

Country/entity	Papua New Guinea Bougainville
Region	Asia and Pacific
Agreement name	Melanesian Agreement
Date	26 Jun 2025
Agreement status	Multiparty signed/agreed
Interim arrangement	Yes

Agreement/conflict level Intrastate/intrastate conflict

Bougainville Conflict (1987 - 1998)

The conflict on Bougainville, an island under the jurisdiction of Papua New Guinea (PNG), began in 1987 as a dispute over compensation for the use of land by Bougainville Copper Ltd, a an Australian subsidiary. The underlying issue of independence soon emerged and the conflict escalated between the government of PNG and the native islanders, in turn spearheaded by the Bougainville Revolutionary Army (BRA). Until fighting ended in 1998, an estimated 20,000 died in the conflict. Several pre-negotiation agreements culminated in an agreement to a 'permanent and irrevocable' ceasefire, and a framework for normalizing the PNG-Bourgainville relationship, which included elections.

Close

Bougainville Conflict (1987 - 1998)

Stage Implementation/renegotiation

Conflict nature Government/territory

Peace process Bougainville: peace process

Parties Hon. James Marape, MP — Prime Minister, Government of Papua New Guinea
Hon. Ishmael Toroama, MHR — President, Autonomous Bougainville Government

Third parties -

Description This agreement establishes a "Melanesian framework" for implementing the results of the 2019 Bougainville independence referendum, where 97.7% of Bougainvilleans voted for independence from Papua New Guinea. The agreement commits both parties to working through Papua New Guinea's National Parliament for final decision-making on independence while maintaining peaceful relations and includes provisions for institutional strengthening and international monitoring. It represents a significant step in the post-referendum consultation process that began after the December 2019 referendum results were declared.

Agreement document	PG_250626_Melanesian Agreement (opens in new tab) Download PDF
Source of document	https://abg.gov.pg/index.php?/news/read/melanesian-agreement-between-the-governments-of-papua-new-guinea-and-bougainville

Groups

Children/youth	Groups→Children/youth→Other Noting the wider consultations that have taken place with civil society organisations, women's groups, churches, business representatives and youth, and the shared aspirations of women and youth for a peaceful and inclusive pathway forward;
Disabled persons	No specific mention.
Elderly/age	No specific mention.
Migrant workers	No specific mention.
Racial/ethnic/national group	No specific mention.
Religious groups	No specific mention.
Indigenous people	No specific mention.
Other groups	No specific mention.
Refugees/displaced persons	No specific mention.
Social class	No specific mention.

Gender

Women, girls and gender	Noting the wider consultations that have taken place with civil society organisations, women's groups, churches, business representatives and youth, and the shared aspirations of women and youth for a peaceful and inclusive pathway forward;
Men and boys	No specific mention.
LGBTI	No specific mention.
Family	No specific mention.

State definition

Nature of state (general)	No specific mention.
State configuration	No specific mention.
Self determination	No specific mention.

Referendum

Guided by the outcome of the constitutionally-sanctioned Bougainville Referendum, declared on the 11th of December 2019, in which an overwhelming majority of 97.7% of Bougainvilleans had voted in favour of separate independence, based on the definition of independence used on the Bougainville referendum ballot paper;
Acknowledging the crucial role that the Joint Moderated Consultations have played in resolving important issues pertaining to the post-referendum process;

...

The Parties have agreed to the following:

1. Joint Commitments:

...

1.2. The Parties recognise the legitimate choice of the Bougainville people for independence as expressed in the Referendum result;

...

1.5. The Parties agree that the process for bringing the Referendum results to the National Parliament will be by way of a sessional order as determined by the National Parliament.

The sessional order will be recommended by the Speakers of both the National Parliament and the Bougainville House of Representatives;

1.6. The Parties acknowledge that the National Parliament and Bougainville House of Representatives have a central and integral role to play in the process leading up to the National Parliament and thereafter;

1.7. The Parties acknowledge the importance of the Bipartisan Parliamentary Committee on Bougainville in consulting and disseminating the joint key messages, as assisted by the Moderator, for members of the 11th National Parliament, and the people of Papua New Guinea, on the Bougainville Referendum and the post-referendum process;

1.8. The Parties further acknowledge the importance of a public awareness raising programme by the Government of Papua New Guinea and the Autonomous Bougainville Government on the joint key messages for the people of Papua New Guinea and Bougainville, on the Bougainville Referendum and progress made in the post-referendum process.

2. Principles:

2.1. The Parties commit to exploring the joint creation of a Melanesian framework with agreed timelines, for a pathway forwards, that may form part of the Joint Consultations Report presented to the 11th National Parliament;

2.2. The results of the Bougainville Referendum and the Joint Consultation Report will be taken to the 11th National Parliament immediately after the Bipartisan Committee has completed its work in line with its Terms of Reference;

2.3. The Parties shall accept the decision of the National Parliament, in the first instance, regarding the Referendum results, and commit to further consultations, if required and agreed, according to an agreed timeline;

State symbols

No specific mention.

**Independence/
secession**

Guided by the outcome of the constitutionally-sanctioned Bougainville Referendum, declared on the 11th of December 2019, in which an overwhelming majority of 97.7% of Bougainvilleans had voted in favour of separate independence, based on the definition of independence used on the Bougainville referendum ballot paper;

...

