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MARA

HA A SE NA LIHLOELA A OELA

**From a glider
to a pilot**

**Life after the
army**

**LeaRN shapes up
for challenges
ahead**

**How abortionists
outsmart the
police**

**The lily of the plains
of Bokaota**

**LDF commemorates
Army Day in style**

**SADC heads of state
search for a common
solution to overcome
HIV/AIDS**

**Good Shepherd Centre:
Refuge for needy single
young mothers**

**Triumph of
civilization**

**Hansa, Monis and
Braai-what a night!**

**Mara's
beauties**



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Comment

Interstate Defence and Security Committee in Lesotho again

The hosting of the Interstate Defence and Security Committee (ISDSC) conference in Lesotho could be a surprise to many people especially Basotho. If you do a good job everyone wants you to do the same for him/her now and again. But this is not the case with the ISDSC.

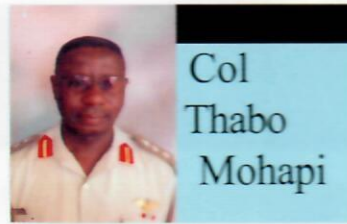
According to the SADC Protocol on Politics, Defence and Security Cooperation in which Lesotho is a signatory, a member state chairing the Organ on Politics, Defence and Security shall also chair the ISDSC. The Kingdom of Lesotho will thus chair this organ after the Republic of Mozambique in September 2003. So the ISDSC under this Protocol becomes a committee of the organ.

The Kingdom in the Sky is facing a lot of challenges pertaining to regional and perhaps continental security as well. Peace remains precarious if not elusive in the Democratic Republic of Congo and the Great Lakes region. And one yearns for stability and lasting peace in Angola following the death of Dr Jonas Savimbi.

The continental challenges include the proposed establishment of the African Standby Force (ASF) in which, each sub-region is expected to establish a Brigade size force. As a chair of the ISDSC, the Kingdom of Lesotho should speed up the process and ensure that at least structures of the ASF are put in place before the end of her tenure.

As she did in 2001, Lesotho must show true leadership in regional political and security matters. But this can only materialize if all SADC member states are behind Lesotho and supportive in all initiatives. Of course one hopes that Lesotho as a leader will lead by example in all initiatives driven by the region. This is a task lying ahead to be executed by determined and courageous men and women of this country. Mara wishes you all the best during your tenure in the hot seat. ■

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In the book of 2 Timothy Chapter 2 Verse 4, the word of God reads as thus:

“A soldier on active service wants to please his commanding officer, and so does not get mixed up in the affairs of Civilian Life.”

Chapter 3 Verses 14 - 15 says:

“But as for you; continue in the truths that you were taught and firmly believed. You know who your teachers were and you remember that ever since you were a child. You have known the holly scriptures, which are able to give you the wisdom that leads to salvation through faith in Christ.”

Theme:

Lets march-on and no about-turn

I sometimes wonder how many of us do spend sometime looking back over the past years, where we come from. Some thoughts are tinged with sadness, some with pride, some with nostalgia and of course others with a sense of shame. Whatever memories we may recall; it will do us no good to dwell on the past.

We have learned a good deal from events that took place, some of which have equipped us for the future. We have to guard against making the same mistakes; we must follow the good examples set by our leaders. In this respect, the past plays a useful part; but it is essential then that looking forward, you march-on head high to meet the challenges of the future.

The only sure and infallible way of coping with what lies ahead of you; is to have trust in your immediate superiors, the high command of the Defence Force, the Government Authorities and indeed our Maker; God Omnipotent. Remember, only God knows what the future holds for you and the desires that which are best for you.

A complete and unreserved submission to the rule of law is what transformed Lesotho Defence Force. Staying away from the affairs of Civilian Life; and obeying our Authorities turned LDF into a small but professional army. Do you remember June 28 the Army Day? Were you not proud of your Army?

Take note therefore, of the past experience and continue in the truths that you were taught and firmly believed and in the company of the Living God march-forward into the future in faith and place yourself in His unfailing Love and Care. AMEN

GOD BLESS YOU ALL

Smiling faces of *MARA'S Beauties*



◀ **Mantoetsi Mabathoana,**
18, from Lithabaneng,
Maseru, would like to be an
entrepreneur. She likes
reading and socialising.



Charity Bataung,
18, from Lithabaneng,
Maseru, aspires to be a
hair stylist.
She likes exercising
and modelling.

▶

IF YOU WOULD LIKE YOUR PICTURE TO APPEAR ON THIS PAGE SEND IT WITH YOUR PARTICULARS TO:
THE EDITOR, MARA. P. O. BOX 1346, MASERU 100

**REMEMBER TO BE IN THE AGE RANGE 15-25 YEARS.
SMILING FACES ARE PREFERABLE**

MARA'S *Formidable hunks*



▲
Relebohile Ntisane,
22, from Khubetsoana, Maseru.
He workouts at Maseru Health
and Fitness Club
Hobbies: Wrestling and
Bodybuilding



▲
Name: Cdm Pte Montoeli Ben
Mthimkhulo
Age: 31
Gymnasium: Maseru Health
and Fitness Club
Hobbies: Soccer and Bodybuilding



**Lt Col
Tanki
Mothae**

World peace and security at stake

– Is it because of unipolarism in world politics?

The world has always been suspicious of weapons of mass destruction (WMD) in the hands of the so-called (rouge states). To date such weapons have never been found or discovered. There are allegations that certain countries possess these weapons and are planning to use them.

Now, the question remains; who should have or acquire these weapons?, where should such a member state be?, who should authorise such acquisition or possession?, why, if such weapons are prohibited should be possessed by anyone? So these questions will remain unanswered for now, but one believes that readers will form their own opinion in this regard.

But by the look of things if the situation remains like it is, the world will hardly realise peace and stability. The reason being the weaker states that will think the unipolar system is unfair to them will endeavour at all costs to acquire such weapons. This has always been

the case in many parts of the world. Political instability will also remain a factor to consider at all times hence the escalation of terrorists' activities throughout the world.

The unfortunate part of this situation is that the most affected are the innocent civilians and smaller states. These states are as a result forced to spend their meagre resources on security in order to meet both regional and

international obligations to fight terrorism.

Flow of refugees remains a problem in most parts of the world particularly in Africa., for example, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Burundi, Congo Brazzaville, Liberia and many others. Neighbouring countries have to shoulder the responsibility that may not be even theirs.

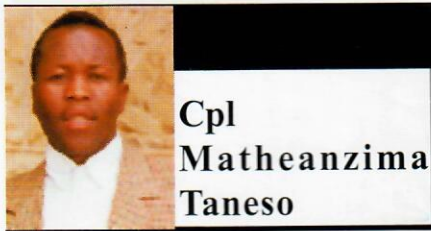
Is all this because of the unipolar system? If so, how should this problem be solved? It is high time that countries, regions and sub regions sit together, identify problems and come up with workable solutions. This should include individual groupings and organisations, which are part of this concern. They should come together and try to make the world a better place to live in and remain so for ever for generations to come. ■

*Now,
the question
remains; who should
have or acquire which
weapons?, where
should such a member
state be?, who should
authorise such
acquisition or
possession?...*

Too many women die each year during childbirth. If you are pregnant please go for regular checkups at the clinic near you. Avoid taking alcohol and please desist from smoking for the sake of your health and that of your unborn baby.

Smoking is certainly dangerous to your health and alcohol abuse is equally if not more dangerous.

LDF commemorates Army Day in style



At long last the day everybody has been looking forward to with great enthusiasm came – June 28, 2003 was the day the Lesotho Defence Force (LDF) commemorated the 1st Army Day. Many braved the chilly mid-winter weather to witness this historic event at Setsoto Stadium, Maseru.

At 0730am the parade formed in column of guards with varying colourful blend of different berets of different army formations. Amongst them were the prestigious Special Forces, Infantry and Paramedics, Engineering Company and others.

The parade commander Lieutenant Colonel Masekoane Pasane called the parade to attention. Everybody became silent and the parade commander passed the general salute to the Commander LDF, Lieutenant General Makhula Mosakeng and The Deputy Prime Minister, Honourable Lesao Lehohla.

Immediately after the march-pass, festivities began. Two hundred and fifty recruits from the LDF Infantry School filed into the stadium and performed a superb rifle exercise to the cheering crowds. The exercise demonstrated the physical training, confidence, discipline, and teamwork spirit instilled to them.

LDF Combat Engineers also took to the stage and displayed their credibility in developing this country during peace times by participating in community based projects like foot bridges, schools and clinics.

The Officer Commanding Combat Engineers, Lieutenant David

Moholoholo stated that mechanical engineers, constructors and electricians constitute the Engineering Company.

“At war times, LDF Combat Engineers help infantry by clearing landmines, building temporary roads to help them reach their area of deployment. Engineers can also be used to obstruct the rapid advance of the enemy by detonating bridges,” explained Lt Moholoholo, adding that during peace times they still have a lot more to be done in their unit.

The Officer Commanding mentioned that LDF Combat Engineers builds bridges with the assistance of the Ministry of Works demolishing dilapidated buildings, which pose a threat to lives of people and construction of roads. He emphasised that demolition party is one of the very important and helpful section as it is used to blasting rocks on road construction sites.

The LDF Special Forces, Commandos conducted a breathtaking mock hostage rescue exercise. The audience were mesmerized by the speed and skill with which the commandos abseiled down towering heights.

When speaking on behalf of the Commando Company, Cmdo Lieutenant Colonel Maaparankoe Mahao explained that among other things duties of the LDF commandos include fighting terrorism, infiltration of the enemy position, obstruct its ill intended activities, hostage rescue operations and also the VIP protection.

The units, which were featured, included the LDF

Paramedics displayed their first aid skills when assisting the severely injured combatants of either friendly or enemy forces.

The moment of the day was when the new LDF pipe band took to the stage amid cheers of the spectators. The pipe band was established under the auspices of Indian Army Training Team (IATT).

Speaking at the same occasion the Honourable Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Education, Mr Lesao Lehohla said the commemoration marked a historic event in the LDF. The Minister further assumed that Basotho are now very proud of LDF.

“We are now facing many problems and challenges in this country such as poverty, HIV/AIDS, inadequate clinics and schools infrastructures as well as rampant livestock theft. You are expected to commit yourselves to deal with all these enemies of your people accordingly. It is always good to know your enemy and its tactics better so as to overwhelm it. Remember, it is not only through the use of arms that you are expected to protect the Basotho. But with the skills that you have required in your trainings you can also come to the aid of your people,” said the Minister.

The Minister also appealed to the parents that charity starts at home, so they must try their level best to instill patriotism and discipline in their children, so much that they should regard joining the army as a call. The service needs grown-up and well-oriented



The Deputy Prime Minister, Mr Lesao Lehohla, addressing the LDF troops on Army Day.



The army march past the Royal Stand at Setsoto Stadium on Army Day.

Army Day...

cont. from pg 7

people who can be trusted as they are supposed to use very sensitive and dangerous weapons in the execution of their respective duties.

He also appealed to the LDF personnel not to let Basotho down, as they trust them. "The LDF personnel should be fully equipped with skills so that in times of disasters they can be of assistance to the victims. Apart from that, you are also expected to uphold and shoulder the responsibility of maintaining the world peace, and it would be wise to start keeping it here at home before going out," the minister appealed to them.

The Deputy Prime Minister also thanked the TROIKA countries and all countries of good will, which tirelessly assisted the LDF in all aspects of training. Mr Lehohla specifically mentioned Indian Army Training Team, which is currently in Lesotho assisting the LDF in military trainings.

The Commander Lesotho Defence Force, Lieutenant General Makhula Mosakeng shared the same sentiments with the Deputy Prime Minister and pointed out that the he

views the commemoration of the 1st Army Day just a rehearsal, and that is why he did not take the trouble of inviting other SADC Forces. He further mentioned that he believes that next year everything will be all right and he will be in the position to invite them as well.

Lt Gen Mosakeng congratulated all who worked tirelessly to make the Army Day celebration a success: "You look so smart in your respective uniforms, but what is important

is that you must always remember your responsibility as soldiers of this country. Always strive to maintain high standard of discipline and do not forget that peace and stability of this country is your sole responsibility," commented Lt Gen.

Among the cheering spectators was one Mr Mashea Qhojeng from Ha Tsosane who was much impressed by the change of attitude he had seen in the LDF. "Gone are the days when the LDF was not viewed as the national army. Our presence here is a clear indication of the change of perspective we had towards our army," the old man said adding that it is good to see that LDF renders such important services to Basotho especially by its Combat Engineers, which seems to enhance Lesotho's infrastructure and national development.

