



Bureau du Médiateur Office of the Ombudsman Ofis blong Ombudsman



11 August 2026

PRESS RELEASE

OFFICE OF THE OMBUDSMAN CLARIFIES REPORT CONFIDENTIALITY AMID UNAUTHORISED DISCLOSURES, REAFFIRMS LEGAL PROTECTIONS

The Office of the Ombudsman is addressing recent media reports concerning the circulation of internal documents and wishes to provide a crucial clarification regarding the types of reports issued by this Office and their respective confidentiality status. The Ombudsman strongly condemns any unauthorized disclosure and underscores the serious legal ramifications for such actions. It is imperative for the public and the media to understand that the Office of the Ombudsman produces two distinct types of reports related to its enquiries:

1. **Working Paper Reports:** These are highly confidential, preliminary documents. They are exclusively issued to the relevant parties involved in an enquiry to provide them with a critical opportunity to respond to findings, evidence and recommendations. This process ensures fairness, accuracy and adherence to the principles of natural justice before any final decisions are made. Working Paper Reports are not public documents and are never intended for public circulation or access.
2. **Public Reports:** These are final, official documents of the Ombudsman, issued after a thorough enquiry as been completed, responses from relevant parties considered, and final conclusions reached. Only Public Reports become public documents, accessible to everyone, reflecting the Ombudsman's commitment to transparency and accountability.

The unauthorized publication or disclosure of a Working Paper Report, or any information contained within it, is not only a breach of ethical conduct but also a direct violation of the law.

Section 28 (1) of the Ombudsman Act [CAP.252] explicitly states:

"Subject to subsections (2) and (3), it is an offence for a person to publish or disclosure to another person any evidence, documents or other information given to, or received from, the Ombudsman."

This provision legally protects the integrity of ongoing investigations and ensures due process. Publishing or disclosing information from confidential documents and Working Paper Reports risks disseminating incomplete, unverified or potentially misleading information, which can prejudice individuals, undermine the investigation and erode public trust.

The penalty for committing such an offence is severe, including a fine of Vt 100,000 or 6 months imprisonment or both. The Office of the Ombudsman takes these legal provisions seriously and will not hesitate to pursue all available legal avenues against any individual or entity found to be in breach of this Act.

We appeal to all members of the media and the public to respect the legal framework governing the operations of the Office of the Ombudsman. Our commitment is to ensure that comprehensive and substantiated Public Reports are made available at the appropriate time, in accordance with the law, to inform the nation.

Thank you


Doran L. Samuel
Officer in Charge
Office of the Ombudsman