



**MINISTRY OF IMMIGRATION AND BORDER SECURITY**  
**OFFICE OF THE MINISTER**

**MEDIA STATEMENT**

**BY**

**MINISTER FOR IMMIGRATION AND BORDER SECURITY**

**HON. PETRUS THOMAS, MP**

**REFUGEES AND ASYLUM SEEKERS MUST MOVE OUT OF  
LOMBRUM NAVAL BASE TO ACCESS AVAILABLE SERVICES**

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The Minister for Immigration and Border Security, the Hon. Petrus Thomas, MP said today that as of 31 October 2017 the former Manus Regional Processing Centre (MRPC) at the Lombrum Naval Base has been decommissioned.

"All necessary equipment and structures for the provision of services have been removed and it is no longer possible to restore any services. Decommissioning activities have been extensive and have been ongoing since messaging of closure first commenced many months ago to the residents. The absence of services should not come as a surprise to anyone," said Minister Thomas.

"The provision of services at the decommissioned facility is not simply a matter of reconnecting the water or turning on the electricity. I want to be very clear that there is no capacity to restore services, there is no service provider to deliver services and more significantly, as services are available at the new facilities, there is no need for services to be reconnected," said Minister Thomas.

"The Government takes its obligations towards the treatment and care of all persons transferred to PNG very seriously. However, it is not incumbent on PNG to deliver services and this remains the responsibility of the service providers but at the new locations where the residents have to move to," said Minister Thomas.

"The PNG Immigration and Citizenship Services Authority have inspected the sites and not only confirmed the readiness of the new accommodation facilities but services such as catering, cleaning, security, including a medical clinic are already operational at East Lorengau Transit Centre. Photographs demonstrating the quality and standard of the accommodation has been made available to the refugees and non-refugees to take up residence immediately".



"PNG Immigration staff have been interacting closely with asylum seekers at the MRPC for many years and have developed a good rapport with the residents. It is apparent to me that there are a small number of persons within the decommissioned Centre who exert considerable influence over others for their own selfish motivations. Anyone using threats and intimidation will be held responsible for anything that happens to residents willing to move," said Minister Thomas.

"I would like to reassure everyone that Manus is a very peaceful place and residents have travelled freely between Lorengau and Lombrum Naval Base without any major incident since April 2016."

"We have also taken into consideration the security concerns of the residents and discussed with service providers to have increased security measures and presence at the new facilities. Refugees and non-refugees should no longer have any security concerns and continue to remain at the decommissioned facility", said Minister Thomas.

"The decommissioning of the remaining accommodation facilities at Lombrum Naval Base must continue for the PNG Defence Force to take control of their land and the residents must move immediately to allow this process to commence".

"The residents must also move for the interest of their own safety, basic hygiene, and health to access the necessary services at East Lorengau Transit Centre and the new accommodation facilities," said Minister Thomas.

"The PNG Government cannot continue to borne unreasonable costs of keeping watch over the residents at the Lombrum Naval Base and will not tolerate a situation that leads to the deterioration of the health and wellbeing of residents because of refusal to move to access services," said Minister Thomas.

"I call upon all those currently at the former MRPC and say that there is no need for you to remain in facilities that are no longer operational. The Government of PNG has discharged its responsibilities by providing safe, secure and adequate accommodation for each and every one of you".

"Those observers including international organisations who claim to have the interests of the refugees and non-refugees I implore you to desist from influencing the residents to remain at the Lombrum Naval Base and support the PNG Immigration to encourage these individuals to avail themselves of the new facilities whilst PNG Immigration as the Government's representative work with Australia to identify durable solutions for those found to be owed protection and encourage those who have not, to return to their countries of origin and move on with their lives," said Minister Thomas.

"It has and will always remain the Government's preference for voluntary relocation. However, the Government will not shirk its responsibilities and we are prepared to work with relevant authorities to ensure that the needs of the refugees and non-refugees are provided and they have access to the necessary services," said Minister Thomas.



**Hon. Petrus Thomas, MP**  
**Minister for Immigration and Border Security**

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