

Prime Minister of the Kingdom of Lesotho
The Right Honourable Samuel Ntsokoane Matekane
Office of the Prime Minister
Maseru

Lesotho

Dear Prime Minister,

I am writing to express my serious concern for the safety of journalist and human rights defender Kananelo Boloetse, after reportedly being subjected to abduction, assault and death threats on 5 September 2026.

At around 7pm on 5 September, three armed men abducted Kananelo Boloetse from his home in Katlehong, Maseru, Lesotho's capital. They restrained him, handcuffed him and sealed his mouth with duct tape before putting him into a vehicle. They interrogated him about his work as a journalist and human rights defender and assaulted him. During the attack, they threatened to kill him if the media reported what had happened. He was left abandoned, seriously injured, in Thaba-Bosiu, a village 24 kilometres outside Maseru. On the same evening, he made his way to a nearby road, where he was rescued by the driver of a passing vehicle. Photographs published after the attack show injuries across his back which he said resulted from the beating.

On 5 September, Kananelo Boloetse filed a case at the Maseru Central Charge Office. But to date, no arrests have been publicly announced with the case remaining under investigation. The abduction, attack and death threats therefore continue to raise serious concerns for Kananelo Boloetse's safety. The perpetrators knew where he lived, and suspicious activity was observed near his residence before his abduction. He continues to be in imminent danger of being attacked and harmed again.

Journalists and human rights defenders must be able to carry out their work without fear of attack, intimidation or reprisals.

In light of the above, I urge you to ensure the below immediate and effective measures are put in place, in consultation with Kananelo Boloetse, to protect him from further threats, intimidation or attacks:

- Ensure a prompt, thorough, independent and impartial investigation into his reported abduction, assault and death threats, and that anyone suspected of criminal responsibility is brought to justice in fair proceedings;
- Ensure that journalists and human rights defenders in Lesotho can carry out their work freely and safely, without violence, intimidation or reprisals.

Yours sincerely,