

Public Statement
by Rt Hon Sir Mekere Morauta
Port Moresby, 27 July 2017

Double Declaration of Moresby North-West Seat



Former Prime Minister and Member-Elect for Moresby North-West, Sir Mekere Morauta, today denounced the actions of the absentee Returning Officer for Moresby-North West, Mr Moka Havera, in fraudulently declaring the candidate who came third in the election, Mr Joseph Tonde.

Sir Mekere said he had seen an EMTV video and a report of the event which apparently took place in Room 202 of the Airways Hotel.

“This makes a complete mockery of the electoral process,” he said.

“At the end of counting, I was called to come to the Rita Flynn Centre for the declaration. I arrived to find that the RO was missing. This was reported to the Electoral Commission by the Metropolitan Superintendent for Police.

“The Electoral Commissioner consequently prepared the appropriate instruments, approved by the Governor-General, to have Mr Bale Kavanamur, Assistant Election Manager for NCD, make the declaration and sign the writ.

“Mr Kavanamur brought a writ to Rita Flynn Centre and I was duly declared the Member-elect for Moresby North-West. Mr Kavanamur and I signed the writ, in the presence of other senior officials from the Electoral Commission, counting and security officers, members of the press and scrutineers. The declaration was also broadcast live on NBC radio and heard all over Papua New Guinea.

“The sham declaration of Mr Tonde in an Airways hotel room is an act of fraud and abuse, a betrayal of the trust that Papua New Guineans have placed in the election. It is incredible that an act such as this would take place. What message is sent to Papua New Guineans? What image is presented to the rest of the world?

“At my declaration, I spoke of the clear signs that our systems of government have broken down. This is a classic example.

“I did not expect to have the points I made in my declaration speech underscored quite so dramatically by a rogue electoral officer and a conspiring candidate.

“I have objected in the strongest terms to the Electoral Commissioner and have called for a criminal investigation into this fraudulent behaviour. The perpetrators must be brought to account and prosecuted.”