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PRESS STATEMENT FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Standard of Parliamentary Conduct Must Improve

Monday 14th December 2020, Port Moresby – The Supreme Court has handed down a ruling by a panel of 5 judges determining the constitutionality of events in Parliament during November. The ruling is a clear reminder of the need to maintain higher standards of conduct within our institutions, this is more so important with regard to the conduct of Parliament. Papua New Guineans have every right to expect our elected leaders to lead by example in demonstrating proper conduct in carrying out their responsibilities.

The Supreme Court in its ruling has articulated and provided guidance on role and conduct of the office of the Speaker of Parliament, the Clerk of Parliament and of MP's ensuring the constitutional functions of Parliament are properly maintained. These officials must conduct their duties for the public good and must always seek to maintain the integrity of the public office they hold. This is TIPNG's view noting the Speaker of Parliament has followed the Supreme Court's direction to reconvene Parliament on Monday (14/12/20).

"People in Papua New Guinea are right to wonder, who actually stands to benefit from all the court cases, in fact questions are being asked on how these cases are being funded and who is funding the political camps. Is it being funded from public funds, or private individuals or groups? Whatever the source, it should be extremely worrying given our current economic state and also the potential for external influence of our political leaders" said Peter Aitsi, Chair of TIPNG, in a media statement.

"Neither political side can claim the moral high ground, if both disregard the integrity of their public office and act against the public good for their own political self-interest. What the people of Papua New Guinea want to see is adherence to democratic principles in Parliament and compliance with legislative processes. TIPNG acknowledges the underlying strength of our democracy, and this is reflected in the conduct of our defense force, the police, the judiciary and our fellow Papua New Guineans for respecting the constitutional processes as they occur," said Mr. Aitsi.

TIPNG encourages citizens to seek information from reliable sources, ensuring they read and share verified information. TIPNG encourages the PNG media to remain diligent and to be objective in their news gathering as this will be vital to ensure our public is kept informed by verified and non-partisan information.

Freedom of Information is vital to our democracy, and should not be squandered by sharing politically motivated falsehoods, which may in turn be used as a justification for state-censorship as we have seen in other jurisdictions within our region

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What is TIPNG?

TIPNG is a member of Transparency International a global anti corruption movement committed to fighting corruption. TIPNG is an independent organization in PNG known as a Chapter of the international movement. The PNG chapter advocates against corruption and promotes transparency, good governance, honesty and accountability both in private and public sector dealings. TIPNG tries to assist strengthen the integrity systems of our country such as the police, the parliament, the public services and the judiciary.