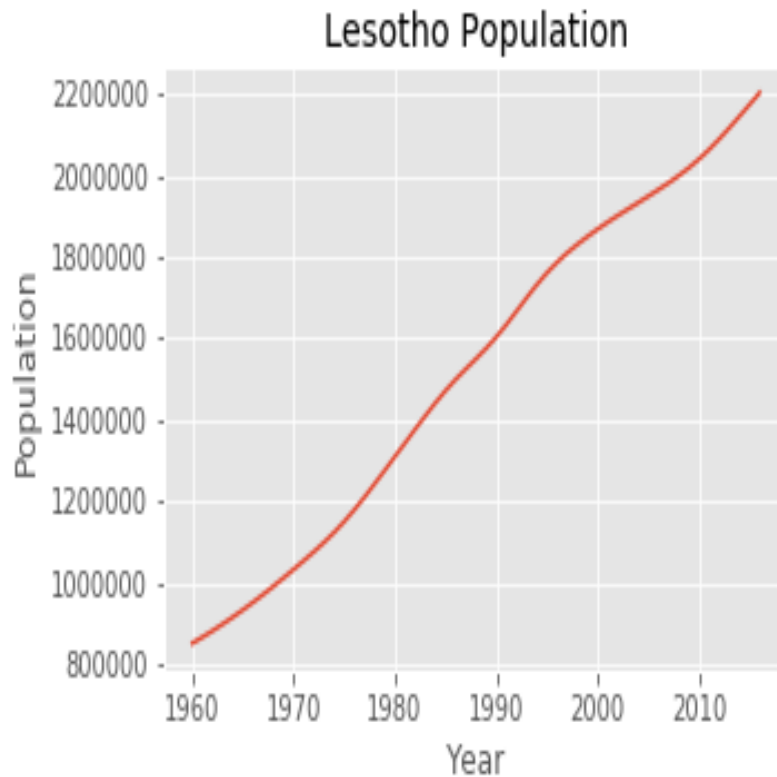


Lesotho



Lesotho ((listen), ■-SOO-too), officially the Kingdom of Lesotho (Sotho: Muso oa Lesotho), is an enclaved country in southern Africa. It is just over 30,000 km² (11,583 sq mi) in size and has a population of around 2 million. Its capital and largest city is Maseru. Previously known as Basutoland, Lesotho declared independence from the United Kingdom on 4 October 1966. It is a member of the United Nations, the Commonwealth of Nations and the Southern African Development Community (SADC). The name Lesotho translates roughly into "the land of the people who speak Sesotho". == History == The original inhabitants of the area now known as Lesotho were the San people. Examples of their rock art can be found in the mountains throughout the area. === Rule of Mosheshoe I (1822–1868) === The present Lesotho, then called Basutoland, emerged as a single polity under King Moshoeshe I in 1822. Moshoeshe, a son of Mokhachane, a minor chief of the Bakoteli lineage, formed his own clan and became a chief around 1804. Between 1821 and 1823, he and his followers settled at the Butha-Buthe Mountain, joining with former adversaries in resistance against the Lifaqane associated with the reign of Shaka Zulu from 1818 to 1828. Subsequent evolution of the state hinged on conflicts between British and Dutch colonists leaving the Cape Colony following its seizure from the French-allied Dutch by the British in 1795, and subsequently associated with the Orange River Sovereignty and subsequent Orange Free State. Missionaries invited by Moshoeshe I, Thomas Arbousset, Eugène Casalis and Constant Gosselin from the Paris Evangelical Missionary Society, placed at Morija, developed orthography and printed works in the Sesotho language between 1837 and 1855. Casalis, acting as translator and providing advice on foreign affairs, helped to set up diplomatic channels and acquire guns for use against the encroaching Europeans and the Griqua people. Trekboers from the Cape Colony showed up on the western borders of Basutoland and claimed land rights, beginning with Jan de Winnaar, who settled in the Matlakeng area in May–June 1838. As more Boers were moving into the area they tried to colonise the land between the two rivers, even north of the Caledon, claiming that it had been abandoned by the Sotho people. Moshoeshe subsequently signed a treaty with the British Governor of the Cape Colony, Sir George Thomas Napier, that annexed

