

Understanding Conflict, Peace and Gender Context in Lesotho

June 2021

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ACRONYMS

ABC	All Basotho Convention
AD	Alliance of Democrats
APRM	African Peer Review Mechanism
APSA	African Peace and Security Architecture
AU	African Union
BCP	Basutoland Congress Party
BKB	Boeremakelaars Koöperatief Beperk
BNP	Basotho National Party
BPfA	Beijing Platform for Action
CCA	Common Country Assessment
CCJP	Catholic Commission for Justice and Peace
CCL	Christian Council of Lesotho
CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women
CMD	Centre for Multiparty Democracy
COLETU	Congress of Lesotho Trade Unions
CONGOMA	Council for Non-Governmental Organisations in Malawi
CPCM	Forum for Dialogue and Peace, Centre for Peace and Conflict Management
CPG	Conflict Peacebuilding and Gender
CSOs	Civil Society Organisations
DC	Democratic Congress
DCEO	Directorate on Corruption and Economic Offences
DCP	Democracy Consolidation Programme
DPCs	District Peace Committees
DMA	Management Authority
DPCs	District Peace Committees
EC	Electoral Commission
EDR	Election Dispute Resolution
EMB	Election Management Body

EU	European Union
EWSs	Early warning systems
FBOs	Faith Based Organisations
FDGs	Focus Group Discussions
FFV	Fresh Fruit and Vegetables
FPTP	First Past The Post
GBV	Gender Based Violence
GoL	Government of Lesotho
GPA	Global Political Agreement
GS	Government Secretary
HoCs	Heads of Churches
IDM	Institute of Development Management
IEC	Independent Electoral Commission
INEC	Independent National Electoral Commission
IoM	International Organisation for Migration
IPA	Interim Political Authority
I4P	Infrastructure for Peace
JBCC	Joint Bilateral Commission for Cooperation
JSC	Judicial Service Commission
LAs	Local Authorities
LAT	Lesotho Association of Teachers
LCA	Lesotho Communications Authority
LCD	Lesotho Congress for Democracy
LCS	Lesotho Correctional Services
LCN	Lesotho Council of Non-governmental Organisations
LDF	Lesotho Defence Force
LIPAM	Lesotho Institute of Public Administration and Management
LPCs	Local Peace Committees (LPCs)
LLA	Lesotho Liberation Army
LMP	Lesotho Mounted Police
LMPS	Lesotho Mounted Police Service
LNBS	Lesotho National Broadcasting Service

LNDSP	Lesotho National Dialogue and Stabilization Project
LNFOOD	Lesotho National Federation of Organisations of the Disabled
LPF	Lesotho Paramilitary Force
LeSPA	Lesotho School Principals Association
LTTU	Lesotho Teachers Trade Union
LWP	Lesotho Workers Party
MDC-T	Movement for Democratic Change-Tsvangirai
MDC-M	Movement for Democratic Change-Mutambara
MFP	Marematlou Freedom Party
MPs	Members of Parliament
MPC	Malawi Peace Commission
MPLCs	Multi-Party Liaison Committees
MSND	Multi-stakeholder National Dialogue
NA	National Assembly
NAFPESCO	National Forum for the Peaceful Settlement of Conflicts
NCCE	National Commission for Civic Education
NDPC	National Dialogue Planning Committee
NDPB	National Development Planning Board
NDSP	National Development Strategy Plan
NECOF	National Elections Consultative Forum
NEEWARG	National Election Early Warning and Response Group
NIP	National Independent Party
NMDS	National Manpower and Development Secretariat
NNPC	Nigeria National Peace Committee
NPA	National Peace Architecture
NPA	National Peace Accord (South Africa)
NPC	National Peace Council
NPCs	National Peace Committees
NRA	National Reforms Authority
NSDF	National Social Dialogue Forum
ONHRI	Organ for National Healing, Reconciliation, and Integration
PAC	Public Account Committee

PCA	Police Complaints Authority (PCA)
PCDG	Presidential Contact and Dialogue Group
PDA	Peace and Development Advisor
PEACE	Pastoral and Moral, Ethical, Accountable, Carrying and Engaging
PFD	Popular Front for Democracy
PR	Proportional Representation
PREGA	Programme on Renewal and Enhancement of Governance Architecture
PS	Principal Secretary
PSC	Peace and Security Council
PWDs	People With Disabilities
RCL	Reformed Congress of Lesotho
REEWARG	Regional Elections Early Warning and Response Group
RPCs	Regional Peace Councils
RPMC	Ribaneng Peace Making Committee
SACU	Southern African Customs Union
SADC	Southern African Development Community
SANDF	South African National Defence Force
SAPMIL	SADC Preventive Mission in Lesotho
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
TRC	Transformation Resource Centre
UN	United Nations
UNCT	United Nations Country Team
UNDAF	United Nations Development Assistance Framework
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UN OHCHR	United Nations Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights
UN RCO	United Nations Resident Coordinator Office
UN Women	United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women
UN 7PAP	UN-Seven Point Action Plan on Gender Responsive Peacebuilding
WILSA	Women and Law Southern Africa

YPF

Young Politicians Forum

ZANU-PF

Zimbabwe African National Union

DISCLAIMER

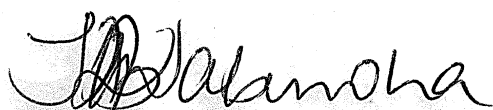
The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) commissioned this assessment on conflict, peace and gender context in Lesotho to contribute to knowledge building and operational learning about conflict prevention and management. Findings contained in this report and analysis thereof do not necessarily reflect the views of the Government of the Kingdom of Lesotho, the UNDP or other UN agencies in Lesotho. The author, Dr. Victor Shale, takes full responsibility for the report.

FOREWORD

Lesotho has embarked on an ambitious path of national reforms following an engaging country-wide dialogue process over the last years. Basotho have spoken and determined the course of action to attain the “Lesotho We Want”. In support of the national reforms process, the United Nations in partnership with the Government of the Kingdom of Lesotho through the Ministry of Development Planning (MoDP) initiated a project titled *Party Democracy, Conflict Prevention and Consensus Building*. The project falls under UNDP’s flagship Programme, “*Renewal and Enhancement of Governance Architecture (PREGA 2019 -2023)*”, which commissioned two assessments on: (1) Intra-and-Inter-Party Democracy; and (2) Conflict, Peace and Gender Context to provide empirical evidence on factors associated with various conflicts and prevention thereof, and issues of intra-and-inter-party democracy – and with stronger focus on unpacking the contributions of women and youth on peace and democracy.

These assessments make a compelling case for capacity building to engage in conflict prevention and management, review of laws and policies, reinvigoration of governance institutions and the speed up of national reforms. When the recommendations of the assessments are implemented, we have no doubt that they would impact positively on social cohesion, socio-economic and political developments in this country. The Government of Lesotho with support of UNDP will continue to prioritize support to conflict prevention and management and intra-and-inter-party democracy as has been the case over the past decades. These efforts build on the ongoing national reforms processes and the Southern Africa Development Community (SADC) initiatives to strengthen national and regional capacities for conflict prevention and peace.

We thank all those who participated for their invaluable contributions towards the finalisation of the assessment. We hope this assessment report will make substantial contributions to prevention of conflicts and consensus building in the Kingdom of Lesotho. Special thanks goes to the Government of the Kingdom of Lesotho, the UN Resident Coordinator, the UN Department of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs (DPPA), the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the Joint UNDP-DPPA Programme on Building National Capacities for Conflict Prevention for their technical and financial support to the assessments.



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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The overarching aim of the assessment on Conflict, Peace and Gender Context was to gain a better understanding of the triggers of conflict and its impact on social cohesion and gender. In addition, the assessment was meant to look into the existing infrastructure for peace in terms of conflict resolution mechanisms and other mitigating measures as well as identify enabling and inhibiting factors to peacebuilding and inclusivity. Pursuant to the objective of the assessment, a qualitative analysis method was adopted for the desk research and in-depth interviews that were conducted with purposively selected respondents in state and non-state sectors.

The assessment findings show that a political party system which is built on strong personalities rather institutions grounded in ideological principles and a weak economy are at the centre of conflict and political instability. The findings have revealed that politicisation of state institutions has crippled their ability to perform. Decisive resolution of governance challenges has been sluggish due to lack of incentives for reform. The intractable conflicts and instability have hampered the delivery of services and led to disillusionment among citizens. Under the circumstances of poverty exacerbated by COVID-19, some people have resorted to violence and crime, and social cohesion is under strain. There are implementation gaps between commitments to international protocols and their execution. Consequently, Lesotho has not been able to deal with gender and inclusivity questions adequately.

The assessment has established that there are several innovative peacebuilding interventions by local actors, including the Catholic Commission for Justice and Peace (CCJP) peacebuilding initiative in conflict-ravaged Ribaneng area in the Mafeteng District from which lessons can be learnt for wider application. External actors such as the Southern African Community (SADC) and the UN have also been credited for their interventions geared towards diffusing political tensions at the national level. However, the political elite has not necessarily responded to some interventions with zeal where they seem to benefit from the status quo. Local peace-building initiatives and regional mediation efforts are not bolstered by a comprehensive national policy response for effective management of conflicts and innovative peacebuilding measures such as

context-specific national peace architecture. Marginalised groups such as women, youth, and people with disability are also not been fully included in conflict management and peacebuilding processes as they currently exist.

Based on the foregoing findings, the assessment concludes that Lesotho's long history of conflict and political instability has reached levels that make it difficult for processes such as the national reforms to be sufficient for ensuring sustainable peace. As outlined below, several challenges remain a threat to the peacebuilding processes in Lesotho:

- While several national, regional and international measures helped to lessen political tensions and kept violent confrontations in abeyance, the absence of a substantive and contextually responsive national peace architecture remains a problem. This deficit also makes it challenging to create a peacebuilding knowledge base that is critical in establishing lessons and harmonisation efforts.
- Social inequalities leading to marginalisation of women, youth, children and PWDs have a negative effect on social cohesion and peacebuilding. Without all sectors of society actively engaged and participating on equal footing, social capital, social cohesion and peacebuilding remain a distant mirage. This is further affected by unemployment, nepotism and rampant corruption, which remain constant social ills that undermine peacebuilding efforts.
- Delays in undertaking national reforms mean that state institutions that have been at the centre of political instability remain unreformed and therefore, a threat to the peacebuilding agenda.
- Inadequate technical, human, and financial capacity building of CSOs and FBOs undermine their ability to be responsive to the demands on them to contribute to peacebuilding.

The assessment makes the following recommendations focusing on the economic growth and development, re-engineering of institutions and peacebuilding:

Economic growth and development

- As weak economy is one of the major triggers of conflict, Lesotho must prioritise broadening of the economic base by investing in its human resources to ensure

productivity. That is, the skills produced at the countries tertiary institutions must be relevant to the strategic sectors of the economy and responsive to the needs identified in the country's NDSP.

- Lesotho must turn its geographic constraints into an opportunity by seeking new ways to define its economic relations with South Africa. There must be an open public dialogue on cooperation model options for Lesotho, especially on trade.
- Ensure economic diversity by investing in mining, tourism, and agriculture, which have the potential to produce quick dividends than other sectors. There is a need for the country to revolutionise the promotion of commercial agriculture (crops and livestock) as a means of generating gainful employment on the land thus creating jobs and reducing the overdependence on politics as a means of livelihoods.
- Invest in climate change mitigation measures to enhance food security and prevent possible community conflicts over diminishing agricultural and water resources due to climate change.

Re-engineering of institutions

- The political system and governance institutions must be redefined and empowered through the national reforms. Specific attention must be paid to the separation of powers to ensure accountability and the rule of law.
- Given the country's historical past that keeps coming back to haunt it, there is a need to implement transitional justice to ensure that the past legacies are tackled once and for all.
- The legal framework governing the formation and management of political parties and coalitions must be reviewed to ensure that it shapes the party system and accountability of political parties.
- The current electoral system is no longer viable, and this necessitates the reform of the electoral system to ensure that the electoral system serves to regulate the proliferation of parties and facilitates the formation of stable governments.

Peacebuilding

- Establish a comprehensive national peace architecture (NPA) that will respond to the unique context of Lesotho. This will also ensure a systematic approach to peacebuilding and create a scope for local solutions instead of the current over-reliance on external.
- As part of NPA, formulate a policy framework that guides the participation of women, youth and PWDs in peacebuilding processes as well as ensures their protection against the impact of conflict.
- The current peacebuilding strategies in community conflicts must be revisited in order to enable timely interventions. The strategy must integrate indigenous knowledge in conflict management so that community-level initiatives can be sustained.
- The external support to peacebuilding initiatives must be closely coordinated to improve their effectiveness. In addition, in the absence of the national peace architecture, external actors must endeavour to hold multi-stakeholder consultative technical meetings with local actors including CSOs, FBOs, traditional leaders and media ahead of the official processes such as the SADC-led mediation to ensure broader consultation and ownership.

1. INTRODUCTION

The United Nations (UN) and its agencies have over the years supported Lesotho's development priorities contained in the country's strategic development plans. The strategic priorities of the United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF 2019 - 2023) are (1) Accountable Governance, Effective Institutions, Social Cohesion, and Inclusion; (2) Sustainable Human Capital Development; and (3) Sustainable and Inclusive Economic Growth for Poverty Reduction. In line with UNDAF 2019-2023 and the Lesotho National Strategic Development Plan (NSDP II), the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) has initiated a new Country Programme (2019-2023).

The Country Programme comprises three pillars: (i) Governance, Accountability, Social Cohesion and Stability; (ii) Sustainable and Inclusive Economic Growth; and (iii) Environmental Sustainability, Climate Change and Resilience. It is aligned to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) as well as UNDP flagship Programme on Renewal and Enhancement of Governance Architecture (PREGA) 2019-2023. Under PREGA, the UNDP developed a specific project entitled 'Support to Conflict, Prevention, Party Democracy and Consensus Building in Lesotho', with the financial support of UN Department of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs (DPPA) and the Joint UNDP.DPPA Programme on Building National Capacities for Conflict Prevention. The objectives of this project are to:

- (1) enhance local peace-making and mediation initiatives including an inclusive national infrastructure for peace and community policing;
- (2) increase the number and profile of women mediators in the country; and,
- (3) strengthen intra and-inter-party democracy and consensus-building among political parties and other influential social and political actors.

This report presents the assessment findings. Following this introduction is a background section on conflict and its manifestation in Lesotho. The third section provides the purpose and scope of the assessment. The fourth section explains the assessment methodology while the fifth section presents the assessment findings from the desktop

and in-depth interviews with 66 key respondents in Lesotho and covering six main areas namely: (a) Conflict triggers and impact on social cohesion, (b) Interplay between conflict and gender inequality, (c) The legal and institutional mechanisms for addressing the conflict, (d) Internal and external peacebuilding initiatives, (e) Participation and representation in peacebuilding initiatives, (f) Impact of COVID-19 on social cohesion and community resilience. The sixth section presents conclusions based on the findings, while the seventh section makes recommendations for the UNDP consideration.

