

During the past few days while I was in Hong Kong I was asked by journalists to comment on the fall of the monarchy in Lybia. I think you will perceive that this was not an idle request but one which emanated from their concern about our position here. I gave forthright answers to their questions, in the full awareness that I was representing the views of the majority of Basotho. I said that the problems of Lybia were different from those obtaining here and that there must have been no alternative for the Lybians if they had thought fit to topple their monarchy - but that that did not concern us as Basotho.

Our way of life here in Lesotho is based on our traditions and customs and it is our intention to adhere to them - for there is nothing wrong with them. We must nevertheless insist that at all times we shall continue to maintain our age-old tradition that the nation should be accorded the respect that is its due by those who have been placed in high positions of authority. I think I speak for all of you when I say that we wish to maintain our Chieftainship at the head of state, with the highest Chief at the apex of the pyramid as our King. His Majesty is our Head of State and I have always thought and still think that as such the dignity of his position must be protected and not be violated by involving him in political differences. That is the position in all countries which still have monarchies. It is for the Prime Minister to protect the position of the King and to bear the brunt of political hecklings.

I exhort everyone of whatever colour, status or degree, that they should cease levelling destructive criticism at Government and its projects to develop this country. Let us all join together in developing our land. I must say most emphatically that I will not tolerate the wilful obstruction of our country's progress. I would also point out that the Basotho have decided that Chiefs should rule in accordance with the Constitution. Now that Lesotho has diplomatic missions in the friendly countries which I have visited and travelled through and where the Lesotho flag is being flown, I shall fight anyone seeking to bring disgrace on that flag.

I appeal to all of you to unite. On this very point I remember talking to one of the Secretaries of the Anti-Communism Organisation, who told me that he was impressed by the way I ran my country's affairs. There was bloodshed in most African states and the coup in Lybia and he pointed out that what I should encourage my people to have was "love" and "justice". If not, all that I was doing would be in vain.

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