

**Public Statement  
by Rt Hon Sir Mekere Morauta  
Port Moresby, 10 July 2017**

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**Resignation of Election Advisory Committee confirms public's worst fears about election**



Former Prime Minister Sir Mekere Morauta said today that the resignation of the Election Advisory Committee sent a loud and clear signal that the conduct of the election had been hijacked by Peter O'Neill, Isaac Lupari, the Electoral Commissioner, ably assisted by the Police Commissioner, the Defence Force Commander and the Secretary for Finance.

Sir Mekere said that the resignation of the EAC was a very clear statement to the nation about the failure of the 2017 election.

"The members of the EAC, Ombudsman Richard Pagen, Richard Kassman and Professor John Luluaki, are all extremely capable men of high integrity," he said. "They will not have taken the decision to resign lightly. They have resigned because they have been ignored by the Electoral Commissioner and prevented from fulfilling their obligations and their role, which they take seriously.

"All honest and concerned Papua New Guineans value their decision, but lament the causes of it. It is a very sad day for Papua New Guinea, and sends shivers of fright about the future of democracy in our country."

The utter chaos of this election is deliberately organized. It is rigged. What rigging and deliberate chaos do we see?

- failure to provide the EAC with any of the information it requested
- failure to complete an Electoral Roll that in any way shape or form reflects the eligible voting population
- failure to include names of people who had registered, with particular disenfranchisement of particular groups of people, such as students and educated working people
- failure to provide copies of the Electoral Roll to the public
- failure to provide sufficient ballot papers in areas where there were eligible voters listed on the Roll
- provision of extra ballot papers to PNC or pro-PNC candidates
- voting numbers in PNC-held seats that far exceed the number of eligible voters
- tens of thousands of ghost names on the Roll
- illegal voting on Sunday and after 6pm
- deferral of voting in many areas, causing confusion and reduced voter turn-out, especially from the working population
- deferral and slow process of counting in selected areas

The list goes on. People have been deliberately disenfranchised. There is a growing surge of anger and disbelief.

"The behavior of the Electoral Commissioner, Patilias Gamato, is deplorable," Sir Mekere said. "He has turned a most powerful independent constitutional office into a political puppet show, and he should be held accountable.

"By law he does not have to listen to anyone, apart from the advice of the Election Advisory Committee. But he has chosen to be an outrigger of PNC. He has chosen to be a political football, kicked around for political scoring by Peter O'Neill and his henchman, Isaac Lupari.

"They will do anything to hold on to power, including destroying the nation. They will do anything to prevent further exposure of their wrongdoings."

Sir Mekere said the resignation of the EAC was a sign of the very dangerous waters that Papua New Guinea was heading towards.

"Papua New Guineans must not just let these issues go. Peoples' rights to take part in any meaningful democratic process have been destroyed.

"Patilias Gamato should immediately resign. He has failed Papua New Guinea."

Sir Mekere also said he hoped the International Observer Teams and the Australian Government would take notice of the importance and gravity of the decision of the EAC to resign.

"Australia has nurtured the O'Neill regime and the election process. It must take some responsibility for the chaos. I do hope the High Commission and their masters in Canberra are finally hearing the growing chorus of Papua New Guineans expressing their disapproval of this Government and their anger about the chaos and rigging of the election. If any hearing aids or spectacles are required, I am more than happy to provide them."

Sir Mekere said a return of the O'Neill Government would spell disaster for Papua New Guinea and change its democratic character.

"I urge all political parties and all Independent Members of Parliament, when elected, to abandon PNC," he said.

"If PNC comes back to power, the economic and social cost of repair and rebuilding the nation may be beyond any honest future government to undertake. No-one with a conscience should allow PNC to form the government."