

309/4/15



NEW ZEALAND HIGH COMMISSION

COMMONWEALTH AVENUE  
CANBERRA, A.C.T. 2600  
AUSTRALIA

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**FACSIMILE MESSAGE**

**CLASS**                   Unclassified                   **FILE NO:** 37/29/1

**DATE:**                   15 October 1996               **NO OF PAGES:** 4

**FROM:**                   Canberra                       **APPROVED BY:** ren/m

**TO:**                       WELLINGTON                   **PRECEDENCE:** Routine

**CC:**                       Port Moresby

**LD:**                       MFAT (SPA, DEV, DP2, DSP1, EAB)

**P/S MFA**

**SUBJECT:**               PNG: BOUGAINVILLE; MIRIUNG

0896

We attach for your information a report from today's Australian withheld  
s 6(b)(i), s 6(b)(ii)

RELEASSED OFFICIAL INFORMATION

ACT COPY

# BRA denies hand in murder

**MYSTERY** still surrounds the death of the assassinated Bougainville leader, Mr Theodore Miriung, who is to be given a State funeral this week by the Papua New Guinea Government.

Bougainville rebel leaders joined others throughout Papua New Guinea yesterday in deploring the killing, which took place in front of Mr Miriung's wife and five children as they ate dinner on Saturday evening.

Speaking via a radio link from Bougainville, a spokesman for rebel sources in South Bougainville, where Mr Miriung was killed, denied any involvement by the Bougainville Revolutionary Army in the incident, which was expected to set back hopes for a peaceful resolution of the Bougainville crisis.

"We strongly deny any complicity in murdering Miriung. There were no bad feelings and we still considered him a friend," the spokesman said, in a reference to the fact that Mr Miriung had rejected the BRA's armed struggle in 1994.

Instead, the rebel spokesman claimed that witnesses had seen a team of men leave the scene of the assassination soon after Mr Miriung was shot.

"The men fired a flare and were later picked up by an ambulance that has been used by the PNGDF (Papua New Guinea Defence Force) for transport," the spokesman was quoted as saying.

**Mary-Louise O'Callaghan**

South Pacific correspondent



Mr Miriung ... State funeral

The BRA claimed that elements within the PNGDF blamed Mr Miriung for recent defections of members of a government-backed resistance force.

PNG's Prime Minister, Sir Julius Chan, has ordered a full investigation into the death, which he described as a "foul deed".

But Sir Julius has so far declined to comment publicly on who might be responsible.

An autopsy has shown that Mr Miriung was shot from both

behind and in front, suggesting at least two gunmen were involved in his death. No one else was injured.

The commander of the PNGDF, Brigadier-General Jerry Singirok, blamed the rebels, claiming the assassination was proof that the BRA was simply a "terrorist group".

The Catholic bishops of Papua New Guinea and the Solomon Islands have also deplored Mr Miriung's death, saying it was proof that "there are people desperate to stop the peace process".

Mr Miriung, who had attempted to bridge the gap between the PNG national Government and the secessionists since becoming Premier, had been expecting to host a visit from the PNG Minister for Provincial Affairs, Mr Peter Barter, today.

Mr Barter said yesterday that arrangements were being made for a State funeral in Port Moresby before Mr Miriung's body was returned to his home in Bougainville.

He said Mr Miriung's death was a tragedy but only intensified the Government's commitment to achieving peace on the island.

"We will continue with his plans to put in place a local-level government which can assist the traditional chiefs of Bougainville to resume control," Mr Barter said from Port Moresby yesterday.

RELEASED  
OFFICIAL

*Pretty much as delivered 14/10 JES*

**FOREIGN AFFAIRS AND TRADE**

*withheld in full - s 6 (b) (i)*

RELEASED UNDER THE OFFICIAL INFORMATION ACT

withheld in full - s 6(b)(i)

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309/415



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**CLASS:** Unclassified **FILE NO:** 37/29/1

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**FROM:** Canberra **APPROVED BY:** ren

**TO:** WELLINGTON **PRECEDENCE:** Routine

**CC:** Port Moresby

**LD:** MFAT (SPA, DEV, DP2, EAB)

**SUBJECT:** PNG: BOUGAINVILLE: MIRIUNG

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We attach for your information reports from the Australian press together with FM Alexander Downer's press release.

OFFICIAL INFORMATION ACT  
RELEASSED

# Murder of PNG go-between 'act of madness'

SMH  
14/10/96

By CRAIG SKEHAN  
Foreign Affairs Correspondent

Mr Theodore Miriung, seen by many as holding out the greatest hope for peace on Bougainville, was shot dead on Saturday night in front of family members.

While the secessionist Bougainville Revolutionary Army (BRA) accused the PNG military of killing Mr Miriung, who headed the PNG Government-backed Bougainville Transitional Government, the Defence Force blamed the rebels.

"Theodore Miriung's killing has hit at the heart and soul of the nation of Papua New Guinea," the Prime Minister, Sir Julius Chan, said last night.

"This slaughter has been an act of madness perpetrated by ungodly cowards. I condemn those who have carried out this dreadful and foul deed."

Sir Julius did not directly accuse the BRA of Mr Miriung's killing.

Observers said the death of the man who had pledged himself to seek an end to the eight-year-old conflict threatened to worsen the bloodshed.

A spokesman for the political wing of the BRA said Mr Miriung was killed in front of his wife in the village of Kapana in southern Bougainville by anti-BRA forces.

The spokesman claimed tensions had risen following accusations by PNG soldiers that Mr Miriung had encouraged resistance members to defect to the BRA.

Mr Miriung was involved in political campaigning in support of autonomy for Bougainville for more than 20 years.

He initially acted as an adviser to the BRA when secessionist strife flared in 1988, linked to a royalties dispute at the massive former Australian Panguna copper mine.

In recent years, some rebel



"A dreadful and foul deed" ... the murdered Mr Miriung.

groups have deteriorated into what are virtually bands of bandits lacking discipline or any clear political direction. The PNG Defence Force has also had major discipline problems and has violated human rights.

Mr Miriung agreed to head the transitional government, but peace talks in Cairns last year backed by the Australian Government broke down and a huge Government military offensive in the middle of this year failed.

Some elements of the PNG Defence Force and allied members of the resistance remained suspicious of Mr Miriung because of his past BRA links. Elements of the BRA regarded him as a turncoat.

But in the search for middle ground, Mr Miriung had support in both camps as a man who might be able to broker peace based on greater autonomy, as opposed to independence.

Australian-based supporters of the BRA's independence push last night expressed deep regret over Mr Miriung's death.

# Murder of Bougainville chief harms peace hopes

Just 14/10/96

RESOLUTION of Papua New Guinea's long-running Bougainville crisis suffered a major blow with the assassination of the Premier of Bougainville, Mr Theodore Miriung, who was shot by an unidentified sniper while having dinner with his family on Saturday night.

