



Commission of Inquiry Act, 1951 (Chapter 31)

**ROYAL COMMISSION OF INQUIRY INTO PROCESSES AND PROCEDURES
FOLLOWED BY THE GOVERNMENT OF PAPUA NEW GUINEA IN OBTAINING
THE OFF-SHORE LOAN FROM THE UNION BANK OF SWITZERLAND AND
RELATED TRANSACTIONS**

PRESS STATEMENT

No 13 of 2020

Further to previous media statements issued by the Commission, the Chairman today announced the following:

1. The further adjournment of some 18 witness appearance matters fixed for today, to Monday 14th September 2020 at 9:30am, to take place at the Commission's new venue situated at APEC Haus, Ela Beach, Downtown Port Moresby.
2. The Commission's decision to defer these matters was made known in a Chamber Direction issued by the Chairman on Friday 21st August 2020. A copy of the Chamber Direction is attached.
3. The main reason for the deferral is that ten applications for admission, of overseas counsel (3) and solicitors (7) from the firm of MinterEllission Solicitors, which were filed in the National Court by their PNG-based Lawyers on 2nd July 2020, are pending hearing and determination. Five of those applications have been listed for hearing today whilst the other five applications are yet to be assigned hearing dates. The Commission has written to the Registrar of the National Court to liaise with the Judge Administrator of the National Court Civil Track to consolidate the hearing of those applications and expedite their hearing and determination.
4. Upon admission, they will apply for certification to practice in PNG by the PNG Law Society under the *Lawyers Act*.

5. Aside from addressing work permit, travel visa and Covid-19 Pandemic requirements, the admission and certification of overseas counsel and solicitors marks the final phase of the Commission's efforts to address mandatory statutory requirements for the engagement of overseas Commissioner, Counsel and Solicitors for CoI duties in PNG. Unfortunately, those activities have consumed almost 12 months of the Commission's time since its establishment in August of 2019.
6. Upon certification by the PNG Law Society, the Commission will confer with the overseas personnel and settle on a revised roadmap for the public investigation, and hearing phases of the inquiry and announce the revised roadmap at a convenient time in September 2020.
7. The Chairman said in the meantime, the Commission will continue to conduct preliminary hearings to request and receive appearances from the remaining witnesses who are yet to appear before the Commission and issue directions for the production of documents and other material that they may be requested or required by the Commission.

DATED this **24th** day of **August** 2020.


Chief Sir Salamo Injia Kt GCE
Chairman, UBS Commission of Inquiry

