



**BOUGAINVILLE STATE OF EMERGENCY
OFFICE OF THE BOUGAINVILLE EMERGENCY CONTROLLER**

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PRESS STATEMENT

As we head into the 3rd day of implementation of the 21 days SOE on Bougainville, it gives me great honour to again be given the opportunity to update our people on Bougainville on the progress of the SOE so far and Law & Order updates in this period of lockdown. In my statement this morning, and as I have been doing in the last 3 days, firstly, I will give some updates on the SOE Operation currently underway in Bougainville. Secondly, I will try to provide some updates on the Law & Order situation in Bougainville in the last 24 hours. Finally, I will try to extend some appeals.

1. UPDATE ON STATE OF EMERGENCY (SOE) OPERATION

Firstly, this is the 3rd day since BPS started implementing Emergency orders that were issued last week. From this exercise, so far there has been observed in our main centres of Buka, Arawa and Buin a general compliance with these orders. In our rural areas however, it is still taking time for our people to understand the importance of the SOE and why these emergency orders. However, awareness's are continuing, and people are slowly starting to understand the reason for the lockdown and why it is important to observe practices like social distancing and not congregating.

As of this morning, and as I speak, members of the SOE Enforcement and Covid-19 response teams are continuing with their respective tasking.

Police checkpoints will continue to be randomly set up to ensure motorists are compliant with general traffic laws and more importantly emergency orders in relation to social distancing. The specific order for social distancing was aimed at getting people to learn and practice keeping good distance from their friends so that in the event that there is one case of Covid-19 on Bougainville, people will already know what to do.

With regard to the Air Niugini plane that was supposed to bring in emergency supplies for Bougainville yesterday, it will eventually be coming in today with no passengers. I know there were a lot of criticisms on the decision to stop the plane, however this was not done lightly but with a lot of consideration on the health and safety of our people. Nonessential people were travelling on the plane that why it was restricted. However, the plane will be coming in today with these supplies minus the passengers.

2. LAW & ORDER SITUATION UPDATE

On the Law & Order situation, the police in the three regions are continuing to report a quiet SOE. No major incidences have been reported as yet except for an unconfirmed shooting incident that occurred yesterday at Mailai Hill in the Konnou Constituency of Buin. According to a situation report received from Buin this morning, police who were deployed to check the roadblock were fired upon by known suspect armed with gun. The person has been positively identified as Aimari from Oria. From the Incident, no injuries were reported. Meanwhile the incident is now under investigation by the police in Buin. With regard to the shooting incident, I wish to strongly appeal to the leaders of the internally displaced people (IDP) who are currently located at Mailai Hill to talk to their young men and immediately remove the illegal road block and stop intimidating and threatening the travelling public including our police officers. Remember, we are currently under a state of emergency to address a major health issue and the last thing I want to see is that we get distracted by such law & order related disorders and violence. Apart from that particular incident, the situation in other parts of Bougainville has been particularly quiet.

GENERAL COMMENTS

I would like to again appeal to everyone to observe the Emergency Orders that have been issued. Some of these emergency orders specifically are for those convenient shops to remain open for the public to have access to however maintain social distancing.

The orders for major sporting activities, customary gathering, big church gathering still stands; that they are being restricted for the next two weeks until Bougainville is cleared of any threats of Covid-19 and until the SOE ends.

I would also like to appeal to the media to be responsible and report accurately on issues of Importance here on Bougainville particularly anything relating to the Emergency Orders. This is to avoid causing anxiety and fear among our people and creating situations where people will question and disrespect authorities on the ground.

Francis N. Tokura, OBE, QPM, DPS
Deputy Commissioner of Police
Chief of Bougainville Police Service & Bougainville Emergency Controller
Controller