On the parade were also the LDF Taekwondo Club, the Air Wing and others that worked behind the scenes to make the celebration a success.

***"The LDF
personnel should
be fully equipped
with skills so that
in times of
disasters they can
be of assistance to
the victims..."***

*Living a healthy life pays.
Take care of your health as a matter of
priority. Exercise, drink plenty of water and if
you take alcohol please do so in moderation.
Also don't forget to take your mineral and
vitamin supplements daily to keep your health
in top condition. Remember too, to eat Garlic
as often as you can afford. Remember garlic is
the king of herbs.*

Indian Army Training Team to stay

By 2Lt Ntele Masoetsa

The Indian Army Security Advisor to the Government of Lesotho, Brigadier Jasbir Singh said

he was happy to announce that the Government of India has agreed to the continuance of Indian Army Training Team (IATT) in Lesotho for a further period of two years, from July 2003.

Brig Singh said the continuance of the IATT in Lesotho was a shining example of the excellent relations that exists between the two countries and the increasing cooperation between the two armies, "The training of LDF will continue in various specialist fields and the LDF personnel shall also be sent to India for courses in instruction," said the Brigadier.

The Commander of Lesotho Defence Force, Lieutenant General Makhula Mosakeng also added that currently there is one LDF Officer undergoing the prestigious senior staff course for a year, while one Corporal is undergoing a three-year officer cadet course in India.

The current Indian Army instructors will be replaced soon, and the incoming contingency of eighteen highly trained officers is expected very soon and will comprise among others, an

additional medical doctor who will boost the medical services at Makoanyane Military Hospital, "There will also be one officer who will assist in the management of Transport Section," added the Commander.

The Commander said he is confident that with the professional level at the army is

performing its day-to-day tasks; truly bears testimony to the fact the LDF is capable of meeting challenges ahead. He said the IATT has indeed moulded the nation's army into a formidable force. The two countries signed a memorandum of cooperation in training Lesotho Defence Force personnel by the Indian Army in 2001



The Indian Army Security Adviser to Lesotho, Brigadier Jasbir Singh.



The Indian Army Training Team Leader, Colonel DS Negi.

SADC Heads of State in search of a common solution

As HIV/AIDS pandemic ravages Southern Africa

With the increase in number of HIV/AIDS orphans and misery of children living with AIDS in the SADC member countries ravaged by poverty and the killer virus, many are beginning to realise the grim reality of the pandemic's onslaught. Cpl Ntlele Ntoi attended the SADC Heads of State Summit on HIV/AIDS in Maseru, and filed the following report.

The SADC HIV/AIDS Strategic Framework and Plan of Action 2003-2007 reveals that approximately 15 million people are HIV positive in the SADC region. This represents about 51% of all infections in Africa and about 37% of the global total thus making the SADC region the worst affected in the world. It is estimated that to date, close to 10 million people have died of HIV/AIDS related diseases in the region with over one million having died in 2001 alone.

From July 1 to 4, 2003, the leaders in the SADC region met to sort out a common solution to the problem. What strategies are in place at regional level to turn back the tide?

In his official opening statement, His Majesty King Letsie III said the summit was being held at a time when the menacing dark clouds of HIV/AIDS, which had undone some of the past socio-economic achievements and threatened to wipe out all the gains that could be made in the future, in particular were threatening sub-Saharan Africa.

"Experts claim that AIDS has created a long-term development disaster on a scale never witnessed before. Thus, our efforts aimed at achieving the United Nations Millennium Development goal to halve global poverty by 2015 are being seriously undermined by the scourge of HIV/AIDS," His Majesty pointed out.

The King further said that leaders in the SADC region were duty bound to formulate a multi-sectoral and multi-facet response to

the challenges posed by HIV/AIDS. According to him the response should include, among others, the intensification of targeted prevention and education programmes, better treatment including provision of antiretroviral, better and more humane care and support for orphans and vulnerable groups and scaling up the fight against stigma and discrimination.

When addressing participants at the summit, the SADC Chairman, and also the President of Angola, His Excellency José Eduardo dos Santos said if the SADC proceed along the road of cooperation, coordination of efforts and sharing of resources greater, success will be realised in fight of the pandemic.

However, His Excellency put it to the participants that: "The significant steps that we have already taken are insufficient given the magnitude of the problem. The moment urges us to move on to another phase, adopting programmes which will contemplate multi-sectorial and multi-dimensional responses and translate our understanding that poverty, unemployment and such relations of this nature can be found based on the expansion of the disease."

President dos Santos further called for the establishment of a framework for a new and more active solidarity among SADC member states, international cooperating partners and the private sector.

"If this ever happens," he went on, "then an International Assembly of Donors may be called to deal with the question of HIV/AIDS in our continent and with the natural advantages resulting from a more effective fight against this evil that has started to affect security and the survival of our countries."

A meeting of ministers of health, finance and gender/women's affairs, which was held on July 3, 2003, and non-governmental organisations forum on July 1, 2003 preceded the summit.

When delivering a vote of thanks, His Excellency, President Robert Mugabe of Zimbabwe reiterated that HIV/AIDS threatens to decimate the human race, particularly in the SADC region, which is the epicentre of the pandemic in the entire globe.

"It is in this quest for survival that we are committing ourselves to combat the disease through regional efforts in order to halt and roll back the pandemic. Our approach therefore should be regional, multi-sectoral, comprehensive and well coordinated," he said.

Pres Mugabe also called on the ministries responsible for finance and planning to appreciate and articulate the impact of the HIV/AIDS pandemic on national economies, mobilise and channel more resources for HIV/AIDS



The President of Angola and Chairman of SADC, His Excellency Jose Eduardo dos Santos

HIV/AIDS pandemic...

cont from pg 11

prevention, care and support to enable member states to meet the targets set in the Abuja Declaration of 2001.

The Managing Director of the World Bank, Dr Mamphela Ramphele said all stakeholders should work hard to converse adversity into opportunities. "AIDS helps us strategise and plan our economy, combat stigma and discrimination. We were at its mercy first but today we have the entire arsenal to fight back. Money is not the limiting factor today. US \$1 billion and several millions in funds are already on the table for Africa," she solemnly promised.

Dr Ramphele also applauded the commitment of Khayelitsha Antiretroviral Program – a non-governmental organisation from South Africa, for its tremendous success in the fight against HIV/AIDS.

Amongst the non-governmental organisations (NGOs) that turned out was THETA from Uganda, the country that was once ravaged by war and HIV/AIDS pandemic but worked hard to curb the wide spread infection prevalence from 32% to 6% in a period of 15 years.

"The first case of the disease then referred to as 'slim' was reported in Uganda in 1983. Seeing it spreading, the government of Uganda through its ministry of health took the initiative of sending samples to the US in 1985 and the test results confirmed them HIV/AIDS infectious disease – not witchcraft as it was generally contemplated," said THETA Head of Clinical Research Department, Dr Alex Opio Chono GP.

Dr Opio Chono further explained that the pandemic was spreading so rapidly that in 1986-1987 some residential areas around Lake Victoria were virtually uninhabited due to extremely high HIV/AIDS related diseases

mortality rate. "All one could see over areas stretching for a kilometre or so at times were closed houses – only graves all over the place. However, President Yowery Museveni came openly that we have a problem. Massive sensitisation was made through the media, and the government injected money into these awareness programs," he says.

Then the NGOs like THETA took to the stage and helped create the enabling environment for all sectors of the community including the traditional healers to join in the fight against HIV/AIDS, he said.

"We started by conducting clinical observational study, trained healers in STDs and HIV/AIDS. When we grew into a full-fledged organisation, we established the resource centre on traditional medicine and HIV/AIDS and established herbal gardens. We are now running and coordinating the

"All one could see over areas stretching for a kilometre or so at times were closed houses – only graves all over the place. However, President Yowery Museveni came openly that we have a problem. Massive sensitisation was made through the media, and the government injected money into these awareness programs."

regional task force on traditional medicine and HIV/AIDS," the doctor disclosed.

"The traditional healers counsel patients and offer herbs that help treat opportunist

infections and boost the immune system. Hopefully in the near future they will successfully come up with the cure of this dreadful disease," Dr Opio Chono said.

When asked about the role of the military in the fight against HIV/AIDS, the doctor said since they are employed all around the country they are being used intensively in the awareness campaign. Some of them even came up openly that they are HIV positive and that further sensitised the community that the problem is for all regardless of class, gender or profession, he said.

The Home Based Care Officer of Women Fighting AIDS in Kenya, Ms Helida Achieng Onyango approved of what Dr Opio Chono said, adding that Kenya even invited the Ugandans to come and train her people to curb the spread of the disease.

"The national statistics on HIV/AIDS prevalence in Kenya stands at 14%, that is 2.6 million infected people out of 28.5 million populations. They have done remarkably well in the fight against HIV/AIDS so I don't find the reason why we shouldn't copy from them," she said.

Health Partners (PTY) LTD from Botswana was also part of the NGOs putting resolutions with the summit. Its General Manager, Ms Wame Jallow said as far as HIV/AIDS is concerned, Botswana has reached a plateau. "There is a marked change in behaviour amongst our people and that has reduced the infection rate," said Wame.

Among others the NGOs have recommended that states should promote and



His Majesty King Letsie III addressing the SADC Heads of State Summit on HIV/AIDS.



The President of Zimbabwe, His Excellency Robert Mugabe delivering a vote of thanks at the SADC Summit on HIV/AIDS in Maseru. (pics by Tiny Sefuthi).



SADC Heads of State pose for a picture at the end of thier summit to discusss about HIV/AIDS pandemic.

HIV/AIDS pandemic...

Cont from pg 13

enhance strategies of team building among all the stakeholders in the area of HIV/AIDS, include HIV/AIDS awareness and psycho-social support raising in all school curricula, consider the embracing and resuscitating African indigenous knowledge and subsidise the purchase of antiretroviral and look into possibility of manufacturing them within the region to ease its access to the people, noting that while antiretroviral are costly, caring for orphans left behind is even more costly.

Mrs Mavis Satande Coordinator of World Bank Institute, Zimbabwe, said that statistics show that of the 14 million HIV/AIDS orphans in the world, 11 million of them are found in sub-Saharan Africa. "Children are our hope for the future. So, we are focusing on school children and teachers using ICT because nowadays people are interested in using computers. We are mainly using peers to educate other peers," she said.

When speaking on behalf of the NGOs at the summit, Mr Moshe

Tšhelo of the Lesotho Council of Non-governmental Organisation (LCN) pointed out that it is not their priority anymore to get into the nitty-gritty of what causes HIV/AIDS. He noted that: "The fact is, it kills and that is why our campaign centres around awareness, provision of drugs and

"The fact is, it kills and that is why our campaign centres around awareness, provision of drugs and laws to make it easier for people to be cared for."

laws to make it easier for people to be cared for."

On July 4, 2003, The Maseru Declaration on the fight against HIV/AIDS in the SADC region was signed recognising that the principal contributory factors to the spread of HIV/

AIDS are extreme poverty, ignorance, negative attitudes and practices, and that the general underdevelopment and unfavourable international economic environment reflected in high indebtedness of some of the SADC member states, limited access to international markets and declining official development assistance, further aggravate the pandemic.

SADC heads of states reaffirm their commitment to the combating of AIDS pandemic in all its manifestations as a matter of urgency through mutli-sectoral strategic interventions as contained in the new SADC HIV/AIDS Strategic Framework and Programme of Action 2003-2007. Among others declaring prevention and social mobilisation, improving care, access to counselling and testing services, treatment and support, and establishing a regional fund for the implementation of the SADC HIV/AIDS Strategic Framework (2003-2007).

The official figure of HIV/AIDS infected people in Lesotho stands at 31%. Given the scenario that Kenya has copied from her neighbour Uganda and now that everybody talks of collaboration of efforts in the fight against the pandemic, will Lesotho also copy either the Ugandans' or even Khayelitsha's experience? It remains to be seen.



Dr Pontšo Sekatle (in checked shawl) was amongst the Lesotho cabinet ministers and other dignitaries who graced the official closing ceremony of the SADC Summit on HIV/AIDS. (pic by Tiny Sefuthi).