the Orange River Sovereignty that many Boers had settled. These outraged Boers were suppressed in a brief skirmish in 1848. In 1851 a British force was defeated by the Basotho army at Kolonyama, touching off an embarrassing war for the British. After repelling another British attack in 1852, Moshoeshe sent an appeal to the British commander that settled the dispute diplomatically, then defeated the Batlokoa in 1853. In 1854 the British pulled out of the region, and in 1858 Moshoeshe fought a series of wars with the Boers in the Free State–Basotho War, losing a great portion of the western lowlands. The last war in 1867 ended when Moshoeshe appealed to Queen Victoria, who agreed to make Basutoland a British protectorate in 1868. === British rule (1868–1966) === In 1869, the British signed a treaty at Aliwal North with the Boers that defined the boundaries of Basutoland, and later Lesotho, which by ceding the western territories effectively reduced Moshoeshe's Kingdom to half its previous size. Following the cession in 1869, the British initially transferred functions from Moshoeshe's capital in Thaba Bosiu to a police camp on the northwest border, Maseru, until administration of Basutoland was transferred to the Cape Colony in 1871. Moshoeshe died on 11 March 1870, marking the end of the traditional era and the beginning of the colonial era. He was buried at Thaba Bosiu. In the early years of British rule between 1871 and 1884, Basutoland was treated similarly to other territories that had been forcefully annexed, much to the chagrin of the Basotho. This led to the Gun War in 1881. In 1884, Basutoland was restored its status as a protectorate, with Maseru again its capital, but remained under direct rule by a governor, though effective internal power was wielded by traditional chiefs. === Independence (1966–present) === Basutoland gained its independence from Britain and became the Kingdom of Lesotho in 1966. In January 1970, the ruling Basotho National Party (BNP) lost the first post-independence general elections, with 23 seats to the Basutoland Congress Party's 36. Prime Minister Leabua Jonathan refused to cede power to the Basotho Congress Party (BCP), declared himself Tona Kholo (Sesotho translation of prime minister), and imprisoned the BCP leadership. BCP began a rebellion and then received training in Libya for its Lesotho Liberation Army (LLA) under the pretense of being Azanian People's Liberation Army (APLA) soldiers of the Pan Africanist Congress (PAC). Deprived of arms and supplies by the Sibeko faction of the PAC in 1978, the 178-strong LLA was rescued from their Tanzanian base by the financial assistance of a Maoist PAC officer, but they launched the guerrilla war with only a handful of old weapons. The main force was defeated in northern Lesotho, and later guerrillas launched sporadic but usually ineffectual attacks. The campaign was severely compromised when BCP's leader, Ntsu Mokhehle, went to Pretoria. In the early 1980s, several Basotho who sympathised with the exiled BCP were threatened with death and attacked by the government of Leabua Jonathan. In September 1981, the family of Benjamin Masilo was attacked. A few days later, Edgar Mahlomola Motuba was taken from his home and murdered. The BNP ruled from 1966 until January 1970. What later ensued was a de facto government led by Dr. Leabua Jonathan until 1986 when a military coup forced it out of office. The Transitional Military Council that came to power granted executive powers to King Moshoeshe II, who was until then a ceremonial monarch. But in 1987 the King was forced into exile after coming up with a six-page memorandum on how he wanted the Lesotho's constitution to be, which would have given him more executive powers had the military government agreed. His son was installed as King Letsie III. The chairman of the military junta, Major General Justin Metsing Lekhanya, was ousted in 1991 and replaced by Major General Elias Phisoana Ramaema, who handed over power to a democratically elected government of the BCP in 1993. Moshoeshe II returned from exile in 1992 as an ordinary citizen. After the return to democratic government, King Letsie III tried unsuccessfully to persuade the BCP government to reinstate his father (Moshoeshe II) as head of state. In August 1994, Letsie III staged a military-backed coup that deposed the BCP government, after the BCP government refused to reinstate his father, Moshoeshe II, according to Lesotho's constitution. The new government did not receive full international recognition. Member states of the Southern African Development Community (SADC) engaged in negotiations to reinstate the BCP government. One of the conditions Letsie III put forward for this was that his father should be re-installed as head of state. After protracted negotiations, the BCP government was reinstated and Letsie III abdicated in favour of his father in 1995, but he ascended the throne again when Moshoeshe II died at the age of fifty-seven in a supposed road accident, when his car plunged off a mountain road during the early hours of 15 January 1996. According to a government statement, Moshoeshe had set out at 1 am to visit his cattle at Matsieng and was returning to Maseru through the Maluti Mountains when his car left the road. In 1997, the ruling BCP split over leadership disputes. Prime Minister Ntsu Mokhehle formed a new party, the Lesotho Congress for Democracy (LCD), and was followed by a majority of members of parliament, which enabled him to form a new government. Pakalitha Mosisili succeeded Mokhehle as party leader

