



MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS & IMMIGRATION

OFFICE OF THE MINISTER



MEDIA RELEASE

BY

MINISTER FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS & IMMIGRATION
HON. RIMBINK PATO, LLB, OBE, MP

BORDER SECURITY TO BE TIGHTENED FOLLOWING TRAVEL OF IRANIAN REFUGEE ON FRAUDULENTLY OBTAINED PNG PASSPORT

The Minister for Foreign Affairs and Immigration, Hon. Rimbink Pato, LLB, OBE, MP today responded to media reports that an Iranian refugee has been deported back to PNG, having travelled to Fiji by air from PNG using a fraudulent document.

“I am aware of reports in this matter and confirm that a thorough investigation is underway to confirm the full details, however I can confirm that an Iranian national who was granted refugee status following processing at the Manus Regional Processing Centre appears to have obtained a PNG travel document after lodging an application containing false and misleading statements about his identity to more than one agency” the Minister said.

“Fiji has deported this person back to PNG on the basis that his passport was invalid, as is their right. We will receive him and take the necessary steps to ensure he is properly questioned and, if appropriate, brought before the Courts, noting he is a refugee who has also had mental health issues” he said.

“The PNG Immigration & Citizenship Service Authority is taking steps to tighten the assessment of passport and travel document applications, including additional checks around identity” he said.

“This may include biometric checking through facial recognition software to prevent the creation of false identities” Minister Pato said.

“We are committed to ensuring robust checking of identity of all travellers as this is an important element in ensuring aviation security, as well as securing easier access of PNG citizens into other countries” he said.

“We are proud to offer resettlement to genuine refugees who are fleeing persecution in their home countries, consistent with our Melanesian values and Christian beliefs. We do also, however, expect our law to be observed” the Minister said.

“Tendering false statements or documents as part of any application for a passport or travel document is a criminal offence in PNG. Breaches will be investigated, and those breaking the law will be prosecuted” Minister Pato said.

Authorised by:



Hon. Rimbink Pato, LLB, OBE, MP
Minister for Foreign Affairs and Immigration

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