

**Public statement**  
**by Rt Hon Sir Mekere Morauta**  
Port Moresby, 15 May 2017

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**Sir Mekere asks PM to explain foreign security personnel**



Former Prime Minister Sir Mekere Morauta expressed his concern today at social media pictures of heavily armed foreign mercenaries patrolling the streets of Port Moresby.

He said it was clear that the public was very concerned about these men. “No-one knows who they are and what they are doing here,” he said.

“The absence of any explanation from the Government is only serving to heighten concerns about these foreigners and why they are openly carrying high-powered weapons in public.

“There are suggestions that these men are US Armed Forces personnel, and that they are here on APEC security business.

Sir Mekere said he been advised that these men are not US SEALs – there are two SEALs on official business in Port Moresby, and they are certainly not driving around town in police vehicles. Nor are they taking part in road blocks and questioning people, he said.

Nor are they in the country on APEC security business - the head of the APEC Secretariat, Mr Chris Hawkins, has told the media that this is not the case.

The Prime Minister, the Police Minister and the Police Commissioner have a lot of questions to answer, Sir Mekere said.

“What are they doing in Papua New Guinea,” Sir Mekere asked. “Who brought them here, where do they come from, and who is paying for them? Which company are they employed by, and who is employing them in Papua New Guinea?”

“On whose authority and on what legal basis are they carrying high-powered guns in public – and why have they been permitted to do so when Australian Federal Police officers sworn in as policemen were not?”

“I am told that the Police Commissioner has knowledge of the hiring of five mercenaries as ‘consultants’,” Sir Mekere said.

“The public has a right to know what their mission is, how long it will last and where the men will be deployed. Are there more of these foreigners coming to Papua New Guinea, and why are they coming at this point in time?”

“APEC is not until November next year – 18 months away. Why are they suddenly on our streets when the election is only a matter of weeks away? Are they here to help manipulate the election outcome?”

Sir Mekere said the Prime Minister, Police Minister and Police Commissioner have a duty to help end the public speculation and concern, and looks forward to a clear and honest explanation