and the LCD won the general elections in 1998. Although the elections were pronounced free and fair by local and international observers and a subsequent special commission appointed by SADC, the opposition political parties rejected the results. Opposition protests in the country intensified, culminating in a peaceful demonstration outside the royal palace in August 1998. Exact details of what followed are greatly disputed, both in Lesotho and South Africa. While the Botswana Defence Force troops were welcomed, tensions with South African National Defence Force troops were high, resulting in fighting. Incidences of sporadic rioting intensified when South African troops hoisted a South African flag over the Royal Palace. By the time the SADC forces withdrew in May 1999, much of the capital of Maseru lay in ruins, and the southern provincial capital towns of Mafeteng and Mohale's Hoek had seen the loss of over a third of their commercial real estate. A number of South Africans and Basotho also died in the fighting. An Interim Political Authority (IPA), charged with reviewing the electoral structure in the country, was created in December 1998. The IPA devised a proportional electoral system to ensure that the opposition would be represented in the National Assembly. The new system retained the existing 80 elected Assembly seats, but added 40 seats to be filled on a proportional basis. Elections were held under this new system in May 2002, and the LCD won again, gaining 54 percent of the vote. But for the first time, opposition political parties won significant numbers of seats, and despite some irregularities and threats of violence from Major General Lekhanya, Lesotho experienced its first peaceful election. Nine opposition parties now hold all 40 of the proportional seats, with the BNP having the largest share (21). The LCD has 79 of the 80 constituency-based seats. Although its elected members participate in the National Assembly, the BNP has launched several legal challenges to the elections, including a recount; none has been successful. On 30 August 2014, an alleged abortive military 'coup' took place forcing then Prime Minister Thomas Thabane to flee to South Africa for three days.

== Politics == The Lesotho Government is a parliamentary or constitutional monarchy. The Prime Minister, Tom Thabane, is head of government and has executive authority. The King of Lesotho, Letsie III, serves a largely ceremonial function; he no longer possesses any executive authority and is prohibited from actively participating in political initiatives. The All Basotho Convention (ABC) leads a coalition government in the National Assembly, the lower house of parliament. The upper house of parliament, called the Senate, is composed of 22 principal chiefs whose membership is hereditary, and 11 appointees of the king, acting on the advice of the prime minister. The constitution provides for an independent judicial system, made up of the High Court, the Court of Appeal, Magistrate's Courts, and traditional courts that exist predominantly in rural areas. All but one of the Justices on the Court of Appeal are South African jurists. There is no trial by jury; rather, judges make rulings alone or, in the case of criminal trials, with two other judges as observers. The constitution also protects basic civil liberties, including freedom of speech, freedom of association, freedom of the press, freedom of peaceful assembly and freedom of religion. Lesotho was ranked 12th out of 48 sub-Saharan African countries in the 2008 Ibrahim Index of African Governance. As of 2010 the People's Charter Movement called for the practical annexation of the country by South Africa due to the AIDS epidemic. Nearly a quarter of the population is infected with HIV. The country faced high unemployment, economic collapse, a weak currency and poor travel documents restricting movement. An African Union report called for economic integration of Lesotho with South Africa but stopped short of suggesting annexation. In May 2010 the Charter Movement delivered a petition to the South African High Commission requesting integration. South Africa's home affairs spokesman Ronnie Mamoepa rejected the idea that Lesotho should be treated as a special case. "It is a sovereign country like South Africa. We sent envoys to our neighbours – Botswana, Zimbabwe, Swaziland and Lesotho – before we enforced the passport rule. When you travel from Britain to South Africa, don't you expect to use a passport?"

