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SECURITY COUNCIL STRONGLY SUPPORTS AGREEMENT ON CEASEFIRE, EFFECTIVE 30 APRIL, TO BOUGAINVILLE CONFLICT**Press Release
SC/6506****SECURITY COUNCIL STRONGLY SUPPORTS AGREEMENT ON CEASEFIRE, EFFECTIVE 30 APRIL, TO BOUGAINVILLE CONFLICT**

19980422 In Presidential Statement, Council Welcomes Establishment of Group To Monitor Agreement's Implementation

The Security Council this afternoon expressed strong support for an agreement on a ceasefire to the nine-year-old conflict in Bougainville, effective 30 April.

The Agreement on Peace, Security and Development in Bougainville was signed by the Government of Papua New Guinea, the Bougainville Transitional Government, the Bougainville Resistance Force, the Bougainville Interim Government, the Bougainville Revolutionary Army and the Bougainville leaders on 23 January at Lincoln University, Christchurch, New Zealand.

Through a statement read by its President, Hisashi Owada (Japan), the Council welcomed the extension of the truce period, as well as a "permanent and irrevocable ceasefire" which would take effect on 30 April as stipulated in the Lincoln Agreement.

Noting that the Lincoln Agreement called for the United Nations to play a role in Bougainville, the Council requested the Secretary-General to consider the composition and financial modalities of such involvement.

The Council urged all the parties to continue to cooperate to achieve and maintain peace, renounce the use of armed force and violence, and to resolve any differences by consultation. It encouraged the parties to cooperate in promoting reconciliation so that the objectives of the Lincoln Agreement could be met. It urged them to confirm their respect for human rights and the rule of law.

It commended the efforts of countries in the region to resolve the conflict, and welcomed the establishment, as outlined in the Lincoln Agreement, of a group to monitor its implementation, composed of civilian and military personnel from Australia, Fiji, New Zealand and Vanuatu.

The Security Council was asked to endorse the Lincoln Agreement by the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Papua New Guinea in a letter to the Council

President dated 30 March (document S/1998/287). The letter states that the Government would also ask the Secretary-General to send an observer mission to monitor the Agreement's implementation. Also, the letter conveys Papua New Guinea's commitment to implementing the Lincoln Agreement, including an early return to civilian peacetime arrangements for maintaining public order and law, as well as free and fair elections for a Bougainville Reconciliation Government before the end of 1998.

According to the Lincoln Agreement, which is attached to the letter, the parties agree to a phased withdrawal of the Papua New Guinea Defence Force from Bougainville, subject to restoration of civil authority. The Government of Papua New Guinea undertakes to conclude the arrangements required for deployment of the successor to the neutral regional monitoring group by no later than 30 April.

Also by the Agreement, the parties will meet again to address political issues before the end of June. The Papua New Guinea National Government will grant amnesty to persons involved in "crisis-related activities" on all sides.

The conflict began with campaigns organized in the late 1980s by local landowners in the copper-rich Central Bougainville mountains, protesting environmental degradation, the level of compensation and royalty payments and disruption of indigenous culture caused by mining operations.

The meeting, which convened at 1:21 p.m., was adjourned at 1:27 p.m.

Presidential Statement

The full text of the statement, to be issued as document S/PRST/1998/10, reads as follows:

"The Security Council, taking note of the development of the Bougainville conflict, strongly supports the Agreement on Peace, Security and Development on Bougainville, signed at Lincoln University, New Zealand, on 23 January 1998 (the Lincoln Agreement) contained in document S/1998/287, achieved by the Government of Papua New Guinea, the Bougainville Transitional Government, the Bougainville Resistance Force, the Bougainville Interim Government, the Bougainville Revolutionary Army, and the Bougainville leaders, with regard to a ceasefire among conflicting parties.

"The Security Council welcomes the extension of the period of truce, and welcomes further a permanent and irrevocable ceasefire which will take effect on 30 April 1998 as stipulated in the Lincoln Agreement.

"The Security Council encourages all parties to cooperate in promoting reconciliation, so that the objectives of the Lincoln Agreement can be met,

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and urges all parties to continue to cooperate, in accordance with the Lincoln Agreement, namely, to achieve and maintain peace, to renounce the use of armed force and violence, to resolve any differences by consultation, both now and in the future, and to confirm their respect for human rights and the rule of law.

"The Security Council commends the efforts of countries in the region for the resolution of the conflict, and welcomes the establishment, as outlined in the Lincoln Agreement, of the peace monitoring group composed of civilian and military personnel from Australia, Fiji, New Zealand, and Vanuatu, the mandate of which is to monitor the implementation of the said Agreement.

"The Security Council notes that the Lincoln Agreement calls for the United Nations to play a role in Bougainville, and requests the Secretary-General to consider the composition and financial modalities of such involvement by the United Nations.

"The Security Council will remain seized of the matter."

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