



**Office of the Ombudsman
Bureau du Médiateur
Ofis blong Ombudsman**



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Press Release

Ombudsman recommends a review of the Vanuatu Mobile Force Fire Services to include a Fire Service legislation to cater for the safety of the fire men and sufficient funds to carry out its activities.

The Ombudsman is issuing this public report to highlight factors that may have contributed to the ineffective and/or delayed services delivered by the Vanuatu Mobile Force Fire Services (VMFFS).

Briefly, on 31 March 2014 a fire burnt down a dwelling house at Anambrou Area at approximately 4.30 in the morning. Although the VMF Fire Service was given the alert they failed to respond and said that they have no petrol. The fire brigade later arrived at the scene but the house had already burnt down. This incident prompted the Office of the Ombudsman to carry out an investigation. Lieutenant Bomma Avia, the officer in charge of the VMF Fire Service was contacted by letter dated 19 February 2016. Lieutenant Boma replied on 15 June 2016 stating that the fire service brigade could not move to the scene because they had no funds to pay for petrol. He further stated that his department does not control the money but the office of the Commissioner does. This is one example of the many fire incidents that the VMF Fire Service failed to take control of.

While the event concerned occurred way back in 2014, the problems that the VMFFS Unit faces everyday remain the same.

The Ombudsman finds that given the lack of or delayed receipt of funds, the VMFFS cannot fully perform its duties to the required expectations.

The Ombudsman recommends that as the services of the VMFFS become more frequent, sufficient funds would need to be allocated for the VMFFS Unit and furthermore, a legislation would need to be established to take care of the Firemen's safety and other matters concerning Fire Service.

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