=== Foreign relations === Lesotho's geographic location makes it extremely vulnerable to political and economic developments in South Africa. It is a member of many regional economic organisations, including the Southern African Development Community (SADC), and the Southern African Customs Union (SACU). It is also active in the United Nations (UN), the African Union (AU), the Non-Aligned Movement, the Commonwealth, and many other international organisations. Prince Seeiso Simoné Seeiso is the present High Commissioner of the Kingdom of Lesotho to the Court of St. James's. The UN is represented by a resident mission as well, including UNDP, UNICEF, WHO, FAO, WFP, UNFPA and UNAIDS. Lesotho also has maintained ties with the United Kingdom (Wales in particular), Germany, the United States and other Western states. Although in 1990 it broke relations with the People's Republic of China (PRC) and re-established relations with the Republic of China (Taiwan), it later restored ties with the PRC. Lesotho also recognises the State of Palestine and the Republic of Kosovo. In the past, it was a strong public opponent of apartheid in South Africa and

granted a number of South African refugees political asylum during the apartheid era. === Law === Lesotho does not have a single code containing its laws; it draws them from a variety of sources including: Constitution, Legislation, Common Law, Judicial precedent, Customary Law, and Authoritative texts. The Constitution of Lesotho came into force after the publication of the Commencement Order. Constitutionally, legislation refers to laws that have been passed by both houses of parliament and have been assented to by the king (section 78(1)). Subordinate legislation refers to laws passed by other bodies to which parliament has by virtue of section 70(2) of the Constitution validly delegated such legislative powers. These include government publications, ministerial orders, ministerial regulations and municipal by-laws. Although Lesotho shares with South Africa, Botswana, Swaziland, Namibia and Zimbabwe a mixed general legal system which resulted from the interaction between the Roman-Dutch Civilian law and the English Common Law, its general law operates independently. Lesotho also applies the common law, which refers to unwritten law or law from non-statutory sources, but excludes customary law. Decisions from South African courts are only persuasive, and courts refer to them in formulating their decisions. Decisions from similar jurisdictions can also be cited for their persuasive value. Magistrates' courts decisions do not become precedent since these are lower courts. They are however bound by decisions of the High Court and the Court of Appeal. At the apex of the Lesotho justice system is the Court of Appeal, which is the final appellate forum on all matters. It has a supervisory and review jurisdiction over all the courts of Lesotho. Lesotho has a dual legal system consisting of customary and general laws operating side by side. Customary law is made up of the customs of the Basotho, written and codified in the Laws of Lerotoli whereas general law consists of Roman Dutch Law imported from the Cape and the Lesotho statutes. The codification of customary law came about after a council was appointed in 1903 to advise the British Resident Commissioner on what was best for the Basotho in terms of laws