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1 August 2017

PRESS STATEMENT FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

2017 National Election displayed lack of transparency and adherence to proper process

Transparency International PNG (TIPNG) strongly condemns the lack of transparency and adherence to proper process in the 2017 National Election. There is a strong public perception that our democracy is being challenged by vested interests, acting with apparent impunity, and this appears to have heightened during the process of election.

This election Papua New Guinea witnessed double declarations plus questionable declarations in a number of seats indicating a level of undue influence on Returning Officers. This is disheartening and completely unacceptable to the vast majority of our people who believe in good and fair actions, transparency and democratic processes.

There have been many reports of election related violence and TIPNG is particularly concerned about the four deaths in Wabag including two policemen, reported deaths in Kundiawa and the shutdown of Kagamuga Airport and closure of business in Mt Hagen. Winning and losing fairly is a basic principle of democracy, but clearly many people cannot countenance the perception that election processes have been manipulated.

TIPNG recognises that the avenue to seek redress is through the Court of Disputed Returns and appeals to authorities including the Electoral Commission to make sure that records and relevant reports including ballot papers are preserved to ensure that the court process is expedited fairly. Media reports that members-elect declared under questionable circumstances have proceeded to join the various political party groupings to participate in the process of Government forming.

Forty-years post Independence, PNG deserves a high adherence and respect to the rule of law and compliance to the principles enshrined in our Constitution. It is welcoming to see the Ombudsman Commission, the Constitutional Reform Commission and the Registrar of Political Parties providing the much needed guidance around the constitutional process and requirements, to assist the Electoral Commission to execute and deliver the 2017 National Election in recent days.

TIPNG joins the call and appeals to the elected leaders to act wisely for the collective good for PNG.

We appeal to the elected Government to pay great attention to upholding our democracy underpinned by the separation of Parliament, the Executive, Judiciary and the all relevant Constitution Offices, and preparing for the next election in a better manner.

We remind Members of Parliament that they have a duty to act in the interest of PNG and protect the Constitution.

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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.