

Public Statement by Rt Hon Sir Mekere Morauta

Port Moresby April 5 2016

Former Prime Minister Mekere Morauta said today that the Supreme Court decision opening the way for the arrest of Prime Minister Peter O'Neill and Finance Minister James Marape was a victory for due process.

In a unanimous decision Justices Hartshorn, Makail and Sawong rejected an appeal by O'Neill, Marape and others against orders allowing the arrest and questioning of the pair by police and Task Force Sweep.

Minister Marape can now be arrested and charged. The Prime Minister can also be arrested and charged on any matters other than the specific matters raised in the Parakagate arrest warrant.

"This decision should end all the delaying tactics used by the Prime Minister and Finance Minister to prevent their arrest and questioning," he said.

"The position of Prime Minister O'Neill is now untenable.

"He should stand aside as PM until the criminal charges laid against him have been dealt with.

"Mr O'Neill should no longer bring the good reputation and standing of PNG as a democracy into disrepute by failing to follow convention and stand down.

"He should act immediately to protect the reputation and integrity of the Office of Prime Minister and resign forthwith."

Sir Mekere said the Prime Minister's recent comments that he will stand aside when someone discovers that he has profited in any way from the payment of legal fees to Paraka Lawyers misses the point.

It is just another attempt to confuse and deceive people. He must resign and allow the justice system to follow its course.

The Supreme Court in effect found that police and members of Task-Force Sweep had not abused proper procedures or compromised their position in trying to arrest Mr O'Neill and Mr Marape.

It also granted costs in the case to Fraud Squad officers Matthew Damaru and Timothy Gitua.