PNG's Prime Minister, Sir Julius Chan, yesterday condemned the killing as the work of "ungodly cowards", but in a one-page statement declined to offer any explanation as to who was behind the assassination.

Mr Miriung, who had worked persistently since becoming premier and head of a Port Moresby-endorsed transitional government for the breakaway province, was considered by many to personify the only remaining chance for a peaceful resolution of the crisis.

His death leaves a vacuum between the warring parties that is unlikely to be bridged in the short term.

A former National Court judge, he accepted the premiership early in 1995 after rejecting the Bougainville Revolutionary Army's armed struggle as the means for achieving independence.

But his efforts to bridge the long-running and bitter gap between the PNG National Government and the BRA led both sides to distrust him and largely frustrated many of his efforts.

Yesterday the PNG Defence Force and the BRA were both blaming each other for his death.

The commander of the Papua Guinea Defence Force, Brigadier General Jerry Singirok, issued a statement extending his sympathies to Mr Miriung's family and blaming "brutal gangsters" for the assassination.

Mary-Louise O'Callaghan

South Pacific correspondent



"The Premier and I have worked closely since 1994 for peace on Bougainville," General Singirok said. "I am at a loss at the news."

However, Mr Miriung was well respected in Bougainville for his willingness to stand up to the PNG army in defence of ordinary Bougainvilleans. In June he exposed the alleged execution of eight Bougainvillean men in the north of the island and last month he was ordered at gunpoint from the main island.

A spokesman for the rebel "interim government" claimed by radio from Bougainville yesterday that members of the PNG Defence Force were responsible for the killing and were blaming Mr Miriung for the recent defection of members of a local resistance who had been fighting with the PNGDF.

There is no means of independent verification of what took place but both sides so far have confirmed that Mr Miriung was shot from behind while eating dinner in his wife's village, Kabana, in South Bougainville between 6pm and 7pm on Saturday.

His body has been taken to the administrative headquarters of Buka at the northern tip of Bougainville.

Sir Julius yesterday urged the nation to remain calm.

"I urge us all to ... look into our own hearts, and to seek a lasting solution to the Bougainville conflict."

Relations between the two men had been strained in recent months, although Sir Julius had recently agreed to Mr Miriung's request that he consider proposals for greater autonomy for the province.

37/29/1



# MEDIA RELEASE

## MINISTER FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS

### ALEXANDER DOWNER

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FA 112

13 OCTOBER 1996

#### ASSASSINATION OF MIRIUNG

The Government is shocked and saddened at the reported assassination of Theodore Miriung, Premier of the Bougainville Transitional Government.

At this stage few details are known of the attack and it is not known who was responsible.

Miriung was a courageous and influential figure who dedicated himself to the pursuit of a peaceful resolution of the eight year conflict in Bougainville. With his passing this will become all the more difficult to achieve.

Theodore Miriung was last in Australia for the two rounds of Bougainville peace talks which were held in Cairns at the end of last year.

RELEASSED UNDER THE OFFICIAL INFORMATION ACT

TOPIC DOCUMENT PRINT REQUESTED BY USER RSADLEIR on 14 Oct 96 at 01:25 pm

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TO.

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PP JAKARTA/81 MANILA/887 NAURU/5400  
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PP TARAWA/8650 THURSDAY ISLAND/5454 VILA/5525  
PP WELLINGTON/4521

FM. CANBERRA/ T3

U N C L A S S I F I E D

PRESS RELEASE - ASSASSINATION OF MIRIUNG

FOLLOWING IS THE TEXT OF MR DOWNER'S RELEASE FA 112 OF 13 OCTOBER 96  
TITLED ASSASSINATION OF MIRIUNG.

THE GOVERNMENT IS SHOCKED AND SADDENED AT THE REPORTED ASSASSINATION  
OF THEODORE MIRIUNG, PREMIER OF THE BOUGAINVILLE TRANSITIONAL  
GOVERNMENT.

AT THIS STAGE FEW DETAILS ARE KNOWN OF THE ATTACK AND IT IS NOT KNOWN  
WHO WAS RESPONSIBLE.

MIRIUNG WAS A COURAGEOUS AND INFLUENTIAL FIGURE WHO DEDICATED HIMSELF  
TO THE PURSUIT OF A PEACEFUL RESOLUTION OF THE EIGHT YEAR CONFLICT IN  
BOUGAINVILLE. WITH HIS PASSING THIS WILL BECOME ALL THE MORE  
DIFFICULT TO ACHIEVE.

THEODORE MIRIUNG WAS LAST IN AUSTRALIA FOR THE TWO ROUNDS OF  
BOUGAINVILLE PEACE TALKS WHICH WERE HELD IN CAIRNS AT THE END OF LAST  
YEAR.

XC. O.CE663901 0907 14.10.96  
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CM. KIRK CONINGHAM, PARLIAMENTARY AND MEDIA BRANCH, (EXTN 3214)

SE. 000  
SU. LBCDD  
SU. JAOLB  
ACTION: INFO  
ACTION: POL1  
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309/4/15

Office of the  
**MINISTER OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS  
AND TRADE**

14 October 1996

**Bougainville Assassination**

The assassination of Premier Theodore Miringu has been described by Foreign Minister Don McKinnon as a major blow to hopes for peace on Bougainville.

Commenting on the killing on Saturday of the Bougainville Transitional Government Premier, Mr McKinnon said Mr Miringu was one person who could talk to all the parties involved.

"He was a key player in the peace initiatives and his killing is an outrage.

"I strongly urge all those involved to redouble their efforts to renew discussion and reach a peaceful settlement. As ever we are ready to help," he concluded.

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§ 9(2)(a)



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309/4715

South Pacific Division  
Fax No: (04) 494-8521

## FACSIMILE MESSAGE

**DATE:** 14 October 1996

**TO:** PORT MORESBY  
HONIARA  
CANBERRA

**PRECEDENCE:** Routine

**FROM:** 39(2)(a) **CHARGE CODE:** SPA

**MFAT:** SPA **PAGE 1 OF:** 2

**SUBJ:** THEODORE MIRIUNG: PRESS REPORTS

We attach for your information press reporting of today on Theodore Miriung's assassination.

Document 2

**STATEMENT OF CONFIDENTIALITY:** The information contained in this document is intended only for the addressee. If you are not the addressee, any disclosure, photocopying, distribution, or use of this information is strictly prohibited. If you have received this facsimile in error, please notify the sender by telephone immediately.

# Killings of Bougainville leader 'an act of madness'

PORT MORESBY

THE killing of Bougainville transitional government premier Theodore Miriung was an "act of madness" that hit at the heart and soul of Papua New Guinea, Prime Minister Sir Julius Chan said last night.

