



Statement on atrocities in Goilala, Central Province, Papua New Guinea

The CLA issued a Statement on 26th July 2024 noting with concern a Statement from the Papua New Guinea Law Society condemning what they described as barbaric killings in the Angoram District of East Sepik.

The CLA has noted a further statement from the Papua New Guinea Law Society, dated 5th January 2025, this time voicing concern about what it described as barbaric killings in Goilala, Central Province.

The CLA supports the PNG Law Society for its courage in calling out these horrifying acts, which it rightly described as striking at the heart of humanity, and other acts of violence it has condemned in the Upper Highlands.

The CLA stands with the Papua New Guinea Law Society in its advocacy and efforts to uphold and promote the rule of law in Papua New Guinea and condemns attempts to muzzle or thwart it and the related personal physical threats on social media towards its President, Mr. Hubert Namani.

The CLA reinforces the calls by the PNG Law Society for adequate and well-resourced investigations and for due process to bring perpetrators to justice and to support those bereaved and injured.

The CLA again recalls the Constitution of the Independent State of Papua New Guinea (the PNG Constitution) which provides in its Preamble a section on Basic Rights where it states:

“all persons in our country are entitled to the fundamental rights and freedoms of the individual, that is to say, the right, whatever their race, tribe, places of origin, political opinion, colour, creed or sex, but subject to respect for the rights and freedoms of others and for the legitimate public interest, to each of the following:– (a) life, liberty, security of the person and the protection of the law;”

The PNG Constitution also contains Section 37 which provides:
“Every person has the right to the full protection of the law”.

The Commonwealth Charter, which forms part of the fundamental values of the Commonwealth, of which Papua New Guinea is a member, contains the following provision:

RULE OF LAW

We believe in the rule of law as an essential protection for the people of the Commonwealth and as an assurance of limited and accountable government.

Noting the PNG Law Society Statement mentions that PNG is preparing to celebrate 50 years of independence the CLA echoes its comment that the atrocities in East Sepik and now in Goilala are wholly unacceptable. The CLA agrees that the rule of law requires protection of life, delivery of justice and preserving shared humanity. The CLA again:

1. Calls upon the Government of Papua New Guinea to ensure adequate protection is provided to all its citizens;

2. Urges swift action by law enforcement agencies, such as the police, to bring perpetrators to justice;
3. Supports the Papua New Guinea Law Society in its calls for justice to be delivered and; and
4. Calls for support for the PNG Law Society and all those who require that all necessary steps are taken to ensure the rule of law is respected and prevails.

Commonwealth Lawyers Association (CLA)

10th January 2025

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