources in Maseru, the majority of members of the Lesotho army are supporters of the BNP, the party of former Prime Minister Leabua Jonathan, who ruled Lesotho with an iron hand from independence in 1966 until he was toppled in a military coup in January 1986.

Political allegiances have had an important influence in the army ever since the struggle for power between the major parties began in December 1966, three months after independence, with a bloody clash at a prayer meeting which the then King Moshoeshoe had called at the Basotho national shrine of Thaba Bosiu. The meeting had been banned by Chief Jonathan and the police paramilitary unit opened fire on the crowd, killing 10 opposition supporters from the BCP and the royalist Marematlou Freedom Party.

Some years later, when the paramilitary unit became the Royal Lesotho Defence Force, the unit's commander Brigadier Metsing Lekhanya, was made head of the defence force in what some Basotho viewed as a recognition of his performance in crushing Moeshoeshoe's rally at Thaba Bosiu.

Death squad

Basotho found that it was impossible to join the RLDF unless they carried a BNP membership card. In open attempts to intimidate opposition to his dictatorial rule, Chief Jonathan set up a special death squad, known as Koe-Eoko, within the army.

Opponents of Jonathan's policies were targeted and a series of attempted and actual assassinations took place, notably the murder of the former editor of the BNP ecumenical newspaper, *Leselilyana-la-Lesotho*, Edgar Motuba.

Another well-known BCP journalist, Ben Masilo who was also deputy speaker of the Lesotho Parliament narrowly escaped death when his home was attacked by Koe-Eoko. His nephew was, however, killed in the attack.

Many young people in the BNP Youth League and other sections of the party were recruited into top positions in the Lesotho army.

The open clashes that broke out recently among members of the army have surprised those who took the pay increase demand by one section at face value. Even the mediators from the Commonwealth who were trying to resolve the matter expressed surprise at the depth of the dispute among members of the Lesotho army.

Political crisis

It seems clear, however, that the crisis was politically masterminded.

Many Basotho had hoped that after the successful completion last March of the first free and fair election in 23 years, Lesotho had a chance to become a model for Southern Africa. There will be sadness if it loses that opportunity.

A solution to the problem facing the government over the army will continue to elude Mokhehle as long as the question of real control of the army remains unresolved.

The problem is compounded by the fact that the Lesotho Liberation Army, the former military wing of the BCP, which conducted a low-level campaign of insurgency against Chief Jonathan's government from outside Lesotho, has not been brought into the army.

Lesotho soldiers in peace deal

(167)

CT 7/2/94

MASERU — Negotiations between the two warring factions in the Royal Lesotho Defence Force came to a successful conclusion yesterday when soldiers agreed to set aside their differences and unite as one army.

The agreement was brokered by a team of Commonwealth envoys sent to Lesotho to end the fighting and assess the political situation in the country

Last month five soldiers died and 11 civilians were injured in fighting when one military faction demanded a 100% salary increase

Commonwealth political affairs director Mr Maxwell Gaylord said his mission had been successful.

He said a major issue had been a protracted political power struggle rather than a wage dispute — Sapa

Lesotho factions agree to return to barracks

B/Day 21/2/94

MASERU — Rival army factions in the kingdom of Lesotho have agreed to lay down their arms and return to barracks under an agreement announced yesterday by the Commonwealth.

Commonwealth Secretary-General Chief Emeka Anyaoku sent two special representatives to the former British colony last week after fighting spread to the capital, Maseru.

Several soldiers were killed during two weeks of intermittent clashes that included mortar and machine-gun attacks and forced Maseru residents to hide indoors. Pay and political issues sparked the fighting, which raised fears of a coup attempt in the politically unstable country

Talks between the Commonwealth envoys and army representatives ended with the military groups declaring their support for Lesotho's civilian government, which took power in March after the first democratic elections in 23 years.

The troops agreed to return to their barracks from their hilltop positions in Maseru and to turn in their heavy weapons at designated armouries (167)

"I am delighted with the progress that has been made," Anyaoku said in a statement from the Commonwealth

Lesotho has undergone two military coups and several coup attempts and has had four governments since it gained independence from Britain in 1966. Its population is 1,8-million — Sapa-AP

Star (167)

'Lesotho army must now talk to govt'

■ BY JOE MOLEFI
STAR AFRICA SERVICE

Maseru — The Commonwealth mission to Lesotho leaves the troubled kingdom today satisfied that they have brought the two warring factions of the Lesotho army together for talks (167)

Maxwell Gaylard, director of the political affairs division of the Commonwealth Secretariat in London was accompanied by Ghanaian diplomat Moses Anafu

Gaylard said that although they helped to end the fighting, the soldiers still had to talk to the Lesotho government

"The Commonwealth team has no further role in the pending talks between the army and the government," he said

The crisis within the army was triggered by the demand by one of the factions for a 100 percent salary increase and payment of a patrol allowance

This was not supported by the other faction and led to the fighting over several days in which five soldiers were killed and 11 civilians injured.

The Commonwealth team were due to meet King Letsie III and Prime Minister Ntsu Mokhehle before they leave today

Mugabe ends Lesotho talks

C 14/2/94

MASERU — Zimbabwean President Robert Mugabe concluded a visit to Lesotho on Saturday and expressed satisfaction at the outcome of talks with the Lesotho government (167)

Mr Mugabe and Botswana President Ketumile Masire visited the country to discuss army faction fighting.

A joint letter from four local political parties accused the prime minister and some senior cabinet members of having "a very direct input in urging one faction of the army to attack the other faction with a hope of stopping the common army demand for increased salaries"

Lesotho confident it can compete for investment

MUNGO SOGGOT

LESOTHO is confident it will be able to compete with a sanctions-free SA in attracting export-oriented investors from certain manufacturing industries

Lesotho National Development Corporation (LNDC) director of investment promotion Pako Petlane told a news briefing in Maseru "For a number of years we have benefited from SA's misfortune

But he said there remained some niche areas — in particular labour-intensive industries that demanded manual dexterity — in which Lesotho would continue to be more competitive than SA

Trade and Industry Minister Shakhane Mokhehle said "We are committed to creating a long-term competitive advantage for manufacturers It is our desire that entrepreneurial activities focus on export-orientated manufacturing."

Among Lesotho's drawcards was a corporate tax rate of no more than 15% for manufacturers, which would also benefit from no withholding tax on repatriated dividends

As a member of the Lome Convention, Lesotho had tariff-free access to the European market for quotas of its products Lesotho also had preferential access to the US

Petlane said Lesotho had a "relatively well educated and disciplined workforce"

Companies backed by the LNDC — which rents out factories and maintains the infrastructure of its six industrial estates — include several clothing manufacturers whose combined output has made the country the largest producer of denim jeans in southern Africa, exporting 4,8-million pairs a year to the US

San Naidoo, operations manager of clothing company Southern Cross, said production levels compared favourably with SA's, especially since there were "no strikes or stayaways".

LNDC investment promotion centre adviser John O'Brien said the minimum wage for sewing machine operators was R268 a month

Taiwanese clothing company C&Y Garments factory manager Steve Wu said his Lesotho workforce of 780 sewing machine operators achieved 70%-80% of the productivity of a similar Taiwanese workforce

LNDC MD Moletsane Monyake said foreign leasehold ownership of land was not allowed, which was why the LNDC rented out factories.

Petlane said nearly all the LNDC's funding came from rents and profits from several companies in which it had a stake

pre-election euphoria has turned into a sense of disillusionment and bureaucratic inertia

Sowetan 28/3/94

BCP govt has failed to deliver

(167)

On March 27 last year, Basotho went to the polls for the first time in 23 years to return their country to democracy. But the peace and prosperity they saw with the coming to power of the Basutoland Congress Party has turned out to be an illusion. Joe Latakgomo reports for the *Sowetan Africa News Service*:

■ NO JOBS Peace and prosperity turned out to be an illusion:

ONE YEAR after getting into power, Ntsu Mokhehle's BCP government has found it harder to create peace and wealth than it was to make war

The army has been restive, as have the former fighters of the BCP's armed wing, the Lesotho Liberation Army, who see themselves as getting no reward for having offered their lives for the liberation of their country after 23 years of unconstitutional and military rule

When they went to the polls last year, Basotho voted solidly against continued military rule The long queues of voters had made up their minds that the BCP would deliver them from poverty, from run-down health services, from poor education and from joblessness

The BCP had told them so in their manifesto and during rallies in the run-up to the election But unemployment is running high, the education system is fundamentally flawed, and those who do obtain qualifications, leave Lesotho for better pastures in South Africa

For many Basotho, however, the BCP's landslide victory probably created a sense of security in the government which has led to official and bureaucratic inertia They suggest that it may have been better if the government had a strong opposition to protect the people from official abuse of power But having won all 65 seats in the House of Assembly the BCP was literally free to do as it pleased Last year, one observer described the government as "at best, pedestrian"

Manifesto

The BCP's manifesto said that the party stood for reconciliation, democracy, good governance, peace and stability It undertook to set up a law review commission "which would overhaul the whole legislative edifice that buttressed the rule of terror and dictatorship in Lesotho"

But recently, at a business women's conference, the government was slammed for doing very little to deal with the legal prejudices against women, and so far, the commission has not made any recommendations on drastic changes to the law

While the BCP promised to maintain "a professional defence force based on quality and not numbers", there is a perception that there was in fact an increase in the number of defence force personnel Government spokesmen deny this, saying that they inherited a 2 500-strong defence force and none of the former LLA fighters had been integrated into the army

But therein lies another problem for the government suspicion that if the LLA fighters are not integrated, they are being maintained as a counter-force in the event of a coup by the present military

Again, the government denies this, and says that those fighters who have been recruited to join a security company are doing so as regular job-seekers and this has nothing to do with any secret plan by the government

Last October, junior officers of the Royal Lesotho Defence Force forced their seniors to resign, claiming that they had links with the LLA

The government showed its first sign of weakness when it announced that the officers had resigned

Having achieved their first victory over the government, it was inevitable that the soldiers at the Makoanyaneng barracks would push for further concessions They demanded a 100 percent increase in their salaries, a demand many described as a smokescreen for broader political goals

> **"Unemployment is running high and the education system is fundamentally flawed"**

In January, the country faced a major crisis when two groups of soldiers exchanged artillery and gunfire across the capital which resulted in several soldiers being killed and civilians injured Intervention by the Organisation of African Unity, Botswana, Zimbabwe and South Africa, and the United Nations, brought an end to the hostilities but not to the problem

Failure to create jobs

But it is in its failure to create jobs that the government is being judged harshly The country remains dependent on South African mines for job opportunities, but it is an option that is diminishing as South Africa turns inwards for its mine labour pool

This will no doubt have a dramatic impact on the economy of the country Remittances from the mines make up as much as 40 per cent of the country's gross national product Lesotho's share from the Customs Union will also decrease once a new formula for distribution is in operation Income from the Lesotho Highlands Water Project is still some years away and very little relief can be expected in the short-term

There are other issues on which the government is being judged

Social policy Women's groups still believe that the law entrenches male domination in the Basotho society The BCP stated in its manifesto that it did not wish to "undermine the Basotho social norms and values" in determining gender equality, which the women's organisations see as being a contradictory position

Youth The economy is still not able to absorb the more than 6 000 school-leavers into jobs each year In addition to this, the education system is still academically orientated and does not provide technical skills necessary to enter the job market

Health The BCP promised health care for all — "all people are entitled to health care and service" — and at least in this area, many believe there has been improvement in the service provided

The country, however, faces an increase in Aids and there has been a resurgence in the occurrence of TB "It's not all fine, but there is method in the chaos," said one health worker

An American human rights watchdog organisation reported this year that under civilian rule, human rights were accorded increased attention "but serious abuses occurred"

Benefits of Lesotho project queried

CT 6/4/94 (167)

Own Correspondent

LONDON — The economic benefits of the second stage of the Lesotho Highlands Water Project, which involves flooding large areas of arable land for a marginal increase in the water supply, should be re-examined, says Christian Aid's policy co-ordinator, Mr Robert Archer

It has been estimated that between 1 000 and 13 000 Lesotho peasants could be displaced by the damming up of the Senqunyane River near Mohale village to create a reservoir Water from this reservoir would then be piped under the mountains to the Katse reservoir

Construction of this stage of the project is due to begin this year

Mr Archer, who has conducted a study of the social implications of the project, said "It is regrettable that one of the few extensive areas of good arable land in the Highlands should have been chosen for flooding"

He believed the government should hold a public inquiry into the issue Compensation for those displaced would be difficult, he said, as Lesotho had no reserve of arable land with which to replace the flooded land

"The project has created severe social problems damaging to health — including HIV/Aids, alcoholism and prostitution," he said "Some services, especially water and sanitation, have not been provided as promised And the income of some households has unquestionably fallen, even after compensation"

The project had so far failed to meet the World Bank's requirement that the local population should not be worse off as a result of it

Lesotho ministers held as mutiny erupts again

(167)

Argus Africa News Service

MASERU — Armed soldiers today arrested several Lesotho cabinet ministers and detained them in Maseru Prison

Gunfire was heard from the direction of the Makoanyane army barracks, which houses one of the rival factions in the Royal Lesotho Defence force Factions attacked one another earlier this year

Deputy Prime Minister Selometsi Baholo is understood to have been arrested at his offices and besides Mr Baholo — who is also Minister of Finance and Planning — the detained ministers are believed to include Monyane Moleleki (Natural Resources and Lesotho Highlands Water Project) Kelebone Maope (Justice) and Phakalathi Mosisili (Education)

They are in the maximum security section of Maseru Prison. ARG 14/4/94

Rumours of fresh trouble in the army began circulating here last week. Observers believe they indicated a resurgence of the crisis that erupted in January — when the rival army factions bombarded one another with mortars on the hills outside the capital

In Pretoria, Defence Minister Kobie Coetsee has instructed senior SA Defence Force officers to communicate with the Lesotho Defence Force

Foreign Minister Pik Botha said Lesotho's Prime Minister Ntsu Mokhehle told a South African Embassy official he was concerned about the arrested men's safety

WEATHER P2 BUSINESS P14

Troops kill Lesotho's deputy PM

(167) CT 15/4/94

MASERU — Rebelling Lesotho soldiers late last night freed four government ministers they had earlier held captive in a mutiny apparently over a planned government probe into the army

Earlier they shot dead Lesotho's deputy prime minister, Mr Solemetsi Baholo, the prime minister's younger brother, and seized the four cabinet ministers Justice Minister Mr Kelebone Albert Maope, Education Minister Mr Bethuel Pakalitha, Natural Resources Minister Mr Monyane Moleleki and Trade and Industry Minister Mr Shakhane Robong Mokhelhle

Late last night Prime Minister Baholo appealed for calm on behalf of Lesotho's monarch King Letsie III

He said the Council of State had convened in an emergency session during which news had come of the release of the hostages

Yesterday diplomats said the crisis had been caused by a mutiny apparently in one section of the army

Rival groups in the army clashed in the streets of Maseru in January following dissident troops' demand for a 100% salary increase

The issue was not resolved

Rumours of further military unrest followed the government's failure to announce the 1994 national budget by the beginning of the fiscal year on April 1

According to an eyewitness, armed soldiers arrived at Mr Baholo's house in Maseru about 5am yesterday

They tried to force they way in then began shooting into the house

Mr Baholo was heard to scream for help Later his body was found slumped in a pool of blood in the kitchen

Troops were guarding his house last night

The South Africa government said it was reactivating a task group of Zimbabwe, Botswana and South Africa that had mediated in the January crisis

South African Foreign Minister Mr Pik Botha said the Lesotho prime minister had sought "immediate South African mediation with the Lesotho Defence Force"

A Lesotho spokesman said soldiers in the latest crisis supported the opposition Basotho National Party. — Sapa-Reuter

Troops kill Lesotho's deputy PM

(167) CT 15/4/94

MASERU — Rebelling Lesotho soldiers late last night freed four government ministers they had earlier held captive in a mutiny apparently over a planned government probe into the army

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A Lesotho spokesman said soldiers in the latest crisis supported the opposition Basotho National Party — Sapa-Reuter —

SOWETAN Friday April 15 1994

Deputy leader gunned down

Sowetan 15/4/94

■ LESOTHO DRAMA Government leader says coup is taking place:

MASERU — Dissident soldiers shot dead Lesotho's deputy Prime Minister, Mr Selometsi Baholo, yesterday and seized four Cabinet Ministers in a mutiny apparently over a planned government probe into the army

"The deputy Prime Minister is dead He was shot while resisting being taken by the soldiers," a diplomat said

The soldiers, however, later released the four Ministers after holding them at their headquarters for several hours The situation was still tense last night

Those held were Minister of Trade Mr Shakhane Mokhehle, Minister of Natural Resources Mr Monyane Moleleki, Education Minister Bethuel Nosisili and Justice Minister Kelebone Maope

The South African Foreign Ministry said it was "appalled by the developments" and would not recognise any government installed by force

Diplomats said there was no indication a coup was under way in the small mountain kingdom of 1,8 million people

But Lesotho Prime Minister Ntsu Mokhele said a coup was in progress in his country.

Lesotho earlier appealed for South African intervention. (167)

Diplomats said the crisis was caused by a mutiny apparently in one section of the army.

The capital Maseru, rocked by fighting between rival army factions in January, was tense as dusk fell. Shops closed early and residents headed home shocked by the second military crisis this year

At least five soldiers were killed and 11 people wounded in the January fighting, which broke out initially over pay and conditions.

A witness said the same soldiers who had triggered the January fighting were responsible for yesterday's events

"They arrived at the deputy prime minister's home early this morning and started shooting at random. Baholo's bullet-riddled body was later found in the kitchen, where he was apparently preparing breakfast," said the witness. — *Sapa-Reuter*

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(9)
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664

312

Gunfire breaks calm in Maseru

Star 15/4/94

■ STAR AFRICA SERVICE

Maseru — The tense calm in the Lesotho capital was broken early today by the sound of gunfire at or near the Hatjomose army barracks just outside Maseru

The shooting increased fears of a repetition of the clash in January between rival factions of the army which led to an exchange of mortar and other fire between soldiers at the Hatjomose barracks and those at Makoanyane barracks on the other side of town.

A meeting of the State Security Council under King Letsie was scheduled for today as the government moved to defuse the second military crisis to rock Lesotho this year.

The fears of a repetition of January's conflict had been raised by the abduction yesterday of four cabinet ministers and the killing of the deputy prime minister by dissident soldiers. (167)

Analysts said these events seemed to stem from the same causes as the January clash — an ostensible demand by junior ranks for a doubling of their pay, which an international commission later said was a smokescreen for an attempt to topple Prime Minister Ntsu Mokhehle's Basutoland Congress Party government

The soldiers who killed Deputy Prime Minister Selometsi Baholo and detained four ministers at the Makonyana barracks yesterday apparently made no attempt toseize Mokhehle.

A sergeant among the rebel troops said yesterday [illegible] wanted Mokhehle to [illegible] prime minister but wa[illegible] some of his ministers to be [illegible]primanded. He did not say [illegible] this should be done [illegible]

Coup feared as army unit kills Lesotho's deputy prime minister

B/Day 15/4/94

MASERU.— Lesotho Deputy Prime Minister Selometsi Baholo was shot dead by a disaffected Lesotho army unit at his home at Ha-Matala, near Maseru yesterday.

Four cabinet ministers were held captive at the Makoanyane barracks, occupied by the army unit There were reports that at least one other cabinet minister had been killed

The soldiers freed the four ministers last night, a Western diplomat said. They were unharmed The ministers were Natural Resources Minister Monyane Moleleki, Justice Minister Kelbone Maope, Education Minister Phakalathi Mosisili and Trade Minister Shakhane Mokhehle

Witnesses said soldiers arrived at the home of Baholo, who was also Finance, Planning and Manpower Development Minister, at about 5am They started shooting into the building at about 6 30am, when they tried to force their way into the house, but failed Baholo screamed for help inside His body was found in a pool of blood in the kitchen.

Unconfirmed reports said the other ministers had been taken away in the back of an open vehicle to the maximum security section of the central prison in Maseru.

Gunfire was heard at the Makoanyane army barracks in Maseru The soldiers occupying the barracks are said to oppose the ruling Basotholand Congress Party

Lesotho's parliament adjourned until today Prime Minsiter Ntsu Mokhele appealed for SA intervention, saying a coup was in progress

(167)

SA Foreign Minister Pik Botha said Defence Minister Kobie Coetsee had been informed and senior SADF officers had been instructed to communicate with the Lesotho Defence Force in a bid to restore order in the mountain kingdom Botha had also informed the Transitional Executive Council's foreign affairs subcommittee, as well as Zimbabwe's foreign minister.

The international task group, consisting of Zimbabwe, Botswana and SA, that defused the mutiny by some soldiers in January, had been reconvened

Rival groups in the army clashed in Maseru in January following dissident troops' demand for a 100% salary increase The capital has been calm since then but the pay issue has remained unresolved Rumours of further military unrest followed the government's failure to announce the 1994 national budget by the beginning of the fiscal year on April 1.

In a report tabled in the Lesotho parliament last week, the task group warned that while the immediate danger of confrontation in the army appeared to have passed, it was clear that unless the broader underlying political issues were addressed, there could be no guarantee that such confrontation would not erupt again

After some confusion yesterday about the whereabouts of the Lesotho army's

☐ To Page 2

Lesotho

B/Day 15/4/94

☐ From Page 1

commander in chief, Maj-Gen Mosakeng, the SA embassy said he had been negotiating with the disaffected army unit for the release of the ministers taken captive.

An embassy spokesman said the situation appeared calm South Africans have been asked not to visit Lesotho

(167)

Botha said "The SA government and the TEC appeal to the Lesotho Defence Force to abandon its present course of action and to avoid bloodshed at any cost " He emphasised that SA would not recognise any government that tried to come to power through violence

Botha had offered safe conduct to SA for the ministers —Sapa.

NEWS

Uncertain future for Lesotho after mutiny

Star 18/4/94

Maseru [illegible]

[illegible]

The mutiny [illegible] Deputy Prime Minister Selometsi Baholi and [illegible] Ministers on Thursday, although [illegible] Minister [illegible] relaunched diplomat [illegible] military, [illegible] army, [illegible] turn [illegible]

[illegible] Minister [illegible] Maseru [illegible]

The government [illegible] Lesotho [illegible] (167)

[illegible] meeting — Separate

Top Lesotho leaders flee

MASERU — Five Lesotho government ministers, including four who were held captive by mutinous soldiers last Friday, fled to Botswana yesterday, a government official said

Principal Secretary for Information and Broadcasting Mr Seeiso Serutla said their flight followed death threats overnight

Mr Serutla said the situation in Lesotho was confused and seemed not to have changed in spite of mediation by the presidents of Botswana and Zimbabwe in February (167)

The crisis arises from a 100% pay rise demanded by elements of the Royal Lesotho Defence Force CT 21/4/94

The five ministers who fled to Botswana are Minister of Trade and Industry Mr Shakhane Mokhehle — who is the younger brother of the Prime Minister, Minister of Natural Resources Mr Monyane Moleleki, Minister of Education Mr Pakalitha Mosisili, Minister of Justice Mr Kelebone Maupe, and Minister of Information and Broadcasting Mr Mpho Malie — Sapa

Townships to get the cellular touch

(167)

Staff Reporter

CELLULAR technology comes to the townships in June when one of the network operators introduces 22 000 subsidised community telephones in areas lacking telecommunications infrastructure. ARG 25/4/94

Vodacom, which has announced details of its R100 million community service plan in conjunction with Pick 'n Pay, will have 500 community service telephones in place in time for the June 1 commercial switch-on.

Another 1 500 will be installed in the first year and then 5 000 a year after that

The bulk of the phones will be installed in mobile self-contained units each containing up to 10 custom-made cellular phones.

The price of calls will be announced in May, but they will be at a discounted rate regardless of distance.

The community service will target communities where there is less than one telephone line for every hundred people.

Community service phones will be installed in consultation with communities.

Record budget for Lesotho

B/Day 3/5/94

MASERU — Acting Lesotho Finance Minister Mpho Malie presented a record budget of R1,59bn for the 1994/95 financial year in the national assembly in Maseru yesterday.

This was a 14% rise on the 1993/94 budget.

Development remained the single largest area of government spending. The minister announced a 25,3% rise in budgeted expenditure for development to R520m

Malie said the large increase demonstrated government's commitment to creating jobs (167)

Education took the second largest slice, recording an increase of nearly a third to R332m (R226m) Other government department budgets included public works, road construction and repairs — R204m (R169m), health — R124m (R118m), agriculture — R103m (R83,5m) and defence — R90,3m (no previous figure)

Lesotho's share of revenue from the Southern African Customs Union remained the largest source of revenue.

An image from The Lion King, the first completely original Walt Disney animated film, which the studio hopes will top Aladdin's box office takings Picture AP

Record boost to Lesotho budget

CT 3/5/94 (167)

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Development remained the single largest area of government spending The minister announced a 25,3% rise in budgeted expenditure for Devlopement to R520m

Malie said the large increase demonstrated government's commitment to create jobs. Some 35 new projects had been approved for the current financial year, he said

Education took the second largest slice of government expenditure recording an increase of nearly a third to R332m (R226m) Other government department budgets included Public Works, Road Construction and Repairs — R204m (R169m), Health — R124m (R118m), Agriculture — R103m (R83,5m) and Defence — R90,3m (no previous figure) — Sapa

Star 11/5/94

Soldiers halt looting in Maseru

Maseru — Lesotho soldiers took control of central Maseru yesterday to halt looting by a mob raiding shops after police went on strike in the capital

Witnesses saw soldiers chasing looters into outlying townships in an effort to recover goods seized from shops owned mainly by Indians and South Africans in the centre of the town.

A mob of about 300 people went on a rampage, smashing windows and grabbing clothing and electrical equipment in the absence of police

Western diplomats said the night shift at the charge office in the town centre went on strike on Monday evening demanding a 60 percent pay increase and other benefits. (167)

The strikers then persuaded the police coming on shift yesterday morning to join them. It appeared about 300 men out of the 2 000-member force were involved.

"At the moment most other police stations are working normally but the strike could spread," one diplomat said

Diplomats believed the government was in touch with the strikers, who had cordoned off Constitution Road around the charge office and the main police station opposite it.

The strike was the latest crisis to hit the government of ailing Prime Minister Ntsu Mokehle (75) who led his Basotholand Congress Party to a victory in March last year in the first democratic election in 20 years.

The military precipitated two earlier crises this year, the first in January when there was fighting between two army factions during which Maseru came under fire, and again last month during a shortlived mutiny over pay during which soldiers shot dead the deputy prime minister, Selometsi Baholo — Sapa-Reuter

Mob acts after police strike over pay

2 die as Lesotho looters dispersed

Star 12/5/94

GOVERNMENT of Prime Minister Ntsu Mokhehle faces yet another crisis after a sweeping victory in March last year

Maseru — Two people were killed when security forces dispersed hundreds of looters in Lesotho's capital Maseru and the rural town of Mafeteng, soldiers said yesterday

The looters were taking advantage of a police strike over pay Looting has spread to several districts in the mountain kingdom, and one shop was burnt in Leribe and another slightly damaged in Mafeteng Shops belonging to foreigners had been closed

The government has deployed soldiers throughout the country to control security

A defence force spokesman said soldiers were trying to recover stolen goods A Cabinet meeting was under way to decide what action to take

On Sunday a mob of about 300 smashed windows and seized clothing and electrical equipment from shops owned mainly by Indians and South Africans

Soldiers who mutinied over pay last month and killed the deputy prime minister did not get involved

Western diplomats said the night shift at the police central charge office in the town centre went on strike on Monday evening demanding a 60 percent pay increase and other benefits

The strikers then persuaded the police on the Tuesday morning shift to join them and it appeared about 300 men out of the 2 000-member force were involved, the diplomats said (167)

The strike was the latest crisis to hit the government of ailing Prime Minister Ntsu Mokhehle (75) who led his Basotholand Congress Party to a sweeping victory in March last year

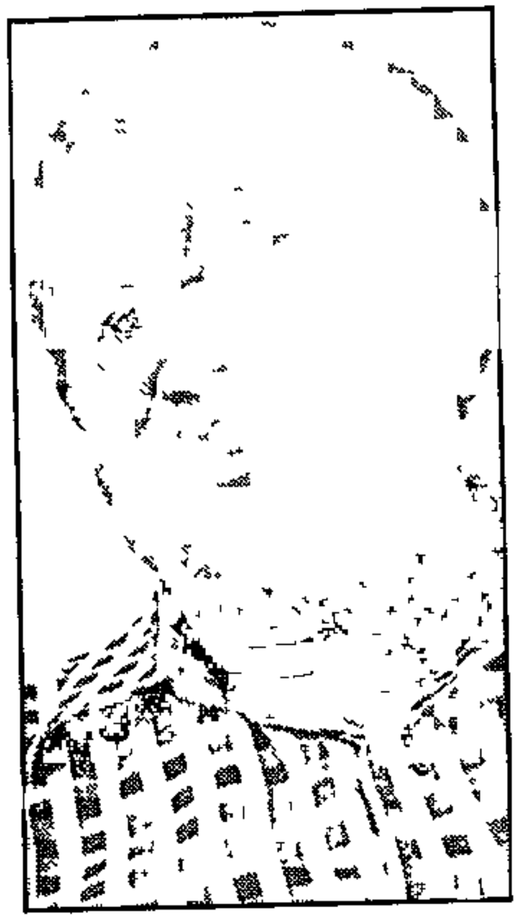
The military has precipitated crises twice this year, the first in January when there was fighting between two army factions and again earlier this month with a mutiny over pay — Sapa-Reuter

Police, prison guards' strike enters second week

Soldiers patrol Lesotho

Star 17/5/94

(167)



Ntsu Mokhehle . prime minister appeals for calm

Maseru — Soldiers patrolled the mountain kingdom of Lesotho yesterday to prevent looting as a nationwide pay strike by junior policemen and prison guards went into a second week.

Prime Minister Ntsu Mokhehle said in a statement the Lesotho government and police representatives had spent four days discussing police grievances, the majority of which were already being dealt with.

The government and the Lesotho economy could not afford a 60 percent salary hike for the police, as demanded, and he had already increased salaries for all civil servants by 10 percent with effect from April 1 He called on all policemen involved in strike actions to return to work

The battered government, hit by an army mutiny and fighting between military factions earlier this year, was trying to negotiate with the strikers, but Western diplomats said they had so far had little success.