The Good Shepherd Centre: A home of compassion for needy single young mothers

When the missionaries of the Good Shepherd Sisters of Quebec came to Lesotho in 1935 they found Basotho a different society to their fellow Canadians where girls who fell pregnant out of marriage were subjected to contemptuous treatment. But lately, with the rising tide of starvation and poverty in the country things changed for worse. Many Basotho either abandon or disown their children should they fall pregnant out of marriage, and the Good Shepherd Centre has now become a safe haven to many of such, writes Cpl Ntlele Ntoi.

The day 15-year old pregnant Std 7 pupil, Lerato (not her real name), was told that she was due to be under the custody of the sisters at the Good Shepherd Centre at Ha Makujoe, Berea, she felt her guardians at Mophato-oa-‘Mantšase – the only home ever known to her, were disowning her. Pity poor little girl did not know that good things were awaiting her at the centre.

In any case, what kind of care one could expect from a centre run by the charitable organisation whose sheer existence solely depends on donor assistance?

“Though I’m missing my guardians at Mophato-oa-‘Mantšase, the care I am given here at the centre is top of the class,” said innocent looking Lerato.

The Good Shepherd Congregation is a charitable organisation which was established in Quebec, Canada in 1850 formerly known as the Order of Immaculate Heart of Mary or The Good Shepherd Sisters of Quebec.

It was a former jail warder, Vincent of Paul’s initiative and response to the plight of young Canadian female convicts who found a continued jail life preferable to living amongst the communities that rejected them after their release.

The Good Shepherd Centre was established in 1995, and has become a twilight of hope to many single young Basotho mothers trudging in the quagmire of unplanned pregnancy.

“The purpose of the centre is to provide single mothers

environment in a residential setting that facilitates bonding between mothers and their children is their mission.

“The program goals also help enhance mother’s dignity by promoting self-esteem, a sense of pride and autonomy. These also go



The Managing Director Good Shepherd Centre, Ha Makujoe, Sister Pius Phate.

in difficulty with a safe and supportive place to live while they learn to care for themselves and for their children. This program offers holistic educational approach through daily living experiences,” explained one of the caretakers at the Good Shepherd Centre, Sister Agnes Makhele.

Concerning the program goals, Sister Makhele stated that providing transitional housing for single mothers and their children as well as a healthy, nurturing

along with providing mothers with a variety of activities designed to improve their interpersonal skills and independent living skills and assisting them in acquiring education and vocational skills,” Sister Makhele pointed out.

In regard to children living at the centre, she said the centre provides opportunities for their development too. “We run a pre-school for children so as to give their mothers a chance to proceed

The Good Shepherd...

cont. from pg 16

with their classes too. So, you can see learning is for all here," she gladly said.

"Currently, we have 15 young mothers and a number of children in our custody. We train mothers in life sustaining skills such as sewing, knitting, farming and poultry production. But most of all we make them come to terms with their

which staff-mother re-evaluations are held every six months to re-assess progress and goals, she said.

According to Sister Makhele, the centre boasts of dramatic changes it has made in the lives of many who have gone through the program, however, some are still not able to put to use all the skills they have acquired during their stay in the centre due to lack of funding in

donor organisation. Other donors include the Irish Consulate, American Embassy, British High Commission, World Vision, Social Welfare, Maseru Rotary Club.

"Apart from donor assistance it provides, UNICEF is also taking the trouble of making our plight known to other donor organisations and mobilising them to come to our aid. For instance, the American Embassy donated beds and lockers," Sister Phate said, ushering us into a 12-bedded dormitory building named after one of the pioneers of the Good Shepherd Sisters of Quibec, Sister Angele La Croix.

"Up there is a poultry house building funded by the Irish Consulate. We are trying our level best with the little that is earned out of poultry production to keep the centre running. We also meet some of the expenses we incur in the day-to-day running of the centre by selling clothing made by our students," she said.

Sister Phate expressed that all these donor organisations are making a difference in the lives of the mothers and their children, however, there are times when the centre would run out of supplies to an extent that the sisters are hard bent to sharing their food with the mothers and children.

"A major set-back was experienced three years after the centre was established. In 1998 at the height of political upheavals that followed the general elections robbers took advantage of the situation and overran the centre. They ripped the premises bare of property including the solar panels and got away with the centre's vehicle," she lamented.



A pile of the mattresses and beds funded by the American Embassy.

challenges and accept themselves as responsible parents in the upbringing of their children," she added.

All that it takes to be admitted to the Good Shepherd Centre is that one has to be an eligible mother, regardless of age, who has no problem of participating in an intake evaluation with the centre's director.

"Basically, the criteria is, there should be a referring agent for informational and collaborative purposes; filling of forms for personal history of a mother and child and for medical information – all endorsed by their respective village headmen.

Moreover, a minimum fee of M20.00 is charged for registration and another M25.00 is also required per quarter to meet half way the expenses for activities, materials and supplies," she explained.

The initial commitment to the program is two and half years during

their small commercial enterprises.

In a bid to ease the psychological effect on young mothers, the Good Shepherd Centre has a range of subjects aimed at enhancing communication, one's self-esteem or assertiveness, stress management, and decision-making.

"Other than tackling this problem of psychological effect circularly, we conduct religion classes and Bible study which form an intergral part of the program. In this regard, Judeo-Christian principles form the basis upon which the program is founded," Sister Makhele said.

The Good Shepherd Centre Director, Sister Pius Phate acknowledged the untiring effort of UNICEF – the centre's main

New Initiatives for Basotho students to get advanced education and training in Leadership disciplines

The Impact Services Unit of LeaRN-Lesotho recently released an evaluation report on activities undertaken by the Lesotho country Hub during the period April-December, 2002. While the report paints an encouraging picture for the times ahead, more still needs to be done before Associates can turn their poverty ravaged communities into economically viable and sustainable communities, reports Lebohlang Lejakane.

An evaluation report on LeaRN-Lesotho performance during the period April-December, 2002 says the introduction of local government in Lesotho has opened up a niche for leadership Associates to put their skills into practice in their communities.

The evaluation was headed by Dr 'Mamolete Mohapi of the Impact Services and covered all LeaRN-Lesotho activities, especially, with regard to the Associates as they have been empowered to effectively deal with the challenges of lack of skills, unemployment and poverty. "Associates are expected to turn their poverty ravaged communities into socially healthy and sustainable

communities. Their success is critical in attaining viable and sustainable community development," notes the report.

About 300 Associates underwent leadership training and skills development in 2002, to empower them to play a leading and meaningful role in social activities such as conflict resolution programmes, HIV/AIDS awareness campaigns, primary health care and personal development..

The report also urges the Lesotho country Hub to take advantage of 'the very strong leadership spirit that is sweeping across the seven sites' of Associates Program. The sites in question are Maseru, Bishop Allard Vocational School,

Semonkong, Thaba-Tseka, Mokhotlong, Qacha's Nek and Quthing.

"This provides a fertile ground for transformative leadership," observes the report, adding that the high increase in community development initiatives driven by Leadership Associates and the networking opportunities created by PPD must be encouraged and enhanced respectively.

Some Associates have urged LeaRN-Lesotho to monitor their progress on a regular basis to facilitate continuous guidance on matters pertaining to leadership. They feel their confidence will be boosted by the knowledge that they are on the right track, states the report.

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The Good Shepherd...

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Furthermore, Sister Phate said the numbers of mothers in need of care are sky rocketing, but there is a limited space to accommodate them all.

A brave 22-year old lady, Senate (not her real name), whose beloved young one passed away during last summer vacation, bears first-hand testimony to what both Sister Makhele and Phate had said about the centre. She is one of the young mothers who were left in the loving care of the sisters while others went home for this winter vacations, solely because her rude step-mother no longer

accepts her in her father's household.

In the year 2000, when Senate, then a Form D student discovered that she had conceived by her boyfriend who was in the same class with her, she felt her dreams for a brighter future were shattered anyway.

But she was adamant though that together they would shoulder the responsibility of their child. The moment of great despair set in when her boyfriend was idiotically influenced by his nosey aunt to leave poor Senate in the lurch.

"Should it have been that the Good Shepherd Centre was not there; I still can't imagine what could have become of me and all these other ladies residing

in the centre," she said, trying hard to retain her composure.

No matter what, Senate still cherishes the unwavering support her father has always thrown behind her. She is busy preparing for the COSC final examinations due at the end of this year.

Senate claims that she has learnt her lesson, and would not like to see anyone going through the same ordeal. To girls out there who might as well be playing with fire, she has this to say: "Ladies, now is the high time you set yourselves goals in life, and strive to achieve them, however, humble they may be. Do not rush to things – take your time and make a wise choice for your future." ■



Seated on the far left is LeARN-Lesotho CEO, Dr Anthony Setšabi. In the middle is a member of the Steering Committee of LeARN-Lesotho, Mrs 'Masebolelo Ramokhele, and standing next to her Mr Seisa Mokitimi – A Service Provider with LeARN-Lesotho.



A group of LeARN-Lesotho Service Providers who attended the briefing session on the new operational structure.



Enthusiastic Local Leaders Associates from Thaba-Tseka after their training session in Thaba-Tseka.

New Initiatives...

cont. from pg 18

The report also observes 'apparent lack of clear guidelines' as to who should be admitted into the Associate Programme, adding, "This causes some disputes in communities where enthusiasm is great to participate in this program."

With regard to traditional lines of business, Associates seem to be inclined towards poultry rearing, sewing and piggery, notes the report, adding, "Perhaps these business lines gives them assured returns and in the short-term."

"Some trained Associates are rearing to go to start small businesses but are handicapped by lack of capital," observes the report, and recommends that LeaRN Lesotho look for more opportunities where it can team up with other partners or organisations working towards the same goals.

"In some cases LeaRN can just empower individuals with the basic skills necessary to start small enterprises and let the individuals concerned source funding elsewhere to kickstart their enterprises," suggests the report.

The report further identifies areas where this could happen, and these include: support for government Gender Unit policies regarding the increased role of women in politics at all levels; linking activities to promote youth enterprise with current plans to reform the secondary school curriculum and to introduce enterprise training to all young people; and continuing LeaRN's strong association with the National Vision 2020.

The Lesotho country Hub started operating in July, 2000 and has a network of more

than 50 Service Providers undertaking activities aimed at achieving its goal of reducing economic, social and spiritual poverty in Lesotho.

Meanwhile the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of LeaRN-Lesotho, Dr Anthony Sets'abi, has disclosed that the 2nd phase of the Leadership Regional Network for Southern Africa (LeaRN) which starts from October, 2003 to September, 2006 will take off under a revamped operational structure aimed at enhancing service delivery, especially, in rural areas. The main beneficiaries are expected to be youth and women.

"At the regional level changes have resulted in the formation of three major streams of activities, each headed by a Director, and these are Leadership Academy (LA), Community

"Some trained Associates are rearing to go to start small businesses but are handicapped by lack of capital"

Leadership Programme (CLP) and Public Policy Dialogue (PPD). With the exception of the Director of PPD who is based in Zimbabwe but will spend one week every month in Pretoria, the other two Directors reside in Pretoria, South Africa," explained the CEO.

He went on: "At the national level positions of National Conveners, who will serve as Kellogg Foundation representatives, have been introduced and their mandate is to coordinate LeaRN, the Integrated

Rural Development Programme (IRDP) and the Initiative for Development and Equity in African Agriculture (IDEAA) programme activities."

"LeaRN-Lesotho's National Convener is Mr Sehoai Santho," revealed the CEO, adding, "The present arrangements of Boards and National Steering Committees are due to end by the end of September, 2003."

Dr Sets'abi also revealed that each country Hub would have 12 facilitators who would be selected in consultation with African Leadership in Action (ALIA) and National Conveners.

He revealed that LeaRN-Lesotho has been exploring new initiatives to assist students from Lesotho get advanced education and training in leadership related disciplines.

"There is a strong possibility of collaboration with the University of Breton in Canada to promote a Canadian supported, Lesotho delivered Master of Business Education in Community Development," he revealed.

The CEO believes that the course will be one of its kind in the world. "It will apply the disciplines of high-level business and management studies to solving the economic and social challenges of communities in Lesotho and similar African countries," he explained.

The Acting Director of LA, Mr Sehoai Santho, says the LA will develop a cadre of leaders across the social spectrum who are committed to social and economic transformation of their communities, nation and region.

"This will be accomplished through short modular courses and training programmes aimed at instilling an ethos of leadership that is informed by the theory, philosophy, values and skills of effective Contemporary African

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Youth Associates who work at a candle-making factory in Quthing show off their product.



