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PRESS STATEMENT FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

The Public need to Trust the Police

Tuesday 11th May 2021, Port Moresby – Community trust is essential for effective policing in Papua New Guinea. Allegations of police brutality, improper conduct by some sections of police and lack of progress on several high-profile cases, can cause mistrust and perceptions of a lack of accountability within the force says Transparency International PNG (TIPNG).

TIPNG in responding to recent allegations of mistreatment of an employee of a media outlet, who was detained for recording uniformed officers dispersing “table market” vendors at Gordons suburb within the National Capital District.

While appreciating the measures to address the spread of COVID-19, comments made by the victims suggest that the actions by police may have gone beyond what is considered reasonable force.

“The country has seen a steady increase in violence in the last 12 months, this incident along with others such as the alleged shooting and killing of two young man in Central Province with allegations of police involvement creates fear within the community toward its Police Force and adds further to the breakdown of trust”, said Peter Aitsi, Board Chair of TIPNG.

“Earlier this month there was an international media coverage of the issue, with Al Jazeera releasing damning footage of policing in Port Moresby. The detaining of a media employee so soon after these events does not bode well for the reputation of our Country,” added Mr Aitsi.

“The public expects our leaders to do more than make politically convenient decisions, a good place to start is to revisit the recommendations from the [Report of the Royal Papua New Guinea Constabulary Administrative Review Committee 2004](#) and consider implementing actions that can bring immediate improvement to our law and order situation. Another way to restore public trust, is to ensure reports of Police misconduct and incidents of abuse of power are properly investigated and outcomes of the investigations publicly communicated. Clear and firm support needs to be given to the office and officers of the Police Internal Affairs Directorate from the highest leadership of the Police Department and from our Executive Arm of Government. We must all remember that a more effective police force will ensure a safer environment for our communities, which will go a long way to improving our law and order situation and in turn create more conducive conditions to retain and attract investors,” said Mr. Aitsi.

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.

It is very disappointing this incident, the detaining of this young media person happened within days of the marking of World Press Freedom Day on the 3rd of May. TIPNG stands in solidarity with the Media Council of PNG in calling for the protection of media practitioners and to ensure the important role of the media is recognized and supported. TIPNG in acknowledging the work of the media has launched the Investigative Journalism Award, the Award is open till December 31st 2021, for any journalist in Papua New Guinea to submit entries in one of three categories, further details are available on the [TIPNG website](#). The Awards are part of TIPNG's Promoting Anti-Corruption and Integrity Strategies (PAIS) Project, which is funded with support from the European Union.

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