



MINISTER FOR POLICE PAPUA NEW GUINEA

NEWS RELEASE



POLICE MINISTER CONFIRMS PUBLIC INFORMATION ON DRUG TRAFFICKING WILL BE RELEASED AT THE APPROPRIATE TIME

22ND January 2024

Police Minister, Hon. Peter Tsiamalili, Jr, MP, has received concerns from the Member for Bulolo, Hon. Sam Basil, Jr, MP, on the release of public information on arrests in Australia relating to the arrest of alleged drug traffickers.

This includes connections to an illegal flight carrying drugs in 2023 and the apprehension last week of a woman in Queensland allegedly linked to the movement of illegal drugs.

"I appreciate the concerns raised by the Member for Bulolo in relation to arrests that have been effected in Australia that are connected with the trafficking of drugs in his district in 2023," Minister Tsiamalili said.

"The Honourable Sam Basil Jr is right to seek information on the operation to apprehend the accused and put them on trial.

"I am confident that the Member will appreciate that this information is part of an ongoing police investigation in PNG and Australia, so there is limited information that can be released until investigations are completed.

"As Minister, I am not privy to operational information as this is an essential part of our system of government where police have operational independence from the elected leadership.

"Many of these matters are before the court, so the last thing any of us would want to do is to release information that could undermine court proceedings.

"If more arrests are to be made in relation to the matter raised by the Member, these will be the outcome of ongoing police investigations and information will be released at the appropriate time.

"I can assure the Member, and the country, that as information is released by the RPNGC and the AFP this will be made public.

The Minister said the series of arrests of drug traffickers that have taken place in both PNG and Australia in recent years are testament to the strong law enforcement partnership between both countries.

"The only way we will get on top of international organised criminal networks is by working together. This includes training together, sharing sensitive information and co-ordinating joint operations.

"These international criminal networks, particularly from parts of Asia, are organised and the damage they cause to people in our countries is devastating.

"The RPNGC will continue to work with its international partners to ensure that there is no rock under which these criminals can hide.

"Working together is the only way to protect people in our countries."

Hon. Peter Tsiamalili Jr, MP
Minister for Police