

LESOTHO

Polity5 regime codes:

fac	scode	polity	pers	bmon	bday	byear	emon	eday	eyear	exrec	exconst	polcomp
1X	LES	5	3	10	4	1966	1	30	1970	7	5	7
1O	LES	-5	3	1	31	1970	3	12	1973	4	1	3
1Oa	LES	-7	13	3	13	1973	1	19	1986	3	2	2
1Ob	LES	-10	4	1	20	1986	3	4	1990	2	1	1
1Oc	LES	-7	1	3	5	1990	5	12	1991	5	1	1
1Od	LES	-4	2	5	13	1991	3	27	1993	5	2	3
2X	LES	5	5	3	28	1993	9	16	1998	7	5	7
2Xa	LES	-77	1	9	17	1998	12	8	1998	-77	-77	-77
2O	LES	6	4	12	9	1998	6	24	2002	7	6	8
2Oa	LES	8	10	6	25	2002	6	7	2012	8	6	9
2Ob	LES	8	7	6	8	2012	99	99	9999	8	7	8

PITF Problem Events:

- 1) 01/70-01/70 (ARC 01/70)
- 2) 09/98-12/98 (ARC 09/98-12/98)

1X) Date of Change to Factional-Democratic: October 4, 1966 (independence)

Brief Explanation of Change To:

The British protectorate of Basutoland (now Lesotho) began seeking greater autonomy from colonial rule in the mid-1950s, gaining self-government of internal affairs in 1955 and promulgating a constitution in 1959. In April 1965 Lesotho held its first legislative elections, in which the Basotho National Party (BNP), led by Chief Leabua Jonathan, won 31 out of 65 seats and the Basutoland Congress Party (BCP) won 25 seats. Chief Johathan became prime minister and initiated independence legislation. On October 4, 1966, Lesotho became a fully independent constitutional monarchy. King Moshoeshoe II initially assumed an activist role, working with the Marematlou Freedom Party (MFP) in opposition to the policy of cooperation with South Africa pursued by the BNP. On January 5, 1967, the King was forced to curtail his political activities by the BNP government under threat of compulsory abdication. Strong opposition to the BNP government continued through the post-independence period, led by the BCP.

Identify Main Factions:

- *Basotho National Party (BNP)* — The BNP was a conservative party led by Chief Leabua Jonathan. It promoted a pragmatic policy of cooperation with South Africa within which Lesotho was completely surrounded and with which the modernization of the country's economy depended.
- *Basutoland Congress Party (BCP)* — The BCP was a socialist, African nationalist party led by Chief Ntsu Mokhehle. It had strong representation among the large numbers of laborers who worked in South Africa. It originally favored reducing the country's dependence on South Africa but it, later, gained support from the apartheid regime as the Lethoso Liberation Army (LLA) initiated an insurgency against the BNP regime and Lesotho became a refuge for the African National Congress.
- *Marematlou Freedom Party (MFP)* — The MFP was a royalist party led by Tsepo Mohaleroe which favored a (constitutional) monarchy headed by King Moshoeshoe II.

10) Date of Change from Factional-Democratic: January 31, 1970 (presidential coup)

Brief Explanation of Change From:

Adverse Regime Change: January 1970

Lesotho's first attempt at democratic rule came to a halt on January 30, 1970, when the Prime Minister, Chief Jonathan refused to hand over power following the victory of the BCP in the country's first elections since independence, held on January 27. After declaring a state of emergency, Chief Jonathan nullified the election results, suspended the constitution, and ordered the arrest of opposition leaders. When King Moshoeshoe II refused to abdicate, Jonathan effectively stripped him of his few remaining powers and ordered him into exile. The King returned on December 4, 1970, after agreeing to serve as ceremonial Head of State.

Changes within Autocratic Period:

10a) April 27, 1973 (one-party state) – On March 12, 1973, Chief Jonathan announced the formation of a new National Assembly, composed of 93 designated members drawn from the BNP and other groups loyal to his regime, which would be responsible for drafting a new constitution. The new assembly met for the first time on April 27, 1973. On July 24, 1973, he lifted the State of Emergency he had imposed in January 1970. In December 1973, a petition calling for a “fully representative government” was rejected by Chief Jonathan and, on January 4, 1974, the BCP launched a rebellion against the government that was very harshly repressed. The armed wing of the BCP, the Lesotho Liberation Army (LLA), engaged in a low-level insurgency against the regime through 1985.

10b) January 20, 1986 (military coup) – On January 20, 1986, the commander of the Lesotho Paramilitary Force, Maj-Gen. Justin Lekhanya, led a bloodless coup that deposed Chief Jonathan; executive authority was transferred to the King, who would act in accordance with a Military Council led by Lekhanya. King Moshoeshoe II decreed on March 27, 1986, that all political activity was banned.

10c) March 5, 1990 (deposition of king; executive-guided transition) – On February 19, 1990, Gen. Lekhanya removed three members of the Military Council who were plotting a royalist coup and, on February 21, he detained King Moshoeshoe II. On March 5, 1990, the Military Council rescinded its 1986 decree granting authority to the monarchy and the King went into exile; his son was named King Letsie III and given ceremonial responsibilities. Gen. Lekhanya announced the formation of an eight-member task force to plan a gradual transition to democratic civilian rule. Lekhanya was deposed on April 30, 1991, and replaced as leader of the Military Council by Col. Elias Tutsuoane Ramaema.

