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## ARTICLE

**To** : Media  
**From** : Maluti-A-Phofung Local Municipality  
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### **EXECUTIVE MAYOR PAYS HIS LAST RESPECT TO THE KING OF BAKOENA**

Qwa Qwa–The Executive Mayor of MAP Cllr Vusimusi Tshabalala together with his MMC’s accompanied by the King of Lesotho Morena Letsie III joined hundreds of mourners that packed the Charles Mopeli stadium on the early hours of Thursday 11, to pay their last respect and to say their final goodbye to their beloved King of Bakoena clan, Morena e moholo Thokoana ‘Makaota’ Mopeli.

Thokoana (41) was given the special Provincial funeral by the office of the President Jacob Zuma, the Majesty King passed on, on the 06<sup>th</sup> of this month at the 3<sup>rd</sup> Military Hospital (Tempe) in Bloemfontein after a long illness. Nkosikazi Nomandla Mhlauli spoke on behalf of the Free State House of Traditional Leaders, stated "This is a great loss not only to the people of the Free State Province but to the country at large. Today it is an opportunity to celebrate the life of our own, a leader and great servant of the people".

His graceful funeral procession attracted many political heads such as Minister of Minerals and Energy Msebenzi Zwane, Letshesa Tshenoli of National Council Of Provinces, MEC,s and media houses across the country, above all to give final farewell to their beloved father; “Ke bohloko haholo hobane Morena e moholo, ke hotse le yena rene re ena le dikamano tsa rona tsa tshebetso tse neng di kgotsofatsa setjhaba, empa leha hole jwalo re leboha Modimo ka bophelo ba hae” said the heartbroken Executive Mayor.

King Thokoana was often referred to as “father” by some leaders and was credited with reviving the reputation of the Kings in Qwa Qwa, many leaders say the king’s death has left a large vacuum in the family and community at large especially the youth. Deputy Chairperson of Free State House of Traditional Leaders, King Sekonyela Mashweleshwele Dirahadibonwe, of Batlokoa glan explain: “It’s so hard to describe the dedication I’ve seen in him, how people have come out to help each other and how he has inspired this, empa mophehakang le Modimo ke mang?”.

The atmosphere inside the stadium and the main streets of Mampoi and Mota routes was filled with sadness and silence except for the sound of the SAPS parading band, drums and horns as the processions move slowly from the stadium to the Thaba



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Bosiu cemetery in Namahali. Tears roll down the eyes of many mourners who apparently feel grateful to the countless good deeds tirelessly performed by the King during his 10-year reign.

“I was very fortunate to have been born under the reign of King Thokoana Mopeli, because during his tenure he made sure that Qwa Qwa became a friendly area with people living peacefully in this beautiful mountainous area of our forefathers” explained by long-time friend, Thebe Ketsise. Amongst the people who attended the funeral were renowned political heads, local stakeholders and government officials.

**By: Masilo Malakwane**