

## DEVELOPMENT FOR PEACE EDUCATION

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### **DPE STATEMENT ON THE ASSASSINATION OF A RADIO REPORTER AND CRIME RATE IN LESOTHO**

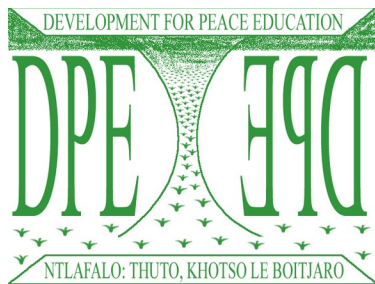
Development for Peace Education(DPE) perhaps like other sectors of society has leaned with shock the cold blood assassination of the Political and Current Affairs Radio Presenter of Tšenolo FM Ralikonelo *Leqhashasha* Joki, shortly after his programme on Sunday 14<sup>th</sup> May 2023. This occurs within a very worrisome situation of fear of crime in society where people are being killed at the highly alarming rate.

DPE condemns in the strongest possible terms this and other similarly heinous actions turning Lesotho into an unsafe space. The attack on Ralikonelo as a media practitioner instills fear in the rest of the profession. Once media feels threatened, that goes directly to the heart beat of freedom of expression in society. This equally relates to the members of society who see their relatives, and fellow countrymen being butchered like flies. Many of the victims are unarmed civilians, business people, the aged, women and children. The rampant killings do not only disturb peace and entrench violence both structural and direct but scare off investment, disrupt business and stifle local economic activity thus entrenching ever declining levels of poverty in the country.

DPE is worried by the way different parts of society respond to this disturbing situation. Casting aspersions that the killings are being perpetuated by certain political inclination against others is reckless, uncivilised, inflammatory, confrontational, provocative and unwarranted. This mishap is even worse when it is peddled by people of recognisable responsibility and status in society. DPE rebukes this attitude and calls upon perpetrators to back-off and stop this irresponsibility. This must stop forthwith and those who are taking a stance to respond recklessly are equally rebuked because that is neither helpful. Basotho deserve peace and all should strive for the promotion of the *culture of peace*.

DPE acknowledges the voices of concern raised in both Houses of parliament and recognises the curfew declared, which occurs in the context of current safety measures that are being taken by the police and the army. However, DPE believes that a lot can and should be done. Therefore, DPE calls on;

- ✓ Police to investigate the case on the assassination of the Tšenolo FM Radio Presenter on Political & Current Affairs with the rigour that is commensurate with the impact this has on public and the potential damage in state of media

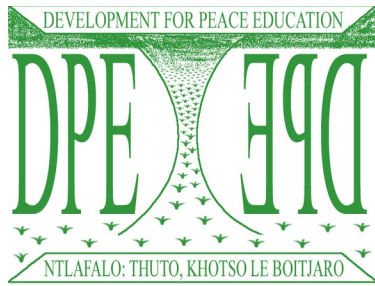


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freedom in the country. In the similar vein, there should be a dedicated effort to investigate, apprehend and put before courts the suspects in the rampant murder and other crimes across the country;

- ✓ Basotho to desist from any form of inflammatory and antagonistic posture towards each other either individually or organisationally over the origins, nature and pattern of the crime in Lesotho as that may sow seeds of hate among the people with dire consequences;
- ✓ The Commissioner of Police to devise more direct and targeted means of response to the rampant crime over generalised and less pointed interventions like the ongoing curfew. Basotho business have not yet recovered from the restricted movements imposed by the COVID-19. While, restricted movement is one of the legal avenues at the disposal of police to fight crime, authorities should be not treat it as a first point of call unless the situation certainly and beyond doubt so demands;
- ✓ The Police Authority and the Commissioner of Police to determine the objectives for policing the country and issue a policing plan respectively as it is demanded by the Police Act 1998 Section 15 and 16. In doing this the Police Authority and the Commissioner should be driven by the basic appreciation that no amount of investment in crime prevention shall bear fruits without involving the public, chiefs, community policing fora, business, media and all other community leadership;
- ✓ The government to finance the police to perform its duty effectively and efficiently. It is not proper for the government to find it easy to deploy the defense force in fighting crime and restoring order instead of adequately resourcing the police service and using the defense to provide the back up;
- ✓ The Commissioner of Police to include in his policing plan which the Police Authority should ensure that government finances, the modern policing technology such as intelligence surveillance cameras which will go a long way in effectively deterring crime and enhancing investigations;



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- ✓ Government to recognise and support peace initiatives such as peaceful school model that inculcates the culture of peace among students and young people;
- ✓ Government to act with resolve to take a zero tolerance stance against the violent gangsterism which the National Security Services(NSS) under the regional anti-terrorism programme defines as early signs of violent extremism.

DPE wishes to appeal to the security sector collective to remain focused and committed to ensure the state security, public safety, peace and tranquility. Therefore, the interaction of security agencies with civilian authority should remain professional at all material times. Once Basotho suspect that any of the security agencies is capable of advancing interests beyond the public good articulated by the law, then the war against crime would not be won and the Kingdom shall regress.

No, one wishes to see that moment. Basotho have observed and enjoyed splendid absence of the agencies in the public and political space in the past few years. They applauded this because they saw it as a departure from the political and security instability which necessitated intervention of Southern African Development Community(SADC).

**Khotso...**

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