



INNOVATIONS FOR SUCCESSFUL SOCIETIES

REINING IN A ROGUE AGENCY: POLICE REFORM IN LESOTHO, 1997-2010

SYNOPSIS

In the 1990s, the Lesotho Mounted Police Service was in disarray. Its members had gone on strike and had committed kidnappings and other crimes in the small African kingdom. A police mutiny in the capital in 1997 forced the government to address the issue of reforming the service. The effort included setting up three support agencies to monitor the activities of the police and ensure adherence to common standards. These agencies had some success but struggled to assert the type of monitoring that was envisaged. The government in 2005 appointed a forward-looking commissioner who forged ahead with her own reform priorities. The case offers insights into the challenges that arise when establishing external oversight agencies and also shows how savings can be made and reforms moved forward with the right leadership, even in low-resource environments.

Daniel Scher drafted this policy note on the basis of interviews conducted in Maseru, Lesotho, in February 2010.

INTRODUCTION

Seated at a desk in her office in police headquarters, surrounded by publications on policing and police reform, Evelyn Letooane, commissioner of the Lesotho Mounted Police Service, exclaimed with frustration, “You have one bad day, and the public never forget!”

The bad day she referred to was the singular low point in the history of the Lesotho Mounted Police Service. On 7 February 1997, after going on a rampage of kidnappings and assaults, junior officers mutinied, taking over the police headquarters near the downtown area of the capital city, Maseru. The army was

deployed to quell the mutiny, and managed to put it down only after shelling the police headquarters from a nearby hill.

The mutiny was the nadir of a police force suffering from three main problems. The first was a lack of accountability. Structures did not exist to ensure the adherence of the police force to civilian control.

The second problem was organizational. As Letooane put it, “Poverty is the order of the day” in Lesotho, and the LMPS suffered from severe resource constraints. Ts’okolo Koro, a former high-level police officer and former inspector of police, said that the force did not

suffer as much from a shortage of resources as a near-absence of resources. The police force was inadequately trained and equipped. Police stations were old and decrepit, and some had not been renovated since independence in 1966.

The third problem was the public's lack of trust in the police. Having seen the LMPS at its lowest point, the public had little reason to trust the police's neutrality or professionalism. The public was uncooperative with the police and saw little reason to help them in investigations.

To address the police problems, the government and Letsoame launched a series of reforms. Letsoame addressed the organizational challenges while simultaneously attempting to rebuild relations with the community. Letsoame's goal was to use the severely limited resources of the police in the most efficient and effective way possible. She implemented a five-year strategic plan, focusing on key priorities that included training, efficient deployment of resources and people, and a new performance-management system. Letsoame also implemented community-policing policies and worked on building closer ties between the police and the public by addressing issues of major concern, such as livestock theft.

Letsoame's reforms were assisted by the establishment of the government's policing oversight agencies, set up to monitor the activities of the police and ensure adherence to common norms. A British consultant proposed these agencies in 1997 and they were incorporated in a 1998 law, but it was 2005 before they were all established.

In addressing the challenges facing the force, the LMPS faced a number of contextual difficulties. Lesotho is a rugged mountain kingdom, with much of the population living in villages that are barely accessible. In 2010, Lesotho's population was about two million, with about 26% of the adult male population working in surrounding South Africa. The borders were porous, and cross-border crime,

especially livestock theft, was a constant problem.

Lesotho has also been afflicted by the HIV/AIDS pandemic, with a prevalence rate of 23.2% in 2010, one of the highest in the world. Estimates that year suggested that about 50% of women under 40 years old in urban areas were infected with the virus. In addition to the standard problems associated with such a high rate of infection, the virus had some unusual side effects on the country. There was a marked increase in the incidence of stock theft due to a surge in demand for livestock that are slaughtered at funerals. Lesotho's productivity also suffered due to the frequency of funerals and the significant time people had to devote to attending ceremonies every week.

Additionally, while Lesotho was and is largely an ethnically homogeneous country, its political landscape was marked by bitter divisions. Murky alliances between political figures shifted quickly, leading to a stop-and-start approach to reforms. Proposals were made, shelved and then dusted off years later amid complex turf wars and power battles.

