

In part, these had to do with the origin of the RLDF. Up to 1970, Lesotho had no army but only the Royal Lesotho Mounted Police (RLMP), a paramilitary force. The RLDF came into being later, mainly to fight the insurgency mounted by the Basotho Congress Party (BCP), which had been cheated out of victory in the 1970 elections by the then Prime Minister, Leabua Jonathan. In other words, unlike most armies, the RLDF had come into being to defend the government of one party against the claims of another party. And because of the circumstances that had necessitated its creation, the early recruits into the RLDF tended to be drawn from supporters of the then ruling Basotho National Party (BNP). The BCP, which assumed power in March 1993, came to see the RLDF as a BNP army rather than a national force. It is significant that in their discussions with the Commonwealth envoys, the two committees separately and independently admitted that there had been political interference in the army in the period leading to the elections in March 1993 and after.

The immediate causes of the fighting, however, had more to do with rivalries and jealousies within the RLDF. The Makoanyane group saw the Headquarters group as unduly privileged. Not only did they have the best weapons, it was also alleged that they were the beneficiaries of allowances not available to the Makoanyane group. Alleged irregularities in the matter of promotions were another major source of grievance.

From the separate meetings with the two committees, it was quite clear to the envoys that more united the army than divided it. This was evident not only to the envoys but, more important, to the soldiers themselves. On the basis of the mood of the committees and the tenor of the discussions, the envoys decided that it was time to bring the two committees together to form a united RLDF Committee. This joint committee was formed on February 17. With the help of the envoys, it proceeded to set out what it saw as the future role of the RLDF against the background of the end of the BCP insurgency and the ending of apartheid in South Africa. Among other things, the joint committee saw the role of the RLDF as including:

- fighting international crime, especially drug trafficking, as the drug barons appeared to be trying to use Lesotho as a transit point for entry into the South African market;
- helping to fight soil erosion (a major problem in Lesotho) through tree planting;
- defending the democratically elected government of the day and the institutions of state; and
- contributing to peacekeeping operations under the auspices of the United Nations or the Organization of African Unity.

These points were then embodied in a submission to the Government. Since then there has been no conflict within the army. Even more noteworthy, when the Royal