

The Burnham Declaration

BY BOUGAINVILLE LEADERS ON THE RE-ESTABLISHMENT OF A PROCESS FOR LASTING PEACE AND JUSTICE ON BOUGAINVILLE – July 5 – 18, 1997

We, the leaders of the people of Bougainville, having met in Burnham, New Zealand, from 5-18 July 1997, in order to end the war and restore lasting peace on Bougainville, hereby commit ourselves to the establishment of a clear process for the achievement of a political settlement to the war on Bougainville with the Government of Papua New Guinea, and declare that we are united in our common stand on the following:

1. Unity and Reconciliation

We recognise that the war on Bougainville has divided our people. In order to achieve lasting peace, we must reconcile with ourselves as leaders to ensure that there is unity and reconciliation among our people at all levels of the community.

2. Process for Negotiation

We will work together with the Government of Papua New Guinea to set up a process for negotiations between Bougainville Leaders and the Government of Papua New Guinea.

3. Ending the War

As soon as the process referred to under Clause 9 below is established between Bougainville Leaders and the Government of Papua New Guinea, we will jointly bring about an end to the war on Bougainville.

4. Declaration of Ceasefire

In order to help create a peaceful environment for a neutral peacekeeping force to come and maintain peace on Bougainville, the Bougainville Leaders urge all parties under force of arms to agree to a declaration of ceasefire, which shall take effect simultaneously with the arrival of the first contingent of the peacekeeping force on Bougainville.

5. A Neutral Peacekeeping Force

5.1 We believe that a neutral Peacekeeping Force is essential to the peace process. We, therefore, request that such a force be invited to Bougainville at the beginning of the process for a period of not more than three years under the auspices of the United Nations.

5.2 We desire also that before a 'Status of Forces' Agreement is agreed to by the State of Papua New Guinea and countries contributing to the Peacekeeping Force that the Bougainville Interim Government and the Bougainville Transitional Government be fully consulted, and be party to it.

6. Demilitarisation of Bougainville

6.1 The demilitarisation of Bougainville is an essential step in the peace process. We, therefore, call for the complete withdrawal of the Papua New Guinea Defence Force within a time frame to be agreed to between Bougainville Leaders and the Government of Papua New Guinea.

- 6.2 As part of this demilitarisation process, there shall also be the laying down of arms by all Bougainvilleans, currently under the force of arms over a period of time, which will be supervised by the Peacekeeping Force in conjunction with the Bougainville Transitional Government and the Bougainville Interim Government.

7. Lifting of Blockade and Removal of Restrictions

We agree that there is a need for access throughout Bougainville to relevant donor organisations and other humanitarian agencies, including ICRC and UNICEF, for the implementation of health and education programs, and for the restoration of basic needs. We further undertake to pursue discussions with the Papua New Guinea Government to this end.

8. Political Process

We undertake to ensure that the people of Bougainville, as a people, freely and democratically exercise their right to determine their political future.

9. Commencement of Process and Venue for First Meeting

We will move to have the first meeting of Bougainville Leaders with the Government of Papua New Guinea no later than September 1997 to set up the process and begin its implementation. We further agree that this meeting be held in a neutral place outside Papua New Guinea or Bougainville.

Declared at Burnham this 18 July 1997.

(signed)

Joseph Kabui
Leader of BIG/BRA
Delegation

(signed)

Gerard Sinato
Leader of BTG Delegation

(signed)

Martin Miriori

(signed)

John Momis MP

(signed)

Sam Kauona

(signed)

Sam Akoitai