



AUSTRALIAN
LAWYERS
FOR
HUMAN RIGHTS

PO Box A147
Sydney South
NSW 1235
DX 585 Sydney
alhr@alhr.asn.au
www.alhr.asn.au

MEDIA RELEASE: Tuesday, 29 May 2012

RECENT ARREST OF PNG CHIEF JUSTICE UNDERMINES THE RULE OF LAW

“Australian Lawyers for Human Rights (‘ALHR’) strongly condemns the executive interference with the PNG judiciary that is taking place in Papua New Guinea.” Stephen Keim, President of ALHR, said today. “The threats towards the judiciary, the recent arrest of a Supreme Court Judge and the imposition of public emergency regulations, separately and in combination, undermine the Rule of Law, breach international human rights standards and impinge on the independence of the judiciary.”

“While the Papua New Guinea government may be dissatisfied with the outcome of the recent court decision against it, judges must be able to exercise judicial functions independently and free of any extraneous influences including threats or actual interference. This principle is enshrined in the Bangalore Principles of Judicial Conduct.” said Mr Keim. A copy of the Bangalore Principles of Judicial Conduct (2002) is available at: www.ajs.org/ethics/pdfs/Bangalore_principles.pdf.

Mr Keim stated: “ALHR calls on the Papua New Guinea government to respect human rights and the independence of the judiciary in the lead up to the mooted elections. Nothing must be done that would further impinge on the rights of Chief Justice Injia and Justice Kirriwom to receive a fair trial before an independent and impartial court in respect of those offences with which they are currently charged.”

The factual comments in which the above comments are made and to which they relate include the following. Last week, Mr. O’Neill’s government called on a number of judicial officers of the Supreme Court of Papua New Guinea to resign after a decision by the Court which ruled that his government was formed illegally and unconstitutionally. On Thursday 24 May 2012, Chief Justice Sir Salamo Injia of the Supreme Court of PNG was arrested on sedition charges. On Monday 28 May 2012, Justice Nicholas Kirriwom was arrested on similar grounds.

Inquiries:

Stephen Keim, President, Australian Lawyers for Human Rights

Email: s.keim@higginschambers.com.au

Mobile: 0433 846 518