THE CHALLENGE

From 1966, when Lesotho became independent from Britain, until a coup in 1986, Letsoame Jonathan ruled as a dictator. During this time the LMPS was a military unit that served as both the police and the army. Its officers underwent military training, carried firearms and had military-style uniforms. After the formation of the army in 1979, both the army and the police fought battles with the armed wing of the anti-Jonathan, pro-democracy Basotholand Congress Party. A combination of internal resistance, invigorated by democratic developments across the border in South Africa, and external donor pressure finally resulted in the restoration of democracy in Lesotho in 1993.

The situation remained volatile after the Basotholand Congress Party won control of the

government in the 1993 elections. With the memory of their battles with the police fresh in their minds, BCP leaders were antagonistic towards the organization. The police were fearful of reprisal, and the BCP did little to assuage these fears. Relations between the government and the police were characterized by what National University of Lesotho Professor Francis Makoa called “mutual suspicion and tension.”¹

One of the first acts of the BCP government was to separate the administration of the police and army. The police had been operated by the Ministry of Defense, but the BCP shifted administrative responsibility to the Ministry of Home Affairs. Koro, an officer in the police force at the time and former inspector of police, recalled that the BCP’s motivation was to “separate the police from their brothers” in the army.

This move antagonized the police force, particularly the junior officers. Koro said the government communicated primarily with the upper-level police managers, which led junior officers to become concerned about their own positions in the changing system. Some of these junior officers went on a rampage, abducting cabinet ministers, striking, unilaterally ‘dismissing’ senior officers viewed as too friendly with the government, and committing acts of brutality and extra-judicial killing.

The situation culminated with the mutiny in 1997, when junior officers took over the central police headquarters and issued a number of statements and demands. Although the precise reason for the mutiny was unclear, reports suggested the takeover was a response to a government-directed attempt to prosecute some police officers for the killing of other police officers in a shootout at a station.

Highly-placed ministers summoned the commander of the army and told him that if he did not put down the mutiny they would invoke regional security obligations and ask the

Southern African Development Community (SADC) to send troops. The army commander, while reluctant to use force against his comrades in arms, was even less willing to be humiliated by foreign troops quelling an internal security situation.

The army surrounded the police headquarters and exchanged small-arms fire with the mutineers before shelling the police headquarters from a nearby hill. The police mutineers surrendered.

FRAMING A RESPONSE

The mutiny forced the government to scrap its confrontational approach toward the police and face the need for reform. Although the army had quelled the mutiny, something had to be done to ensure the police’s continued adherence to civilian authority. As a quick and immediate move, Police Commissioner Victor Makoaba, who had been “dismissed” by the mutineers, abolished the brown military-style combat uniforms of the police. Makoaba also announced that rank-and-file police officers would no longer carry guns while performing routine duties. As Makoa, of the National University, noted, “With this move, the [police service] lost not only the veneer of being a combat force but also its most potent means of violence and coercion.”²

The government hired a British consultant to map out the future direction of the police service. The consultant directed the production of a document entitled “A New Partnership with the Police,” which resulted in the passage of a new Police Act in 1998. To deal with the oversight problem, the law provided for the establishment of three new oversight agencies: a police directorate, a police inspectorate (officially the Office of the Inspector of Police) and a Police Complaints Authority. These new agencies, all under the umbrella of the Ministry of Home Affairs, were meant to be grafted onto the existing command structures of the force,

creating a new level of control for the civilian government.

The directorate's sole aim was to ensure the smooth processing of all administrative issues associated with police functions such as human-resource management. The agency would also ensure that the administrative side of the police functioned appropriately and according to established standards. Letoane stressed the importance of such responsibilities: "The police's operational duties are extremely time-sensitive. If an administrative requirement or decision is held up, this can be detrimental to police operations. If you delay for even a day, it can equal a loss of years."

The inspectorate was to be separate from the police, functioning as a self-contained unit within Home Affairs and reporting directly to the minister. The inspectorate's role was to monitor the progress and implementation of the commissioner's annual policing plan. The agency would have advisory authority and could make recommendations to the minister but would not have the ability to change police procedures.

The third new agency, the Police Complaints Authority, also would report directly to the minister. Its duties centered on investigating grievances against the police.

Although the new police law provided for the creation of all three agencies, only the directorate was immediately established. Those involved saw the utility of a dedicated administrative unit so police demands would not be lumped in with the rest of the Home Affairs workload. The inspectorate and the complaints agency were set up in 2005, seven years after the enabling law was passed.