Mr Miriung was shot through the heart during an attack by two men while attending a family function in southern Bougainville on Saturday night, government sources said. He died immediately.

The cause of the shooting is not yet known. Mr Miriung had political enemies on both sides of the eight-year secessionist battle between the Papua New Guinea defence force and rebel fighters.

Sir Julius urged Papua New Guinea to remain calm over the killing as he praised Mr Miriung's efforts to bring peace to the strife-torn island since being installed as premier in April last year.

"Theodore Miriung's killing has hit at the heart and soul of the nation of Papua New Guinea," Sir Julius said. "This slaughter has been an act of madness perpetrated by ungodly cowards."

THEODORE MIRIUNG WAS ONE OF THE GREATEST DEFENDERS OF BOUGAINVILLE WE HAVE SEEN, AND HE HAS BEEN SHOT FOR NO OTHER REASON THAN THAT HE PLACED THE GOOD OF HIS PROVINCE AND ITS PEOPLE ABOVE HIS OWN PERSONAL SAFETY.

Australian high commissioner David Irvine said Mr Miriung was a man of compassion and humanity who felt for all Papua New Guineans who had suffered as a result of the secessionist crisis.

"As premier, he had worked assiduously against many obstacles to promote a peaceful solution to the problem of Bougainville," he said.

Despite being head of the Bougainville transitional government, which is recognised by the Papua New Guinea government as the legal governing body on the island, Mr Miriung was distrusted by some members of the Papua New Guinea defence force because of his prior association with the Bougainville Revolutionary Army.

Mr Miriung, a lawyer and former adviser to the BRA leadership, increasingly saw peace and rehabilitation as superseding the struggle for sovereignty. — AAP

# Bougainville leader killed

PORT MORESBY — The leader of Bougainville's transitional government, Mr Theodore Miriung, has been assassinated, intelligence sources said yesterday.

Details of the killing were sketchy, but the sources said Mr Miriung was gunned down by two men in his home village of Kaparo in the island's south.

The security sources said his body had been taken to Sohamo Hospital in the island's north by security force members.

Despite his efforts to negotiate peace between Papua New Guinea and the Bougainville Revolutionary Army (BRA), Mr Miriung was distrusted by elements on both sides of the secessionist crisis.

Although he was head of the Bougainville Transitional Government — which the PNG Government recognises — as the legal governing body on the island — some members of the military distrusted him because of his former association with the BRA.

After the Kangu beach killing of

11 security force members by rebels last month, the Defence Minister, Mr Mathias Jjape, accused Mr Miriung of inciting the attack and tried to have him placed under surveillance.

Despite the doubts about Mr Miriung from both sides, some observers recognised him as one of the most potent forces in trying to negotiate peace on Bougainville.

One intelligence source described his death as a "dreadful blow" to the peace process.

"It's a great shame, he was a man who was committed to trying to pull the two sides together and find some common ground," he said.

"It's disastrous really. Not many men had the commitment and background that Miriung had.

"His job was to walk an extremely difficult line between the Government and the rebels, and in doing so he was under suspicion from both sides."

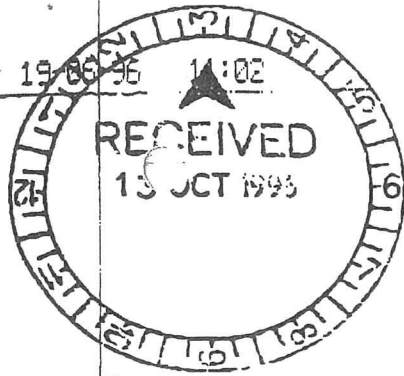
— AAP

DOMINION



OFFICIALS FOR RELEASE

HERALD



S 9 (27) (a)

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### BOUGAINVILLE INTERIM GOVERNMENT

Representative to the Unrepresented Nations and Peoples Organization  
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309/4/15  
SD  
APM  
DLS

#### News Release

For immediate release. The Hague. Sunday October 13, 1996

"PNG PRIME MINISTER SIR JULIUS CHAN AND HIS DEFENCE MINISTER MR MATHIAS IJAPE MUST BE HELD RESPONSIBLE FOR THE BRUTAL MURDER OF LATE BOUGAINVILLE TRANSITIONAL GOVERNMENT (BTG) PREMIER MR THEODORE MIRIUNG BY THEIR SECURITY FORCES" SAYS BOUGAINVILLE INTERIM GOVERNMENT (BIG) SECRETARY MR MARTIN MIRIORI

The assassination of the late BTG Premier Mr Theodore Miriung by members of the so called PNG Government security forces at Konea in the Siwai district of South Bougainville on Saturday morning 12th October 1996 must be squarely blamed on both the PNG Prime Minister Sir Julius Chan and his Defence Minister Mr Mathias Ijape for plotting and ordering their troops to murder the late Premier.

The assassination of the BTG leader has ended the period of much speculation and wild accusations at late Mr Miriung, especially by Mr Ijape who strongly suspected him of closely collaborating and supporting the BIG and Bougainville Revolutionary Army (BRA) to fight for Bougainville's independence from Papua New Guinea.

The late BTG Premier was also strongly accused by Mr Ijape of instigating the recent major clash that took place at Kangku Beach, South Bougainville on 8 September 1996 between the PNG troops and the BRA which resulted in the killings of 13 PNG soldiers by BRA. Following this incident the PNG Defence Minister then threatened to remove late Mr Miriung from Office. At the time when late BTG Premier was killed he was supposed to have been still under the PNG military house arrest on direct orders from Mr Ijape himself.

According to the report from Bougainville this morning, late Mr Miriung had travelled from Buka last Friday to visit his family in Siwai where his wife comes from for the weekend. The late BTG Premier was from the Kieta district of Central Bougainville.

ORIGINAL INFORMATION



The report also said that following late Mr Miriung's assassination, all resistance fighters in the area have now since fled into the jungle, taking with them their PNG Defence Forces issued weapons and ammunition to rejoin the BRA and fight against the PNG security forces. There is now report of increase of fresh fighting between the PNGDF and BRA/Resistance fighters combined since yesterday morning in South Bougainville.

"This brutal assassination of late Mr Miriung should be again seen as one more concrete evidence to the media outside as well as the international community that the so called PNG security forces simply cannot be trusted at all to protect the basic human rights and security of all Bougainvilleans on the island in this now 8 year old conflict.

"What more proof does the international community including Australia and New Zealand want before they can pressure PNG Government to pull all their forces out of Bougainville? The longer that these forces are allowed to remain on the island, the more killings will continue to take place as part of the campaign by PNG Government to suppress the rights of the Bougainvilleans to determine their own political future for the island", Mr Miriori said.