About 2 500 policemen below the rank of captain — the bulk of the 3 000-strong force — and junior officers among the country's 600 prison guards want higher pay and improved working conditions

Diplomats reported a rise in crime throughout the country, with looting and theft from shops owned by Indians and Chinese — traditionally the first victims of violence in the kingdom

Troops patrolled streets of the capital Maseru and elsewhere, while senior warders tried to keep the prisons running Soldiers shot dead two looters last week

Diplomats said striking policemen had demanded indemnity from prosecution and access to budget documents last Friday

The strikers had received both concessions, but they were not satisfied and their position appeared to be hardening

Rumours suggested that the strikes were politically motivated, aimed at bringing down Mokhehle, who led his Basotholand Congress Party to a sweeping victory in the country's first multiparty elections in 20 years in March last year

Mutinous troops killed the deputy prime minister and held hostage other Ministers during a brief revolt last month

Church leaders were due to meet strikers yesterday to try to settle the disputes — Sapa-Reuter

NEWS Ntsu Mokhehle appeals for calm ● Interprete

Sowetan 17/5/94

Army patrols Lesotho

SOLDIERS patrolled the mountain kingdom of Lesotho yesterday to prevent looting as a nationwide pay strike by junior policemen and prison guards went into its second week

The battered government, hit by an army mutiny and fighting between military factions earlier this year, was trying to negotiate with the strikers, but Western diplomats said they had so far had little success

About 2 500 policemen below the rank of captain — the bulk of the 3 000-strong force — and junior officers among the country's 600 prison guards want higher pay and improved working conditions (167)

First victims

Diplomats reported a rise in crime throughout the country, with looting and theft from shops owned by Indians and Chinese — traditionally the first victims of violence Lesotho's ailing 75-year-old prime minister, Mr Ntsu Mokhlele, appealed for calm on state radio over the weekend Troops patrolled streets of the capital Maseru and elsewhere, while senior warders tried to keep the prisons running Soldiers shot dead two looters last week

Diplomats said striking policemen, who want 60 percent pay increases, had demanded indemnity from prosecution and access to budget documents last Friday

The strikers had received both concessions, but they were not satisfied — *Sapa-Reuter*

Muluzi acts against corruption

BLANTYRE — President Bakili Muluzi yesterday dissolved the boards of all the country's state-run organisations in a crackdown on corruption in the regime of his predecessor, Dr Hastings Kamuzu Banda

Mr Muluzi's office said new boards would be appointed soon

The organisations, ranging from the University of Malawi to the national airline, were manned by appointees of Dr Banda

Former minister of state Mr John Tembo chaired or was a board member on most of them

The most controversial has been the central bank, whose governor is closely associated with the Banda regime

The new government wants the bank to be independent of political influence and its appointments to be based on merit

Mr Muluzi was given a standing ovation on Saturday when he announced a general amnesty for all political prisoners, and commuted to life imprisonment the death sentences of ordinary prisoners (167)

He made the announcement in his first speech to the nation shortly after his presidential inauguration CT. 23/5/94

The amnesty and life imprisonment sentences will take immediate effect — Sapa-AFP

Military intervention warning

Leaders lay down law to Lesotho rebels

Star 9/6/94

TASK force to be sent to Lesotho to "knock sense" into forces causing lawlessness

(167)

■ POLITICAL STAFF

Cape Town — Southern African presidents decided in Cape Town last night to send a joint task force to tell rebel police and soldiers in Lesotho to stop threatening democracy in the region or else a combined military force could be deployed against them

Presidents Nelson Mandela, Robert Mugabe of Zimbabwe, Sam Nujoma of Namibia and Ali Hassan Mwinyi of Tanzania announced this after a Frontline states summit

They were joined at the summit by Festus Mogae, vice-president of Botswana, Ben Mwila, Minister of Defence in Zambia, and Ken Maope, Lesotho's Minister of Justice.

Acting as spokesman for the group, Mugabe said they would be setting a dangerous precedent if "we allowed peace in the region to be reversed by forces bent on lawlessness and disorder" The Frontline states were acting "to assist the government and people of Lesotho to save their democratic order"

Mugabe said the Frontline states meeting in Harare last Friday had looked "at the trouble spots in Africa with a view to deciding what possible measures we could take to assist the process of bringing these countries back to normality".

Because of the worsening situation in Lesotho, it was decided that a task force of all the Frontline states will go to Lesotho to "try to knock some sense into all elements of those forces interfering with the smooth running of governmental activities and actually causing the lawlessness".

Mugabe said the task force would "urge them, encourage and warn them that if they persist in their actions we will go much further than just the political action"

Asked if this could include military action, Mugabe said: "That is not excluded "

SA pledges military aid for Lesotho govt

CT 9/6/94 (167)

By ANDRE KOOPMAN

SOUTH AFRICAN military forces will be part of a regional peacekeeping contingent to restore democracy in troubled Lesotho if attempts by a frontline delegation to resolve problems there fail

This emerged at a late-night press conference at the Mount Nelson Hotel last night attended by President Nelson Mandela, President Robert Mugabe of Zimbabwe, President Sam Nujoma of Namibia and President Ali Hassan Mwinyi of Tanzania

Mr Mugabe, chairman of the Frontline States, said southern African leaders attending an economic summit at the hotel had met yesterday to discuss a report prepared by a task force that had been in Lesotho

He said they had decided, in view of the seriousness of the situation, to send another task force, comprising representatives of all the frontline states, to "knock some sense into the elements in the military and police" so they would stop interfering in the functions of lawful government

President Mugabe said he would like to warn the factions in the army that the frontline states would "go further than just the political act of sending a task force"

"Stern" action would follow and military action was "not excluded, but for now it has not been decided on"

Lesotho dissidents facing ultimatum

CAPE TOWN — The Frontline states would issue an ultimatum to dissident forces in Lesotho, President Nelson Mandela said yesterday B/Day 10/6/94

He also warned that problems in Lesotho could spread beyond the borders of the tiny mountain kingdom (167)

Speaking at the World Economic Forum's Africa summit in Cape Town, Mandela said rebel police and army personnel would be told they had to "promptly refrain" from undermining the legitimate government

Further steps would depend on their response.

The steps would be taken in consultation with other international organisations such as the UN, the Commonwealth and the Organisation of African Unity.

Mandela was elaborating on a decision taken at a meeting of Frontline leaders in Cape Town on Wednesday night

Law and order had collapsed completely in Lesotho and the government was hostage to lawless and dissident elements

"That situation could snowball beyond the borders of Lesotho where you have lawless individuals trying to overthrow and subvert a democratically elected government . . that is the situation that faces us."

He said the Frontline states were concentrating on peaceful methods of addressing the Lesotho issue, and that SA had established its own heritage and legacy of using non-violent methods to solve problems.

"Everything we do from the point of view of our foreign relations, internationally or regionally, is motivated by our desire to promote peace in our region."

Mandela said even if initial action against the Lesotho dissidents was taken by one country alone because of the resources and position it enjoyed, that action would only be the result of a unanimous decision by the Frontline states.

On Wednesday night Frontline chairman Robert Mugabe said military action was "not excluded but for now it has not been decided on" — Sapa

SOWETAN Friday June 10 1994

zi to address peace gathering

Task force for Lesotho

■ POLITICAL ACTION Bid to save democracy and prevent lawlessness after mutiny by armed forces:

Sowetan Correspondent

SOUTHERN AFRICAN presidents have decided to send a joint task force to tell rebel police and soldiers in Lesotho to stop threatening democracy in the region

(167)

A combined military force could be deployed against them

South African President Nelson Mandela, presidents Robert Mugabe of Zimbabwe, Sam Nujoma of Namibia and Ali Hassan Mwinyi of Tanzania announced this after a three-hour frontline states summit in Cape Town on Wednesday night

The presidents are attending the World Economic Forum conference They were joined at the summit by Botswana Vice-President Festus Mogae, Zambian Defence Minister Ben Mwila, and Lesotho Minister of Justice Mr Ken Maope

Mugabe, who acted as spokesman for the presidents, said they would be setting a dangerous precedent if, in a region where democracy had been established and was the order of the day, "we allowed its reversal by forces that are bent on lawlessness and disorder"

The frontline states were acting "to assist the government and people of Lesotho to save their clearly established democratic order"

Representatives from the frontline states met in Pretoria on Monday and Tuesday to discuss the country.

The presidents set up a task force consisting of all the frontline states which will get to Lesotho to "try knock some sense into all elements of those forces whether this is police or army which are interfering with the smooth running of governmental activities and actually causing the lawlessness that is taking place currently in the country"

Mugabe said the task force would "urge them, encourage and actually warn them that if they persist in their actions we will go much further than just the political action of sending a task force, but that further action is yet to be decided on by us" Asked if this could include military action, Mugabe said, "That is not excluded "

Ultimatum for Lesotho rebels

By ANTHONY JOHNSON (167)

LAW and order had "completely collapsed" in Lesotho where dissident elements where trying to overthrow the democratically elected government, President Nelson Mandela said yesterday

Expressing concern at conditions in the mountain enclave, he told the World Economic Forum problems could snowball into South Africa CT 10/6/94

The Frontline states would issue an ultimatum to dissident forces to stop undermining the legitimate government

Should rebel police and army personnel fail to accept the ultimatum, South Africa — which had considerable investments in Lesotho — would consult with international bodies about what further steps to take, he said

These would be taken in consultation with other international organisations such as the UN, the Commonwealth and the Organisation of African Unity

Mr Mandela was elaborating on a decision taken at a meeting of Frontline leaders on Wednesday

He said they were concentrating on peaceful methods of addressing the issue

Frontline chairman President Robert Mugabe said military action was "not excluded but for now it has not been decided on"

Talks in Lesotho on threat to stability

Sowetan 28/6/94

TWO Commonwealth secretariat representatives were to arrive in Lesotho last night for talks with the Government and other parties about continuing instability in the country

(167)

Commonwealth secretary-general Mr Keith Emeka Anyaoku delegated secretariat political affairs director Mr Max Gaylard and assistant director Dr Moses Anafu after talks with the governments of Lesotho, South Africa, Botswana and Zimbabwe

Gaylard and Anafu visited Lesotho in January and April after clashes between the army and police

A statement by the Lesotho government yesterday said Anyaoku was concerned that recent events "threatened the stability and process of Lesotho's democratic structures" — *Sapa*

basic services or cannot contrib- medical benefits to staff — Sapa

ing — Sapa-Reuter

Plan on crises in Angola, Lesotho

CT 29/6/94 (167)

Political Staff

SOUTH AFRICA has been formulating contingency plans with frontline states in case armed intervention in either Lesotho or Angola is needed.

Disclosing this, Defence Minister Mr Joe Modise said the SANDF was "always in a state of readiness"

Talks had been held with the frontline states, and "we are waiting to get instructions", he said

Earlier, he said South Africa did not intend sending combat troops or support personnel to Rwanda

Replying to a question from DP Senator Mr Errol Moorcroft, he said said the government was committed to supporting "all mediation and other efforts by the international community to ensure a peaceful and lasting solution to the problems of Rwanda"

He said the government would donate humanitarian aid such as emergency food, medical supplies and other relief items as specified by the UN

Mr Modise said the government was negotiating with the UN about the possible lease of 50 armoured personnel carriers for use by UN forces in Rwanda

Asked by Senator Moorcroft whether the government might reconsider if the genocide in Rwanda continued, the minister said "we have problems here at home and need to concentrate on them"

"I think the Rwanda situation will be taken care of by forces from the UN and France"

REFUGEE CAMP . . . Hutu militiamen patrol the grounds of the Santa Famille Church in Kigali, which has become a crowded camp for refugees of Rwanda's civil war. The gunmen are feared by the minority Tutsis and have been accused of massacring refugees. Picture AP

OJ judge asked to veto TV bid

LOS ANGELES. — Both sides in the O J Simpson murder case on Monday requested the judge to prevent NBS Television from broadcasting evidence relating to a beating Simpson gave his then-wife Nicole, 35, in 1989

They asked Judge Ray Hart not to release a sealed envelope containing the police investigation report, letters to the court from a psychiatrist and photographs taken of Nicole Simpson immediately after the beating

In a separate development, the Los Angeles district attorney filed a motion asking that Simpson, the former football great, who faces charges of murdering his ex-wife, and Mr Ronald Goldman, 25, provide a hair sample to see if it matches hair found at the crime scene

Simpson has pleaded not guilty to stabbing the two to death on June 13

A judge scheduled an emergency hearing for 9am yesterday on a defence request that prosecutors make blood samples and other evidence available for examination and photography.

The hearing will decide if there is enough evidence for a full trial. — Sapa-Reuter

Lesotho inquiry is expected to end King's power bid
Star 5/8/94

EX-KING

Moshoeshoe's fight for power comes up against a tough challenge Joe Molefi and Gerald L'Ange report for the The Star's Foreign Service

By appointing a commission of inquiry into the monarchy, Lesotho Prime Minister Ntsu Mokhehle's government appears to be moving to block deposed king Moshoeshoe's bid to regain the throne.

It remains to be seen, however, whether this will end the ambitious former monarch's long struggle for political power

The eight-member commission will cover a wide range of issues spanning more than 30 years since Lesotho's independence in 1966, including Moshoeshoe's past actions and present situation.

(167)

While there is nothing in the commission's 13 terms of reference to suggest the intention of politically emasculating the former king, many Basotho see this as the main purpose of the government's move.

Moshoeshoe (56) has had problems with various governments in Lesotho since independence

The ex-king is a descendant of Moshoeshoe I, who founded the Basotho nation and placed his land under British protection.

His occupancy of the throne was brief Installed as paramount chief of Basutoland in 1960, he became king in October 1966 at independence But two months later, he was placed under house arrest by Prime Minister Leabua Jonathan when he tried to increase his powers.

He tried to delay independence to increase his country's chances of resisting South African attempts to absorb it

He refused to sign the report of the 1964 conference on independence because the new constitution precluded him from having a say in foreign affairs and defence

Jonathan ended the 1966 house arrest after forcing Moshoeshoe to agree not to exceed his constitutional powers. But he was again put under house arrest when he opposed Jonathan's Basutoland National Party (BNP) seizing power in 1970

Jonathan sent Moshoeshoe into exile in Holland, but allowed him back eight months later after he agreed to stay out of politics.

This he did, more or less, until the military ousted Jonathan in 1986 and vested executive and legislative powers in the king, while keeping ultimate powers in the hands of a Military Council.

Exile

Again Moshoeshoe's taste of power was brief, for four years later he became involved in a power struggle with the council's head, Major-General Metsing Lekhanya and ended up back in exile, this time in England.

Lekhanya later offered to let the king return, but Moshoeshoe said he would do so only if the military agreed to hold an election. Lekhanya responded by deposing him and installing in his place Moshoeshoe's eldest son, Prince Bereng Seeisa, who became King Letsie III.

Letsie later let it be known that he was only keeping the throne warm for his father

After Lekhanya was deposed in 1991, his successor, Major-General Elias Ramaema, allowed Moshoeshoe to come home in 1992 The former king subsequently made several abortive attempts to get back to the throne

When the military surrendered power in 1993, Ntsu Mokhehle's Basuto Congress Party swept into power

Most Basotho assume the commission will make sure that the king stays out of politics

Re

The resolution of the Pick 'n Pay strike the first major industrial dispute of the post-election South Africa, was met with collective relief by all, particularly the protagonists who endured a bruising three-week test of power

The end, at about noon on Wednesday, seemed to come as suddenly as the beginning But before that came many long hours of bargaining. And in the midst of that was Charles Nupen, the 44 year-old national director of the Independent Mediation Services of SA (Imssa)

Back in his neat, simply furnished Richmond, Johannesburg, office, and nearly 24 hours after settlement, Nupen still bore the tell-tale signs of many days of conveying demands and counter-demands between Pick 'n Pay and SA Commercial, Catering and Allied Workers Union (Saccawu) negotiators

Dressed in a grey suit and still looking stressed, he could afford to smile. Being in the middle of the most bitter and longest labour dispute had been as challenging as it was stressful. 'I'm pleased it s over

He is now concerned about the rebuilding of relations between Pick 'n Pay management and Saccawu members

"I sincerely hope that the parties will be able to (implement) the key agreements contained in the settlement and reconstruct their relationship If their public announcements are anything to go by, both parties seem to see positive elements in the settlement"

At its height, the strike evoked strong emotions not only among workers and management, but also from the public and sections of the media. Does he think this reaction was warranted?

Help tha

Now, with worldwide attention finally focused on the plight of Rwandan refugees, I find my self in a charged, newsroom like atmosphere, where the bigger story of the year is unfolding all around me

My assignment for the week i to handle incoming requests from journalists wishing to fly into Goma on UNHCR-co-ordinated flights. "We are not a travel agency!" my colleague retorts as more than a few calls come in wanting to know visa and vaccine requirements.

With over a million refugees to worry about, our priority is not to recommend which hotels Japanese film crews should stay in. Water diviners offering their services are another unwelcome distraction.

South Africans such as myself quickly learn that French is the lingua franca around here. While my scant knowledge of German helps me out occasionally, colleagues from around the world — America, Iran, Japan, Brazil, Hungary, Canada and France — put my limited language skills to shame

A notice requests supervisors to release non-essential staff wanting to volunteer for Rwanda. Much to the horror of her parents, my colleague, an attractive French-American, signs up. Luckily for them, by the time she gets clearance, she will be safely back at university

Another colleague, herself a refugee, hears she is going to Rwanda within the week. Her brother is already there, running a Red Cross orphanage for

(167) ARG 17/8/94

Lesotho security forces open fire on coup protesters

MASERU — Several people were reported injured when the police and army opened fire on a crowd of several thousand Basotholand Congress Party supporters outside the royal palace here today

The crowd had accompanied BCP leaders to the palace to present a petition to King Letsie III in protest against his dissolution of parliament this morning

The trouble started when a spokesman for the group told the crowd to proceed to BCP's headquarters four kilometres away

At that point stones began flying and the authorities opened fire

As the crowd fled, shoes and garments lay strewn over the main thoroughfare

An exact number of injured or whether there were any fatalities were not known

It was not known whether the palace accepted the petition

Earlier South African High Commissioner Gerard Visser said his staff were closely monitoring the crisis but no action was planned.

Mr Visser said he estimated the number of protesters at no more that 1 000, including supporters of ousted Prime Minister Ntsu Mokhehle's Basotholand Congress Party and the opposition Basotho National Party

He said police were on the scene but were only performing crowd control

He said the crisis was clearly a constitutional one involving the Lesotho people themselves

He admitted the South African mission was also short of details

He disputed rumours that King Letsie III had abdicated

Earlier this year a three-nation panel headed by Zimbabwe, and including Botswana and South Africa, was established to address the mutinies — The Argus Foreign Service and Sapa

NEWS 10 000 marchers demand rep

No SA plan to intervene

Sowetan 18/8/94

■ MARCHERS KILLED King's call to disband Lesotho government:

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By Joe Mdhlela
Political Reporter

THE South African Government is not considering military intervention in Lesotho after a call by King Letsie III that the country's government be disbanded

Foreign Minister Mr Alfred Nzo yesterday ruled out any possibility of Government interfering in Lesotho's troubles which have already left three nationals dead after being shot by police

At best, said Nzo, the Government would want to engage the Lesotho government in constructive discussion in order to defuse tension

"The Government does not at this stage have the full facts but one would imagine that if there were to be any intervention, it would be at the diplomatic level," said Nzo

Nzo said the Government respected the fact that the government led by Ntsu Mokhehle was legitimate "However, it would be premature for the Government to make any informed comment as we do not have full details of what is happening in that country," he said .

The Lesotho king yesterday announced that a provisional council would be established to take over the running of the country

The announcement by the king led to a march by about 10 000 pro-Mokhehle demonstrators in Maseru The marchers were fired on by police, leaving three of them dead

Spokesman for the Queen Elizabeth II Hospital In Maseru said at least three demonstrators were shot dead by police as Basotho Congress Party-aligned supporters took to the streets

They were demanding, among other things, the abdication of the king and the establishment of a republic under Mokhehle

Royal coup crisis

Lesotho capital tense after yesterday's violent confrontations

Lesotho tense amid coup crisis

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unknown quantity. Previously split along political lines, the army is assumed to be generally supportive of the monarchy

But it is not known which way it will swing or whether new factions will emerge It is unlikely, though, given its recent bloody confrontations within its own ranks, to stand fast behind Mokhehle

(167)

King Letsie, who does have certain constitutional powers, made his drastic announcement at 5 10 am yesterday and declared that a representative council would be set up until another round of elections

Four people were killed and 10 injured when supporters of the prime minister marched on the royal palace in Maseru in protest at the monarch's move.

Security forces fired on the crowd of about 5 000 people when a section of the crowd, who had accompanied a delegation of four leading members of the BCP intent on presenting a petition of protest at the pal ace, stoned an army truck.

Armed guards refused the delegation entry to the palace grounds.

Apart from this confrontation, Maseru was generally quiet yesterday

Last night the radio announced that a dusk-to-dawn curfew had been imposed in the capital.

Foreign Minister Alfred Nzo told The Star he was expecting a report from the SA embassy in Maseru and President Mandela would in all likelihood discuss the crisis with visiting Zimbabwean President Robert Mugabe

LOYALTY of army will determine who holds sway in battle for mountain kingdom

BY JOE MOLEFI DALE LAUTENBACH and BRENDAN TEMPLETON

Maseru — Although the Lesotho capital was quiet today after the constitutional crisis which erupted yesterday, the spectre of military intervention by South Africa, Botswana and Zimbabe remains.

The crisis has pitted King Letsie III against the government of Prime Minister Ntsu Mokhehle

Diplomatic sources in Maseru said people were going about their normal business this morning but the city was tense in the wake of violent confrontations yesterday.

"Today we'll start seeing different moves," said one diplomatic who had seen the prime minister last night and described him as "very tired"

The Basoto security forces, who opened fire yesterday on a crowd protesting against the king's announcement that he was dissolving government, have not made any moves beyond that incident in support of any faction in the political showdown

(167)

Diplomats believe that if the army becomes involved, the constitutional crisis will move on to another level but as it stands the battle between the king and the prime minister could also go to court and become a protracted legal battle

Late yesterday, Mokhehle issued a statement in defiance of an earlier announcement by the king that he was dissolving both the government and the 65-member national assembly

Mokhehle has declared the king's move unconstitutional and *ultra vires* and has called on the security forces to protect the constitution and law and order

The statement said the suspension of sections of the constitution was illegal

"The king has breached the provisions of the constitution relating to the monarchy and his oath of office, and has seriously damaged the image of the king."

The loyalty of the army is an

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Four die in Lesotho palace protests

(167) CT 18/8/94

MASERU — Four people were killed and 19 hurt when police opened fire on several thousand Basotholand Congress Party demonstrators outside the palace of King Letsie III yesterday

The marchers were protesting against an early-morning radio announcement by the king that he was removing from power the democratically elected cabinet of Prime Minister Dr Ntsu Mokhehle and dissolving parliament.

The king's announcement was declared unconstitutional and ultra vires by Dr Mokhehle, who said it came as "a total surprise to my democratically elected government"

The marchers had gathered at the palace to watch four MPs hand over a petition to the king demanding the government's reinstatement.

The trouble started when a spokesman for the group told the crowd to proceed to the headquarters of the BCP four kilometres away

At that point stones began flying through the air and the authorities opened fire

As the crowd fled, shoes and garments lay strewn over the main thoroughfare

The 34-year-old king said a provincial council representing all people was being established to take over Dr Mokhehle's government.

"The provincial council representative of all people is being established to run the general administration of the country An independent electoral commission will be set up to prepare and organise a general election which will be held on proportional representation basis," he said

The king said he had also suspended certain chapters of the constitution.

A dusk-to-dawn curfew was announced on Radio Lesotho last night.

The curfew, called by the police commissioner, will operate indefinitely

It was not clear if the curfew was ordered by King Letsie or Dr Mokhehle — Own Correspondent, Sapa

Cathedral Hall

'Worried' SA monitors Lesotho turmoil

(167) ARG 18/8/94

MASERU. — South Africa was today closely monitoring the crisis in Lesotho after the ousting of Prime Minister Ntsu Mokhehle, which set the scene for a showdown between rival army factions.

Four people died and 13 were injured yesterday when security forces opened fire on a crowd gathered outside the royal palace to protest against the pre-dawn "royal coup".

President Mandela was expected to discuss the crisis today with visiting Zimbabwean President Robert Mugabe, and Foreign Affairs Minister Alfred Nzo was expecting a report from the South African embassy in Maseru.

Mr Mugabe described the crisis in the turbulent mountain kingdom as "disturbing"

A foreign affairs department spokesman said the situation was being closely monitored and the government was "very worried"

A dusk-to-dawn curfew was declared late yesterday after King Letsie III announced in an early morning radio broadcast that he had suspended part of the constitution and dissolved Mr Mokhehle's government, Lesotho's first democratic rule in two decades

He also announced that a provisional council was being established to run the affairs of the country and that an independent electoral commission had been appointed to organise and prepare for an election.

Royal spokesman Makhaola Nkau Lerothodi said the king was considering imposing a state of emergency after Mr Mokhehle declared the monarch's actions illegal and called on the security forces to "ensure the protection of the constitution".

"The king has breached the provisions of the constitution relating to the role of the monarchy and his oath of office," Mr Mokhehle said.

Describing Mr Mokhehle's call to the security forces as an "empty gesture", Mr Lerothodi said the police and the army were "solidly" behind the king.

Mr Lerothodi said the king had acted against Mr Mokhehle because the prime minister refused to consult him on national issues, as the constitution requires. — Sapa-AFP.

Ntsu ignores Lesotho king

MASERU — Lesotho foreign minister Qhobela Molapo said yesterday the government was still in control of the country despite its dismissal by King Letsie III.

Molapo told a news conference in Maseru the government of prime minister Ntsu Mokhehle had ignored the king's "purported dissolution of parliament and cabinet" and was continuing as usual with day-to-day administrative duties Sowetan 19/8/94

Confusion reigned 24 hours after the king went on radio at dawn on Wednesday to say he was dissolving the government, Lesotho's first democratically elected administration in more than two decades because people were dissatisfied with it

"We have been trying since early this morning to find out what is going on we are trying to talk to people in the king's court and the government but are finding it difficult to get hold of anybody," a Western diplomat said

Government sources said some official cars had been impounded and the bodyguards of cabinet ministers withdrawn. Some ministers had also been prevented from going to their offices by the security forces.

Red Cross workers and other residents said there had been no reports of any incidents since four people were killed outside the king's palace on Wednesday during protests at his bid to dissolve the government (167)

Mokhehle condemned the king's action as unconstitutional and vowed to resist attempts to remove him — *Sapa-Reuter.*

Lesotho crisis grows as king grabs power

ARG 19/8/94 (167)

☐ Indemnity for armed forces worries government

JOE MOLEFI and DALE LAUTENBACH
The Argus Foreign Service and Reuter

JOHANNESBURG — Lesotho's power struggle deepened when King Letsie III assumed legislative powers but the government insisted it was still in control.

The king, who announced the dissolution of the government of Prime Minister Ntsu Mokhehle on Wednesday, published an order yesterday taking over the powers of parliament

The order, published in an extraordinary official gazette, also indemnified the king from prosecution for his actions

But Mr Mokhehle's Foreign Minister, Molapo Qhobela, said the government was still in control

He acknowledged, however, that the government of the ruling Basotoland Congress Party was worried about the allegiance of the armed forces

Nelson Mandela and visiting Zimbabwean head of state Robert Mugabe are expected to offer a joint statement on the crisis in Lesotho after meeting in Cape Town today

Maseru remained quiet yesterday, but Mr Qhobela's acknowledgment that his ruling party did not know if it had the loyalty of the security forces was a strong indication of enormous underlying tension

Mr Qhobela accused the police of acting unconstitutionally by imposing a dawn-to-dusk curfew without consulting the government

But the king appeared confident of the armed forces' loyalty The order indemnifying himself also prohibited legal proceedings against the Lesotho Defence Force or the police

BLANKET AUTHORITY: Makhaola Lerothodi, King Letsie's spokesman, telling reporters in Maseru that the king was setting up a caretaker government in Lesotho

Mr Qhobela said the prime minister and the king held separate talks yesterday with the Defence Commission, comprising the heads of the various services The result of Mr Mokhehle's meeting appeared unsatisfactory, however, as Mr Qhobela said the armed forces were "not neutral"

The only practical moves against the government yesterday were the impounding of some cabinet ministers' official cars and the removal of their bodyguards

Lesotho govt 'still in control'

MASERU — Lesotho Foreign Minister Mr Qhobbela Molapo said yesterday the government was still in control of the mountain kingdom despite its dismissal by King Letsie III

Mr Molapo told a news conference here the government of Prime Minister Mr Ntsu Mokhehle had ignored the king's "purported dissolution of parliament and cabinet" and was continuing as usual

Confusion reigned 24 hours after the king went on radio at dawn on Wednesday to say he was dissolving the government. Lesotho's first democratically-elected administration in more than two decades

Government sources said some official cars had been impounded and the bodyguards of cabinet ministers withdrawn

Red Cross workers and other residents said there had been no reports of any incidents since four people were killed outside the king's palace on Wednesday during protests at his bid to dissolve the government

Mr Mokhehle condemned the king's action as unconstitutional and vowed to resist attempts to remove him — Sapa-Reuter

PM's cars and telephones confiscated

King Letsie III takes reins in royal coup

Star 20/8/94

LESOTHO once again is in a constitutional crisis, write **ANDRE JURGENS, SAPA, AFP and OWN CORRESPONDENT**

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MASERU — Lesotho's King Letsie III effectively seized power of the mountain kingdom in a royal coup yesterday when six new ministers were hastily sworn in, stripping ousted Prime Minister Ntsu Mokhehle and his cabinet of power.

Human rights lawyer Hae Phoofolo was sworn in as chairman of a Provisional Council to rule Lesotho for the next 12 months as well as being given the portfolio of Minister of Public Service.

But the potential for confrontation heightened when ousted Foreign Minister Molapo Qhobela appealed on BBC radio for pro-government supporters to start rolling mass demonstrations today and engage in a national strike on Monday.

There was no sign of ousted Premier Mokhehle, who headed the country's first democratically-elected government in more than 20 years for a troubled 16 months characterised by army mutinies and police strikes.

I came in at a very difficult time, when peace and tranquillity was at its lowest ebb. It is not a joyous occasion.

He and his staff have reportedly had their cars and telephones confiscated

The 34-year-old king suspended part of the country's constitution and government in a dawn radio broadcast earlier this week.

Among the new appointments was the leader of the opposition Basotholand National Party (BNP), Everistus Sekhonyana, as Foreign Minister.

Letsie suspended sections of the constitution and dissolved parliament on Wednesday.

According to Phoofolo, Letsie had assumed executive and legislative powers and was now effective head of state

Previously he was merely a constitutional monarch

Speaking to reporters afterwards, a solemn Phoofolo said the occasion was "not one to be joyous about"

"I came in at a very difficult time, when peace and tranquillity in Lesotho was at its lowest ebb," he said

"It is our task to try and bring peace and stability to the country"

The new provisional Cabinet is: Hae Phoofolo — Minister of the Public Service, Evaristus Sekhonyana — Foreign Affairs, Mamello Morrison — Information, Khauta Khasu — Agriculture, Mathabiso Mosala — Labour and Employment and Moletsane Monyake — Finance and Planning

Several portfolios were excluded and could be filled by later appointments

Most people in the capital were completely unaware of the swearing-in ceremony in the royal palace banquet hall until the news was broadcast on Radio Lesotho

Armed troups maintained a visible presence in the streets and a dusk-to-dawn curfew remained enforced

South African High Commissioner in Lesotho Gerhard Visser urged visiting South Africans to be cautious over the weekend as the situation was tense

Meanwhile, a man was killed and another seriously injured yesterday when police opened fire on Basotholand Congress Party supporters at Quthing, about 200 km south of the mountain kingdom's capital of Maseru

A police spokesman said police tried to disperse a crowd of about 500 people who had illegally gathered at Pitso Ground, an open meeting place in the town.