that would govern them. Until this time, the Basotho customs and laws were passed down from generation to generation through oral tradition. The council was then given the task of codifying them, came up with the Laws of Lerotoli which are applied by customary courts today (local courts). Written works of eminent authors have persuasive value in the courts of Lesotho. These include writings of the old authorities as well as contemporary writers from similar jurisdictions. === Districts === For administrative purposes, Lesotho is divided into ten districts, each headed by a district administrator. Each district has a capital known as a camptown. The districts are further subdivided into 80 constituencies, which consist of 129 local community councils. == Geography == Lesotho covers 30,355 km² (11,720 sq mi). It is the only independent state in the world that lies entirely above 1,000 metres (3,281 ft) in elevation. Its lowest point of 1,400 metres (4,593 ft) is thus the highest in the world. Over 80 percent of the country lies above 1,800 metres (5,906 ft). Lesotho is also the southernmost landlocked country in the world and is entirely surrounded by South Africa. It lies between latitudes 28° and 31°S, and longitudes 27° and 30°E. === Climate === Because of its elevation, Lesotho remains cooler throughout the year than other regions at the same latitude. Most of the rain falls as summer thunderstorms. Maseru and surrounding lowlands often reach 30 °C (86 °F) in summer. Winters can be cold with the lowlands getting down to -7 °C (19 °F) and the highlands to -18 °C (0 °F) at times. Snow is common in the highlands between May and September; the higher peaks can experience snowfalls year-round. === Wildlife === There are known to be 339 bird species in Lesotho, including 10 globally threatened species and 2 introduced species, 17 reptile species, including geckos, snakes and lizards, and 60 mammal species endemic to Lesotho, including the endangered white-tailed rat. Lesotho flora is Alpine, due to the high and mountainous terrain. The Katse Botanical Gardens houses a collection of medicinal plants and has a large seed bank of plants from the Malibamat'so River area. == Economy == Lesotho is geographically surrounded by South Africa and economically integrated with it. The economy of Lesotho is based on agriculture, livestock, manufacturing and mining, and depends heavily on inflows of workers' remittances and receipts from the Southern African Customs Union (SACU). The majority of households subsist on farming. The formal sector employment consists mainly of female workers in the apparel sector, male migrant labour, primarily miners in South Africa for three to nine months, and employment by the Government of Lesotho (GOL). The western lowlands form the main agricultural zone. Almost 50 percent of the population earn income through informal crop cultivation or animal husbandry with nearly two-thirds of the country's income coming from the agricultural sector. The percentage of the population living below USD Purchasing Power Parity (PPP) US\$1.25/day fell from 48 percent to 44 percent between 1995 and 2003. The country is among the "Low Human Development" countries (rank 160 of 187 on the Human Development Index as classified by the UNDP, with 48.2 years of life expectancy at birth. Adult literacy is as high as 82 percent. Among the children

