


Annex 6: Letter from Committee Chair to Attorney General re TSMs

Letter emailed on 21 June 2021

**SPECIAL PARLIAMENTARY COMMITTEE ON
GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE**



COMMITTEE MEMBERS

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Member

Hon Allan Marat
Member for Rabaul
Member

Dr Eric Kwa
Attorney General
Department of Justice and the Attorney General
Waigani, Papua New Guinea

31 May 2021

Dear Attorney General,

Re: Request for written information on current Government propose to reserve seats for women in the National Parliament

I am writing to you on behalf of the Special Parliamentary Committee on Gender-Based Violence (GBV). As you are aware, the Committee held public hearings last Monday 24 May and Tuesday 25 May 2021. Your Department was represented at that meeting by your Deputy Secretary, Ms Miriam Kias, as we understand you were not able to attend for family reasons.

During the public hearings, we asked Ms Kias for more information regarding the Government's current plans to progress temporary special measures for women in the National Parliament, namely the proposal to reserve five regional seats for women. She was unable to provide fulsome advice to the Committee. I have since engaged with women in the community who learned about the proposals from the public hearings and have asked me to clarify the proposals. I am concerned that we have been unable to get clarify to date.

Accordingly, by way of this letter I wish to formally request that you provide written advice to my Committee on the current proposal, responding to the specific questions below. Please note, these questions reflect similar questions sent on 29 March 2021 to your office by my Committee colleagues, Governors Parkop and Bird, in their roles as Co-Chairs of the Coalition of Parliamentarians to End GBV.

- i. Can you please clarify the current proposal for reserved seats, including the number, boundaries, who will be eligible to vote for the seats, the rights of the elected women members, their access to constituency funding and any other pertinent issues?
- ii. What is the anticipated process to be undertaken to finalise the Bill or multiple Bills to reserve seats for women in the National Parliament?
- iii. When/in which session of Parliament is it anticipated that the Bill/s will be tabled? What is the anticipated timeline/steps to be taken for the Bill/s to go through the House?

iv. It is understood that an ordinary Bill will be used to enact this measure, to enable it to be amended more easily in future. What majority of votes will be required to pass that Bill?

v. In addition to the main Bill to reserve seats for women, what other laws (including the Constitution and/or Organic Laws) will need to be amended to enable the reserved seats to be created and implemented in advance of the 2022 National Elections? What majority of votes will be required to pass those amendments?


We would please request that your office provide this information to the Committee Secretariat no later than one week from today, namely Monday 7 June 2021, in writing, at ParliamentGBVCommittee@gmail.com.

Please note that it is my intention to share the information received with other Committee Members and with the public. The Committee is keen to support the efforts of the Government to reserve these seats for women and I wish to ensure the Committee Members all have accurate information about this proposal, to enable us all to start advocating for these reforms as a priority.

Please feel free to contact me through the Secretariat at ParliamentGBVCommittee@gmail.com or to contact me directly on 7253-9533 to discuss this letter or propose a different approach to sharing this information with Committee Members.

We are very committed to supporting the enactment of reserved seats for women in advance of the 2022 National Elections and therefore want to be sure that we have all the information we need so that we can be informed on this issue in advance of the next session of Parliament in August 2021.

Your sincerely



Hon Charles Abel
Member for Alotau
Chairperson, Special Parliamentary Committee on Gender-Based Violence