The crowd had decided to burn down businesses belonging to newly appointed Foreign Affairs minister Evaristus Sekhonyana, the police claimed, adding that stones were thrown at policemen When a shot was fired from the crowd police returned fire. Three people were arrested, the spokesman said

It is our task to try and bring peace and stability to the country with the appointment of the new provisional cabinet.

The meeting was called to protest against King Letsie III dissolving the BCP government and parliament earlier this week.

In another development, Britain warned King Letsie yesterday that it would have to "reconsider" its aid programme unless he reinstated the elected government in the former British protectorate

The Foreign Office said the British Government was "deeply concerned by the reports that the king has declared that parts of the Lesotho Constitution are to be suspended and the democratically elected parliament and government dissolved"

No intervention in Lesotho for now – Mandela

CAPE TOWN — President Mandela yesterday ruled out an immediate military role for South Africa in Lesotho

Mandela told a news conference he had discussed the Lesotho crisis with visiting Zimbabwean President Robert Mugabe and would meet Mugabe and President Quett Masire of Botswana soon to seek ways of promoting peace in the kingdom

"It's premature at the moment to even think in terms of any kind of military intervention It will depend on developments there in the coming days," he said — Reuter

King's men to rule Lesotho

(167) ARG 20/8/94

MASERU — Human rights lawyer Hae Phoofolo has been sworn in as chairman of a provisional council to rule Lesotho for the next 12 months following a "royal coup" in which Prime Minister Ntsu Mokhehle was ousted

At a ceremony conducted by Chief Justice Lebona Kheola at the palace here yesterday, five other members of the council, all appointed by King Letsie III, also were sworn in

Among them was the leader of the opposition Basutholand National Party (BNP), Everistus Sekhonyana, who was named foreign minister

Speaking to reporters after the ceremony, a solemn Mr Phoofolo said the occasion was "not one to be joyous about"

"I came in at a very difficult time, when peace and tranquillity in Lesotho was at its lowest ebb," he said "It is our task to try and bring peace and stability in the country"

According to Mr Phoofolo, King Letsie had assumed executive and legislative powers and was now effective head of state Previously, he was merely a constitutional monarch

Mr Phoofolo said his priorities were to amend the constitution and return King Moshoeshoe II to the throne

"We will be working towards reinstating King Moshoeshoe II as a full constitutional monarch. But first we have to correct the constitution."

■ To page 3

Crisis in Lesotho

ARG 20/8/94 (167)

■ From page 1

On Wednesday, King Letsie III went on radio at dawn to announce he was dissolving Lesotho's first democratically elected administration in more than two decades, because people were dissatisfied with it

The government denounced the move as illegal and said it was still in control

Meanwhile, President Nelson Mandela yesterday ruled out an immediate military role for South Africa in Lesotho

"It's premature at the moment to even think in terms of any kind of military intervention it will depend on developments there in the coming days," he said

Mr Mandela told a news conference he had discussed the Lesotho crisis with visiting Zimbabwean President Robert Mugabe and would meet Mr Mugabe and President Quett Masire of Botswana soon to seek ways of promoting peace there

Yesterday, a man was killed and another seriously injured when police opened fire on Basotholand Congress Party supporters at Quthing, about 200 km south of Maseru

On Wednesday, the day of the king's announcement, security forces shot dead four demonstrators outside the palace

Britain said yesterday it was deeply concerned by King Letsie III's attempt to dismiss the elected government

It warned the king that it would be obliged to "reconsider" its programme of assistance if unlawful measures were taken to overthrow the government.

Lesotho currently benefits from about £11 million (R61,6 million) of British aid

A group of trade unions, civic bodies and co-operatives vowed to continue strikes and demonstrations to press the king to reinstate Mr Mokhehle's government — Sapa-AFP-Reuter.

Democracy threatened in Lesotho as Letsie III dissolves Parliament

LESOTHO security forces have been placed on the alert ahead of a two-day national strike called for tomorrow to protest against a royal coup in the southern African kingdom, head of the caretaker government Hae Phoofolo said yesterday

Five people have been killed since Wednesday, when King Letsie III dissolved parliament and ousted the government of Prime Minister Ntsu Mokhehle

Phoofolo, named by Letsie on Friday as head of a Provisional Council to rule Lesotho for 12 months, told AFP that he was bracing for a period of instability in the wake of the king's decree

Angry

"The people have a right to protest, but they are angry and will not listen to reason," he said

One person was killed late Friday when police opened fire on anti-monarchy protesters in the southern town of Quthing, adding to the four killed in the capital when demonstrators massed outside the royal palace

The streets of Maseru were quiet yesterday, following angry protests late Friday outside the headquarters of Mokhehle's Basutoland Congress Party (BCP), but an increased army presence was visible

Phoofolo said troops would be deployed in numbers on Monday and Tuesday to prevent bloodshed during a national strike called by the BCP

"Not all the people will support the strike," he said. "I anticipate coercion by BCP supporters If they endanger lives the government will have to act"

Mokhehle has rejected the royal decree, saying he still regards himself as head of the government, but he has acknowledged that the military has not supported him

Mokhehle was stripped of his official vehicle and office on Thursday and has also moved out of his official residence

Phoofolo defended the king's decree, saying that the BCP, which won a landslide victory 16 months ago in Lesotho's first democratic elections in two decades, had begun to act unconstitutionally

"They were ignoring the minorities and had become dictatorial," he said

Phoofolo said the Provisional Council planned to call fresh elections in a year, but this time the government would be based on the proportional representation system rather than the winner takes all British-style Westminister system

"The BCP will no doubt win again," he said "But this time the minority parties will also have a voice"

Phoofolo, a human rights lawyer and former banker who spent a year in jail in the late eighties for irregular foreign currency dealings, said the remaining nine members of the Provisional Council would be appointed this weekend

The first six, most of whom had links with the opposition Basuto National Party, were sworn in on Friday.

He hoped all parties "including the BCP if they will join", would be represented on the council, which he referred to as a "government of national unity"

The 47-year-old lawyer called for understanding from the international community on "the intricate problems facing Lesotho," adding that he was encouraged by the initial reaction to the Lesotho crisis by South African President Nelson Mandela and his Zimbabwean counterpart, Robert Mugabe

Mandela and Mugabe expressed concern about the situation in Lesotho after meeting in Cape Town on Friday, but stopped short of threatening military intervention, saying they would prefer to negotiate a solution

■ Lesotho's King Letsie III, who deposed his country's democratically elected government this week, is a proxy leader of a military dictatorship, a leading Zimbabwean newspaper alleged on Saturday

Democracy

In a commentary, the semi-official *Herald* urged neighbouring states to seriously consider intervening militarily in the tiny southern African kingdom to restore democracy

On Wednesday King Letsie III announced he had dissolved the government of Prime Minister Ntsu Mokhehle. The government denounced the move as illegal and said it was still in control

But many people say the king, with the backing of the army, appears to be in charge He appointed a provisional council to run the country on Friday

On Friday President Nelson Mandela ruled out an immediate military role for South Africa to resolve the Lesotho crisis – Sapa Reuter

ARGUS
Argus 21/8/94

SOWETAN Monday August 22 1994

t workers ● United States to withdraw aid

Testing time for Lesotho monarchy

STAYAWAY PLANNED Wave of industrial action to hit kingdom:

Sowetan Correspondent

MASERU — Pressure mounted in Maseru yesterday on the Lesotho monarchy to abort last week's royal coup, with lawyers vowing to bring the courts to a standstill, a two-day work stayaway being called and the United States withdrawing millions of dollars in foreign aid

King Letsie III and his newly sworn-in council of Ministers, who ousted Prime Minister Ntsu Mokhehle's democratically elected government, will face a testing political showdown and national protest stayaway from today

Describing the royal seizure of power as an "afront to the people of Lesotho" the US yesterday suspended economic assistance to the country, including about R34,5 million earmarked for primary education The US also suspended its military training programme with the Royal Lesotho Defence Force, which appears to be backing the king

"The United States cannot condone action which undermines democracy and call upon the authors of the recent events in Lesotho to revert their actions before more blood is shed," the US embassy in Maseru said yesterday

The Lesotho Law Society yesterday resolved to join the stayaway, refused to appear in court for one week and asked judges of the High Court to follow suit

Civil servants, unsure of their future, were advised by newly appointed Information Minister Mamello Morrison to go to work today

(167)

Non-government organisations called on the nation, business community, schools and transport to shut down for two days of peaceful protest

At a meeting at the weekend of 40 leaders representing 26 federations, including trade unions, it was resolved should the king not rescind his takeover, non-government organisations would consider calling on people to withdraw funds invested with local banks and government institutions and cease paying taxes

Mokhehle and his government kept a low profile yesterday Many of them had left their homes Lesotho security forces have been put on alert

Lesotho US stops aid to 'coup'

■ Calls for two-day stayaway

■ Pressure on King to abort 'coup'

Star 22/8/94

AT HOME and abroad Letsie and his new ministers face mounting calls to abort their seizure of power (167)

■ BY ANDRE JURGENS
STAR FOREIGN SERVICE

Maseru — Pressure mounted on Lesotho's King Letsie III yesterday to abort last week's "royal coup", with the United States withdrawing millions of dollars in foreign aid and the Commonwealth calling for a return to democracy in the mountain kingdom

The king and his newly sworn-in council of ministers, who ousted Prime Minister Ntsu Mokhehle's democratically elected government, also face calls for a two-day work stayaway throughout the country from today, while lawyers have vowed to bring the courts to a standstill.

Describing the royal seizure of power as an "affront to the people of Lesotho", the US suspended economic assistance to the country yesterday, including $9,6 million (about R34,5 million) earmarked for primary education

The US also suspended its military training programme with the Royal Lesotho Defence Force, which appears to be backing the king

"The United States cannot condone action which undermines democracy and calls upon the authors of the recent events in Lesotho to reverse their actions before more blood is shed," the US embassy said in Maseru yesterday.

The Lesotho Law Society yesterday resolved to join the stayaway by refusing to appear in court for a week It asked judges of the High Court to follow suit

Civil servants, unsure of their future, were advised by newly appointed Information Minister Mamello Morrison to go to work today

In a telephone interview last night Morrison said Radio Lesotho had broadcast instructions asking licensed businesses to open and assured people who wanted to go to work that security and transport would be provided

"We are concerned at the tendency of the United States and United Kingdom to throw a stick before sitting down and discussing issues fully with us after witnessing the collapse over the past few months of the former government and violation of the constitution "

Morrisin said she envisaged the king's newly sworn-in government remaining in power for only a few months until a solution could be found

Non-government organisations called on businesses, schools and the transport sector to shut down for two days of peaceful protest

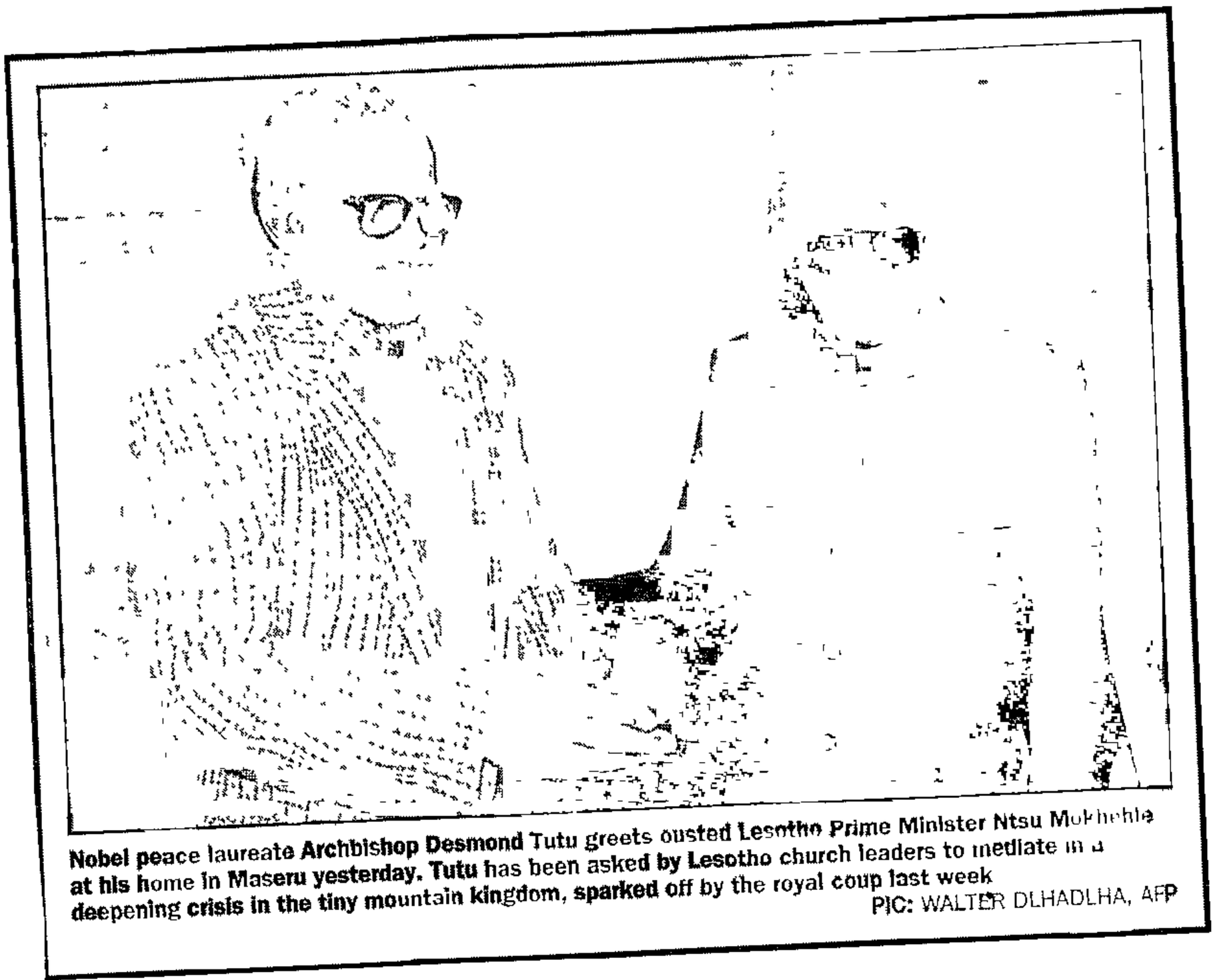
At a meeting at the weekend of 40 leaders representing 26 federations, including trade unions, options to be taken if the king did not rescind his takeover were considered

Mokhehle and his colleagues kept a low profile yesterday. Many of them had left their homes.

Lesotho security forces have been put on alert

In London, the Commonwealth called for the restoration of democracy in Lesotho Secretary-general Chief Emeka Anyaoku said the Commonwealth was "ready to help in every practicable way to this end".

led campus ● Safety minister faces probe



Nobel peace laureate Archbishop Desmond Tutu greets ousted Lesotho Prime Minister Ntsu Mokhehle at his home in Maseru yesterday. Tutu has been asked by Lesotho church leaders to mediate in a deepening crisis in the tiny mountain kingdom, sparked off by the royal coup last week
PIC: WALTER DLHADLHA, AFP

Ministers to reform system

Sowetan 23/8/94

MASERU—Lesotho's new Minister of Information and Broadcasting, Mrs Mamello Morrison, said yesterday that King Letsie III had dissolved parliament because the government had gone "from bad to worse"

Morrison, a member of the council of ministers installed last week by King Letsie to run the country, told a Press conference in Maseru the king had charged the council with devising ways of reforming the electoral system to avoid dictatorship in any form

An independent electoral commission will be announced later this week to make arrangements for general elections to a parliament representative of the population, including minorities

(167)

She said the council had also been charged with "purifying" the public service, the security forces and the judiciary so they could not be manipulated by politicians

Asked about threats by Britain and the United States to revise their relations with Lesotho after last week's monarchist coup, Morrison said the British and US missions in Lesotho were aware of the deterioration in government

Meanwhile, Maseru was at a virtual standstill yesterday as tens of thousands of people observed a general strike to back the government of Prime Minister Ntsu Mokhehle

South African Anglican Archbishop Desmond Tutu, meanwhile, met the king and government ministers in Maseru in a bid to resolve the crisis

Mandela to attend Lesotho crisis talks

TIM COHEN and ADRIAN HADLAND

PRESIDENT Nelson Mandela is to meet Zimbabwean President Robert Mugabe and Botswanan President Quett Masire in Gaborone today to discuss the crisis in Lesotho B/Day

They will consider an appeal from deposed Prime Minister Ntsu Mokhehle for action to restore his government, and a call for recognition from the provisional council appointed by King Letsie III

A diplomat said Maseru was at a virtual standstill yesterday — the beginning of a two-day stayaway to protest against the king's action in dissolving Parliament Five people have been killed in protests

"It's very quiet but the situation, in which Lesotho currently has two kings and two governments, is a bit confusing"

Meanwhile, Sapa-Reuter reports that Cosatu and the NUM backed the general strike in Lesotho and called for the immediate reinstatement of the elected government Cosatu threatened a trade blockade and the NUM suggested imposing sanctions on Lesotho 23/8/94

The provisional council said the king had urged a "purification" of Lesotho's military, civil service and judiciary The government had been replaced to avoid an army coup It said the crisis could be resolved only through dialogue (167)

Council chairman Hae Phoofolo said it intended to amend the constitution and return Letsie's father, Moshoeshoe II, to the throne Moshoeshoe was deposed in 1990 by the then military government

Sapa-AFP reports that Archbishop Desmond Tutu went to Lesotho yesterday to act an an international mediator at the invitation of that country's church leaders

Lesotho heeds call for a return to work

ARG 24/8/94 (167)

☐ Streets come to life after two day stayaway

ANDRE JURGENS
The Argus Foreign Service

MASERU. — Thousands of people wrapped in blankets against biting cold poured into the city in taxis and buses today, heeding calls from the new disputed Lesotho authorities to return to work after a peaceful two day stayaway.

Streets echoed to a cacophony of blaring hooters summoning passengers to taxis at the height of the morning rush hour in stark contrast to the eerie silence of the past two days

Notably absent amid the bustle were the police and soldiers with automatic weapons who had been deployed on the streets of the capital during the strike

In spite of political differences, rival organisations had made repeated calls on the security forces to exercise restraint during the stayaway, fearing a repeat of last week's shooting when four people protesting in support of the ousted government of Prime Minister Ntshu Mokehle were shot dead outside the royal palace

Before shops opened their doors today, hundreds of street vendors selling fruit and cooked breakfasts did a roaring trade from makeshift pavement stalls. Food vanished from tables and shelves as people, many of whom had not been able to buy fresh bread, headed for work and school

Lesotho's King Letsie III ponders his future.

And suppliers of goods from South Africa started trickling through the border post again.

Most people were adamant, when asked, that they would be paid by employers for their absence from work during the two-day strike

Meanwwhile, strong calls for a Codesa-type national conference of political groups and civil society to thrash out once and for all Lesotho's political power struggles and constitutional deadlocks have been made here as King Letsie III prepares to meet President Mandela in Pretoria tomorrow.

Speaking from Gaborone yesterday, Mr Mandela said he would host a meeting of the key players in the Lesotho crisis.

He said King Letsie and the head of the government he was trying to oust, Mr Mokhehle, would attend along with presidents Quett Masire of Botswana and Robert Mugabe of Zimbabwe.

On his return Mr Mandela told a media conference at Pollsmoor Prison that the elected government of Mr Mokhehle had to be reinstated

Mr Mandela said the king's action in deposing Mr Mokehle was unconstitutional "and we find it unacceptable that he should have taken that step".

King 'did the right thing'

MASERU — The dissolved government of Ntsu Mokhekle in Lesotho has been described as feeble, secretive, lawless and about to plunge the country into a civil war or precipitate a military coup

Newly-appointed foreign minister Evaristus Sekhonyana said in Gaberone yesterday "King Letsie III did the right thing (in dissolving the government) You cannot have a government which thinks it has the privilege to violate a country's laws with impunity"

He was in Gaberone to give a note from the king to Botswana's Sir Ketumile Masire, President Mandela and Zimbabwe's Robert Mugabe — Sapa

Foreign Affairs body to call for evidence on rift

(167) ARG 24/8/94

CLIVE SAWYER
Political Correspondent

THE parliamentary select committee on foreign affairs is set to flex its muscles by calling for evidence on the situation in Lesotho.

Among those who may be asked for appear before the committee are foreign affairs minister Alfred Nzo, his deputy Aziz Pahad and Anglican Archbishop of Cape Town Desmond Tutu, who has been active in peace efforts in Lesotho

Committee members said today that they did not want to be a mere rubber-stamp for foreign policy decisions.

ANC MP Raymond Suttner, who was today elected the committee's first chairman, said there was broad support for the committee to have a bipartisan approach to foreign policy.

Mr Suttner said he had been advised by the department of foreign affairs not to hold hearings immediately because of the delicacy of the situation in Lesotho

He said a meeting would be called next week.

Koos van der Merwe (IFP) said the drastic action of "summoning the two naughty boys (King Letsie and Mr Mokhehle) to Pretoria" risked being seen as making a mockery of Lesotho's independence.

Lesotho sanctions averted

B/Day

MARK ASHURST

GABORONE — Economic sanctions against Lesotho by southern African states were averted yesterday when the mountain kingdom's warring factions agreed to meet in Pretoria tomorrow 24/8/94

President Nelson Mandela, his Zimbabwean counterpart Robert Mugabe and Botswana President Quett Masire adopted a conciliatory stance on the crisis, pending the negotiations between King Letsie III and ousted Prime Minister Ntsu Mokhehle

SA Foreign Affairs director-general Rusty Evans said participation by the Lesotho leaders had been secured moments before yesterday's meeting in the Botswana capital (167)

A strongly worded declaration imposing economic sanctions had been drafted for discussion, but the presidents had decided "there was nothing to be gained by wielding a big stick at this stage"

Mandela's meeting with the regions' leaders had reached "complete agreement", said Evans "I think it has been very important This is the way diplomacy should be conducted"

Letsie dissolved Mokhehle's 16-month-old government last week, appointing a provisional council of ministers in its place Lesotho provisional Foreign Affairs Minister Everistus Sekhonyana flew to Gaborone to represent the council at the meeting, but was not included in the talks "He was not invited but came in case he was called to ask questions," said Evans

The participation of both Lesotho factions at tomorrow's meeting indicated their willingness to reach a settlement endorsed by other African states and the

☐ To Page 2

Lesotho

B/Day 24/8/94

☐ From Page 1

international community, he said

Zimbabwean Foreign Minister Nathan Shamuyarira said the parties would discuss "the restoration of normality and constitutionality" tomorrow

The three governments viewed "with concern the deteriorating situation in Lesotho ... which, if not carefully handled, could have grave consequences for southern Africa," he said The replacing of a democratically elected government could not be condoned. (167)

Shamuyarira rejected claims allegedly made by the Lesotho council of ministers that the king had acted to restore constitutionality in Lesotho.

The meeting did not accept that Letsie had adverted a military coup, nor that the Mokhehle government had acted unconstitutionally, he said

An SA official said military intervention was not high on the agenda at the meeting "It is a crazy idea, our troops would be there for 20 years"

Sapa reports that Mandela said in Cape Town after the Gaborone meeting that the government of Mokhehle had to be reinstated and the position of the monarcy addressed.

"It seems to us that the security forces are fully behind the monarchy and unless the question of the monarchy is addressed, it's going to be very difficult for any government in Lesotho to get the support of the security forces Without the support of the security forces, no party can govern in that country"

Meanwhile, leaders of the two-day-old general strike in Lesotho announced they were suspending the action, pending Letsie's response to a workers' petition for the restoration of Mokhehle's government.

Lesotho Council of Non-Governmental Organisations president Sohai Santho said all workers had been requested to resume work today. The two-day stayaway by tens of thousands of workers brought business to a virtual standstill

Sweden yesterday joined the US in freezing economic aid to Lesotho

Mandela hits at Lesotho king

CT 24/8/94 (167)

President Nelson Mandela returned "with mixed feelings" to inspect overcrowding in Pollsmoor Prison yesterday, where he was held from March 1982 to August 1988 With him are Minister of Health Dr Nkosazana Zuma (left), Minister of Prisons Services Dr Sipho Mzimela and Pollsmoor's commanding officer Brigadier Johan Robberts ● Story Page 2 Picture BENNY GOOL

By MELANIE GOSLING and Sapa

PRESIDENT Nelson Mandela yesterday hit at Lesotho's King Letsie III for his "unconstitutional" ousting of Prime Minister Mr Ntsu Mokhehle, who he said should be reinstated

Mr Mandela was speaking at a press conference in Cape Town after returning from talks on the Lesotho crisis in Gaborone with frontline states leaders President Robert Mugabe of Zimbabwe and President Quett Masire of Botswana

President Mandela said Mr Mokhehle's government was 'unique' in that it had swept all seats in general elections last year

"We consider it unacceptable that King Letsie should overthrow a government which enjoys the confidence and support of the entire voting population he said

"We are not convinced that his action was constitutional and we find it unacceptable that he should have taken this step We feel the government of Mr Mokhehle should be re instated '

But he cautioned that the position of Lesotho's monarchy needed to be urgently addressed

'It seems to us that the security forces are fully behind the monarchy Without the support of the security forces no party can govern in that country"

Mr Mandela said South Africa did not want to be involved in protracted discussions in Lesotho, and ultimately the country's opposing parties would have to settle their differences themselves

"But there is some inter connection between countries in a region and therefore it is in the interests of our country that there should be no instability in any countries which are our neighbours'

Mr Mandela said he had invited Lesotho's prime minister and King Letsie to a meeting in Pretoria tomorrow "so the two presidents and myself can have the opportunity of bringing them together and explain ways of addressing the situation"

Leaders of the two day-old general strike in Lesotho announced yesterday that they were suspending the action pending King Letsie's response to a workers' petition for the restoration of the ousted government

The national steering committee of the Lesotho Council of Non-Governmental Organisations resolved that the strike be provisionally suspended

Supported

● Sweden has frozen its economic aid to Lesotho as a result of the crisis Swedish Co-operation Minister Mr Alf Svensson said yesterday that when the rules of democracy are so seriously disregarded conditions for co operation no longer exist"

Last year, Sweden paid $5,2 million (about R29 1m) to Lesotho

● Mr Mandela said he supported Archbishop Desmond Tutu's peace initiatives in Lesotho

Archbishop Tutu said yesterday that reinstating Mr Mokhehle would not be enough Any solution would have to be inclusive of all parties

Archbishop Tutu said he had also met the council of ministers appointed by the king to run Lesotho for 12 months, and with Mr Mokhehle, church and military leaders and foreign diplomats

● The Lesotho Students Association at UCT yesterday condemned the killing of Lesotho citizens — five people died in a protest against the king's action last week — and denounced the "unconstitutional dissolution of the democratically elected government'

Dual exchange system, to stay

Business Staff

FOREIGN exchange controls would not be abolished immediately, South African Reserve Bank Governor Dr Chris Stals said yesterday

Speaking in Pretoria, Dr Stals said that it would first be advisable to "re enter world capital markets" before doing away with the dual exchange rate system CT 24/8/94

Analysts expect that South Africa will be accorded a satisfactory "BBB" rating in September allowing safe access to funds on world capital markets The rating will hopefully trigger foreign investment and allow the financial rand to strengthen to meet the commercial rand

The financial markets have interpreted the statement as good news

● Prepare for rates hike, warns Stals — Page 10

Medal for Maria — out of the blue

From IAN HOBBS

VICTORIA — South Africa's third Commonwealth Games medal literally came out of the beautiful blue sky early today when Transvaal s Maria Etzebeth won the women s discus bronze

The 31 year-old Pretoria athlete with the angelic smile completely destroyed her previous best throw of 52,30m s when she sensed the crowd was behind her and took the bronze with a huge throw of 55,74

The gold went to Australian Daniela Costian with a new games record of 63,72 with Beatrice Faumina of New Zealand second (57,12m)

● Meanwhile flamboyant Masibulele "Hawk" Makepula is South Africa's last hope of a boxing medal in the Games, but still insists that he will return home with gold

He was left as the only survivor from the SA six-man team when SA 63,5kg champion Stefanus Carr lost 6-19 in his contest with Northern Ireland's aggressive Mark Winters last night.

● Western Province athlete Bobang Phiri finished a disappointing last in 46 35 seconds in the Games 400m final which was won by Kenyan Charles Gitonga in 45 sec

● Win 'a life-changer' — Page 3

crack of dawn

Amazing how you can always tell an MP by the gravy stains on his suit

Virus hits 3 Capetonians

THREE Capetonians have been admitted to Groote Schuur with the virus that causes an illness identical to Guillain Barré Syndrome, and another four cases have been reported in Johannesburg

The virus has already killed one Aliwal North resident

Groote Schuur specialist Dr Dave Linton said the three were admitted to hospital between early July and mid August He said they would probably remain in hospital for between six and 10 weeks

He said the disease was not a mystery "It has been around for many years and was described in the 18th century"

Groote Schuur treated five people with the syndrome last year and if patients were treated appropriately the recovery rate was good, Dr Linton said There was no reason for panic, he added

Four more people are receiving treatment at the Johannesburg Hospital

The recent focus on the disease surfaced at Aliwal North, where six cases have been diagnosed — Sapa

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Patrick Laurence *places Lesotho's latest political crisis in historical perspective*

Lesotho monarchy future at risk

Star 25/8/94

Observing the latest political drama in Lesotho is a bit like watching the rerun of an old film Many of the old actors strut across the screen in — to use the phrase coined by American historian Barbara Tuchman — a march of folly

In its brief post-colonial history Lesotho has had no fewer than three coups, none of which has solved its problems or brought any significant improvement to the lives of the majority of its citizens

These were the coups which

■ Denied the veteran Lesotho politician, Ntsu Mokhehle, the premiership in 1970 after his Basotholand Congress Party (BCP) won the general election that year

■ Overthrew the dictatorial regime in January 1986 of Mokhehle's great rival, Leabua Jonathan, who — after winning Lesotho's pre-independence election in April 1965 — refused to accept the outcome of the January 1970 election, seized power and imprisoned his opponents

■ Deposed Mokhehle last week when King Letsie III issued a decree — whose legality is fiercely disputed — suspending parts of the constitution, establishing a Council of Ministers and announcing his intention to restore his father, Moshoeshoe II, to the throne

The most recent of these coups was preceded by two events of central political importance to Lesotho today

The first was a decree, issued by Lesotho's former military ruler, Justin Lekhanya, deposing Moshoeshoe in November 1990 and installing his eldest son, Letsie III

The second was the stunning victory of Mokhehle's BCP in Lesotho's general election of March 1993 The BCP won 54 percent of the vote and all 65 seats in Lesotho's National Assembly The election, declared to be free and fair by international observers, marked Lesotho's return, for a brief 18 months, to constitutional rule

These developments deserve closer scrutiny The more closely they are observed, the more intriguing they become While there are strong themes of continuity, including the recurring appearance on the political stage of Mokhehle and Moshoeshoe, significant differences emerge to modify the view that history is simply repeating itself

Moshoeshoe appears to be Lesotho's equivalent of the French Bourbon kings. Like the deposed dynasty, he seems to have learnt nothing and forgotten nothing

Since Lesotho became independent in 1966, Moshoeshoe has refused to accept his role as a constitutional monarch, although his political ambitions have brought him nothing but humiliation and disaster

In the same year of Lesotho's independence, rivalry between Moshoeshoe and the then prime minister, Jonathan, led to bloodshed

Moshoeshoe, who had made plain his desire for power, wanted to address his followers at Thaba Bosiu Tribesmen loyal to Moshoeshoe were intercepted en route to the meeting by the Lesotho Paramilitary Unit Royalists were killed and Moshoeshoe was put under house arrest

In the 1970 election the pro-royalist Marema-Tlou Freedom Party fared badly Votes went overwhelmingly to the BCP and Jonathan's Basotho National Party Moshoeshoe refused to read the writing on the wall and continued to harbour political ambitions

The tough-minded Jonathan, faced with a major crisis after aborting the 1970 election, sent Moshoeshoe into exile in Holland Moshoeshoe returned in December 1970 after undertaking to abstain from politics

He kept his head down for a time But after the 1986 coup which toppled Jonathan, he again clashed with the political strongman of the day, Lekhanya. He was exiled for a second time and then, in 1990, deposed and replaced by his son, Letsie III

In the latest coup Moshoeshoe, who returned to Lesotho in July 1992, has indirectly lent his name to the purported dissolution of Mokhehle's democratically elected government The coup — which aims to replace Moshoeshoe on the throne — seems set to fail because of growing opposition at home and abroad.

