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**21/09/2010**

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**Press Release for immediate release**

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**TIPNG – CS buying guns not right**

Transparency International PNG (TIPNG) says the purchase of high powered weapons by the Correctional Services (CS) in Papua New Guinea is not the solution to the various problems associated with jails in the country. This is in light of CS Minister Tony Aimo's announcement in the daily papers last week that the CS will spend up to K9 million to purchase high powered fire arms to presumably deter mass prison break outs.

TIPNG says the tax payers K9 million should be better spent to upgrade and secure all prison facilities including staff facilities to boost low morale among staff and instill discipline among service members.

The anti-corruption organization says the Minister's announcement is a slap in the face of hard working prison officers working and living in very trying conditions over many years as observed by Justice David Cannings during his visit to Boen jail in Madang last month.

TIPNG believes that all jail facilities nationwide are similarly run down as the Boen facility and says mass breakouts and related problems in all jails are not caused by lack of high powered firearms but rather due to over crowded and run down facilities. This is where the Minister's attention is urgently required.

TIPNG says that there have been instances where government issued firearms have been wrestled from members of the disciplined forces during break outs or hold ups ending up in the wrong hands so there is no guarantee for the safety of these fire arms. TIPNG is also concerned that with the elections around the corner, there could be greater misuse of firearms

TIPNG calls on the Minister and Commissioner to re-direct the funds to improving the living conditions of the warders and upgrading prison facilities. Buying guns will not solve problems with the jails including mass break outs.