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## PRESS STATEMENT FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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### ***Consistency in Leadership Investigations required for Public Confidence***

*Thursday, 21<sup>st</sup> September, 2023 Port Moresby* –The recent suspension of the Commander of the Papua New Guinea Defence Force (PNGDF) by the National Executive Council purportedly over delays in conducting investigations in to the fatalities and injuries sustained during a training exercise has led to calls for consistency in investigations of public office holders. Transparency International Papua New Guinea (TIPNG) is expressing concerns that there appears to be inconsistency in the Government’s handling of investigations of breaches and apparent wrongdoings of public office holders.

“Citizens are right to wonder how the Government of the day has not seen fit to suspend or indeed remove other public office holders and even some cabinet ministers over allegations of corrupt conduct, and breaches of public service codes,” said Peter Aitsi, TIPNG Board Chair in a media statement.

“In TIPNG’s [2021 National Integrity System Assessment](#) of 14 sectoral pillars of national integrity, our main finding was that across the board the legislation to promote integrity was adequate and in place, however the implementation and enforcement of those laws by office holders, including the National Executive Council (NEC) was grossly inadequate.”

“Public confidence in national integrity institutions is reliant on the effective enforcement of the law and consistency of decisions such as the suspension of office holders, so as to not prejudice internal investigations. Also concerning to the public is the use of processes such as Leadership tribunals to attack political opponents or those who do not side with the Government of the day,” said Mr. Aitsi.

The National Integrity System Assessment was funded by the European Union through TIPNG’s Promoting Anti-Corruption and Integrity Strategies (PAIS) Project. The PAIS project was developed to assess and bridge gaps in PNG’s national integrity system.

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#### ***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.