A statement issued by Presidents Mandela, Mugabe and Masire after their meeting in Botswana on Tuesday expresses "deep regret" at the action taken by King Letsie The censure applies by extension to Moshoeshoe, who as a prospective beneficiary must have approved of the intervention by his son

Throughout these events, Mokhehle emerges as the survivor After each crisis — defeat in the 1965 election, flight after unsuccessful armed rebellion against Jonathan in 1974, temporary humiliation last week by Letsie and his allies in the Lesotho Defence Force — Mokhehle, who is now 75, seems to shake his leonine head, adjust his thick-lensed glasses and soldier on

(167)

South Africa, a giant by comparison to neighbouring Lesotho, figures prominently in the still unfolding drama in the mountain kingdom

In 1965 the then South African prime minister, Hendrik Verwoerd, gave his blessing and material aid to Jonathan, whose BNP adopted a relatively friendly disposition to the minority government of its powerful neighbour

In the late 1970s and early 1980s, however, South Africa's white government became increasingly hostile to Jonathan Lacking legitimacy at home after seizing power, Jonathan sought to boost his image by adopting a vociferously anti-apartheid stance His new stance included making Lesotho available as a base for ANC guerillas

Jonathan's new radical policies led to an alliance of convenience between South African security forces and the armed wing of Mokhehle's BCP, the Lesotho Liberation Army

The enmity between the Jonathan regime and that of P W Botha in South Africa ended in a blockade of Lesotho in January 1986 and overthrow of Jonathan by the Lesotho army, acting in concert with Moshoeshoe

Now, ironically, ANC-aligned trade unions are calling for a blockade to restore Mokhehle to power if Letsie, his ambitious father and their backers in the Lesotho Defence Force reject the attempt by Mandela and the Presidents of Zimbabwe and Botswana to persuade them to abandon their quest for power

What is at stake is the fate of the Lesotho monarchy By refusing to heed the lessons of the past, Moshoeshoe has endangered the survival of the Lesotho monarchy There is another danger for Lesotho Without the monarchy as a distinctive unifying force, Lesotho — one of the poorest countries on Earth — may be incorporated, politically as well economically, into South Africa

Where the vast majority of Lesotho's citizens resisted absorption into apartheid South Africa, the same level of resistance can no longer be assumed As a non-racial, democratic society with more Basotho citizens than Lesotho itself, the new South Africa may be a bigger threat to Lesotho independence than the old one

'Aim of Pretoria summit is to reinstate govt'

Basotho rally in support of premier

Star 25/8/94

BY ANDRE JURGENS
STAR FOREIGN SERVICE

Maseru — Hundreds of pro-government supporters, fists clenched and chanting, brought the Lesotho capital to a standstill yesterday after Prime Minister Ntsu Mokhehle's jet took off for a summit in Pretoria. (167)

After the departure of the besieged leader, Molapo Qhobela, Foreign Affairs Minister in Mokhehle's Cabinet, said the sole purpose of the trip to South Africa was to secure the reinstatement of the elected government

"There can be no bargaining over a constitutional position What is happpening violates the constitution of this country and it has violated the sovereign right of the people when they constituted a parliament through the ballot box."

A spontaneous and excited convoy of Mokhehle's supporters brought traffic to a halt, waving banners, singing and hooting after his departure The crowd chanted pro-Basotho Congress Party slogans, and armed police withdrew as they passed

King Letsie III, who last week unilaterally announced the dissolution of Mohkehle's government which won elections with a resounding majority last year, is also expected in Pretoria today for the summit at President Mandela's invitation

It is expected that he might face some harsh words from Mandela who, with his colleagues of Zimbabwe and Botswana, has taken a dim view of the monarch's challenge to democracy in Lesotho

Tough criticism of the king's action also came from the Lesotho Chamber of Commerce and Industry yesterday The monarch's action had created an impossible environment for business and investment

The business community was particularly concerned about Letsie's sweeping and "totalitarian" indemnity order giving legal cover from prosecution to the Crown, the civil service and security forces

"The stipulations of the order render it impossible for any business concern, and indeed the nation at large, to take recourse to the courts of law for any serious, criminal or civil offence such as armed robbery, fraud, rape or theft," the statement read

For a week now, there has been little measure of who precisely is in control in Lesotho.

Qhobela avoided the question when asked whether the king's provisional "council of ministers" or Mokhehle's government were in control.

▶ **Monarchy at risk — Page 21**

Farewell . . . BCP supporters drive through the streets of Maseru yesterday in a jubilant send-off for deposed prime minister Ntsu Mokhehle who flew to Pretoria for a summit. PICTURE TJ LEMON

Lesotho workers threaten more strikes

MASERU — Lesotho workers returned to work yesterday after a two-day strike but vowed to push King Letsie III to return elected Prime Minister Ntsu Mokhehle to office

Tens of thousands of people observed the stayaway on Monday and Tuesday.

The Lesotho Council for Non-Governmental Organisations, ahead of the king's scheduled talks with Mokhehle in Pretoria today, said there would be more strikes if its call for restoration of democracy was not met. B/Day

The meeting was set up during talks in Gaborone, Botswana, on Tuesday between presidents Nelson Mandela, Robert Mugabe of Zimbabwe and Ketumile Masire of Botswana

The three presidents will also attend the Pretoria meeting, intended to resolve the crisis created when the king dissolved Mokhehle's government a week ago The king, citing popular dissatisfaction with the government, named a provisional council to rule in its place

Mokhehle was elected in March last year in Lesotho's first democratic poll in two decades

Mandela said on Monday the situation in Lesotho was of major concern to SA, which encircled the country of 1,6-million people.

Lesotho's new Foreign Minister Evaristus Sekhonyana said Mokhehle's government was about to spark a military coup or civil war because it was "feeble, secretive and lawless"

He said international threats to cut aid to Lesotho would not help resolve the crisis

"You can stop aid but a problem will not be solved so long as it is endemic Only diplomacy can help solve it, not mechanical measures"

Meanwhile, the European Union condemned the suspension of Lesotho's constitution, saying it would review its relations, including the future of development programmes, with Lesotho. 25/8/94

An EU statement issued in Brussels also condemned the shooting of four pro-democracy demonstrators by security forces last week at Lesotho's royal palace — Sapa-Reuter (167)

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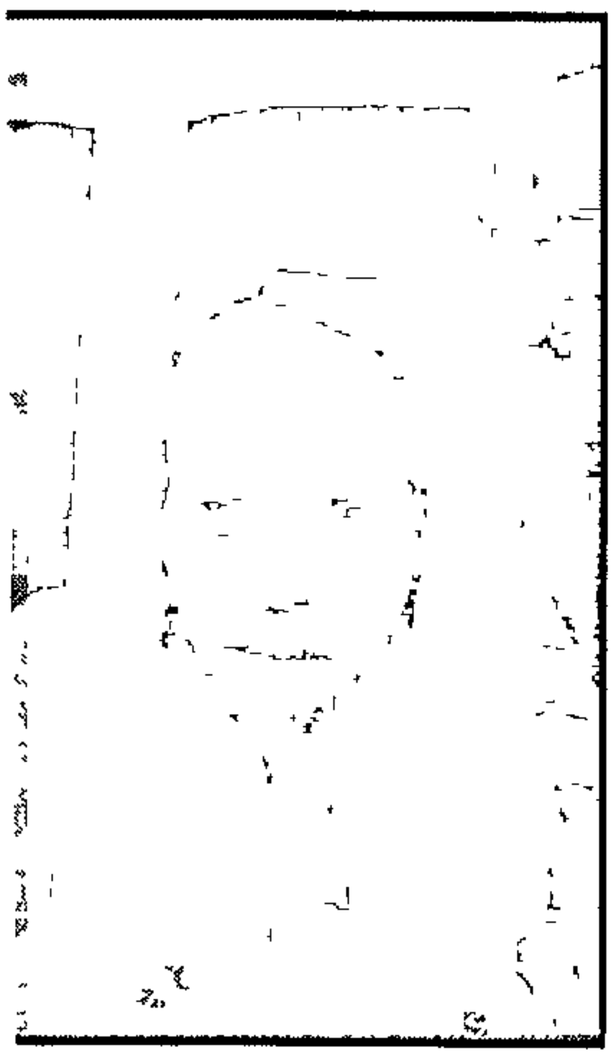
num mines and the initial technical staff will be recruited from South Africa.

ARG 25/8/94

A statement from Delta Gold said the platinum resources in the Hartley complex were second in the world only to those of the Bushveld complex of South Africa

The Hartley deposits could contain more than 200 million ounces of platinum group metals as well as significant quantities of nickel, copper, gold and cobalt.



r food with other refugees at an
Bukavu, Zaire

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ıtionists fear that about 650 rare
orillas in the park, which straddles
ıda and Uganda, are threatened by
n conflict and the refugee exodus to
end of the park. — Reuter.

'Extend war crimes court'

THE HAGUE — Judge Richard Goldstone, prosecutor for the United Nations war crimes tribunal for the former Yugoslavia, says he wants the court's jurisdiction extended to Rwanda

Judge Goldstone told Dutch television "I see no reason why the former Yugoslavia should be dealt with differently from other nations where similar offences are taking place

"For that reason, I personally would be in favour of expanding the jurisdiction of this tribunal to include Rwanda"

Hundreds of thousands of government opponents and members of the minority Tutsi tribe were massacred by Hutu government militias in Rwanda in a three-month civil war

The victorious Tutsi-dominated Rwandan Patriotic Front has pledged to bring those responsible to book The RPF is preparing a list of suspects

Of his current task, Judge Goldstone said "If the tribunal fails, it could be a major blow to the enforcement of international human rights, but if it succeeds it would be a major step forwards" — Sapa-AFP

Press freedom 'inviolable'

(243) ARG 25/8/94

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BOB TILLEY
The Argus Foreign Service

HAMBURG — Press freedom in the new South Africa is inviolable

This is the assurance given by Interior Minister Mangosuthu Buthelezi in an interview in a German newspaper today

Censorship and the expulsion of foreign journalists would not occur while he was in office, the Inkatha Freedom party leader told Die Welt correspondent Thomas Knemeyer

As far as pornography was concerned, he said South African adults could no longer be told "what they may read or watch"

Chief Buthelezi endorsed old political foe Nelson Mandela as "president of us all, also of those who didn't vote for him"

But he called on Mr Mandela's African National Congress to dissociate itself from its alliance partners, the Communist Party and Cosatu

The strike in the motor industry showed what a mistake it was for a government party to ally itself with a trade union, Chief Buthelezi said.

He claimed his federalist ideas were now supported by all ANC provincial leaders

King Letsie faces wrath at summit

(167) ARG 25/8/94

PRETORIA — A grim-faced King Letsie III of Lesotho arrived at President Mandela's offices here today to face the wrath of southern African leaders for staging a royal coup in his mountain kingdom

He was preceded by Zimbabwean President Robert Mugabe and President Ketumile Masire of Botswana, who immediately went into talks with Mr Mandela before a scheduled summit with the king and deposed Prime Minister Ntsu Mokhehle

The summit was also being attended by Organisation of African Unity secretary-general Salim Ahmed Salim

Mr Mandela, Mr Mugabe and Sir Ketumile are expected to threaten economic sanctions against Lesotho unless King Letsie restores democracy

The monarch suspended parts of the constitution, dissolved parliament and threw Mr Mokhehle out in a pre-dawn radio broadcast on August 17 after accusing the prime minister of being dictatorial and of leading the country into chaos

His action was met by clashes between anti-monarchists and security forces, which left five people dead and 13 wounded, and a two-day general strike

The three southern African leaders, after meeting in Botswana on Tuesday, expressed "deep regret" at the king's move, which had "created a crisis that if not carefully addressed could have serious consequences"

The three presidents said in a statement "It is not only a threat to Lesotho but to the stability of all of the southern African states"

A small group of Lesotho citizens living and working in South Africa today demonstrated outside the Union Buildings in support of Mr Mokhele while the talks were being held

Spokesman for the demonstrators Martin Mohosho said the king's actions were an insult to the Lesotho nation and to democracy

● In Brussels, the European Union condemned the suspension of Lesotho's constitution and said it would review its relations, including the future of development programmes, with the southern African country — Sapa-Reuter-AFP

New Lesotho minister fails in bid to gatecrash SADC

ARG 26/8/94

(167)

GABORONE. — The Lesotho power struggle impinged on a meeting of the Southern African Development Community (SADC) today when a minister named by the crisis-ridden nation's King Letsie III tried to gatecrash the gathering.

The 10-nation SADC does not recognise the council of ministers appointed by the king after his sacking last week of the elected government of Prime Minister Ntsu Mokhehle, which is officially representing Lesotho at the four-day meeting

Witnesses said the king's new finance minister, Moletsane Monyake, was prevented from registering after arriving at the conference centre

After the meeting was opened by Botswana's Vice-President, Festus Mogae, the chamber was cleared of all but SADC ministers while the Lesotho situation was debated

Mr Mogae emerged 30 minutes later and spoke to Mr Monyake, who was then driven away.

The leaders of South Africa, Zimbabwe and Botswana said yesterday after talks in Pretoria that they had given King Letsie a week to reverse his decision to dissolve the government.

Five people have been killed and 15 wounded in clashes since the king, citing popular dissatisfaction, sacked the administration that came to power last year after the first multi-party elections in 20 years. — Reuter

King Letsie advised to back down

CT 26/8/94 (167)

Own Correspondent

JOHANNESBURG. — "Back down" was the advice given to Lesotho's King Letsie III by southern African leaders in Pretoria yesterday.

The advice came at a meeting between the king and his ousted prime minister, Mr Ntsu Mokhele, President Nelson Mandela, Zimbabwean President Robert Mugabe, Botswana's President Ketumile "Quett" Masire and other high-ranking officials yesterday.

Mr Mugabe said after the meeting that "some progress had been made but the king and Mr Mokhele required more time".

The three leaders, accompanied by SA Home Affairs Minister Chief Mangosuthu Buthelezi and OAU general secretary Mr Salim Ahmed Salim, said they could not condone the monarch's replacement of parliament and government with a provisional council and the suspension of parts of Lesotho's constitution.

No alternative

The action, announced in a pre-dawn radio broadcast on August 17 in which King Letsie accused Mr Mokhele of being dictatorial, caused a two-day national stayaway in Lesotho earlier this week as well as demonstrations in which five people were killed and 13 injured

Mr Mugabe said the king and Mr Mokhele had been given a week to report back on talks.

Mr Mugabe said that while the king was positive about resolving Lesotho's political crisis, there was no alternative to reversinghis actions and restoring the democratically-elected government to power.

He added that there was no possibility of military intervention by Zimbabwe as the issue had to be resolved through dialogue.

President Mandela, President Mugabe and President Masire, after a meeting in Botswana on Tuesday, expressed "deep regret" at the king's move.

A small group of Lesotho citizens demonstrated in Pretoria yesterday in support of Mr Mokhele.

THE WEEKLY MAIL & GUARDIAN
August 26 to September 1 1994

Why the Lesotho government was suspended

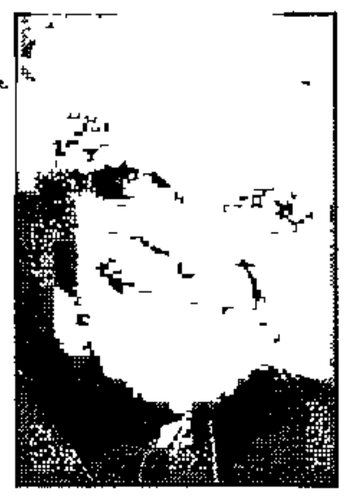
(167) WM 26/8-1/9/94

The Lesotho prime minister's request for aid was the reason behind the suspension of his government, writes **Wiseman Khuzwayo**

A REQUEST from ousted Lesotho Prime Minister Ntsu Mokhehle to Southern African leaders for a peace-keeping force to quell an army uprising lay behind King Letsie III's dramatic suspension of his government, the *Mail & Guardian* learned this week.

Evaristus Sekhonyana, appointed by Letsie as foreign minister in the interim government he formed after dissolving that of Mokhehle, said he believed Mokhehle's action would either plunge the country into civil war or precipitate a military coup.

Speaking from Gaborone, Botswana this week, Sekhonyana claimed Letsie's action against Mokhehle's government — which swept to power in the kingdom's first democratic elections last year — was sparked by the discovery last month of a letter in which Mokhehle requested a peace-keeping force from Botswana, South Africa and Zimbabwe to quell an internal military dispute.



Archbishop Tutu ... Not well received

Sekhonyana said Mokhehle, when confronted with the letter, conceded he had ommitted to inform the king and parliament of the request

"He lied to parliament and the nation The king has the right to be informed on all matters of state. What Dr Mokhehle did was treason and a crime."

A small group of Lesotho citizens living and working in South Africa demonstrated outside Pretoria's Union Buildings in support of Mokhehle while President Nelson Mandela, Zimbabwe President Robert Mugabe and Botswana's President Ketumile Masire began discussions with King Letsie and the man he deposed in last Wednesday's "royal coup"

The Southern African leaders were expected to threaten economic sanctions against the land-locked kingdom unless the king restored democracy

Members of his country's legal profession announced a stayaway yesterday, demanding that Letsie's new government step down and calling for a return to the rule of law and the constitution

The Law Society of Lesotho also demanded the resignation of Lesotho Chief Justice Joseph Kheola, accusing him of violating a basic principle of justice by swearing in members of the monarch's provisional government without first consulting his fellow judges

A two-day general strike in protest against Letsie's action ended on Tuesday pending the outcome of yesterday's talks.

The law society has called on all its members to boycott any court appearances from last Wednesday to this coming Wednesday. Its members had already joined the two-day general stayaway at the beginning of this week.

The statement claimed Kheola's actions had undermined the independence and integrity of the Lesotho judiciary at a time when he should have demonstrated that the impartiality of the judiciary was unquestionable.

According to Candi Raimoane, editor and publisher of Lesotho's weekly, *Mo Afrika*, the intervention of Archbishop Desmond Tutu had not been well received by many of those opposed to the interim government formed by King Letsie III.

Tutu was invited to arbitrate in the crisis by the Lesotho Christian Council At the end of his mission, Tutu called for a Codesa-type of dialogue to resolve the crisis.

"But the critics point out that the council itself had not come out clearly and opposed the new government Tutu's appearance was seen as some sort of foreign intervention instead of the council sitting down and resolving the domestic question," said Raimoane

This was denied by Ramolulela Taula, general secretary of the council

He said· "The LCC does not have a specific stand on the issue It accepts that there may have been bad things on both sides. It therefore facilitated the two sides to come together and review the situation.

"Before we make statements we must be sure of the facts We are doing so much without calling it to the attention of the people and the media "

King Letsie III 'ready to abdicate'

(167)

CT 27/8/94

JOHANNESBURG — Lesotho's embattled king is ready to abdicate within days and reinstate his deposed father in order to settle the crisis he started by sacking the government, political and government sources said yesterday

The sources said King Letsie III, who angered his Southern African neighbours by firing the democratically-elected government on August 17, would step down before September 1 and the administration he sacked would return to power

September 1 is the deadline set by the presidents of South Africa, Zimbabwe and Botswana for the king to restore democracy to the mountain kingdom

"The king will abdicate within days as the first step to bring normality to Lesotho," said one of the king's advisers

A Lesotho University lecturer in constitutional law said the role of the monarchy had always been disputed in Lesotho, and the return of former King Moshoeshoe would restore the status quo of 1990, before the quarrelling intensified

The sources said the plan was that after King Letsie had stepped down, former King Moshoeshoe would initiate an electoral process whereby Lesotho's 1,6 million people could decide what kind of monarchy they wanted — Sapa-Reuter

C. 27/8/94

New regime's minister barred

(167)

GABORONE. — The power struggle in Lesotho impinged on a meeting of the Southern African Development Community (SADC) yesterday when a minister named by the crisis-ridden nation's King Letsie III tried to gatecrash the gathering.

The 10-nation SADC does not recognise the council of ministers appointed by the king after his sacking last week of the elected government of Prime Minister Mr Ntsu Mokhehle, which is officially representing Lesotho at the meeting

Witnesses said the king's newly-appointed finance minister, Mr Moletsane Monyake, was prevented from registering after arriving at the conference centre and spent some time in the foyer talking to senior policemen.

After the meeting was opened by Botswana's Vice-President Festus Mogae, the chamber was cleared of all but SADC ministers while the Lesotho situation was debated. — Sapa-Reuter

King of Crisis to quit the throne

(167) ARG 27/8/94

RICH MKHONDO
Weekend Argus Correspondent

JOHANNESBURG — Lesotho's embattled king is ready to abdicate within days and reinstate his deposed father in order to settle the crisis he started by sacking the government, political and government sources said

The sources said yesterday that King Letsie III, who angered his southern African neighbours by firing the democratically elected government on August 17, would step down at the end of the month and the administration he sacked would return to power

September 1 is the deadline set by the presidents of South Africa, Zimbabwe and Botswana, who met in Pretoria on Thursday, for the king to restore democracy to the mountain kingdom

An adviser to the king said "The king will abdicate within days as the first step to bring normality to Lesotho

"King Letsie has no alternative but to hand back power to a democratically elected government"

All that remains to be settled are details of the future role of the monarchy in Lesotho, the adviser said

President Mandela criticised the king's action in Lesotho, which is economically dependent on South Africa

While there was no public threat of sanctions against Lesotho at the Pretoria meeting, Lesotho's neighbours could exert enormous pressure on the kingdom

King Letsie, 34, was elevated to the throne in 1990 after his father, Moshoeshoe II, was deposed by the then military government

Elections last year were won by the Basutoland Congress Party, with Ntsu Mokhehle becoming prime minister

After a series of embarrassing incidents, including a police strike and an army mutiny, King Letsie fired Mr Mokhehle and his government, citing popular dissatisfaction with the administration as his reason

Zimbabwean President Robert Mugabe, chairing the Pretoria meeting that brought the king and Mr Mkhehle face to face, concluded that the future of the dethroned Moshoeshoe was the key to settling the crisis

"As you know that the role of the monarchy has been one of the sore points in Lesotho, his majesty King Letsie III and Prime Minister Mokhehle both agreed that the possibility of this problem being resolved is no longer a pipedream"

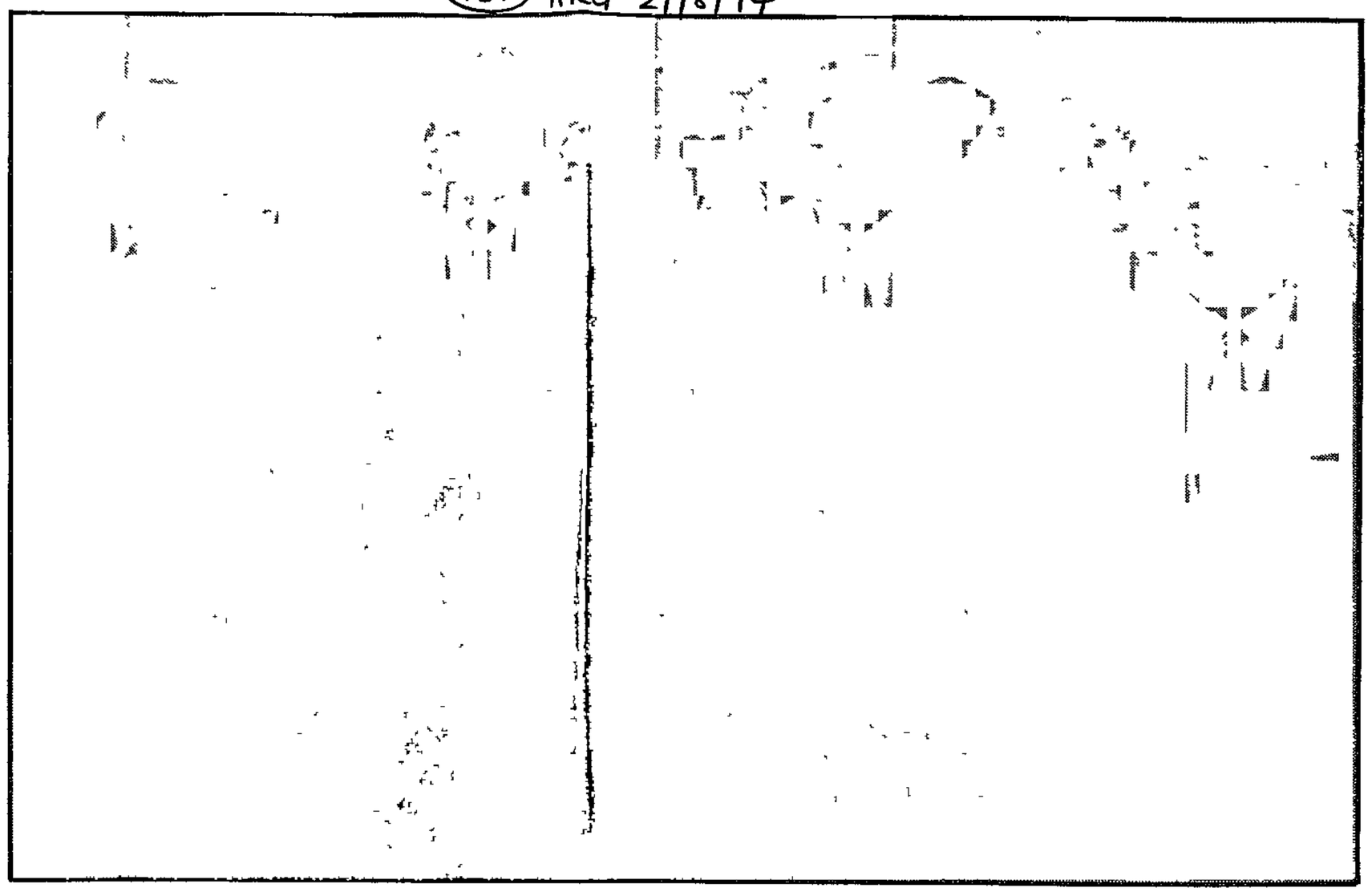
A Lesotho University lecturer in constitutional law said the role of the monarchy had always been disputed in Lesotho and the return of Moshoeshoe would restore the status quo of 1990, before the quarrelling intensified

The sources said the political game plan was that after Lestsie had stepped down, Moshoeshoe would initiate an electoral process whereby Lesotho's 1,6 million people could decide what kind of monarchy they wanted

Mr Mokhehle would go along with this, the sources said, because he and his party believed that the role of the monarchy must be clarified in this way

Lesotho University lecturer Nqusa Mahao said "If we want stability, we need to resolve this issue and I think King Letsie is aware of this and wants it to be tackled as a matter of urgency"

An official close to the king said that if the monarch had not been required to attend the Pretoria talks, he would have handed over the throne to his father on Thursday



☐ Home Affairs Minister Mangosuthu Buthelezi, President Mandela, King Letsie III and Zimbabwean President Robert Mugabe leave the Union Buildings in Pretoria after a six-hour meeting to resolve the Lesotho crisis

Poet Wally Serote heads arts committee

RENOWNED poet Wally Serote was elected chairman of the National Assembly's Arts and Science standing committee yesterday

His nomination, by Jennifer Ferguson, singer and fellow-ANC representative on the committee, was unopposed

Speaking immediately after his election, Mr Serote said the committee was extremely important

"If anything, we are the ones who can make reconciliation in our country a reality"

This could be achieved by enabling people to express their aspirations about their country, and to define South Africa's place in the world

It could also help make South Africans aware that they were Africans and ensure that Africa "informs our spirit and soul" — Sapa

Wally Serote

Move quicker on dispossessed — Mandela

HARARE — President Nelson Mandela says South Africa must step up plans to resettle or compensate thousands of blacks dispossessed under apartheid, in order to establish stable rural communities

Opening Zimbabwe's annual agricultural show here, Mr Mandela said his government aimed to develop SA's agricultural sector in a fair manner, as envisaged in its reconstruction and development plan

"This is urgent because agriculture forms an important part of our economy," he said "To achieve this we have to ensure the necessary conditions for the commercial sector to thrive This should include the improvement of the working conditions of millions of farmworkers

"We also have to intensify the programme to resettle or compensate those who were unjustly dispossessed, distribute available state land among deprived communities and assist small-scale farmers to set themselves up and prosper"

He said SA was keenly interested in the land-reform experiences of Zimbabwe, which has over the past two years increased its efforts to resettle thousands of landless blacks under controversial legislation, which allows the state to forcibly buy mostly white-owned farms for resettlement

Four white farmers are challenging the government's decision to earmark their land for resettlement in a landmark case in the Supreme Court

Mr Mandela, on his first official visit to Zimbabwe since he swept to power in April, said that although South Africa had a developed agricultural sector, helped by state-sponsored research, this research had not benefited all

"This has to change The advanced technology available needs to be adapted to suit local conditions, meet community needs and make creative use of latent indigenous information and experience," he said

Earlier, Mr Mandela was honoured by Harare's Agricultural Show Society, which named one of its halls after him He and his host, President Robert Mugabe, were each given a ton of maize seed, enough to plant a field of 100 acres

"Zimbabwe and South Africa are at one that socio-economic development can succeed only if it is underpinned by democracy, peace and stability within and among nations of our region," said Mr Mandela. — Sapa-Reuter

Nelson Mandela gets a lot of bull

HARARE — President Mandela has left the Zimbabwe capital the owner of a 16-month brahman bull.

Mr Mandela, who opened the 84th annual Harare agricultural show, was given the bull, valued at Z$20 000 (R44 000), by local farmer, opposition politician and academic Dr Themba Dhlodhlo

A spokesman said the bull will be "presented to the Eastern Transvaal for breeding purposes".

