



**Prime Minister O'Neill and President Momis:  
Bougainville Referendum will Take Place on Time**

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The Prime Minister, Hon. Peter O'Neill CMG MP, and Autonomous Bougainville Government President, Grand Chief Dr. John Momis GCL MHR, met in Port Moresby on Friday to discuss ongoing progress in the implementation of the Bougainville Peace Agreement.

Both leaders again reaffirmed their determination to ensuring the referendum takes place next year.

The Prime Minister said the National Government and the Autonomous Bougainville Government, through the Bougainville Referendum Commission's Transitional Committee, have made steady progress on referendum preparations.

"The National Government is committed to implementing Bougainville Peace Agreement, of which is a key component is the referendum in July 2019," the Prime Minister said.

"The referendum is the next important step in the long-term process of ensuring a lasting peace in Bougainville."

The Prime Minister said much effort has been put into the peace process by so many people for more than two decades, and all parties must ensure the referendum is conducted properly in accordance with the peace agreement.

"We are committed to ensuring a transparent referendum process that is free, fair, and without violence.

"To ensure this success we must maintain clear communication and awareness with our people in Bougainville.

"They must be fully informed of the significance and importance of every vote that is cast.

"Freedom of expression is the right of every citizen of Papua New Guinea, and we look forward to the referendum process being successfully undertaken."

The Prime Minister said there is a great deal of work ahead in preparing for the referendum and other key elements of the Bougainville Peace Agreement.

"We still face major challenges including making sure weapons disposal is effective, and in strengthening cohesion and ensuring a true and lasting reconciliation between all groups.

"President Momis and myself will work day and night to deliver lasting peace and economic advancement for our people in Bougainville."

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