

CIVIL SOCIETY, BUSINESS AND ACADEMIA STATEMENT ON THE CONTINUING VIOLATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS

IN

LESOTHO

26 JUNE 2015

We, the civil society formations in the Kingdom of Lesotho represented by Lesotho Council of NGOs (LCN) Democracy and Human Rights Commission and its affiliates, The Law Society of Lesotho, Lesotho Chamber of Commerce and Industry (LCCI), Maseru Region Transport Operators (MRTO), Maseru Star Taxi Association (MSTA), Lesotho Trade Union Congress (LTUC), National Clothing Textile and Allied Workers Union (NACTWU), Lesotho Congress of Democratic Unions (LECODU), Alliance of Progressive Trade Unions (APTU) and Academic Forum for Development of Lesotho (AFDEL); are convinced that the current security situation in Lesotho continues to stifle and threaten development efforts of individuals, business and the citizenry in general.

As we have pronounced ourselves in the past and continue to seek justice, peace, stability, accountability and rule of law in the country, we met again on the 25th June 2015 to assess progress towards bringing normalcy in the country.

We are convinced that the current security situation continues to ferment more divisions in our society as evidenced by the pronouncements of government, opposition parties and media platforms in the country.

We have the sufficient political, ethical and moral duty to condemn the continuing violations of human rights, political intolerance and disrespect of judiciary shown, among others, by the security agencies of the state: these shall not bring any sustainable solution for Lesotho. Neither one group nor a partisan approach will bring a lasting stability that is a cornerstone for development.

We are again convinced that the current security requires all Basotho to stand together in legal means to pursue the government to act responsively in making sure that Lesotho is a safe place for every citizen, investor development partner.

In our assessment, we have noted with concern;

- The sluggish efforts by the government of Lesotho to rein in this situation, particularly to speedily arrest this situation by maintaining rule

of law and failure fully account for the actions of the Lesotho Defence Force.

- Continuing arrest of members of Lesotho Defence Force without to speedily bringing them to trial in an appropriate court of justice that shall deliver independent and fair judgement based on the principle of natural justice.

For these reasons, as peace loving civil society formations, we appeal to international community to continue to ask for measure to that cease the breach of rule of law, violation of human rights and demanding accountability and proper inquiry on killings and shootings perpetrated by organ of state security.

We therefore demand that the Government of Lesotho do the following:-

1. to promptly and boldly take necessary measures to restore the security status of the country to the level acceptable to the international community and development partners, to avoid wrecking the already fragile and stagnant economy;
2. establish an independent and fair martial court that shall speedily deliver justice to members of LDF who are in its custody;
3. investigate the violations of human rights in the country and take necessary legal measures;
4. speedily restore normalcy in the country by ensuring that every citizen and group is able to fully exercise all freedoms as enshrined in the Constitution of Lesotho;
5. speedily engage the exiled leaders of opposition parties in parliament and take measures to assure them of their individual security and national security;
6. ensure that there is no more torture and violation of human rights to the military officers in custody of LDF by publicly ordering the end to these practices, and enabling independent verification of it by civil society organisations or external actors;
7. assure local and foreign investors and international community that the violation of human rights shall stop, the security shall improve and respect for judiciary shall be maintained;
8. come up of a clear plan for security reform in the country for long-term sustainability.

In conclusion, the civil society formations agreed on the following actions:

1. The labour and business shall meet to forge ways in which they will be part of the solution for Lesotho problems;

2. Civil society formation under LCN will continue the engagement with other local and international actors
3. All efforts should be coordinated and shared by different actors
4. Contact and consultations with government shall also be maintained.

SIGNED BY THE REPRESENTATIVES OF THE FOLLOWING ORGANISATIONS:-

ACADEMIC FORUM FOR DEVELOPMENT OF LESOTHO

LESOTHO CHAMBER OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY

LESOTHO COUNCIL OF NGOs (LCN)

LESOTHO TRADE UNION CONGRESS

MASERU STAR ASSOCIATION

MASERU REGIONAL TAXI OPERATORS

THE LAW SOCIETY OF LESOTHO

NATIONAL CLOTHING TEXTILE AND ALLIED WORKERS UNION

LESOTHO CONGRESS OF DEMOCRATIC UNIONS

ALLIANCE OF PROGRESSIVE TRADE UNIONS