below the age of five years, 20 percent are under weight. Lesotho has taken advantage of the African Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA) to become the largest exporter of garments to the US from sub-Saharan Africa. US brands and retailers sourcing from Lesotho include: Foot Locker, Gap, Gloria Vanderbilt, JCPenney, Levi Strauss, Saks, Sears, Timberland and Wal-Mart. In mid-2004 its employment reached over 50,000, mainly female workers, marking the first time that manufacturing sector workers outnumbered government employees. In 2008 it exported goods worth 487 million dollars mainly to the US. Since 2004, employment in the sector has dwindled to about 45,000 in mid-2011 due to international competition in the garment sector. It was the largest formal sector employer in Lesotho in 2011. In 2007, the average earnings of an employee in the textile sector were US\$103 per month, and the official minimum wage for a general textile worker was US\$93 per month. The average gross national income per capita in 2008 was US\$83 per month. The sector initiated a major program to fight HIV/AIDS called Apparel Lesotho Alliance to Fight AIDS (ALAFa). It is an industry-wide program providing prevention and treatment for workers. Water and diamonds are Lesotho's significant natural resources. Water is utilised through the 21-year, multibillion-dollar Lesotho Highlands Water Project (LHWP), under the authority of the Lesotho Highlands Development Authority. The project commenced in 1986. The LHWP is designed to capture, store, and transfer water from the Orange River system to South Africa's Free State and greater Johannesburg area, which features a large concentration of South African industry, population, and agriculture. Completion of the first phase of the project has made Lesotho almost completely self-sufficient in the production of electricity and generated approximately US\$70 million in 2010 from the sale of electricity and water to South Africa. The World Bank, African Development Bank, European Investment Bank, and many other bilateral donors financed the project. Diamonds are produced at the Letšeng, Mothae, Likhobong, and Kao mines, which combined are estimated to produce 240,000 carats of diamonds in 2014, worth US\$300 million. The Letšeng mine is estimated to produce diamonds with an average value of US\$2172/carats, making it the world's richest mine on an average price per carat basis. The sector suffered a setback in 2008 as the result of the world recession, but rebounded in 2010 and 2011. Export of diamonds reached US\$230 million in 2010–2011. In 1957, a South African adventurer, colonel Jack Scott, accompanied by a young man named Keith Whitelock, set out prospecting for diamonds. They found their diamond mine at 3,100 m elevation, on top of the Maluti Mountains in northeastern Lesotho, some 70 km from Mokhotlong at Letšeng. In 1967, a 601-carat (120.2 g) diamond (Lesotho Brown) was discovered in the mountains by a Mosotho woman. In August 2006, a 603-carat (120.6 g) white diamond, the Lesotho Promise, was discovered at the Letšeng-la-Terae mine. Another 478-carat (95.6 g) diamond was discovered at the same location in 2008. Lesotho has progressed in moving from a predominantly subsistence-oriented economy to a lower middle income economy exporting natural resources and manufacturing goods. The exporting sectors have brought higher and more secure incomes to a significant portion of the population. The global economic crisis hit the Lesotho economy hard through: the loss of textile exports and jobs in the sector due largely to the economic slowdown in the United States which is a major export destination; reduced diamond mining and exports, including weak prices for diamonds; drop in SACU revenues due to the economic slowdown in the South African economy; and reduction in worker remittances due to weakening of the South African economy and contraction of the mining sector and related job losses in South Africa. In 2009, GDP growth slowed to 0.9 percent. The official currency is the loti (plural: maloti), but can be used interchangeably with the South African rand. Lesotho, Swaziland, Namibia, and South Africa also form a common currency and exchange control area known as the Common Monetary Area (CMA). The loti is at par with the rand. One hundred lisente (singular: sente) equal one loti. Lesotho is a member of the Southern African Customs Union (SACU), in which tariffs have been eliminated on the trade of goods between other member countries Botswana, Namibia, South Africa, and Swaziland. Lesotho has received economic aid from a variety of sources, including the United States, the World Bank, Republic of Ireland, the United Kingdom, the European Union, and Germany.

