



MEDIA STATEMENT

Coalition of Parliamentarians Against Gender-based Violence

PORT MORESBY March 31, 2021: The Coalition of Parliamentarians to End Gender Based Violence voices their deep concern against dramatically spiking rates of gender-based violence in the country. This violence must be addressed immediately.

Coalition Co-Chair Hon. Powes Parkop, Governor of NCD stated: “it is obvious violence is escalating. We call for a stop to these attacks on the women and girls of our country.”

Chair of the Parliamentary Committee on GBV, Hon. Charles Abel MP Alotau continued by saying: “How do we empower our young women to be confident, bold and creative if we punish them for one transgression by casting them out.”

In one day, three key cases, in three chronically and horrifically problematic areas, have decimated the lives of young women and their families, and darkly sullied the international reputation of our country.

1. **Gender-based cyber-bullying:** the public on social media has subjected Miss. Lucy Maino, the Miss PNG beauty pageant titleholder to unimaginably intense public cyber-bullying. The cyber harassment reached a peak with not only calls for her to resign her crown, but indeed calls for much worse.

We call out the men and women who chose to malign, harass, and attempt to humiliate, and demean a daughter of Papua New Guinea for the simple act of dancing. We are deeply disappointed in your behaviour.

2. **Abuse of power by a security company:** The security guards of the Ultimax Guards unlawfully detained and tortured a young woman who they caught shoplifting, for hours in the back of a second hand store this week.

We call out the security guards from Ultimax Guards who abused a young woman caught for shoplifting this week.

3. **Sorcery-related violence:** Relatives accused a mother and her young daughter in Eastern Highlands of sorcery, and tortured them with hot iron rods, broke both the mother’s arms and caused severe head injuries to the daughter.

We call out the national government for continuing to allow sorcery related violence to occur in the country through inadequate action and no consequential remedies.

Coalition Co-Chair Hon. Allan Bird stated in reaction to the cyber-bullying of Miss. Lucy Maino: “I am stunned by the negative comments coming from very educated people. I was even attacked for standing up for her.” And continued in reaction to the sorcery case:



“Allegations of sorcery have no place in our country and cannot be used as an excuse for violence. We are a modern, Christian country and we must uphold the laws of our land not superstitions.”

Hon. Gary Juffa stated: “Security guards have NO right to assault or torture anyone even if they have been caught committing a crime.” **Hon. Richard Masere** went on to say: “this type of bullying by security companies has gone on for too long and our Government must act and clamp down on these unscrupulous behaviors by security guards.”

The Coalition CALLS UPON our:

1. **National Government** to take **immediate action** to both support survivors and address perpetrators’ behaviours, including ensuring immediate funding to support the formal establishment of the National GBV Secretariat and the implementation of the National GBV Strategy.
2. **Police and Judiciary** to take **immediate action** to ensure due process is served and the laws of the country that prohibit gender-based violence are immediately and consistently enforced.
3. **National ICT Authority** to take **immediate action** to prosecute and penalize people engaged in cyber bullying by shutting their accounts after warnings are not heeded.
4. **Doctors and Nurses** in our health services to provide sensitive and caring support to GBV survivors, in line with public health guidelines, including proper protocols around evidence collection and confidentiality.
5. **CSOs, private sector and faith groups** to join hands with Coalition members and each other to identify and fill the gaps in services so that no woman or girl stands alone against injustice.
6. **Fellow citizens** to use their voices to drown out those in this nation who hide behind the banner of our moral authority, misaligning its history, honour and beauty with one of violence and misogyny.

ABOUT: The Coalition of Parliamentarians to End Gender Based Violence is a bipartisan collective of 20 Parliamentarians from across Papua New Guinea who convened August 24th, 2020 and subsequently organized the first ever national summit on gender-based violence in November 2020, and are now leading the Special Parliamentary Committee on GBV. The Coalition is committed to take substantial strategic steps to address key policy failings and use their collective voice to demand change. The Coalition is Co-Chaired by Hon. Powes Parkop, MP/Governor NCD and Hon. Allan Bird, MP/Governor ESP. The Special Parliamentary Committee on GBV is Chaired by the Hon. Charles Abel, MP Alotau.

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