"All Bougainvilleans are therefore strongly urged to make one more common and united stand in demanding the complete withdrawal of the PNG military from all parts of the island.

"If the PNG Government does not want to pull all its forces out from the island, then this time we must stand together and force them to pull out and leave our people and leaders alone to sort out our own problems and decide on the island's future", Mr Miriori said.

..... END OF RELEASE .....

For more information and interviews please contact 59(2)(a)

RELEASES  
OFFICIAL INFORMATION ACT



NEW ZEALAND HIGH COMMISSION

TE AKA AORERE  
PORT MORESBY

FILE NO: 82/1/8

NR  
309/4/15

F A C S I M I L E M E S S A G E

DATE: 19 FEBRUARY 1997

TO: WELLINGTON

PRECEDENCE: ROUTINE

FROM: PORT MORESBY

FAX NO: SD

MFAT: SPA, EAB, UNC, HRU

PAGE 1 OF: 2

OTHER AGENCIES:

SUBJ: PNG: BOUGAINVILLE: MIRIUNG ASSASSINATION

We attach for your information an account of the findings of Sri Lankan Judge Thiruvukkarasu Suntheralingam, sitting as a Coroner in Papua New Guinea to enquire into the manner, circumstances and cause of the death of BTG Premier Theodore Miriung in October 1996.

2 The substance of these findings has been known since Judge Suntheralingam revealed them at a media conference immediately prior to his departure from Port Moresby's Jackson's Airport on 30 November 1996. However, this is the first publication of the actual text.

withheld - s 6(a)  
s 6(b)(ii)

OFFICIAL INFORMATION ACT

FOCUS

# Coroner makes findings in Theodore Miriung murder

**I**n November last year, following the assassination of the then Bougainville Premier Theodore Miriung, the Commonwealth Secretariate - acting on a request from Prime Minister Sir Julius Chan - appointed retired Sri Lankan high court judge Thiru. Vukkarasu Satharalingam to inquire into the manner, circumstances, and cause of Mr Miriung's death. The following is the judge's findings on his three-week investigations.

**B**Y WARRANT dated November 11, 1996, I was appointed by the Hon Arnold K. Marsipal, Minister for Justice, to be a coroner in Papua New Guinea to inquire into the manner, circumstances and the cause of death of Theodore Miriung, the deceased.

In the discharge of my functions as such coroner, I was assisted by Kosi Latu of the Commonwealth Secretariat.

I recorded the evidence of witnesses on November 21 and 26, 1996. Seven witnesses gave evidence (their depositions annexed to the report).

The following facts emerge from the evidence of the said witnesses, whose names I refrain from mentioning in this report as those witnesses apprehend danger to their lives if their identities are disclosed.

The deceased arrived at his wife's house

Immediately thereafter, two soldiers in battle dress armed with guns were seen moving around the deceased's house

in Kapana village at about noon, on Friday the 11th October, 1996.

At about 1pm the same day, one (named), a resistance fighter working with the Defence Force attached to the Tonu camp, was heard telling the soldiers in the camp that T. Miriung had come to Konga by helicopter that day.

At that time, he and another person attached to that camp and referred to by his initials (SK) were heard to remark that the deceased "will not be returning to Buka but will be going down six feet".

In the afternoon of 11.10.96 (named) got himself dropped near the deceased's house. He was armed with a pump action shotgun at that time. On the next day, October 12, 1996 around 12 noon, another witness who had known (named) previously, had seen (named) armed with a gun on the main road near the deceased's house and looking towards the deceased's house.

At about 6pm on October 12, 1996, (named) and five soldiers from the Tonu camp, all dressed in battle gear left the camp in an ambulance used by the Defence Forces. The ambulance was driven by (named).

The ambulance was seen being driven slowly past the deceased's house towards Konga at about 6pm on October 12, 1996.

A little later on 12.10.96 the ambulance was seen parked at Konga station. At that time there were only four soldiers with the ambulance. They were identified as

(named), a corporal from Rabaul, another known as JK from Kefema and Kavieng, from Kavieng and the fourth from Rabaul.

A short while later, gunshots were heard from the direction of the deceased's village. Upon hearing the shots, the said soldiers got into the ambulance and the ambulance was driven by (named) towards Kapana village.

At about 7pm on October 12, 1996 the ambulance returned to the camp driven by (named). He was alone at that time. A few minutes later, the other five soldiers were seen returning to the camp, on foot.

While the ambulance was parked at Konga, the deceased was gunned down at his home when he was having dinner with the members of his family under the house.

Immediately thereafter, two soldiers in battle dress armed with guns were seen moving around the deceased's house. At that time a resistance fighter (named) and a student called (named) were seen walking ahead of one of the armed soldiers towards the main road.

The same night, 26 spent cartridge shells were recovered from near the body of the deceased by relatives of the deceased and kept under an orange tree. Early next morning (named), a resistance force commander from Konga called at the deceased's house and took the empty shells away. The resistance fighters and defence forces work together.

On the instructions of (named) and one (named), a PNGDF corporal, the ambulance was converted on October 16, 1996 to look like a Jeep, the word ambulance removed, the Red Cross signs scraped off and the word "SPY" inscribed on the bonnet of the vehicle.

In this work of conversion, the soldiers attached to the Tonu camp also took an active part.

That the death of the deceased resulted from extensive gunshot injuries inflicted on him at about 6.30pm on October 12, 1996 is established by the Medical Report and the certificate of death. Copies annexed to the report.

The evidence of the seven witnesses who testified before me, leads me to the finding that the persons concerned in the wilful murder of Theodore Miriung are members of the Defence Forces stationed in the Tonu camp and a few resistance fighters. It seems to me clear beyond reasonable doubt that the six persons who left Tonu camp in the ambulance at about 6pm on October 12, 1996 are either principals or accessories in the murder of Miriung on that day.

Of the six, two are identified by name, and one is identified by his initials (SK). The identities of the others have to be ascertained.

The involvement of (named) who removed the empty cartridge shells and the involvement of (named) who was one of those who ordered the conversion of the ambulance into a Jeep, and of the soldier referred to as (SK), require further investigation.

I direct that the CID continue its investigations and takes steps to arrest all those involved in the murder of Theodore Miriung.

I recommend that all possible assistance be given to the investigators to ensure a speedy completion of the investigations.

309/4/15



NEW ZEALAND HIGH COMMISSION

COMMONWEALTH AVENUE  
CANBERRA, A.C.T. 2600  
AUSTRALIA

TELEPHONE: (06) 270 4211  
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FACSIMILE MESSAGE

**ACTION COPY**

CLASS Unclassified

FILE NO: 37/29/1

DATE: 18 February 1997

NO OF PAGES: 7

FROM: Canberra

APPROVED BY: *[Signature]*

TO: WELLINGTON

1140

PRECEDENCE: Routine

CC: Port Moresby

LD: MFAT (SPA, EAB)

SUBJECT: PNG: BOUGAINVILLE

We attach press reporting for your information.