== Population ==

=== Demographics ===

Lesotho has a population of approximately 2,203,821. The population distribution of Lesotho is 25 percent urban and 75 percent rural. However, it is estimated that the annual increase in urban population is 3.5 percent. Population density is lower in the highlands than in the western lowlands. Although the majority of the population—60.2 percent—is between 15 and 64 years of age, Lesotho has a substantial youth population numbering around 34.8 percent.

=== Ethnic groups and languages ===

Lesotho's ethno-linguistic structure consists almost entirely of the Basotho, a Bantu-speaking people: an estimated 99.7 percent of the people identify as Basotho. Basotho subgroups include the Bakuena (Kuenta), Batlouteng (the Tlou), Baphuthi (the Phuti), Bafokeng, Bataung (the Tau), Batšoeneng

(the Tšoene), and Matebele. The main language, Sesotho (or Sotho), is also the first official and administrative language, and it is what Basotho speak on an ordinary basis. === Religion === The population of Lesotho is estimated to be more than 95 percent Christian. Protestants account for 50 percent of the population, (Evangelicals 17.5 percent, Anglicans 7.5 percent, Pentecostals 21.9 percent and other Christians an additional 8.5 percent). Roman Catholics represent nearly 40 percent of the population, served by the province of the Metropolitan Archbishop of Maseru and his three suffragans (the bishops of Leribe, Mphahlele's Hoek and Qutha's Nek), who also form the national episcopal conference. Non-Christian religions represent only 1.5% of the population, and those of no religion 3.5%. === Education and literacy === According to recent estimates, 85 percent of those older than 14 are literate. As such, Lesotho holds one of the highest literacy rates in Africa, in part because Lesotho invests over 12 percent of its GDP in education. Unlike in most other countries, in Lesotho female literacy (88.7 percent) exceeds male literacy (70.1 percent) by 18.6 percentage points. According to a study by the Southern and Eastern Africa Consortium for Monitoring Educational Quality in 2000, 37 percent of grade six pupils in Lesotho (average age 14 years) are at or above reading level four, "Reading for Meaning." A pupil at this level of literacy can read ahead or backwards through various parts of text to link and interpret information. Although education is not compulsory, the Government of Lesotho is incrementally implementing a program for free primary education. Despite their literacy, Lesotho's residents struggle for access to vital services, such as healthcare, travel and educational resources, as, according to the International Telecommunication Union, only 3.4 percent of the population use the Internet. A service from Econet Telecom Lesotho expanded the country's access to email through entry-level, low-end mobile phones and, consequently, improved access to educational information. The African Library Project works to establish school and village libraries in partnership with US Peace Corps Lesotho and the Butha Buthe District of Education. == Health == Infant mortality is at about 8.3 percent. There are five physicians per 100,000 persons. === HIV/AIDS === Lesotho is severely afflicted by HIV/AIDS. According to 2009 estimates, the prevalence is about 23.6 percent, one of the highest in the world. In urban areas, about 50 percent of women under 40 have HIV. The UNDP stated that in 2006 life expectancy in Lesotho was estimated at 42 years for men and women. The country regards HIV as one of its most important development issues, and the government is addressing the pandemic through its HIV/AIDS National Strategic Plan. Coverage of some key HIV/AIDS interventions has improved, including prevention of mother to child transmission and antiretroviral therapy. Prevention of mother to child transmission coverage increased from about 5 percent in 2005, to 31 percent in 2007. The roll-out of antiretroviral therapy has made good progress, with 38,586 people receiving treatment by 2008. The "Know Your Status" campaign boosted the number of people being tested for HIV to 229,092 by the end of 2007, 12 percent of the population and three times the number tested in 2005. The program is funded by the Clinton Foundation and started in June 2006. Bill Clinton and Microsoft chairman Bill Gates visited Lesotho in July 2006 to assess its fight against AIDS. As a result, the annual rate at which adults in the population who are HIV-negative become HIV-positive declined from 2.9 percent in 2005 to 2.3 percent in 2007, lowering the estimated annual number of new infections from 26,000 to 21,560. These are the first signs of a decline in the HIV epidemic. The Apparel Lesotho Alliance to Fight AIDS (ALAFa) is an industry-wide program providing prevention and treatment, including ARVs when these are necessary, for the 46,000 mainly women workers in the Lesotho apparel industry. It was launched in May 2006. The program is helping to combat two of the key drivers of the HIV/AIDS epidemic: poverty and gender inequality. Surveys within the industry by ALAFa show that 43 percent of employees have HIV. Prince Harry of UK co-founded the charity Sentebele in Lesotho, for children with HIV/AIDS. The other co-founder is the Prince of Lesotho. == Security == The internal and external security of Lesotho is the responsibility of the Defence Commission, which is established and defined by article 145 of the Lesotho national Constitution. The Prime Minister is the Chairman ex officio, and there are six other Defence Commission members, namely the Commander and Deputy Commander of the Lesotho Defence Force, the Commissioner and Assistant Commissioner of the Lesotho Mounted Police Service, and the Director and Deputy Director of the Lesotho National Security Service. The Defence Commission has power to strategically direct the defence force, the police, and the prison service, but not the security service, which is answerable only to the Government. The Defence Commission has power to appoint or remove the senior staff of the defence force, police, and prison service, but not the security service, whose Director and Deputy Director are personal appointments of the Prime Minister. The Lesotho Defence Force (LDF) is established under article 146 of the national Constitution, and charged with the maintenance of internal security and the defence of Lesotho. Its chief officer is designated Commander