The LeaRN-Lesotho CEO, Dr Anthony Setšabi (left), in a cheerful mood with the newly appointed National Convener, Mr Sehoai Santho.



The Chairman of the Steering Committee of LeaRN-Lesotho and The Vice Chancellor of NUL, Dr Tefetso Motšabe.

New Initiatives...

cont. from pg 20

Leadership (CAL)," explains Santho, adding that the concept of CAL will be marketed through press releases, brochures and bulletins.

"Our target group includes executives of the golden triangle (government, business and civil society), women and youth leaders as well as LeARN Partners and Service Providers," added Santho

The Director for PPD, Dr Lindiwe Sibanda, says the key objective of PPD is to empower people at local level to engage, shape and influence policies for social and economic transformation.

She went on: "We will also provide the means and create an enabling environment in which ordinary citizens, particularly, rural people, can engage with and shape proposals around the New Partnership for African Development (NEPAD)."

"We seek to create processes that will allow communities, government and the private sector to conduct public policy research and informed dialogue that enables strategic engagement at local,

national, regional and global levels," she explains.

Dr Sibanda said training and capacity building will encompass civic participation skills, visioning, strategy formulation and review as well as dialogue and negotiation skills. She said PPD will target, amongst others, Heads of schools, churches, local institutions of learning, the media and key personnel from Non Governmental Organisations active in the local community.

Pretoria based Director of CLP, Mr Gavin Anderson, says developing leadership that is rooted in and is accountable to community structures is the priority of CLP. "Towards this end we shall target Youth Associates and Local Leaders Associates in Integrated Rural Development Program (IRDP) sites," he reveals.

"We want to see Youth Associates in each Hub actively engaged in civic, social and socio-economic entrepreneurial development of their communities. Similarly we want local leaders to apply their leadership skills effectively in pursuance of community development projects and viable and sustainable enterprises," he adds.

The CLP Director states that by the year 2005, each of the eight regional Hubs is expected to have trained 600 Youth Associates (60% of whom are women) and 300 Local Leaders Associates (60% of whom are women).

Besides Lesotho, the other country Hubs are Swaziland, Zimbabwe, Botswana, Mozambique and three of South Africa's provinces, namely, Eastern Cape, Limpopo and Kwa-Zulu Natal. The Kellogg Foundation funds all the country Hubs.

"We strive to develop leadership that has the will, competence and global perspective to work for socio-economic justice," he stresses.

LeARN-Lesotho is a partnership between the Christian Council of Lesotho and the Institute of Extra Mural Studies of the National University of Lesotho. One of its major objectives is to contribute meaningfully in the social and economic transformation of Lesotho and the continued democratisation of the country by strengthening the capacity of individuals, families, organisations and institutions to secure the development of healthy and sustainable communities. ■

We would like to thank our readers for their positive reaction to some of the stories we featured in the last issue. You seem to have overwhelmingly loved and appreciated the funny side of our true story of 'A rodent in a soldier's pants'. Please continue letting us know the types of stories you would like us to feature from time to time.

From a glider to a pilot

The amazing story of a Danish volunteer sensation



2Lt Ntele
Masoetsa

He is bald and the sides of his head are thinly covered by apparent greying hair. He sat in a relaxed posture on a rotating armchair in a beautifully decorated office, and then beckoned me with his right hand to a lounge chair. His ever-smiling face exudes confidence and success. He still looks classy in his trademark military green flying overall and those famous old suede shoes.

Jurg Willy Steppat looks set to venture into greater heights in his flying career, "I have been involved in aviation since the age of fifteen," he said. Jurg said he used to go trout fishing before a friend of the family who was a glider instructor, introduced him to gliding. After having been bitten by the bug, Jurg spent every spare time and money pursuing this new hobby.

Born in Kitale, Kenya in East Africa on June 29, 1953 to a Danish father and a Swiss mother, the young and aspirant Jurg began his primary education at Kitale Primary School from 1959 to 1962. "I learned English, German and Swahili on the farm where my parents were farming at the foot of Mount Elgon, close to the Ugandan border.

In 1962, the family moved to Denmark and due to not knowing Danish, Jurg attended the Duetsche Schule at Aabenraa. "I became part of a society characterised by unusual norms and traditions as opposed to the

African way of living that I was accustomed to. From 1964 after I had learnt to speak, read and write in Danish, I became part of the Danish educational system," said Jurg.

Jurg pursued his love for aviation by doing his aircraft mechanics apprenticeship at

charter flights for Highland Air in Lesotho, before joining the Royal Lesotho Defence Force Airwing from 1986 to 1989.

After 1989 he rejoined Highland Air and in 1992 returned to the Lesotho Defence Force where he still is today. "This was a turning point in my



Jurg Willy Steppat is seen here doing what he likes best.

Scandinavian Airlines Systems in Denmark. During his spare time, he would still go gliding over the flat green countryside, and eventually went solo on a glider in late 1969 and got his licence in 1970.

Jurg finds gliding a very challenging adventure; the feeling of being aloft across the country without an engine. "This later became instrumental in my decision to fly engine-powered planes," said Jurg.

He returned to Africa in 1977 as a Danish volunteer and worked for Lesotho Airways as an engineer. After getting his power flying licences in the United States of America, he flew

career, because in the LDF I am using everything I ever learnt in aviation, by doing maintenance, mountain flying, instrument flying and flight instruction", says Jurg.

When he joined the Airwing in 1986, which had been in existence for seven years, the infrastructure was well established in terms of training both locally and abroad.

"Training never ends, as the profession loses its skilled personnel through retirement, promotions and deaths. Because of these factors, training becomes a constant challenge not only to

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...glider to a pilot

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the army, but to aviation in general”, he emphasized.

During his first term with LDF, Jurg flew the Northern Ireland manufactured Shorts Skyvans, then acquired by the

become separated from the lowlands.

Jurg is rated on these fixed wing airplanes, the Cessna 182Q, CASA 212/300 and also assists in the state-of-the-art CASA 212/400 as a co-pilot. His determination to improve spared him no chance of converting to the

“ Obviously, there is still room for improvement in all areas of the Airwing and prospects of success in the future look really good”



Jurg in his early days of piloting.

RLDF; undertaking various flying missions that included ferrying LDF troops and supplies to the operational areas of the country, also charter flights for various government departments, and most significantly, flying in the disaster relief operations especially during the bitter-cold periods when the highlands

rotor wing. He was instructed on the two-seater Bell 47 Soloy and BO-105 utility helicopter.

Later he was assigned to fly the fifteen-seater troop carrier, Agusta/Bell 412, which he still flies to date. Jurg boasts an overwhelming 5 500 total flying hours, i.e. about 230 on gliders and over 400 on choppers. The rest on fixed wing airplanes.

Jurg believes that the Lesotho Defence Force, through the Airwing is doing a tremendous job of supplying air transportation to its clients and the people of Lesotho, “ Obviously, there is still room for improvement in all areas of the Airwing and prospects of success in the future look really good,” said the frankly speaking Jurg.

His face turned sad, when asked about how best to avoid tragedies, such as the one that occurred at Katse dam recently. He said any one of them, as pilots could have been involved in such an accident.

He said depth perception, i.e. the judgment of distance, over still or calm water is difficult. “Good communication between the aircrew and the passengers, especially when doing photographic work is vital,” commented Jurg.

After cooling down emotionally, he said he does not see himself grounded very soon and hopes to fly as long as possible and stay in the aviation profession, “However, when the time comes to vacate the cockpit, I hope to continue doing aircraft maintenance,” said Jurg.

Jurg spends his leisure time cycling at least two to three times a week to keep fit. Asked about his favourite dish, he spared no second, “Food! I prefer any pasta dish”, he said.

He is divorced and has three children, two boys aged 22 and 23 who work in South Africa, while the eldest is a daughter living and working for a London estate agency. Jurg is named after his late father Willy who died in 1996; his mother, Clara, as well as two brothers and a sister are living in Denmark. He is now a South African citizen residing in Ladybrand, which is a few kilometres from Lesotho’s capital Maseru. ■

Life after the army

Retired army officer 'knighted' the chief's advisor

By Sgt Thabiso Rajane

In the court of Chief Moholi Mphutlane of Ha-Leqele, a village situated in the eastern suburbs of Maseru, the retired Lesotho Defence Force (LDF) officer, Colonel Ramohlanka Blyth Ntšohi is the man of influence

Born on March 12, 1931 at Ha Toloane, Col Ntšohi joined the then Basutoland Mounted Police in 1959. He was part of the group that formed the Police Mobile Unit (PMU) in 1968. He retired from the LDF in 1993.

"After my retirement I experienced a lot of hardships pertaining to my extended family that I cared for while I was still at work. I was not well prepared for the catering part of my responsibility as there was now less cash at my disposal," Col Ntšohi says.

The soft-spoken Col explained that his expertise in farming quickly restored the situation to normalcy. "I do cope fairly well now," he reveals.

"I am a subsistence farmer and most of my spare time is spent on farming activities, every part of my life goes on as planned. I am also the chairman of the village executive committee of the anti-crime group," said the Col with a sense of pride.

The Col's love for education has prompted him to challenge some aspects of the constitution of the Lesotho Teachers Association (LTA). "They have a clause which I strongly feel should be deleted from the constitution as it is both reactionary and not in line with the country's constitution," said the colonel.

The clause in question according to the Col is one which bars boys and girls who have been to

circumcision schools from resuming their studies.

The 72-year-old Col argued that initiation schools are part of Basotho customs and traditions and it is therefore unacceptable for anyone to be denied education just because he/she is practising his/her culture.

"I remember persuading my son who works at the Lesotho Highlands Development Authority (LHDA) to buy some football outfit for the village team known as *Ka Lerato*. I even paid M500.00 for membership as a gesture of commitment to youth



Colonel Ramohlanka Ntšohi.

He revealed that his community was planning to have recreational facilities where young and old can exercise and relax, have fun and enjoy life. "Currently this idea does not have much support but I am working very hard to popularise it," he says.

development and sports," he says.

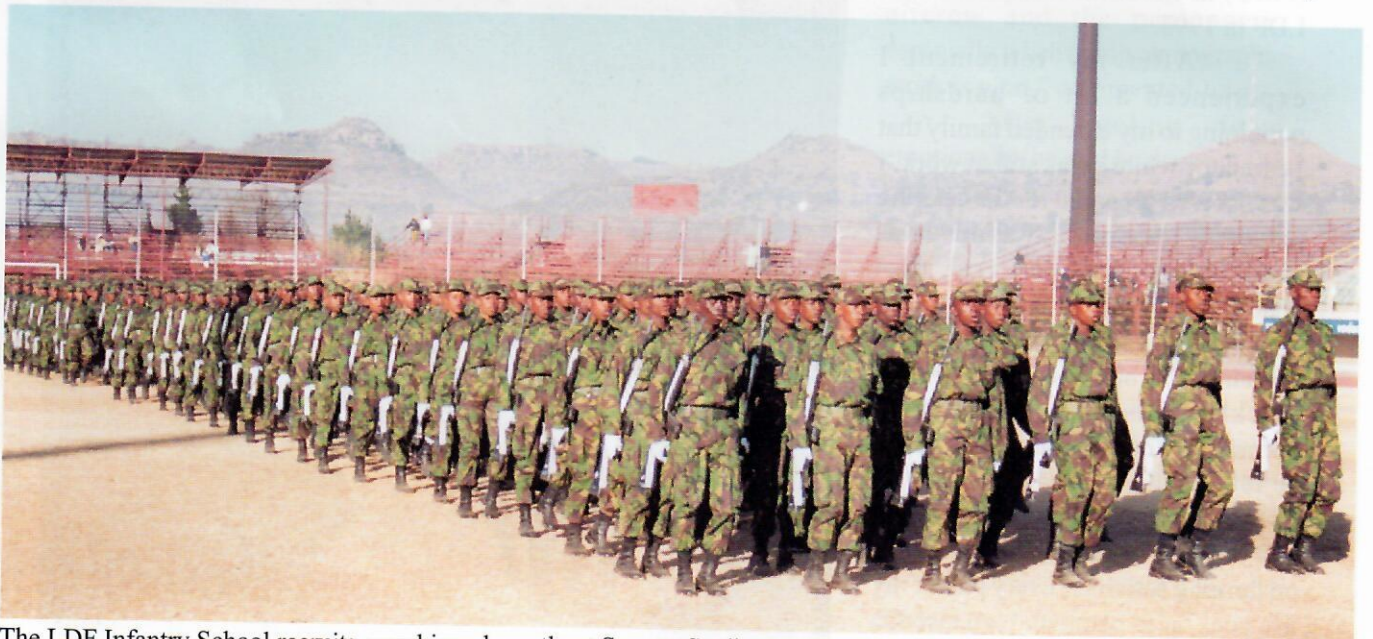
Besides his active role in community development projects the Col is also a member of a church committee known as a consistory in the Lesotho Evangelical Church.