RELEASSED OFFICIAL INFORMATION



## WORLD 7

## ■ PAPUA NEW GUINEA

Evidence  
of cover-up,  
Miriung  
report saysBy LUCY PALMER  
in Port Moresby

Soldiers from the Papua New Guinea Defence Force (PNGDF) believed to have assassinated the Premier of Bougainville, Mr Theodore Miriung, last year may also have tried to cover up evidence, a confidential colonial report suggests.

There was evidence that an army ambulance used in the shooting was, four days later, converted by soldiers to look like a jeep, with the word "Ambulance" and the Red Cross signs being removed, the report says.

The PNGDF Chief of Staff, Colonel Jack Tuat, said in an interview it was likely that some of the soldiers accused over the killing in the report had lied to an internal army inquiry in January.

The soldiers are still serving members of the PNGDF.

No one has been charged over Mr Miriung's assassination.

The report of the inquest, conducted late last year by a Commonwealth Secretariat-appointed judge, Justice Suntheringham, alleged seven PNGDF members were involved in the killing. It detailed the alleged movements of several PNGDF personnel on the night of October 12, when Mr Miriung was shot dead at his wife's village in south Bougainville.

The soldiers were allegedly helped by members of the "resistance", an armed civilian force fighting alongside government troops against the pro-secessionist Bougainville Revolutionary Army.

The civilians are alleged to have taken away 26 spent cartridges from outside Mr Miriung's house.

The inquest heard evidence of a conversation between a PNGDF soldier and a named resistance fighter the day before the shooting, in which they said the premier would not be returning to the administrative headquarters of Buka after his weekend off, but "will be going down six feet".

Colonel Tuat said the PNGDF had not been given a copy of the coroner's report. He said the army preferred that police continue their independent investigations and then lay charges against those alleged to be responsible.

There was increasing pressure on the PNGDF from the office of the Prime Minister, Sir Julius Chan, for the army to cooperate with police investigators, he said.

But police sources said the PNGDF was frustrating their inquiries and that a recent attempt to interview witnesses had been abandoned after half an hour because of fears of intimidation by the army and resistance fighters.

Allegations of army involvement and delays in the police investigation are expected to be raised by Australia's Minister for Foreign Affairs, Mr Downer, when he arrives in Port Moresby for a three-day visit tomorrow.

RELEASSED IN  
OFFICIAL INFORMATION ACT

# Three soldiers killed: Sinato

Hostages 'were murdered a month ago'

By HENZY YAKHAM

PORT MORESBY: Three kidnapped soldiers have been killed by their rebel captors, Bougainville Premier Gerard Sinato announced here yesterday.

The soldiers who were captured by the rebels in October were killed more than a month ago, Mr Sinato said.

He said the soldiers were killed near Tintupz and were buried. Efforts were continuing to locate the burial site.

The Bougainville Transitional Government and the Defence Force officials on Bougainville and the headquarters here knew about the killings, but did not make any announcement of the incident.

The soldiers were taken hostage by the rebels at Siara Junction near Selau on the northern tip of Bougainville, only 14 kilometres from Buka.

They were being escorted to an arms surrender by rebels, but were tricked into an ambush and captured.

Mr Sinato also said that five others, three policemen and two soldiers, who were captured during the September Kangu Beach massacre would be released before Christmas.

He said: "It is a good Christmas present for the relatives of the security forces members who are held hostage by the rebels."

Mr Sinato said the five will be released after Bougainville MP John Momis travels to the area where they are being held.

The five are being held in the Laguai area of Buin on southern Bougainville.

In early October, Mr Momis travelled to the area and held talks with the rebels and reached an understanding for their safe release.

The second round of talks with the rebels was to have taken place in mid October, but was abandoned following the assassination of former Premier Theodore Miriung.



309/4/15



NEW ZEALAND HIGH COMMISSION  
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FACSIMILE MESSAGE

CLASS	Unclassified	FILE NO: 37/29/1
DATE:	13 December 1996	NO OF PAGES: 4
FROM:	Canberra	APPROVED BY: s 9(2)(a)
TO:	WELLINGTON 1036	PRECEDENCE: Routine
CC:	Port Moresby Honiara	
LD:	MFAT (SPA, DR3, DEV, DSP1, EAB)	
SUBJECT:	PNG: BOUGAINVILLE	

We attach for your information further reporting from the Australian press.

# PNG troops use dumdum bullets

By South Pacific correspondent MARY-LOUISE O'CALLAGHAN

HONIARA: Internationally banned dumdum bullets are being used on Bougainville by Papua New Guinea soldiers and their allied resistance forces, say surgeons treating wounded civilians who have escaped to the neighbouring Solomon Islands.

The bullets, outlawed under the Geneva Conventions, fragment on impact, causing horrific injuries.

Five Bougainvilleans, including a 10-year-old girl, are being treated at the Central Hospital in the Solomons for wounds caused by dumdum bullets.

The five were admitted last week and all remain in a critical condition.

They are among 11 people injured during an attack on a bush camp in the Siwai district on December 1. Another 11 civilians were killed in the attack. The survivors claim they were attacked by PNG soldiers and members of the local "resistance".

A Swiss National, Dr Hermann Oberli, who has been consultant surgeon in the Solomon Islands for three years, confirmed yesterday that wounds and x-rays showed massive damage to the patients' tissue.

He said the damage was consistent with the use of "fragmenting bullets" from a high-velocity rifle such as the M-16, the weapon most commonly used by the PNG Defence Force.

"A so-called clean bullet will enter and exit cleanly," Dr Oberli said yesterday when granting *The Australian* access to the x-rays and patient records.

"These bullets are like a small grenade exploding inside the body. They cause horrendous damage to the tissue, creating an enormous cavity and leaving behind fragments and a huge exit wound."

Dr Oberli said he had seen similar injuries in Afghanistan during six missions there for the International Red Cross.

"Here I have seen Bougainvilleans with injuries from fragmenting bullets on and off since September 1993," he said.

It is not possible to buy dumdum bullets legally. But a crude version can be fashioned with a file or a bayonet by carving a cross in the tip of the round.

"This causes the bullet to open like a clover leaf on impact and fragment into the flesh," a defence expert told *The Australian* yesterday. "But these homemade ones are still banned."

A spokesman for the PNG Prime Minister, Sir Julius Chan, yesterday denied that the PNGDF was using dumdum bullets.

"The PNGDF do not have dumdum bullets," he said.

