



## **LAWASIA CONCERN AT DEVELOPMENTS IN PAPUA NEW GUINEA**

LAWASIA, the Law Association for Asia and the Pacific, has noted with concern developments in Papua New Guinea that have seen the arrest of the Chief Justice, Sir Salamo Injia, on charges of attempting to pervert the course of justice.

The current instability in Papua New Guinea inevitably gives rise to concerns of political interference with the judiciary, a concern that can be alleviated only by complete and clear observance of due process as the matter proceeds through the courts.

LAWASIA makes no comment on the issues leading to the arrest. Nevertheless, the arrest of a senior judicial officer is a very serious development in any democracy, and accordingly, it is important that the authorities proceed with proper caution to ensure that there is no inappropriate or unwarranted interference with the judicial process.

In this context, LAWASIA refers to the *Beijing Statement of Principles of the Independence of the Judiciary* (1995, amended 1997), reflecting an agreed position of 32 Chief Justices of the Asia Pacific region, which, at article 5, indicates:

5. *It is the duty of the judiciary to respect and observe the proper objectives and functions of the other institutions of government. It is the duty of those institutions to respect and observe the proper objectives and functions of the judiciary.*

LAWASIA encourages strict and transparent adherence to proper procedures and institutions as this matter progresses.

Malathi Das

**PRESIDENT**

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