

**The Bougainville Leaders Meeting
Burnham, Christchurch, New Zealand**

Friday 18 July 1997

Joint Communiqué

1. The delegations of the Bougainville Interim Government (BIG) and the Bougainville Revolutionary Army (BRA) and the Bougainville Transitional Government (BTG) have ended their meeting today which was held from 5 - 18 July 1997 in Burnham, Christchurch, New Zealand. The talks were very fruitful and had resulted in the signing of a Declaration.
2. The Bougainville Leaders recognise that the war on Bougainville had divided their people and that it was necessary for them to be united and reconciled in order that their people be also united and reconciled.
3. The Leaders believe that the first priority is to re-establish a clear process where a political settlement could be reached with Papua New Guinea.
4. The Leaders in their declaration stated that demilitarisation was essential to the peace process. In this regard, they have undertaken to work with the Government of Papua New Guinea to establish a process wherein a peacekeeping force could be invited to begin the process of demilitarisation on Bougainville. It was also declared that a ceasefire would have to be agreed to by all the warring factions prior to the process of demilitarisation.
5. The Leaders declared that the laying down of arms of all Bougainvilleans is a necessary part of the demilitarisation process.
6. The Leaders declared that there was a need to lift the blockade or ease the restrictions on Bougainville to allow access to humanitarian organisations.
7. Finally, the Leaders declared that they will request the Government of Papua New Guinea for a meeting before the end of September 1997 to commence the process of negotiations.
8. The Leaders on behalf of the people on Bougainville express their deepest appreciation to the Government of Papua New Guinea for allowing the Talks to go ahead, and the Government of New Zealand for the excellent arrangements it had made for hosting this Bougainville Leaders Meeting at Burnham, New Zealand.

(signed)

Mr Gerard Sinato
Leader of BTG Delegation

(signed)

Mr Joseph Kabui
Leader of BIG/BRA Delegation