2. BACKGROUND: CONFLICT AND ITS MANIFESTATION IN LESOTHO

The sources of conflict and political instability in Lesotho go back to pre-independence period. A prominent authority on Lesotho history, Professor Motlatsi Thabane (2017) suggests that the wars and treaties of land dispossession that have left the people of Lesotho with an economically unviable “marginal territory” that would not support the future population of Lesotho is one of the main sources of political instability. He argues that at the time of its annexation by Britain, Lesotho’s material circumstances were not conducive for the creation of a politically stable state.ⁱ Hence, he posits, that its incorporation into the Union of South Africa, remained a prospect had it not been due to opposition to apartheid in Britain, among African nationalists in Southern Africa and international opinion. Professor Thabane proffers that the pre-independence era circumstances did not change after independence and, this is the cause of conflict and political instability. The question of Lesotho’s incorporation into South Africa remains pertinent albeit sensitive more in Lesotho than in South Africa. Some of its proponents have tended to tip-toe around it. A more straightforward proposition is according to the Popular Front for Democracy (PFD), the economic and political integration. Although the integration discourse made traction between 1993 and 1998, it was doused by 1998 South African National Defence Force (SANDF) “invasion” of Lesotho and has since not been revisited.ⁱⁱ

The African Peer Review Mechanism Report (APRM 2010) provides a helpful framework of analysis on how conflict manifests in Lesotho.ⁱⁱⁱ It identifies four levels of explanation, namely: political, institutional, socio-economic, and inter-state. Only the first three levels, namely political, institutional and socio-economic, are looked at because they are applicable for purposes of this assessment. As the APRM rightly notes, Lesotho’s geographical position where it is entirely surrounded by South Africa makes the inter-state conflict unlikely. Although the relations between Lesotho and a democratic South are unequal, they remain fairly cordial.

2.1 Political conflict

Politics in Lesotho have for many years since independence become a source of wealth accumulation for political elites. Hence Professor Thabane aptly states that having failed over the years to change the circumstances of the country through visionary leadership, the political elite has used the employ of the state for personal benefit and entrenched patron-client political culture.^{iv} Under the conditions of personality-cult politics, the conflict has mainly expressed itself through zero-sum politics. There have been several politically motivated conflicts with some involving the security agencies. Seminal work by Professor Machobane elucidates the intra-paramilitary crisis of the mid-1980s where senior army officers at the rank of colonel and brigadier had gone rogue and undermined army command authority at the instigation of the then Prime Minister Jonathan.^v

Following Lesotho's 1998 general elections, the country experienced what Matlosa (1999) terms "the most profound conflict in its entire history". On the face of it, the conflict was triggered by the election outcome that had been overwhelmingly won by the newly formed Lesotho Congress for Democracy (LCD). But, Matlosa contents that the plausible way to explain the conflict must be tracing the many and varied unresolved political issues that transcended the election outcome.^{vi} Opposition parties' supporters had camped outside the royal palace in Maseru from where they plotted against the LCD administration. The Lesotho Defence Force (LDF) which was largely perceived to be politicised and covertly supporting the opposition, deployed its army units in the city. The soldiers paid a blind eye to the violent protesters and the deteriorating law and order giving credence to the perception of their partisan stance.

Politically driven skirmishes between the security agencies, especially the army and police and their instrumentalization by the political elite, have often resulted in the loss of lives since Lesotho's return to multiparty democracy. For example, in 1994, there was a police strike that led to the BCP government unleashing the army on the police to end the strike. In 1995, a group of police mutineers defied government instructions to thwart salary-related demonstrations by highly politicised civil servants including teachers and chose instead to join the protests. In 1997, the army had to intervene to quash a mutiny

of police officers who were suspected of having spearheaded the 1995 unrests that claimed the lives of police officers. The army and police faced off again in 2014 when the army invaded the police headquarters and Mabote Police Station allegedly to avert a coup.^{vii} The LDF claimed that the Lesotho Mounted Police Service (LMPS) was planning to arm the ABC supporters to ambush the LCD youth planned anti-prorogation march that was to take place in Maseru around the time of the LDF invasion. It has since been revealed that the LDF invasion which left one police officer and a security officer at a nearby government building dead may have been disguised for its own attempted coup against the ABC-led coalition government. This matter is now a subject of the courts of law.

Between 2014 and 2015 political conflict between the All Basotho Convention (ABC) and the Democratic Congress (DC) played itself out in the armed forces over the appointment of the army commander. Prime Minister Mosisili's appointment of the army commander, Lieutenant General Tlali Kamoli on the eve of the 2012 elections led to tensions within the army and between the DC and ABC. The perception was that because his 15-year dominance over Lesotho politics faced stiff competition for the first time, Mosisili was using the appointment to bolster his grip in the army so that he could rule from the grave. He was accused by opposition parties of using the army to intimidate them. Although Mosisili's party went on to receive the largest number of 218 366 out of a total of 551 726 48 votes (40% of the vote), it lost power to a coalition government led by Thomas Thabane's ABC.

As new Prime Minister, Thabane replaced the army commander, Lieutenant General Tlali Kamoli with Lieutenant General Maaparankoe Mahao in 2014 but the former resisted and challenged his removal until Mosisili reinstated him following his return to power through a coalition government in 2015. Mahao was demoted by Mosisili to the position of Brigadier and was later accused by LDF Command of leading a mutiny.^{viii} This saw the LDF embarking on an operation marked by a reign of terror, which resulted in some 23 soldiers being arrested, tortured, and detained at Maseru Maximum Security Prison. Many other soldiers who were not arrested fled into South Africa and other neighbouring countries and only returned after the 2017 elections. The 2015 Southern African Development Community (SADC) Commission of Inquiry had concluded that there was

no evidence of such a mutiny. However, the same mutiny allegation was used by the LDF to persecute Mahao until he was assassinated by LDF members.^{ix}

This killing of Lieutenant General Maaparankoe Mahao led to heightened political tensions. It also received international condemnation and put Lesotho on an awkward regional and international spotlight. This propelled Prime Minister Mosisili to initiate a Commission of Inquiry into the murder. The first two recommendations of the SADC Commission of Inquiry were that:

- a. The Government of Lesotho should ensure that the criminal investigations on the death of Brigadier Mahao be pursued vigorously and that the LMPS is empowered and resourced accordingly. The investigation should be conducted expeditiously and comprehensively without any hindrances and that all physical evidence be surrendered. The finality of the investigations should lead to a transparent course of justice.
- b. The general discontent of some Basotho with the Commander of LDF, Lieutenant General Tlali Kamoli and the conduct of the LDF under his command is disconcerting. In the interest of restoring trust and acceptance of the LDF to the Basotho nation, it is strongly recommended that Lieutenant General Kamoli be relieved of his duties as Commander LDF, and all LDF officers implicated in cases of murder, attempted murder and treason be suspended while investigations in their cases proceed in line with international best practice.

The South African Deputy President, Cyril Ramaphosa who had been appointed as a SADC Facilitator in 2014 following the purported coup that saw Prime Minister Tom Thabane fleeing to South Africa, oversaw among other things the dialogue process that led to the retirement of Lieutenant General Kamoli and his replacement with Lieutenant General Khoantle Motšomotšo in 2016. A SADC Preventive Mission (SAPMIL) was also deployed following another assassination of Lieutenant General Motšomotšo in 2017 hardly a year after taking office as army commander. Two senior LDF officers who were alleged to have masterminded Brigadier Mahao's murder namely, Brigadier Bulane Sechele and Colonel Tefo Hashatsi were said to have carried the hit on Lieutenant General Motšomotšo. They were reportedly shot dead by the commander's bodyguards on that fateful day.

Explanations on the assassination of Lieutenant General Motšomotšo suggest that he was suspected of implementing the SADC Commission of Inquiry recommendations.

The foregoing conflict episodes demonstrate its multi-layered complexity of Lesotho's political conflict.

2.2 Institutional conflict

The APRM report aptly notes that Lesotho's political history has largely shaped the relations within and between various institutions as well as their relations with the government. For instance, the subterranean factional loyalties within the traditional institution are divided along "Ba-Leribe and Ba-Matsieng" (those from Leribe and those from Matsieng). This divide is a deep historical issue within the Lesotho royal family.^x There is also the "royals" versus the "commoners" dichotomy which defines relationships in some spaces and between some institutions. It even became one of the political mobilisation instruments in the 1960s between the Basutoland Congress Party (BCP) and the Marematlou Freedom Party (MFP) according to Khaketla (1970).^{xi} According to Matlosa and Pule, the dichotomy between royalists and non-royalists also manifested within the Lesotho military. For example, the Letsie brothers' (Colonel Sekhobe Letsie and Thaabe Letsie) who were closely related to the royal family challenged the leadership of the army commander, Major General Lekhanya, mainly on the basis that he was a "commoner".^{xii} They were eventually arrested and jailed in 1990 for insubordination.

The institutional conflict has also manifested between the army and the government. The 1986 military coup against the BNP government marked a turning point in relations between the army and government. Hitherto this coup, the army had supported the BNP hold on power since the 1970s. Following the return to civilian rule in 1993, there were suspicions by the LDF and the BNP that the BCP led government would integrate the Lesotho Liberation Army (LLA) into the national army. This created a conflict which reached a boiling point when members of the army killed the Deputy Prime Minister Selometsi Baholo and arrested of some BCP cabinet ministers in April 1994. During the

same time, intra-army conflict resurfaced when two factions, one located at the Makoanyane barracks and another at the Ratjomose barracks attacked each other.^{xiii}

The institutional conflict has also been manifest between the executive and the judiciary especially since the coalition dispensation where the executive has attempted or succeeded to manipulate the judiciary. Some of the most profound incidents were during the period between 2012 and 2017 where irrational appointment to and removal from senior judicial offices such as the Chief Justice and the President of the Court of Appeal took place. The ruling elite always put pressure on the judiciary to make rulings that satisfy political ends. The handling of the intra-ABC court trials where the Acting Chief Justice was alleged to allocate the cases to herself and acted in a manner that suggested she had a personal interest is a case in point.

Consulted judiciary representatives indicated that the overall political environment in Lesotho is not healthy for it to function correctly, and this has at times led to tensions between the judiciary and the executive. Different political leaders and their supporters accuse the judiciary of aligning with their opponents if court decisions do not favour them. This has also put a lot of judicial officers' safety at risk because they become targets of verbal abuse and at times, death threats by individuals aggrieved by the court outcomes. The foregoing notwithstanding, it is worth noting that the judiciary has exhibited signs of residual independence judging by some of the decisions taken by the Court of Appeal on cases that were glaringly politically driven.

The co-existence of the modern and traditional institutions in Lesotho constitutes another area of institutional conflict. Throughout the country's historical epochs of one-party rule, military rule and multiparty rule, the leading political elite has not genuinely considered the role of traditional institutions in addressing the country's governance challenges. As a result, Lesotho has never developed the necessary conditions for the establishment of a functional and viable system of local government. There is no political will to have a clear decentralisation policy, and therefore, the roles between traditional leaders and local councillors remain poorly defined, leading to constant power struggles and conflicts between the two.

One of the examples of a collision between local authorities and traditional leaders is around the demarcation of boundaries. The chieftaincy boundaries overlap with the administrative district boundaries. This is a socio-cultural problem in that the local government demarcations are ignorant of the traditional leadership hierarchy. For example, there are instances where the boundaries place Area Chiefs (even Headmen) under Principal Chief's wards that they do not report to and may not even have similar traditions with. On the face of it, this is a harmless administrative decision. But, in Lesotho, it is one that could lead to violence between communities and could easily result in death and arson. This also has traits of a socio-economic conflict because besides the traditional institution hierarchy and allegiances, land ownership is a key area of contestation between and among chiefs. The legacy of the placing system established by Moshoeshoe I has also led to fierce resistance and pushback by any real or perceived subordination of one chief by the other.^{xiv} So, the demarcation exercise has been a source of conflict between local government authorities and traditional leaders and among the traditional leaders.

2.3 Socio-economic conflict

There is no gainsaying that Lesotho is one of the poorest countries in the world, with unemployment being one of the highest on the continent. The country remains the only low-income country among the Southern African Customs Union (SACU) member states while others have moved to the middle-income category. It has not made tangible efforts to industrialise the economy in its more than 50 years of independence. Although the country generates revenue from natural resources such as water sold to South Africa and diamonds sold in world markets, limited job opportunities and inequality in society breeds conflict. As rightly noted by Ikejiaku quoted in Beyene (2014),

“ The relationship between conflict and poverty is widely observed, as they are closely interwoven. Both of them explain the suffering of human beings. Poverty can result in conflict when complaints and grievances are not resolved; poverty-stricken people may revolt or challenge the administration in other ways. Furthermore, deterioration in economic conditions can lead to the eruption of violence (2012).^{xv}

The Lesotho political elite and their parties have created a milieu of patron-client politics where those in power have unconstrained access to public resources for personal gain, nepotism and cronyism.^{xvi} The fierce contestation over control of government and access to resources has led to a conflict where the political elite applies the law of the jungle to win at all cost. One of the causes of the socio-economic conflict is that under conditions of zero-sum politics, the distribution of state resources and infrastructure development does not cover the whole country. There are many places in rural Lesotho which are yet to reap the dividends of independence. There is no water supply, no roads, no communications networks and no electricity. This is in comparison to urban areas where modern infrastructure exists and communication networks are installed and maintained.

During the winding-up of this assessment, unemployed Basotho youth staged a public action which adopted the hashtag #BachaShutDown on 6 November 2020. They planned to submit their memorandum of grievances to the National Assembly. Central to the youth grievances were:

1. **High Unemployment Rate:** they called for government declaration of unemployment as a national disaster so that it could dedicate resources to effectively deal with the problem. This could be done through support to the private sector for job creation and prioritisation of youth-led businesses in government procurement.
2. **The National Youth Policy:** they lamented lack of political will to youth economic empowerment and called for the establishment of the youth commission to operationalise the youth policy.
3. **Gender-Based Violence (GBV):** they complained that the youth are affected by GBV, which is not given adequate attention by the criminal justice system. Therefore they demanded the introduction of 'mobile response units' for GBV case management and post-violence care across the country and tabling of a GBV Bill in the National Assembly (NA) before the end of 2020.

4. **National Manpower Development Secretariat Reform:** noting what they termed a “blind training” by the government, the youth called for a reform of the National Manpower and Development Secretariat (NMDS), which is charged with administering reimbursable loan bursaries on behalf of the government. They called for Prioritisation of students from underprivileged backgrounds when awarding scholarships and bursaries to ensure many of them have access to education.

The import of the above-mentioned demands by the youth in Lesotho is that they strike at the heart of the socio-economic cleavages that trigger conflict, unequal distribution of resources and rise in the level of unemployment, especially among the youth is a recipe for conflict. The assessment noted that the youth were not able to deliver their memorandum because the LMPS did not only deny them a permit to march to parliament, but it forcefully dispersed them using tear gas and rubber bullets when the youth marched to parliament without the permit. Failure by authorities to attend to the legitimate demands which are meant to alleviate poverty is a source of conflict. In other words, there is a direct link between the poor socio-economic conditions, poverty and the intractable conflict, which has a negative impact on social cohesion in Lesotho.

At the political party level, the limited economic resources have led to dwindling private sources of funding for political parties. Consequently, some political parties have resorted to forming alliances with some prominent traditional famo music groups, especially the ‘Terene’ and ‘Seakhi’. This is despite these two groups being linked with the frequent deadly community conflicts in the southern part of Lesotho, especially the district of Mafeteng. In responding to the economic constraints they face, these famo artists have formed gangs that fight each other to dominate the limited market that buys their music. Despite being faced with the same socio-economic conditions as political parties in Lesotho, the famo groups provide the much needed private party finance to some of the political parties during election campaigns. In return, the parties included members of these groups in their parliamentary candidates during the 2017 nap elections. Other famo group members have been employed in government as drivers, and this has created a perception that they enjoy political protection from prosecution.

Representatives of the security agencies described the groups as having mutated from a social phenomenon to extremism judging by their organisation, precision, and magnitude of the conflict and resultant killings. Some members of these groups who have since fallen out with some of the parties have publicly confessed that they have been used by politicians to carry out hits on political opponents. Others have infiltrated members of the security agencies like the LDF and LMPS and obtain arms and ammunition through illegal deals. Members of the LDF were arrested at the time of this assessment and charged with stealing four LDF service rifles for famo groups.

