



**EMBASSY OF THE
UNITED STATES OF AMERICA**

Douglas Street, Port Moresby, Papua New Guinea

Office of Public Affairs

Telephone: +675 321-1455

Fax: +675 321-1593

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Murder of Kepari Leniata

Port Moresby, Papua New Guinea: The United States of America strongly condemns the brutal murder of Kepari Leniata in Mt. Hagen on Wednesday morning and extends our deepest sympathies to her family, especially her eight-month old daughter. We add our voice to those of Papua New Guinean religious and civil society leaders who have spoken out against the brutality inflicted upon Ms Leniata. There is no possible justification for this sort of violence.

The United States applauds the Western Highlands provincial police authority's promise to investigate and prosecute those responsible for this act. We hope that appropriate resources are devoted to identifying, prosecuting, and punishing those responsible for Ms. Leniata's murder.

This incident once again highlights the need for comprehensive action to address the pervasive global problem of gender-based violence. The United States calls for a sustained international partnership to address this issue throughout the Pacific, including through the creation and enforcement of anti-gender-based violence laws, the enhancement of prevention and response efforts, and the reduction of stigma and harmful practices. We will continue to work in partnership with the Papua New Guinean government and civil society to advance this agenda.

Our thoughts are with the victim's family and children during this difficult time.

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