10d) May 13, 1991 (lifting of ban on political activity) – On May 13, 1991, the Chairman of the ruling Military Council, Col. Ramaema, announced the lifting of the ban on political activity that had been imposed in March 1986. He promised to hold elections by June 1992 for a return to civilian rule. Disagreements between the Military Council and the traditional council of chiefs over the status of the monarchy led to postponement of elections until March 27, 1993.

2X) Date of Change to Factional-Democratic: March 28, 1993 (legislative elections)

Brief Explanation of Change To:

Lesotho held its first legislative elections since 1970 on March 27, 1993. Despite the alignment of the military with the BNP, the opposition BCP won the election (deemed free and fair by UN observers) in a landslide, taking all 65 seats in the country's parliament. On March 28, the BNP announced that it would not accept the results. A new government was formed under BCP leader Ntsu Mokhehle on April 2. The election results and legitimacy of the BCP government were rejected by the BNP, the traditional chiefs, and significant portions of the military. Conflict between the BNP and BCP factions was intensified by Prime Minister Mokhehle's plans to integrate the BCP's armed wing, the Lesotho Liberation Army (LLA), with the central government military, the Royal Lesotho Defense Force (RLDF). These tensions led to several RLDF mutinies and armed clashes in January and April 1994. On August 17, 1994, King Letsie III attempted to seize power; he suspended sections of the Constitution, dissolved parliament, and dismissed the Basotho Congress Party (BCP) government of Prime Minister Mokhehle. The King's action was thwarted when the BCP organized a national strike and gained support from international leaders, in particular Nelson Mandela, who threatened economic sanctions and military intervention. The King restored the elected government on September 14, 1994.

Identify Main Factions:

- *Basotho National Party (BNP)* — The BNP supported conservative economic policies and generally held the support of the country's military (RLDF) and police forces. It had ruled the country under the leadership of Chief Jonathan since independence and had spent the 1970s and 1980s fighting against the BCP and its armed wing, the LLA. It also gained the support of former king, Moshoeshoe II, who had been forced to abdicate in 1990 by the military government.
- *Basotho Congress Party (BCP)* — The BCP was originally a socialist party, and was prevented from coming to power for two decades after winning the 1970 general election. The BCP gradually came to support a mixed economic system by the early 1990s, acting as a mass left-center party in the 1993 elections. In March 1997, the BCP split after its executive committee tried to remove the aging Mokhehle from leadership of the party, with Mokhehle leaving in June 1997 to form the LCD (below). The split reduced the BCP to a minority, oppositional party in the LCD-controlled parliament.
- *Lesotho Congress for Democracy (LCD)* — In 1997 Prime Minister Mokhehle broke away from the BCP with two-thirds of the BCP parliamentarians to form the LCD, at which time the LCD took over as the majority party in the parliament. Mokhehle was succeeded as LCD leader by Pakalitha Mosisili on February 21, 1998.

Changes within Factional Period:

2Xa) September 17, 1998 (collapse of central authority) –

Adverse Regime Change: September 1998 – December 1998

Prime Minister Mokhehle declined to seek a second term, leaving Pakalitha Mosisili to represent the LCD in the May 23, 1998, general election. Despite winning only 60% of the vote, the LCD won 78 of 79 seats being contested, leaving the BNP with one seat and shutting out the BCP entirely. As in the 1993-94 crisis, the opposition refused to recognize the results of the elections,

organized widespread demonstrations against the Mosisili/LCD government, took up arms against LCD supporters, and began recruiting disaffected portions of the military to support the overthrow of the government. Demonstrations became widespread in August and escalated in September, marked by a military mutiny and the defection of the government civil service, which joined the opposition on September 16, causing a government shutdown. Much of the capital city was torched. On September 22, 1998, South African troops crossed into Lesotho to restore order, and were joined by troops from Botswana and Zimbabwe, acting under the authority of the Southern African Development Community (SADC).

2O) Date of Change from Factional-Democratic: December 9, 1998 (creation of interim authority)

Brief Explanation of Change From:

Faced with paralyzing internal opposition and occupation by international security forces, the LCD conceded to oppositional parties and agreed to establish an Interim Political Authority (IPA) comprising representatives of the ruling and oppositional parties and charged with establishing the proper conditions for holding free and fair elections. On December 9, 1998, the IPA was sworn in and the LCD government resumed administrative responsibilities. The SADC security forces left the country in May 1999.

Changes with Democratic-Consolidation Period:

2Oa) May 25, 2002 (legislative elections) – National elections were held on May 25, 2002, under a new mixed-member electoral system and expanded membership designed to give smaller parties a greater voice in parliament. The LCD retained a large majority of seats (79) with the BNP winning 21 seats and eight smaller parties controlling the remaining 20 seats in the 120-seat assembly. International observers declared the vote to be free and fair and Prime Minister Mosisili was sworn in for a second five-year term. Parliamentary elections held on June 15, 2007, resulted in a reduction of LCD seats to 61 with the BNP share reduced to only 3 seats.

2Ob) June 8, 2012 (new government) – A growing rivalry within the ruling Lesotho Congress for Democracy (LCD) led Prime Minister Mosisili to resign from the party and form a new party, the Democratic Congress (DC). Defections from the LCD to the DC enabled Mosisili to remain in office. However, the results of parliamentary elections held on 26 May 2012 left the DC short of a majority and allowing the formation of a coalition government led by the All Basotho Convention (ABC) with the LCD and three small parties. The ABC leader, Motsoahae Thabane, was appointed prime minister on June 8, 2012.