The Parties have agreed to the following:

1. Joint Commitments:

...

1.2. The Parties recognise the legitimate choice of the Bougainville people for independence as expressed in the Referendum result;

...

1.4. The Parties are committed to maintaining a close, peaceful and enduring relationship between Papua New Guinea and Bougainville;

**Accession/
unification**

No specific mention.

Border delimitation No specific mention.

**Cross-border
provision**

No specific mention.

Governance

Political institutions (new or reformed)	Governance→Political institutions (new or reformed)→General references The Parties have agreed to the following: 1. Joint Commitments: 1.1. The Parties agree to the role of the National Parliament in the decision making process in accordance with Section 342 of the National Constitution; ... 1.5. The Parties agree that the process for bringing the Referendum results to the National Parliament will be by way of a sessional order as determined by the National Parliament. The sessional order will be recommended by the Speakers of both the National Parliament and the Bougainville House of Representatives; 1.6. The Parties acknowledge that the National Parliament and Bougainville House of Representatives have a central and integral role to play in the process leading up to the National Parliament and thereafter; 1.7. The Parties acknowledge the importance of the Bipartisan Parliamentary Committee on Bougainville in consulting and disseminating the joint key messages, as assisted by the Moderator, for members of the 11th National Parliament, and the people of Papua New Guinea, on the Bougainville Referendum and the post-referendum process; 1.8. The Parties further acknowledge the importance of a public awareness raising programme by the Government of Papua New Guinea and the Autonomous Bougainville Government on the joint key messages for the people of Papua New Guinea and Bougainville, on the Bougainville Referendum and progress made in the post-referendum process. 2. Principles: ... 2.4. The Parties jointly commit to institutional strengthening and institutional building of the ABG administration as per the Sharp Agreement;
Elections	No specific mention.
Electoral commission	No specific mention.
Political parties reform	No specific mention.
Civil society	The Parties have agreed to the following: 1. Joint Commitments: ... 1.8. The Parties further acknowledge the importance of a public awareness raising programme by the Government of Papua New Guinea and the Autonomous Bougainville Government on the joint key messages for the people of Papua New Guinea and Bougainville, on the Bougainville Referendum and progress made in the post-referendum process.
Traditional/religious leaders	No specific mention.

Public administration	No specific mention.
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Constitution	No specific mention.
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Power sharing

Political power sharing	No specific mention.
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Territorial power sharing	Power sharing→Territorial power sharing→Autonomous regions The Parties have agreed to the following: ... 2. Principles: ... 2.4. The Parties jointly commit to institutional strengthening and institutional building of the ABG administration as per the Sharp Agreement;
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Economic power sharing	No specific mention.
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Military power sharing	No specific mention.
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Human rights and equality

Human rights/RoL general	No specific mention.
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Bill of rights/similar	No specific mention.
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Treaty incorporation	No specific mention.
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Civil and political rights	No specific mention.
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Socio-economic rights	No specific mention.
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Rights related issues

Citizenship	No specific mention.
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Democracy	No specific mention.
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Detention procedures	No specific mention.
Media and communication	No specific mention.
Mobility/access	No specific mention.
Protection measures	No specific mention.
Other	No specific mention.

Rights institutions

NHRI	No specific mention.
Regional or international human rights institutions	No specific mention.

Justice sector reform

Criminal justice and emergency law	No specific mention.
State of emergency provisions	No specific mention.
Judiciary and courts	No specific mention.
Prisons and detention	No specific mention.
Traditional Laws	No specific mention.

Socio-economic reconstruction

Development or socio-economic reconstruction	No specific mention.
National economic plan	No specific mention.

Natural resources No specific mention.

International funds No specific mention.

Business Noting the wider consultations that have taken place with civil society organisations, women's groups, churches, business representatives and youth, and the shared aspirations of women and youth for a peaceful and inclusive pathway forward;

Taxation No specific mention.

Banks No specific mention.

Land, property and environment

Land reform/rights No specific mention.

**Pastoralist/
nomadism rights** No specific mention.

Cultural heritage No specific mention.

Environment No specific mention.

**Water or riparian
rights or access** No specific mention.

Security sector

**Security
Guarantees** No specific mention.

Ceasefire No specific mention.

Police No specific mention.

Armed forces No specific mention.

DDR No specific mention.

**Intelligence
services** No specific mention.

Parastatal/rebel and opposition group forces	No specific mention.
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Withdrawal of foreign forces	No specific mention.
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Corruption	No specific mention.
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Crime/organised crime	No specific mention.
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Drugs	No specific mention.
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Terrorism	No specific mention.
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Transitional justice

Transitional justice general	No specific mention.
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Amnesty/pardon	No specific mention.
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Courts	No specific mention.
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Mechanism	No specific mention.
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Prisoner release	No specific mention.
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Vetting	No specific mention.
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Victims	No specific mention.
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Missing persons	No specific mention.
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Reparations	No specific mention.
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Reconciliation	No specific mention.
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Implementation

UN signatory No specific mention.

Other international signatory No specific mention.

Referendum for agreement No specific mention.

International mission/force/ similar No specific mention.

Enforcement mechanism No specific mention.
