



## **Southern African Catholic Bishops' Conference**

### **SACBC SOLIDARITY MESSAGE TO THE PEOPLE OF LESOTHO**

We, the Bishops of the Southern African Catholic Bishops Conference (SACBC) gathered here in Mariannhill this August 2015 wish to express our solidarity with our brothers and sisters from the Kingdom of Lesotho. We would like to express that Lesotho is not alone, the Bishops and the Catholic community are with you in this time of need.

We have been following the events in your country since the outbreak of violence in August 2014 with shock and dismay in particular the recent killing of the Lesotho Defence Force Commander, L.G. Maaparankoe Mahao on the 25<sup>th</sup> June 2015. We are shocked that such a horrendous act was done by some members of the Lesotho Defence Forces. This action reflects the predicament in which many Basotho people find themselves, that they are not safe in their own country. It brings fear and threatens the foundations of human rights, especially the right to life, and throws out the democratic principles on which many constitutions are founded. We are well aware that even last year some disturbances took place in Lesotho. We call upon leaders in Lesotho to come together to seek a lasting solution to the Lesotho problems. As leaders, we condemn any attack on any person.

Affirming that Basotho are best positioned to solve their own problems, we also commend the actions of SADC leaders who acted swiftly and quickly to try and solve the challenges that had befallen the Kingdom of Lesotho. We believe that as long as one of the countries in Southern Africa is unstable, it affects all its neighbours.

We call for open dialogue as a way of solving the problems that are facing Lesotho. We therefore need to stand together with all the Basotho people and condemn any form of violence, especially when it is being done by the state.

We pray for peace in Lesotho and ask the government to respect the human rights of its citizen and to promote tolerance of different opinions.

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