



MSG Secretariat
Secretariat du GFLM

Melanesian Spearhead Group | Le Groupe Fer de Lance Mélanésien

**MELANESIAN SPEARHEAD GROUP (MSG) LEADERS
JOINT STATEMENT ON THE DECOLONISATION
PROCESS AND POLITICAL SITUATION IN KANAKY-
NEW CALEDONIA (HEREINAFTER THE TOKYO
STATEMENT)**

We, the Leaders of the Melanesian Spearhead Group (MSG), Fiji, FLNKS, Papua New Guinea (PNG), Solomon Islands, and Vanuatu, meeting in Tokyo, Japan, on the margins of the Pacific Islands Leaders Meeting (PALM10), specifically on the issue of Kanaky-New Caledonia.

Concerned at the ongoing tenuous security situation in Kanaky-New Caledonia;

Committed to the decolonization and the free and fair exercise of the right to Self-Determination by the Indigenous people of Kanaky New Caledonia as enshrined under the Charter of the United Nations;

Affirming support for the implementation of the UN Fourth Decade for the Eradication of Colonialism (2021-2030) proclaimed under UNGA Resolution 75/123;

Acknowledging the need for the Administering Power, France to faithfully discharge its responsibilities in accordance with UNGA Resolution 1514(XV) on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples;

Desirous of playing a constructive role in bringing about a conducive environment in New Caledonia for dialogue to resume on the future political status of the non-self-governing territory; and

Recalling our 2023 Communique reaffirming support for our MSG Member, FLNKS, cause for self-determination, and eventual independence.

Hereby agree to issue the following:

1. Recent Events on 13 May and its aftermath in Kanaky-New Caledonia

1.1 We regret the recent events in New Caledonia after the passing by the French National Assembly of the Constitutional Bill on 13 May 2024, seeking to "unfreeze" the electoral roll for the provincial elections in New Caledonia, which precipitated the carnage that followed.

1.2 We condemn the destruction of property and the unnecessary loss of lives that has effectively caused untold damage to the economy and extreme suffering for the people of New Caledonia.

1.3 We are concerned that certain members of the Cell for Coordinating Field Action (CCAT) have been arrested and deported to France to face trial in a different *endroit* where the alleged offenses were committed, and we are of the strong view that this is not helpful, to create a harmonious and peaceful environment in New Caledonia.

1.4 We are also strongly opposed to the apparent militarisation of New Caledonia since 13 May 2024, which has the potential to undermine the peaceful resolution to the situation in New Caledonia.

2. Constitutional Bill on Electoral Reforms for New Caledonia

2.1 We welcome the decision of the President of the French Republic, Emmanuel Macron, made on June 2024 to shelve the presentation of the Constitutional Bill to the Congress de Versailles and urge him to officially withdraw the Bill and issue a public statement to that effect to create a propitious environment for dialogue to resume amongst the Noumea Accord Signatories.

3. Third Self-Determination Referendum conduct and its results

3.1 We note, with deep regret, that the voices and concerns of the indigenous people Kanaky, particularly relating to the forceful and unilateral decision by the French State to hold the third Self-Determination Referendum amidst the unprecedented challenges imposed on the indigenous peoples by COVID-19, restriction to movement of people, lack of clarity on election timelines, the difficulties in organizing campaigns and customary mourning rituals, and in spite of collective calls to defer the Referendum until after the 2022 French Presidential Elections.

3.2 We reaffirm our strong opposition, as echoed in our 22nd MSG Leaders' Summit Communique of August 2023, to the way the third self-determination Referendum was conducted, where less than 50% (only 43%) of the voting population participated and where traditional obligations and Kanak customs relating to COVID 19 deaths were completely ignored.

3.3 We are of the strong view that the conduct was not in accordance with the UN principles allowing a fair and unfettered process to be expressed by the indigenous peoples concerned, in particular, the obligation of the Administering Power to give "due respect for the culture of the peoples concerned" during COVID 19, and therefore regard the conduct and the result as illegitimate and null and void.

3.4 We call for a new and fair self-determination referendum to be conducted with technical preparatory supervision by UN experts and observation missions for the actual independence referendum to determine the political future of New Caledonia.

4. Post-3rd Referendum Negotiations on Future Political Status of Kanaky-New Caledonia

4.1 Aware that the Noumea Accord envisaged negotiations to be held between the Noumea Accord Signatories after the third self-determination Referendum, we call for the speedy resumption of these talks and urge the French State and its instrumentalities of Government to be impartial and honest brokers as was demonstrated in the negotiations and conclusion of the Noumea Accords.

4.2 We strongly believe that the lasting peace we are all seeking can only be guaranteed over time by efforts on both sides to propose political solutions that respond to the legitimate aspirations of the colonized indigenous people of Kanaky-New Caledonia as part of the decolonization process that has been underway since the Nouméa Accords.

4.3 We are pleased to note that the French State and the signatories to the Nouméa Accord have proven that goodwill and magnanimity are possible in our search for a win-win situation in New Caledonia, as witnessed by the 26 years of peace that have prevailed since the signing of the Nouméa Accord in 1998; and we call for a return to the spirit of the Nouméa Accord which recognizes the rights of the indigenous people of Kanaky-New Caledonia.