Mr Mandela told his hosts the greatest challenge facing his government was the redistribution of land and said South Africa was keenly interested in Zimbabwe's experience in dealing with inherited distortions in the ownership of land — Sapa.

Harsh blow for Letsie

Talks end with a stern order: the king must back down

C/Press 28/8/94

(167)

BY staging a "royal coup", Lesotho's King Letsie III might have unwittingly and to his regret unleashed forces likely to cement democracy in the tiny mountain kingdom

Letsie's decision – most likely at the instigation of the military – to annul parliament and dissolve the democratically elected government of Ntsu Mokhehle precipitated mass demonstrations in the capital of Maseru which must have stung him and his fellow conspirators

Thousands of protesting civil servants and other workers brought Maseru to a virtual halt for two days this week Other organs of civil society like the legal profession and non-governmental organisations also came out against the king's move

The large-scale opposition to the king's decision indicates that Basotho are no longer prepared to succumb to military or authoritarian dictatorships

But of paramount importance, influential countries in the subcontinent like South Africa, Botswana and Zimbabwe have shown they will not accept undemocratic governments in the region

President Nelson Mandela and his counterparts from Botswana and Zimbabwe on Thursday told King Letsie III he had no alternative but to retract his dissolution of the Lesotho parliament and the government

Zimbabwean President Robert Mugabe, who led the news conference after the Union Building crisis meeting as chairman of the Frontline States, said "We made it clear to King Letsie that we cannot condone the measures he has taken It is necessary for the king to take steps to reverse those measures."

Mugabe told the news conference that the king and ousted Prime Minister Ntsu Mokhehle had been given a week to consult their advisers and report back

All this must have come as a sobering blow to Letsie

The reaction of the international community was also blunt The US and the European Union threatened to suspend economic aid to Lesotho, one of the world's poorest countries

Failure by Letsie to respond positively within a week would have serious implications for the landlocked kingdom The country would find itself completely isolated

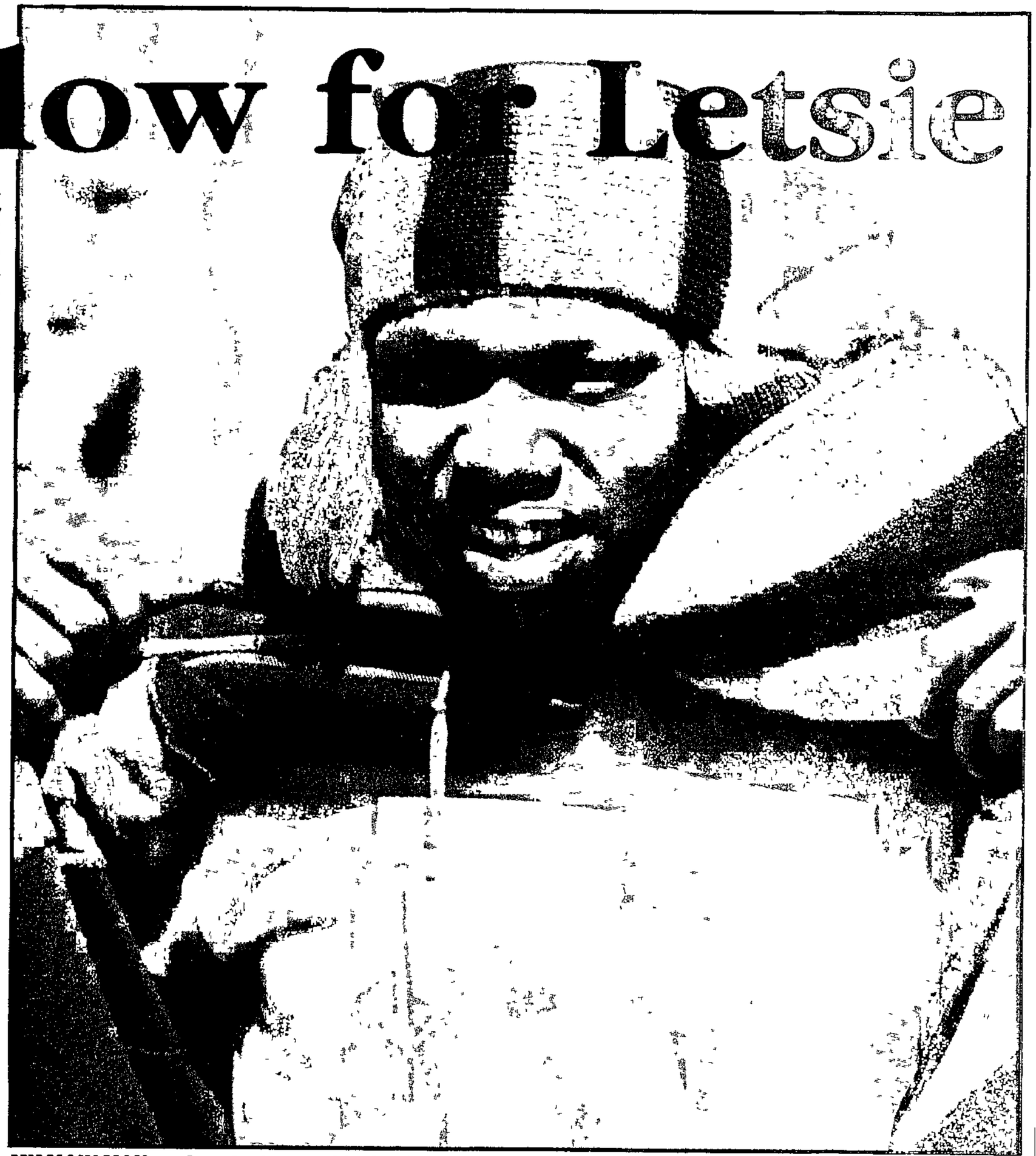
Observers of the events unfolding in Lesotho say that the young monarch and his father, Moshoeshoe II are just pawns in the power game. It is the military and the former Foreign Minister in the previous regime, Evaristus Retselisitsoe Sekhonyana, who are the puppet masters

The military have not been happy since the country reverted to civilian rule 18 months ago

Earlier this year some of them mutineed and demanded a 100 percent pay rise – a demand which the government said was a pretext for usurping power

The army has played a pivotal role in the affairs of Lesotho since 1970 when the then Prime Minister Leabua Jonathan annulled the elections which Mokhehle's BCP had won

The miscalculation by Letsie and his backers has backfired The events of the last few days have sent a powerful message – undemocratic regimes will no longer be tolerated, at least in this part of the world



MY MAIN MAN . . . A protester outside the Union Buildings shows off a T-shirt bearing deposed Prime Minister Ntsu Mokhehle's face.

Pic: THULANI SITHOLE

King urged to reinstate government

(167)

ARG 30/8/94

☐ 'In best interests of Lesotho'

GABORONE. — Heads of Southern African states have advised Lesotho's King Letsie III to reinstate immediately and unconditionally the government of Prime Minister Ntsu Mokhehle he dismissed 12 days ago.

This was in the best interests of Lesotho and the region, according to a statement from the Southern African Development Community (SADC) heads of state summit in Gaborone.

It condemned the action of Lesotho's security forces who in April kidnapped several cabinet ministers and assassinated Deputy Prime Minister Selometsi Baholo

The summit urged its 11 members to support efforts to mediate in the Angolan civil war by President Mandela, the United Nations and the Organisation of African Unity.

It also called on the international community to intensify pressure on the Unita rebel movement to commit itself to a speedy and peaceful resolution of the war.

The heads of state said they noted that UN-sponsored negotiations in Lusaka had made a significant breakthrough on agreements in principle for national reconciliation

Unita had been offered posts in the cabinet, local government and foreign services in an envisaged government of national unity

Agreement had also been reached that UN peacekeeping forces in Angola would number 7 000 troops

The summit said it was satisfied with progress in the Mozambique peace process, especially the demobilisation of armed forces and the integration and training of a 30 000-strong new national army

● Lesotho has protested against the exclusion of Minister of Finance Moletsane Monyame from an SADC council of ministers meeting last week

The ministry said it had sent a protest note to the SADC secretary-general.

The protest note said the affront to Mr Monyame was an affront to King Letsie, whose position was constitutional and not disputed by anyone — Sapa

Reinstate govt, king told

GABORONE — Heads of southern African states advised Lesotho's King Letsie III to immediately and unconditionally reinstate the government of Prime Minister Mr Ntsu Mokhehle that he dismissed 12 days ago.

This was in the best interests of Lesotho and the region, according to a statement from the Southern African Development Community (SADC) heads of state summit here.

It condemned the action of Lesotho's security forces, who kidnapped several cabinet ministers in April and assassinated Deputy Prime Minister Mr Selometsi Baholo

The European Union has also threatened to review diplomatic and economic relations with Lesotho unless the constitutional government was reinstated, says a statement issued through the German embassy yesterday. — Sapa

167 CT 30/8/94

SOWETAN Wednesday August 31 1994

NEWS Letsie III 'has no right to dismiss government and parliament' — axed minister

Lesotho king 'abused power'

GABORONE — Lesotho King Letsie III constitutionally does not have the right to dismiss the government and parliament because he does not rule, he reigns, says Lesotho's ousted foreign minister Mr Molapo Qobela

Qobela, who served in prime minister Ntsu Mokhehle's government, said yesterday all concerned agreed King Letsie III acted unconstitutionally by deposing the democratically elected government of the Basotholand Congress Party

He said Letsie, who also dissolved the council of state and scrapped some sections of the constitution, did not consult with the elected government

"There is no government in Lesotho other than the elected one," he stressed

Qobela said Letsie wrote a letter to Mokhehle on August 27 inviting him to a meeting to discuss problems but Mokhehle refused to accept the letter

Qobela also said the Pretoria meeting — initiated by South Africa, Botswana and Zimbabwe — did not agree that Letsie and Mokhehle should go back to Lesotho to confer on the country's crisis. He said last Thursday's Pretoria meeting urged Letsie to think again and restore the democratically elected government that he deposed on August 17

Qobela said the Southern African Development Community summit in Gaborone this week implored Letsie to abide by the agreement reached at the Pretoria meeting

He said once back in power, the deposed government would find out who had authorised payment of those who usurped the reigns of power, and would act accordingly — *Sapa*

■ RESTORE DEMOCRACY King urged to abide by Pretoria agreement:

Great welcome for deposed Mokhehle

CT 31/8/94 (167)

MASERU — Deposed Lesotho Prime Minister Mr Ntsu Mokhehle returned here yesterday to a tumultuous welcome from thousands of Basotholand Congress Party supporters

He and his ousted cabinet were returning from a meeting in Gaborone, Botswana, of Southern African Development Community heads of state

His return came as the head of the mountain kingdom's caretaker government, Mr Hae Phoofolo, said there was "no way" Lesotho King Letsie III was going to restore the ousted prime minister

"That step is not even on the cards," Mr Phoofolo, appointed by the king to head a Provisional Council to rule Lesotho for a year, said by telephone from the Lesotho capital Maseru

The monarch has been given until tomorrow by President Nelson Mandela and his Zimbabwean and Botswanan counterparts President Robert Mugabe and President Ketumile Masire to reinstate Mr Mokhehle's government, which won power in Lesotho's first democratic elections in two decades — Sapa-AFP

Diplomacy given a chance in Lesotho

ARG 1/9/94 (167)

□ King's deadline extended to September 5

Reports by
KAIZER NYATSUMBA
The Argus Foreign Service

MASERU. — Diplomacy has been given a chance in Lesotho.

The deadline now given to the country's embattled King Letsie III to hand power over to the mountain kingdom's democratically elected Basotho Congress Party (BCP) — which won a landslide victory in the tiny country's April 1993 election — has been extended to give diplomacy a chance, according to informed diplomatic sources here.

The new turn of events follows a short-notice visit to Lesotho yesterday by the foreign ministers of the three countries involved in a concerted bid to mediate in the crisis created by King Letsie's ousting of prime minister Ntsu Mokhehle's government

Ministers Alfred Nzo of South Africa, Nathan Shamuyarira of Zimbabwe and G Chiepe of Botswana arrived in Lesotho yesterday for separate talks with King Letsie and Mr Mokhehle

Top secret latters from presidents Nelson Mandela, Robert Mugabe and Quett Masire were handed to the two leaders

The three presidents will send another emissary to Maseru today to hold further secret talks with the king and Mr Mokhehle

Although diplomatic sources last night said they understood the new deadline given to Mr Mokhehle was September 5, other sources said no firm deadline had been fixed to avoid a situation in which the three presidents would find themselves forced to take action if the crisis was not resolved by a certain date

People to whom journalists spoke on the streets of Maseru yesterday, as they were hurrying home to beat the 7pm-5am curfew, said the BCP had advised its members at a meeting yesterday to go to work as usual today because King Letsie's deadline had been extended

Although Mr Nzo, Mr Shamuyarira and Dr Chiepe held a Press conference at the King Moshoeshoe II Airport here before flying out of the mountain kingdom, they were tight-lipped about their mission, saying they first had to report to their respective presidents

South African director-general for foreign affairs Rusty Evans said last night the situation in Lesotho was not without hope

"It isn't doom and gloom There are a number of hopeful signals and the diplomatic effort has still got a lot of life in it"

Meanwhile non-governmental organisations here yesterday threatened a stayaway if talks between King Letsie and Mr Mokhehle did not lead to a resolution of the crisis soon

In South Africa, Cosatu has again urged that tough action — including the blockading of the landlocked country — should be taken

Mokhehle is people's choice . . .

MASERU. — Among the commuters rushing home to beat the curfew in Maseru, not one could be found who supported King Letsie in his action of ousting the government of Ntsu Mokhehle

Instead, everyone who stopped to talk wanted Mr Mokhehle's government restored to office.

People here are worried about the possible implications of the political stalemate.

"We are going to lose jobs because overseas parastatals will go to countries where there is peace Education standards will drop because most teachers here are foreigner," said 26-year-old Matshidiso Tlakeli.

"They should sit down and settle their problems through negotiations and not through fighting"

A 66-year-old man who declined to give his name also condemned King Letsie

"I am feeling uneasy, very uneasy and very unhappy about the present situation, especially since Mr Mokhehle won a landslide, which means he was unanimously elected to become prime minister," he said.

Pressure on Lesotho king building up

(167)

ARG 2/9/94

□ Sanctions looming after coup

MASERU. — Lesotho's king, who toppled Prime Minister Ntsu Mokhehle's elected government last month, is facing growing pressure to reinstate it or confront possible crippling sanctions.

Diplomats and analysts said King Letsie III had limited room for manoeuvre after his dissolution of Mr Mokhehle's government on August 17, and the installation of a provisional government

"Most countries are waiting to see what the king does by Monday," said a diplomat from Britain, Lesotho's former colonial power

Monday is the new deadline given by South Africa, Botswana and Zimbabwe, mediators in Lesotho's crisis, for the king to reverse Mr Mokhehle's dismissal, which has been backed by the army.

The three countries had earlier told the monarch to do this by yesterday, but agreed to extend the deadline to give diplomacy a chance

The analysts said the African trio and the international community were determined to punish the king until Mr Mokhehle's government, elected in Lesotho's first democratic polls 16 months ago, was returned.

"I think the scenario that we had in 1986, when South Africa blockaded Lesotho until the government was overthrown, cannot be ruled out, although I think it will be the last resort," a Western diplomat said.

In 1986, South Africa's rulers said they took the action to punish the then government of civilian Prime Minister Leabua Jonathan because he was allegedly backing blacks fighting against apartheid

The analysts said countries such as Zimbabwe were anxious that that King Letsie's move should not succeed.

But yesterday King Letsie tightened his grip on the provisional government he has appointed, banning all foreign travel by ministers. — Reuter.

Talks on crisis at 'delicate stage'

JOHANNESBURG. — Diplomatic negotiations to resolve the constitutional crisis in Lesotho have reached a "very delicate stage", said a South African foreign affairs spokesman.

He said Department of Foreign Affairs acting director-general Rusty Evans and senior diplomatic officials were still involved in talks in the mountain kingdom.

Because negotiating parties were monitoring all media reports, Press statements on the negotiations could jeopardise the talks. — Sapa.

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"I think the scenario that we had in 1986, when South Africa blockaded Lesotho until the government was overthrown, cannot be ruled out, although I think it will be the last resort," a Western diplomat said

In 1986, South Africa's rulers said they took the action to punish the then government of civilian Prime Minister Leabua Jonathan because he was allegedly backing blacks fighting against apartheid.

The analysts said countries such as Zimbabwe were anxious that that King Letsie's move should not succeed.

But yesterday King Letsie tightened his grip on the provisional government he has appointed, banning all foreign travel by ministers. — Reuter.

Talks on crisis at 'delicate stage'

JOHANNESBURG. — Diplomatic negotiations to resolve the constitutional crisis in Lesotho have reached a "very delicate stage", said a South African foreign affairs spokesman.

He said Department of Foreign Affairs acting director-general Rusty Evans and senior diplomatic officials were still involved in talks in the mountain kingdom.

Because negotiating parties were monitoring all media reports, Press statements on the negotiations could jeopardise the talks. — Sapa.

Lesotho king to reinstate ousted leader

(167)

ARG 3/9/94

MASERU. — Lesotho's King Letsie and ousted Prime Minister Ntsu Mokhehle have ended their power struggle and Mr Mokhehle said his government would be reinstated.

The agreement was announced as Lesotho's regional neighbours South Africa, Zimbabwe and Botswana appeared set to impose sanctions on the tiny landlocked kingdom, with backing from Western states such as Britain and the United States.

"It was agreed the process of restoring the government should start immediately," said Mr Mokhehle after his meeting with the king.

The king sparked a constitutional crisis on August 17 when he dissolved Mr Mokhehle's government, saying it did not enjoy popular support.

The ousting of Lesotho's first democratically-elected government in two decades drew widespread condemnation in the region and abroad.

South Africa, Botswana and Zimbabwe gave King Letsie until September 5 to rescind his decision.

South Africa has a complete stranglehold on the Lesotho economy.

Radio Lesotho said the latest accord was clinched in talks also attended by Rusty Evans, director-general of the South African foreign ministry.

It said the king and Mr Mokhehle reached agreement that the three Southern African states should act as guarantors of their accord.

A Western diplomat said: "I understand a letter was handed over raising the threat of economic sanctions if they (the king and Mr Mokhehle) do not reach a compromise."

Mr Mokhehle, whose Basotho Congress Party won elections in March last year, said the role given the three southern African states meant the king accepted that he had to meet their September 5 deadline for reinstating his government.

A statement from the palace did not say when Mr Mokhehle would be back in office.

"If things can get back to normal, to where they were, everybody will be happy," said Mr Mokhehle. — Sapa-Reuter.

Strike brings Lesotho to halt

MASERU — Lesotho was brought to a standstill yesterday by a general strike called by the Basotholand Congress Party (BCP) of Prime Minister Mr Ntsu Mokhehle, ousted by King Letsie III. (167)

Shops and offices were closed and public transport shut down in the normally bustling capital. (48) CT 6/9/94

The BCP called the strike to step us pressure on King Letsie — Sapa

Three envoys in Lesotho to check on king

(167)

ARG 5/9/94

☐ Mokhehle aides 'confused'

MASERU — Envoys from Botswana, South Africa and Zimbabwe have arrived in Lesotho to determine whether embattled King Letsie III is prepared to reinstate the government he sacked last month.

Diplomatic sources said the envoys, who arrived in Maseru yesterday, would seek more details about the king's statement last week promising to restore Prime Minister Ntsu Mokhehle's government

The statement, issued after talks between the king and Mr Mokhehle, said they had agreed to restore "constitutional order" but did not say when

Mokhehle aides said they had since heard conflicting signals from officials of an interim government installed by the king when he dismissed the prime minister on August 17

"We hear that some of these officials are now saying in private that Friday's accord may not be implemented immediately as had been agreed," one Mokhehle aide said "We are confused and worried"

A Western diplomat said of today's mission of the foreign envoys· "I expect them to hold talks with the king to hear first-hand how soon Mr Mokhehle will be reinstated and what steps are being taken in this regard"

The leaders of the so-called African troika, angered by a reversal of democracy in their region, have given King Letsie until today to act

Diplomatic sources said the three states, which would act as guarantors of the king's pact with Mr Mokhehle, were ready to impose sanctions on Lesotho unless their demand was met

Sanctions could include a blockade of Lesotho by South Africa, which encircles the poor kingdom of 1,6 million people.

The three countries are backed in their tough line by several Western states, including the United States, which has halted its aid to Lesotho, and Britain, the former colonial master which has threatened to take similar action

"A blockade of Lesotho by South Africa would bring the country to its knees within a week at best," a Lesotho economist said

"If you add the aid cut-off, you have a grave crisis."

Lesotho's powerful industrialists and sections of the work force say they will make Lesotho ungovernable unless Mr Mokhehle is returned to power immediately

King Letsie said when he dismissed Mr Mokhehle's government, elected in 1993 in the country's first democratic polls in two decades, that it had lost its mandate to govern and was dividing the nation — Sapa-Reuter

Mokhehle back as premier

LESOTHO'S King Letsie III and the elected premier he ousted last month have agreed "in principle" to work to restore constitutional order, the foreign minister in the interim government said at the weekend. S|9|94

South African foreign ministry official Mr Rusty Evans said "progress has been made" in talks between Prime Minister Ntsu Mokhehle and the king, following his August 17 dismissal of the elected government. (167)

Mr Evaristus Sekhonyana, the foreign minister in the interim government installed by the king, said: "It is a positive step. I have no doubt that there will be an amicable solution. — *Sapa-AFP*

Deal on Lesotho crisis 'is on track'

(167)

CT 6/9/94

MASERU. — Three African states threatening to impose sanctions on Lesotho to force the reinstatement of ousted Prime Minister Mr Ntsu Mokhehle yesterday pronounced themselves happy with a deal to return him to power.

But as envoys of South Africa, Botswana and Zimbabwe shuttled between urgent talks here, a local democracy group warned of action if Mr Mokhehle was not back in power by tomorrow.

"The people's patience is quickly running out," said Mr Caleb Sello, head of Lesotho's Non-Governmental Organisations group that organised a national strike last month after Mr Mokhehle's toppling by King Letsie and the military.

Mr Sello demanded a speedy and unconditional reinstatement of the government, "otherwise we will have no option but to unleash our contemplated measures ... Our deadline has to be observed." — Sapa-Reuter

Lesotho sanctions call

(167) CT 7/9/94

JOHANNESBURG — Lesotho's Basotho Congress Party yesterday called for immediate economic sanctions against King Letsie III's government because two deadlines for reinstating ousted Prime Minister Mr Ntsu Mokhehle's government had not been met

But in Parliament yesterday Deputy President Thabo Mbeki, replying to a question, said South Africa would not intervene militarily, or impose sanctions to resolve the political crisis in Lesotho.

King Letsie's administration yesterday criticised South African mediator Mr Rusty Evans, who said earlier in Cape Town he hoped an agreement to reinstate the Mokhehle government would be signed later in the day.

Referring to previous forecasts that the return of Mr Mokhehle was a foregone conclusion, the interim government said "These announcements are false and devoid of all truth on what has been discussed." — Sapa-Reuter

focus on

Sowetan 7/9/94

Deposed Lesotho King Moshoeshoe II could be reinstated as part of certain guarantees to restore the government of Ntsu Mokhehle, according to the **South African Press Association:**

LESOTHO's King Letsie III has demanded certain guarantees as part of an agreement to restore the government of Prime Minister Ntsu Mokhehle, Foreign Affairs Director-General Rusty Evans said yesterday

Briefing the National Assembly's Foreign Affairs select committee on diplomatic efforts to end the political crisis in Lesotho, he said Letsie and Mokhehle were expected to sign a final draft outlining the guarantees this week

At Evans's request, committee chairman Raymond Suttner ruled that details of the guarantees should not be made public

However, Evans said Letsie had definitely agreed to reinstate Mokhehle's democratically elected government and restore his father, King Moshoeshoe II, to the monarchy

"Mokhehle will have to be restored in government within days, if not hours We have a sense that we are very close to that If it does not take place within the next day or two, we will have another crisis"

Evans and Zimbabwe's permanent secretary of Foreign Affairs, Mr Stanislaus Chigwedere, have been involved in talks with the two parties to end the crisis caused by Letsie's dismissal of the Mokhehle government on August 17

Their mission follows a deadline given to Letsie by Presidents Nelson Mandela, Robert Mugabe of Zimbabwe and Ketumile Masire of Botswana at a meeting in Pretoria on August 24

Evans said Letsie and Mokhehle had reached a basic agreement on Friday to "restore the constitutional order" in Lesotho

However, both parties then had to propose "measures and procedures" to implement the decision. These measures include the guarantees required by Letsie

(167)

"We hope that agreement will be reached in the course of today"

Evans said the position of Moshoeshoe II, who was ousted by a previous military government in 1990, and a lack of discipline in the security forces were central to the crisis in the mountain kingdom

Elements in the ranks of the Royal Lesotho Defence Force openly supported Moshoeshoe's efforts to return to the throne Mokhehle had given a written undertaking that he would consider the restoration of the King, but certain constitutional changes were required

While RLDF officers were generally well-trained and disciplined, soldiers were highly politicised and openly aligned to the former Basutoland National Party government

"There is concern that if the BCP (Mokhehle's governing party) is returned to power, there might be some form of uncontrollable reaction from the defence force"

Evans said Mokhehle was "very concerned" about the RLDF's reaction if his government was restored and had requested troops from neighbouring countries to help keep the peace

A commission of inquiry instituted to investigate the Lesotho armed forces should reconvene as soon as possible and complete its task.

Evans said a broader constitutional and political debate was needed in Lesotho South African politicians could assist by encouraging Lesotho to move in the direction of power-sharing and a government of national unity

Lesotho protest stayaway planned

(167) ARG 7/9/94

□ Pressure on efforts to reinstate government

MASERU. — The National Crisis Committee in Lesotho is planning a stayaway tomorrow and on Friday to put pressure on diplomatic efforts to reinstate the deposed Lesotho government.

Crisis committee communications secretary Sobuza Sopeng said today that his organisation was unhappy with the way the shuttle diplomacy between South Africa, Botswana, Zimbabwe and Lesotho was being handled

He said two deadlines had passed, the last one on Monday, but nothing had happened to resolve the issue. Instead, King Letsie appeared to be setting conditions over handing power back to the democratic government of Ntsu Mokhehle.

Mr Sopeng said they were not being informed of new developments. He said the stayaway would be supported by businessmen, trade unions, taxi associations and other organisations.

The stayaway threat came after Lesotho's interim government, appointed less than a month ago and facing imminent removal, hit out at South African and other mediators trying to end the crisis in the kingdom.

The government was named by King Letsie, who sacked the elected government of Prime Minister Ntsu Mokhehle on August 17, angering his neighbours, aid donors and his own subjects

In a show of defiance, a statement by the administration read on government radio focused on South African mediator Rusty Evans, who said in Cape Town yesterday that he hoped an agreement to reinstate the Mokhehle government would be signed later in the day.

Referring to previous forecasts that the return of Mr Mokhehle was a foregone conclusion, the interim government's statement said: "These announcements are false and devoid of all truth on what has been discussed."

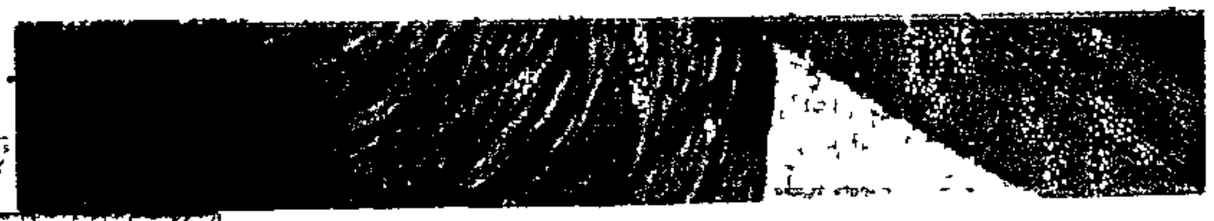
"The nation is entitled to know that all announcements in relation to the present situation in Lesotho will be made by His Majesty the King and not officials of certain governments who describe themselves as mediators," the statement said.

Mr Evans said on Monday that an accord between Mr Mokhehle and King Letsie was binding and would result in the reinstatement of Mr Mokhehle and his government.

Mr Evans is spokesman for envoys from South Africa, Botswana and Zimbabwe, which have intervened in the crisis and have raised the prospect of sanctions if King Letsie, 34, does not come to heel. — Sapa-Reuter

Nigerians face clamp ARG 7/9/94

Pledge over reprisals



Zaire money forgers face

SA troops on Lesotho border

Paratroopers, fighter planes monitor troubled mountain kingdom

The Argus Correspondent

JOHANNESBURG. — South African National Defence Force paratroopers were dropped on the Lesotho border in a show of force today.

The action coincided with the second day of a work stoppage in protest against the dissolution of the government of Prime Minister Ntsu Mokhehle.

Chief of the Army Lieutenant-General Hattingh Pretorius announced in Pretoria that elements of the South African Army in the Free State were moved as part of an exercise to test contingency plans

The army's move was aimed particularly at making provision for border protection duties and other aid actions which could arise from the unstable situation in Lesotho.

In Cape Town, a spokeswoman for the ministry of defence denied an invasion was imminent

The Lesotho capital Maseru was at a standstill for the second day today with shops, offices and banks closed.

Basotho residents watched three South African Air Force Impala jets fly over the South African side of the border this morning.

Residents described the situation as calm but tense

"The anxiety level is increasing as a result of these manoeuvres," said Maseru resident Nomakhosi Jennens

"There is support for the South African initiative, but the feeling of residents is that if the South African government is going to act they must do so quickly," she said

Large numbers of Maseru residents stood on the banks of the Caledon River, watching the South African manoeuvres

Paratroops jumped from a SAAF blue jet and landed near the river.

People travelling back to Maseru after shopping in nearby Ladybrand in the Free State said today they had seen South African troops gathering behind a mountain facing the Lesotho capital

Unconfirmed reports said members of the Royal Lesotho Defence Force at the main barracks had taken up position on the border in anticipation of a military strike

There has been no comment from the Lesotho government on the military action.

Yesterday the Congress of South African Trade Unions threatened a blockade against Lesotho unless the democratically-elected government of Mr Mokhehle was reinstated by September 17

Mr Mokhehle's government was summarily dismissed by King Letsie III on August 17

ARGUS 17/9/91

Strike leads to Lesotho shutdown

Star 9/9/94

Maseru — Lesotho was brought to a standstill yesterday by a general strike called by the Basotholand Congress Party of ousted prime minister Ntsu Mokhehle

Shops and offices were closed, public transport shut down and only a few civil servants turned up for work in the normally bustling capital

The BCP called a two-day strike for yesterday and today to step up the pressure on King Letsie, who ousted the democratically elected Mokhehle on August 17

Mediators from SA, Zimbabwe and Botswana postponed Wednesday's talks on Mokhehle's reinstatement, allowing for a period of mourning following the sudden death of a sister of Letsie, Princess Maseeiso Christina Seeiso. — Sapa-AFP.

167

King Letsie meets ex-prime minister

LESOTHO's embattled King Letsie III yesterday met the man he deposed as prime minister but refused to reinstate him.