Finally, the poor socio-economic conditions have forced some Basotho youth to seek jobs in illegal mines in South Africa where the famo music groups are also involved. Violent clashes between members of these famo groups (also known as Zama Zamas) in the illegal mines are increasing in South Africa^{xvii}. In January 2020 the Eye Witness News reported the killing of nine Basotho men believed to be zama-zamas in Matholeville outside Roodepoort in Johannesburg.^{xviii} The Zama Zamas a part of the wider framework of criminality and violence in South Africa and it's often accompanied by the trafficking of miners, laundering the proceeds of gold-related crime and rampant murder and violence among rival syndicates.^{xix} Some of the gang members return to Lesotho where they engage in revenge attacks on relatives of their opponents- worsening the already dire socio-economic conditions. Thus, the conflict that is a creation of the poor socio-economic conditions becomes a compounding factor for those conditions.

3. PURPOSE AND SCOPE OF THE ASSESSMENT

Pursuant to the above contextual background, the purpose of this assessment was to collect empirical data that will provide up to date understanding and inputs to the United Nations (UN) Common Country Assessment (CCA), enable the UN and its agencies such as the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) to reflect on what has worked, what has not worked and what needs to be changed in their interventions. In addition, the assessment findings are expected to inform the CCA in terms of conflict-sensitive programming and the support on conflict prevention to state and non-state actors. The assessment is also expected to shape the design of appropriate conflict management and

gender curriculum as well as methodologies for workshops to be held for the various key stakeholders including civil society organisations (CSOs), faith-based organisations (FBOs), public representatives and political parties. Specifically, it inquired into:

- (a) the nature, triggers and manifestation of conflict in Lesotho.
- (b) measures taken in mitigation and challenges encountered.
- (c) Impact of conflict on social cohesion and community resilience under Covid-19.
- (d) the existing infrastructure and processes for peacebuilding and the nexus between conflict, peacebuilding, gender, and inclusivity.
- (e) prospects for promotion and development of a National Peace Architecture (NPA) through the national reforms process.

The assessment was guided by a realist approach whose thrust focused on ‘what works, what doesn’t work, how and why, for whom, to what extent, in what respects, in what circumstances and over what duration? This approach ensured that the assessment paid attention to the political, cultural, and economic peculiarities and conflict dynamics in Lesotho.

4. METHODOLOGY

A qualitative analysis method was adopted for this assessment. Qualitative data was gathered through desk review, in-depth interviews, and Focus Group discussions (FGDs) to uncover the various experiences of the variety of relevant respondents. A total of 66 respondents from 34 state and non-state institutions and offices were interviewed.. Out of the 66 respondents, 41 were males, and 25 were females (see annexure 1). The methodologies are detailed below.

(a) Desk Review

Documents related to the assessment were reviewed. These included the UNDP project document, progress reports on UN-supported conflict, peacebuilding and gender initiatives from the Catholic Commission for Justice and Peace (CCJP), journal articles, book chapters and other research documents on conflict, peacebuilding, and gender in

Lesotho and beyond.

(b) In-depth interviews

Interviews were used for purposively identified respondents who are considered critical to the assessment. These included public representatives, political parties outside parliament, CSOs including FBOs and the media, government officials, security agencies and development partners. Collected data were organised according to the different respondents' category and their responses identifying types of conflict and certain emerging trends from the data were summarised. The interviews were conducted using a semi-structured interview guide.

(c) Focus Group Discussions (FGDs)

Focus group discussions FGDs were used for interaction with groups of key actors using a semi-structured interview guide. These were CSOs, print and electronic media. Through the FGDs, information pertaining to perceptions on the value, benefits, advantages, challenges of conflict, peacebuilding and gender in Lesotho were captured. The FGD discussions provided experience-based perceptions across gender and age spectrum.

(d) Methodology Limitations

Collection of data for the assessment generally went well with few challenges encountered. These included COVID-19 restrictions, access, and availability of respondents and, reporting bias.

- **The prevailing COVID-19 conditions:** carrying out the assignment under COVID-19 conditions meant that it would not be possible to secure many face-to-face interviews due to travel and social distancing restrictions. This challenge was mitigated by conducting the majority of interviews virtually mostly through zoom digital platform, and some through WhatsApp calls. Two local researchers were also engaged to assist with data collection and in instances where virtual meetings were not possible arrangements were made for them to meet face-to-face with

respondents as well as for follow-ups with some respondents where clarity on their virtual interviews was required.

- **Access and availability of the targeted respondents:** related to the COVID-19 challenges above, it was challenging to access some of the respondents, especially the high-ranking officials from statutory institutions and government departments. Some were working from home and therefore firming up dates and times with them was not as quick as it would if appointments were set through their office secretaries. This became even more difficult where some of these respondents also had to get clearance from their principals before granting the interviews. Access limitations were addressed through third-party interventions and personal networks. The profile of the local researchers was immensely helpful in this regard because they were well known to targeted respondents. In some cases, network connectivity related problems were encountered, leading to some respondents not being able to re-join the meetings. Respondents who experienced connectivity problems were followed up and interviewed by the local researchers.
- **Potential for reporting bias:** There was observable reporting bias in some of the interviews owing to political polarization. Collected data was therefore verified through triangulation.

5. ASSESSMENT FINDINGS

5.1 Conflict triggers and impact on social cohesion

The assessment found that opinions on the triggers of conflict in Lesotho are many and varied depending on who one is talking to. However, the assessment found that through careful analysis, the triggers of conflict in Lesotho can be summed up in two main categories under which there are sub-themes. These two main areas are, a flawed political system and a weak economy and they are looked at in seriatim below.

5.1.1 Flawed Political System

For some respondents, Lesotho operates a shaky political system characterised by inter alia personality politics accompanied by a culture of animosity and deep mistrust, the politicisation of state institutions and partisan recruitment of civil servants, limited separation of powers, weak oversight institutions and lack of overall accountability.

a) Personality/elite interest-based politics

The literature on Lesotho reveals that the country has since independence experienced personality-based politics. The political elite thrives through the distribution of patronage to their members and non-members, thereby creating conflict and competition among the people. Consequently, the electoral processes have become highly competitive as the elite seek to gain unconstrained access to public resources for personal gain, nepotism and cronyism. Citizens' participation in the elections is not a way of giving a mandate to the political elite to develop the country, but they do so in the hope for a trickle-down of the patronage. Once power has been secured, political differences and dissenting voices are violently crushed through different strategies including isolation, torture and at times assassinations.^{xx}

Most of the respondents indicated that one of the traits of personality-based politics is the weakening of state institutions by the political elite. In extreme cases, some institutions are not established despite the constitution providing for them. For example, different governments have never ensured that the National Development Planning Board (NDPB) enshrined in Section 105 of the Constitution is established and operational. One respondent averred that:

“Lesotho has never built strong institutions, and the political elite manipulates them. This problem started in the 1960s and 1970s where, for instance, the establishment of security agencies was not to protect the sovereignty of Lesotho but political parties. Therefore, their training was also politically inclined”.

The respondents suggest that the current national reform process has not addressed the problem of personality-based political culture. Therefore, there is a need for a separated process to tackle the problem. Given the political atrocities experienced in

the country since independence, such a process must be preceded by transitional justice to effectively deal with the unresolved injustices of the past to pave the way for the future.

b) Politicisation of state institutions and partisan recruitment in civil service

In a country where personality cult politics loom large, everything including state institutions gets highly politicised. Government business gets compromised as government ministries pursue narrow party agenda's instead of national policies. , The politicisation of state institutions, runs deep in Lesotho and affects the functionality of state those institutions. The assessment found that because of politicisation of state institutions, recruitment and promotion of civil servants and some members of the security agencies is also politicised. Ppolitical loyalty takes preference over professionalism in the appointment of top public service positions. This criterion has seen filling top government positions along party lines. These include positions of Government Secretary (GS), Principal Secretary (PS), commissioners of different statutory bodies and directors of parastatals and ambassadors. Linked to party line are appointments based on family ties. Recent examples of the children and relatives of Prime Ministers Mosisili and Thabane to senior positions in government and parastatals were cited. The partisan recruitment has triggered conflict within and between political parties as some people feel marginalised. As a result, the term of service of some of the beneficiaries of partisan recruitment is inextricably linked to the term of the government. That is, whenever the government that hired them loses power, they too get fired. Respondents said that even if such public servants seek recourse in institutions such as the Ombudsman, there is no guarantee that they will get help because the institution itself is weakened.

c) limited separation of powers

Most consulted respondents raised concerns that the country's political system has exhibited a weakness in upholding the principle of separation of powers. This is regarded as one of the major triggers of conflict because according to the respondents, the executive oversteps its mandate and interferes in roles of the other arms of government. They accused it of treating the National Assembly (NA), Senate and

Judiciary as if they are subordinate to it. Examples of the allocation of the lion's share of the national budget to the executive, including its benefits in comparison to the budgets of parliament and the judiciary were given. The assessment noted serious concerns regarding the executive's interference in the judiciary. Respondents pointed out that there is the trend of politically motivated removal the Chief Justices and the Presidents of the Court of Appeal. These have been done to either protect political leaders facing legal battles or because of perceived bias by the judicial officers in matters of a political fallout within or between political parties.

d) Weak oversight institutions and lack of overall accountability

The assessment further found that since the observation of the 2010 APRM report that highlighted the generally poor public finance and accountability standards, there has been an improvement in some sectors in recent years.^{xxi} For example, the NA portfolio committees such as the Public Accounts Committee (PAC) have conducted public hearings where officials from government ministries and parastatals are summoned. These highly publicised proceedings are broadcast Lesotho Television and radio. The PAC takes up cases contained in the Auditor General's (AG) reports and representations by members of the public and businesses. However, the NA collective is at times unable to effectively carry out its oversight and accountability functions when Members of Parliament (MPs) make decisions based on the party line instead of being guided by national policy documents.

Other institutions like the Ombudsman and Police Complaints Authority (PCA) lack powers to take remedial actions, and they are deprived of the human and financial resources. However, others such as the police and Directorate on Corruption and Economic Offences (DCEO) have in recent years pursued corruption and criminal cases against some political figures and politically connected individuals. The timing of these cases has been questioned by some respondents who suggested that these institutions are at times either overwhelmed by political pressure or are used to settle political scores.

e) fragmented political party system

The assessment found that Lesotho was experiencing an increasing party system fragmentation, especially since 2012 when it entered into coalition politics. Three observations are worth making in this regard. Firstly, political parties are blamed for the party system fragmentation and conflict, which many respondents ascribe to their lack of intra-party democracy, confrontational politics and discriminatory practices towards non-members. Secondly, conflict and instability in Lesotho are attributable to the emergent phenomenon of coalition governments. The assessment noted that since the advent of coalition politics, the composition of governments has not necessarily been in line with the preferences of the electorate because of political elite cobbled up agreements which are not in keeping with the voters' interests. This is a trigger of conflict. Also, the Constitution of Lesotho does not guide the formation and functioning of coalitions. This has led to political instability which has seen Lesotho hold three elections within 5 years since 2012.

None of the coalition governments lasted for more than two years. They have all collapsed due to lack of cooperation and coordination between coalition partners. The respondents pointed to glaring contradictions of systems and poor coordination within the coalition government, especially during COVID-19 lockdown period. Government's COVID-19 responses were not coordinated between the different ministries. For instance, respondents indicated that there has not been clear coordination and complementarity between the Ministry of Home Affairs and the Ministry of Health during the COVID-19 period including on documenting nationalities of COVID-19 related deaths.

5.1.2 Weak Economy

There is a group of respondents who find faultlines in the feeble economy marked by scarce resources, small private sector, corruption, and geographical constraints. These are regarded as economy-related conflict triggers that Lesotho has to confront if a conflict is to be mitigated.

a) Scarce Resources

According to the World Bank May 2020 report, Lesotho's real GDP growth rate is estimated to have averaged 1.6% between 2015–2019, and it is projected to average 0.6% between 2019–2021, attributed mainly to the expected negative impact of COVID-19 (coronavirus). Unemployment remains high at 23.6% in 2018, coupled with high inequality and poverty. As the UN reports, the country's economy has been:

“negatively affected by political instability and a prolonged period of slow growth in South Africa, which has led to liquidity problems and falling revenue for the Southern African Customs Union. Between 2015 and 2018, economic growth averaged 1.4 per cent. Real gross domestic product is projected to grow by 2.6 per cent in 2019 and to average 1.5 per cent in the next two years. The fiscal deficit was projected to narrow in the 2019/20 financial year due to increased tax collection and a reduction in expenditure”.^{xxii}

The APRM (2010) notes that despite the government of Lesotho's commitment to improving living standards of the people, as well as pursuing a fair distribution of wealth and development gains, the country has since the 2005 adoption of its Vision 2020 remained crippled by the restrictive geographical, economic and human resources environment. The assessment found that Lesotho is predominantly a rural and agrarian society. The rural dwellers depend on the land for their livelihoods. The land remains a major source of gainful employment for the rural folk who utilise it for farming of crops and livestock.

This natural resource base has been undergoing long term degradation through processes such as erosion due inter alia, to poor land management and inappropriate farming practices. This degradation has been impactful on the capacity of the land to support gainful employment of the rural people, thus forcing them to look for alternative means of livelihoods. In seeking an alternative source of gainful employment and food security, the people have resorted to the trading of their land-use rights with those who have the financial resources for alternative *viz* housing. This has resulted in massive encroachment of human settlements into agricultural land,

both cropland and grazing land. This phenomenon is predominant in peri-urban areas.

Government has attempted to resolve this challenge by invoking sections of the Land Act 2010 to place a moratorium on further land allocations on unplanned land. This is not as successful as similar efforts by the government to thwart the destruction of wetlands which are a critical source of the country's rivers.

Equally problematic is the country's lack of economic diversity which leaves the inhabitants in a dire situation. As the APRM report notes, despite having housed the garment industry for more than 25 years, Lesotho is yet to have textile firms owned by its citizens.^{xxiii} The 2018 study by Workers Rights Consortium on the conditions of female workers in textile industries shows that all the factories are foreign-owned. There is a Taiwanese Nien Hsing Textile Co. Ltd also known as (Nien Hsing) which owns five garments (cut-and-sew) factories based in Thetsane and Tikoe industrial areas in Maseru, Lesotho.^{xxiv} The assessment found that there are 13 other factories in Maseru, Tikoe and Maputsoe industrial areas and all of them are foreign-owned. More than half of Lesotho's budget comes from SACU remittances.^{xxv} Therefore, as a renowned political analyst Kopano Makoa aptly puts it, "...by and large, progressively poor, food insecure and hungry Basotho cannot easily survive without a fair amount of financial assistance and state patronage"^{xxvi}.

b) Small Private Sector

The assessment found that there is hardly any private sector to talk about in Lesotho. On the contrary, the government is the main source of income to businesses whose only raison d'être is doing business with the government. The over-dependence of business on government has led to conflicts over tenders as companies scramble for business opportunities. Government is also the primary employer for individuals who are often holders of degrees on subjects that are in oversupply for the government. There has not been a programme aimed at capacitating such individuals through the repurposing of skills so that they become relevant to the strategic sectors that are contained in the country's National Development Strategic Plan.

