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19 September 2024

PRESS RELEASE

MRA Responds to Hon Lino Tom

PORT MORESBY: The Mineral Resources Authority (MRA) Managing Director Jerry Garry, has brushed aside claims by the Member for Wabag, Hon Dr Lino Tom, that fighting in the Porgera Valley is a consequence of non-implementation of the Porgera Project Community Development Agreement (CDA).

The MD explained that the lawlessness and fighting that is currently going on is a social and law & order issue.

“It has nothing to do with the CDA process that is currently underway in Port Moresby,” said Mr Garry.

He said the fighting started between two illegal miners from Kandep and Laiagam districts respectively, over gold that they had mined illegally in the pit. The fight quickly escalated into local villages that host the two illegal miners, resulting in the involvement of the wider communities.

The MD said all stakeholders involved in the CDA process are currently negotiating benefits, and that negotiations would be completed soon. Mr Garry further explained that the permitting of operations of mines and the CDA processes are two different processes that can run in parallel. In this case, the Porgera Mine has been operating for some time, and while the mine is operating, it is normal practice for parties to the CDA to negotiate benefits.

He said the CDA process also addresses the relocation of the Special Mining Lease (SML) landowners from the SML area, and issue raised by Hon Lino.

The MD said the CDA process involves only the government sanctioned and recognized parties under the Organic law on Provincial Government and Local Level Government.

Mr Garry has conveyed his condolences and sympathies to the families of those who have lost their lives.