Paradise lost — Page 13

3/12/96

UNCLASSIFIED INFORMATION ACT

# PARADISE LOST

Aug 13-12-96

■ At least 20 civilians have been killed in two massacres on Bougainville in the past fortnight. Mary-Louise O'Callaghan reports

**O**N Bougainville they call them "Australian" bullets. They are like miniature grenades that explode inside the body, destroying the tissue, fragmenting the bone and leaving a gaping cavity as they exit.

Known to the rest of the world as "dum-dums", the international community first decided to ban them nearly a century ago. Yet there is documentary evidence showing that Papua New Guinean troops, and their allied local resistance forces, are using them on Bougainville and have been doing so on and off for at least three years.

It is not possible to purchase dum-dums legally, but a crude version can be fashioned using a file or a bayonet to carve a cross in the tip of a bullet.

"This causes the bullet to open like a clover leaf on impact and fragment into the flesh," one defence expert told *The Australian* this week. "But these homemade ones are still banned under the Geneva Conventions."

Bougainvilleans appear to have dubbed them Australian because of the widespread view on the island that it is Australia's annual \$12 million defence aid package to the Papua New Guinea Defence Force that has enabled PNG to persist with the war on Bougainville — a war now entering its ninth year.

It's a perception that already makes Canberra uncomfortable, underlining the tension that the PNGDF's efforts on Bougainville have brought to the bilateral relationship.

The Australian Defence Minister now receives as much mail on Bougainville as he does on East Timor. But, more fundamentally, Bougainville has exposed the inadequacy of a force we helped create and in doing so it has hastened a decline in the bilateral defence relationship, which is now under active review.

Ann Moiru, a Bougainvillian woman in her mid-40s, was one of 11 people, including her own four children, who were shot — with some of these gruesome homemade dum-dum bullets — while asleep in their beds in the early hours of Sunday, December 1.

Speaking from her hospital bed in the neighbouring Solomon Islands this week, she described

lying in the dark, unable to move, as she listened to the voices of the Bougainvillian resistance fighters, speaking in two different local languages, and their PNGDF accomplices whom she said were using the distinctive mainland PNG pidgin to communicate.

The attack, which took place in Bougainville's strife-torn Siwai district, left 11 dead, including Moiru's husband and two nieces. It highlights how complicated the Bougainville crisis has become, long ago deteriorating into something far from a simple struggle for independence.

Moiru claims the attack took place in a tiny bush camp built on her land, sheltering only her and her sister's families, and no Bougainville Revolutionary Army militants.

"I do not know why they came," she told *The Australian* this week. In fact, the attack fits with a pattern of payback and revenge killings that have been rife in the Siwai, which sits just below the central Bougainville stronghold of the BRA, for at least five years. One senior PNGDF source on Bougainville, who did not want to be named, denied any official army involvement in the attack, but conceded it had occurred and could have involved some PNGDF personnel as unauthorised "private soldiers".

It is a remark that says much about the state of the PNGDF and the control its commanders are able to exercise both over their own men and the resistance they have helped to arm and create.

A spokesman for the PNG Prime Minister's Department yesterday denied that the PNGDF were on the "offensive" or that they use dum-dum bullets. "There is firm evidence of both BRA and resist-

ance involvement in an escalating Bougainvillian-based conflict using stolen weapons which they may be modifying."

But in the past three weeks there have been persistent reports of attacks by the PNGDF and resistance, including mortar bombardments, on civilians.

With the army controlling access to the island and preventing almost everyone, including journalists and

international agencies, from visiting, it has proved almost impossible to confirm these. Only the Siwai shooting and the mortar bombing of a small village church at Malapita in south Bougainville — which left nine dead — have been verified because of the arrival of casualties in the Solomon Islands.

Coupled with reports by the Solomon Islands' border authorities of attacks by armed PNG citizens on the Solomon Islands' tiny Police Field Force, the vicious nature of the two attacks paints a picture of the PNGDF spiralling out of control.

Although the BRA — perhaps sensing that they have gained the high moral ground for the time being — have by all reports been largely laying low, casualties reaching the Solomon Islands, according to doctors in Honiara, are the worst to appear from the Pacific isle.

## ‘The vicious attacks: the PNGDF spiral

Yet reports of the massacres in the PNG and international media have not provoked a single comment from the PNG Prime Minister, Sir Julius Chan, who began his term in office slightly more than two years ago with a public pledge to find a lasting peaceful solution to the Bougainville crisis.

Instead it has been left to the beleaguered commander of the PNGDF, Brigadier General Jerry Singirok, to put out a lame one-paragraph statement denying that his force's command post at Buksa — a small island at the other end of mainland Bougainville that serves as the province's administrative headquarters — had any knowledge of the church bombing.

Once an astute handler of the media, Singirok was long regarded as one of the best and brightest officers of the PNGDF, displaying much needed leadership and discipline skills during his command periods on Bougainville.

Such was his reputation, that his appointment by Chan last year was even cautiously welcomed by the BRA, which like others elsewhere had interpreted it as a move aimed at cleaning up a force that was clearly heading out of control, causing ever greater discomfort to its political masters.

So unsuccessful has Singirok been in delivering on this front, the PNGDF's reputation, as well as his own, is now more severely compromised than ever. It is a situation that has led to recent speculation that Chan might well move to appoint his third PNGDF commander in two years.

This year alone he has presided over an ill-fated push into central Bougainville, the heartland of the BRA, in Operation High Speed II.

Not only was this an unmitigated disaster — boosting rebel morale

are still being held at a BRA camp in south Bougainville, not far from where the attack on the Malapita church took place.

Ironically, Singirok's efforts to ensure a proper investigation into what was effectively one of the worst incidents in the history of the PNGDF's involvement on Bougainville led only to further proof of the appalling state of his force.

The investigation sheeted home the blame entirely to the company, saying that heavy drug and alcohol abuse by the soldiers, coupled with a "unacceptable behaviour" towards the local population, including the families of the very resistance leaders they were supposed to be working with, had provoked the attack and left the men in no fit state to defend themselves.

But by the time Chan made public the findings in mid-October, the nation was already preoccupied with another shocking twist in the Bougainville tragedy.

On October 13 in his wife's village, near Tovu in south-west Bougainville, Theodore Miriung, the Premier of Bougainville, was gunned down midway through his family's evening meal.

It was only a matter of hours before evidence of PNGDF involvement in the assassination began to surface.

The blow was a particularly cruel one, and depending on your perspective, particularly effective. Following the bad blood of Operation High Speed II, Miriung had come to represent about the last hope of any chance for pursuing a negotiated settlement.

Events since his death, including an independent coroner's report formally implicating up to 10 members of the PNGDF, have subsequently confirmed the pivotal role he played in keeping such a prospect alive.