4.4 We call on the French authorities to urgently make the announcement on the resumption of talks, convinced that this announcement will help create an environment conducive to the continuation of negotiations for a new political solution or agreement for the future of New Caledonia, which remains within the decolonization process envisaged in the Nouméa Accord.

5. High-level Eminent Persons to broker agreement amongst Noumea Accord Signatories on the format and agenda of negotiations on the future Political Status of Kanaky-New Caledonia

5.1 We call on France, as the Administering Power, to continue to demonstrate good faith towards the Indigenous people of Kanaky-New Caledonia and to elevate the negotiation to engage eminent persons from France at a higher level, particularly those who were involved in the negotiations that resulted in the conclusion of the Noumea Accord in 1998.

5.2 We further call on the French State to elevate the New Caledonia dossier back to the Prime Minister's Office.

6. Kanaky-New Caledonia on the UN Special Committee on Decolonisation (C24) list of Non-Self-Governing Territories under the UN Charter.

6.1 We urge France, as the Administering Power of the non-self-governing territory of New Caledonia, to continue to discharge its responsibilities in accordance with UNGA Resolution 1514 (XV).

6.2 We declare our opposition to any suggestions seeking to cease the responsibilities of the Administering Power over the Non-Self-Governing territory of New Caledonia.

6.3 We strongly reiterate our call to retain New Caledonia on the United Nations list of Non-Self-Governing Territories.

6.4 We call on France, as the Administering Power, in close consultation with the United Nations, given our dissatisfaction with the conduct of the third referendum, to undertake another Self-Determination Referendum on the issue of independence as part of the implementation of actions called for under the UN Fourth Decade for the Eradication of Colonialism (2021-2030).

7. Possible UN General Assembly Resolution on the 3rd Self-Determination Referendum conduct and its results

7.1 We direct the MSG Permanent Missions to the United Nations to keep the option of a possible UN General Assembly Resolution on the conduct and results of the 3rd Referendum under active consideration.

8. MSG International Diplomatic support Effort for FLNKS cause

8.1 We recommit the MSG countries and their diplomatic representatives around the globe to spare no effort in spearheading diplomatic actions in support of New Caledonia's right to self-determination as prescribed under UNGA Resolution 1514 (XV), and consistent with the FLNKS desire for the eventual exercise of full sovereignty.

9. Kanaky-New Caledonia Human Resource Development

9.1 Mindful of the need to prepare Kanaky-New Caledonia for full sovereignty, directs the MSG Secretariat and Member Governments to establish an educational fund for young Kanak students and professionals to enable them to study in the MSG National Universities and other educational and training institutions.

9.2 We further direct that the MSG Secretariat utilizes Vatu 5 million from its 2024 Budget surplus to kick start this initiative.

9.3 We also call on France to facilitate training for young Kanak

students and professionals to undertake studies, not only in France but in MSG Universities and Technical Institutions.

10. MSG/Kanaky-New Caledonia Trade and Commercial Relations

10.1 Recalling our decision to explore ways on how New Caledonia can be involved in the MSG Trade Agreement, and our desire to help New Caledonia with its restoration efforts.

10.2 Direct the MSG Secretariat to open dialogue with the relevant authorities in New Caledonia to consider the option of a Protocol to the MSG Agreement where identified products can be included for duty-free trading between New Caledonia and MSG countries.

11. MSG -Kanaky-New Caledonia Parliamentary Cooperation

11.1 Recognising that all the Speakers of the MSG National Parliaments have signed Memorandums (MOU) of Cooperation with the New Caledonia Congress.

11.2 Direct the MSG Secretariat to organise a meeting of the Heads of MSG Legislatures as soon as possible with a view to developing a work plan on concrete cooperative activities.

12. Recent French National Assembly Elections

12.1 We congratulate the FLNKS for succeeding in having one of its members elected to the French National Assembly in the recent elections.

12.2 We are encouraged by the overwhelming turnout by the pro-independence voters in the recent elections and consider this as good reason for another Self-Determination Referendum to be conducted as part of the UN decolonisation process.

13. MSG Information visit to Kanaky-New Caledonia

13.1 We are committed to playing a constructive role in helping to bring about an environment where Kanaky-New Caledonia can be able to progress out of the tenuous political, security, economic, and social situation it is in now and request that we be allowed to undertake an "information visit" to determine how and where MSG might play a useful role.

14. United Nations-MSG Joint Mission to New Caledonia

14.1 We call on France to allow a UN-MSG Joint mission to visit New Caledonia to assess the Political and Socioeconomic status and propose ways for mutually and amicably addressing the situation in New Caledonia.

15. Situation in New Caledonia to be discussed at the Pacific Island Forum (PIF) Summit.

15.1 We call for the consideration of the situation in New Caledonia during the Pacific Islands Forum (PIF) Meeting to be held in Tonga in August.

15.2 Propose that at least one member of the MSG be part of the Pacific Island Forum (PIF) mission to visit New Caledonia.

16. MSG Roadmap on the provision of assistance to FLNKS.

16.1 Task the Secretariat to develop the roadmap containing the short-term and long-term strategies for MSG assistance to FLNKS, taking into account Leaders' past decisions and current political developments.

Dated on the 17th of July, 2024, in Tokyo, Japan.