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EVENTS IN PICTURES



Members of the LDF Combat Engineers installing solar panel to generate power for a makeshift community health facility.



The LDF Infantry School recruits marching elegantly at Setsoto Stadium on the Army Day.



Members of the LDF Special Forces (Commandos) conducting a simulated hostage rescue on Army Day celebrations.

EVENTS IN PICTURES



The President of Botswana, His Excellency Festus Mogae inspecting the LDF guard of honour on his arrival at Moshoeshe I International Airport to attend the SADC Summit on HIV/AIDS.



The LDF Mohobelo Club entertains spectators at Setsoto Stadium on Army Day.



Members of Junior LDF Taekwondo Club flexing it out at Setsoto Stadium.

Life after ...

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“One must not forget one’s creator and it is important to prepare for life after death,” he enthuses.

The village chief Moholi Mphutlane (72) said he had known Col Ntšohi even before he joined his village in 1996. Chief Mphutlane disclosed that he has been a village watchdog from 1984 to date.

“Since coming to this village in 1996, Col Ntšohi’s conduct and behaviour have been impeccable. He is one of my trusted advisors,” he reveals

The chief further noted that shortly after the arrival of the Col, an anti-crime committee was proposed and formed at his instigation. Chief Mphutlane stated that all retired army officers; police officers and prisons officers as well as civil servants are playing a vital role to ensure that there is peace and development in the village.

“I have people of high calibre in my village such as Mr Selebalo Mahaheng who is currently heading Maseru Association Committee on anti crime campaign, and the former member of the defunct military regime, retired Col Paepae Mothakathi, is one of my advisors,” he says

Col Ntšohi retired in 1993 after 34 years of outstanding and impressive record of service. His academic qualifications include the then prestigious Basutoland Teachers Training Course (BTTC). He has also attended many seminars and training courses during his tenure in the army. His military trainings took him to several countries overseas including the United Kingdom and Iran.

During the military regime, Col was appointed Minister of Labour from 1986 to 1987. From 1988 to 1992, he was nominated Lesotho’s envoy in the Southern African Development Community member states. He has been High Commissioner to Swaziland, Mozambique, Zimbabwe, Malawi, Zambia, Botswana, Tanzania and Angola.

Col Ramohlanka Blyth Ntšohi is married and blessed with 12 children 10 of whom are still alive.



Retired Col Ntšohi while he was still in active service.

For some of the activities taking part within the Lesotho Defence Force stay informed by regularly reading the



Newsmagazine.

How abortionists outsmart police:

Should abortion still be illegal?

Abortion is no longer illegal in South Africa. Some people are very disappointed with that including even men who do not know what it is like to experience unplanned and unwanted pregnancy. Others, however, are elated at the development which they say is safe and saves lives that would otherwise be lost in back street abortions. The excited ones include beneficiaries from South Africa's neighbours, including Lesotho, where the thought of legalizing abortion is discussed in hushed tones. Cpl Matheanzima Taneso reports.

"If I could turn back the clock, I could not have let any man to deceive me in the first place," said Mary Nkompele (not her real name), a 27-year old factory worker residing at Ha Mabote, Khubetsoana.

Mary, a single mother of eight-year-old boy, recently terminated her six months pregnancy and nearly lost her life. She has since been arrested and consequently lost her job.

According to the Oxford dictionary abortion is premature expulsion, spontaneously or induced, of a foetus.

Mary is one of the women arrested and detained for committing abortion. Should abortion be regarded as a criminal offence?

"Yes, of course, abortion is a serious criminal offence. The courts should impose heavy punishments so that women and girls desist from doing it," says Inspector Thakoaneng Molefe, the Officer Commanding Thetsane Police Station.

He said 16 abortion cases have been reported to his station since the beginning of 2003 and that most of the culprits were aged between 18 and 25 years.

Inspector Molefe urged parents to take care of their children and advise them accordingly to avoid being deceived into activities that would ultimately leave them with unwanted pregnancies.

"Poverty is the main cause of this problem as young girls who should be schooling are forced to go out and seek employment. While still waiting to get employed some find themselves

forced to become sex workers, just to survive," explained the Inspector.

Statistical reports from Health Planning show that for the year 2000, abortion cases reported were 1382 while the figure for 2001 is 1784. despite that, abortion

in Lesotho is illegal. This is most likely to be just the tip of the iceberg as the recorded figures refer only to those who did unsafe abortions and ended up rushed to hospitals when things went horribly wrong.

Mrs Keiso Matashane-Marite, National Coordinator,



Mrs Keiso Matashane-Marite, National Coordinator, Women and Law in Southern Africa (WLSA).

How abortionists...

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Women and Law in Southern Africa (WLSA) says even though abortion is a criminal offence in Lesotho, she has a strong feeling that it would be wise to legalise it. But she is very much aware that it is a very sensitive issue, which cannot be dealt with overnight.

“Abortion is a crime in this country since our Constitution

backyards. She noted, however, that there are serious emotional pressures which lead women and girls attempt abortion.

“Girls are compelled to withdraw from schools, some rejected by their families and community at large, and worst of all, even by their religious folks, due to unplanned pregnancy. It’s a worrying factor that they are not treated humanly in some health centres and are even denied access to information

more about sex,” concluded Mrs Matashane-Marite.

Mrs Puleng Letuka, Research Associate also from WLSA shared the same views and unhesitatingly emphasised that the conception of a child is the product of a sexual union, but responsibility for pregnancy remains with the female.

“Sometimes men run away from their responsibilities and offer no support to their partners and friends. Women are plunged into the world of crime by seeking unlawful terminations of their pregnancies, putting their lives as well as their future reproductive capacity at risk. The problem remains why and how these acts are characterised as criminal in our laws?” asked Mrs Letuka.

“The government should implement policies, which will help provide a more extended access to and availability of birth control measures. Pregnant women and girls should not be demoralised, and their reproductive rights should not be limited”, said Mrs Letuka.

Miss ‘Mathabo Liphapang, Programme Officer, Research and Evaluation at Lesotho Planned Parenthood Association (LPPA) believes that fear of transmitting HIV/AIDS to their unborn babies and the resultant consequences forces some women/girls to commit abortion.

“LPPA is on the verge of advocating the legalisation of abortion in this country. We cannot deny the fact that since abortion is legal in neighbouring Republic of South Africa, many women go there, abort safely and come back to get on with their lives free from any charges. It is their reproductive rights and they should be given chance to decide on their lives,” contends the Programme Officer.

“LPPA is still busy educating people on the use of contraceptives. We are witnessing



The Officer Commanding Thetsane Police Station,
Inspector Thakoaneng Molefe.

states that everyone has a right to life. I don’t think to decriminalise it will be easy or guarantee that people will change their attitudes, and above all there must be designated places where it can be done safely,” said Mrs Matashane-Marite.

She further stressed that abortion is not an easy choice as some people die in the process, particularly those that do it in

pertaining to family planning,” she added.

Matashane-Marite also appealed to the government and the community to put in place mechanisms aimed at reducing drastically the number of women and girls who experience unplanned pregnancies. “Life skills education should be part of the curriculum so that people will have the opportunity to know

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Agriculture focuses on watered catchment areas

By Sgt Thabiso Rajane

"It is most pleasing and gratifying to see a variety of displays of local and foreign origin. The exhibits represent a bird's eye view of our potential to tackle and overcome famine, malnutrition and disease, notably to reduce the impact of HIV and AIDS," says the Honourable Minister of Agriculture and Food Security, Dr Rakoro Phororo.

When addressing sponsors, participants and contributors at the 2003 Central Agricultural Show held at Ha Foso in the district of Berea from June 2 – 7, 2003, Dr Phororo said the Ministry of Agriculture and Food Security is committed to building sound foundations of sustainable agriculture and is also on the verge of assisting farmers to produce adequate food and be self-reliant.

The minister further stated that there is a need for Basotho to go back to the agricultural development drawing boards to review effectiveness of donor assistance towards halving poverty by the year 2015.

"For sustainable agriculture, we need two types of foreign assistance: direct foreign investment in agro-industries and agricultural development aid in infrastructure," Dr Phororo indicated.

One of the reckoned farmers of Lesotho, Mr Matela Tšita, 49, of Mokhotlong district who won the first prices for the best,

well fed and well cared for ram, said that agricultural show is very instrumental and important to them as farmers as it creates platforms for farmers to share new techniques and skills on farming in general.

"It is not my first time to attain this position. I won the first prize in 2001. I want to tell you it is not an easy task to enter into these kinds of competitions because one has to know exactly what the show is all about," the winner of the 2003 agricultural show explained.

Mr Tšita disclosed that before he goes for the national agricultural show, he normally selects some of his livestock and prepare them for the competition. He indicated that one of his secrets to success is to associate himself with the ministry of livestock for the medication process.

Tšita indicated that livestock caring needs determination, dedication and

"Be prepared to spend for your livestock, give them injections and buy them some mash."

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How abortionists...

cont. from pg 30

a rather low attendance. However our suspicion is that many choose to go to hospitals as they provide the same services as us," said Miss Liphapang.

Inspector Masupha Masupha, the Second in Command at Pitso Ground Police Station revealed that many cases of abortion are reported at police stations even though at his station figures are on the decline. He mentioned that it is very difficult for the culprits to be identified and arrested because those residing in Maseru travel to Maputsoe to dump their unborn babies and come back,

and those from Maputsoe do vice versa.

A 38-year old abortion culprit, Mrs 'Masenkepe Senkepe (not her real name) stated that at one stage she nearly fell into the trap of attempting an unsafe abortion, but got some advice from a friend to go for a safe abortion in the RSA. "It went unbelievably very well," she said.

"I had a love affair with one man during the absence of my husband who was working in the South African Mines. I fell pregnant

by that man, while my first-born was only two years. And that is why I decided to terminate that pregnancy," explained Mrs Senkepe, adding that she wonders why it is still illegal in Lesotho.

On the other hand, Mrs 'Maliteboho Mahula, The Principal of Sefika High School indicated that there are social pressures, which make some women, and girls commit abortion but being responsible is a great tool to defeat this problem. "Government can implement policies to tackle this problem, but if people do not support them, nothing can be done," said Mrs Mahula. ■



Mr Matela Tšita walked away with the first prize for his well-nourished and cared for ram.

effort. "Be prepared to spend for your livestock, give them injections and buy them some mash," he said.

In this year's agricultural show, the Lesotho Defence Force (LDF) being part and parcel of the community, participated in two army components namely: Makoanyane Military Hospital (MMH) and the LDF Combat Engineers.

The LDF hospital displayed various expertises on health issues. The Principal Nursing Officer (PNO) at the hospital, Mrs Anna Kampong said the MMH is mainly focused on home-based care programme and paramedics' services in times of disasters.

"The home-based care programme is a programme on HIV/AIDS infected persons and people with chronic illness," the PNO said, adding that paramedics section provides first aid to casualties before the doctors' attendance during emergencies. "We offered a free sugar diabetes and blood pressure tests on people who attended the show. Those

whose readings were not good were advised to go to a nearby clinic for treatment," said Mrs Kampong.

One of the participants who went for freer sugar diabetes and blood pressure tests at the

MMH stall, Mrs 'Manthabeleng Mosoeunyane of Ha Ratšiu, Teyateyaneng said: "I was very much surprised when I first heard that the LDF is offering to test us sugar diabetes and blood pressure free of charge."



2Lt 'Makato Mosenye checking blood pressure of Mrs 'Manthabeleng Mosoeunyane at Central Agricultural Show, Maseru.

Agricultural focuses...

cont. from pg 32

Mrs 'Manthabeleng Mosoeunyane was so astonished when she came across the LDF newsmagazine, Mara saying: "I did not know that the LDF has any publication and I really commend the LDF for what we see as a symbol of professionalism."

Speaking on the scale of production of the LDF Combat Engineers, Lieutenant David Moholoholo said that the department largely presented on its roles and functions within the LDF and to the entire nation.

"During peace times we switch our focus from tactical point of view to the civil engineering point of view. We feature in country development projects such as building of bridges and renovation of health clinics," Lt Moholoholo indicated.

