



## PRESS STATEMENT

### **Apia, 31 May 2021 – *Respect for democratic values and principles and human rights***

Samoa is going through an unprecedented phase in her political history.

The Office of the Ombudsman also Samoa's National Human Rights Institution has been closely monitoring events on the ground and is assured that people have been able to exercise their fundamental human rights and freedoms as guaranteed by the Constitution.

The nation regardless of their political affiliations have exercised their freedom of association, freedom of assembly, freedom of movement and freedom of speech without retaliation or being subjected to any restraint or arrest.

We commend the Police for ensuring the safety of everyone as well as the public and essential services for their uninterrupted work in serving the people despite these uncertain times.

We also commend the people of Samoa for responsibly upholding peace.

As our political, religious, and cultural leaders work through the means available to them to arrive at a peaceful, fair, and just resolution of the political situation, the Office joins all in the spirit of solidarity while upholding the principles of good governance and the protection and promotion of human rights as mandated by law.

The principles and values of democratic governance have governed our country since Independence as we navigate our nation's ship as a young democracy. Respect for democracy, the rule of law, human rights, and good governance, fused with our unique culture and Christian beliefs, have made us a beacon of stability in our Pacific region and afar. These same essential values are key to our efforts towards a resolution which we are confident will be reached.

We earnestly call for those values and principles to be upheld and maintained, wherein there is mutual respect between the three branches of government - the Executive, the Legislative and the Judiciary and their respective critical roles.

The independence of the judiciary is integral to upholding the rule of law.

We encourage our institutions and public service to continue to be guardians of these values and principles. Lastly, we remind all of our responsibility and respect for human dignity.

On the eve of our Independence anniversary, we wish our leaders and the people of Samoa a peaceful Independence Day.

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