Indeed, few reforms took place immediately after the enactment of the 1998 Police Act. This was at least partially due to the unsettled political situation. The 1998 general election prompted a crisis that was resolved only by the intervention of SADC troops in 1999. Police

reform was relegated to the background while Lesotho grappled with political and societal strains.

Peaceful elections in 2002 saw the country achieve some degree of political stability, and police-reform efforts were revived. In 2004, the government convened a new police-reform committee. The committee consisted of high-level police officers from Botswana, Mozambique, Zimbabwe and South Africa, with technical assistance from a new British adviser, Anthony Howlett-Bolton. The committee also consisted of the principal secretary for Home Affairs, the attorney general, the commissioner of police, the commander of the Lesotho Defense Force, the director of the National Security Service and the principal secretary for Public Service. Their responsibility was to review the police service and develop a new strategic direction for the force. They revived many of the provisions of the 1998 Police Act. In 2005, after a formal government selection process, Letoane was appointed as the country's first woman commissioner of police to lead the reform process from within.

GETTING DOWN TO WORK

To prevent a repeat of the events earlier in the decade, the 1998 Police Act had provided for the establishment of the three new oversight agencies.

The police directorate was established in 1997, in anticipation of the Police Act. The directorate was the administrative node of the police within the Ministry of Home Affairs. The directorate in 2010 was run by Limakatso Nthloki, who saw the role of the directorate as assisting the minister of Home Affairs in addressing police issues and elevating police concerns out of the mainstream.

The directorate handled the police budget and monitored spending while also managing police human-resources issues. The directorate had research officers who were able to

investigate any cases of faulty administration. The researchers also worked on sophisticated problems of resource deployment. They mapped out areas of police station responsibility, working closely with the Bureau of Statistics to ensure that police staffing numbers were in line with population needs.

The directorate also received crime-statistic reports that were the basis for monthly reports to the minister. Nthloki said that original reports were little more than lists of numbers. Within the directorate, the Office of the Controller of Crime analyzed the statistics, helping the police to identify trends in crime frequency and location.

While the directorate in 2010 had a more-established role than either the inspectorate or the complaints authority, staff there noted that working with the police could be difficult. The police drew a sharp distinction between themselves and the civil service, and that issue occasionally hampered the smooth running of the directorate. However, because the directorate's role was primarily administrative and advisory, it was better able to handle these challenges than other agencies such as the inspectorate, whose role required involvement in operational details.

Koro was appointed as the first inspector of police when the inspectorate was established in 2005. He had served as an assistant commissioner of police and had been acting commissioner prior to Letooane's appointment.

Koro had the difficult task of building an office with an ambitious mandate but few resources, human or otherwise. The inspectorate was charged with improving the "effectiveness and efficiency" of the police and measuring the force's progress against the commissioner's annual plan. For the first two years, Koro operated alone, drawing up a staffing structure, recruiting staff and waiting for the government to approve hiring and to disburse funds.

Hiring was problematic. Koro recalled that it was difficult to know what type of people to look for: He had been appointed head of an organization that had no clear staffing plan. Koro was able to travel to the U.K., where he examined the structure of the British inspectorate of police.

After his return, he sat down with officials from the Ministry of Public Service and drew up a structure and job descriptions. He tried to recruit individuals with policing backgrounds like his own, thinking that those who knew the police well would be most suited to the position. After that, he wanted to recruit talented researchers, but he found it difficult to locate experienced people. When he was finally able to hire three, they soon left for private-sector jobs. Ultimately he ended up sharing researchers with the directorate. Because of the staffing challenges, the inspectorate was unable to perform its first inspection until 2007.

The inspectorate was intended to ensure adherence to standards and norms. For example, the agency had a responsibility to help ensure that police actions were appropriate to the seriousness of suspected crimes; that is, that minimum effective force was used. The inspectorate also monitored the performance of reform programs and could recommend the closure of ineffective ones. Staffers could inspect any aspect of police functions without warning. Offering an example, Koro said that after a scandal in which police firearms were used in crimes, the inspectorate looked into the management practices of the armory and made recommendations on how weapons could be better tracked and monitored.

