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## **MEDIA RELEASE**

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### **TI PNG outraged by payouts for Government cronies**

Transparency International PNG (TI PNG) is outraged at the flood of recent payments to politicians, ex-politicians and selected heads of statutory institutions, especially as two of these are declared candidates for the forthcoming elections.

Even more outrageous is the manner in which some of these payments seem to have been engineered, with contracts being “terminated” so the individual receives a full payout, as opposed to them resigning and perhaps receiving their entitlements “pro-rata”.

TI PNG questions how these people can be paid sums that have been quoted as being in excess of K1 million, and why ex-judges, Prime Ministers and others are receiving substantial improvement to their retirement packages - some of them said to be retrospective of many years. Who’s interest are these boards and salaries and remuneration committees serving?

TI PNG Chairman Mr Mike Manning said the government and public trustee’s should make decisions which consider first and foremost the interest and wellbeing of all citizens of PNG not just the fortunate few.

“All over the country, citizens are openly commenting that there is one rule for the rich and another for the poor. These payments just reinforce that perception,” said Mr Manning

“Our elected leaders and in particular our leaders who sit on public entity boards have to understand that is the people’s money - Money that should be going to medicine, education and services in the rural areas. Instead, it is going straight into the pockets of a select few,” he said.

Mr Manning called on the voting public to be very careful when deciding who to vote for in the coming elections.

“Many of us will be asked to vote for our ‘hauslain’, our relatives and our clansmen. We must not do so unless we are absolutely sure that the candidate will not approve expenditure that goes into the pockets of the elite few,” Mr Manning said.

“We should ask candidates what they propose to do fight the massive levels of corruption that exist in PNG – especially in the public sector,” he said.

<b>Chairman</b>	Mike Manning
<b>Secretary</b>	Richard Kassman
<b>Treasurer</b>	Paul Nindipa
<b>Board Members</b>	Peter Aitsi Kible Bonga Leon Buskens Fr John Glynn Anne Kerepia Sisa Kini Iva Kola Mick McWalter John Nonggorr Lawrence Stephens Ian Tarutia Mel Togolo
<b>Executive Director</b>	Emily George Taule

Mr Manning said citizens should support candidates who honestly intend to provide better services to their villages, and not those who use their public position for their own benefit.

“Citizens must ensure that candidates will not run away to Port Moresby as soon as they are elected, and that they will use their Joint Budget Priorities and Planning committees as a tool for development, not as a reward for political cronies,” Mr Manning said.

Mr Manning said that while TI PNG does not begrudge former leaders their retirement packages, payments such as these must bear some relation to the welfare of the people of PNG.

“While many countries around the world do make similar payments to past senior officials, many of these are richer countries which have already demonstrated an ability to provide basic services to the population. As the PNG Government is yet to demonstrate such ability, payments such as these should not be increased until such a time the majority of our citizens are receiving the basic services they deserve,” Mr Manning said.

“The government should not guarantee that these leaders live in luxury whilst the rest of the country descends into poverty,” he said.

“It is certainly not the proper role of Parliament to reward itself abundantly while the average Papua New Guinean can barely afford to feed and educate their family,” Mr Manning said.

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