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TIPNG SLAMS LACK OF TRANSPARENCY IN KAPRIS CASE

Transparency International PNG (TIPNG) today calls for the immediate end to the reported media ban on the trial of the bank robber William Kapris.

The anti-corruption organisation agrees with the assessment of yesterday's editorial in *The National* that Mr Kapris is nobody special before the eyes of the law, and therefore his trial should not be shrouded in secrecy.

TIPNG Chairman Mr Peter Aitsi says: "The reasons for this trial being closed to the media has not been adequately explained. This adds insult to injury - the people are being denied the information they have a right to access, and they are not even being told why."

TIPNG says that the enormous public interest in the case is understandable given the allegations Mr Kapris has made regarding three MPs being involved in criminal activities. TIPNG acknowledges however that these MPs are not the people on trial, and says people should remember this fact.

Mr Aitsi continues: "The issue is not what Mr Kapris may or may not say in relation to his allegations. The issue is transparency of our justice system, and the right for people to know about the issues that effect their lives. If the people want to hear what Mr Kapris has to say then they have that right, as long as they keep perspective on the issues and remember who Mr Kapris is."

TIPNG says that hiding the details of the case from the media and the public will ultimately be counter-productive. Barring the media from covering the court case will simply raise people's suspicions and undermine trust in the legal system and the government.

Mr Aitsi adds: "People are asking - what is there to hide? They are also asking - whose interest does this media ban serve? The fact that these questions are being posed undermines the process even more. Secrecy does nothing to serve justice or democracy in this country or any other."