



Ministry of Information and Communications Technology

Office of the Minister

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Call for Collaborative Approach on Sensitive Cyber Matters

This morning, following a meeting with senior executives of the National Information and Communications Authority, and the Department of Information and Communications I wish to address recent concerns around Facebook access in Papua New Guinea taking my cue from a statement issued overnight by my colleague Minister for Police.

Commissioner of Police has powers under the Counter-Terrorism Act 2024. As Minister, I also have emergency powers under the National Information and Communications Technology Act 2009. However, I reiterate that these statutory powers on either side are anchored by constitutional constraints and there must be conditions precedent before these powers are exercised.

Cyber is a domain that requires coordinated efforts across government bodies, and sensitive matters must be handled through a collective approach to ensure national security and public trust.

Collaboration in the cyber domain is important. For instance, the Department of ICT and NICTA have been currently working with the Office of Censorship since 2023 in implementing a standing NEC directive to filter internet content, and this will soon be followed by collaboration with other partners on implementation of policies covering media development, social media, and digital ID.

As Minister responsible, I reiterate that NICTA is a regulator largely responsible for licensing operators, mainly telco operators and internet service providers that provide over-the-top services including Facebook and WhatsApp.

Preliminary exchanges overnight with Meta, the parent company of Facebook and WhatsApp, indicate that there was no outage from Meta's end over the last 48 hours.

To narrow down to the root cause of unsatisfactory access to Facebook during this period, NICTA is now called upon to initiate an investigation into the matter.

Last week, Department of ICT and NICTA joined the Office of Censorship and the Police at the briefing called by the Permanent Parliamentary Committee on Communications.

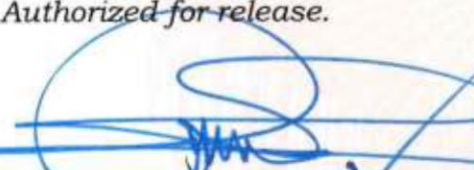
At the briefing, the Committee was informed that in the long-term, PNG is also preparing to join the United Nations Convention Against Cybercrime, and the Budapest Convention on Cybercrime.

As Minister responsible, I will be taking a joint policy submission to NEC seeking endorsement for parliamentary ratification to both international conventions.

The implications of a decision by PNG to join international cybercrime treaties will include amending existing or passing new legislation to implement international cybercrime laws within PNG to strengthen PNG's ability to combat cybercrime.

I urge all relevant government bodies and stakeholders to commit to a collaborative process that ensures the security and resilience of our nation's cyberspace in light with our international obligations.

Authorized for release.


HON. TIMOTHY MASIU, MP
Minister for Information & Communication Technology
And Member for South Bougainville