Speaking on behalf of the National Agricultural Show Cum

Trade Fair Executive Committee, Mr Letuka Mohapi, an officer at the Agricultural Headquarters, Maseru, appealed to the authorities at the Ministry of Agriculture and Food Security to take heed of the farmers' complaints and recommendations.

Mr Mohapi added that complaints and recommendations tabled

before the ministry will help the authorities seek a lasting solution to the problems the farmers come across on their day-to-day business.

"Honourable Minister, sir, I have been instructed by these farmers to lay down their problems so that necessary steps may be taken to remedy the situation. Among others, nowadays the thieves are targeting our fields where they harvest our crops and sell them at a profit in the streets of Maseru and other commercial centres. I urge the ministry to keep an eagle's eye on these people who harvest where they have not planted," he pleaded.

"We request the Ministry to review the Agricultural Show prizes since the inflation rate has doubled in the past year," Mr Mohapi said, adding that there is complaint that prizes awarded are no longer proportional to the efforts made by the farmers. ■

"I was very much surprised when I first heard that the LDF is offering to test us sugar diabetes and blood pressure free of charge."



When you see this vehicle know that copies of Mara are on their way to you. This 'Kokopshe' of Mara is driven by Pte Selebalo Qhobela. Standing next to the driver is the Marketing Manager, Pte Nyatso Tsoeunyane.

Hansa, monis and braai galore

Oh what a night! at a 'Welcome Party' for 'Taiwan'



**Pte
Sakeng
Lekola.**

Lesotho Defence Force Public Affairs Office staff (LDFPAO) welcomed their Director and editor of Mara Newsmagazine Lt Col Tanki Mothae from Zambia where he attended a one-year military training course in 2002.

In his welcome remarks at the welcome party held at Mejametalana Airport recently, the Assistant Chief of Staff (ACS) Operations in the LDF, Brigadier Mahao Mofolisa thanked Lt Col Mothae for his successful effort to introduce **Mara** which he said was turning out to be a resounding success. He also thanked him for the establishment of LDFPAO.

"Before this office was established, it was not easy for the LDF to respond to the media most of which used to report negatively about LDF. He was particularly pleased with the gradual but steady impact the Mara newsmagazine is making nationwide.

"Through this newsmagazine, we Basotho are informed about what is happening within their national army (LDF) and they are also informed and enlightened about issues of national interest and concern. Above all as soldiers, our image has improved for the better and we are now welcomed as part

and parcel of our communities," he said.

"It is through Lt Col Mothae's tireless effort that the good image of LDF is projected. I also thank the LDF Commander for his unwavering support to the office of public affairs," said the ACS Brig Mofolisa.

Brig Mofolisa appealed to the PAO staff to join hands in order to make **Mara** a success. He further urged them to make use of what have been imparted to them for the benefit of LDF.

The editor promised to keep on applying the effort to

"Through this newsmagazine we Basotho are informed about what is happening within their national army (LDF) and they are also informed and enlightened about issues of national interest and concern. Above all as soldiers our image has improved for the better and we are now welcome as part and parcel of our communities."

assist LDFPAO despite the fact that he now has added responsibilities, as the new Commandant LDF Training Wing. He further indicated the need to reinforce the PAO staff

as the newsmagazine on its own is a full time job.

"With the purpose of handling and responding to the media on LDF issues, I proposed to the Commander to establish the PAO. My proposal was granted and the office was established in 1997. It was not an easy task at the beginning for people outside LDF who looked at us differently," he recalled, adding, "Mara is one of this office's greatest achievements."

To establish **Mara** the editor explained that he approached the Managing Director of LL Productions and Media Consultancy (PTY) LTD, Dr Lebohlang Lejakane for assistance.

"He then trained our staff from scratch in journalism and ultimately we managed to publish our maiden edition within two months of training. "Since then despite occasional hiccups we have not looked back. In fact every issue is an improvement on the last one," he said.

We are now set to make our mark and LL Productions is engaged in taking our reporting staff to higher levels of the profession of journalism. Our aim is to be pace setters professionally," he said.

"Taiwan", as Lt Col Mothae is popularly known, was applauded when he revealed that more equipment was on its way to the PAO office to ease shortage of equipment such as computers.

When conveying his thanks, the Chief of Military Intelligence (CMI) Captain Gerard Mafoea shared the Editor's sentiments and appealed to Dr Lejakane to keep on assisting the PAO.



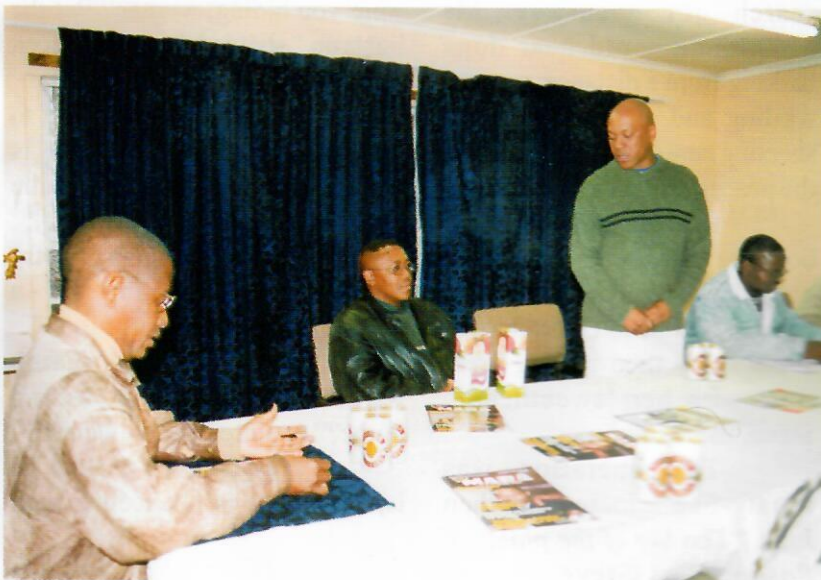
The LDF Brigade Commander, Brigadier Mahao Mofolisa congratulates Lt Col Tanki Mothae for his untiring effort to have made Mara what is today.



The Chief of Military Intelligence, Captain Gerard Mafoea encourages Mara staff to keep up the good job.



The Editor, Lt Col Mothae (standing) expresses his heartfelt gratitude to Mara staff who worked very hard to make the LDF's command's dream a reality.



The Sub-Editor of Mara, 2Lt Ntele Masoetsa, (standing) delivering a vote of thanks at the Editor's welcome party at Public Affairs Office premises.

The lily of the plains of Bokaota

By Cpl Ntlele Ntoi

When dawn broke over Bokaota, a farming community settlement 70km south of the capital, Maseru, a detachment from the encampment in the south moved swiftly into positions in and around the settlement. The operation codenamed, 'Operation Swoopdown' that had drawn about one hundred and fifty men – all armed to the teeth, was about to start very soon after the first cock crow. Nobody, not even the headman, knew of their presence in the settlement except for one Mr Mootloane, a short, heftily-built prosperous farmer in the vicinity of Bokaota.

That morning, soon before they sprang into action, Mr Mootloane was already up and on his way to his field. At the moment he was intercepted by the army personnel on the outskirts of the settlement, Mr Mootloane had only one thing he wished he could have got rid of well before the army clamp down on the area. In the then recent upsurge in cattle rustling incidents in the area, the dagga smugglers had fobbed off on him unlicensed firearm. Much to his chagrin, he had forgotten to wear it that morning.

"Oh, that firearm that never fired even a single shot the night they took away my cattle! How I wish I could have thrown it away. Look, I'm now in for a high jump," he lamented.

Everybody knew Mr Mootloane as a responsible law-abiding citizen who would never in the least be found in the ruffian circles. No one doubted his competence in farming. During the weeding season, he would toil in his fields from dawn to dusk,

never laying down a hoe. It was said at times when his lazy, young and attractive wife, Julia came and suggested he broke for lunch, he would just wave her away impatiently without uttering a word – toil and toil till the darkness grips the land.

On that fateful morning as he was escorted to the command post set up on the other side of the settlement his heart was pounding like a drum. In fact, he had known that Bokaota had for some reasons been the sore in the eyes of law enforcement agencies and the government. It was declared a lawless region wherein armed robbery, drug trafficking, cattle rustling, arms smuggling, and, needless to say, reprisal killings were the order of the day.

So, the army was out there to conduct an aggressive and intensive cordon and search, leaving no stone unturned to get people like him behind bars. His head ached at the thought of going to jail.

Meanwhile, back in the settlement residents were ordered to keep indoors while the search got underway. Mr Mootloane could hear dogs barking from a distance; women wailing and at times sporadic shooting here and there disturbing the peaceful silence of the dawn.

He thought of Julia – and how she had been complaining of headache soon before bedtime last night. Little did he know that she was by then having great time with her 'sweetheart', Steve, the shopkeeper.

The operation was twenty-five minutes on when Julia, "*The lily of the plains of Bokaota*" as Steve used to

flatter her, heard a hard knock at the door. "The army. Open up!"

"Did you hear that, Stevie?" Julia softly whispered in Steve's ear.

"Is this a joke? The army here? What wrong have you people done?" Steve asked in a hushed tone.

"Us? Did I hear you say us? Stop interrogating me. We are caught anyway. Remember, Mootloane's brother is in the army. How does that sound to you?" she barked at him.

"No, Lily, I didn't mean to be rude. It was just a"

"I said open up! Or else I shoot." the male voice shouted again from outside, banging hard on the door.

"Please, don't. I'll open up for you," Julia said, jumping out of the bed with undone cream-white silky short nightdress exposing large expanse of her shapely thighs.

"Lily, please, don't open the door," cried Steve, pulling the sheets over his head in utter desperation, bracing himself for what he thought would be a hail of bullets. But that never was.

Rather: "Make way. What were you hiding, woman? Put the lights on," shouted the army officer, shoving poor Julia aside.

"I was only struggling to get dressed, officer. There is nothing, nothing to hide, sir," Julia said, round-eyed with terror.

Two other men in military uniform accompanied by a policeman stormed in.

"We have a search warrant, madam. Is your husband home?" enquired the policeman.

"Ye-ye-yes, sir! Here he is, though he is not feeling well

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Illustration by Maleté Mabusela

The lily...

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tonight," she stammered, pointing at where Steve was lying on a single bed.

"We are sorry to disturb you good people, but we will carry on with our duty anyway. So, you, madam will be of assistance to us as we search your compound, we will only request Mr Mootloane's assistance only if necessary. I'll only request he sits up and makes himself comfortable just for a while; we are leaving anyway," the policeman reassured them.

The search began. And then: "You have dangerous weapons in your possession, Mr Mootloane. What do you do with this?" the policeman said drawing next to Steve where he sat feigning illness.

Julia nervously tittered and quickly responded: "Oh, that spear, you see, my husband uses it occasionally when slaughtering pigs, sir."

"Is Mr Mootloane too sick to answer that simple question, madam?" the army officer interrupted, looking straight into her eyes.

"I bet he is, sir!" she said, forcing a smile.

Julia was such a woman who had round the clock technique of dealing with men. She was a terrible flirt, who kept many guessing, it was said. Would she get away with this too?

"Okay, I see," the officer noted in approval but still suspicious of the assertion.

Then after a short while trouble ensued. "What is this, madam?" the policeman said, taking out a loaded revolver under the pillow. "Hope you can still be answerable for this too. Could you please produce valid license for this firearm; we need to check it, even though I can see that you have already rubbed off its serial number," the policeman required.

"No, no! That one I don't know; may be he can explain that to you, sir!" she said shaking like a leaf.

Until then, Julia had never discovered that her 'legal' husband, the *real* Mr Mootloane had a firearm in his possession. Genuinely, she thought her 'Stevie' would be answerable for it.

"No, no, not me!" Steve burst out. "I don't have even the slightest idea whose firearm this is. I'm not even Mootloane for that matter. I've just popped in thirty minutes before you came in. I was just about to leave, if you don't mind, sirs," Steve pleaded with them but to no avail.

"What's your hurry, man? Relax, we are also on our way too," the policeman said in a relaxed tone, urging Steve to sit back.

To the surprise of the army officer and his search party, Steve was very much alive for a "sick" man they met earlier when they came in.

"Whoever you are Mr, I arrest you on two counts. One: You deliberately failed to provide your true identity. Two: Unlawful possession of an unlicensed firearm and three rounds of ammunition. You have a right to remain silent or what you say might be used against you in the court of law," the policeman recited the order as he handcuffed Steve.

