



PRESS RELEASE

Directorate on Corruption and Economic Offences

Former British High Commissioner's Building

MASERU

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INVESTIGATION AND ARREST OF JOURNALIST, LESOTHO TIMES NEWSPAPER, MR MOHALENYANA PHAKELA

The Directorate on Corruption and Economic Offences (DCEO) is aware of a matter of a public concern circulated in the media and social network platforms relating to the arrest of one Mr. Mohalenyane Phakela, a journalist at Lesotho Times Newspaper.

Concerned with the state of affairs, DCEO wishes to extend its thoughts to all affected parties and highlight the nation on the events that led to the arrest of the journalist. However, the Directorate wishes to state right from the outset, that it fully understands and appreciates the strategic role that the media plays in the fight against corruption and related crime, especially through its investigative journalistic approach. This being the case, there is no way DCEO can interfere with the media when the media has uncovered a story. The only thing that can bring the DCEO in, and this would not apply to the media fraternity alone but to all other sectors of society, is where there is reasonable suspicion that an offence has been committed, as per DCEO's statutory mandate. The case that led to the arrest of Mr. Mohalenyane Phakela is the case in point.

On the 22nd August, 2025, DCEO was carbon-copied an information that was sent to *kphakela@gmail.com* account, from Maseru Toyota, which the DCEO had previously had dealings with on its investigations. Concerned with this, DCEO launched an investigation into the matter.

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The investigation and evidence available as of the 25th August, 2025, revealed that an offence under the *Prevention of Corruption and Economic Offences Act of 1999* as amended, had been committed, that the suspect, who happened to be Mr. Mohalenyane Phakela, a journalist at Lesotho Times Newspaper, had misrepresented himself or falsely claimed to be a DCEO officer to obtain information relating to a case that involved the Lesotho Correctional Service. Mr. Phakela was then summoned and taken to DCEO on the 29th August, 2025, to assist with the investigations and was later taken into custody on the reasonable suspicion that an offence of impersonation had been committed, as stated already. He however, was released the following day, 30th August, 2025 whilst further investigations were continuing, to appear on Monday the 1st September, 2025 for his appearance before court.

Further investigations, however, revealed that indeed there was no material evidence that the suspect had impersonated himself so as to obtain the information under the pretext of being a DCEO employee. Mr. Phakela and his legal representative were then met by the Director-General and his team on Monday 8th September and informed that much as there was reasonable suspicion that an offence had been committed, the matter would not be pursued any further unless new evidence emerged.

In concluding this statement, the Directorate wishes to state once again that, being an anti-corruption law enforcement agency, entrusted with the fight against corruption, the DCEO remains committed to effectively join hands with all stakeholders in the fight against corruption, more particularly the media. The Directorate considers the media fraternity as one of its key strategic partners and shall continue to collaborate with the media in the fight against corruption, for the promotion of good governance through transparency and accountability.



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Directorate on corruption and Economic Offences

Dated 10th September, 2025