The deputy inspector of police, Motlepu Makhakhe, noted that the inspectorate was not a "Mr. Fix-It" but a monitoring agency that could identify problems and where they arose. The focus was on reporting to the minister of Home Affairs and ensuring that he had the necessary information to make informed decisions.

However, Makhakhe also stressed that a major goal was to assist the police in their work rather than to find fault. He said that when he does an inspection, it should not be the case that, “everybody has to shiver.”

Although the inspectorate was mandated by the minister and largely staffed by ex-police officers, the police viewed agency staffers as civilian outsiders. Koro noted that the police could be quite suspicious and sensitive, rank-conscious and not accustomed to having to listen to or deal with civilian authorities. As a result, the inspectorate’s work was hobbled by a lack of consistent cooperation. However, in 2010 the police and the inspectorate agreed on standard operating procedures that laid out the responsibilities of the inspectorate and the obligations of the police. The procedural rules aided the inspectorate’s work and helped emphasize that its goal was to help rather than hinder police efforts.

The Police Complaints Authority, also established in 2005, was headed by Thakane Chimombe, who was in charge of setting up the unit and focused on recruiting graduates in a variety of disciplines from the National University of Lesotho. The new agency also brought on board two ex-police officers who understood police operations.

Established according to the 1998 Police Act, which drew heavily on the British model, the PCA was hampered from the start by a cumbersome legal structure. Chimombe believed that the British model was inadequate because the agency had no independence. The PCA was housed within the Ministry of Home Affairs and reported directly to the minister. Although the agency had its own researchers and investigators, it could not launch investigations independently. Indeed, staffers were unable to take citizens’ complaints directly.

In order to make a complaint against a police officer, citizens were required to present the complaint in person to the minister of Home

Affairs. While citizens could take complaints to the PCA, the agency was required to refer the complainant to the minister. Any complaint that came to the commissioner also would be forwarded to the minister. The minister then had the discretion to either quash the complaint or refer it to the PCA for further investigation.

This setup created problems. First, members of the public faced a tough job in trying to get an audience with the commissioner or minister, and the process could be intimidating if the subject involved a complaint about the police. Second, given Lesotho’s rugged and mostly rural terrain, just traveling to Maseru was a significant undertaking.

Chimombe said that when some complainants were asked for their home addresses, some answered with statements like, “Do you know the big forest? Cross the first river, then cross a second river, then there’s another forest, etc.”

A third problem was that the system gave the minister, a political appointee, sole discretion to decide which cases would be investigated. Some observers suggested the permanent secretary in the Ministry of Home Affairs, as an apolitical career civil servant, would be a more neutral arbiter. Additionally, in other countries some kinds of cases, such as deaths in police detention, warrant automatic referral to the complaints agency. However, Lesotho’s Police Act made no such provisions.

In 2010 the PCA made progress by hammering out operating procedures with the police in a process similar to the one used by the inspectorate. One major change to come out of this process was that complaints could now be submitted at any district police station, eliminating the need for citizens to travel to Maseru. Heads of the stations would relay complaints to the commissioner and in turn to the minister. Chimombe and her staff were working on a plan to have PCA representatives in Lesotho’s three regions in order to facilitate this process. Indeed they saw decentralization as

one of their top priorities in 2010. Chimombe said she and her staff wanted the law changed to reflect the new agreement and procedures, but quick action seemed unlikely, given the difficulties and slow pace of legal reform in Lesotho.

Given these challenges, the PCA battled to carve out a niche. In 2009, the minister referred about 20 complaints to the agency. After reviewing the cases, the PCA pursued 14 further. By early 2010, seven cases had been completed, and seven were still under investigation. Some observers suggested that with six investigators the unit was overstaffed from the beginning, and they all expected more complaints to be handled.

While the oversight agencies worked to assert their mandates, Letoane focused on improving police operations. Her ambitious agenda ran into initial resistance, much of it because she was a woman doing what many considered to be a man's job. A lawyer by training, she had worked her way up through the ranks, overcoming gender barriers. When she was appointed commissioner of the Maseru capital district, the business community expressed skepticism that a woman could run the police in the country's commercial and political hub. The commissioner at the time told them to give her two weeks, and if they still had complaints, he would listen to them. After two weeks not a single business leader returned to the commissioner's office. Despite having established her credibility, many still felt that it was not appropriate to have a woman head the police force. George Cunningham, a British policing expert who worked in Lesotho and many other countries around the world, noted that for Letoane to have reached the top was a "task of biblical proportions."