Then the policeman turned to Julia and looked straight into her bulging eyes. She went deathly pale with fear, however, she managed to force a coy smile again. The policeman drew a deep breath. "You!" he grinned and winked an eye at her at the same time, "I'm not done with you. So long," he said, shoving poor Steve out.

Swaying her hips seductively in her usual manner, Julia walked towards the door; happy to see their backs at long last. "Bye, officers," she waved back.

Steve turned and eyed her evilly. "How dare you set me up, you cheap whore!" he snapped, hurling insults at her. That was for the first time that in a fit of anger 'Stevie' ever called "*The lily of the plains of Bokaota*" names.

"Steady on, man! You can't say such rude things about this nice lady," the policeman said roundly.

When the sun shed its first rays on the hills of Bokaota the army pulled out of the settlement. Mr Mootloane was already out weeding his cornfield as usual, but the community of Bokaota was beginning to realise life the hard way.

Bafokeng Mini Market had been closed for two weeks following the shoot-out that claimed the life of its owner, Mr Khunong and his bodyguard. The customers were beginning to get impatient because even Steve's shop was closed too that morning.

When the convoy rumbled past Mr Mootloane's field, he was relieved to see them off too. His friend, Colonel Tim Mollo, the overall commander of Operation Swoopdown, waved him goodbye. "Keep that lamb of mine fat, my friend. I'll come and collect it on Christmas eve!"

"Bye, officer. You're a generous man, see you then," Mr Mootloane shouted back between mouthful of chocolate Col Mollo had given him.

"What a relief! I'm still a free man, after all!" Mr Mootloane sighed, laying down a hoe – something unusual of him, and hurried home to see how Julia was coping and also – to get rid of the firearm.

Steve, the shopkeeper, the lover, the loser, and worst of all – the murder suspect was amongst seven other suspects crammed in a police van. ■

Where AIDS awareness work is hitting rocks

Although Botswana is known to have the world's highest percentage of people living with HIV/AIDS, a significant proportion of the youth still believe the pandemic is a figment of other people's imagination. With such dangerous mindset, AIDS awareness programmes are not having the desired impact, reports AANA Correspondent, Rodrick Mukumbira.

HIV/AIDS statistics in Botswana are shocking. Roughly, four in 10 people aged 15 to 49 are infected. In Selebi Phikwe, a mining town in central Botswana, more than half of pregnant women aged between 20 and 29 were found to be infected at random tests conducted between June and August 2002, according to an HIV Seroprevalence Report by the National AIDS Coordinating Agency (NACA).

Alarmingly, HIV prevalence among young people in the 15-24 age group is again rising after a brief drop in late 1990s. "Young people do not take HIV/AIDS seriously enough to change their behaviour," says Baatweng Motladiile, a training coordinator at the Scripture Union, which runs "Positive Parenting" workshops for teenagers and their parents.

Motladiile attributes this to the absence of reproductive health education in families. "Parents and children do not talk about sex. They live in different worlds," she says. But parliamentarian, Shirley Segokgo, who has been an active anti-HIV/AIDS crusader in Botswana, has warned that culture of silence over the epidemic in the country must end.

"We need to talk about the issue to our children. We need to come clean when one of us dies of HIV/AIDS, though it is not part of our culture to reveal the cause of death. Let us call a spade a spade and then deal with the consequences," she urges.

Among those aged from 15 to 29, there are three HIV-positive women for every HIV-positive man, according to Botswana Human

Development Report of 2000, published by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP).

absence of a cure, the only salvation lies in a drastic change of attitude toward the epidemic.

"We must sensitise the people to change their attitude



The President of Botswana, His Excellency Festus Mogae.

The ratio stabilises at one-to-one in older age groups. The disparity suggests that girls are infected at the younger age than boys, and that HIV is transmitted across generations through sex between older men and younger women.

Teenage pregnancy here is among the world's highest. Half of teenage girls have been pregnant. Illegal abortions are frequent.

The depth of the matter has forced even President Festus Mogae, to repeatedly say that in the

towards sex and the disease and also remove all taboos about sex and change our sexual lifestyles. Otherwise, we should lose the fight of people dying of HIV/AIDS," Mogae is reported to have recently told parliament.

The belief that HIV/AIDS does not exist is certainly the major impediment in the fight against the pandemic. A 2002 government report found that many Batswana still believe that HIV/AIDS was a foreign disease, which is only found in urban areas and major villages. Others brand

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LDF chefs go an extra mile in catering

By Pte Hlaoli Moeletsi

The Lesotho Defence Force Infantry School Commandant and Director Public Affairs, Lieutenant Colonel Tanki Mothae says he is confident that the LDF is now in the position to train its own chefs. He

was speaking at the official closure of Basic Chef Course serial No.4 recently.

"The catering techniques and display I have witnessed here leaves me in no doubt that the LDF Catering section is now ready to take up

on any challenge locally and internationally," Lt Col Mothae said, ushering the LDF command attending the closing ceremony into the LDF mess where tables laden with all sorts of mouth-watering

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Where AIDS awareness...

cont from pg 39

self-confessed people living with AIDS as liars.

In the face of the crises, the government, through NACA, has intensified awareness programmes on the epidemic. But the effort, which include putting up the billboards with HIV/AIDS messages, are falling on "deaf ears" as young people think these are likely any other advertisement.

"Who wants to look at these billboard, they are so boring," says Kabo Lesomo, pointing at one in Maun, a resort town in north-western Botswana. The billboard depicts a nuclear family smiling, with a message reading, "Unlock AIDS", and featuring a huge padlock.

Since 1995, Lesomo has been working with Peer Approach to Councillings by Teens (PACT), an organisation sponsored by Young Women's Christian Association (YWCA).

PACT has 1,000 peer educators in schools in Botswana. Lesomo's concern, however, is not about slick billboards, but getting young people to understand that AIDS is here and they must learn to live with it or die of it.

"AIDS has become a boring topic, abstinence means nothing to 14-year old," Lesomo asserts. She would like PACT to design its own information

material with a "cool" design using street-wise terminologies. In her opinion, hammering that "AIDS kills", does not work.

"Scare tactics do not make people change their behaviour," interjects PACT training co-ordinator, Bawani Mutshewa.

PACT has joined a number of NGOs, the UN, and the Ministry of Health, in a new approach to reach youth in three townships of Gaborone.

Through a combination of sport, music, peer education and youth-friendly reproductive health services, the Urban Youth Project is pulling out all the stops to offer young people choices than alcohol, drugs and unsafe sex.

"It's about getting young people excited about their lives, their health, their future," says Sarah Kirby, a consultant on adolescent reproductive health with the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF).

Poverty perpetuates the epidemic. Despite diamond-rich Botswana being the world's fastest growing economy, about 50 percent Batswana are poor.

In the country's townships, unemployment and boredom coupled with alcohol and drugs encourage people to indulge in behaviour that increase

the risk of infection, such as commercial sex.

Myths abound. One-fifth of young people believe that having sex with a virgin cures AIDS. The conviction among older men is that such engagement rejuvenates and cleanses their blood.

The stigma is strong. Half of those aged 10 to 14 believe that HIV-positive people should be isolated from the society.

There is also a belief amongst some Batswana men that HIV infection comes as a result of engaging in sex with a woman who never passed through certain traditional rituals.

According to social analysts, Botswana's deeply entrenched sexual habits, traditional customs and beliefs, are to blame for the future to bring behavioural change in regard to HIV/AIDS. But elders in Botswana generally maintain that scourge is spreading rapidly among young people because they are departing significantly from their cultures.

"The initiation schools where young members of society used to go for orientation on conduct, morals, responsibilities, marriage, among others, have been abandoned," says Paramount Chief Oarabile Kalaben, the deputy chairperson of the House of Chiefs. ■



**Commando
Lt Col
Maaparankoe
Mahao**

Triumph of civilization

For centuries history of humankind was characterized by conquests of the weak by the strong. The 1884 Berlin conference that partitioned Africa among colonial powers marked an important milestone in history. It had at least two important aspects. For the weak, it revamped their perpetual condemnation in a predatory world. On the other hand it proved that the strong could coalesce and share spoils of their loot.

Since the Berlin conference it took about thirty years for the insatiable forces of profiteering to plunge the world into a global war. Formation of the League of Nations became an antithesis of a course that had been kindled for years. Crisis had brought the rich nations to realise that profiteering at the expense of the poor was a threat to the entire humankind. The unrepentant and apologists, however, led the world into an even worse conflagration of World War II in yet about another 30 years.

The United Nations was formed at the end of Second World War with some major principles embedded in the law of nations. Human rights movement made a major stride manifesting itself in launch Universal Declaration of Human Rights. The ages old tendency of unilateralism was done away with instituting United Nations Security Council and other structures as a system for conflict prevention, management and resolution. The Security Council became a watchdog protecting the weak and strong in a regime of genuine rule of law.

The international order set in the immediate post world war period provided an environment whereby many international instruments, mechanisms and for a arose reinforcing rule of law. Peace Support Operations became one of the most important features of the time. Under the banner of peace support operations, nations

put together their armed forces and other agencies in defence and promotion of peace. Grave breaches of the law of war and abuse of human rights was observed to be perpetrated by forces across the spectrum of conflict.

A recent development has been the development of international criminal court. The court is to try criminals who commit war crimes and crimes against humanity. This is a major milestone in civilisation. It reinforces and translates the concept of rule of law into reality for the defenceless and the weak in a world, which is still much predatory. It further translates the concept of democracy into something tangible because it empowers the weak and vulnerable arming them with a forum to seek recourse in against the forces of illegality. Resisting ICC is tantamount to holding civilisation in contempt and embracing the most retrogressive elements belonging to the era deserving consignment to rubbish bins of history. ■

LDF chefs...

cont from pg 40

dishes were neatly arrayed by the graduating course participants.

Furthermore, Lt Col Mothae disclosed that since the African countries have agreed to establish an African Standby Force (ASF) whose task will be to monitor peace initiatives in all troubled spots in the continent, he is adamant that the LDF Catering Platoon will also be incorporated in that contingent too.

Speaking at the same occasion, the LDF Catering Section instructor, Lcpl Monde Ndaba said the participants were equipped with all necessary skills in the line of their duty. "These include hygiene, introduction to kitchen, recipe making, storage, temperature control in cold rooms and many more," he said.

"Though they were slow learners, the commitment and dedication they displayed

helped them become some of the best chefs, not in the LDF alone but also in this profession," commented Lcpl Ndaba.

When speaking on behalf of the participants Office Assistant Makepe said the skills they have learned would definitely help them perform their duty even better.

"With time we will even perfect what we have been taught and enhance our self confidence too," Makepe said. ■



**Puleng
Letuka
(Research
Associate
WLSA)**

Married persons Equality Bill: A ray of hope for Basotho women (continuation)

In our last issue we promised to give you the second and last part of the article by Mrs Puleng Letuka of Women and Law in Southern Africa (WLSA). Below is the remaining part of that article and it begins by reminding you the problems the bill seeks to address.

Problems Addressed by the Bill

- Non-consultation between spouses on acquisition, use and disposition of marital property. It is well known that women make a big contribution to the amassing of family property. Despite this fact, if they are married in community of property or customarily (which is the large majority of marriages in Lesotho), they legally have little or no power to dispose of such property. Such power is by law vested in the husband.
- He has the right to dispose of the property even without consulting the wife. This is a result of the marital power that the husband has to administer the joint estate in whatever way he sees fit. Because the power to deal with marital property is vested in the

husband, the wife is regarded in law as having no capacity to dispose of marital property. This means that while she can help amass the property, she does not have control over such property.

- Lack of access to resources;- Married women are currently regarded as legal minors therefore they do not have capacity to enter into contracts without the assistance of the husband. The result of lack of contractual capacity is that married women are denied access to resources such as credit as institutions which provide credit such as banks would not enter into agreements with women if they are not assisted by their husbands. Because of this legal minority, immovable property cannot be registered in their names. As a result, they would not be in a position to put immovable property as security for loans. Once the Bill becomes law, married women will have the capacity to enter into legal agreements without

having to be assisted by their husbands. They will also be qualified to have immovable property registered in their own names.

- When a wife has to enter into transactions for which she needs her husband's assistance, this can present problems where the husband is not there. This means that a vacuum would exist in the family. The situation can be even more difficult where there is conflict between husband and wife or where husband and wife are separated so that the wife does not know where to get him.
- Rights over children are vested in the husband as the wife does not have legal capacity to be a guardian to the children of her marriage nor to any other children. This legal incapacity means that without her husband's assistance, she is not able to make any legal transactions on their behalf such as assisting in acquisition of passports for her minor children. If the Bill is passed by parliament, both husband and wife will be qualified to have guardianship over their children including the

Married persons...

