



National Fisheries Authority

Papua New Guinea

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PRESS RELEASE

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SUCCESSFUL PROSECUTION OF ILLEGAL FISHERMEN AND SCUTTING OF ILLEGAL BOATS

The National Fisheries Authority (NFA) and the Royal Papua New Guinea Constabulary (RPNGC) have successfully concluded a significant operation against illegal fishing in our waters, resulting in the prosecution of 27 defendants, including three masters and 24 crew members.

This decisive action sends a powerful message to all Illegal Unreported and Unregulated (IUU) fishing vessels that Papua New Guinea will not tolerate their activities.

The three masters of the illegal fishing boats have each been charged with three counts of illegal fishing, resulting in substantial financial penalties. Each master faces a fine of K40,000 per count, amounting to a total of K120,000 in default of 12 years imprisonment. The total financial penalties for the three masters reach K360,000.

In addition, the 24 crew members have each been charged with two counts, each carrying a fine of K20,000. This results in a total fine of K960,000 for the crew.

Summary of Financial Penalties:

- Masters: K360,000 (3 masters)
- Crew: K960,000 (24 crew)
- Total Penalties: K1,320,000

Summary of Imprisonment Terms:

- Masters: 12 years each, totalling 36 years

- Crew: 6 years each, totalling 144 years
- Overall Imprisonment: 180 years

The Minister of Fisheries and Marine Resources, Hon Jelta Wong, extends his congratulations to both the National Fisheries Authority and the Royal Papua New Guinea Constabulary for their exemplary collaboration in this operation. "I am pleased with the progress we are making in combating illegal fishing. This operation demonstrates our commitment to protecting our marine resources and ensuring that those who wish to fish in our waters adhere to legal processes," said Minister Wong.

"The directive from our Prime Minister to sink all IUU vessels is being implemented effectively. We are sending a strong message: if you want to fish in our country, you must follow the law. We look forward to continuing our efforts to catch more illegal boats and safeguard our national resources."

Through this operation, we reaffirm our commitment to sustainable fishing practices and the protection of our marine environment. The collaboration between the NFA and RPNGC is a testament to our collective resolve in tackling illegal fishing and ensuring the long-term sustainability of our fisheries.

Meanwhile, Mr Justin Ilakini, NFA Managing Director, has confirmed the successful apprehension of two illegal squid trawlers operating in the Dog Leg area.

"On 18 February, the Fisheries Patrol Vessel *Ilakini* intercepted and apprehended two foreign squid trawlers engaged in illegal fishing activities within our waters," Mr. Ilakini said.

The patrol vessel arrived in Port Moresby on Sunday morning 22 February, escorting the detained vessels.

The vessels apprehended are:

- KM Kasih Jaya – carrying 33 crew members and 350 cartons of squid
- KM Mitra Utama Rejeki – carrying 34 crew members and 400 cartons of squid

In total, 67 crew members and approximately 750 cartons of squid were found onboard the two vessels.

“The NFA is currently conducting investigations. The crew members, including the captains, will be formally charged in accordance with Papua New Guinea’s fisheries laws,” Mr. Ilakini stated.

Mr. Ilakini reaffirmed the Authority’s commitment to protecting Papua New Guinea’s marine resources and ensuring strict compliance with national fisheries regulations.

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