The king is under pressure from neighbouring countries and his own subjects to reinstate Prime Minister Ntsu Mokhehle after dissolving the elected government on August 17

SA Foreign Affairs spokesman Chris Streeter said that if the king refused to reinstate the government, which won power 16 months ago, an "economic blockade is one of the last options" mediators would consider Negotiations would "run their full course". At no stage would southern African states resort to military action to persuade Letsie to give in.

However, the monarch was defiant, his aides said. Since telling President Nelson Mandela and other regional leaders last week he would consider restoring Mokhehle, he has said such action was not a solution.

A close aide said Letsie had asked the prime minister to join a newly appointed provisional council to prepare for elections scheduled for March.

The king had decided that the solution "lies in all parties governing together for a while", the aide said.

Mokhehle's response was not immediately known.

Earlier, the foreign minister in his government, Molapo Qobela, said the prime minister's Basutoland Congress Party, would never join the king's provisional government. "We are the only elected government. There is no government in Lesotho other than the elected one," he said

The foreign ministers of SA, Zimbabwe and Botswana held talks with the king and Mokhehle in the capital, Maseru, yesterday

They said talks with the two rivals had been successful, but declined to elaborate.

The three countries have given Letsie until today to hand over power. No specific sanctions have been publicly threatened if the ultimatum is ignored, but Lesotho is economically dependent on SA.

One Western diplomat said: "Things do not look good at all.

"Many people here think military intervention is the only solution.

"The people are bracing for worse things to come."

Some trade unions and lawyers' groups threatened to call strikes if the king did not restore Mokhehle. (167)

"If he does not hand over power to Mokhehle, we are going to embark on very rough mass action," one union spokesman said. — Sapa-Reuter-AFP.

CITY PRESS, September 4, 1994

Letsie III to restore elected Lesotho rulers

LESOTHO'S King Letsie III, threatened with international sanctions after ousting Prime Minister Ntsu Mokhehle, has agreed to reinstate him to head off a crisis that would have crippled the tiny nation

The king clinched the face-saving accord in talks with Mokhehle on Friday in Maseru

"It was agreed that the process of the restoration of the government should start immediately," Mokhehle said

Asked whether he was pleased, he said "I have not been happy with this episode But if things can get back to where they were before August 17, everybody will be happy"

Letsie sparked a constitutional row and international outrage on August 17 when he dissolved Mokhehle's government – the first to be democratically elected in two decades – saying it no longer enjoyed popular support

South Africa, Botswana and Zimbabwe gave Letsie until September 5 to rescind his decision

South Africa completely surrounds the mountain kingdom and has a stranglehold on its economy

Danger signs

Lesotho's former colonial ruler, Britain, and other countries made clear they would cut off vital aid unless Mokhehle was restored to office

"The king seems to have read the danger signs," said a Western diplomat

In a statement read by state radio, Letsie said he had agreed to restore constitutional order and that steps would be taken to start a national debate on the future role of the monarch

South Africa, Zimbabwe and Botswana will oversee the implementation of the accord

African diplomats in Maseru say the king has been a virtual pawn in a high-stake power game played by the military, which controlled Lesotho for eight years until Mokhehle's election victory last year

The army is now said to be restive about going back to barracks Mokhehle is a former guerrilla leader who fought against the army – Sapa-Reuter

A King on Tucks

(167)

Democracy's lightning has struck twice in south recently but the effect on its targets, Lesotho and Sou has been surprisingly variable, observes ***Denis B***

The Star 1 Sept 1

Strong parallels and stro

STRONG DIFFERENCES

You may not have noticed — few people did, this side of the Caledon River — but an uncannily equivalent chain of events has lately occurred in southern Africa not once but twice

Twice, a nation historically ruled by oligarchy has become democratic

Twice, the turnaround came in an April, amid jubilation from the locals

Twice, a once banned party won by a landslide

Twice a previously jailed, much idolised, septuagenarian became his nation s leader

Twice the former ruling faction emerged as the second party with just over 20 percent of the vote

Strong parallels Strong differences, too, which is why Lesotho is a wreck while South Africa, warts and all, is pioneering the mer ruling party now has 20 percent of the House of Assembly, 20 percent of the Senate, and 20 percent of the Cabinet Gripe as it may, it is in the team

Lesotho's 20 percent former ruling party has 0 percent of the House of Assembly, 0 percent of the Cabinet, and 100 percent domination of the Senate

For another our technically geriatric president is abundantly awake, on-the-ball, and a world-class superhero Lesotho's geriatric prime minister is tragically out of it

Ntsu Mokhehle was Lesotho's idol even before Lesotho was Lesotho He waited in the wings through 40 years of vigorous struggle. When he won, it was cruelly too late

Mokhehle can barely hear, barely speak, and barely see Everybody reveres him, everybody knows that the Basutho Congress Party (BCP) polled its volcanic victory in April 1993 because of him, and nobody likes to say in public what is an open secret throughout Lesotho, that the prime minister's infirmity is largely responsible for the catatonic muddle which BCP rule has been.

Thirdly, of these two parallel nations one is mercifully uncluttered by the atavistic complications of monarchy, the other, cursed by kingship

That the youthful King Letsie — "Let's see ay" rather than a rhyme with "Betsy" — has been agitated by his royal role is not in doubt.

He's king The whole nation has to stand up for him But his father is his father He must stand up for his father What happens when father and son, subject and king, are in the same place at the same time?

Who comes first? This kind of personal problem has deeply troubled Letsie, the most reluctant of kings It has troubled his father, Moshoeshoe II, most enraged of ex-kings, even deeper

Moshoeshoe was harshly elbowed off the throne in 1990 after falling out with military strongman Metsing Lekhanya, whom he may have helped depose the previous BNP government (Lekhanya, himself now three years deposed, last month turned up wearing the colours of the party he overthrew, leading a march to reinstate the king he evicted

Had Moshoeshoe opted to retire quietly to Britain, Lesotho might today be a calmer place facing a clearer crystal-ball Instead the ex-king set up an alternative court in the breathtakingly beautiful royal compound at Matsieng — rustic sandstone architecture amid classic Lesothan scenic splendour — where he waits impatiently to be king again

For Letsie, the weight of an unwanted crown is great He took it on under duress, to save the monarchy. He hoped for early relief, in place of which matters got steadily worse

For one thing, the BCP government shows nil inclination to rescue him from his throne As with everything in Lesotho politics, this is for totally contradictory motives On one hand the BCP leaders are modern progressives, needing the intrigues of kings and courtiers not a whit more than they need the Horsemen of the Apocalypse.

To go through the pomp of a new coronation would be to reinflame the monarchist fervour of the peasantry, which the government fervently but quietly wishes would fade away

On the other hand, if they were going to have a king at all they may as well have one they get along with, and that does not mean Moshoeshoe Oddly enough Letsie, although now infamous abroad as the villain of the coup, has all along been Mr Nice Guy to those in the know

Even now they'll tell you at length how straight, how honest and how misled he was

Whereas Moshoeshoe — worshipped in the mountains as the next thing to God if not vice-versa — is little-loved around the green baize tables of the Maseru elite, he is widely suspected of wholesale scheming and of knowing more than he would wish to discuss about certain low points of recent Lesotho history

So the orb and sceptre stayed in Letsie's hands Not much else came to his hands, such as the official documents he was supposed to see The BCP's closed-eared brand of dictatorial democracy became rapidly uncomfortable to friend and foe alike, but to no one more than the former Establishment, the army, the chiefs, and the Catholic hierarchy, the people surrounding the king They saw themselves as being simply cut out

The Lesotho Council of Non-Government Organisations, the cutting edge of civil society and perhaps the most sensible public institution in the nation, called for a national convention

The BCP government shot that down and followed its rejection up with a number of actions that the old Establishment perceived as a build-up to a purge

They appointed a commission of inquiry into Moshoeshoe's activities for the last 32 years They charged the de facto leader of the opposition with sedition, on the strength of a mildly rash speech They interdicted a royal prince for proposing a rally To the old guard, it seemed like a closing ring

That is the background to last Wednesday fortnight, when at 5 am King Letsie ambled into the radio station with four policemen and three soldiers and abolished the government

Since then on the one hand you have Keystone Cops meets Evelyn Waugh The country is thick with comic opera Take the censorship endeavours

In a parody of Banana-republicism, state radio and TV do not, for instance, announce calls for protests or boycotts, but do in interminable length and detail regurgitate the Letsie regime's angry response to such calls

You learn the news by what is not said, like in a *Mad* magazine satire Any rate, that is how you would learn the news if censorship worked, which it does not

South African airwaves are everywhere Any Mosotho watching as Lesotho TV carefully ignores Lesotho's news can simultaneously have his radio tuned to the SABC and hear it all Or he can switch channels as soon as Lesotho TV's one-hour stint ends, and have it with visuals on CCV The State can't play Big Brother in a land where the callboxes only take a neighbouring country's coins.

There is also the hide-and-seek games of Official Portraits Lesotho belongs to that less-blessed category of nations where every prudent place of business has on reverential display photographs of the Head of State and Head of Government

At times like now this means Russian Roulette, and mental acrobatics to make sure you have the right pictures for the right audience. Last week, that meant Letsie definitely alone for the police or the green-beret troops of the Mokoanyane Barracks, Mokhehle for sure, so far with or without Letsie, optionally, for the general public, and in case of a visit from the unpredictable maroon-beret toughies of the Support Company you quickly check that both pictures are up, and give yourself over to prayer

One businessman tells me it was the same in the Jonathan coup of 1970, the Lekhanya coup of 1986, the Lekhanya putsch of 1990, and the Ramaema coup of 1991, he keeps all his old Official Portraits locked up for sudden demand Insurance, y'know

There are hilarious features and pathetic features, often overlapping, and these are what puts Lesotho on the screens of the world insofar as it sees those screens at all

Yet there is another feature as well, which from the perspective of being there on the ground rather than distantly surveying the entertainment completely eclipses both the comedy and the tragedy, and that is the element of 2 million people living out ordinary lives

The country is extraordinarily beautiful and the people are as amiable as you like It's not only the quaint rustic peasants like you see in the brochures — they're there, all right, with their blankets and their horses and their ineffable courtesy, and it's true enough, cliché or no cliché, that the simple peasant goodwill can melt hearts and heads

But it's more than that, there are also the ordinary modern-minded sober townsmen who are wanting some way of seeing their mini-state thrive in peace They don t need big-shots messing things up

Of the 232 beds the new Lesotho Sun offers, 12 were occupied last Thursday, and the fax was dripping in cancellations That's where it ceases to be fun

Urban view . . . a busy street in Maseru, where the motives of deposed king Moshoeshoe are regarded with suspicion. Rural aspect . . . two Basotho boys stand in front of their home in the countryside, where Moshoeshoe is seen as the next thing to God.

PICTURES TJ LEMON

'Whereas Moshoeshoe, worshipped in the mountains as the next thing to God if not vice-versa, is little loved around the green baize tables of the Maseru elite. He is widely suspected of wholesale scheming and of knowing more than he would wish to discuss about certain low points of recent Lesotho history.'

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ng differences

(167)

People are hurting They need the income, they drive it away with their squabbles

Today Letsie is supposed to report back to Messrs Mandela, Mugabe & Co on how he has restored the status quo It sounds neat and sweet, but don't bet on it working The interpretations are incompatible "Ah," say the royalists, "this is where we all sit down together to negotiate"

The BCP version is "Ah, this is where the unelected intruders hurry off our turf" If Letsie does report satisfactorily today that will be surprising If the outcome sticks, that will be astonishing

Lesotho is one of the most homogenous countries on Earth The people not only have the same language, they don't even, I'm told, have different accents

They even have a shared snootiness towards South African Basotho, expressed in such things as an innocent one-upmanship about orthography In Lesotho for instance the sound 'd' is spelt "l", and Lesotho Basotho look down their noses at their SA cousins who chickened out and write it the modern way

As a nation with a shared culture, this place is blessed in a way South Africa can t begin to smell Yet they're falling to pieces and we're knitting together like clockwork mohair

They wail and apologise and make excuses about how deep the rifts go, how firmly imbued the army is with animosity to the BCP, and so on Deep, nothing

These little riftlets are scratches compared to what we've known Seems to me there's one big factor

Our new society brought the old one on board, their new society kicked the old one in the teeth We're likely yet to hear a good deal of outraged squawking about how dare the king interfere with the verdict of democracy, and true enough, that's unarguable in itself But we've learned that for democracy to rally work, it has to mean inclusion

Lesotho peace deal wrecked as interim rulers tell king not to sign

(167)

JOE MOLEFI
The Argus Foreign Service

MASERU — Prospects for a breakthrough in the Lesotho constitutional crisis looked set to deadlock today and the promised signing of a pact to resolve the power struggle now appears unlikely

This follows a radio broadcast in which the interim ruling council urged King Letsie III not to sign the agreement paving the way for a reinstatement of the government ousted by the king last month.

The council, effectively his mouthpiece as it was appointed by him following his dismissal of Prime Minister Ntsu Mokhehle's government last month, broadcast its position widely and repeatedly last night and today on Lesotho state radio.

While envoys of the three mediating countries in the crisis — South Africa, Botswana and Zimbabwe — arrived in Maseru today for the signing, the council's broadcast said it would be "premature" for the king to sign any agreement.

The council acknowledged the importance of the three mediating presidents but also signalled an unwillingness to co-operate, saying that "sovereign practice" would be violated if the Lesotho crisis was solved in Pretoria, Harare and Gaborone.

Last week King Letsie demanded that guarantees accompany the agreement These appear to have been worked out and the council acknowledged that if accepted they would "go a long way towards answering some fears and anxieties of those who do not favour the unconditional restitution of Mr Mokhehle's government"

The guarantees include an indemnification package of a general nature to those who supported the order dissolving the government, a guarantee that former King Moshoeshoe II be reinstated and measures to ensure strict compliance with the constitution.

A national forum to "discuss wider issues of reconciliation and unity" would also be guaranteed

However, this is the agreement the council now stands against. Instead, it says, on offer from King Letsie is an all-inclusive provisional government of national reconciliation, reconstruction and unity and the establishment of an independent electoral commission to prepare for general elections next year.

The council also said the king should not sign an agreement before consulting the nation and concluding his negotiations with Mr Mokhehle.

These negotiations were stalled last week when the king's sister died, and in the interim it appears positions have hardened and the negotiating envoys might come away empty-handed today

Regional states have threatened sanctions against the impoverished kingdom unless the status quo is restored. The king is backed by the army, which has seized power twice since Lesotho gained independence from Britain in 1966.

ARG 12/8/94

Lesotho deal delayed as military presses Letsie

ARG 13/9/94 (167)

□ Mediators confident of reinstatement decree today

DALE LAUTENBACH, Foreign Editor

JOHANNESBURG — The "table is set" for the signing of the agreement to resolve the Lesotho constitutional crisis today but military pressures behind the scenes appear to be causing hesitation on the part of King Letsie

However, Rusty Evans, senior South African envoy to the negotiations, remained confident that the monarch and the prime minister he ousted in a dramatic constitutional coup last month will indeed sign today

"When we left them about nine o'clock last night, the king told us he would sign today," said Mr Evans King Letsie had given ousted prime minister Ntsu Mokhehle the same undertaking

Mr Evans is leading a delegation of facilitators representing South Africa, Botswana and Zimbabwe, the three countries whose presidents have undertaken to steer Lesotho back to democracy

All documents pertaining to the agreement, including the order rescinding the king's dismissal of the Mokhehle government, were in order, according to Mr Evans

"The table is set," he said, adding that the broad and careful nature of the agreement created a sound basis on which Lesotho could steer a path to a stable political environment.

Mr Evans confirmed, though, that he had heard that some military elements were attempting to hold the king back from the proposed signing

"We are worried about that but remain confident the signing will take place We understand the pressure the king is under and if those pressures prevail, we will have an entirely different situation"

At this stage there is obviously no talk of a move as extreme as military intervention but a Cosatu resolution has earmarked Thursday as the day on which it will refuse to handle goods into Lesotho if the crisis is not resolved and Mr Mokhehle is not reinstated

Further, all reports from Maseru tell of a widespread insistence from the population that the signing should go ahead and that the ousted government should be reinstalled Failing this, diplomatic observers in the capital fear widespread strikes and protests

If King Letsie bows to military pressure, having undertaken now to sign the agreement, he will effectively be a hostage of the military, which has supported him so far

The agreement, according to Mr Evans, creates a "solid basis" for all parties in the Lesotho dispute to have an effective political role where applicable and, in the case of the military, to be depoliticised

"The agreement broadens the political debate," said Mr Evans, signalling that things would not return to the old Mokhehle style of government which, prior to the king's coup, had been quite harshly criticised

The expected decree would guarantee the protection of the interests of all political parties

The breakthrough came last night as Mr Mohkhehle's Basutoland Congress Party called for sanctions

"We plan to have strikes and stayaways indefinitely and we call for immediate sanctions against Lesotho," said Shakhane Mokhehle, BCP secretary-general and the prime minister's brother

Lesotho pact 'not signed'

MASERU — No pact has yet been signed between Lesotho's King Letsie III and ousted Prime Minister Mr Ntsu Mokhehle

The two met yesterday, in a meeting widely expected to bring an end to the crisis SABC news reported last night that the agreement had not been signed

Foreign Minister Mr Molapo Qobela, a member of the government the king sacked on August 17, said the meeting had taken place but declined to say if the king had signed the pact.

"The issue is very delicate," Mr Qobela told reporters, adding that he could say no more until Mr Mokhehle's cabinet had finished a late-night meeting

A ruling council appointed by the king after the sacking of Mr Mokhehle's elected government said earlier the monarch ought to consult the nation before agreeing to a deal — Sapa-Reuter

(167) CT 13/9/94

Lesotho joy

ARGUS 14/9/94 (167)

King restores government of ousted PM

MASERU — Lesotho's King Letsie today restored to power the government of ousted Prime Minister Ntsu Mokhehle, whose sacking nearly a month ago plunged the nation into a constitutional crisis.

Thousands of people ran into the streets of Maseru and erupted into cheers as state radio broadcast from the palace the signing of a peace agreement by the two leaders reinstating the government the king sacked on August 17

The 34-year-old king smiled as he signed the pact Mr Mokhehle, 76, using his walking stick for support, appeared to be nervous and his hand shook as he signed the document, witnesses said

The monarch and the former guerrilla warlord shook hands but did not talk to reporters who gathered at the palace for the signing, which took place just after 11am

The pact is guaranteed by Zimbabwe, Botswana and South Africa, whose envoys were present for the signing ceremony ending a royal coup that sparked protest marches in which five people were killed, strikes which brought the kingdom to a standstill, worldwide condemnation and threats of sanctions.

Palace officials thanked the envoys for their efforts in resolving the crisis, which they said had tried the patience of the kingdom's 1,6 million people.

An official close to the envoys said they would meet the restored prime minister later in the day Mr Mokhehle, he said, was expected to tell the envoys and the nation what he planned to do to address the complaints of the king, who perceived the prime minister as anti-royalist

King Letsie was due to address the nation on state radio later.

A diplomat said earlier that the signing had been delayed until today because those involved in the overthrow of the Mokhehle government, including the interim council the king appointed to fill the power vacuum, wanted guarantees that there would be no witchhunt after the status quo was restored

Diplomats said Mr Mokhehle had accepted opposition demands that he and his Basutoland Congress Party (BCP) administration should be more accountable to the people and less autocratic

"The BCP has to accept some responsibility for prompting the crisis It was perceived as elitist and out of touch with the people," a diplomat said

Regional leaders, including President Mandela, told the king in Pretoria last month to reinstate Mr Mokhehle's government, the country's first democratically-elected one

South Africa and other regional states had threatened to impose sanctions if the king continued to defy them — Reuter.

Lesotho crisis 'to be resolved today'

MASERU — Ousted Lesotho Prime Minister Mr Ntsu Mokhehle said yesterday he expected the constitutional crisis in the southern African mountain kingdom, sparked by a royal coup last month, to be over today

Mr Mokhehle told reporters he had "highly successful" talks with King Letsie III yesterday and expected the monarch to issue a statement "within the next 24 hours".

An agreement was meant to be signed on Monday, but was held up when the government said some clauses needed further negotiation.

"There are too many legal interpretations of the agreement," the king's information minister Mrs Mamello Morrison, said yesterday — Sapa-AFP (167) CT 14/9/94

EWS Peace proposal could lead to the reinstatement of Mokhehle's gov

Sowetan 14/9/94

Feud nears its end

MASERU — Lesotho's feuding leaders are studying a peace proposal that could lead to the reinstatement of the sacked government of prime minister Ntsu Mokhehle, according to officials

"There is a meeting of all the role players. They are going through the full text, line-by-line, to make sure everyone is reading the same thing," an official close to mediators trying to resolve the crisis said.

Zimbabwe President Robert Mugabe, who has been mediating in the dispute, said in Harare he expected King Letsie III to sign an accord yesterday reinstating the elected government he dismissed on August 17

Mugabe was speaking only hours after a top official of Lesotho's former ruling party called for sanctions against the country, saying the king had refused to sign the agreement.

"The information I got yesterday was that the king asked for a postponement of the signing ceremony for a day because he had not yet finished working on a speech for the occasion," Mugabe said.

"He wanted one of us (Mugabe or South African President Nelson Mandela or Botswana President Ketumile Masire) to be present at the ceremony. Tuesday was the day he asked for and we expect him to sign that agreement," Mugabe told a news conference.

(167)

South African officials, however, said it was not feasible for one of three presidents to go to Lesotho

Constitutional crisis

Mugabe, Mandela and Masire told Letsie in Pretoria last month to reinstate Mokhehle's government, whose sacking by the king three weeks ago sparked a constitutional crisis in Lesotho

A South African Government official said talks between mediators and the feuding sides went on late into Monday night and it was hoped an agreement could be reached — *Sapa-Reuter*

Elation as Lesotho PM returns to work

(167) ARG 15/9/94

☐ Regional mediators in new ceremony tomorrow

JOE MOLEFI
The Argus Foreign Service and Sapa-Reuter

MASERU. — Ntsu Mokhehle returned to work as Lesotho's prime minister today, almost a month after he was sacked by the mountain kingdom's King Letsie

Elated supporters lined the street leading to his office to welcome him back after the 34-year-old monarch restored him to power yesterday

Mr Mokhehle, whose democratic government was dissolved on August 17, did not speak to reporters But one of his aides said the 76-year-old premier was happy that peace had returned to the country

Regional leaders, including President Mandela, told the king in Pretoria last month to reinstate Mr Mokhehle's 16 month-old government, the first elected democratically

Yesterday's restoration of Mr Mokhehle was guaranteed by envoys from Zimbabwe, Botswana and South Africa after three weeks of negotiations

His reinstatement ended the royal coup, which sparked protest marches in which five people were killed, strikes that brought the kingdom to a standstill, international condemnation and threats of sanctions

Diplomats said the accord called for an examination of the role of the army in politics and the restoration of King Moshoeshoe, who was deposed by the former army-led government in 1990. King Letsie, Moshoeshoe's son, has indicated he will abdicate in favour of his father

The military, which backs King Letsie, has twice seized power since Lesotho gained independence from Britain in 1966 but remained largely on the sidelines during the latest crisis

The army is unhappy with Mr Mokhehle, who fought a long guerrilla war before winning power in elections last year

Zimbabwean President Robert Mugabe said in Harare today that his foreign minister and those of Botswana and South Africa were due in Lesotho tomorrow for another ceremony marking King Letsie's reinstatement of the elected government

Mr Mugabe, a key mediator in the crisis, said the ministers would witness the signing of more documents on the deal.

Yesterday jubilant crowds took to the streets of the Lesotho capital to celebrate Mr Mokhehle's reinstatement

The demonstrations indicated that he enjoyed popular support from a nation which swept him to power when he won all 65 seats in the general election last year

In Cape Town, Mr Mandela told the senate "There is jubilation in the streets of Maseru and we too are jubilant"

King Letsie and Dr Mokhehle signed an understanding of measures and procedures on the restoration of constitutional order in Lesotho

Letsie reinstates Mokhehle

BDAY 15/9/94

MASERU — People left offices and shops to celebrate in the streets yesterday after King Letsie III restored to power the elected government he ousted last month

Letsie signed an agreement brokered by SA, Zimbabwe and Botswana reinstating Prime Minister Ntsu Mokhehle, ending a political crisis that brought threats of economic sanctions and military intervention

"The events make it imperative for us to rededicate ourselves to peace and development," Mokhehle said. He thanked the presidents of SA, Botswana and Zimbabwe for their "efforts in defence of the constitution and consequently democracy" (167)

The ceremony reinstating Mokhehle was broadcast from the Royal Palace Within minutes, car horns blared in Maseru as people began day-long celebrations.

In terms of the agreement all participants in the ousting of Mokhehle's government received amnesty from prosecution.

It also allows Letsie to abdicate in favour of his father, King Moshoeshoe II, and set up a national forum

Mokhehle called for the army to commit itself to upholding the constitution. Government would remain politically neutral regarding the armed forces

President Nelson Mandela welcomed the agreement and said any destabilisation in a neighbouring state "creates instability in our country as well" "Southern Africa cannot sit back and allow the subversion of democracy in any of our countries"

Deputy Foreign Minister Aziz Pahad said it was the first success of the OAU's regional approach on conflict regulation

Cosatu hailed Mokhehle's reinstatement as a "victory for democracy in the region and in Africa". The union federation called off its planned protest action against Lesotho, including a refusal to handle products entering the country — Sapa-AP.

MPs applaud Lesotho deal

(167) CT 15/9/94

Jubilation in the streets

By ANTHONY JOHNSON
Political Correspondent

PARLIAMENT resounded with the applause of senators and MPs yesterday with news of a political settlement in Lesotho

President Nelson Mandela told the National Assembly that King Letsie III had signed an agreement in Maseru, restoring the democratically elected government of Prime Minister Mr Ntsu Mokhehle, which he dissolved on August 17

"There is tremendous jubilation in the streets of Lesotho and we are jubilant too," Mr Mandela said during the introduction of his policy debate

He said that he was happy a settlement had been reached because any instability in neighbouring states could destabilise South Africa as well

"Southern Africa cannot sit back and allow the subversion of democracy in any of our countries," Mr Mandela said

The agreement also reinstates King Moshoeshoe — King Letsie's father — as monarch and gives amnesty to all those who took part in the ousting of the cabinet and dissolution of Parliament

The presidents of South Africa, Zimbabwe and Botswana met King Letsie and Dr Mokhehle in Pretoria last month in a bid to resolve the political crisis

Several people were killed and injured in unrest following the ousting, which had the backing of the military

Lesotho king still defiant over PM

(167) BCT 1/9/94

JOHANNESBURG — Lesotho's embattled King Letsie III yesterday met the man he deposed as prime minister but refused to reinstate him, despite demands from Southern African neighbours

The king is under pressure to reinstate Prime Minister Mr Ntsu Mokhehle after dissolving the elected government on August 17

But the 34-year-old monarch is defiant

An aide said King Letsie had asked the prime minister to join a newly-appointed provisional council to prepare for elections in March next year

● All parties in the Lesotho crisis should assemble to solve the situation, the PAC's Mr Gora Ebrahim said yesterday — Sapa-Reuter-AFP

Old king back on throne as crisis in Lesotho ends

(167)

ARG 6/9/94

TOS WENTZEL
Diplomatic Correspondent

THE constitutional crisis in Lesotho is expected to be resolved today with the reinstatement of the deposed government

An agreement between the ousted government and King Letsie, leading to the reinstatement of deposed premier Ntsu Mokhehle and his government, is expected to be signed today.

Mr Rusty Evans, director general of Foreign Affairs, gave details of the settlement to the parliamentary standing commission on foreign affairs today after returning from Maseru.

The reinstatement of the present king's father, Moshoeshoe II, who was deposed in a military coup in 1990, is part of the agreement, which will be guaranteed by South Africa, Zimbabwe and Botswana.

Mr Evans indicated today that there will be further negotiations on Lesotho's constitutional system, including a switch to proportional representation

The king had demanded certain guarantees and he and Mr Mokhehle were expected to sign an agreement today, Mr Evans added.

South Africa and other neighbouring countries had steered away from any military intervention in Lesotho, instead embarking on a conflict-resolution exercise sponsored by the Organisation of African Unity.

One of the problems was that the Lesotho defence force had become highly politicised, with most of its members supporting the opposition Basutoland Congress Party, which had no parliamentary seats.

Botswana, South Africa and Zimbabwe pronounced themselves satisfied with moves by King Letsie to reverse his "royal coup" that toppled Mr Mokhehle's government.

"Things are looking up now and the state of seige that was beginning to take hold of Lesotho is disappearing," said a western diplomat in Maseru.

● The king justified his coup by saying that Mr Mokhehle, elected only 16 months ago, had lost his mandate to govern because he was dividing the nation of 1,6 million people.

Happy situation has been resolved - Mandela

Welcome for Mokhele

Star 15/9/94

■ BY JOE MOLEFI
STAR FOREIGN SERVICE

Maseru — Jubilant crowds took to the streets of the Lesotho capital yesterday to celebrate the reinstatement of Prime Minister Ntsu Mokhehle.

Mokhehle was deposed on August 17 by King Letsie III who cited popular discontent with the prime minister's administration as the reason for his action

But yesterday the demonstrations of support for Mokhehle indicated that he enjoyed popular backing from a nation which swept him to power when he won all 65 seats in the general election last year

In Cape Town, President Mandela told the Senate yesterday afternoon "There is jubilation in the streets of Maseru and we, too, are jubilant."

Mandela added that destabilisation in Lesotho could lead to problems in South Africa.

"We are very happy that this situation has been resolved," he said.

Letsie and Mokhehle signed an understanding of measures and procedures relating to the restoration of constitutional order in Lesotho

Present at the historic ceremony at the palace in Maseru were the three envoys representing the presidents of South Africa, Zimbabwe and Botswana.

They were Rusty Evans, SA's director-general of foreign affairs, Oteng Tebape, Botswana's high commissioner in Pretoria, and Zimbabwe secretary for foreign affairs Stanuslas Chigwedera

Mediatory

The eight-point agreement outlined guarantees for peace and a return to constitutionality

It included the reinstatement of the former king, Moshoeshoe II.

The presidents of the three mediatory nations were committed to remaining "directly involved in this understanding".

The agreement stated that all parties would be firmly committed to absolute neutrality of the public service and to the independence of the Lesotho Defence Force, the Royal Lesotho Mountain Police, the National Security Service, the Prison Service and the judiciary from political influence and abuse. (167)

Urgent steps were to be taken to ensure the loyalty of the security forces to the State

Tomorrow min 11 deg C
Tomorrow max 15 deg C
Long St pool 25 deg C
Full moon Sept 19
37 percent
Wind
2pm yesterday
S 6 knots.
Port Elizabeth
Fine and warm
13 to 25 deg C
Strand
024 854 7593

King welcomes Mokhehle assurance on ex-monarch

(167) ARG 16/9/94

MASERU. — Lesotho's King Letsie III has welcomed assurances by Prime Minister Ntsu Mokhehle that he will not block the reinstatement of the monarch's father, Moshoeshoe II.