As for Port Moresby, leaders there give every impression of wanting to disown any responsibility for the very demons they have unleashed.

Mary-Louise O'Callaghan is The Australian's South Pacific correspondent.

## Paint a picture of going out of control

when they were able to meet the PNG troops in a conventional front and force them to retreat — but it virtually wiped out all the progress towards a negotiated solution of the secession crisis, which had been laboriously and painfully crafted during Chan's prime ministership.

Men, resources, ammunition and commonsense were sacrificed in a reverse of PNG policy on Bougainville that surprised and dismayed all those, including close allies such as Australia and New Zealand, which had long recognised the fruitlessness of trying to pursue a military solution and thought Chan had done the same.

Then in September, local resistance fighters, allied with the PNGDF and largely armed by them, turned on a company of PNG troops camped at Kangu Beach in south Bougainville, joining forces with BRA militants to slaughter and mutilate 12 PNGDF personnel. A further five were captured and

REL  
OFFICIAL

■ BOUGAINVILLE

## Amnesty pushes for full murder inquiry

By LUCY PALMER  
in Port Moresby

Amnesty International has accused the PNG Government of failing to honour its commitment to fully investigate the assassination of the Bougainville Premier, Mr Theodore Miriung, in which the security forces have been implicated.

Police investigators say they still have no money to fly to the village of Kapana in southern Bougainville where Mr Miriung was shot two months ago.

"It should be a priority for the Government to find money to send investigators," Amnesty's London-based spokeswoman, Ms Kerry Brogan, told the *Herald*. "It's absolutely fundamental - the inquiry rests on eyewitness testimony."

PNG Defence Force soldiers implicated in the killing by a coronial inquest in November have just been withdrawn from the island and are now on recreational leave in Port Moresby, senior military officials confirmed yesterday.

"Some of them are alleged to have been involved so they're awaiting normal investigations," said the PNGDF Chief of Staff, Colonel Jack Tuat.

The head of the CID, Mr Thomas Eluh, said police

needed to gather evidence from the scene before they started questioning suspects.

"We don't want to touch the defence people at this stage because they still work on the ground," he said. "We want to collect evidence and have a look at the scene before we start interviewing those implicated."

"Because of the funding situation, we're having a bit of a struggle. Hopefully, we'll find some money somewhere for us to get to the scene quickly."

Ms Brogan said the PNG Government had shown good intentions by setting up an independent coronial inquiry, headed by the Commonwealth-sponsored Justice Suntheralingham, but needed to complete the process.

"If the army unit has been removed but police are not able to send in a team for lack of money, it really does question their commitment," she said.

Mr Miriung was seen as the country's best hope to broker peace between Bougainville rebels and the national army in the eight-year civil crisis.

The PNGDF also denies claims by the Bougainville Revolutionary Army that it mortar bombed a church late last month, killing nine people.

SMH 12/12/96

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309/4/13



NEW ZEALAND HIGH COMMISSION  
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**FACSIMILE MESSAGE**

**CLASS:** Unclassified **FILE NO:** 37/29/1

**DATE:** 9 December 1996 **NO OF PAGES:** ①

**FROM:** Canberra **APPROVED BY:** *[Signature]*

**TO:** WELLINGTON 1014 **PRECEDENCE:** Routine

**CC:** Port Moresby

**LD:** MFAT (SPA, DP3, DEV, DSP1, EAB)

**SUBJECT:** PNG: BOUGAINVILLE

We attach for your information reporting from the Australian.

# Villagers claim 11 killed in dawn raid by PNG troops

*Print 7-8 Dec*

**HONIARA:** At least 11 people are dead and 11 seriously injured in a second massacre of unarmed civilians on Bougainville to come to light this week.

The attack, which took place in the early hours of last Sunday while the village was asleep, was carried out by PNG soldiers and members of the "assistance" who are armed and backed by Port Moresby, according to survivors arriving in Honiara, capital of the neighbouring Solomon Islands.

Interviews with *The Week* Australian yesterday, seven wounded in the attack seem to have been shot while sleeping in their beds.

Mrs Ann Moiru, who with her 10-year-old daughter, Victoria, had been evacuated to Honiara after hearing serious gunshot sounds, said she also witnessed

**Mary-Louise O'Callaghan**

South Pacific correspondent



her 16-year-old son Robin and husband Moiru being shot dead by the armed attackers.

"They told my husband to sit on a rock, but when they wanted to shoot my son, he called out 'shoot me, shoot me' and they shot my son and then they shot my husband too," Mrs Moiru said through relatives translating for her.

Mrs Moiru named nine other people who had been killed during the attack, but reports from Bougainville suggest three additional people may have died, bringing the number of fatalities to 14.

PNG Defence Force sources have confirmed that troops

were active in the south-west over the weekend, but they have not commented on whether PNGDF personnel were involved at Mukakuru village, in the south-west Siwai.

Mrs Moiru claimed Mukakuru was not a rebel village and people were unarmed when the dawn attack occurred.

"They were resistance with PNG Defence Force," Mrs Moiru said when asked who had carried out the attack.

However, the Siwai district has been fraught with internal power struggles for several years and it is not clear whether the attack was motivated by some form of local payback.

The Siwai is a district that lies between the central Bougainville stronghold of the rebel Bougainville Revolutionary Army and south Bougainville where nine people were killed and five seriously injured in a

mortar attack on a village church on Thursday last week.

The Commander of the PNGDF, Brigadier-General Jerry Singirok, has not yet commented on the incidents, two of the worst in the history of the eight-year civil war.

However, the Chief of Staff of the PNGDF, Colonel Jack Tuat, was reported as saying yesterday that the army was "gravely concerned" about the allegations.

"We are gravely concerned on all these reports that everything is pointing towards the security forces," he told AFP.

A spokesman for the ERA's political wing, the Bougainville Interim Government, quoted another eyewitness as saying: "Those that died were killed while still asleep on their beds and others were cut down in front of their houses as they were trying to escape."





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■ PAPUA NEW GUINEA

# Troops 'helped killing' of Bougainville leader

By LUCY PALMER  
Herald Correspondent  
in Port Moresby

Soldiers from the Papua New Guinea Defence Force (PNGDF), in league with armed civilian supporters, were responsible for killing the Bougainville Premier, Mr Theodore Miriung, last month, an independent coronial inquest has found.

Justice Suntheralingham, of the Commonwealth Secretariat, said he had no doubt about his findings, despite being unable to interview any witnesses from Kapana village in south-west Bougainville, where Mr Miriung was shot on October 12.

The final report from the three-week inquest, ordered by PNG's Prime Minister, Sir Julius Chan, a fortnight after the assassination, is to be made public next week.

