

Public statement on politicking in Western Province
by Rt Hon Sir Mekere Morauta
Port Moresby, 16 April 2017

Western Province should fight the Octopus



Former Prime Minister Sir Mekere Morauta today called on Western Province to unite against the latest attempts by the O'Neill Government to take political control of funds and other assets belonging to the province.

“The proposal to appoint another Provincial Administrator a few short weeks before the election is an extremely serious threat to the future of the province,” he said.

“It would appear to be a blatant grab for funds and control of the province by the O'Neill Government.”

It also further threatens Western Province control of its own gasfields, in particular P'nyang, which have become the subject of takeover attempts by Southern Highlands Province interests.

Hundreds of millions of kina belonging to the province, including CMCA and non-CMCA money, funds that should go to Ok Tedi Development Foundation and trust funds controlled by the Department of Mineral Policy and Geohazards in Port Moresby are now at risk.

The appointment could also open doors to fake and/or inflated contracts. It is rumored that Daru road contracts for K100 million for example are soon to be awarded to a company with close political connections.

“Make no mistake about it – this is the work of the well known Octopus that has been preying on Papua New Guinea for the past five years,” Sir Mekere said.

“Western Province is a favorite hunting ground of the Octopus, and the latest proposal to jnstall a new Provincial Administrator reflects its greed for money and lust for power.

“The proposal must be killed off.”

Sir Mekere suggested that Western Province people examine the processes used to try to install the new Provincial Administrator with a view to taking out an injunction preventing the appointment.

The decision was made by a Provincial Executive Committee meeting in Port Moresby last week chaired by the Acting Governor, Mr Roy Biyama, who is the PNC member for Middle Fly.

Mr Biyama is currently Western Province's only MP, with the former Governor Ati Wobiro in jail, former North Fly MP Boka Kondra dismissed from office, and the South Fly seat also vacant with the recent passing of Adi Ganasi.

“The appointment of such an important position as Provincial Administrator should wait until there is a new Provincial Assembly with four MPs,” Sir Mekere said. “What is the hurry? The nation's life does not depend on this appointment. But Western Province's future will be at risk by it.”