



Lesotho – Researched and compiled by the Refugee Documentation Centre of Ireland on 21 June 2012

Corruption and inefficiency of the Criminal Justice System in Lesotho.

A report from the *Open Society Initiative for Southern Africa* states:

“Calling themselves a coalition of concerned citizens, comprising taxi owners, civic groups, youth organisations, NGOs, indigenous business people and workers, the protestors called for a whole host of actions – some big, some small – that illustrate the breadth and diversity of the protest’s participants. Their demands included calls for:

- The government to be accountable for every cent of taxpayer’s money by taking appropriate action against corruption and fraud in the public service;
- The government to address the lack of clean water and sewage in villages;
- The government to address unsatisfactory judicial services that result in cases in court taking too long and that are too expensive for the poor so that only the rich can enjoy ‘justice’.” (Open Society Initiative for Southern Africa (23 November 2011) *Lesotho’s Mother of All Protests*)

A *Lesotho Times* article states:

“The president of the Lesotho Court of Appeal last Friday attacked High Court judges for failing to deliver written reasons for their judgments. Justice Michael Ramodibedi was speaking at the close of the session of the Court of Appeal in Maseru. He said the Court of Appeal had on numerous occasions deplored the failure of some High Court judges to deliver written reasons for their judgments. ‘This notwithstanding, the practice continues unabated to the detriment of the administration of justice in this country,’ Justice Ramodibedi said. The president of the Court of Appeal cited the case of Molahlehi Mohale whose case has been pending in the courts since 1997. The indictment is dated 2 July 1997. Incredibly, the trial only commenced on 18 June 2008, a delay of more than 10 years. ‘There is no explanation for this inordinate delay,’ Justice Ramodibedi said. The president also complained over the delays in transcribing records of proceedings of the High Court.” (Lesotho Times (29 October 2009) *Justice system on its knees*)

See also another Lesotho Times article which states:

“A parliamentary portfolio committee has blamed the current backlog of cases in Lesotho’s courts on ‘laziness’ by both judges and lawyers. An investigation by the public safety, justice and law cluster portfolio committee revealed that the judges and lawyers, the people at the core of the justice delivery system in this country, do not seem to agree on the main causes of the backlog in the courts. The committee found that there was a general tendency among judges and lawyers to shift blame on each other.” (Lesotho Times (10 February 2010) *Courts backlog: ‘lazy’ judges blamed*)

This response was prepared after researching publicly accessible information currently available to the Research and Information Unit within time constraints. This response is not and does not purport to be conclusive as to the merit of any particular claim to refugee status or asylum. Please read in full all documents referred to.

References:

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<http://www.lesitimes.com/?p=2513>
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