In a statement issued at his palace, King Letsie also expressed satisfaction at Dr Mokhehle's undertaking to work more closely in future with Lesotho's constitutional monarchy.

The kingdom was plunged into turmoil on August 17 when King Letsie, claiming the government had become "dictatorial", deposed Dr Mokhehle, disbanded parliament and suspended parts of the constitution.

But after weeks of strikes and protests and under intense diplomatic pressure from South Africa, Botswana and Zimbabawe, King Letsie on Wednesday agreed to restore Dr Mokhehle's government.

Diplomats in Maseru believe King Letsie supplanted Dr Mokhehle's government because it had refused to return Moshoeshoe to the throne and had instead set up a commission of inquiry into the former monarch's dethronement. Moshoeshoe was kicked out of his palace in 1990 after being accused by the then military rulers of interfering in politics.

He spent two years in exile in London before returning to Lesotho, stating that he intended regaining the throne from his son.

In London, Commonwealth secretary-general Chief Emeka Anyaoku congratulated President Mandela for the part he and leaders of other neighbouring states played in resolving Lesotho's crisis.

Chief Anyaoku welcomed the agreement reached in Lesotho and pledged continuing Commonwealth support to the country in its efforts to restore normality. — The Argus Foreign Service and Sapa-AFP.

IMF gives $12m to Lesotho

BDay

WASHINGTON — The IMF announced on Monday that it had approved a 12-month stand-by credit for Lesotho, of SDR8,37m, about $12m, to support the government's 1994/95 economic reform programme

Since 1988 Lesotho has been implementing an economic reform program, which has been successful in the face of a severe drought and prolonged recession in SA 28/9/94

Real GDP growth averaged more than 6%, investment increased and manufacturing expanded The overall fiscal balance moved from a deficit of 9,3% of GNP in 1988/89 to a surplus of 2,2% in 1992/93. The current account deficit declined from 9,6% of GNP to 2,6%, and official reserves rose from less than four weeks of imports to 12,3 weeks. (167)

The 1994/95 programme aims at achieving a real growth rate of 11% to 12% and at containing inflation to no more than 8%. To meet these objectives, fiscal policy is designed to attain a budget surplus of 2,8% of GNP. — AP-DJ.

SW 13 knots

ıd about the abduction of popular singer Lounes Matoub. ıidnappers, the Berber Cultural Movement cancelled ıts amentalist militants unless Matoub was freed unharmed.

Africa 'should have permanent UN seat'

ARG 29/9/94

NEW YORK. — Military-ruled Nigeria says Africa should have a permanent seat on the UN Security Council and has reasserted its own candidacy to join the exclusive club of world powers with a UN veto.

Foreign Minister Baba Gana Kingibe also used his speech to the UN General Assembly to defend his military government's commitment to democracy, which he said had been misconstrued.

"The resolve and commitment of the Nigerian people and government to democracy remain firm and unshakeable in the full realisation that the task of democratisation is primarily our responsibility, and is for the good of the nation," Mr Kingibe said.

His speech coincided with the swearing-in in Abuja of a new and exclusively military ruling council by the country's military leader Sani Abacha, who sacked the council's only civilian members but still pledged to move towards civilian rule.

General Abacha seized power in a military coup in November

Some members of the Security Council have expressed reservations over extending permanent membership to Nigeria because of the absence of democratic rule there

Mr Kingibe said activities by political parties leading to general elections would begin next year, but he offered no date for elections. — Sapa-AFP

ARG 29/9/94 (167)

Legal experts will seek to reinstate Moshoeshoe

MASERU. — Lesotho's restored prime minister said legal experts from South Africa, Botswana and Zimbabwe would arrive in the kingdom this week to help find a viable way of reinstating deposed King Moshoeshoe.

Ntsu Mokhehle told parliament in its first sitting since the ex-monarch's son, King Letsie, sparked a crisis in the southern African mountain state by dissolving his government, that the restoration of Moshoeshoe would take time.

"The restoration of the former king is not purely a political matter capable of accomplishment within a short time," Mr Mokhehle said, adding that the three neighbouring states had the expertise and commitment to help the impoverished kingdom of 1,6 million people

Mr Mokhehle was restored to power almost a month after his August 17 sacking by the king, which sparked protest marches in which five people were killed, strikes that paralysed the kingdom, international condemnation and threats of sanctions — Sapa-Reuter.

NEWS

Part of tunnel completed

Milestone in Lesotho water plan reached

Star 14/10/96

■ BY DUNCAN GUY
STAR FOREIGN SERVICE

Hlotse (Lesotho) — The water lifeline to the PWV for the next century reached a milestone yesterday with the completion of a significant part of the tunnelling for the Lesotho Highlands Water Project

The third largest tunnel in the world after the Chunnel and the Chicago Tunnelling Reservoir, the section completed yesterday is on the Lesotho side of the project and completes the first part of phase one of the multimillion-rand scheme

South African Water Affairs and Forestry Minister Professor Kader Asmal and Lesotho's Natural Resources Minister Tseliso Makhekhe, seated in the tunnel with other VIPs deep inside the Maluti Mountains, watched the action of a tunnel-boring machine

'SCHEME symbolises beginning of vital link between Lesotho and SA'

At the "breakthrough ceremony" which followed, Asmal said· "It will be a great day when generators start turning and electricity goes to Lesotho, and clear mountain water goes into the Vaal Dam."

Asmal added that, regionally speaking, water should be an interdependent resource

He also said President Mandela would officiate at the opening of an extension of the tunnel near Clarens in the Free State in January

Makhekhe said the project had so far created 6 000 jobs in Lesotho

He said the tunnel that would eventually be completed over the border in South Africa symbolised "the beginning of a vital link between our countries It signifies mutual trust, co-operation and understanding," he said

A further 22 km of tunnelling on the South African side has 2,5 km of excavation to go (167)

Other features of the initial phase of the scheme include the completion of the Katse Dam and a hydroelectric power station at Muela.

According to project documents, implementing future phases depends on projected increased demands for water in the PWV

The full 2 208 million cubic metres of water that the project has the potential to produce might not be needed for another 26 years

Star 18/10/94

Shorter working hours proposed

Cape Town — The Basic Conditions of Employment Act of 1983 would be amended early next year to provide for shorter working hours and longer annual leave, Labour Minister Tito Mboweni said in written reply to Douglas Gibson (DP) yesterday.

The proposed amendments would be referred to the National Manpower Commission (NMC) for discussion.

The Labour Ministry's five-year strategic plan's focus on labour law reforms would include a range of legislative changes which affect conditions of employment.

Increased productivity was being discussed by trade unions and employers in the NMC, which included restructuring the education and training system

There were also plans to democratise the workplace to enhance worker participation and consultation — Sapa.

Moshoeshoe to be king again

PRETORIA. King Moshoeshoe II is to be reinstated as monarch of Lesotho.

Zimbabwe President Robert Mugabe, head of the Southern African Task Team on Lesotho, announced this here yesterday afternoon.

"I'm glad that a bill is being formulated to implement this reinstatement," he said

This was confirmed by Lesotho's King Letsie III, who said he was delighted at the reinstatement of his father. CT 4/11/94

"I have been fighting for this for the past four years It will enhance the process of reconciliation and peace in Lesotho," he said.

The announcement came at the end of a meeting attended by Mr Mugabe, Botswana's President Ketumile Masire, King Letsie, Lesotho Prime Minister Mr Ntsu Mokhehle and South Africa's Deputy President Thabo Mbeki

The draft bill on the reinstatement of King Moshoeshoe II is being formulated for the Lesotho cabinet for submission to the country's parliament (167)

It will deal with the legal aspects of the reinstatement

Mr Mugabe expressed his satisfaction with a programme of discussions in Lesotho to garner the views of the Lesotho people on creating peace and stability. — Sapa

14/12/94

The Mountain Kingdom takes stock after crippling coup attempt

Lesotho in economic crisis

Sowetan

INVESTORS APPREHENSIVE

Businessmen report a general slump:

THE POLITICAL CRISIS in Lesotho has apparently been resolved with the recent return to constitutional rule, but business leaders are still coping with a painful economic hangover from the August coup

Profile tainted

"When I talk to policymakers, I tell them that our investment profile has been tainted," says Pako Petlane, director of the investments promotion unit of the Lesotho Development Corporation

"I tell them of the potential projects lost, so much money, so many jobs"

The impact is all the more severe because the country is in the middle of drawing up a World Bank-supervised five-year privatisation programme which will involve the sale of all government-owned corporations

Petlane refuses to outline the extent of the damage done to the economy, saying "My main mission is to tell the world in what an excellent place to do business Lesotho is"

Willing to discuss

But others are more willing to discuss the problem, and say that manufacturing, commerce, tourism, transport and construction were all hit

"Even in the absence of statistical data, one can see that the economy has suffered," said an opposition political leader

Lesotho Central Bank's principal economist, Peete Mohale, admits "There has been no analysis yet Not even on a quarterly basis" However, the bank is reporting a seven per cent drop in deposits and for the first time in August a fall in credit to business enterprises

The Agricultural Bank of Lesotho also reports a drop in deposits and loans

Forecasters expect the Basotoland Congress Party government's tax revenues for the year to drop, despite a budget estimate earlier in the year that revenues would rise.

(167)

The cumulative effects of more than six months of political uncertainty, which began in January with a struggle within the Lesotho armed forces, eroded investor confidence

Worries continue

And the worries continue, despite the September accord signed between King Letsie III and Prime Minister Ntsu Mokhehle, which restored Mokhehle to power and pledged democracy, better relations between the government and the armed forces, and reinstated King Moshoeshoe II (Letsie's father) as reigning monarch

"What's going to happen now? Expect another crisis in November These things seem to have happened in a three-month cycle," commented one businessman.

Pessimists say it could take two years for foreign investor confidence to return Optimists claim it may take only six months Both agree the country risks losing its window of opportunity for investment as world attention shifts to the South African market.

"While we waste time arguing about whether to reinstall Moshoeshoe II, investors are not waiting They have money, and they are going elsewhere," said a company executive.

There are some people, like businessman Patrick Damane, who make the simple argument that "Lesotho has no economy" because of its more than close economic ties with South Africa

Capital has been flooding out of the country as anxious people choose to buy their supplies in South Africa, hoard goods and money, or shift savings to South African border towns such as Ladybrand and Ficksburg Hotels and small catering businesses suffered under a month-long nightly curfew imposed following the August 17 coup in which King Letsie ousted Mokhehle

Coup protest

In addition, two general strikes held in protest against the coup caused large losses to some businesses, losses that are still being felt even after Mokhehle's return to power on September 14

A denim clothing factory employing 650 people — mainly women — lost R140 000 when the general strike caused it to miss a deadline and a customer in the United States cancelled an order The jeans are still sitting in a US warehouse

Among other losses, the manager of a car rental company said 100 reservations had been cancelled and the company lost R8 000 The manager of a fuel retail outlet said sales were down 15 per cent and the manager of a hardware and building supply company estimated a 30 percent drop in sales — *Gemini News*

ARG 20/12/94

Move to defuse tension after cattle raids in Lesotho

(167)

JOE MOLEFI
Argus Foreign Service

MASERU. — In an urgent move to defuse the mounting tension on the border between South Africa and Lesotho, the foreign ministers of both countries have held special talks in Bloemfontein.

A Lesotho government spokesman said today Lesotho Foreign Minister Molapo Qhobela and his South African counterpart, Alfred Nzo, agreed on the need to find "the speediest durable solution to this matter, which is of mutual concern to both countries"

In Pretoria, a foreign affairs spokesman confirmed that the matter was receiving "top-level attention", but gave no further details

The ministers met after several reports that groups of farmers from the areas of Mount Fletcher, in the former Transkei, and Matatiele, in KwaZulu-Natal, had raided cattle posts in the rugged southern Lesotho districts of Quithing and Qacha's Nek In some cases, the cattle posts were burnt down

They had also seized several animals, the spokesman said

Without giving details, reports from within Lesotho claimed the raids had resulted in deaths and injuries

Lesotho authorities said members of the Lesotho defence force had been deployed in the southern areas since Friday to help the police.

In the latest report, police headquarters in Maseru announced that 50 farmers from Matatiele, supported by soldiers and helicopters from Transkei, had raided cattle posts in the Quithing district

Political observers in Maseru believe that unless the reports of the raids were controlled, it might lead to further bloodshed and violence

Meanwhile, Sapa reports that the KwaZulu-Natal Agricultural Union has come out in support of Matatiele farmers who went on a raid into Lesotho

Chairman William Mullins said the effort was a last resort by farmers after authorities failed to keep promises to stop the theft of livestock

Lesotho's ruling party names exco

(167)

MASERU — Lesotho's ruling Basotholand Congress Party yesterday announced its new national executive committee

Minister of Trade and Industry Mr Shakhane Mokhehle, brother of Prime Minister Dr Ntsu Mokhehle, was removed as secretary-general He was replaced by Maseru lawyer Mr Godfrey Kolisang

CT 28/12/94

The party's annual national conference, held on Christmas Day, elected Minister of Foreign Affairs Mr Molapo Qhobela deputy leader and Minister of Natural Resources Mr Tsiliso Makhakhe chairman

Dr Mokhehle remains leader of the party

It is rumoured Mr Qhobela will soon be elevated to deputy prime minister, to replace Mr Selometsi Baholo, who was assassinated during an army rebellion in April — Sapa

LESOTHO – GENERAL

1995

topple buildings severly weakened by the quake. PIC. AP

Moshoeshoe returns to Lesotho throne

Sowetan 25/1/95 (167)

■ OPPOSING VIEWS BCP youth wing call for stayaway to protest at reinstatement:

MASERU — Lesotho's ousted King Moshoeshoe will be reinstated today, five years after being deposed by a restive military which put his son on the throne

The king's return to power and the abdication of his son, Letsie III, marks the culmination of months of delicate talks involving neighbouring Botswana, South Africa and Zimbabwe, and brings to a close a constitutional crisis that sparked riots, strikes and threats of military intervention

While many of Lesotho's 1,6 million people are delighted at the prospect of having the 55-year-old king back on the throne, elements within the ruling party believe the monarchy should have been abolished rather than perpetuated

The influential youth wing of the ruling Basotholand Congress Party has issued pamphlets calling for people to stay away from work as a sign of disapproval of the reinstatement

But BCP spokesman Godfrey Kolisang said the party "supported unwaveringly" Lesotho's democratically elected government and parliament's decision to reinstate Moeshoeshoe "We advise people to go to work as usual," he told reporters

British-educated Letsie (34) has occupied the throne since Moshoeshoe was deposed by the former military rulers in 1990 after a 30-year reign Political analysts said his reinstatement could help bring political stability to Lesotho, as it had been one of the main issues in the struggle for power between royalists and the government of Prime Minister Ntsu Mokhehle

Letsie caused a constitutional crisis when he dismissed Mokhehle's cabinet in August last year, citing popular discontent with the prime minister Southern African states, including South Africa which surrounds the kingdom, put strong pressure on the king to return to democratic rule As well as the royal coup, Lesotho suffered military strife in which fighting between army factions spread across the capital, as well as strikes by police and prison officials

Mokhehle has said he does not care who occupies the throne as long as the monarch left government to the cabinet

His BCP won an overwhelming victory in the 1993 elections, but has been criticised for lack of decisive policies and action

Lesotho king is reinstated

(167)

The Argus Foreign Service

MASERU. — More than 25 000 people packed the Sesoto Stadium here for the reinstatement of King Moshoeshoe II, who was dethroned five years ago by the military council

King Moshoeshoe's son, who reigned as King Letsie III, abdicated Barely five minutes later his father ascended the throne. ARG 26/1/95

King Moshoeshoe took the oath of office as king prescribed by the constitution and declared that he would not involve himself in politics or any political group

Moshoeshoe II back on Lesotho's throne

(167) Sowetan 26/11/95

MASERU — One of two flags flew upside down and the public address system ruined the speeches, but the landlocked mountain kingdom of Lesotho yesterday joined the new democratic spirit of South Africa by reinstating twice-exiled and once dethroned King Moshoeshoe II.

The presidents of Zimbabwe and Botswana flew in to ensure the ceremony took place, as did representatives of South Africa's President Nelson Mandela and the King of Swaziland, whose Prime Minister arrived resplendent in an orange-patterned toga, a red feather in his hair and a suite of warriors decked out in leopard and antelope skins.

Trying to boost stability in Southern Africa since the fall of the last bastion of white rule in Pretoria, regional leaders have worked hard to bring constitutional rule back to Lesotho, the former British protectorate of Basutoland. Lesotho's army, kings, and left-wing nationalists have given its two million people a bumpy political ride since independence in 1966.

Yesterday's reinstatement of a constitutional monarch crowned a compromise between the Lesotho royal family's network of regional chiefs and the left-wing nationalists in the government of the Prime Minister, the frail, 74-year-old Ntsu Mokhehle.

> **"One minute he (Letsie III) was on the throne, the next sitting in a back row swigging back a can of Coke"**

The day's ceremonies in the capital's main soccer stadium included the curious sight of a monarch returning a throne to his father The 32-year-old interim King Letsie III abdicated and reverted to his role as Crown Prince with obvious alacrity and relief.

One minute he was on the throne, the next sitting in a back row swigging back a can of Coke

The 10 000 crowd was more interested in the pageantry than in speeches rendered incomprehensible by the amplification system. A neat British-style drill squad marched up and down in the midday sun to the beat of a respectable brass band One group of schoolboys was dressed as hunters, with porcupine quill head-dresses, bows and arrows and woolly loin cloths A contingent of Basuto cavalry, many draped in blankets and wearing their traditional conical wicker hats, was led by a wild holy man dressed in skins, brandishing a wooden club with a face carved on its head and chanting hoarsely

"Just think of it as traditional rap We don't understand a word of it either," said one of the plainclothes policemen stationed around the stadium perimeter, both to prevent trouble and to take down posters attacking the reinstatement of the monarch.

King Moeshoeshoe II, 58, was a law student at Corpus Christi college, at Oxford University and a descendant of the great 19th century unifier of the Basuto nation, King Moeshoeshoe I But many ordinary people associate his name with political repression and corruption.

While keeping the throne warm for his father, Letsie staged a palace coup in August last year But Mokhehle had come to power 15 months earlier with 75 per cent of the vote in Lesotho's first democratic election, and regional leaders stepped in to force the rival factions to settle their differences — *The Independant, London*

NEWS FEATURE *Looking beyond Lesotho for water supply as Gauteng demand increases*

Water from the Zambezi

■ DISTANT FORECAST *Lesotho may not provide enough in the future:*

(167) (69) sowetan 2/2/95

By Duncan Guy

THE LESOTHO Highlands Water Project will not be Gauteng's saviour forever In fact the demand for water in this industrial hub is expected to exceed the supply available from the Maluti Mountains only 25 years after the turn of the century

Looking ahead to that dry point, sources beyond South Africa are being considered All eyes seem to be on the mighty Zambezi River which, at its closest point, not far from Victoria Falls, is surprisingly much the same distance from Gauteng as Port Elizabeth

"South Africa is not well endowed with water and countries to the north are better watered than we are," said Piet van Niekerk, chief engineer for project planning in the Department of Water Affairs

"As time goes on and our resources start to fall behind our requirements, we will probably want to import water from the north"

Only three years ago, consulting engineers proposed a pipeline tapping the Zambezi where it touches Botswana. It proposed carrying up to 4 000 million cubic metres of water across eastern Botswana in a 1 300 kilometre pipeline to the Hartbeespoort Dam at a cost of about R7 billion.

But the political climate was not considered right at the time, said one of the team, Basil Lund

However, hydrologists in the Southern African Development Community (SADC) — of which South Africa is a new member — have also been casting an eye around Their study began in 1989 and was conducted from Lesotho, the country charged with the SADC environment, land and water management portfolio

Next month the Zambezi River System Action Plan, the resulting initial report which has reviewed the eight countries in the river basin, is due

"We should have all the kind of data you can think about — ranging from agricultural and water supply to transport potential," said Norwegian consultant Egil Skosteland.

The next phase will be to make several management models Only then will it be clear what kind of projects should be developed, he said

So far more than $7 million has been secured by SADC for the project, estimated at a cost of $54 million, according to preliminary budgets

The Zambezi River's journey of more than 2 000 kilometres starts in the highlands of eastern Angola

It flows through Zambia and touches Namibia and Botswana for short stretches and then a quarter of the river's entire length divides Zambia and Zimbabwe Travelling east it spreads out massively into Lake Kariba and the Cahora Bassa Dam in Mozambique and bisects this narrow Indian Ocean state before reaching the sea

Major tributaries include the Kafue River in Zambia and the Shire out of Lake Malawi which has shorelines in Malawi, Mozambique and Tanzania In spite of good relations between the Zambezi Basin countries — all SADC members — there has been little co-operation in river research until recently, thus little data

"The Zambezi doesn't have the same gauging sites that we do (in South Africa) so knowledge is sparse," said Van Niekerk of Water Affairs

A storekeeper gets ready to tackle the Sani Pass into Lesotho, stocked with supplies from KwaZulu-Natal.

Basotho women on the fourth day of their walk to look for work in Durban.

A joint venture giving nature run for its money

(167) ARG 9/2/95

The Lesotho Highlands Water Project, a joint undertaking by South Africa and Lesotho, is being seen as a model of how to avoid conflicts over resources.

MUELA (Lesotho) — With a satisfied smile Letuso Majalle closes the door of the underground hoist deep in Lesotho's mountains

"The generations that come will know their forefathers built this dam and they will be proud of us," Mr Majalle said

In an age when rapidly expanding populations are sharpening resource conflicts around the world, the Lesotho Highlands Water Project could be an interesting prototype of how to avoid them

The R17,5 million joint venture between Lesotho and South Africa will build a network of dams and channels in the remote mountains of Lesotho to funnel rainwater to the industrial heartlands of South Africa, which will soon be parched for it

On the way down, it will generate enough hydro-electricity to supply all Lesotho's power needs.

"It sounds so impossible but it is a reality, it is not impossible We want to reverse the flow of water," said Les Fabian, Lesotho Highlands Development Authority (LHDA) deputy chief executive for engineering and construction

The dams will trap water which normally runs into the Orange river and out west into the Atlantic Ocean, and instead turn it north towards Johannesburg

A lot of engineering in the project, if it doesn't actually defy nature, at least gives it a good run for its money

The key to the whole project is the 185 metre high Katse dam, scheduled to be completed in 1996 and situated more than 3 000 metres above sea level in remote mountains

Tunnels with a diameter of five metres are being cut through solid mountain rock for 82 km to carry the water into Gauteng

By 1997, some 18 cu m of water will be delivered to South Africa every second while another dam and a power station at Muela will generate 72 megawatts of electricity per hour By its final stage in 2020, three more dams are planned and a maze of interconnecting tunnels will deliver 82 cu m of water per second

The power station at Muela could then generate 110 megawatt/hours of electricity — enough to supply all Lesotho, which currently buys its power from South Africa

"One of the benefits of the project is the improved infrastructure The interior is very remote and has been opened up," said LHDA chief executive Tsebang Putsoane

"Clearly there are some other benefits, jobs have been created both during the construction of the infrastructure and also with the construction of the main works," Mr Putsoane said

"We are achieving what other people call perhaps the impossible," he added — Sapa-Reuter

(167)

Mosilili becomes deputy PM in Lesotho reshuffle

BY JOE MOLEFI
STAR FOREIGN SERVICE

Maseru — The appointment of a deputy prime minister and the creation of a new cabinet portfolio in Lesotho were announced by the office of the prime minister in Maseru yesterday.

The new Deputy Prime Minister Pakalitha Mosisili is minister of education and training, and the new post of minister without portfolio will be filled by the Assistant Minister in the Prime Minister's Office, Sephuri Motanyane,

Lesotho's last deputy prime minister Selomethsi Baholo, was assassinated in April.

The appointment of the new deputy prime minister and the creation of the new ministerial posts has been interpreted by political observers in Maseru as a move to boost the performance of the government of Prime Minister Dr Ntsu Mokhehle

Star 10/2/95

(167) Star 24/2/95

Lesotho Prime Minister jacks up administration in reshuffle

BY JOE MOLEFI
STAR FOREIGN SERVICE

Maseru — Lesotho's first major cabinet reshuffle since Prime Minister Ntsu Mokhehle took power in a democratically elected parliament in 1993 — involving three portfolios — was announced yesterday

Former Minister of Information and Broadcasting Mpho Malie is now Foreign Minister and former Foreign Minister Molapo Qhobela has been appointed Minister of Works.

David Mochochoko has been relieved of the Works portfolio and now retains only Transport and Communications.

The former assistant Minister of Finance Lira Motete has been promoted to Minister of Information and Broadcasting

Political observers have interpreted this reshuffle as a bold move by Mokhehle to strengthen government administration, which is generally at a low ebb

The reshuffle is also seen against the recent filling of the post of deputy prime minister, which had been vacant since April when the incumbent Selometsi Baholo was assassinated at the height of the tension between two factions in the Lesotho Army.

Another significant appointment announced at the time of the cabinet reshuffle was that of Tom Thabane, a tough official in the former military administration of former Major-General Metsing Lekhanya

He served as secretary to both the Military Council and foreign minister during that era

He has been given the top post of political adviser to the prime minister, the first such post in the democratically elected government

The reshuffle also comes less than a month after the reinstatement of King Moshoeshoe II

Food appeal by stricken Lesotho

(167)

Star 26/4/95

BY JOE MOLEFI
STAR FOREIGN SERVICE

Maseru — Lesotho has appealed for assistance from the international community to provide emergency food for more than 400 000 people in "vulnerable households" affected by the drought.

The appeal included requests for donor assistance to provide distribution of emergency food to starving people, including 63 000 undernourished children

The total food needs are estimated to amount to 50 200 tons of maize and 3 300 tons of beans.

The government has also requested "non-food aid" to improve the country's meteorological service, boreholes and wells, as well as pit latrines and drugs to combat drought related diseases.

Lesotho further hopes to receive aid to provide subsidies to farmers for the next summer crop season.

The devastation of maize, the staple crop, and other cereals during the 1995 summer ploughing season resulted in a total crop failure in the worst hit areas where some farmers did not plant.

Tile factory for Lesotho

(167)

■ BY THABO LESHILO

A new, R55-million state-of-the-art ceramics factory was opened in Lesotho by Prime Minister Ntsu Mokhehle at the weekend, pointing to growing foreign investor approval of the tiny nation's favourable tax regime

General Ceramic Industries Ltd, with a capacity to produce a million tiles a year, is a 70/30 percent joint venture between the Lesotho National Development Corporation (LNDC) and Interkiln Projects, an industrial and engineering group from Houston, Texas.

The R55-million is made up of R19-million in equity and R36-million in loans. The government provided R13-million of the equity under the Lesotho Highlands Project Fund

A total R33,1-million — a loan from the African Development Bank — was used to buy the latest technology to produce high quality glazed wall and floor ceramic tiles Interkiln's equity stake is R5,1-million

Compete

The Mafeteng-based factory makes Lesotho an important competitor against Italy, Spain and Brazil, who are world leaders in the production of glazed ceramic tiles

LNDC chief executive Pako Petlane said it would earn the country at least R40-million a year in foreign exchange Other critical benefits were to be found in the beneficiation of domestic raw materials (clay), import substitution, diversification of the country's industrial base and job creation The factory would employ at least 140 people Another 20 jobs would be created at the clay mine, about 20km from the town.

Interkiln executive vice-president Elmer Salgo said his country's major attraction to Lesotho had been the low 15% tax on manufacturing profits and free repatriation of profits

He said the cost of establishing the huge factory had come below budget by about R7-million because of astute buying — the first achievement by an AFDB-backed project.

The money would be used to start a sanitary ware production facility at the firm

The products are targeted for the Southern African Custom Union market and the first marketing office will be based in Johannesburg. Initial distribution will be restricted to the Reef, its surrounds and the Free State

Future

Star 8/5/95

Mokhehle promised that involvement by his government would be only temporary He urged Basotho to prepare to take up the government's stake in future

"The government has established this firm so that you can have jobs We expect from you to make it succeed. When there is progress, development will follow and jobs will increase so that you can escape from poverty," Mokhehle said

Taxi protest as SA, Lesotho sign treaty

CAPE TOWN — As SA and Lesotho signed an extradition treaty yesterday to improve mutual co-operation in combating organised cross-border crime, minibus taxis held up peak hour traffic in Maseru in a large demonstration against the signing of the treaty.

More than 200 taxis drove three abreast along Maseru's main street, blocking traffic and delaying commuters on their way to work.

A taxi owners' spokesman said they staged the protest because the people of Lesotho had not been consulted on the treaty.

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Minister of Justice Dullah Omar and Lesotho Justice Minister Kelebone Maope signed the agreement at a ceremony in Cape Town.

Omar said the agreement enabled the two neighbouring states to fight organised economic crime such as drug trafficking, money laundering and corruption.

"No country in southern Africa can stamp out illegal cross-border activities on its own. It is possible to break the back of these crimes if there is closer co-operation between countries in the region," Omar said.

Lesotho had resisted signing an extradition treaty with SA for decades because of fear that the agreement would be "one-sided".

BD 21/6/95

"This agreement provides the legal foundation for us to deny sanctuary to fugitives in each other's territories. I hope (it) will help combat crime, which has reached serious proportions on both sides of the border," he said.

Such illegal activities included motor vehicle theft — which appeared to be operated by organised syndicates — as well as drug smuggling and cattle theft.

Referring to a taxi drivers' demonstration against the extradition treaty in Maseru yesterday, Maope said the decision to sign had been approved by Lesotho's parliament after wide media debate. — Sapa.

Lesotho in the balance

Sowetan 13/7/95 (167)

For the first time in Lesotho's history the issue of incorporation into South Africa is being debated openly by the public, reports **Mzimkulu Malunga**

PRESIDENT NELSON MANDELA'S VISIT TO Lesotho this week not only puts relations between the two countries on the agenda but could also give impetus to ongoing debates about Lesotho's future in the post-apartheid scenario

It was Mandela's release five years ago that first got these debates off the ground A few months after his release, academics, politicians and trade unionists held a conference in Maseru to discuss Lesotho's future once apartheid was eradicated

To most participants at that gathering, it was clear that Lesotho could not survive in its present form — and they were not without possible solutions

Some speakers at the conference favoured incorporation "Should we remain independent and poor, or should we seek some form of incorporation so that we can have access to the land that is historically ours?" asked one trade unionist

Conquered territory

Others had a different view They advocated the return of the "conquered territories", referring to the entire Free State and parts of the Eastern Cape

"The issue of the return of conquered territories is a historically popular one among Basotho," argued law lecturer Mr Nqosa Mahao at the conference.