Even the media that is supposed to hold government accountable is dependent on the government for income. As a result, some media houses have sacrificed media ethics for the sake of revenue generation through state-funded advertising and narrow coverage of factional propaganda in favour of one or the other faction. Some of the journalists have had to ditch the media for political appointments as spokespersons or get deployed to Lesotho missions abroad as a reward for their role in political mudslinging. Respondents say that when things do not work out for these journalists, they return to the media sector with a vengeance. Most radio talk shows are used to advance a particular political agenda, and this makes the media one of the perpetrators of political instability.

c) Corruption

One of the major triggers of conflict is the rampant corruption in government and parastatals. The Directorate on Corruption and Economic Offences (DCEO) reported that public procurement in Lesotho is the most vulnerable area to corruption and public procurement cases form 99 percent of corruption cases handled by the DCEO in 2016.^{xxvii} In an environment mired by corruption, those who are in political positions misappropriate public resources and account to no one outside of themselves. They protect their positions by all means necessary, including engaging in acts of violence. The assessment found that in Lesotho, the diminishing resources for CSOs which remain the vanguard of the marginalised sectors of society such as women, youth, and PWDs make it difficult for them to demand accountability from the political elite.

Respondents cited several incidents of suspected or actual corruption in which senior politicians were implicated. Top among these are, (a) the 2012 Matala road construction saga where the then Deputy Prime Minister was charged with illegal authorisation of a construction contract worth millions of Maloti. He was alleged to have had suspicious deposits of USD 23,429 and USD 8,428 in different banks^{xxviii}, (b) the 2015 multi-million Bidvest saga where the Minister of Finance was alleged to have pocketed over 4 million Maloti,^{xxix} and, (c) the 2018 introduction of the Agricultural Marketing (Wool and Mohair Licensing) (Amendment) Regulations No. 65 of 2018.

According to the Public Eye Newspaper, the regulations makes the licencing of the wool and mohair dealers by the Ministry of Small Businesses, Co-operatives and Marketing mandatory. Holders of the export licence are also prohibited from exporting wool and mohair unless it is prepared, brokered, traded and auctioned in Lesotho. This new legislation meant that the wool and mohair farmers would no longer be able to market their products in Port Elizabeth and Durban, where the Boeremakelaars Koöperatief Beperk (BKB) is the main handling agent.^{xxx} Although no charges of corruption have been made, some respondents accused the political elite of having received kickbacks worth millions of dollars from a Chinese businessman who was seen as their preferred wool and mohair dealer in the country.

d) Geographical Constraints

The geographic position of Lesotho as an enclave of South Africa and her economic dependence on the latter is also deemed a major factor leading to the socio-economic conflict. This is well articulated by the APRM report which states that:^{xxxii}

...Other challenges emanate from the peculiar geographic and economic situation of Lesotho. This small, externally dependent economy faces the risk of having its democracy and good political governance agenda determined by powerful external forces. Therefore, questions arise regarding the extent to which Lesotho can determine and own its national policies and political practices, and whether the country can resolve the problems of poverty, unemployment and HIV and AIDS in order to foster development.... (APRM, 2010:38).

The Joint Bilateral Cooperation Commission for Cooperation (JBCC) which the two countries signed in 2001 has had a mixed bag of results. The JBCC is among other things meant to deal with the strengthening of common interests between the two countries including on Political and strategic cooperation, defence and security, good governance as well as economic and social areas of cooperation. ^{xxxii} A lot of results have been realised over the years but, the continued restriction of movement of Basotho to South Africa coupled with the diminished opportunities in the South African mines means that for Basotho who venture into politics, this is the only

opportunity to escape poverty. On the other hand, Lesotho has amended the constitution ushering in dual citizenship for Basotho. Yes, more than a year later, the restriction of the people to move freely in search of livelihoods remains because the dual citizenship provision is yet to be operationalised because of delays in the parliamentary process to enact the act of parliament has also according to the police contributed to the already existing problem of rampant livestock theft along the Lesotho-south African border that the JBCC is trying to address.

e) Climate change

Climate change is one of the triggers of conflict in Lesotho. There is a decline in agricultural production because of changes in weather. Respondents pointed out that Lesotho has not had a good harvest in the past three years. The 2019 UN Lesotho report shows that as a result of dire drought conditions, the government of Lesotho (GoL) declared a drought emergency in October 2019, thereby triggering humanitarian support initiatives to the country.^{xxxiii} Under severe drought conditions, people's competition for the scarce resource has always ended in conflict among communities. Cases of conflict over grazing land at times on reserved areas (Maboelleng), water sources and destruction of wetlands have been cited as a common occurrence in Lesotho, especially among livestock farming communities.

As part of its contribution to the reduction of the impact of climate change, the UN and its agencies have made several interventions including; (a) mainstreaming of climate change in the National Strategic Development Plan II and building the capacity of communities and GoL institutions to manage natural resources including rangelands, (b) training of local authorities (LAs) in managing natural resources and providing them with improved agricultural equipment such as seeds and shade nets to help them diversify their sources of income with climate-smart agricultural technologies, (c) strengthening of policies and financial mechanisms intended to improve access to and the use of sustainable energy technologies through the establishment of regulatory frameworks to facilitate the development of mini-grids, (d) strengthening the early warning system by revising key disaster risk reduction documents.

Also important was the UN support to farmers and communities to adapt to climate change by constructing water harvesting structures, including roof water tanks, earth dams and infiltration furrows. The UN has also launched the Local Climate Change Adaptive Living Facility targeting four community councils in Moleleke's Hoek where a system of performance-based climate-resilient grants has been introduced to finance climate adaptation projects at the local level. However, as with other donor supports, the risk entailed in all these interventions is the possibility of it not being sustained beyond the UN support. Therefore this climate change-related risk could become a flare point for conflict.

To conclude this brief outline of conflict triggers in Lesotho, it is clear from the findings that the impact of both the flawed political system and the country's economic deficits is multi-sectoral with adverse repercussions on social cohesion. Social cohesion entails the trust in institutions; feeling adequately represented by institutions in terms of how whether people's concerns are represented by institutions; human security measured in terms of personal, economic and political security; satisfaction with civic life; freedom from corruption; satisfaction with personal life, ethnic group identification and civic engagement (UNDP (2015)).^{xxxiv}

Two main views on the effects of conflict on social cohesion emerge from these findings. On the one hand, there is a view that economic conditions and not political culture affect social cohesion because the conflict has diminished trust in state institutions, deterred investment, created a sluggish economy and high unemployment, and slow progress in the eradication of poverty. The other view establishes a direct link between conflict, lack of service delivery and erosion of social cohesion. This view argues that since 2012, human insecurity and corruption have, among other things, occurred. The people of Lesotho have been transformed into an intolerant, apathetic, and variously polarised society - a set of traits that makes the society less cohesive. Lack of service delivery and partisan approach to development has created animosity between those deprived of their right to service delivery and those who enjoy political patronage.

Respondents' identified capacity needs

- Capacity training for key actors like political parties, traditional leaders, CSOs, FBOs and media in conflict management.
- Training of traditional leaders in public management and leadership.
- Induction training for traditional leaders on roles, functions, and conduct.
- Training of the media on ethical reporting.

5.2 Impact of conflict on gender and vulnerable groups

The Constitution of Lesotho 1993 provides for fundamental human rights and through its principles of state policy encourages the development of gender equality policy. The National Strategic Development Plan (NSDP) II also recognizes peace and stability as a sine qua non for accelerated economic and social development for all Basotho. Lesotho has ratified significant international and regional instruments seeking to protect women and empower them to contribute more effectively to peacebuilding and development initiatives. Such commitments include but are not limited to:

- the United Nations Security Resolution 1325, which recommends mainstreaming of gender issues in peace and security structures.
- the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) whose Article 7 guarantees women the rights to vote, to hold public office and to exercise public functions^{xxxv}.
- the Beijing Platform for Action (BPfA) whose thrust is promotion and protection of all human rights and the fundamental freedoms of women.
- The SADC Protocol on Politics, Peace and Security which requires SADC Member States to ensure equal gender representation and participation in key decision-making positions in conflict resolution and peace building.

- The 2008 SADC Protocol on Gender and Development which, similar to the SADC Protocol on Politics, Peace and Security, requires the Member States to put in place measures to ensure that women have equal representation in key decision-making positions in conflict resolution and peacebuilding processes”.

The above notwithstanding, research reveals that women’s lived realities and their role in conflict and peacebuilding activities remain largely unrecognized due to inherently gendered power relations and lack of documented accounts.^{xxxvi} For example, although not legally barred from contesting elections, women face several barriers (including patriarchy, violence and culture, economic exclusion) which make it almost impossible to contest elections. Yet, they have borne - more than the most social group - the brunt of the violence that has become part and parcel of political and electoral processes in Lesotho. Not even the epoch-making amendment of the Local Government Act 1997 and the Local Government Elections Amendment Act, 2004 that legally reserved one-third of seats for women in local councils ahead of the 2005 local government elections, had a lasting impact. Firstly, the legal framework did not cater for women who may have chosen to contest elections as independent candidates if they felt political parties would not represent their interests. Thus, the only way women could contest elections in the electoral divisions that were earmarked for women candidates only was to subject themselves to the male-dominated candidate selection processes within political parties. Secondly, reserving a third of the council seats was not sustained beyond one electoral cycle.

The assessment found that conflict and political instability have had a negative impact on the promotion of gender and protection of vulnerable groups in society. There is frustration among female Members of Parliament (MPs) whose efforts to push for gender equality in the NA have been met with lukewarm responses. One of the MPs indicated that their calls for the domestication of protocols on gender get shot down without hesitation by their male counterparts.

There appears to be no meaningful political will for gender equality even at the local government level. One respondent indicated that during the 2005 local elections Lesotho tried to promote gender equality by reserving one-third of seats for women. This was

abandoned in the next elections after stiff resistance and court challenges by some political parties and individual males. The assessment noted an improvement in the law for national elections where political parties are required to submit proportional representation (PR) candidate lists containing 50 per cent of women. While this is a progressive measure, respondents indicated that some political parties now use the PR lists as an excuse to discourage women from contesting primary elections for nomination as candidates under the first past the post (FPTP) component of the electoral model.

The assessment found that culture and religion are both barriers to the promotion of gender in political and governance activities and a form of conflict at the same time. The Ministry of Gender holds the view that Chapter 2, Section 18 (4) (c) of the Constitution allows discrimination based on culture and tradition.^{xxxvii} It gave an example of the court case over the succession of the Principal Chieftaincy of Mamathe where cultural considerations were used to deny Princess Senate Masupha the right to succeed her parents in favour of her uncle. The Ministry highlighted contradictions of the cultural practices saying the Princess's mother had been allowed to be chief in the area for many years after the death of her husband. Yet, the Princess was regarded as unbecoming to take over from her mother because she is a girl child. Other laws such as the Laws of Lerotholi were also cited as reinforcing patriarchy by not recognising the right of widows to the property because they cannot take over the property when their spouses pass on. The Ministry holds that these legal barriers are a form of conflict against women and must be removed.

Another respondent indicated that the subordination of women is entrenched through socialisation, wherein most families, women and girls are expected to go to church on Sundays. In contrast, men and their sons are expected to attend political rallies. As such, women are not able to participate in political activities. If they do, they are unable to contest leadership positions because of the violence and vulgar language used against them.

With regard to the impact of conflict on vulnerable groups, the assessment found that the inability of state institutions to deliver services to the people due to instability characterised by fragmentation, intolerance, erosion of accountability and the rule of law

has severely affected vulnerable groups. Other examples of the impact are and not limited to the:

- (a) the killing of defenceless women and children during famo gangs revenge attacks. The police indicated that within 18 months from the beginning of the violence in 2009, over 30 people were killed mostly in Mafeteng and Maseru districts. According to the UN International Organization for Migration in Lesotho (IoM), this has led to internal displacements in Mafeteng where vulnerable groups have been forced to leave their villages to reside with relatives in other villages and some cases have moved to different districts altogether. Available information on reported murders at the Matelile police station under which the epicentre of the famo killings, Ribaneng falls shows that 127 people were killed between 2015 and 2019 within the jurisdiction of this police station.^{xxxviii} However, the figures do not show how many of those murders were conclusively determined to be due to famo gang wars.
- (b) exclusion of PWDs in political activities, economic opportunities as well as lack of education. The needs of PWDs are often not catered for despite the fact that when conflicts manifests in the country they are among the first victims.
- (c) discriminatory youth employment in government based on party membership. Interviewed youth representatives lamented the high unemployment rate and poverty levels, saying many university graduates aren't employed partly because they are not politically affiliated to those in power. As a result, some youth have been forced to join party politics with the hope of getting employed in government. Other respondents attribute the militancy of some young people to their disillusionment due to lack of job opportunities. Youth have lost their self-worth as they are forced to do jobs that pay meagre salaries and allowances that cannot sustain them and their family needs.
- (d) abuse of women and PWD by influential individuals in public and private sectors through sexual exploitation in exchange for jobs.

- (e) lack of access to medical care and criminal justice system for women, youth and PWDs who are victims of sexual offences and domestic violence. These people get even more affected under the COVID-19 environment due to travel and other restrictions.
- (f) violation of the rights of women, children and PWDs to access justice through delays. The assessment found that there is a general clogging of cases because urgent and deserving cases involving the violation of children's and PWDs rights get unduly delayed because of intra-party and intra-coalition conflict cases that are lodged on an urgent basis. An example of a civil case that was lodged in 2008 and only concluded in 2020 after the death of the plaintiff was given to illustrate how rights of women and other vulnerable groups get violated. The situation has worsened during the COVID-19 period because the courts have scaled down the number of judicial officers and the number of allocated cases as a precautionary measure.
- (g) The assessment also found that some cases involving minors and PWDs who are victims of domestic violence and sexual abuse have been scrapped off the roll for lack of evidence. Children have a short memory, and therefore by the time the cases get set, they have forgotten what happened to them a long time ago. Similarly, some with a mental disability cannot remember things easily. Lawyers take advantage of this to discredit children and PWD witnesses.
- (h) delays in parliamentary processes such as the passing of the national budget. Respondents cited the politically motivated delays in the passing of the 2020/21 national budget. The budget discussions were delayed from February 2020 to June 2020 first due to prorogation of parliament by then Prime Minister Thabane which was later overturned by the Constitutional Court. Then the Finance Minister delayed it albeit briefly when he withdrew the budget on grounds that he was going to factor in COVID-19 costs. The budget was further delayed by ministers who requested the speaker to allow them time to familiarise themselves with the

budget because they had just been appointed.^{xxxix} The respondents reckon, was done with no regard to citizen's rights, especially rights of the vulnerable groups in society.

(i) inconclusive legislative processes. Some respondents pointed out that one of the major disruptions of coalition governments instability is that parliament has not been able to deal with several bills such as the domestic violence and the disability bills which get shelved as priorities change depending on who is in power or has a parliamentary majority.

Respondents' identified capacity needs

- Sectoral (ministerial) capacity building on gender mainstreaming
- Conflict management training for youth including young women and people with disability
- Leadership training for youth
- Training for law enforcement authorities (police, lawyers, and the judiciary) on human rights approaches in cases involving children and PWDs.

5.3 The legal and institutional mechanisms for addressing conflicts

The assessment found that the legal and institutional infrastructure for addressing conflict in Lesotho is generally weak. Besides the court system, which has resources constraints, there is no systematic, coherent policy in place for conflict resolution. Different legislations and institutions have, among other things, a mandate to deal with conflict directly or indirectly. One such example is the National Assembly Elections Act 2011 under which the Independent Electoral Commission (IEC) manages elections. According to the IEC, logistics, data and monitoring committees were established alongside the leaders and delegates forums to serve as consultative platforms where all political parties contesting elections are represented. This arrangement has ensured transparency and served a confidence and trust-building mechanism.

The IEC also works through conciliation committees and a tribunal to deal with election-related disputes. Although effective in dealing with election-related disputes, the experiences of the election management body (EMB) are that the limitation with these structures is that they are not able to deal with disputes outside the election period. In addition, some political parties did not cooperate with the structures, especially with the tribunal. Therefore, there is a need to reinforce the structures with regulations that ensure compliance with their procedures and processes.

