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– the international coalition against corruption  
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**The Editor**  
**Post Courier**  
**PO Box 85**  
**Port Moresby**

01/11/05

**LETTER TO THE EDITOR**

**Re: Reply to letter from Ago Lahine of Sudest Island**

Dear Sir,

Transparency International PNG (TI PNG) would like to respond to the letter from Ago Lahine of Sudest Island, Milne Bay (Post Courier, October 25, 2005). In the letter, Lahine asks TI PNG and other "so called watchdogs...to seriously look into the purchase of this boat". Lahine's allegation refers to a boat launching on Sudest Island by the Milne Bay Governor.

In responding to this we also wish to clarify what TI PNG is and what we can do.

TI PNG is a non-government organisation with a mandate that is not based on the legal power of the state - but on the moral power of collective human action. Only legally-sanctioned public bodies such as the Ombudsman Commission or the RPNGC can legally compel individuals to assist an investigation, or other similar acts.

TI PNG is a PNG member-based incorporated association that exists wholly and completely within PNG, and has no external corporate links to any other body. We are affiliated with the international coalition of Transparency International, which has more than 85 other national chapters who do what we do around the world, and are accredited yearly for continued membership of the international coalition against a series of criteria. We are an advocacy coalition where like-minded people come together, give freely of their time, and advocate for change in areas that are important to us - greater transparency, accountability, and good governance in the public domain.

We will field complaints such as that from Lahine, and forward them on to the proper agencies of the state who are legally tasked to investigate and prosecute these matters - agencies such as the Ombudsman Commission, the RPNGC, the Auditor-General, and the Parliamentary Accounts Committee. We can follow up complaints with further enquiry, which acts to further strengthen the proper role of the agency concerned. We support government where we can to strengthen the independence and professionalism of these bodies which make up the integrity systems of the nation. Complaints referred to us can also assist us in highlighting areas of poor governance that require further support and assistance to fulfil their legal role.

TI PNG cannot and will not politically align itself with any politician or political party. TI PNG will only campaign on the issues that lay in the area of our mandate - transparency, accountability and good governance.

Together with the Media Council of PNG we facilitate the work of the Community Coalition Against Corruption - a network of public sector, private sector, church and community organisations that jointly represent more than 2 million Papua New Guineans. This goes to the core of TI's global strategy - building coalitions internationally, nationally and locally to fight corruption.

We would recommend in the case of Lahine that the allegation be documented, and sent to the above-named agencies. If Lahine would like, we will field the complaint, forward it on, and follow it up in due course. We support Lahine, and all other Papua New Guineans, in their right to have the integrity of their country administered in a sound fashion.

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