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**PRESS STATEMENT BY THE LESOTHO COUNCIL OF NGOS ON THE CURRENT
POLITICAL SITUATION IN LESOTHO
3RD OCTOBER 2014
MASERU – LESOTHO**

The Lesotho Council of NGOs (LCN) Democracy and Human Rights Commission held a meeting on the 2nd October 2014 to deliberate and make opinion of the current political situation faced by the Kingdom of Lesotho. This is a continuation efforts of the Democracy and Human Rights Commission of ensuring that the culture of democracy and human rights is inculcated in Lesotho. Basotho will recall that civil society has been monitoring and the political and security situation in Lesotho with keen interest to find the sustainable peace and respect of democracy and human rights.

The Democracy and Human Rights Commission condemns the confrontation between the Police and the Army at Khubetsoana, Maseru on 30th September 2014 that took place within the vicinity of the civilians.

As Democracy and Human Rights Commission of Lesotho Council of NGOs (LCN), note with concern the deteriorating security situation in Lesotho as evidenced by the confrontation. The Commission further noted that the latest confrontation is a continuation of the tension that exists between the two armed forces which needs urgent attention as it undermines democracy and human rights in Lesotho.

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mong others the military operation at some key police posts and temporary closure of radio stations on Saturday, 30th August 2014. This appears to be a culmination of the political impasse that had dominated public sphere in the country for the past few months. Civil Society believes that this concern reflects the position of all citizens and others who have the best interest of Lesotho at heart.

The meeting noted with great concern

Deliberate

Basotho will recall that following the civil society feedback meeting organised by members of Lesotho Council of NGOs, namely: Development for Peace Education and Action Aid Lesotho on the New Zealand Report at Lesotho Sun on Monday 11th August 2014, which, established the synergies of New Zealand Report, SADC TROIKA processes and South Africa's interest in the Lesotho situation, a delegation of five (5) people; Sofonea Shale, Seabata Motsamai, Sekonyela Mapetja, Thusoana Ntlama and Olivia Gumbo went to Victoria Falls to lobby the SADC TROIKA Summit on the views and position of Civil Society Organisations in regard to addressing Lesotho's political challenges. The involvement of CSOs in this matter is premised on the understanding that the country should work towards being removed from SADC Flash Points.

It should be noted that before the Lesotho CSO delegation could even report on the outcome of its trip, it was pre-empted by the misrepresentation, which we hope you all aware of, and which was later dismissed by the Lesotho Council of NGOs Press Release dated 18th August 2014 as fabricated and unfounded allegations.

Within a framework of the Lesotho Sun Resolution characterised by an identified need for a combination of external and internal mediation processes and necessity to guarantee public participation in all the processes, the delegation presented a letter highlighting the following;

- i. SADC Mediation /Facilitation should ensure that conflicts among the political party leaders are both distinctively and holistically addressed
- ii. Constitutional reforms and transformation of political system
- iii. Importance of public participation in the whole process
- iv. Expansion of South Africa's mandate in case it is given mandate to facilitate Lesotho's political situation to SADC Secretariat.

It is on the basis of a desire to have stable, peaceful and democratic Lesotho, Civil Society Organisations are looking forward for the following cause of actions as a form of further commitment and as such, CSO will engage;

- i. SADC to understand its decision on Lesotho,
- ii. Government of Lesotho to understand its intentions to move forward within the three months period;
- iii. Broader civil society and Basotho nation on these issues.