Since then, those who oppose incorporation have been joined by some sectors of the elite, who fear that their ability to pull strings would be severely weakened by incorporation

The irony is that some segments of this sector are already doing business in South Africa, yet they oppose incorporation

Two other groups that frown at suggestions of incorporation are chiefs and security forces, particularly the army

The chiefs' apprehension stems from a fear of losing their already limited power in the event of incorporation

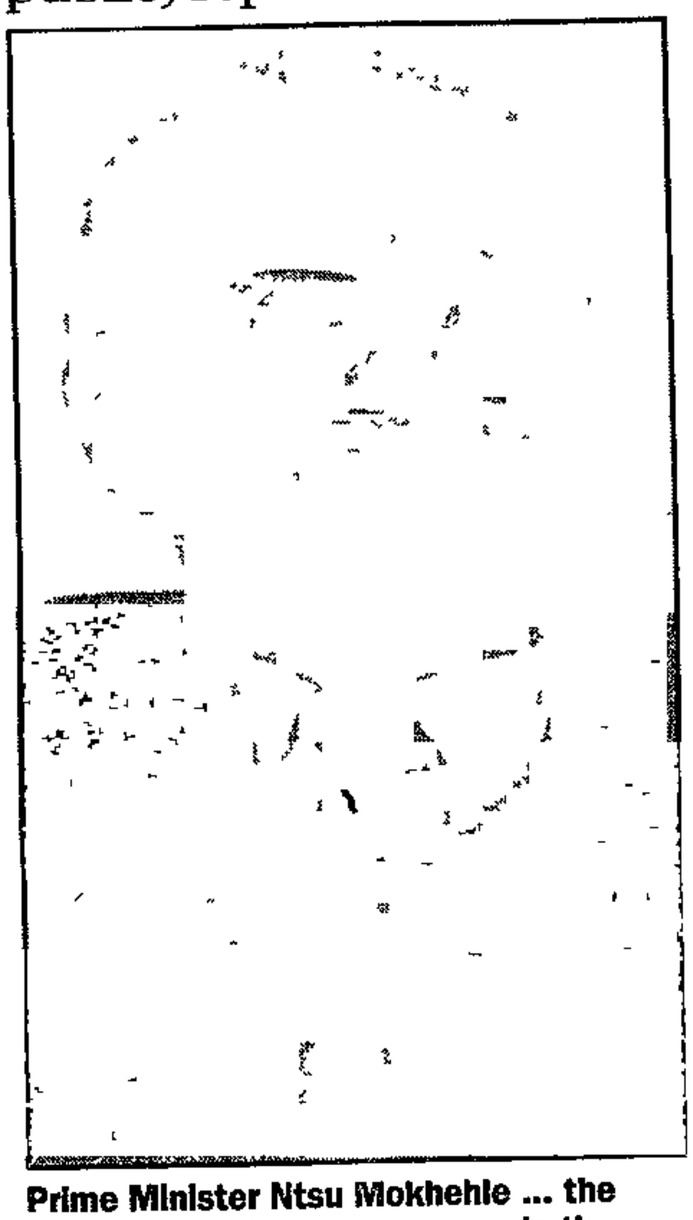
Most powerful group

As for the army, since tasting power in 1986 it has become the most powerful group in Lesotho and virtually does as it pleases

Just a few hours before Mandela's visit, there were again rumours that the army were plotting to topple Prime Minister Ntsu Mokhehle's government

However, despite the conflicting anxiety and excitement generated by the incorporation issue, for the first time in Lesotho's history the issue of incorporation into South Africa is being debated openly by the public Initially, such debates were confined to intellectuals and academics

But, since South Africa's non-racial elections in April last year, the debate has extended to villagers and Lesotho's mineworkers



Prime Minister Ntsu Mokhehle ... the future of Lesotho is once more in the spotlight.

Most Basotho who work on South African mines are members of the National Union of Mineworkers In 1992, the union took a resolution calling on the Basotho to consider incorporation into South Africa

The pro-incorporation lobby points to Lesotho's economic dependence and geographic position as necessitating a rethink on independence

They argue that while the Basotho have contributed immensely to South Africa's industrialisation, they have not gained anything in return

Entire working life

Many Basotho, particularly mineworkers,have been employed in South Africa for their entire working life

They also contend that incorporation would give the Basotho access to something that is very close to their hearts — the land the colonial masters took away from their ancestors

> **The issue of the return of conquered territories is a historically popular one among Basotho**

They cite the events of January 1986 that saw Chief Leabua Jonathan's government toppled after a 25-day blockade by South Africa They also point to last year's royal coup to fortify their argument If Lesotho's powerful neighbour had not put its foot down, Mokhehle's government would not have been restored to power

They further argue that the pioneers of Basotho's struggle against colonialism, such as the Lekhotla La Bafo leader Josiel Lefela, opposed attempts in 1910 to incorporate Lesotho into South Affrica only on the grounds that black people across the Caledon River were oppressed

If Lefela were alive today, they say, he would support incorporation

Held in high esteem

Ironically, Lefela is held in high esteem by many nationalists in the ruling Basostholand Congress Party, who advocate the return of the Free State to Lesotho

The BCP regards Lefela as the "Moses of the Basotho nation" However, the anti-incorporation group also bases most of its arguments on nationalistic appeals

This group views a democratically elected government in South Africa as the legitimate organ with which to negotiate the return of the Free State to Lesotho

Cannot be surrendered

To them, Lesotho exists today because of the "blood of our forefathers", and therefore cannot be surrendered by the stroke of a pen

This group sees incorporation as amounting to a surrender that will not only take away independence, but Basotho nationhood as well

Lesotho's total economic dependence on South Africa could be reduced if the land of their ancestors is returned to them, they contend

To people who do not understand Lesotho's history and politics, the call for the return of the Free State could seem like a daydream

But, those making the call believe it is their right.

Mokhehle reshuffles cabinet

(167)

MASERU — Lesotho Prime Minister, Dr Ntsu Mokhehle yesterday announced the appointment of three new ministers and the dismissal of two others in a major cabinet reshuffle

The new appointments are Sekoala Toloane as Minister for Health and Social Welfare, Mopshatla Mabitle, who becomes Minister of Agriculture, Cooperatives and Youth Affairs, and Pasho Mochesane, who becomes Minister of Tourism, Sports and Culture

Foreign Minister Mpho Malie and David Mochochoko, Minister of Transport and Communication, have been dropped

Sowetan 19/7/95

The cabinet reshuffle has resulted in several changes in portfolio

Deputy Prime Minister Pakalipha Mosisili has dropped education from his portfolio and has taken home affairs and local government Tseliso Makhakhe has become Minister of Education and Manpower Development, Minister of Natural Resources is KD Radipapole, Minister of Foreign Affairs is KA Maope, Minister of Justice, Human Rights and of Law and Constitutional Affairs, Molapo Qhobela; Minister of Works, Ntsukunyane Mphanya, and the Minister of Transport and Communication, Lesao Lehohla — *Sapa*

Blind support for govt works against Lesotho's democracy

(167)

19/7/95

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DREW FORREST BD 19/7/95

DEMOCRACIES work best when the ruling party has a clear — as opposed to overwhelming — mandate to govern In Zimbabwe, for example, crushing Zanu (PF) power and a marginalised opposition have encouraged high-handed and unaccountable rule In four years' time, when constitutional power-sharing falls away, the ANC will face similar temptations.

Nowhere in the region are the dangers of rampant majoritarianism clearer than in Lesotho, where the ruling Basotholand Congress Party (BCP) holds every seat in the national assembly Since the 1993 election which ended military rule, successive crises — including an army mutiny and a royal coup which ousted temporarily the civilian government of Ntsu Mokhehle — have jolted the minuscule kingdom

Concerned at the potential ripple effects of instability, and keen to show that it would now use its muscle for the good of the region, SA stepped in With Botswana and Zimbabwe, it brokered an agreement which saw coup maker Letsie III step down in favour of his formerly exiled father, Moshoeshoe II, the reinstatement of Mokhehle's government and the launch of a "national dialogue" to bolster democratic institutions

President Nelson Mandela's unspoken agenda during his visit to Lesotho last week was to throw his considerable weight behind the democratic process and urge all Basotho to back it In his speeches, he cited repeatedly a Basotho proverb meaning: "He who runs crouching can still be seen from the ground"

A lasting consequence of the BCP's victory has been an embittered opposition convinced that it fell victim to ballot-rigging in 1993 Everistus Sekhonyana, leader of the main opposition party, the Basotho National Party (BNP), insists that official ballot papers were not used He also points to the report of the Commonwealth observer group which, while endorsing the election, noted the "extraordinarily low number of invalid votes" and the remarkable neatness and uniformity with which papers were crossed

"Drivel" is the response of Mokhehle's special adviser Tom Thabane, to claims of widespread infractions He stresses that the election was ratified by international observers and that BNP court challenges to the results in 29 constituencies failed

Indeed, a strong swing to the BCP in the election was to be expected. Basotho must have wished to vindicate their choice in the 1970 elections, when the BNP's Leabua Jonathan seized power after a poll defeat. The persecution of opponents — and in particular the murderous activities of Jonathan's paramilitary police — must have undermined BCP support further.

Drawing a parallel with the elected rulers of Haiti after the dictatorship of Papa Doc Duvalier, Sekhonyana accuses the BCP of "massive arrogance Because they have got 100%, they are insensitive to opposition views

"The foreign minister summed it up recently by saying 'We don't need advice, least of all from the unelected.'" He charges that the government is installing political judges, and that it is hostile to the "dualistic" cheftainship system and monarchy. Proof of this was its failure to counter a pending court challenge to Moshoeshoe's enthronement. "Government's job should be to protect the head of state Why have they not changed the constitution for this purpose?"

At the centre of Lesotho's divided political stage stands the 2 000-member Lesotho Defence Force,

MOKHEHLE

which embraces BCP and BNP members and has a long tradition of king-making, including a putsch in 1986. Both parties accuse each other of sucking it into politics.

Sekhonyana believes the BCP aims to wrest control of the military from the non-party defence commission He sees sinister moves to incorporate in its ranks the BCP's armed wing when it was in exile — the Lesotho Liberation Army.

For Thabane, the military represents the only hope of a BNP shorn of power by the electorate. Sekhonyana had been convicted of sedition for inciting the army, he stresses "Left to its professional duties, under professional leadership and the guidance of the government of the day, the army would be no threat to democracy, he insists.

He also accuses the BNP of inciting former king Letsie to last year's coup. Sekhonyana was appointed foreign minister in Letsie's temporary government

Conflict over who is subverting the army broke into the open two weeks ago when Sekhonyana publicised an interdepartmental memorandum which discussed possible staff reductions in the defence force, "particularly at middle and senior officer level" and the sacking of undisciplined soldiers

Thabane insists this was a "contingency plan" and an "exercise in professionalisation and development" The leaking of the document was blatant incitement, he says.

A slimmed-down professional army purged of unruly elements and standing above the political fray is pivotal to the success of Lesotho's democratic renewal. A commission of inquiry appointed after last year's mutiny has found this, and the SA, Zimbabwe and Botswana governments — "guarantors" of Lesotho's democracy — also know it. Soldiers from the troika sit on a committee advising the government on defence policy

But longer-term stability demands the incorporation of the powerless and embittered BNP into the political mainstream Thabane, surprisingly, accepts this "Lesotho will need an opposition party in parliament after the next election The current situation is doing us no good The opposition must accept their election defeat and find ways of strengthening their position with the electorate They must enter a dialogue with the government, instead of trying to topple us."

Thabane complains that Sekhonyana had turned down both a senate seat and a place on the council of state, which advises the king. The troika's answer is a national dialogue, involving all interest groups, which will forge a national consensus on the form of democracy, the electoral system, the place of the monarch and the chiefs, the role of the military and other key issues.

Sekhonyana charges the government was "arm-twisted" into this initiative, for which it and its supporters have scant enthusiasm Signs are that a five-day conference due in September will be a one-off, and that the government will refuse to be bound by its recommendations.

Thabane denies this. "There is nothing the troika made us do that we would not have done anyway The dialogue will be continuous and the conference will decide its form."

However, the BCP is adamant that it will not be an alternative parliament or a Codesa-style process in which the government's position is up for negotiation

At the pitso (public gathering) addressed by Mandela and Mokhehle last week, there was a charged moment which said much about the obstacles facing a democratic Lesotho. Mokhehle's announcement of the September conference was received by the crowd — overwhelmingly BCP supporters — in stony silence. Also amid silence, he went on to call for national reconciliation and forgiveness

Says Thabane: "Under Jonathan's state of emergency, BCP members were persecuted by their BNP counterparts People died and disappeared in circumstances which have never been explained Leaders cannot sit in Maseru and hope for a stable country If it is to be more than cosmetic, the dialogue must draw in the people and recognise their pain."

Major reshuffle in Lesotho cabinet

ARG 20/7/95

(167)

The Argus Foreign Service

MASERU — Prime Minister Ntsu Mokhehle has announced a surprise cabinet reshuffle with the appointment of three younger men and the sacking of two ministers from his cabinet

The announcement over state radio surprised even senior people in the Lesotho government The three new appointments are Sekoala Coloane will become minister of health and social welfare, Mopshatlea Mabitle becomes minister of agriculture, co-operative and youth affairs and Pasho Mochesane becomes minister of tourism, sports and culture — a newlycreated portfolio

The dismissed ministers are the former foreign minister, Mpho Malie, and the former minister of transport and communication, David Mochhochoko

The cabinet reshuffle involved changes in several portfolios Among the changes are home affairs, foreign affairs and transport

Radio Lesotho announced that the changes would become effective from tomorrow and that the prime minister had expressed his appreciation to the outgoing ministers for their co-operation during their tenure

Although the reasons for the dismissals from the cabinet have not been officially stated, observers believe the prime minister undertook this major reshuffle to enhance the efficiency of his cabinet and to transcend his administration He has appointed younger men into his cabinet as evidence of this transition

Uneasy sits the crown

ARG 19/7/95 (167)

ANGELA QUINTAL of Sapa reports from Maseru on the implications of a court initiative aimed at unseating Lesotho's king — an initiative being supported by the Law Society of Lesotho.

EMBATTLED Lesotho monarch King Moshoeshoe II may yet again be forced to vacate the throne if a High Court application challenging his reinstatement succeeds

There are renewed fears that the action will fuel political instability in the already volatile country and that regional peace will be threatened

However, the king could retain the throne if the constitution is amended after a referendum

South African President Nelson Mandela has already intervened in an attempt to broker a political solution

Maseru attorney Thabane Khaue filed an application in the Lesotho High Court earlier this year challenging the constitutionality of the Reinstatement of His Majesty King Moshoeshoe II Act, passed by the Lesotho Parliament late in 1994

The Lesotho Law Society intends to join the application

The reinstatement formed part of an record of understanding brokered by Mandela, Zimbabwean President Robert Mugabe and Botswana President Quett Masire in September last year

Their mediation was in response to the constitutional crisis triggered by then Lesotho monarch King Letsie III's dismissal of prime minister Ntsu Mokhehle's democratically elected governemt

The palace coup followed political dissension within the mountain kingdom, including a mutiny by Lesotho Defence Force members in February, 1994

Letsie III succeeded his father King Moshoeshoe II, who went into exile in London in 1990 after being deposed by the then ruling Military Council of Major General Metsing Lekhanya

Following mediation Letsie agreed in principle that his father should be reinstated and that Mokhehle's government — which won all 65 seats in the National Assembly in the 1993 general election — should be restored

Mokhehle in turn agreed to broaden democracy in response to internal opposition from political parties and dissatisfaction within the military, police and civil service

Mandela's state visit to Lesotho last week revolved around South Africa's status as guarantor of the process to entrench democracy in the mountain kingdom.

Concerned about the implications should the court action succeed, Mandela invited Khaue to Pretoria on March 17 and asked him to stay the court application so that a political solution could be found

Khaue said yesterday Lesotho's College of Chiefs and not parliament had the constitutional power to reinstate the king in accordance with customary law

The matter was further complicated by Basotho customary law of succession, which allows the first born male to succeed as heir

It was unheard of that a father succeeded his son, Khaue said

Since King Letsie III had vacated the throne and had no heir, his brother, Prince Seiso was next in line

The only way to reinstate the king was to amend the constitution and this could only be done by way of a referendum

Asked whether his application would not jeopardise stability in Lesotho, Khaue said "In a world where there is no constitutionality, there will be no stability and peace I have forgiven all those people who were parties to the illegality, but I can't forget

"We won't have constitutionality in this country and we will have the same situation when His Majesty King Letsie toppled a democratically elected government

"If we allow this situation, Lesotho will be a playground for fools and jokers and for those who are not supposed to be our leaders"

Khaue confirmed that in terms of his meeting with Mandela, he was to have an audience with Moshoeshoe to discuss the matter A date has yet to be set

Khaue also said he was still open to a constitutional solution

The Lesotho Law Society joinder application would be heard on August 4, and only then would the main case have been set down, he said

The matter had however been complicated by Letsie, now known as Prince Mahoto, joining the Attorney-General as second respondent, as "his so-called attorneys who should have known better have set the matter down for September 7 and 8", Khaue said

The constitutional challenge had been part of ongoing talks between Mandela and the Mokhehle, the prime minster's special adviser Tom Thabane confirmed on Monday

It had also been discussed during Mandela's state visit

"As far as I know the lawyer concerned expressed a willingness to postpone the court case to give the government the chance to find a political solution"

The set-down by the second respondent had however added another dimension, he said

"We will have to re-evaluate the situation We thought we had until November which would give us adequate time We almost saw the way clear to find a (political) solution"

The action's outcome could not be predicted, but it would result in unnecessary political problems which would have to be surmounted, Thabane added

"Whatever the outcome we still have to find a way not disturb the status quo Of course, it would be much better to find a solution beforehand" — Sapa

(167) BD 2/8/95

Lesotho enterprises to be privatised

MASERU — Lesotho's government has earmarked more than 30 state-owned enterprises and services for privatisation, and an enabling Bill is wending its way through parliament.

The 65-seat National Assembly passed the Privatisation Bill in July and it now goes before the Senate

A list of government-owned enterprises published by the Finance Ministry includes subsidiaries of the Lesotho National Development Corporation, ranging from a brewery and brickworks to hotels, vegetable canners and retail stores

When he introduced the Privatisation Bill to the National Assembly, Justice Minister Kelebone Maope said Lesotho had come under international pressure to sell off its parastatal organisations

Finance Minister Moeketsi Senaoana said publication of the list of state holdings did not mean the government had already decided to sell them off.

He said the Privatisation Bill was enabling legislation aimed at establishing relevant institutions and procedures for the privatisation process

Lesotho's economy has taken a hammering from recession and drought, which has crippled agriculture

Surrounded by SA, Lesotho largely depends on remittances from its Basotho people working in the mines of its giant neighbour, and a share of tariff revenue from the five-nation Southern African Customs Union (SACU). — Reuter

European bank awarded Highlands water contract

Michael Moon

BD 19/9/95 (167)

EUROPEAN investment bank Deutsche Morgan Grenfell has been appointed to raise overseas finance for the next phase of the Lesotho Highlands water project.

About 40% of the estimated R6,9bn cost of Phase 1B of the project would come from foreign loans, water affairs department international projects managing engineer Willie Croucamp said at the weekend.

The rest of the money would be raised locally. The Lesotho Highlands Development Authority had taken a policy decision that at least half the financing would be from southern African sources.

The Deutsche Morgan Grenfell contract will be funded by the World Bank, and the appointment follows an international bidding process.

Phase 1B will involve building a 1-billion m^3 dam at Mohale on the Sequnyane River, a 30km tunnel to take water to the Katse Dam, and a diversion weir on the Matsoku River.

Croucamp said initial work on Phase 1B was now starting and a number of consultants had already been appointed. Environmental studies were under way. The major consultancy — for dam planning — would probably be decided on later this month.

Awards of contracts are expected in 1997 and the Matsoku project is due for completion in 2001.

Croucamp said the R9,8bn Phase 1A would come on stream in January 1998, when water from the Katse Dam would start flowing northwards into the Vaal River system. The two parts of the project's Phase One would be adequate only in meeting Gauteng's water demand until 2005.

Lesotho given emergency food aid

(167) CT(FR) 20/9/95

BY JOE MOLEFI

INDEPENDENT FOREIGN SERVICE

Maseru — The first consignment of food aid of 24 tons of French wheat towards emergency relief in Lesotho arrived in Maseru last week.

Gilles Dufeigneux, the commercial attaché at the French embassy in Johannesburg, said this was part of a total shipment of 1 000 tons of wheat pledged by the French government in response to an appeal by the Lesotho government to the international community for the emergency food aid

Contribution

Lesotho needs assistance to help alleviate the drastic effects of the severe drought in the country.

The estimated value of the French wheat is R900 000

Dufeigneux said that the donation would "modestly contribute to fight the effect of the serious drought which has affected the southern African region over the past few years".

The wheat would be milled at the Lesotho's flour mills It would be sold commercially to generate funds to finance logistical support for the country's drought-relief operations

Consignment

This includes in-country food-aid storage, handling, transportation and distribution

The World Food Programme in Rome also delivered its first consignment of 2 225 tons of maize meal to Lesotho this week as part of the contribution towards drought relief in the country.

The programme has pledged a total of 10 000 tons of cereals (maize and sorghum) and 1 000 tons of peas and beans.

Chalker tells Lesotho: try to be transparent

(167) Star 20/9/95

BY JOE MOLEFI
STAR FOREIGN SERVICE

Maseru – Britain's Minister for Overseas Development Baroness Lynda Chalker told high-ranking Lesotho government officials last night that the British government's aid strategy is to concentrate resources where they believe these resources could make the most effective possible contribution, such as in good governance.

Speaking at a reception in her honour at the start of a two-day official visit, Lady Chalker said Britain had no single blueprint for democracy nor for good governance.

She however outlined broad principles for the concept, and said that these included the need for transparency

"The business of government should be open to scrutiny by the public. Ministers should explain all their decisions and actions to the public and information about the business of government should always be readily available."

Lady Chalker referred to conflict prevention and resolution in Africa and said she welcomed the interest expressed by the government of Lesotho in contributing to future United Nations peacekeeping operations

Lesotho's Foreign Minister Kelebone Maope said they looked forward to receiving a share of the reconstruction and development aid provided by the international community for South Africa

ILO probes Lesotho working conditions

CT (BR) 18/10/95

FROM INDEPENDENT FOREIGN SERVICE

Maseru — Poor conditions in Lesotho's clothing and textile industry, where about 90 percent of the 12 000 workers are women, have led to intervention by the International Labour Organisation (ILO)

The industry is dominated by Taiwanese-owned organisations, with a few South African concerns

It plays an important role in the economy, notably through job creation and exports, most of which go to the United States, the European Union and South Africa

The ILO became involved after reports of sub-standard conditions

The ILO and the Lesotho Department of Labour, accompanied by trade unionists, subsequently held a random inspection of 14 factories, interviewing managers and 350 workers

A report issued in April said that by ILO standards, conditions were unacceptable The organisation recommended frequent factory inspections to check that standards had improved

The report said the conditions were largely attributable to uncaring management and the weak bargaining position of workers because of divided and ineffective trade unions

The national 50 percent unemployment rate also meant workers generally accepted anything offered to them

The report said

☐ Working hours were unacceptably long with only a brief 30-minute break each day,

☐ There were not enough toilet and washing facilities and the ones that existed were obsolete,

☐ Little or no concern was demonstrated over the need for staff canteens or other eating facilities There was not enough clean drinking water,

☐ Factories were too hot in summer and too cold in winter,

☐ Fire exits were either non-existent or were padlocked,

☐ The concentration of cotton and synthetic fibres in the air was a major health hazard — all of the workers interviewed complained of chest problems,

☐ Ergonomic conditions for workers were poor They often had to stand or sit awkwardly at machines All of those interviewed complained of shoulder and neck problems Others had swollen legs and feet, and

☐ Waste water from factory laundries — containing harmful bleaches — was disposed of directly into small streams

The Lesotho Allied Clothing and Textile Workers' Union claims improvements recommended in the report are taking place at a snail's pace Motsoane Nkotsi, the government's senior factory inspector, says the unions expect too much to happen overnight

Some of the recommendations will take time to implement because they could disturb productivity, which should be given priority, he said "The factories must be given time and the recommendations are being implemented step by step," said Nkotsi

(167)

Lesotho finds favour with new investors

(167) Star 23/10/95

■ BY THABO LESHILO

African Life's acquisition of a 10 percent stake in the Lesotho National Insurance Company underscores Lesotho's increasing acceptability to South African and overseas investors

Lesotho's economy, especially its manufacturing sector, has seen huge improvements since the 1980s due mainly to increasing private investment, the introduction of an export financing scheme and continued inflows of foreign investment

Thanks to the government's consistent policy of attracting foreign capital, several major foreign companies have established factories in the landlocked state in recent years

South African companies with subsidiaries in Lesotho include Lee Manufacturing, owned by Celrose, Mustang Shoes, a subsidiary of Amshoe and Highlands Shoe Company, a subsidiary of Futura Footwear

The numerous overseas companies involved in Lesotho come from Taiwan, United Kingdom, United States, Switzerland and Germany

Cheap labour . . . an employee hard at work in one of the foreign companies attracted by Lesotho's improving economy and attractive investment policies

Moeketsi Senaoane, the minister of finance, attributes the growth in foreign investments to the government's commitment to the market economy, investor-friendly policies and, especially, the efforts of the Lesotho National Development Corporation.

Attracting foreign investors are a low 15 percent tax rate on profits, free repatriation of profits, financial incentives which reduce start-up costs and include training grants and concessionary loan finance.

Pako Petlane, the corporation's chief executive, is proud of the efficiency of the organisation's Investment Promotion Centre, which ensures that potential investors' requirements for utilities and permits are processed promptly Another important attraction is Lesotho's abundant cheap labour Forty-percent of its two million people are unemployed, its trade unions are relatively weak compared with South Africa's and wages are a third of those in South Africa

Eric Chao, manager of C&Y Garments Company, is happy with the productivity of his 1 300 employees, who earn a basic wage of R17,50 a day

The Taiwanese firm produces at least 20 000 jeans a day for export to the United States, Canada and the European Union

However, the days of cheap labour in Lesotho appear to be numbered, thanks to the growing militancy of the unions, which have close relationships with South Africa's powerful unions

Investors find Lesotho attractive

(167) CT(BR) 24/10/95

By Thabo Leshilo

Staff Writer

African Life's acquisition of a 10 percent stake in the Lesotho National Insurance Company underscores Lesotho's increasing acceptability to South African and overseas investors

Aflife said it had been attracted by Lesotho's relatively buoyant economy, which promises to grow even further once the Lesotho Highlands Water Project is completed

Lesotho's economy, especially its manufacturing sector, has seen huge improvements since the 1980s due mainly to increasing private investment, the introduction of an export financing scheme and continued inflows of foreign investment

Real GDP rose 11,2 percent in 1995, exports increased by 292 percent from 1990 to 1994 and the current account of the balance of payments stood at R159,3 million in 1994, compared with R56,5 million in 1993

Thanks to the government's consistent policy of attracting foreign capital, several major South African and overseas companies have established factories in the landlocked state in recent years

South African companies with subsidiaries in Lesotho include Lee Manufacturing, owned by Celrose, Mustang Shoes, a subsidiary of Amshoe, and Highlands Shoe Company, a subsidiary of Futura Footwear

Others are Maluti Mountain Brewery (SAB), African Electrics, (York Electrics) and Lesotho Reinforcing (LTA)

The numerous overseas companies with joint ventures or wholly owned subsidiaries in Lesotho come from Taiwan, the United Kingdom, the United States, Switzerland and Germany

Moeketsi Senaoane, the minister of finance, attributes the growth in foreign investment to the government's commitment to the market economy, investor-friendly policies and, especially, the efforts of the Lesotho National Development Corporation (LNDC)

Attracting foreign investors are a low 15 percent tax rate on profits, free repatriation of profits, financial incentives which reduce start-up costs and include training grants and concessionary loan finance

The LNDC also makes available ready-build factory shells at highly competitive rental rates and a comprehensive export credit facility is in place

Pako Petlane, the corporation's chief executive, is proud of the efficiency of the organisation's Investment Promotion Centre, which ensures that potential investors' requirements for utilities and permits are processed promptly

Another important attraction is Lesotho's abundant cheap labour Forty percent of its two million people are unemployed, its trade unions are relatively weak compared with South Africa's and wages are a third of those in South Africa

According to 1992 figures, the minimum monthly wage set by the government for a driver of a delivery van, a junior clerk and a receptionist was R378 a month, R353 for an unskilled labourer, R363 for a waiter and R109 for a domestic worker

Eric Chao, manager of C&Y Garments Company, is happy with the productivity of his 1 300 employees, who earn a basic wage of R17,50 a day

The Taiwanese firm produces at least 20 000 jeans a day for export to the United States, Canada and the European Union Its customers include Bugle Boy and and K-Mart.

Jeff Sewkumar, factory manager at Highlands Shoes in Maputsue, said the low labour costs made it cheaper for the firm to operate from Lesotho even though electricity and telephone costs were much higher However, the days of cheap labour in Lesotho appear to be numbered, thanks to the growing militancy of the unions, which have close relationships with South Africa's unions

Even the LNDC appears to have already accepted the possibility of a sharp rise in labour costs in the next few years The organisation now prefers to emphasise the productivity, manual dexterity of the Basotho and the country's high literacy rate of 75 percent, the highest in Africa, as attractions

"You cannot sell a country on the basis of cheap labour No serious investor will believe you You should rather show the investor what he will get for his labour input," said Petlane

Social upheaval costs Lesotho business

CT(BR) 28/11/95 (167)

By Mojalefa Ntlalapa

Maseru — Lesotho's business sector has lost millions of dollars through riots and strikes during the past four years

Moeketsi Senaoana, the minister of finance and economic planning, said upheavals including disturbances in the army and police, the abduction of key political figures and strikes, had hurt the image of Lesotho as a safe business location

"These events render effective investment promotion a very difficult task Consequently, a substantial number of promising projects at the beginning of the year never materialised As a result, job opportunities for the Basotho and other accompanying economic benefits were lost, thus exacerbating the already chronic poverty in the country," he said

Senior trade development officer, J N Nteleki, said this unrest had resulted in Lesotho losing business to other countries, and created fear in some potential investors

"There is a general loss of confidence among the business people about their security," he said

The most severe strikes involved teachers and textile workers, although doctors, nurses, security guards and prison wardens had also gone on strike

The government said the country did not have enough resources to respond adequately to the financial demands, while the private sector claimed that it could only pay employees in accordance with government stipulations

Tseliso Ramochela, the general secretary of the Lesotho Federation of Democratic Trade Unions, said the dawn of democracy in 1993 had brought a new culture among the working masses "Since then trade unions have embarked on teaching workers about labour rights"

Most illegal actions within the manufacturing industry were the result of long-term dissatisfaction previously unexpressed because of the fear of victimisation, and ignorance of industrial relations, he said

"Workers' rights have long been undermined through a lack of law enforcement on the part of the previous oppressive governments Hence workers often become aggressive and go out of control when they witness the same sluggishness on the part of this democratically elected government"

Moletsane Jonathan, the general secretary of the Lesotho Trade Union Congress, said that while some employers had developed an anti-union spirit due to ignorance, unhappy employees had developed a carefree attitude towards their work In most instances, the money they received was below the minimum wage

As the government continued to struggle with recurring strikes for better pay and working conditions, more than 300 000 of the 1,9 million Basotho roamed the streets in search of jobs About 26 000 people entered the labour market every year

According to a study published last year, unemployment is aggravated by low productivity in agriculture, rural-urban migration, declining job opportunities in South African mines, and the stagnation in public sector employment — Independent Foreign Service — AIA