by the Constitution, and usually holds the rank of Lieutenant General. The LDF has a total strength of just over 3,000. The largest component is infantry, but they are supported by small artillery, logistics, and air force units, and a single armoured reconnaissance company. Since 2000, Lesotho Defence Forces have been trained by a small contingent of Indian Army Training Team, led by a Brigadier. The Lesotho Mounted Police Service (LMPS) is established under article 147 of the national Constitution, and charged with the maintenance of law and order. Its chief officer is designated Commissioner by the Constitution. The LMPS provides uniformed policing, criminal detection, and traffic policing. There are specialist units dealing with high-tech crime, immigration, wildlife, and terrorism. The current force has existed, despite changes of name, continuously since 1872. The Lesotho National Security Service (LNSS) is established under article 148 of the national Constitution, and charged with the protection of national security. Its chief officer is designated Director by the Constitution. The LNSS is an intelligence service, reporting directly to the Government. The power to appoint or dismiss a Director is vested directly in the Prime Minister. == Culture == Traditional musical instruments include lekolulo, a kind of flute used by herding boys, setolo-tolo, played by men using their mouth, and the woman's stringed thomo. The national anthem of Lesotho is "Lesotho Fatše La Bo-ntata Rona", which literally translates into "Lesotho, Land of Our Fore-Fathers". The traditional style of housing in Lesotho is called a mokhoro. Many older houses, especially in smaller towns and villages, are of this type, with walls usually constructed from large stones cemented together. Baked mud bricks and especially concrete blocks are also used nowadays, with thatched roofs still common, although often replaced by corrugated roofing sheets. Traditional attire revolves around the Basotho blanket, a thick covering made primarily of wool. The blankets are ubiquitous throughout the country during all seasons, and worn differently by men and women. The Morija Arts & Cultural Festival is a prominent Sesotho arts and music festival. It is held annually in the historical town of Morija, where the first missionaries arrived in 1833. === Cuisine === The cuisine of Lesotho includes African traditions and British influences. ===== Traditional food ===== Because Lesotho has limited food resources, a majority of families in the country raise their own food and livestock to support themselves and their families. Some staple foods include pap-pap, a cornmeal porridge covered with a sauce consisting of various vegetables. Tea and locally-brewed beer are popular choices for beverages. == Social issues == Significant levels of child labour exist in Lesotho, and the country is in the process of formulating an Action Program on the Elimination of Child Labor (APEC). According to the UN, Lesotho has the highest rape rate of any country (91.6 per 100,000 people rate for reported rape in 2008). Treatment of people with disabilities is another major issue facing the country. According to the Lesotho Census 2006 around four percent of the population is thought to have some sort of disability. However, there are concerns regarding the reliability of the methodologies used and the real figure is thought to be closer to the global estimate of 15 percent. According to a survey conducted by the Lesotho National Federation of Organisations of the Disabled in conjunction with SINTEF, people with disability in Lesotho face significant social and cultural barriers which prevent them from accessing education, healthcare, and employment on an equal basis with others. On 2 December 2008 Lesotho became the 42nd country in the world to sign the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. However, to date the treaty has yet to be domesticated. Despite lobbying efforts from disabled persons organisations, there have been no moves to develop disability specific legislation to protect the rights of people with disabilities. Although the National Disability and Rehabilitation Policy was developed in 2011, as yet there has been no budget allocated for its implementation. Sexual violence in Lesotho is a serious problem. International data from UNODC found the incidence of rapes recorded in 2008 by the police to be the highest in Lesotho. One study in Lesotho found that 61 percent of women reported having experienced sexual violence at some point in their lives, of which 22 percent reported being physically forced to have sexual intercourse. In the 2009 DHS survey 15.7 percent of men said that a husband is justified in hitting or beating his wife if she refuses to have sex with him, while 16 percent said a husband is justified to use force to have sex. In another study, researchers have concluded that "Given the high prevalence of HIV in Lesotho, programs should address women's right to control their sexuality." The Married Persons Equality Act 2006 gives equal rights to wives in regard to their husbands, abolishing the husband's marital power. The World Economic Forum's 2015 Gender Gap Report ranks Lesotho 61st in the world for gender parity, while neighboring South Africa ranks 17th. == See also == Communications in Lesotho Index of Lesotho-related articles List of people from Lesotho Military of Lesotho National University of Lesotho National University of Lesotho International School Outline of Lesotho Transportation in Lesotho == References == == External links == Government of Lesotho Published Judicial Opinions "Lesotho". The World Factbook. Central Intelligence Agency. Lesotho from UCB

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Atlas of Lesotho Key Development Forecasts for Lesotho from International Futures