

Public Statement by
Rt Hon Sir Mekere Morauta
Port Moresby May 1 2016

“Prime Minister Peter O’Neill should allow the National Fraud and Anti-Corruption Directorate to take up his challenge to find whether there is evidence or not that he benefitted financially from the Paraka scandal,” former Prime Minister Sir Mekere Morauta said today.

“He should also allow them to continue their wider investigation into all aspects of the case, and he should assist their enquiries by presenting himself to Director Matthew Damaru and his colleagues for questioning.

“Mr O’Neill has boasted that he knows the facts surrounding the case, and who benefitted financially.

“He has a duty to reveal that to the Fraud Squad.”

In a media release and in Parliament the Prime Minister challenged the authorities to *‘show evidence of me benefiting financially or otherwise and I will resign.’*

The choice is clear – either he cooperates with the police or he resigns. He has left himself no other option, Sir Mekere said.

“It is in the national interest for him to do so. It is not in the national interest for the Office of the Prime Minister to be used to hide from truth and justice.

“There is a clear public interest in settling this sordid affair, and the only person preventing this is the Prime Minister.”

Sir Mekere said Mr O’Neill cannot continue to be a fugitive from justice, on the run from a court-sanctioned arrest warrant, surrounded by heavily armed police way in excess of his Prime Ministerial allocation.

The Prime Minister is in no personal danger whatsoever – the only reason for his over-the-top personal security is to evade arrest.

It sets a bad example to the rest of the nation, and is also casting Papua New Guinea in a very bad light internationally.

The Police Commissioner, Mr Gary Baki, also has a role to play in settling the matter honorably and lawfully, and easing the tensions he and the Prime Minister have created.

“Mr Baki, like the Prime Minister, should comply with the law,” Sir Mekere said.

“He should comply with the legitimate orders of the National and Supreme Courts, and that means reinstating Mr Damaru and his colleagues to their positions in the National Fraud and Anti-Corruption Directorate and enabling them to recommence their investigations.

“These investigations include not just the Paraka case, but also into the UBS loan, the Israeli generator deal, which led to the charges laid against Treasury Secretary Dairi Vele, which in turn led to the perversion of the course of justice charges against lawyer Tiffany Twivey, and others.”

Sir Mekere said the Prime Minister’s actions demonstrated not only the disrepute he had brought on the Office of the Prime Minister, but also a deeper phenomenon.

Peter O’Neill’s Prime Ministership has changed the character of Papua New Guinea from being a democracy supported by functioning institutions to one that is bordering on a failed state. This is manifested by:

- His treatment of Parliament as a rubber stamp;
- His interference in and attack on law enforcement agencies – the Ombudsman Commission, the Police, the Fraud Squad, Task Force Sweep, the Public Prosecutor;
- His constant disregard for court decisions and erection of roadblocks and detours to prevent their implementation, and;
- His incompetent management of the Budget and the economy, with huge deficits and huge borrowings, the falling level of foreign reserves, the falling value of the Kina, the country’s current incapacity to borrow and the decline in credit ratings.

“The result is that those who uphold and enforce the law sink to the bottom, while those who are corrupt and break laws fly to the top,” he said.

“Papua New Guinea is now a country where corruption is the norm, where the only questions asked are who gets a cut, and how much.”

Sir Mekere said that it was his prediction that Peter O’Neill would wreck Papua New Guinea in order to save himself.