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## *Office of the Chair of Melanesian Spearhead Group*

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### PRESS RELEASE

#### **Chairman of MSG reaffirms MSG position against the Constitutional Bill to unfreeze the Electoral Roll for New Caledonia**

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The Chairman of MSG and Prime Minister of Vanuatu, Hon. Charlot Salwai Tabimasmass, today issued a Press Release reaffirming MSG's support of FLNKS position opposing the French Government's Constitutional Bill aimed at unfreezing the New Caledonia Electoral Roll, the modifications to the citizen's electorate, and the changes to the distribution of seats in Congress.

In expressing sadness to the unfortunate happenings that have befallen New Caledonia over the last few days, the MSG Chair expressed support for FLNKS call for calm, and shared FLNKS's condemnation of the violence. FLNKS today issued the call for calm and condemned the violence.

The Chair of MSG pointed out that the indiscriminate destruction of property will affect New Caledonia's economy in a very big way and that will have a debilitating cascading effect on the welfare and lives of all New Caledonians, including the Kanaks.

Consistent with the support recorded during the MSG Senior Officials Meeting and the MSG Foreign Ministers Meeting in March this year, the Chair of MSG reiterated that the French Government must withdraw or annul the Constitutional Bill that has precipitated these regrettable events in New Caledonia.

"These events could have been avoided if the French Government had listened and not proceeded to press forward with the Constitutional Bill aimed at unfreezing the electoral roll, modifying the citizen's electorate, and changing the distribution of seats in Congress. There is need for the French Government to return to the spirit of the Noumea Accord in its dealings relating to New Caledonia. That spirit ensured mutual respect and cooperation between all parties and ensured peace in New Caledonia", Hon. Tabimasmass noted.

The Chair of MSG added, there is an urgent need now for France to agree to the proposal by the FLNKS to establish a dialogue and mediation mission to be led by a mutually agreed high-personality to, amongst other things, discuss a way forward so that normalcy can be restored quickly and an enduring peace can prevail in New Caledonia.

**Honourable Matai Seremaia NAWALU**  
**Chairman of MSG Foreign Affairs Ministers, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Vanuatu**