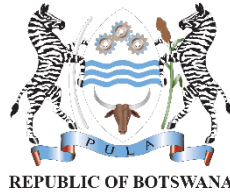


Telephone: (267)3950800  
Telegrams: PULA  
Telex: 3956364



Ministry for State  
President, Defence and  
Security  
Private Bag 001  
Gaborone

BGCIS 9/9/2 II (25)

24 April 2026

Kemoneilwe Mpinang  
Re A Bua Foundation

## **GOVERNMENT RESPONSE ON THE "JUSTICE FOR TSHEPI" PETITION**

Government hereby conveys its formal response on the above matter.

Kindly find attached the full statement for your attention.

Government remains committed to upholding the rule of law, ensuring accountability, and safeguarding the welfare of all citizens.

**HONOURABLE MOETI C. MOHWASA**  
Minister for State President, Defence and Security





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**ADDRESS TO THE NATION FOLLOWING PUBLIC PETITION  
"JUSTICE FOR TSHEPI"**

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**BY  
HONOURABLE MINISTER MOETI C. MOHWASA  
MINISTRY FOR STATE PRESIDENT, DEFENCE AND  
SECURITY**

**24 APRIL 2026**

1. On 9 April 2026, the Acting President, Ndaba Gaolathe, received a petition before the National Assembly outlining a number of demands from concerned citizens following the death of a minor student. The petitioners, who staged a peaceful march, requested a formal government response within two weeks of the submission of the petition. It is this Government's commitment to transparency that has brought us here today.
2. Batswana betsho, our youthful petitioners, every family carrying the pain of the loss of our children, and to all who have raised your voices in pursuit of "Justice for Tshepi", I address you today, not merely to speak, but to account for the actions taken by government.
3. We mourn the loss of Retshephile "Tshepi" Setso Tshedu, a 13-year-old Standard 7 pupil of Sehithwa, whose future was cut short. To her family, we extend our deepest condolences. Your pain is not yours alone. It is a pain now carried by the nation.
4. The Botswana Police Service received a report of Tshepi's death on May 17<sup>th</sup> 2025. Officers who attended the scene transported the body to Letsholathebe II Memorial Hospital, where a medical doctor certified the death.
5. Findings from the investigation indicate that the deceased took her own life at Kgosing Ward in Sehithwa, the same day the incident was reported. A post-mortem examination has since confirmed the cause of death.
6. While these findings provide important medical and investigative clarity, the investigation extended beyond the immediate cause of death. It comprehensively examined all surrounding circumstances to determine whether any form of abuse or criminal conduct may have contributed to this tragic outcome.
7. This line of inquiry remains a critical component of the case, which has now been submitted to the Director of Public Prosecutions for legal review and determination.
8. Bagaetsho, your call for transparency, for action and for the protection of our children has been heard, not with words alone, but with the disciplined process of the law and justice.

9. From the very first hour this tragedy came to light, the Botswana Police instituted a full and active investigation. Immediately, evidence collection was mobilized.
10. The nature of the case itself, one that involves a child, more so a minor, the complexities, the evidence it yields, and the legal and ethical obligations it imposes upon those who pursue it, has an implication on the timelines.
11. Some matters may be resolved within a month; others, particularly those involving the most vulnerable among us, demand far more. When a child is concerned, the standard procedure is not merely a guideline; it is a binding framework of protection where other stakeholders like social workers intervene to guide the processes of investigations in the interest of minors and witnesses.
12. As evidence was collected and tests were conducted, results underwent verification and interpretation by various independent experts following all the regulatory standards stipulated in the Criminal Procedure & Evidence Act. In cases involving a minor, every finding must, of necessity, be corroborated, every chain of custody documented, and every expert opinion subjected to peer review. This is because a child's case, once it reaches the courtroom, will be scrutinized with the intensity that spares no detail. Further to these Standard Operating Procedures, there is also a requirement to ensure full compliance when handling witnesses, ensuring they have undergone adequate trauma recovery.
13. Bagaetso, we have not been idle during the past months. A rushed investigation would not have served any meaningful purpose, but only those who would hope to escape accountability. We refuse to let that happen to Tshepi.
14. Today, I give you my personal assurance, that this investigation was conducted with the highest professional standard and the fullest resource commitment. The ten months you have questioned are not evidence of neglect, but evidence of rigour.
15. There are specific policies, regulations and international obligations that govern how cases involving minors are handled. These are not merely bureaucratic obstacles, they are the safeguards that ensure a child's dignity is preserved even in death, that evidence is collected without contamination, that testimony is obtained without re-traumatization, and that every procedural step can withstand the scrutiny of a court of law.

