

## Lesotho

Estimated population 2.3 million

A constitution monarchy, Lesotho gained its independence from the UK in 1966 and went through various periods of political instability with democratic interludes. A landlocked country, Lesotho is completely surrounded by the Republic of South Africa which has had a strong influence over its politics. Lesotho's substantial rainfall allows it to export water and electricity to its neighbour and these exports are of significant importance to the economy. Emigrants remittances are also significant. Once perhaps the poorest country in Africa Lesotho now has a GDP per capita of \$630 and is rated 149th in the UN's Human Development index. Life expectancy in 2003 was very low at 38 for females and 35 for males.

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