



PRIME MINISTER
PORT MORESBY

PRESS STATEMENT

**GOVERNMENT DECISION TO TERMINATE THE
APPOINTMENT OF THE POLICE COMMISSIONER IN THE
INTERESTS OF THE STATE TO ENSURE POLICE FORCE
STABILITY AND ORDERLY AND PEACEFUL GENERAL
ELECTIONS IN 2012**

**An announcement made by the Prime Minister,
Honourable Peter O'Neill CMG MP on 29th September 2011**

The Prime Minister, Hon Peter O'Neill has announced with regret that the National Executive Council has advised the Head of State to terminate the appointment of the Commissioner for Police, Mr Anthony Wagambie in the interest of the State, through no fault of Mr Wagambie.

The Prime Minister said that the revocation of Mr Wagambie's appointment was not politically motivated and that full consultations have been held with the Public Service Commission and the Permanent Parliamentary Appointments Committee. He said that the Government's actions were absolutely necessary to ensure stability within the Police Force over the next twelve months, before, during and after the declaration of the General Election results.

The Prime Minister said that the former Government had behaved irresponsibly in appointing Mr Wagambie without concluding the mandatory consultation process with the appropriate Constitutional institutions. With the current change of government, the NEC has since been informed that Mr Wagambie is already within one year of age 60 years, which is the compulsory retirement age for the Heads of the State Services.

Because Mr Wagambie is due to retire in July 2012 in the middle of the General Elections, his appointment made by the former government is for only fourteen months, contrary to the *Police Act* which requires that an appointment must be for four years.

Hence, on Mr Wagambie's retirement a new Commissioner would have to be appointed by the Government during the crucial stages of the 2012 General Elections, disturbing command and control of the Police Force at this most critical time.

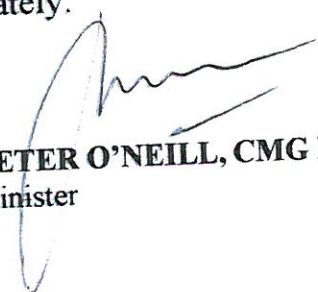
Mr O'Neill said that his Government needed to be able to work with a Police Commissioner in preparation for and conduct of the elections. He said that he could not put at risk law and order and the peace in the Country during the elections due to a change of command and control in the Police Force.

He said that based on proper legal advice and support from the Public Service Commission, the Government will terminate Mr Wagambie in the interest of the State and pay out the balance of his contract entitlements so that he will lose no remuneration prior to his compulsory retirement in July 2012.

The Prime Minister said that Mr Wagambie is not at fault and that the fault lies with the former government and its irresponsible action in appointing him for a short period only in breach of the *Police Act*. The Government has ensured that Mr Wagambie suffers no financial loss as a result of his premature revocation.

With regard to the appointment of a new Commissioner of Police, the Prime Minister said that the NEC has advised the Head of State to appoint Mr. Tom Kulunga, an experienced Police Officer with many of those years in the executive ranks of the Police Force, as acting Commissioner of Police until a substantive Commissioner of Police is appointed. Cabinet has also directed the acting Commissioner to submit names of suitable candidates to Cabinet to consider for appointment as Deputy Commissioners.

In the meantime Cabinet has directed for the substantive vacancy to be advertised immediately.



HON. PETER O'NEILL, CMG MP
Prime Minister