

NEWS

RFP youth leader wants newspapers punished



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MASERU – A youth leader of the ruling Revolution for Prosperity (RFP) party has urged the government to withhold advertising support to newspapers that are critical of Prime Minister Sam Matekane’s administration.

Lesala Maphathe, who is the RFP’s youth league chairman, told a rally in ‘Maletsunyane constituency last Sunday that the media is spreading lies against the party.

As a result he wants the government to “starve” the media of advertising support as punishment.

If implemented, the directive could seriously impact the viability of newspapers in Lesotho that rely on government advertising for survival. The government is the biggest advertiser in Lesotho.

Maphathe, said the party was under “serious attack from social media.”

“We are not only facing attacks as a party but also as a government led by our own members,” Maphathe said.

“Our government and party are under attack even from newspapers, many of which are owned by foreigners,” he said.

Maphathe emphasised that despite these attacks, “the government continues to support the same media houses through advertising”.

“A newspaper cannot exist without adverts,” he said.

“Our Secretary General (Nthati Moorosi) must ensure that adverts given to newspapers are properly regulated.

There is no reason they should attack us every day while we are the ones financing them.”

Maphathe further urged the RFP youths to defend the party on social media, regardless of whether the information published is true or not.

“You can see that we are being attacked even by some of our party leaders,” he said.

“You should respond to that leader who is now a Facebook lord as well.”

He likened political defence to military discipline, saying he was trained to defend everything “whether it is true or a lie”.

“Everything that is against our government is not true,” Maphathe said.

“It doesn’t matter if it is true or not, we must defend our party.”

He warned that continued “propaganda” could cost the RFP in the next general elections and urged members to remain vigilant.

The RFP deputy spokesman, Thabo Maretlane, told thepost yesterday that the party did not agree with Maphathe’s proposal.

“I heard him saying that but I just brushed it aside as coming from an inexperienced young man,” Maretlane said.

“How can we agree to such a thing?”

He said the RFP will not adopt such a position.

Speaking at the same rally, Prime Minister Sam Matekane urged his supporters not to be swayed by people he said were spreading falsehoods to sow confusion within the party.

“Do not allow people who want to frustrate you to win,” Matekane said.

“They spread lies that cause confusion among you,” he said.

He added that some people enjoy telling lies and that it was best to “part ways with such people.”

“You will only get official statements from our party office and officials,” Matekane said.

“Do not listen to things you see on the internet or hear over the radio stations.”

Nkheli Liphoto

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