Letoane was ideally positioned to lead a new reform drive in the LMPS. Having been exposed to all aspects of the force's functioning in her long career, she had a deep appreciation

for the challenges facing the police. To counter the opposition to her appointment, she was able to fall back on the fact that her promotion to the post had been entirely open and meritocratic. When she applied for the job she was an assistant commissioner of police. She competed with other assistant and deputy commissioners for the position and scored highest on the aptitude tests and interviews. These factors provided her with a legitimacy that carried over to her reform program.

Letoane's first move was to build a leadership team that included eight assistant commissioners and two deputy commissioners. She recalled that "the team represented the voices of the entire ... service." Members were drawn from the three regions of the country and the police headquarters. Letoane made sure that the team met at least every two weeks to monitor the reform process and objectives.

Setting her primary goal as "capacitating" the police force, Letoane developed a five-year plan to implement her priorities: building capacity, in the form of increased and expanded training and training opportunities; fighting corruption; preventing the spread of HIV/AIDS; and improving equipment and refurbishing police stations and offices. Additionally, she launched a performance-management system aimed at identifying skill gaps and ensuring that people with the right skills and background were deployed to areas where those skills and background were most needed.

OVERCOMING OBSTACLES

Training was a constant problem for the LMPS, owing to the small size of the training college and the lack of resources in general. To make up for the shortfall, Letoane tapped into regional policing networks such as the Southern African Regional Police Chiefs Cooperation Organization. Through this group, she facilitated training for her officers in South

Africa and at the police college in Botswana. The American Embassy also helped by sending officers to the U.S.'s International Law Enforcement Academy in Botswana. There, mid-level officers underwent training courses ranging from surveillance and detection to dealing with weapons of mass destruction and improvised explosive devices. Interpol contributed training modules in cybercrime and antiterrorism.

Letoane also gathered together enough funds to send a few senior officers to the Bramshill International Commanders Program offered by the U.K.'s National Police Improvement Agency. Letoane also instituted "lecture days," where stations every Wednesday would have lectures on policing methods and standards. The lectures were given by field training officers and developed and distributed by the police training college. Letoane said she heard a lot of compliments from members of the public on how her officers were behaving in a more professional manner, and she believed the emphasis on training had a positive effect. With new recruits and others who underwent extensive training, Letoane said, she tried to combine "the highly qualified with the highly experienced, to get the correct mixture of experience and qualifications."

Letoane also undertook a campaign against corruption within the force, targeting in particular traffic enforcement. She made clear that corruption of any kind would not be tolerated, and she engaged teams of officers to set traps for other officers suspected of corruption. She enlisted the help of police from other divisions or units to reduce the risk of corrupt officers identifying the set-up. While some officers were reluctant to trap their colleagues, Letoane's strong leadership and her commitment to fighting corruption elicited cooperation. Police posed as civilians and put themselves in a position where police officers might be tempted to ask for bribes. Letoane

said she arrested a number of officers using these traps and significantly raised the risk that police faced if they took bribes.

Letoane said she was sympathetic to the financial pressures faced by officers, especially those who had to care for extended families and victims of the HIV/AIDS pandemic. But she tried to spread the message that the money made from corrupt acts would never be enough to meet the needs of family members. Instead she urged her officers to be exemplary and to uphold the ideals of the police service. Simultaneously she lobbied the government to increase pay and allowances.

Combating HIV/AIDS in the force was a difficult and sensitive issue. Like the rest of Lesotho, the LMPS was severely afflicted. High rates of absenteeism and poor performance due to ill health largely reflected the effect of the virus, including the demands of attending funerals. Substituting for absent employees was difficult in a small force with limited resources. Letoane used her position to spread an HIV/AIDS awareness message as part of her daily work. She instituted a series of lectures in all stations on Thursdays on HIV prevention. The police could not compel officers to declare their health status, but Letoane urged supervisors to be sensitive to the situation. If they knew an officer's health status, they were directed to take it into consideration when undertaking transfers and deployments. If possible, HIV-positive officers would be kept close to their families so that their families could assist in their care. There was also an unacknowledged pragmatism in this policy: Keeping HIV-positive staff close to their families might reduce the spread of the virus. Letoane also worked with a South African think tank, the Center for the Study of Violence and Reconciliation, to assess the impact of HIV/AIDS in the LMPS.

