

**REPUBLIC OF VANUATU  
OFFICE OF THE OMBUDSMAN**

**PUBLIC REPORT**

**ON THE**

**GRANTING OF LEASES BY THE FORMER  
MINISTER OF LANDS MR PAUL BARTHELEMY  
TELUKLUK TO HIMSELF, FAMILY MEMBERS AND  
WANTOKS**

**22 April 1999**

**7159/9/06**

**PUBLIC REPORT ON THE GRANTING OF LEASES  
BY THE FORMER MINISTER OF LANDS MR PAUL BARTHELEMY TELUKLUK  
TO HIMSELF, FAMILY MEMBERS AND WANTOK**

**PREAMBLE**

*"Thou hast greedily gained of thy neighbours by extortion and have forgotten me saith the Lord God..."*

*Ezekiel 22 v 12*

This yet again we are confronted by evidence of leaders conspiring to defraud not only private individuals but the public by carefully plotting to increase their own personal wealth and assets by systematically pursuing dishonest courses of action and by misusing their public official positions to break the law, enrich themselves and to defraud others of their rights.

**SUMMARY**

Public Report is about how 15 land titles were improperly allocated by the Former Minister of Lands and now Minister of Ni-Vanuatu Business Mr. Paul Barthelemy Telukluk to himself, Members of his Family and wantoks (people of his island community). This report highlights the need for a proper policy governing the lease of Government Lands and Customary lands to ensure that they are done according to constitutional rights and Leadership Code obligations, and that actual market values are used.

The Ombudsman decided to investigate into this distribution of titles following several complaints lodged by members of the public. These complainants, having been allocated a block of land by the Department of Lands, had seen their land then given by Minister of Land Telukluk to members of his family or wantoks before the full process was finalised.

As Minister of Lands between 1992 and 1996, Mr. Telukluk had the legal power to sign land leases on behalf of the government, for public lands and lands under the management or control of the government. This also gave Mr. Telukluk the ultimate power to approve or determine the premium charged for leases.

During his term, Mr. Telukluk assigned 15 titles to himself, members of his family and wantoks:

- without requiring applications to lease
- without obtaining the application fee
- without using the ULLSC or RLLSC to consider the application
- in 5 cases ignoring previous recommendations of these Committees or other legal interests in the title (one approved applicant had even paid a deposit on the title)
- in 8 cases without requiring negotiator's certificates as required by s. 6 of the Land Reform Act
- in 7 cases granting negotiator's certificates himself without the recommendation of the ULLSC or RLLSC
- without obtaining proper valuations
- in 5 cases, without charging any premium at all on the leases
- in 5 cases, without requiring the premium to be paid before the leases were registered
- in 3 cases, having the documents prepared in Vila even though the land was in Luganville
- in 2 cases, signing the lease 2 days after he ceased to be the Minister of Lands with this power

The total of the lease premiums of the 15 properties was 6.608.960 Vatu, however only 5.125.800 Vatu was collected. The privately estimated market value of the 15 properties at the time the leases were granted, is approximately 27.818.100 Vatu. This shows a loss of **over 22 million Vatu** to the people of Vanuatu.