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Statement by the Lesotho Council of NGOs (LCN) on the Current political situation

Maseru, 1st September 2014 - As civil society organizations under the auspices of the Lesotho Council of NGO's Democracy and Human Rights Commission, note with concern the deteriorating security situation in Lesotho demonstrated by among others the military operation at some key police posts and temporary closure of 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 LCN's Democracy and Human Rights Commission is convinced that solution to this current political situation cannot be resolved through antagonistic approaches and therefore:

1. Encourages peaceful approach and the pursuit of dialogue in resolving whatever differences among leaders that have precipitated the current situation. This applies to political leaders as well as security forces. In this connection the Civil Society also appreciates and supports the political efforts of the regional and international friends in helping return Lesotho to stability and peace;
2. Call upon those in authority to give the public an official statement explaining the current situation and the Command of the Lesotho Defense Force, as a way to calm the public and give the nation hope and direction. In this situation, the public need to be reassured and assuaged by, among others being constantly furnished with authoritative information that removes doubt and limits speculation;
3. Appeal to the public, and specifically political party activist and supporters to limit/regulate the tone of statements made for public consumption, as these may further inflame the situation. This request with the full understanding that people may need to vent or express their heartfelt opinions, but appeal for statements that will help diffuse the tension rather than exacerbating it;
4. Further, appeal to the media fraternity to play a leading role in this regard.

The LCN's Democracy and Human Rights Commission will continue to proactively engage with all concerned to resolve the current tension, and put Lesotho back on the path of peace and national stability, which are the aspirations of all who love peace, good governance, and who love Lesotho.

In this regard the Lesotho Council of NGOs will host multi-stakeholder forum to provide a platform for dialogue that will chart the way forward towards resolving the country's current political crisis. Details of the forum will be communicated in due course.

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