Justice Suntheralingham said: "There were between eight and 10 people actually involved.

"A certain number of Defence Force soldiers along with a lesser number of [pro-PNG Government] resistance fighters were involved," he said.

Two or three people had been directly responsible for the death of the 52-year-old Premier, regarded by many observers as the best hope for peace on the crisis-torn island.

A former magistrate and adviser to the BRA, Mr Miriung took a great personal risk when he broke ranks with the rebels and was voted Premier of the island's transitional government early last year.

The Premier's insistence on autonomy in negotiations with the PNG government over the political future of the troubled province also won him few friends among members of the PNGDF, who suspected him of secretly siding with the BRA.

Justice Suntheralingham said it appeared the Defence Force had closed ranks to protect the soldiers from the army camp at Tonu, about seven kilometres

from Kapana, who are under suspicion.

"The co-operation that investigators required was not forthcoming," he said.

"It could very well be a slowing down or a dragging of feet, hoping that investigators might lose interest, that's what I think."

The PNGDF commander, Brigadier-General Jerry Singirok, was unavailable for comment.

During the investigation, only seven witnesses gave evidence in Port Moresby and on the small island of Buka, separated from mainland Bougainville by a short sea crossing.

Justice Suntheralingham, a former Sri Lankan High Court judge, said he would be making a recommendation that the soldiers from the PNGDF unit at Tonu be removed from the area.

"Unless that particular army unit, which has about 15 to 20 persons, unless they are moved out, the witnesses are not prepared to meet anyone or say anything for fear of their lives," he said.

Justice Suntheralingham said there was "no evidence, nothing at all," which indicated rebels from the BRA, which has been spearheading the secessionist struggle for the past eight years, were involved in the Miriung killing.

■ Nine people, including two children, were gunned down by Bougainville rebels on Thursday in what intelligence sources said could be payback killings.

The PNGDF commander on Bougainville, Lieutenant-Colonel Tokim Kanena, confirmed the dawn massacre at Sisiapai village in the island's north-west.

Two young schoolgirls were killed during the attack by more than 40 Bougainville Revolutionary Army fighters (BRA) from central and northern Bougainville, he said. Three Government-aligned resistance fighters, three men and a woman were also killed.

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FILE

309/4/15/1

5 December 1996

§ 9(2)(a)

x  
§ 9(2)(a)

I refer to your correspondence of 1 November on Bougainville.

I share your view that Premier Theodore Miringo's death is indeed a tragic loss for Bougainville and represents a setback for the peace process. You are, I believe, aware of the New Zealand Government's concern over the situation on Bougainville and of our long-standing position of readiness to support peace moves that have a realistic chance of succeeding. Obviously that requires a commitment from all the key players. There is no way that an outside party can impose its views.

Essentially, I think we share similar hopes for the future of Bougainville. The Government remains concerned about the real difficulties and hardship that the situation on the ground poses for ordinary Bougainvilleans. I was therefore recently pleased to authorise a contribution (NZ\$ 150,000) to the current relief efforts of the Red Cross on Bougainville.

Yours sincerely

**SIGNED**

Rt Hon Don McKinnon  
Minister of Foreign Affairs and Trade

s 9(2)(a)

(2 page) Fax to:

Rt. Hon. Don McKinnon MP  
Minister of Foreign Affairs  
Parliament Buildings  
Wellington

Fax no. s 9(2)(a)

Dear Mr. McKinnon,

We have received the attached article from the "Europe-Pacific Solidarity Bulletin", the newsletter of the European Centre for Studies Information and Education on Pacific Issues, with which s 9(2)(a) has an association.

You will no doubt be well aware of the circumstances of Premier Miriung's death and of the respect in which he was held by many for his efforts to bring peace for his people, as the article affirms.

We in s 9(2)(a) though, are more interested in the implications of the final paragraph which indicate some hope of progress towards a peaceful negotiated settlement rather than the military solution seemingly favoured by some in the PNG government.

We heartily endorse the proposals credited to the MP for Bougainville, John Momis, as they represent the position taken by s 9(2)(a) locally and internationally. Having discussed them with the coordinator of ECSIEP last April, I am sure that I could guarantee their approval also.

Could you please give us some indication of the New Zealand Government's:

1. response in principle to these proposals,
2. readiness to actively support them through appropriate means,
3. readiness to offer assistance in mediation and facilitation processes.

We look forward to your response in the near future.

s 9(2)(a)



## Europe-Pacific Solidarity

# BULLETIN

Volume 4 Number 5, October 1996.

### Premier of the Bougainville Transitional Government assassinated

On 12 October, North Solomons Premier of the Bougainville Transitional Government (BTG), *Theodore Miriung* was tragically assassinated while he was having dinner with his family in their village of Konga in the Siwai area. Miriung was shot dead by two gunmen.

Miriung became the premier of the Bougainville Transitional Government under the Mirigini accord signed on November 25, 1994 between the National Government and Bougainville leaders under which BTG was set up as a legal authority on Bougainville to oversee the restoration of services on the island. On numerous occasions, he explicitly opposed armed confrontations between the rebels and the security forces and called for laying down of arms to pave way for peaceful negotiations. Miriung was critical of the lifting of the cease-fire early this year and warned of increased confrontation between rebels and security forces. He also wanted the rebels to back down from their extreme position demanding full independence for Bougainville.

In an editorial newspaper *The National* wrote: "*Theodore Miriung was, in his last and most influential incarnation, a man of peace. In many ways, he stood alone, almost isolated from the mindless fury that swirled around him.*"

The identity of the assassins is not known and a police inquiry has been launched. Prime Minister Sir *Julius Chan* who called the assassination an act of madness said last night that "*the Government's full capacity will be used to trace the murderers and bring them to account.*"

The news of Miriung's death followed some positive developments on Bougainville concerning the negotiations for the safe return of the five Security Forces servicemen held captive by BRA rebels in Laguai, Buin. Member of parliament for Bougainville, Mr. Momis, believes that his peace mission to Buin and subsequent meetings with the BRA has resulted in "*overwhelming signals of a significant break-through in the eight-year crisis. A very important feature of these signals is that they are coming simultaneously from the BRA, the Resistance Force, the Security Forces, the chiefs, and the people themselves.*" Momis proposed to the government that a cease-fire be declared on Bougainville and that the blockade of goods and services to Bougainville Revolutionary Army-controlled areas be lifted. He furthermore suggested that all care centres be dismantled to allow people to return to their villages and that overseas mediators and facilitators could, if necessary, be involved in the peace process. Momis appealed to politicians to put aside doubts, fears and suspicions and work together to achieve peace on Bougainville.

Good readings,

59 (2) (a)

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(Sources: *The National* (PNG), 13, 14 October and *Post Courier*, 15 October 1996.)