Another important institution for combatting conflict from the media perspective is the Lesotho Communications Authority (LCA) established under the Communications Act 2012 to oversee the conduct of the broadcast media including the public, private and community. The perpetuation of political and election-related conflict, as well as other transgressions through the airwaves by political parties and individuals, is prohibited through the Act and subsidiary legislations. According to LCA, the existing measures are constrained by the absence of a broadcasting code. The code was initially drafted in 2013. It was not completed because there was political turbulence which drew the attention of relevant political actors away. It was resuscitated in 2015 after the formation of a new coalition government, but again this government collapsed before the code was legislated. The LCA reviewed the code and subjected it to a parliamentary process after the formation of another coalition government in 2017. The legislative process is yet to be completed.

The assessment found that besides the delays in the enactment of the broadcasting code, there are other equally urgent legislations that have been interrupted by collapses of coalition governments and dissolution of parliament. One such legislation is the Domestic Violence Bill which was drafted in 2018 but yet to be tabled before Parliament. Similar with the delays on the broadcasting code, the Bill has been affected by the political instability, which has crippled parliamentary processes until the collapse of the coalition government in May 2020.

Some respondents regard the national reforms process as a conflict management mechanism because the reforms are meant to deal with legal, political, and institutional causes of conflict. Initially, the National Reforms Act 2018 was passed to deal with

dialogue and reforms process and established the National Dialogue Planning Committee (NDPC). The process had two major phases namely, the Multi-stakeholder National Dialogue (MSND) Plenary I under which stakeholders had to discuss the seven thematic areas namely, constitutional, parliamentary, security, justice, public service, economic and media. Plenary I was held from 26 – 28 November 2018 while its district and diaspora consultations were held between on 25 March- 18 May 2019 and 6 – 11 June 2019, respectively. These consultations were consolidated and formed the basis for Multi-stakeholder National Dialogue (MSND) Plenary II. Plenary II was held from 25 -27 November 2019 as the final stage of the consultative process. The National Reforms Authority Act, 2019, was enacted to oversee the implementation of the reforms recommendations and established the National reform Authority (NRA) to carry out and oversee that.

There was a cautiously optimistic group of respondents that thinks the reforms process can resolve long-standing conflicts. They pointed out that the level of open public consultations during this process was unprecedented, and this has reduced suspicions and conflict. According to the NDPC records, a total of 381 “lipitso” (public gatherings) were held, reaching out to 47,103 people, of whom 18,768 were women. Despite the reforms process having started on this positive note, several legal institutional and administrative challenges beset the post-public consultation process. Top among these is the slowness of the operationalisation of the NRA. The assessment noted that the tight timelines within which the NRA is expected to complete its work might not be met because, at the time of the assessment, Parliament was yet to formalise the NRA committee system. According to the NRA Chairperson, the committees are expected to initiate legal principles on agreed thematic areas. The NRA rules and procedures had also not been gazetted. The Secretariat that is charged with implementation and day to day running of the NRA had not yet been established, and international consultants who are supposed to support the committees had also not been engaged.

There are also some doubts on the ability of the reform process to address conflicts without adequately dealing with the political culture, which is marred by a lack of trust. Some respondents felt that the reforms process is dominated by politicians who are

largely responsible for the country's woes. Therefore, their commitment to meaningful changes that could make them lose power is questioned. There are suspicions that the politicians may manipulate the conclusions of the Plenary II sessions to suit their political ends. In addition, the configuration of the National Reforms Authority (NRA) makes some respondents uneasy given the high number of political parties in the body. There are 35 political parties in the NRA compared to only 12 in the NA. The impression created by this imbalance is that 23 unelected political parties are now influencing the reforms process. The role of these parties is eyed with suspicion by some respondents who suspect they may usurp the role of the NA.

Concerns were also raised on the national reforms process approach to security sector reform (SSR) as a means of addressing conflict and political instability. Respondents from the security agencies felt that they were not adequately involved in the process, which seemed to give more space to experts. They pointed out that the consultations on SSR did not correctly take into account their lived experiences and cannot be complete without clear national security, foreign, and defence policies. The LDF pointed to deficits in the legal framework, which have not received adequate attention during the consultations. For example, the Lesotho Defence Force Act, 1996 (Defence Act) is not in sync with the Constitution.^{xl} For example, the provisions of the Act, especially on disciplinary processes, have been found to be unconstitutional. Many LDF Defence Act based rulings get overturned by the civilian courts when members sue the army. It follows, therefore that there is an urgent need for realignment of the Defence Act to the Constitution.

Regarding policy, the assessment found that Lesotho does not have a national security policy except what is vaguely contained in the Constitution. The LDF indicated that the deployment of the army is currently a prerogative of the civilian authority without policy guidance and parliament has no say in the decision. The LDF considers this as the source of the abuses of the army by the political elite and must be changed under the SSR to ensure that Parliament has a say in the deployment of the national army. Another example of lack of policy guidance is the deployment of LDF members during COVID-19. The army pointed out that when its members got accused of human rights transgressions during deployment, there was a challenge establishing the boundaries and policy position

within which their deployment was made in the first place. These are areas that, according to the LDF, could be addressed through a crafted defence policy framework.

Besides the national reforms, the introduction of a civil registry system by the Home Affairs Ministry is one of the measures taken to mitigate immigration-related conflict. According to the Ministry of Home Affairs, lack of immigration and citizenship systems has led to criminals and illegal migrants' infiltration, which has fanned conflict. One of the parties in parliament echoed the immigration problems saying that this is not getting adequate attention. The party argued that currently, the law is very weak, and anyone can claim to be a citizen. An example of a controversial Chinese businessman who is alleged to have been involved in several tender scandals using his proximity to one of the political parties in the coalition government was used to substantiate the point. Establishment of a credible national population register was described as a positive step in ensuring that immigration conflict is contained. However, its success is contingent on closer collaboration and coordination between ministries that are relevant for this initiative. The incessant political instability under the coalition governments makes this collaboration impossible.

The assessment found that although not necessarily described by respondents as part of the conflict management mechanisms, traditional leaders provide an avenue for alternative resolution of conflict. All traditional leaders structures from Headmen, Area Chiefs to Principal Chiefs are called into action to manage community conflicts about pastures, wetlands, agricultural land, family conflicts and even witchcraft. According to one Principal Chief, their success in managing conflicts is dependent on the will of the people involved in the conflict. He indicated that the government does not support chiefs, and respect in the traditional institution has been eroded by political influence. As a result, people resort to traditional leaders for resolution of a conflict only if modern conflict management mechanisms fail to work for them.

To summarise the findings under this section, two points are worth highlighting. Firstly, that Lesotho has some institutional and legal infrastructure to contribute to the management of conflict. However, these are, at times, frustrated by the lack of political will to offer them support. Therefore, the ability of these institutions to yield results is

dependent on a conducive environment where there is the unity of purpose by the political leadership and all key actors to remove the barriers. Secondly, the country needs a comprehensive conflict management strategy and practice to deal with both latent and manifest conflicts effectively.

Respondents' identified capacity needs

- Lobbying and advocacy skills training for CSOs to influence reforms on legislation dealing with conflict.
- Need to provide capacity training for NRA members on core mandate and interface with parliament and government to avoid duplication of efforts and possible conflict of roles.

5.4 Impact of COVID-19 on Social Cohesion and Community Resilience

Respondents regard COVID-19 as an additional blow to the country that is already torn by conflict and political instability. Therefore, the closure of borders with South Africa under the lockdown means that there is a limited movement of agricultural goods. Basotho livestock farmers who are used to buying animal fodder and other supplies from South Africa are in a desperate state. Other services have been generally affected by the changes in everyday business operations of the government and private sector. According to one respondent, even where services were rendered, there was price inflation by suppliers who cashed in on the short supply of goods. The high cost of urgently needed supplies and most of which were imported from South Africa and beyond, made it difficult for the government to deliver services to more people given limited resources.

Besides the issue of high costs, respondents criticised government's handling of the COVID-19 crisis, arguing that its poor record in service delivery disqualifies it to take the lead. A lot of financial resources were misappropriated on officials who served in the command centre instead of the delivery of relief services to vulnerable citizens. As a result of this weakness, COVID-19 has exacerbated economic hardship for different

vulnerable groups, including women and girls, youth and PWDs, cattle herders, as well as most people who are in the informal sector. These groups of people had not been sufficiently supported by the government at the time of this assessment. One of the notable gaps in the government's approach was the absence of departments that have established track record in dealing with national disasters and health emergencies. The Disaster Management Authority (DMA) is one of the departments that must have been at the forefront of efforts to combat COVID-19.

The executive-centred government response to COVID-19 also stifled the critical flow of information to the people, thereby leaving the people vulnerable to disinformation. This happened against the background of an almost financially crippled private media. Except for few community radio stations, all the leading media houses are based in the capital, Maseru. The impact of the lockdown on the media was the instant drop in income streams such as advertising. According to the Lesotho Communications Authority (LCA), the law governing the media is a major barrier to private media performance during public health emergencies like COVID-19. The law requires private media to carry its costs when disseminating emergency messages. This means that despite the drops in income and with no government relief fund available to it, private media was still expected to communicate COVID-19 pandemic information for free. This was not possible, and the burden was left with the public media, which is basically, the Lesotho National Broadcasting Service (LNBS) outlets namely, Lesotho television, Radio Lesotho and Ultimate Radio as well as its two weekly newspapers, Lesotho today and Lentsoe-La-Basotho. In the absence of commercial and community radios' contributions to the fight against the pandemic, public media fell short of adequate coverage. The absence of other media players left space for misinformation and sensationalism on COVID-19, national reforms as well as other national issues. As with other countries elsewhere, disinformation has added to the polarisation of communities.

The judicial sector was equally affected during COVID-19 lockdown. For example, the High Court and Magistrate Court's reduced the number of judicial officers by half, and only criminal cases were prioritised while the civil cases were indefinitely postponed. This was said to have significantly impacted on litigant's right to justice. The respondents also posited that COVID-19 is partly responsible for diminished social cohesion. The

media and CSO representatives pointed out that under the COVID-19 lockdown conditions, there has been an increase in gender-based violence (GBV), sexual offences, child marriages, child trafficking and sex work. The security agencies and traditional leaders reported increased poverty and stock theft and other crimes as some sections of society become desperate to make ends meet. Consequently, villages have experienced tensions where people rise against each other in competition for scarce resources.

In terms of community resilience, there was a strong perception that Lesotho has a history of being a nation of resilient and resourceful people. However, respondents think that COVID-19 has considerably weakened community resilience. The restrictions imposed by the government to curb COVID-19 infections presented a catch-22 dilemma for the people and impacted on community resilience. On the one hand, the government relied on social capital for the people to adhere to the social distancing and hygiene protocols as the only remedy available against the pandemic. This is more so because the earlier measures by the government to impose the protocols through the security agencies, especially the LDF and LMPS backfired, and there was also no testing facilities in the beginning. According to respondents, people's behaviour tended to change when their compliance was not demanded by force. Thus, the paradox of COVID-19 strategy by the government is that coercion it had initially employed thinking it had the social capital actually diminished the social capital. A lesson out of that was that persuasion was instead an appropriate dosage that yielded positive behaviour and enhanced social capital.

On the other hand, respondents indicated that the resilience of the people of Lesotho largely depends on their ability to support each other. Therefore, the social distancing and other protocols have meant that the traditional community initiatives for fighting poverty such as "Matsema", stokvels and "liphephesela" have not been possible.^{xli} Respondents also pointed out that since the relaxation of COVID-19 restrictions, the informal sector trade is slowly picking up. However, this is constrained by a continued closure of the borders because most informal traders depend on cross-border trade. As earlier intimated, continued restrictions and increasing poverty under COVID-19 has driven some community members to commit crimes. Therefore, the pandemic has overstretched people's patience levels so that social capital has not necessarily been

sustained and social cohesion has been compromised. The high number of Basotho who were reported by the respondents to have illegally crossed the Lesotho-South Africa border without COVID-19 testing during this assessment is a case in point. Some of these people were profiled in communities and accused of importing COVID-19 into Lesotho.

5.5 Internal and external peacebuilding initiatives

The assessment found that there is no common strategy for conflict management and peacebuilding in Lesotho. Instead, there are several conflict management and peacebuilding initiatives led by domestic and external actors. Civil Society actors such as Lesotho Council of Non-Governmental Organisations (LCN), Transformation Resource Centre (TRC), Development for Peace Education (DPE) and Catholic Commission for Justice and Peace (CCJP) have taken up a keen interest in national political peacebuilding at different levels to mitigate conflicts that have ravaged some parts of the country. Although peacebuilding and conflict management is not their flagship focus, they contribute to conflict resolution at different societal levels. The myriad factors that undergird this complex and unstable political context have also necessitated robust peacebuilding interventions by external actors. The experiences of other actors in terms of what worked and what did not work with their strategies as well as the underlying circumstances are looked at in this section.

5.5.1 Peacebuilding initiatives by local actors

Notable among the local peacebuilding initiatives is the UNDP supported project by the Catholic Commission for Justice and Peace (CCJP), which has been focused on peacebuilding and social cohesion in Ribaneng in the Mafeteng District. Ribaneng is considered as the epicentre of the famo music gang-related conflict that has claimed the lives of many people, including women and children. Prior to the CCJP intervention, the government represented by the then Minister of Home Affairs, Tom Thabane had intervened to arrest the conflict escalation. The then Mafeteng District Police chief, Mampho Mokhele and a businessman, Thabiso Tšosane had also been attempting to mediate between the different famo gangs without much success.^{xlii}

The CCJP adopted a community-based peace model to address the conflict. This model was the most ideal for dealing with cases like in Ribaneng because it relied on social capital. Based on this model, a local peace committee, the Ribaneng Peace Making Committee (RPMC) comprising of church leaders, teachers, herd-boys, village representatives and community policing forum members was established, trained, and supported to lead peacebuilding in affected communities. The utility of the CCJP Ribaneng intervention is that it was the first structured multi-stakeholder conflict intervention after the initial government-led initiatives, as mentioned above. Most of the initiatives carried out by the RPMC) were successful because of community involvement and its bottom-up approach in addressing the conflict. This initiative contributed to the promotion of social cohesion in Ribaneng. However, some of the challenges the RPMC encountered were attempts by politicians to use the forum and its activities for political ends. The committee also lacked transport and communication devices to reach out to all villages to conduct public gatherings. The police in the area also face similar transport shortages, and this led to instances where crime and famo related conflict were not timely attended by the police (CCJP 2019).

Another local peacebuilding initiative is led by the Development for Peace Education (DPE) using the “peaceful school model”. The model has been pioneered as one of the peacebuilding mechanisms which involve school governance board, learners, and parents’ representatives to participate in real peace forums. The main objective is to mentor learners from the young age to take leadership positions and participate in forums where key decisions are made. The model which has been piloted in 24 schools at the time of this assessment has successfully brought stability where strikes in schools have been avoided through peaceful dialogue. The DPE has entered into partnerships with the IEC and the Ministry of Education and Training in this initiative.

A lesson learnt from the intervention is that to be successful, a peacebuilding strategy must be inclusive of all sectors of society instead of the hitherto conventional approach where peacebuilding initiatives in communities would target adults only. Secondly, partnering with other key stakeholders lends credence and ownership of the initiative. The DPE also conducts community peace dialogues aimed at building a culture of peace and reconciliation between chiefs and local government authorities on the one hand and

creating a platform for interface between local government councillors and the communities on the other.