Letoane also worked to improve the quality of equipment and uniforms, which

originally were made of inferior cloth that frayed and often fell apart. She said the acquisition of better uniforms improved morale while creating a more professional-looking force.

Letoane spent much of her time in negotiations with the government, eventually winning approval to enter into long-term leases for new vehicles. Problems with the old, decrepit fleet had resulted in slow response times. Letoane considered the vehicles an urgent problem because slow police response further undermined the public's low opinion of the service. The poor condition of the police stations and buildings was a thornier problem. Many of the buildings had not been refurbished since independence. Letoane worked to secure funds to improve the facilities and succeeded in making modest improvements, but any wide-scale overhaul remained out of reach in early 2010 because of the government's overall lack of funds.

A further innovation was the introduction of a broad performance-management system. Alice Theko, an assistant commissioner of police who was in charge of implementing the system, explained that it was designed to collect information that would "aid in deploying the right people to the right places." The system was in keeping with the commissioner's goal of efficiently using limited financial and human resources. The system was meant to identify gaps in skill levels, to gear training to those who needed it and to identify talented officers eligible for fast-track promotion. Letoane used a quarterly evaluation system with open performance grading. Four times a year, supervisors sat down with their subordinates and worked together to come up with a grade that they agreed upon, using modified civil-service forms. The system used two different forms: one for drivers, guards and other staff with narrow responsibilities, and another for officers with more complex job descriptions and work plans.

The plan encountered initial resistance after its introduction in 2006, as many were uncomfortable with the process of discussing personal strengths and weaknesses. Letoane and Theko were forced to modify the forms slightly to ease the process. A more difficult challenge was to overcome the reluctance of supervisors to grade their subordinates harshly—or even realistically. In addition to cultural proscriptions against open criticism, a single supervisor might oversee as many as 30 junior officers. Letoane and Theko said a ratio of one to 10 would have fostered a better mentoring relationship.

After difficulties with the initial program, Letoane sent human-resources staff to the districts to talk about the importance of the system and to provide more evaluation training for supervisors in the form of one-day workshops. This decision to decentralize some training worked well. District police had been required to attend the central academy, and the new system eased demands on the officers as well as on the small police college.

Despite the complexity of the police force's internal problems, Letoane believed the main challenge was external: rebuilding the public's trust. She said she emphasized community consultation and a process of "going back to the community" on horseback in the rural areas and on foot in urban settings. Letoane highlighted the communal traditions of the Basotho people, noting that Lesotho was a nation that did things together and that the country's motto was "Unity is Strength." In response to complaints from some communities that felt neglected, she established satellite police stations that sometimes were little more than distinctively marked tents. The visible presence of police helped build public confidence in these areas, she said.

Police in the districts ran crime-prevention campaigns, addressing church congregations, schools and community *pitsos*, the local

equivalent of traditional town-hall meetings. The LMPS in early 2010 also was in the process of changing its ranking system to a civilian form from a military one. For example, station commanders were to become station commissioners. Officers also worked with community members on crime-prevention projects such as building secure kraals, or corrals, to reduce livestock theft.

Stock theft was the top crime concern for the police and for the people. Letoane said that it was impossible to estimate the value of cattle that were stolen each year, but the crime affected thousands of people. Gangs operating in the mountains stole cattle, often at gunpoint, and drove them across the border. There, complicit South African slaughterhouses effectively destroyed the evidence of the crime. The police and community tried branding and tattooing cattle but found thieves altered the brands easily. Clashes between rival cattle raiders were increasingly bloody, especially encounters in the north between homegrown gangs and Zulu raiders from South Africa.

Because stock theft affected the lives of so many Lesotho citizens, Letoane worked to address the situation. A conference in January 2010 brought together all concerned parties to discuss strategies to combat the issue. The main recommendation that came out of the meeting was to embed identifying microchips in as many animals as possible. Microchips and readers were relatively cheap, and the police hoped to persuade operators of slaughterhouses to check ownership of cattle brought to them. Many farmers indicated their willingness to sell their sheep in order to pay the cost of using microchips in their cattle.