16. We did not choose complexity. Complexity was thrust upon us by the gravity of what happened. And we chose, deliberately and without apology, to meet that complexity with thoroughness rather than haste.
17. As I speak, the investigation into the circumstances surrounding the death of young 'Tshepi' have now been formally transmitted to the Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions (DPP), as procedure dictates, following completion of investigations by law enforcement. This is due process, and due process is the only foundation upon which a conviction, if secured, will stand.
18. The DPP has promised to complete the evaluation of evidence and will furnish the Police Commissioner with his response not later than the 15th of May, 2026. Only then will we be able to definitively advise on issues of evidential sufficiency and criminal liability. We ask for patience, as this delicate exercise is being undertaken, and promise to return to you with an answer as soon as it is reasonably possible upon receiving the response.
19. The office of the DPP has resolved that all cases of abuse regarding minors are serious offences and shall, therefore, not be subject to reconciliation as other cases envisaged by Section 321 of the Criminal Procedure & Evidence Act. The Sexual offences Unit, being a unit responsible, among other offences, for Gender based violence and child-related offences, is being expanded in terms of manpower, and enabled in terms of knowledge and competencies to ensure that cases such as the one under reference are dealt with the full might of the law.
20. Furthermore, the Children's Act and our international obligations under the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, and the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child impose parallel duties: to protect the dignity of the child victim, to handle all proceedings with trauma-informed sensitivity, and to ensure that any legal action does not compound the harm already done. These obligations inform every step the DPP takes. They are not obstacles to justice, they are dimensions of it.
21. Tshepi was thirteen-years-old. She was a Standard 7 pupil. She had a future that was cut short. No timeline, no legal brief, no prosecutorial decision can restore what was been lost.
22. What we owe the nation is accountability, and an institutional process that will ensure that justice prevails.

23. To the family; your grief is the grief of a nation. We do not stand here as officials dispensing information from a distance. We stand here as fellow citizens, bound by the same sorrow, empathy and determination.
24. To the petitioners; your peaceful assembly, your refusal to be silenced, your insistence that a child's life matters, these are the acts of good citizenship that strengthen democracy. You have not merely asked for answers; you have demanded that our institutions be worthy of the people they serve.
25. Let it be known that any case brought to the attention of Government involving the abuse, neglect or death of a child will be met with the same rigour: thorough investigation, independent prosecutorial review, transparent communication and accountability.
26. We are establishing, through this case, a standard of response that will govern all future cases. No child will be met with indifference. No family will be left without answers. No community will be abandoned to despair.

Beyond this case, this Government has decisively moved to strengthen systemic safeguards, including:

1. Reviewing investigative protocols in cases involving minors.
2. Strengthening safeguards against conflicts of interest in sensitive investigations.
3. Enhancing coordination between law enforcement, social services, and communities.
4. Expanding early detection and reporting mechanisms for abuse.
5. Accelerating reforms to ensure faster response and accountability in cases involving vulnerable persons.
6. The institutionalization of a Multisectoral GBV Prevention and Response Framework to ensure every sector, ministry, organisation, and community clearly understands and actively fulfills its role in the fight against GBV.

This framework moves beyond viewing GBV as a standalone issue, positioning it instead as a cross-cutting national priority to be addressed through policy, service delivery, enforcement, education, and community engagement for long-term impact.

8. Advancing comprehensive GBV legislation to consolidate and strengthen existing measures. The Ministry of Youth and Gender Affairs (MYGA) has already issued drafting instructions to the Attorney General's Chambers in February 2026.

This tragedy must not pass without consequence, not only in outcome, but in reform.

The UDC in its 2024 Manifesto promised the establishment of an Independent Police Complaints Commission (IPCC), mandated to receive and investigate complaints against the police, ensure accountability in cases of misconduct or abuse of power, and provide an independent avenue for justice outside of internal police processes. This commitment has already commenced, with the IPCC currently at an advanced drafting stage, laying the foundation for a transparent and accountable policing system.

**To the petitioners and to all citizens:**

Your voices have been heard.

Your demands for justice are legitimate.

And your call for accountability will be met with action.

**To the family of Tshepi:**

We cannot undo your loss. But we can, and we will, pursue the truth with the seriousness it deserves. Let this moment not divide us, but compel us to act with clarity, courage and resolve.

Justice must be done.

Ke lebogela nako e le e mphileng go re ke tle go buisana le lona. Gomotsegang.