



STATEMENT BY
HONOURABLE PEYA MUSHELENGA (MP),
DEPUTY MINISTER OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS,
ON
NAMIBIA'S CONTRIBUTION TO PEACE AND SECURITY IN THE
KINGDOM OF LESOTHO

THURSDAY, 12 MARCH 2015

**Honourable Speaker,
Honourable Members of Parliament,**

1. I am taking the floor to inform this August House, that after a year of political instability followed by security concerns, the Kingdom of Lesotho held snap National Assembly Elections on 28 February 2015. These elections were declared peaceful, transparent, free and fair by the SADC Electoral Observation mission as well as other Election Observer Missions.

Honourable Speaker,

2. The last National Assembly Elections in Lesotho were held in 2012. With no single party having won an outright majority, political parties formed the first ever Coalition Government in that country. Regrettably, in 2014 political instability fell upon Lesotho.
3. As Chair of the SADC Organ on Politics, Defence and Security Cooperation then, His Excellency Dr. Hifikepunye Pohamba, President of the Republic of Namibia, sent a Ministerial Fact-Finding Mission to Lesotho in May 2014, led by Honourable Netumbo Nandi-Ndaitwah, to ascertain the situation on the ground.
4. The political and security situation in the Kingdom of Lesotho continued to deteriorate and members of Parliament who were dissatisfied with the political environment crossed the floor to join the opposition which led the Prime Minister to suspend Parliament for nine months.
5. In an effort to officially address the situation in Lesotho, His Excellency President Pohamba, as Chair of the SADC Organ, visited Lesotho from 12 to 13 June 2014, and met with all relevant stakeholders, including King Letsi III, His Excellency President urged the Coalition Leaders to work together to ensure the restoration of peace and stability in the country.
6. At the invitation of His Excellency the President, leaders of the Coalition Government of Lesotho undertook a Working Visit to Windhoek from 30 to 31 July 2014, which culminated in the signing of the Windhoek Declaration on 31 July of the same year. The Declaration reflected the commitment of the Coalition Leaders to resolve the political tensions in the country and to uphold democratic principles.

Honourable Speaker,

7. Following a perceived attempted coup d'état in August 2014 in Lesotho, the then Prime Minister fled to South Africa for safety. The SADC Organ Troika, made up of South Africa, Namibia and Lesotho, plus Zimbabwe as the Chair of SADC, urgently met in Pretoria, South Africa on 31 August 2014, on the emerging situation.
8. In an effort to address and contain the underlying situation, SADC appointed a Facilitator, His Excellency Cyril Ramaphosa, Deputy President of the Republic of South Africa, to facilitate the restoration of political stability and security in the country. The facilitation process led to the signing of the Maseru Facilitation Declaration, the Maseru Security Accord, the Memorandum of Understanding between the Army and Police of Lesotho, and the Election Pledge. His Excellency Cyril Ramaphosa was assisted by Ambassador Veicco K. Nghiwete, former Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, who was supported by two Officials from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and one Official from the Ministry of Justice.
9. SADC also resolved to deploy a SADC Observer Mission to Lesotho with Police, Military, Intelligence and Civilian components, for three months from October to December 2014, initially, which was subsequently extended to 31 March 2015.
10. As part of Namibia's commitment to promote peace and stability in the region, Namibia initially sent 52 Security and Civilian Officers, including from the Police, the Army and Intelligence Services.
11. In January 2015, Namibia made its assessed financial contribution of about US Dollars 443 000 (four hundred and forty three thousand US Dollars) towards the SADC Observer Mission to Lesotho. Other Member States also contributed financially towards the Mission and deployed police officers, military, intelligence and civilian personnel to Lesotho. Additional SADC police officers were further deployed to Lesotho to provide extra security during the elections.

12. In preparation for the 2015 National Elections, Namibia sent 10 Observers to Lesotho to form part of the SADC Electoral Observation Mission . The team was led by Ambassador Theresia Samaria. South Africa and Namibia, as members of the Troika of the Organ, sent the highest number of observers. A total of 82 SADC Observers were deployed in Maseru and in all 10 districts of Lesotho.

Honourable Speaker,

13. This strong support by Namibia and all SADC Member States for the restoration of political normalcy and security in Lesotho, had paved the way for the opening of Parliament, and the holding of early elections in the country, which were peaceful, transparent, free and fair.
14. Namibia, as the Outgoing Chair of the SADC Organ on Politics, Defence and Security Cooperation, will continue to play its part in the consolidation of democracy and the promotion of peace and stability in the region.
15. Twenty three political parties took part in the Lesotho elections. However, as none of them gained the seats required to form a government, in accordance with Lesotho Constitution, seven (7) political parties led by Honourable Pakalitha Musisili have formed a coalition government. Accordingly, on 17 March 2015 Honourable Musisili and his Deputy Honourable Mothetjoe Metsing will be inaugurated as Prime Minister and Deputy Prime Minister respectively. Namibia congratulates the people of Lesotho and urges them to maintain peace and stability in the country.

I THANK YOU.