The LCN is also one of the key local peacebuilding actors in Lesotho. In 2019 LCN and other civil society organisations (CSOs) intervened in one of the longest salaries and employment conditions related strike by teachers that lasted for almost the whole year. It facilitated negotiations between teachers' unions and the government. During this strike, teachers belonging to the Lesotho Association of Teachers (LAT), Lesotho Teachers Trade Union (LTTU) and the Lesotho School Principals Association (LeSPA) had downed tools bringing the entire primary and high school education to a halt. The teachers' strike was polarised with political undertones and had become a threat to peace and stability of the country. Some striking teachers were vandalising schools and displaying aggressive behaviour to public officials, non-striking teachers, and at times members of the public, especially after the government imposed a “no-work-no-pay” resolution on striking teachers. The intervention of the LCN and its partners including DPE, CCJP and Congress of Lesotho Trade Unions (COLETU) led to the uplifting of the “no-work-no-pay” decision by the government.

The Christian Council of Lesotho (CCL) has over the years spearheaded peacebuilding initiatives of the faith-based organisations' (FBOs) in Lesotho. It used its “prophetic voice” in promoting peace, unity, and stability of the country through mediation in major political deadlocks. It does not impose itself on belligerent parties but follows the pastoral and moral, ethical, accountable, carrying and engaging (PEACE) strategy guided by principles of solidarity and subsidiarity. In the past, CCL has collaborated with LCN to facilitate a peaceful dialogue over the allocation of parliamentary seats after the 2007 elections. This was after a prolonged political impasse that even saw the SADC mediator (President Ketumile Masire) quit the SADC-led mediation over non-cooperation by Lesotho's governing party. Drawing from its pastoral role and technically supported by the CSOs under the LCN, CCL created space for negotiation by facilitating communication and breaking down barriers to constructive dialogue among political belligerents.

Among many noteworthy CCL contributions to peacebuilding is its leadership in the development of a peace pledge ahead of the 2012 elections. The build-up to the elections

was filled with a toxic cacophony that threatened peace and political stability. The governing party, the Democratic Congress (DC) was facing a potential electoral defeat. The CCL persuaded all contesting parties and candidates to sign the peace pledge to honour the constitution, abide by an election code of conduct and accept the election results. This was the first time that a peace pledge was signed by political parties ahead of elections in Lesotho. According to the CCL, most of its peacebuilding interventions strategies have yielded results. Nonetheless, political conflict in Lesotho has affected its leadership structures to the extent that it has often been accused of being partisan. Questions to its integrity have militated against some of its peacebuilding efforts.

The assessment notes that despite being generally successful, some of the above mentioned locally-driven peacebuilding initiatives have come late when the manifest conflict situation is dire. At times the initiatives are undertaken after the conflict has inflicted losses of lives and property. In addition, there is a weak link between these initiatives and the government's responses. In 2012, Prime Minister Thabane tasked two the Minister in the Prime Minister's Office, Molibeli Soulo, and the Deputy Minister of Local Government and Chieftainship Affairs, Selibe Mochoboroane to facilitate talks between the warring famo groups. While the tensions abated, this was for a short time as the groups continued to use their music lyrics to antagonise each other.^{xliii} There are no adequate long term support structures at the district level nor coordination between the CSOs, MPs, police and relevant ministries. As a result, the initiatives remain localised as sporadic is the case in Ribaneng. This provides limited lessons and learning for mitigation of similar conflicts elsewhere. Most importantly, without adequate support from the government, the violence perpetrators in places like Ribaneng are not directly involved in peacebuilding efforts in communities. This leaves communities exposed to the recurrence of violence every time the perpetrators show up.

Respondents' identified capacity needs

- Capacity training for CSOs, FBOs, media, traditional leaders, and legal practitioners in peacebuilding processes.
- Technical and financial support by the UN and development partners

5.5.2 Peacebuilding initiatives by external actors

The assessment found that outside peacebuilding interventions have mainly been initiated by the SADC (and the Commonwealth to some extent) with the support of the UN. There have also been bilateral interventions by Lesotho's only immediate neighbour, the Republic of South Africa. Respondents attribute the reduction in election-related disputes and instability in the security agencies, especially the LDF to these initiatives. Most of the interventions have enjoyed technical and financial support from the UN and its agencies as well as other development partners, including the European Union (EU). Most respondents believe that Lesotho has not fully realised dividends of the external peacebuilding interventions because of two main problems namely, lack of political will where political elites' interests loom large and lack of the multi-track interventions to deal with all factors including political party level problems.

Lack of political will is a barrier to attaining lasting peace in Lesotho. Government commitment to the resolution of the problems was questioned by some respondents who felt it is not genuinely investing time and resources (limited as they may be) to maximise on external support. According to one respondent:

“the current SADC mediation has too many starts and stops because the tendency in government is that the senior officials' meetings are only convened when the SADC Mediator and his delegation is scheduled to visit Lesotho. Therefore, instead of the officials working hard on a continuous basis on agreed issues, they only convene these meetings to prepare responses to the questions the Mediator is likely to ask. This strategy has worked for officials because the Mediator is also usually in a hurry to return to South Africa before verifying what he has been told”.

On the other hand, there are respondents who indicated that external peacebuilding initiatives such as the SADC mediation are government focused and not capable of dealing with the intra and inter-party level issues derail peace efforts. The intra-ABC succession debacle was used as an example to illustrate the point that the key deliverable, including the reform processes, had taken a back seat as the ABC factional battles raged on. This obstacle was only circumvented after South Africa assigned its former minister Jeff Radebe as an envoy to facilitate talks between the two sides in the party. Although not

conventional, this intervention worked mainly due to cooperation by the then Prime Minister Thomas Thabane who had already publicly announced his intention to retire.

At the UN level, the UN system has made several peacebuilding efforts since the country's return to democracy in 1993. This has been mainly through providing technical support to state institutions and processes as well as capacity building support to CSOs – including faith-based organisations (FBOs) and women organisations. Overall, its successes in various interventions include:

- Dialogue facilitation between security agencies and government in the mid-1990s.
- Capacity building of the armed forces especially focusing on civil-military relations.
- Technical assistance and promotion of greater participation in the 1995 National Dialogue.
- Technical support to the Independent Political Authority (IPA) on the electoral reforms process

In recent times, the UN took part in the implementation of the Lesotho National Dialogue and Stabilisation Project (LNDSP), which concluded in June 2020. The Project was designed to achieve national consensus and trust-building through multi-level dialogue on reforms, stabilise the security sector and effectively communicate the reforms process with gender mainstreaming in the entire process. This project:

- (a) Successfully completed the dialogue process.
- (b) Generated nationally agreed reforms contents.
- (c) Created the legal framework for their implementation through the enactment of the National Reforms Authority Act, 2019.
- (e) Initiated fundamental steps towards the professionalisation of the security sector through training of the security agencies on human rights and UN Conventions in collaboration with United Nations Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (UN OHCHR), SADC and with the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN Women).
- (f) Built a consensus and capacity for special interest groups (women, youths,

children, elders and traditional leaders) in collaboration with UN Women and UNICEF leading to the development and production of the Women's Compact, the Youth Compact and the Children's Compact articulating the respective positions and as a contribution to the dialogue and reform process.

(g) Catalysed adequate development partners support, including the EU for the NDPC and the reforms process at large.^{xliv}

The UN has also supported the CCL to bring together political parties and the various segments of the security sector whenever real and potential conflict arises in Lesotho. The UN Resident Coordinator Office (RCO) represented by the Peace and Development Advisor (PDA) and UNDP have collaborated in developing the Heads of Churches experience sharing retreat in 2015 and 2019 on national infrastructure for peace for Lesotho. This intervention was in sync with the ongoing overall UN and SADC initiatives meant to promote peace and stability in Lesotho.

In a quest to enhance the integrity of electoral processes in Lesotho - the outcome of which will be a peaceful environment - the UNDP has also supported the acquisition of democratic 'hardware' and 'software' through support to IEC. This support has targeted logistics as well as the capacity building needs of staff.^{xlv} For example, aware of the preponderance of snap elections, the UNDP supported the IEC's post-2017 snap elections lessons learning retreat. During this retreat, the capacity of the EMB to deliver credible elections under pressures that come with snap elections was assessed. The retreat also created an opportunity for suggestions on areas of electoral reforms and improvements to the administrative frameworks which govern the IEC's mandate, powers, and functions.

The UNDP has also supported the IEC election dispute resolution (EDR) capacity so that it can deal with disputes between political parties, which have the potential to disturb a peaceful electoral environment. Innovative electoral assistance strategies have also been used primarily to support: (i) capacity building of the IEC and CSOs on public outreach; (ii) creation and support of a media monitoring panel to ensure equitable access to the media by different political actors during election campaigns; and, (iii) deployment of mediators to constituencies during the election.

In summary, findings in this section on internal and external peacebuilding initiatives show that although largely successful, the lessons learnt by the local actors is that they are effective when collaborating as has been the case with the CCL, LCN and others on different occasions. They believe that local efforts are weakened by political authorities' hasty requests for SADC intervention before exhausting local remedies to the problem. They consider the locally-driven peacebuilding initiatives to be key for ownership and lasting peace. However, this is dependent on external resources support. Some external actors think that part of the peacebuilding processes must include transitional justice. Traditional justice entails both both judicial and non-judicial measures taken to address violations of human rights that have occurred in a country, especially during conflict situations. Lesotho has a history of conflict and gross human rights violations which have never really been addressed. These unsolved political and historical issues appear to be sources of the intractable political conflict, and they compound mistrust and hostility. Respondents have not necessarily suggested a specific transitional justice mechanism. There are many such mechanisms that could be looked at, including truth commissions, legal mechanisms, reparations, reform, and Lesotho's own history long traditional justice mechanisms.

Most respondents believe that peacebuilding efforts in Lesotho could have had more impact if undertaken within a comprehensive institutional framework/ national peacebuilding architecture (NPA) for proactive management of conflict. This NPA would be sure that the lessons learned from Ribaneng and other parts of the country where local actors have intervened consolidated and utilised. However, they were ambivalent on how it should be constituted. They only agreed that it must be inclusive of all key actors such as traditional leaders, FBOs, CSOs and political parties and be technically supported by the UN and other development partners. There are two preponderant types of I4Ps relevant for Lesotho because of either their replicability or in terms of historical, political and socio-economic contexts within which they were created. These are: (a) the ones established at the national level as statutory bodies and the ones initiated by government; and, (b) non-statutory ones often established at the local level either initiated by non-state actors and supported by government or through a collaboration of government and non-state actors. Some examples include:

5.5.2 (a) National level

- **Ghana National Peace Council (NPC):** The NPC is a statutory body established through an Act of Parliament, the National Peace Council Act, No. 818 of 2011 to spearhead the Ghana Peace Architecture by developing mechanisms for conflict prevention, management and resolution, and building sustainable peace in Ghana. It has managed to defuse tensions, especially during election periods where some political parties deploy violent vigilante groups against their opponents. The NPC's strength is its collaboration with other institutions including traditional and religious bodies, political parties, CSOs and state agencies such as the National Commission for Civic Education (NCCE) and the Electoral Commission (EC). It works through Regional Peace Councils (RPCs) in tackling conflict hotspots and, together with its partners it has established the early warning systems (EWSs) such as the National Election Early Warning and Response Group (NEEWARG), the Regional Elections Early Warning and Response Group (REEWARG) in all the 10 regions of Ghana.^{xlvi}
- **Zimbabwe National Peace and Reconciliation Commission (NPRC):** The NPRC is a Chapter 12 institution created in 2013 after the adoption of the new constitution. It replaced the Organ for National Healing, Reconciliation, and Integration (ONHRI) which was established under the 2008 Global Political Agreement (GPA) power-sharing government between the Zimbabwe African National Union (ZANU-PF), the Movement for Democratic Change-Tsvangirai (MDC-T) and Movement for Democratic Change-Mutambara (MDC-M). The NPRC only became operational in 2018 when the National Peace and Reconciliation Commission Act 2018 was enacted to give it effect. Its first major initiative was facilitating the signing of a peace pledge by presidential candidates and representatives of parties contesting the 2018 Harmonised elections. While the spirit and design of both the NPRC and its predecessor the ONHRI were in line with the regional, continental, and international trends, the equally important political resolve and support required to make these mechanisms effective remains a constant missing factor in Zimbabwean peace architecture. Consequently, the NPRC is unable to fulfil most of the functions stipulated in section 252 of the NPRC Act 2018 even when incidents such as the post-2018 electoral violence and shootings of civilians by the army warrant its intervention.^{xlvi}

- **Malawi:** Malawi has established a National Peace Architecture (NPA) as envisioned by section 13 (1) of the country's constitution that provides for "mechanisms by which differences are settled through negotiation, good offices, mediation, conciliation and arbitration." Pursuant to this provision, the National Peace Act has been enacted to guide the establishment and operations of the Malawi Peace Commission (MPC), and District Peace Committees (DPCs) have been established for national and sub-national levels, respectively. Prior to the establishment of the Malawi NPA, several entities played a role in conflict management. These included:

- (a) the Public Affairs Committee (PAC),
- (b) Multiparty Liaison Committees (MPLCs),
- (c) Centre for Multi-Party Democracy (CMPD),
- (d) National Forum for the Peaceful Settlement of Conflicts (NAFPESCO),
- (e) Presidential Contact and Dialogue Group (PCDG),
- (f) Council for Non-Governmental Organisations in Malawi (CONGOMA),
- (g) Forum for Dialogue and Peace, Centre for Peace and Conflict Management (CPCM),
- (h) Democracy Consolidation Programme (DCP),
- (i) Media, Judicial Services,
- (j) National Social Dialogue Forum (NSDF) for Labour Disputes
- (k) Programme on Renewal and Enhancement of Governance Architecture (PREGA),
- (l) National Initiative for Civic Education (NICE),
- (m) Catholic Commission for Justice and Peace (CCJP),
- (n) Young Politicians Forum (YPF),
- (o) National Elections Consultative Forum (NECOF),
- (p) Traditional leaders, women and the youth.

5.5.2 (b) Local level

- **South Africa Peace Committees:** The peace structures were a product of the South African National Peace Accord (NPA) signed in 1991. These structures were the National Peace Committees (NPC), Regional Peace Committees (RPC), and Local Peace Committees (LPCs). The NPC consisted of the signatories to the NPA while the RPCs were composed of the regional representatives of the signatories to the NPA as well

as key actors, including traditional leaders. On the other hand, the LPCs comprised the local representatives of the NPA signatories, traditional leadership, CSO's as well as eminent people at the local level. The primary mandate of the peace committees was to deal with conflict at the respective levels.^{xlviii} They successfully thwarted emerging conflict outbreaks in various parts of South Africa.

The formula for peace structures' success was their multi-disciplinary membership, collaboration with statutory bodies like the police as well as the introduction of the codes of conduct for political parties and for security forces. Although successful in maintaining peace during South Africa's fragile period, especially in a country where such structures never existed before, the committees had several challenges. For example, their operations depended on broader, political or conflict environment within which they were established operated. In the absence of political support and where there was extreme violence, they could either not be established or were established but couldn't achieve much.^{xlix}

- **Nigeria National Peace Committee (NPC):** Although the NPC operates throughout Nigeria, it is not a statutory body but a key entity that has successfully facilitated peaceful elections, held dialogue meetings with political parties, organised meetings with the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC), organised meetings with security agencies, and collaborated with traditional rulers and religious leaders. The NPC has also organised signing peace accords for non-violent campaigns. Its successes in mitigating conflict lie in the moral authority of the eminent persons who constitute its membership as well as its collaboration with other local structures in different states within Nigeria. In terms of accountability, the NPC has two-pronged accountability, namely the moral accountability to the public and the financial accountability to the funders.¹

It is important to underscore the fact that regardless of whether national or local level interventions, the given examples of peace structures have pros and cons that provide signposts in designing a national peace architecture in Lesotho. The following pros and cons adapted from Hans Giesmann (2016) are comprehensive and worth mentioning.

