



Media Release

Australian Bar Association

Statement on Papua New Guinea

Recent reports as to the manner and circumstances of the arrest of the Chief Justice of Papua New Guinea, Sir Salamo Injia, on charges of sedition give rise to deep concerns.

The arrest of the nation's most senior judicial officer at a time when the court has been dealing with the validity of the Prime Minister's appointment raises fundamental issues concerning judicial independence. This is all the more so because the arrest is on the charge of sedition which has a politically charged history.

The actions are also troubling given that they have occurred following the previous arrest of the Chief Justice within the judge's chambers complex on 6 March this year. No judge is above the law. However, it is fundamental to the maintenance of the rule of law that when allegations are made against judicial officers that those allegations are dealt with in a manner that upholds the independence of the judiciary. The handling of any such allegations must be, and must be seen to be, in the hands of independent prosecutors as part of a fair and transparent process free from Government interference.

The Australian Bar Association calls upon the Government of Papua New Guinea to ensure that proper steps are taken to recognise the independence of the judiciary in all its dealing with the Chief Justice.

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