



# MANUS PROVINCIAL GOVERNMENT

## OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR

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### PRESS RELEASE

#### GOV. BENJAMIN: LOMBRUM MOU AN "UNFRIENDLY" ACT

Governor of Manus, Charlie Benjamin is urging the Marape-Stevens Government to immediately order a halt in construction work on Lombrum naval base until completion of a review of the Lombrum MoU is completed and negotiations toward a bilateral defense Treaty to be led by the U.S.A is finalized for signature by Parties. In urging the national government, the Manus leader makes the bold statement that Section 9 of the MoU and its secret Implementation Arrangement constitutes an "unfriendly act" in peacetime where PNG and Manus have no external threat at all. Who's national interest and security threat is Section 9 of the MoU is meant to serve, he asks.

Governor Benjamin wants the MoU delayed of its construction phase, as it is an illicit covert entry by a foreign interest into PNG's sovereign space as per the constitution. It would also give the Manus government time in preparing a development package to be effectively addressed through provisions within a future Treaty arrangement led by U.S.A instead of Australia.

"Manus province, its people and government do not trust Australia. She has let the people of Manus down, denying them road infrastructures, social as well infrastructures as hospital upgrades augmenting toward progress during the tenure of the Manus Asylum seekers debacle on Manus.

"Manus and indeed PNG has received global reputational hit all because of the misguided letter of a draconian MoU that was.

"What we witness again is Australia's deliberate or otherwise sneaky utilization of another of her "MoU" instrumentalities purported to appear as a legit international mechanism of suppression and domination of national interest and security, including constitution and foreign policy to softly enter into a foreign jurisdictional space.

"Unless PNG is able to discipline and sanction such Australian foreign policy attitude and the current text and form of the Lombrum MoU reviewed, it seems clear now that those high level officials of the both PNG and Australian militarist, geopolitical and diplomacy on both sides appear to have subverted PNG's constitutional, foreign policy and national interest.

" This is to the extent that Section 9 pertaining to Access and Use Activity, without a periodicity clause, in effect lends the MoU of illicitness, covert and void of respect in international law. It smacks of subversion to the point of treason on the part of perpetrator officials from both Australia and PNG.