



TRANSPARENCY INTERNATIONAL (PNG) INC  
Lokua Avenue, Boroko, Section 54 Lot 31  
PO Box 591 Port Moresby, NCD Phone 323 7517/4917 Fax 323 4317  
E-mail: [yvonne.ngutlick@transparencypng.org.pg](mailto:yvonne.ngutlick@transparencypng.org.pg)  
Website: [www.transparencypng.org.pg](http://www.transparencypng.org.pg)

---

**PRESS STATEMENT FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

---

## **Investigate PNGEC Declaration of SHP Provincial Seat**

**Friday 2<sup>nd</sup> September, 2022, Port Moresby** – The decision by the PNG Electoral Commissioner, Simon Sinai, to declare the Southern Highlands Provincial seat appears to contradict the democratic principles enshrined within the National Constitution, says Transparency International PNG (TIPNG). As a constitutional office, the PNG Electoral Commission (PNGEC) is tasked with upholding the integrity of the electoral process and this decision appears to go against one of the fundamental principles of the democratic election system, that is universal suffrage. The loss of the right of eligible voters to have their vote counted is at direct odds with this principle and further weakens public trust in the PNGEC to fulfil its mandate in the public interest.

“TIPNG identified in our preliminary assessment of the 2022 National General Election, that there is a perceived weakening of the democratic mandate of MP’s due to the many problems encountered in the conduct of the 2022 elections. The decision by the Electoral Commissioner, to declare a candidate under special circumstances, adds further suspicion and doubt in the minds of many citizens,” said Peter Aitsi, TIPNG Board Chair.

“On 9<sup>th</sup> August during the extended counting period, the Commissioner announced in a statement that despite the destruction of ballot papers, the seats of Kabwum and Markham in Morobe Province would be declared so as to deter those who might seek to disrupt the election. However, this rationale is not supported by logic, as the counter-argument is that it will embolden the assault on PNG’s democratic norms, as further candidates who are leading will use disruptive tactics to have themselves declared. A very dangerous and worrying precedent has been set, and one which all thinking Papua New Guinean’s must not let pass without challenge. It is the view of TIPNG there should be an investigation of the matter by the Ombudsman Commission to ensure citizens’ constitutional rights were not inadvertently or intentionally violated,” said Mr. Aitsi.

Under s.175(1A)(b) in the Organic Law on National and Local-level Government Elections, where the Electoral Commission has directed the Returning Officer not to declare a result, “in special circumstances, the Electoral Commission may declare the result based on information concerning scrutiny and other information provided by the Returning Officer or an Assistant Returning Officer.” The application of these powers are relatively broad and so an independent investigation by the Ombudsman Commission would test the basis of the information provided to the EC and the fully understand the rationale for the decision by the PNG Electoral Commission.

TIPNG’s Summary Paper on the 2022 National General Election described the accumulated failures in the preparation, conduct, delivery and conclusion of the Elections as being a severely flawed process. In the Summary Paper TIPNG provided detailed recommendations for consideration in improving the electoral process, focusing on a 5-year structured intervention to restore public trust and demonstrate greater levels of competency. TIPNG stands ready to work with other stakeholders and Government agencies to develop a fully informed reform program that can result in significant improvements in the delivery of our 2027 national elections.

///ENDS///

**Authorized by:**  
**Arianne Kassman**  
**Chief Executive Officer**

**Media contact:**  
**Yvonne Ngutlick**  
**Deputy Director Communications**

---

### ***What is TIPNG?***

TIPNG is a member of Transparency International a global anti-corruption movement committed to fighting corruption. TIPNG is an independent organization in PNG known as a Chapter of the international movement. The PNG chapter advocates against corruption and promotes transparency, good governance, honesty and accountability both in private and public sector dealings. TIPNG tries to assist strengthen the integrity systems of our country such as the police, the parliament, the public services and the judiciary.