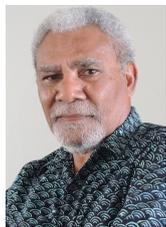


Public Statement
by Rt Hon Sir Mekere Morauta
Former Prime Minister and Member for Moresby North-West
Port Moresby, 20 September 2017

False reports by EMTV and Lohia Boe Samuel



The Member for Moresby North-West, Sir Mekere Morauta, said today that claims made on EMTV by failed Moresby North-West candidate Lohia Boe Samuel that he had avoided service of an election petition were completely untrue.

Sir Mekere said he noticed Mr Samuel at the Yacht Club after lunch on Tuesday 19 September.

“I was standing in open view on the footpath, talking to a friend, for at least 5 minutes. Mr Samuel had every opportunity to approach me, but he did not,” he said.

“When I finished the chat with my friend I proceeded to my home on my boat.

“I went downstairs to my cabin to read and rest. I did not see either of my two boat workers when I arrived at the boat – one was in the engine room and the other was out at the bank.

“My wife Roslyn was upstairs working. The boat door was open. Neither Mr Lohia nor any of his agents came to the door and asked Roslyn where I was.

“Another person – authorised by the Yacht Club to come into the marina - did visit the boat, and delivered some documents to her for me.

“Later in the afternoon Roslyn heard from one of our boat workers that Mr Samuel and some gentlemen who described themselves as CID officers from Konedobu had accosted him at the coffee shop, accusing him of lying and threatening to arrest him.

“As the worker had not seen me, he had truthfully said he did not know where I was and that he had only seen Roslyn when he came to the boat.

“To say I was ‘in hiding’ is a complete joke, and utterly untrue. I don’t hide from anyone or anything.

“I have two questions for Mr Samuel. I discovered this morning from a list from the Court House that he filed his petition on 5th September. Why did he leave it until the last day to look for me? He had two weeks to serve the petition. He could also have put an advertisement of the petition in a daily newspaper, as many other petitioners have done.

“This whole matter seems to have been a set-up organised by Mr Samuel, EMTV and forces unknown.

“My second question is why he used police to attempt to effect service? It is not the function or duty of police officers to serve election petitions, which are civil matters, not criminal. The serving of petitions is an obligation on Mr Lohia and/or his lawyers.

“This practice of renting police officers for private purposes is wrong and must be stopped. I call on the Police Commissioner to investigate which officers were involved in working for Mr Samuel, and who gave them permission to do so.

“According to the EMTV report, Mr Samuel claims his petition outlines ‘discrepancies’ in polling and counting. I have no idea what discrepancies he is claiming, but if they are based on the same degree of truthfulness as his report to EMTV last night, I do not expect to be worried by them,” Sir Mekere said.