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right to take passports for their minor children.

- Because married women are regarded as legal minors, they do not have the capacity to appear in court in their own right to claim their rights in civil proceedings or to have others claim against them. The Bill proposes to have women as capable of appearing in court on their own. This means that if she has been wronged, she would no longer need her husband's assistance to approach the courts for compensation. As things stand, her husband does not need her assistance to approach the courts to claim his rights therefore this Bill gives her the same right as her husband.
- They cannot seek medical assistance such as operations without having the assistance of their husbands. This means that their right to their bodies and to health has to be exercised through and with the consent of their husbands. If the husband for whatever reason does not cooperate then a woman's health might be at real risk.

Many Basotho do not know that these are some of the provisions of the law. The way in which family affairs are run is through consultation and participation of both the husband and the wife. However where there are problems between the spouses, it is not unknown for the husband to unilaterally deal with family property and sometimes to the disadvantage of the wife and children.

This is where the wife would learn that the husband was acting perfectly within the power that the law of marriage bestows upon him. This power would obviously be negative because it is being used to disadvantage the family. Clearly it is necessary in such circumstances that the wife who is a partner in this union also has as equal a say as the husband on how family property is to be dealt with.

The wife, like her husband is entitled to access to justice without having to depend on another person; she is qualified to have marital property registered in her name too and having the legal capacity to enter into agreements like her husband. This does not in any way remove power from the husband but it gives power to the wife who previously did not have it.

Giving legal capacity to the wife would increase the number of capable hands in the family and therefore benefit not just the wife but also the husband and the

children. This means that the family's life would no longer have to stop simply because the husband is not there to give his consent. The wife would be an adult like her husband to carry out all transactions. The Bill does not make the wife superior to her husband but rather it is only removing the discrimination at law which was making her a minor.

The Bill therefore ably addresses problems that make it difficult for women to enjoy the right to equality and freedom from discrimination. If the Bill becomes law, married women will benefit not just legally but socially as well. Currently, married women are at law like children and this is sometimes socially interpreted to mean that women are in the same category as children. Economically, women will be free to engage in economic activities that help them amass resources. They will also be able to deal with and dispose of resources as any adult has the capacity to do.

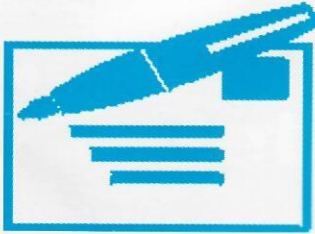
All in all, married women stand to benefit from the Bill because they will then be persons before the law. This will also benefit the family in which so many women play a critical economic and social role. The nation will also benefit because there will be more qualified participants in the economic arena having removed the major hurdle that was excluding a large portion of the population. ■

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Your letters to the editor



Performance appraisal in the Army: A debate From a civilian's point of view

The quest for improved performance and justification for existence has compelled many organisations of different orientations to experiment with different ways of doing things. One of these ways is strategic planning and acting strategically. This way of doing things has its origins in the armed forces, mostly in relation to planning for combat against troops of the enemy.

Strategy by definition is "a well thought-out approach to winning a war or achieving an objective"¹ This system has proved to be efficient and effective in military operations. It is for this reason that private organisations borrowed the concept and applied it in their planning processes and operations.

The main pillars of the system include setting a vision and mission encapsulated in clear and succinct statements. These statements are then followed by setting objectives that would actualise the vision of the organisation. Planning at the corporate level is then filtered down to the lower level of the organisation through departments down to every individual within the organisation.

There also has to be a job description for every individual. Performance of every individual is then evaluated and assessed on a regular basis in relation to the set objectives. Promotion, training, coaching and counseling are in-built within the system and they are informed by the performance appraisal of each member of staff.

The benefits reaped by the private sector throughout the world have enticed the civil services of

many countries around the world including in Africa to try it, with the hope that it will boost morale in the public sector and thereby improve service delivery to the people. The government of the Kingdom of Lesotho is one of those that have introduced the system. It has replaced the confidential reporting system in which there was no transparency and fairness in how public officers were sent for training especially outside the country, and promoted, among other things.

The Civil Service has put the system into place albeit with some problems. The issue that the system seems to fall short in answering is with regard to the effective evaluation and motivation of people who do routine work, especially as it will finally relate to remuneration of such people.

An interesting point in this regard is whether the army can be able to extend this system to its day-to-day work which includes manning posts such as the Palace gates, guarding Ministers, and other activities that are administrative in nature and perhaps routine as opposed to combat.

It is also important to note that performance management insists that supervisors and supervisees

discuss objectives and performance instead of just being given orders.

Given the way the military works in relation to giving orders and its highly centralised, directive and top-down approach to management it would be interesting to hear an opinion of those who are intimately familiar with ways of the military.

It is the contention of this article that the army cannot remain isolated from the rest of the public sector in this regard. However, the bigger question is, does the nature of the military fully lend itself to this kind of system? If not, and if on the basis of this the army is treated differently how then will the armed forces' performance be rated?

Furthermore, how would the exemption affect the efforts of the army of trying to come closer to the people by improving civil-military relations, especially in the light of the country's recent history and the fact that it is part of the public sector? These are some of the pertinent questions that we as a nation have to grapple with and debate thoroughly so that when a decision is finally made in this respect it does not compromise the effectiveness and efficiency of the army.

**Motlalepula
'Monna-oa-Mosotho'
Khotlo**



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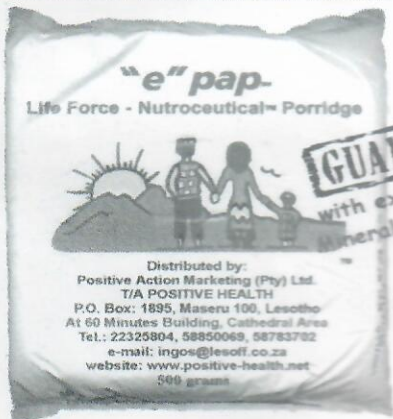


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Lesotho in pole position to host the 16th Military Taekwondo World Championship tournament in 2004



**Sgt
Thabiso
Rajane**

The President of the Lesotho Military Sports Council (LMSC) in the Lesotho Defence Force (LDF), Colonel Letšolo Kholoane says Lesotho is in a pole position to host the 16th Military Taekwondo World Championships tournament in 2004.

Col Kholoane said this annual sporting event would certainly bring Lesotho the recognition it deserves as far as taekwondo is concerned

“The LDF Taekwondo team is regarding the host as a major challenge. The team will gauge its prowess in the forthcoming 15th Military Taekwondo World Championships due in Croatia from August 9 to 16, 2003. About 122 countries have confirmed their attendance to the mother body – International Military Sports Council. Seven players and 5 officials will represent the team to the championship tournament,” Col Kholoane disclosed.

Basing himself on previous LDF Taekwondo Club’s performance, Col Kholoane said that he was very positive that the club would confidently raise up both the country and army flags. The LDF Taekwondo Club coach and also International 3rd class referee, Warrant Officer Class II (WOII) Phatoli Mahao said: “I

believe we shall do well at the tournament,” he said.

“Players like Pte Mokete Mokhosi, one of the renowned players of the club, now poised as a club trainer has just retired from the ring due to age restrictions,” said the coach,” adding that CISM rules and regulations require players to hang gloves at the age of 36.

WO II Mahao indicated that the LDF Taekwondo Club, men would contest in three different categories: fin weight

(under 54kg), featherweight (under 60kg), and middleweight (under 84 kg). Women would contest in four categories, namely: fin weight (under 47kg), bantamweight (under 54kg), featherweight (under 60 kg), and heavy weight (over 70 kg).

One of the players earmarked to fly to Croatia, Pte Likhama Leuta (27) said that he started his career in 1994 while still a scholar in his hometown, Mafeteng.

“I promise Basotho and the LDF an outstanding performance in the tournament. So far, I do not see any problem to any one of us,” said Pte Leuta.

According to Pte Leuta the 15th Military Taekwondo World Championships tournament is not a new venture to him and some of his club mates. They have been in various parts of the world contesting in similar sporting events.

Pte Leuta singled out countries like Kenya, Zimbabwe, Republic of South Africa, Korea and United States of America where similar competitions were held before.



The President of Lesotho Military Sports Council in the LDF, Col Letšolo Kholoane.



These athletes constitute the team that will represent Lesotho in the forthcoming 15th Military Taekwondo World Championships in Croatia in August 2003.

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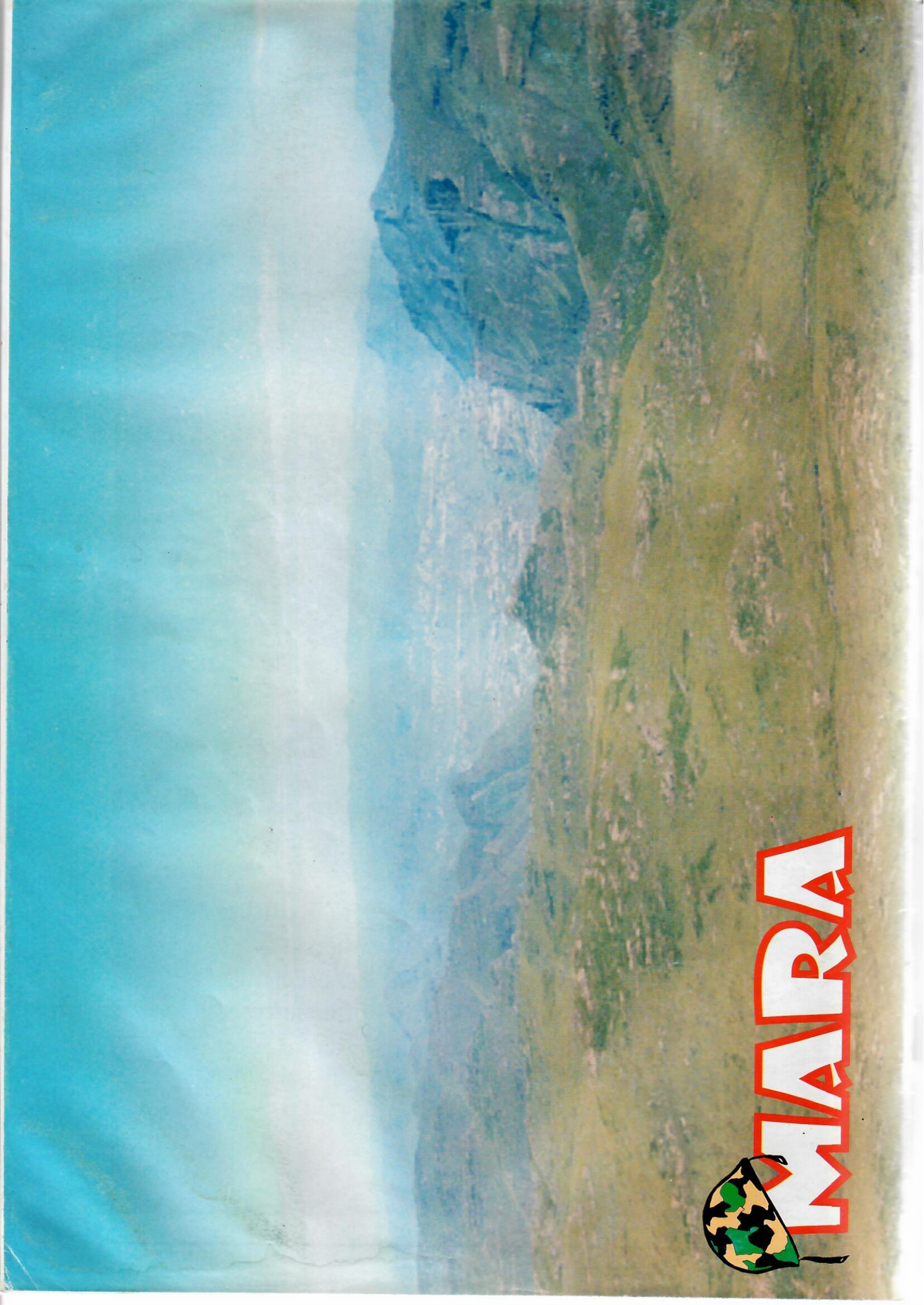
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