Table 1: National level

Advantages	Disadvantages
Authorised mandate provided by government.	Political influence of government/ruling actors on the design and implementation of I4P.
Political and legal accountability of structures and operations.	Risk of bureaucratic procedures and decision making and as well as departmental in-fighting (mission creep)
Interest group support of government I4P functioning and successful.	One-sided dependence on permanent governmental interest and support.
Access to funding, staff, premises is provided and budgeted for.	Difficulties for CSOs actors to receive sufficient funding, staff support and fair share of support structures.
Professional flow and dissemination of essential information.	Information may be biased, and information flow may be controlled by governmental authorities.
Media coverage and interest.	Lack of independent and effective public oversight.

Source: Giesmann 2016

Table 2: Local level

Advantages	Disadvantages
High legitimacy provided by drivers and participants of I4P.	Dependent on local power structures and balances.
Sensitivity to cultural conditions due to limited scope and mandate.	Marginalisation of minorities and influence of culturally inherited hierarchies.
Diminished influence by external actors.	Limited outreach and impact.
Independence in allotting funds and taking decisions.	Lack of sufficient resources for funding.

Tailor-made approaches to conflict resolution and peace building.	Lack of appropriate skills to implement decisions and recommendations.
Effective and direct public oversight	Lack of media coverage and public interest.

Source: Giesmann 2016

5.6 Participation and representation in peacebuilding initiatives

The assessment found that similar to political activities; peacebuilding initiatives do not have deliberate efforts to ensure the participation of all sectors of society. This is partly because the political parties, which must be the cornerstones for the institutionalisation, nurturing, deepening and consolidation of participatory democracy fall short of this expectation. Lesotho trails behind other countries in implementing the UN 7-Point Action Plan (7PAP) on women’s participation in peacebuilding especially focusing on conflict resolution, post-conflict planning, post-conflict financing, gender-responsive civilian capacity, women’s representation in post-conflict governance, the rule of law, and economic recovery.

The Ministry of Gender and Youth, Sports and Recreation pointed out that for Lesotho to effectively implement the 7PAP, there is a need for closer coordination among government departments. This is currently lacking due to several factors, including frequent changes in the coalition government, which means that the chief accounting officers never get an opportunity to properly settle in the Ministry and mainstream gender. According to the Ministry, the UN support to different government departments must include a requirement for gender mainstreaming. That is, if the UN agencies’ support ministries such as the Ministry of Agriculture and Ministry of Public Works, those ministries must be assisted to ensure that their planning under the NSDP II encompasses aspects of gender. This would also significantly reduce GBV.

Respondents indicated that women, youth, and PWDs had not been fully involved in national level peacebuilding processes as required by the 7PAP and UN Security Council Resolution 1325. This is in contrast to community-level initiatives spearheaded by CSOs and FBOs, where women have been actively involved. Women’s involvement in both the

CCJP led programme in Ribaneng and the DPE-led community dialogues were mentioned as examples. The national reforms process that is seen by some respondents as conflict management and peacebuilding initiative was criticised for poor participation of women and other marginalised groups in form and content. Although the NRA committee system allows for public participation as observers from the gallery during its sessions, the assessment noted that when the committees' plenaries begin such participation may be constrained by the COVID-19 social distancing protocols.

Besides the COVID-19 constraints, the domination of political actors in the NRA membership was identified as a disadvantage to formal participation by other sectors, especially women, youth and PWDs. Interviewed youth representatives also felt that the youth is under-represented in the NRA because only one person represents the youth in the NRA despite that the youth accounts for over 40 per cent of the population. They indicated that initially, the national reforms consultative process did not pay adequate attention to the youth either. This led to the youth organising a separate consultative process in October 2018 with the support of the United Nations Population Fund (NFPF) to collect views on reforms. The report was used by the NDPC during the first and second plenaries of the dialogue phase. The youth report formed part of the myriad of sector submissions to the NDPC for consolidation and synthesis into a comprehensive dialogue report.

With regard to process and content, some respondents indicated that the national reforms consultations were not sensitive to the barriers for women participation. According to the Ministry of Gender and Youth, Sports and Recreation, the questionnaire on gender were administered at meetings or gatherings where both men and women participated. It argued that in a patriarchal society, some women had difficulty responding to equality related questions in the presence of their fathers-in-law or spouses. The responses that women gave could have been different if the consultations were held separately for men and women because they would have freely expressed themselves. To overcome this challenge, an initiative supported by UN Women to collect women's perspectives on the reforms process in all the districts was undertaken by Women and Law in Southern Africa – Lesotho (WLSA), Federation of Women Lawyers

(FIDA) and LCN in collaboration with the Ministry of Gender and Youth, Sports and Recreation.

In addition, these organisations held a national women's conference to create a platform for women across different sectors to dialogue on key political and governance issues. The output of this conference was a report on women's common position on the national reform process, especially concerning women's equal representation and participation, conflict management and peacebuilding. More than 170 women representatives drawn from several sectors including private, business, government, CSOs, FBOs, political parties, security forces, law, traditional leaders, media and trade unions participated in the conference. The report was included in the sectoral consultations of Plenary II of the reforms process.

Respondents views on SADC-led peacebuilding initiatives are that these are too state-centric and therefore, do not give full opportunity for other sectors to participate and at times fall short of addressing the underlying conflict issues. Non-state actors felt that these processes are clouded by state secrecy that often leads to short term solutions because of lack of public ownership. CSOs have always negotiated with government and SADC envoys to be included in the processes. They cited the experiences during the SADC mediations led by the former president of Botswana Sir Ketumile Masire in 2007 and the current one led by former Deputy Chief Justice of South Africa Dikgang Moseneke as examples.

6. CONCLUSION

Based on the foregoing findings, the assessment concludes that Lesotho's history of long conflicts and political instability has reached levels that make it difficult for processes such as the national reforms to be sufficient for ensuring sustainable peace. The findings have revealed that politicisation of everything that constitutes the state has not only crippled the country but has inculcated deep mistrust among people and political organisations. The intractable conflicts and instability have hampered the delivery of services and led to disillusionment among citizens. Under circumstances of poverty exacerbated by COVID-19, some people have resorted to violence and crime and social

cohesion is under strain. Yet external peacebuilding interventions have not necessarily been met with zeal by the political elite who seem to benefit from the status quo. Therefore, several challenges remain a threat to the peacebuilding processes in Lesotho:

- Firstly, while several local, regional, continental, and international measures have helped to lessen political tensions and kept violent confrontations in abeyance, the absence of a substantive peace architecture remains a problem. This deficit also makes the creation of a peacebuilding knowledge base that is critical in establishing lessons and harmonisation efforts difficult.
- Secondly, the social inequalities leading to marginalisation of women, youth, children, and people with disabilities (PWDs) have a negative effect in social cohesion and peacebuilding at local and national levels.
- Thirdly, unemployment, nepotism and rampant corruption remain constant social ills that undermine peacebuilding efforts and give rise to criminality, labour migration mainly to South Africa.
- Fourth, delays in undertaking national reform programme mean that state institutions that have been at the center of Lesotho's political instability remain unreformed and therefore, a threat to the peacebuilding agenda.
- Fifth, inadequate technical, human, and financial capacity building of CSOs and FBOs undermine their ability to be responsive to the demands on them to contribute to peacebuilding.

7. RECOMMENDATIONS

7.1 Economy

- Based on the finding that a weak economy is one of the major triggers of conflict, it is recommended that Lesotho must prioritise broadening of the economic base by investing in its human resources through skills capacitation and skills repurposing to ensure productivity.
- Lesotho must turn its geographic constraints into an opportunity by seeking new ways to define its relationship with South Africa. There must be an open public dialogue on cooperation model options for Lesotho, especially on trade. The assessment notes the ongoing JBCC arrangement between the two countries. However, a broader people-centred dialogue is also needed to ensure a people-driven cooperation. This is more so given that despite the amendment of the Constitution to allow for dual citizenship of Basotho and the subsequent adoption of the Citizenship and Immigration Bill, the movement of Basotho between Lesotho and South Africa remains a burning issue.
- The country must also ensure economic diversity by investing in mining, tourism, and agriculture sectors, which have the potential to produce quick dividends than other sectors. For example, Lesotho has already included the production of fresh fruit and vegetable (FFV) in its poverty reduction strategy. Through the Ministries of Forestry and Land Reclamation and of Agriculture and Food Security, the government has encouraged the production of fresh fruit and vegetables (FFV) and other high-value agricultural products as part of its poverty reduction strategy. For example, farmers have been encouraged to engage in commercial fruit tree production, particularly peaches and apples. Farmers purchase peach seeds (pits) from rural households, plant them in their nurseries and improve the genotype of the emerging seedlings by means of budding using buds bought from local progressive farmers and from South African producers. The improved seedlings are bought by the Ministry of Forestry for distribution to potential orchard operators and use them in their conservative with production

programmes. Therefore, the country must revolutionise the promotion of commercial agriculture (crops and livestock) as a means of generating gainful employment on the land thus creating jobs and reducing the overdependence on politics as a means of livelihoods.

- The country to invest in climate change mitigation measures to enhance food security and prevent possible community conflicts over diminishing agricultural and water resources due to climate change.

7.2 Reengineering of institutions

- There is a need to review Lesotho's political system. Given the country's historical past that keeps coming back to haunt it, there is a need to implement transitional justice to ensure that the past legacies are tackled once and for all.
- Governance institutions must be redefined and empowered through the national reforms process. Specific attention must be paid to the separation of powers to ensure accountability and the rule of law.
- The legal framework governing formation and management of political parties and coalitions must be urgently reviewed to ensure that it shapes the party system and ensure accountability of political parties.
- The MMP electoral system needs to be reviewed through the electoral system reform process to ensure that it serves to regulate the proliferation of parties and facilitates the formation of stable governments.

7.3 Peacebuilding

- Lesotho needs to establish a comprehensive national peace architecture (NPA) that will respond to the unique context of Lesotho. This will also ensure a systematic approach to peacebuilding and create a scope for local solutions for

Lesotho instead of the current over-reliance on external interventions and support.

- A policy framework that guides the participation of women, youth and PWDs in peacebuilding processes as well as ensures their protection against the impact of conflict must be formulated and form part of the policy framework for the NPA.
- The current peacebuilding strategies in community conflicts must be revisited so that they enable timely interventions. The strategies must integrate indigenous knowledge in conflict management so that community-level initiatives can be sustained.
- The external support to peacebuilding initiatives must be closely coordinated to improve their effectiveness. In addition, in the absence of the national peace architecture, multi-stakeholder technical meetings including CSOs, FBOs, traditional leaders and media must be held ahead of the external interventions such as the SADC-led mediation to ensure broader consultation and ownership.

8. ANNEXURES

Annexure 1: List of consulted Respondents

State Institutions		Respondents	Name		No. people
1	National Assembly	Speaker of the National Assembly	Hon. Sephiri Motanyane	M	2
		Clerk of the National Assembly	H.E Fine Maema	M	
2	Senate	President of the Senate	Hon. Mamonaheng Mokitimi	F	2
		Clerk of the Senate	Mr. Selete Molete	M	
3	Judiciary	Chief Justice	Hon. Maseforo Mahase	F	3
		Chief Magistrate	Mrs. 'Matankiso Nthunya	F	
		Registrar	Mrs. 'Mathato Sekoai	F	
4	National Reforms Authority	Chairperson	Hon. Pelele Letsoela	M	1
5	Security Agencies	Army Commander	Lt. General Mojalefa Letsoela	M	3
		Police Commissioner	Mr. Holomo Molibeli	M	
		Commissioner of Correctional Services	Mr. Chabana Majara	M	
6	Independent Electoral Commission	Director of Elections	Mrs Lydia Macheli	F	1
7	Government Ministries	Ministry of Justice and Law	Mr. Lebeko Sello	M	4
		Ministry of Defense	Mrs. Mamonyane Bohloko	F	
		Ministry of Home Affairs	Mr. Tumelo Raboletsi	M	
		Ministry of Foreign Affairs	Mr. Tanki Mothae	M	
8	Ombudsman	Ombudsman	Adv. Tšeliso Mokoko	M	1

9	Lesotho Authority	Communications	Director	Mr. Tšiu Tšiu	M	1
Sub Total						18
Political Parties						
10	Parliamentary parties	All Basotho Convention (ABC)		Hon. Lebohang Hlaele	M	11
		Alliance of Democrats (AD)		Hon. Dr. Mahali Phamotse	F	
		Basutoland Congress Party (BCP)		Mrs. Makhotso Rantho	F	
		Basotho National Party (BNP)		Mr. Tšepo Lethobane	M	
		Democratic Congress (DC)		Mr. Tšitso Cheba	M	
		Democratic Party of Lesotho (DPL)		Mrs 'Mathato Thinyane	F	
		Lesotho Congress for Democracy (LCD)		Hon. Teboho Sekata	M	
		Movement for Economic Change (MEC)		Hon. Tšepang Mosena	F	
		National Independent Party (NIP)		Hon. Kimetso Mathaba	M	
		Popular Front for Democracy (PFD)		Hon. Lekhetso Rakuoane	M	
Reformed Congress of Lesotho (RCL)		Dr. Motloheloa Phooko	M			
11	Non-parliamentary parties	Representatives of all non-parliamentary parties		Mr. Mohau Thakaso (WHP)	M	2
				Mrs Rosa Lenea (LWP)	F	
Sub Total						13
CSOs						
12	Lesotho Council of Non-governmental Organizations (LCN)		Executive Director	Ms. Lebohang Leeu	F	1
13	Development for Peace Education (DPE)		Coordinator	Mr. Sofonea Shale	M	1
14	Transformation Resource Centre (TRC)		Director	Mr. Lira Theko	M	2
				Mr. Tšitso Kapa	M	

15	Women in Law in Southern Africa (WILSA - Lesotho Chapter)	Executive Director	Advocate Mamosa Mohlabula-Nokana	F	1
16	Federation of Women Lawyers in Lesotho (FIDA)	Executive Director	Advocate Mabela Lehloenyane	F	1
17	Catholic Commission for Justice and Peace (CCJP)	Manager	Mr. Booi Mohapi	M	1
18	Democracy Works Foundation (DWF)	Country Director	Ms. Kholu Tsumane	F	1
19	Lesotho National Federation of Organizations of the Disabled (LNFOD)	Director	Advocate Nkhasi Sefuthi	M	1
20	Young Christian Students	Director	Mr. Nyeoe Ntene	M	1
21	Lesotho Law Society	Secretary General	Adv. Nthathi Pheko	F	1
Sub Total					11
FBOs					
22	Christian Council of Lesotho (CCL)	Heads of Churches	His Grace Archbishop Tlali Lerotholi	M	1
Sub Total					1
Traditional leaders					
23	Principal Chiefs and the College of Chiefs	Principal Chiefs of Thaba-Bosiu	Morena Khoabane Theko	M	2
		Principal Chief of Koeneng le Mapoteng	Morena Peete Lesaoana Peete	M	
Sub Total					2
Media					
24	Private and Public Print media houses	The Post	Mr. Shakeman Mugari	M	5
		Informative	Ms. Mosa Mojonothoane	F	
		Lesotho MNN Centre for Investigative Journalism	Mr. Billy Ntaote	M	

		News Day	Ms. Moleboheng Selebeli	F	
		The Reporter	Ms. Kefiloe Kajane	F	
25	Private and public Electronic media	Lesotho Television	Mr. Thapelo Mabote	M	8
		Mo-Africa FM	Mr. Chalale Mokhethi	M	
		Molisa ea Molemo FM	Ms. Gladys Makhatseane	F	
		MXXL FM	Mr. Tseliso Sebolao	M	
		People Choice FM	Ms. Malehlohonolo Ramathe	F	
		Bokamoso FM	Mrs. Mankalimeng Rasethuntsa	F	
		Ultimate Radio	Ms. Hlompho Letsie	F	
26	Media Institute for Southern Africa (MISA)	Director	Mr. Lekhetho Ntsukunyane	M	
Sub Total					13
Research Institutions					
27	National University of Lesotho	HOD Political Science	Professor Anthony Kapa	M	3
28	LIPAM	Director/Registrar	Mrs. Matlali Phakisi	F	
29	IDM	Registrar	Dr. Retšelisitsoe Nko	M	
Sub Total					3
UN, Development partners and Embassies					6
30	UN RCO	Resident Coordinator	His Excellency Salvator Noyonzima	M	
31	UNDP	Resident Representative	Her Excellency Betty Wabunoha	F	
32	IoM	Head of Office	Ms. Eriko Nishimura	F	

33	European Union	Ambassador	His Excellency Christian Manahl	M	
34	South African High Commission	High Commissioner	His Excellency Sello Moloto	M	
35	GIZ	Director	Mr. Khotso Lefatsa	M	
Sub Total					6
TOTAL NUMBER OF RESPONDENTS					66

Annexure 2: CPG context assessment questions

Conflict

- The nature and manifestation of conflicts in Lesotho?
- What are the drivers of conflict in Lesotho?
- How has the conflict's affected:
 - (a) state-society relations;
 - (b) Provide Lesotho's political and socio-economic challenges that hinder sustainable development;
 - (c) women, girls, people with disability and marginalised groups?
- What are the political factors that enable or inhibit meaningful transitions to improved state-society relations?
- What are the social factors that enable or inhibit meaningful transitions to improved state-society relations?

