

LESOTHO: Prayer Request and Update

Please keep our sisters and brothers in the Lesotho Evangelical Church of Southern Africa (LECSA) and the Basotho people in your prayers. Please pray for:

- The people of Lesotho, that they may know security, respect for their fundamental rights, and life in fullness through Jesus Christ;
- Leaders and members of LECSA, that they may be agents of peace, justice, reconciliation and healing in the midst of conflict;
- Lesotho's political leaders that they may demonstrate wisdom, humility and a commitment to the common good as they seek a durable resolution of the country's social and political tensions;
- Representatives of SADC and the international community as they seek to mediate the disputes and guide Lesotho back to democracy, stability and rule of law.

Update:

Politically-charged conflict between Lesotho's police and military culminated in what some observers termed an attempted coup d'état at the end of August 2014. Subsequently, the nation experienced a period of heightened political and social tensions that included the closure of the National Assembly. Mediation by the Southern African Development Community (SADC) and the Christian Council of Lesotho persuaded Lesotho's leaders to hold early elections on February 28, 2015, to break the impasse and restore democratic rule.

The election prompted a reconfiguration of Lesotho's ruling coalition and brought back to power former Prime Minister Pakalitha Mosisili, whose party had been excluded from government following the 2012 elections. While Lesotho has enjoyed relative peace and calm since the elections in February, political tensions have continued to simmer beneath the surface.

At the end of June, conflict erupted again when members of the Lesotho Defence Force shot and killed the former head of the army near his farm. Another prominent businessperson and party funder was also murdered, and opposition leaders, including the immediate past Prime Minister, Tom Thabane, have fled the country, fearing for their safety.

SADC has again sent South African Deputy President Cyril Ramaphosa to Lesotho to mediate, and South African President Jacob Zuma has expressed concern about the "explosive security situation" in Lesotho.