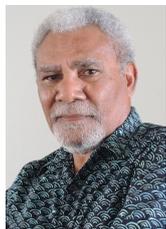


Public Statement
by Rt Hon Sir Mekere Morauta
Port Moresby, 29 June 2017

Independent Commission of Inquiry into election



Former Prime Minister Sir Mekere Morauta said today an Independent Commission of Inquiry must be set up to investigate the 2017 election chaos and make recommendations to prevent a repeat of the mismanagement and corruption that has occurred.

“There is enough evidence now, from the first few days of polling, to justify such an inquiry,” he said.

“Police, soldiers and voters have reported widespread corruption and irregularities and we have all witnessed the failure of electoral systems and processes.

“There has been a deliberate and systematic attempt to prevent a free and fair election and to manipulate the outcome. Papua New Guineans have a right to know exactly what has happened, who was involved and how the mess can be fixed.

“By any normal test the election has already failed, and as a result the foundations of Papua New Guinea’s parliamentary democracy have been undermined and our Constitutional rights and freedoms threatened.

“It is now imperative that Papua New Guinea acts decisively to protect the future of the nation.”

Sir Mekere said the first step should be to uncover the detailed causes of what went wrong, and develop a set of recommendations to prevent a repeat.

An independent Commission of Inquiry, headed by an eminent international jurist with suitably qualified PNG commissioners, must be set up. It should have powers of compulsion, a strong and suitably skilled secretariat, and it should be required to report publicly as well as to Parliament. It must be set up as soon as possible after Parliament sits.

It should have wide Terms of Reference, which should cover:

- The performance of the Electoral Commission and its powers and its funding
- The involvement of other Government departments and agencies in the electoral process
- The Organic Law on National and Local Level Government Elections
- The need for stronger independent advice to the Electoral Commission
- Election security
- Outside influences and funding
- The role of international observers and international support

“No doubt, as polling proceeds, new areas of inquiry will become apparent,” Sir Mekere said. “But we have enough evidence already to know that a complete overhaul of the electoral system is necessary.”