Through measures such as these, Letoane tried to rebuild relations with the public. She considered the 2005 Zero Tolerance to Crime operation a test of the community-policing system. In this operation, the police service conducted a massive sweep of the country in

order to retrieve stolen vehicles and illegal firearms. Based largely on information supplied by communities, the police recovered hundreds of vehicles and thousands of firearms. Building on the momentum of the zero-tolerance campaign, the police recovered and destroyed over 1,000 illegal firearms every year after 2005. Most were recovered based on community tip-offs.

While Letoane noted that much of the public in 2010 was still quick to use the 1997 mutiny as a yardstick for any minor police mishap, relations between the public and the police had undoubtedly improved since the 1990s, she said.

REFLECTIONS

Although Lesotho's police-reform program proceeded fitfully into 2010, one measure of success was that there had been no repetition of the destabilizing activities that characterized the service in the 1990s. In terms of addressing the police's three main problems, the government and police had made progress. The establishment of the three oversight agencies created the ability to monitor the actions and functioning of the police. Still, the record of the oversight agencies was decidedly mixed. While the police directorate functioned efficiently within its closely delineated responsibilities, the Police Complaints Authority was toothless and unable to provide any meaningful oversight or accountability. Without legislation to give the PCA some independence, especially authority to take complaints and launch investigations, the agency appeared likely to remain underutilized and a tool of the incumbent minister. The inspectorate, despite early struggles involving organization and staffing, in 2010 was well positioned to contribute to the effectiveness of the police force.

At the other end of the spectrum, Letoane's reforms succeeded in setting the LMPS on a favorable course. While most

evidence in early 2010 was anecdotal, conversations with various individuals in Lesotho revealed an appreciation for her work as commissioner since 2005 and a sense that the

police force was changing for the better. Looking ahead, Letooane said, “After a long, long time, I think I am seeing light at the end of the tunnel.”

¹ Explaining Government/Police Relations in Post-military Lesotho: The February 1997 Police Mutiny, Francis Makoa, *African Security Review*, Institute for Security Studies, Vol 7, No. 1, 1998
<<http://www.issafrica.org/pubs/ASR/7No1/Makoa.html>>.

² Ibid.

Innovations for Successful Societies makes its case studies and other publications available to all at no cost, under the guidelines of the Terms of Use listed below. The ISS Web repository is intended to serve as an idea bank, enabling practitioners and scholars to evaluate the pros and cons of different reform strategies and weigh the effects of context. ISS welcomes readers' feedback, including suggestions of additional topics and questions to be considered, corrections, and how case studies are being used: iss@princeton.edu.

Terms of Use

In downloading or otherwise employing this information, users indicate that:

- a. They understand that the materials downloaded from the website are protected under United States Copyright Law (Title 17, United States Code). This work is licensed under the [Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-NoDerivatives 4.0 International License](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/4.0/). To view a copy of this license, visit <http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/4.0/>.
- b. They will use the material only for educational, scholarly, and other noncommercial purposes.
- c. They will not sell, transfer, assign, license, lease, or otherwise convey any portion of this information to any third party. Republication or display on a third party's website requires the express written permission of the Princeton University Innovations for Successful Societies program or the Princeton University Library.
- d. They understand that the quotes used in the case study reflect the interviewees' personal points of view. Although all efforts have been made to ensure the accuracy of the information collected, Princeton University does not warrant the accuracy, completeness, timeliness, or other characteristics of any material available online.
- e. They acknowledge that the content and/or format of the archive and the site may be revised, updated or otherwise modified from time to time.
- f. They accept that access to and use of the archive are at their own risk. They shall not hold Princeton University liable for any loss or damages resulting from the use of information in the archive. Princeton University assumes no liability for any errors or omissions with respect to the functioning of the archive.
- g. In all publications, presentations or other communications that incorporate or otherwise rely on information from this archive, they will acknowledge that such information was obtained through the Innovations for Successful Societies website. Our status (and that of any identified contributors) as the authors of material must always be acknowledged and a full credit given as follows:

Author(s) or Editor(s) if listed, Full title, Year of publication, Innovations for Successful Societies, Princeton University, <http://successfulsocieties.princeton.edu/>