Legal and institutional framework

- What are the key contemporary issues for Lesotho in conflict resolution and peace building processes: political, economic, social and other issues which have an impact on women and youth, especially young girls and people with disability?
- Provide national legal and policy framework which advance women's rights in Lesotho.
- Which regional, continental, and international instruments and protocols pertaining to women's rights has Lesotho ratified?
- To what extent does the legal framework articulate rights of minorities and marginalised groups, particularly women, people with disability?
- What are the provisions for women's right to political participation?
- Which state institutions are mandated to monitor and enforce norms of inclusivity? If so, to what extent, elaborate?
- What are your views in terms of state institutions adherence to principles of accountability, transparency and are they responsive to service delivery needs across social segments? Justify.

Peacebuilding initiatives

- What are the recent peacebuilding initiatives in Lesotho?
- Were the peacebuilding initiatives locally or externally supported?
- Are they addressing localised or nationwide problems? Who were/are the actors?
- Do women's right to participate in all aspects of conflict prevention and resolution, peacekeeping and peacebuilding, and to be included in decision-making bodies at all levels of governance exist in Lesotho? If so, what has been their role in these peacebuilding initiatives?

- Where peace agreements or pledges were signed, were women, youth, people with disability and other marginalised groups in society included in those agreements or pledges?
- How has the inclusion or exclusion of women affected the quality of their access to basic services?
- Does including women in peace agreements significantly reduce the prospects of renewed conflict and violence?
- What are the main actors driving, directing changing or preventing progress – Towards the Lesotho We Want (drivers of change and power brokers) from a gender perspective?
- What are the obstacles that prevent Lesotho from implementing a vibrant Women, Peace and Security Agenda (WPSA); and also prevent the country from developing its National Action Plan (NAP) on Women, Peace and Security in line with UNSCR 1325, which will allow women to participate in all aspects of conflict prevention and resolution, peacekeeping, and peacebuilding and to be included in decision-making bodies at all levels of governance?

National Reforms

- Is the national reforms process inclusive and consultative? What worked and what did not work?
- What measures do you think need to be taken to address aspects of the process that have not worked?
- Do the thematic areas in the reform process consider women, youth, PWDs representation issues and planning? Explain.
- What must be done differently to ensure inclusivity?
- Can the national reforms agenda create an opportunity for promotion and development of National Peace Architecture (NPA)? Explain.
- In the Lesotho We Want, how can women's role be enhanced for successful implementation of proposed thematic areas in the reforms agenda in order to safeguard women empowerment, human rights and the long-term stability and development of Lesotho?

Human Rights Architecture

- Which human rights regional, continental, and international instruments and protocols has Lesotho ratified?
- Given high poverty rates, weak social service delivery coverage and propensity of natural disasters affecting health, food security and adequate standards of living, does Lesotho respect and promote human rights standards.

- What has been the role of security agencies in human rights violations over the years and to what extent have these attributed to conflict and political instability?

Strategies

- Describe your understanding of the UN-Seven Point Action Plan (7PAP) on gender-responsive peacebuilding.
- Is Lesotho complying with the 7PAP? Explain.
- What are the conditions enabling or inhibiting compliance with the 7PAP?
- Are there peacebuilding and social cohesion strategies that assure women's voice and agency?
- Are any of those strategies aligned to regional, continental, and international instruments and protocols other than the 7PAP? Explain which ones.
- Explain what the strategies say about women's participation in post-conflict governance rule of law and economic recovery.
- Explain and what works well and what does not work well with the current strategies. For whom do they work or do not work? What circumstances have shaped the impact of the strategies?
- What do you consider as circumstances that led to the strategies working or not working?
- Are there strategies meant to support state and non-state actors in conflict prevention?
- Explain what works well and what does not work well with those strategies targeting state and non-state actors?
- What circumstances have shaped the impact of the strategies?
- What do you consider as circumstances that led to the strategies working or not working?

Impact of COVID-19 on Social Cohesion and Community Resilience

- How has COVID-19 impacted on service delivery?
- What is your view on the impact of COVID-19 on social cohesion?
- Do you think COVID-19 has enhanced or diminished community resilience?
- What measures have been taken by your institution to ensure social cohesion and community resilience under Covid-19? Are these measures working? Explain.

9. ENDNOTES

- ⁱ See Thabane 2017 Towards an identification of historical roots of Lesotho's political instability. In Thabane, M. (ed) Towards an Anatomy of Persistent Political Instability in Lesotho, 1966-2016
- ⁱⁱ Interview with Nthakeng Selinyane, 04 December 2020.
- ⁱⁱⁱ APRM 2010 African Peer Review Mechanism Country Review Report No.12- Kingdom of Lesotho. APRM Secretariat, Johannesburg.
- ^{iv} *ibid*
- ^v LBBJ Machobane 2001 The Kings Knights. Roma: ISAS. In chapter 2 Professor Machobane gives details of how Colonel Sehlabo and Brigadier Ramotšekhoane undermined Major General Lekhanya's authority as head of the army because they were serving political agendas and had become close confidants of Prime Minister Jonathan.
- ^{vi} Matlosa, K. 1999 Conflict and Conflict Management: Lesotho's Political Crisis After the 1998 Election. In Lambrechts, K (ed.). 1999 'Crisis in Lesotho: The Challenges of Managing Conflict in Southern Africa', in Foundation for Global Dialogue, Series no 2.
- ^{vii} Mabote Police Station was targeted mainly because it's the police special operations unit's base
- ^{viii} The SADC Commission of Inquiry into the killing of Lieutenant General Mahao concluded that his demotion was legal albeit the manner in which it was done was flawed.
- ^{ix} Pherudi Mokete 2018 The Assassination of Military Commanders In Lesotho: Triggers And Reactions. *Journal of Contemporary History* 43(2):117-133.
- ^x Shale V. 2012 PhD Thesis research findings.
- ^{xi} Khaketla, M. 1971. *Lesotho 1970: An African Coup Under the Microscope*. London: C.Hurst & Co. Publishers Ltd.
- ^{xii} Matlosa, K and N.W. 2001 Pule Civil Military Relations in Lesotho: Problems and Prospects. *African Security Review* 10(2)
- ^{xiii} See Tom Lodge, Denis Kadima and David Pottie (eds) 2002 *Compendium of Elections in Southern Africa*, EISA.
- Saunders 2002, "Lesotho: Recent History" In Murison, K (ed) *Africa South of the Sahara 2002*, Europa Publications.
- Matlosa, K and N.W. Pule Civil Military Relations in Lesotho: Problems and Prospects
- ^{xiv} Under the placing system, King Moshoeshoe I placed his brothers, and close relatives as chiefs over existing chiefs and subordinated the former to the placed chiefs. This has been a source of bitter tensions between the surnodinated chiefs and the placed ones. More so because most of the placed chiefs ended up being the officially recognised chiefs through gazettement during colonialism and after while some of the surbodinated chiefs and their descendants have neve been officially gazetted. The makeup of the Principal Chiefs clearly reflects this arrangement where almost all the Principal Chiefs are relatives of the King by blood or marriage. Only the gazetted chiefs enjoy benefits of being chiefs including receiving allowances from government.
- ^{xv} Beyene H.G 2014 Socio-economic factors as causes and remedies for conflict of the San community in Platfontein. *Journal for Transdisciplinary Research in Southern Africa*. 10 (4)
- ^{xvi} See Chris Landsberg 2007 Democracy and political institutions in the SADC Region. In Matlosa et.al (eds) 2007 *Challenges of Conflict, Democracy and Development in Africa*. Johannesburg: EISA
- ^{xvii} Loosely translated, zama is a zulu word that means to try. So zama zama's are people who try their luck
- ^{xviii} See EWN Report "Police Question 87 People Over Killing Of 9 Lesotho Zama-Zamas & Other Crimes. Online at: <https://ewn.co.za/2020/02/01/police-question-87-people-over-killing-of-9-lesotho-zama-zamas-and-other-crimes-1>
- ^{xix} See Alan Martin 2019 Uncovered: The dark world of the Zama Zamas. ENACT Number 8
- ^{xx} See Machobane LBBJ 2001 The Kings Knights. Roma: ISAS and Shale. V 2017 Political Parties and Political Instability in Lesotho. In Thabane, M. (ed) Towards an Anatomy of Persistent Political Instability in Lesotho, 1966-2016.
- ^{xxi} The APRM had noted that despite several institutional reforms to improve public sector management, government ministries were unable to submit timely accounts for auditing and there was lack of political will by parliament and the government to compel them to meet their legal obligations.

^{xxii} See the World Bank May 2020 report on Lesotho. (<https://www.worldbank.org/en/country/lesotho/overview>) and the 2019 One UN Lesotho Country Report. Maseru: UN

^{xxiii} According to the NSDP II 2018/19-2022/23, the textile factories in Lesotho employ about 50,000 women.

^{xxiv} See Workers Rights Consortium Report 2018: Worker Rights Consortium Assessment C&Y Garments, Nien Hsing International, and Global Garments findings from worker interviews

^{xxv} APRM 2010 African Peer Review Mechanism Country Review Report No.12- Kingdom of Lesotho. APRM Secretariat, Johannesburg

^{xxvi} Mako, FK 1996 Political Instability in Post-Military Lesotho: The Crisis of the Basotho Nation-state? African Security Review 5 (3), p.14

^{xxvii} Toebe, T 2018 Corruption in Public Procurement in Lesotho. Law and Development Review 11 (2)

^{xxviii} Kapa, A. 2017 Lesotho. In Osisa (ed) Effectiveness of Anti-Corruption Agencies in Southern Africa: Angola, Botswana, DRC, Lesotho, Malawi, Mozambique, Namibia, South Africa, Swaziland, Zambia, Zimbabwe.

^{xxix} Lesotho Times 2017 DCEO Grills Rakuoane, Moshoborane. Online at: <http://lestimes.com/dceo-grills-rakuoane-mochoboroane/>

^{xxx} Pubic Eye 2020 Lesotho's Wool and Mohair Saga: What Does Statistical Data Say?. Online at: <http://publiceyenews.com/lesothos-wool-and-mohair-saga-what-does-statistical-data-say/>

^{xxxi} Ibid

^{xxxii} **Department of International Relations and Cooperation November 2020** Minister Naledi Pandor leads Ministerial delegation to meeting with Lesotho. Online at <https://www.gov.za/speeches/minister-naledi-pandor-leads-ministerial-delegation-meeting-lesotho-20-nov-19-nov-2020-0000>

^{xxxiii} United Nations Lesotho 2019 Report

^{xxxiv} UNDP 2015 Predicting Peace: The Social Cohesion and Reconciliation Index as a Tool for Conflict Transformation. Cyprus: UNDP

^{xxxv} The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, 1989

^{xxxvi} ^{xxxvi} Matšeliso 'M'a- Tlali Mapetla, 2016. The Gender Perspective of Peace and Reconciliation in Lesotho. Journal of African Security, Peace and Tolerance Studies, Volume 1 No.1, 2016

^{xxxvii} Section 18 deals with "Freedom from discrimination" and sub-section 1 clearly stipulates that no law shall make any provision that is discriminatory either of itself or in its effect. Yet in a contradictory manner sub-section 4 overrides that provision by stating that sub-section 1 shall not apply to any law to the extent that that law makes provision- (c) for the application of the customary law of Lesotho with respect to any matter in the case of persons who, under that law, are subject to that law;

^{xxxviii} See CCJP 2019 Review of the Peace Building and Social Cohesion Initiative in Ribaneng in the Mafeteng District for the Catholic Commission for Justice and Peace Lesotho (Unpublished)

^{xxxix} Lesotho Times Newspaper, June 2020. Budget Delay Could Cripple Government: Motanyane. Online at: <http://lestimes.com/budget-delay-could-cripple-government-motanyane/>

^{xl} Lesotho Defence Force Act No. 4 of 1996

^{xli} Matsema are traditional community anti-poverty initiatives where community works together often for reward in kind including food. Stokvels are community-initiated saving schemes where community members especially women gather together to make financial contributions for future or toward a particular course. On the other hand, liphephesela are income generating initiatives where traditional brew is sold for fundraising.

^{xlii} Lesotho Time Newspaper June 2010. Famo Gang War. Online at: <http://lestimes.com/famo-gang-war/>.

^{xliii} See Sunday Express Newspaper November 2015. No End In Sight To Famo Turf Wars. Online at: <https://sundayexpress.co.ls/no-end-in-sight-to-famo-turf-wars/>

^{xliv} See the Supporting Conflict Prevention, Party Democracy and Consensus Building in Lesotho project document 2019 and the PBF Lesotho country project progress report of June 2019.

^{xlv} See UNDP 2009. Elections and conflict Prevention: A Guide to Analysis, Planning and Programming. New York: UNDP

^{xlvi} See The Commonwealth NPC Evaluation report 2017

^{xlvii} See (1) Ruth Murmbadoro 2019 One Year After: Has the National Peace and Reconciliation Commission Act Failed Zimbabweans? New York: Social Research Council. Online at: <http://www.ssrc.org/>

(2) Lawrence Nhandara 2020 Community Based Reconciliation in Practice and Lessons for the National Peace and Reconciliation Commission of Zimbabwe. AJCR 2020/1 Conflict Trends

^{xlviii} See Andries Odendaal & Chris Spies (1997) "You Have Opened the Wound, But Not Healed It": The Local Peace Committees of the Western Cape, South Africa, *Peace and Conflict: Journal of Peace Psychology*, 3:3, 261-273.

^{xlix} Paul van Tongeren (2013) Potential cornerstone of infrastructures for peace? How local peace committees can make a difference, *Peacebuilding*, 1:1, 39-60.

¹ See Commonwealth 2019 proceedings report on the sub-regional experience-sharing workshop on building and sustaining national dialogue and peace structures.

