

Tributes to Alan Weeks

From the Prime Minister of Papua New Guinea, Sir Michael Somare

On behalf of the Government and people of Papua New Guinea, I send our sincerest condolences to the wife, Liz, the children, Cathy-Jean and David, the friends, colleagues, and the many people who admired or benefited from the demonstrated commitment and practical work for peace of the late Alan Weeks. We all, surely, miss him. Our thoughts and prayers are with his family as we share in their grief at his untimely death.

The late Alan Weeks was among the individuals, leaders and representatives of churches and other bodies committed to peace, and the many humanitarian and other non-government organizations, which helped to lay the groundwork for peace-making and ongoing peace-building in Bougainville. The fruits of their efforts can be seen in the peace which now prevails, and the ongoing efforts to strengthen its foundations through ongoing reconciliation on the ground.

The late Alan Weeks was among those who worked very hard to maintain, restore and strengthen peace by promoting reconciliation and the peaceful resolution of disputes both before and after the terrible conflict which took place in what is now Papua New Guinea's Autonomous Bougainville Province between 1989 and 1997. He was especially notable for his strong advocacy and his personal contributions in the early stages of what is often described as 'Track Two' of the Bougainville peace process. This led to his participation in some of the early meetings of leaders which eventually opened the way to further meetings where agreement was reached to end armed conflict, to co-operate in restoring peace, and to work together to increase opportunities for development in Bougainville.

It was, therefore, entirely appropriate that the late Alan Weeks was able to join us when I traveled across to Bougainville with a number of senior Ministers for the informal swearing-in of the Autonomous Bougainville Government in June last year.

The late Alan Weeks as a committed peace-builder knew that reconciliation is the foundation for restoring and building peace. As I said in a paper I gave at a conference sponsored by Moral Re-Armament in Caux, Switzerland, in August 2000, when I was Minister for Bougainville Affairs at a critical time in the Bougainville peace process, reconciliation raises many sensitive questions. In a diverse and rapidly changing country like Papua New Guinea, reconciliation can take many forms – traditional, religious, legal and others. This too, the late Alan Weeks recognised. His understanding of Papua New Guinea, based on many years of experience here, guided his efforts to promote reconciliation in Bougainville, and the success he achieved. He will be accordingly missed by the many people – in Bougainville, the rest of Papua New Guinea, and the region – who were inspired by his advocacy, the example he set, and the advice he gave to those who shared his commitment to peace.

Those who were privileged to know the late Alan Weeks personally, or were otherwise aware of his role as a peace-builder, are among those who will miss him.

May God bless his family, and others who grieve at his loss.

Yours sincerely,

M.T. Somare GCL GCMG CH CF KstJ

From the President, Autonomous Bougainville Government

My wife Rose and I, my family, the Autonomous Bougainville Government and the People of this Autonomous Region, were saddened to learn of the recent passing of brother Alan Weeks. The Bougainville Leadership know Alan well as a passionate and knowledgeable advocate for peace in our region and Papua New Guinea.

Alan's unwavering dedication combined with a deep love for his fellow men and women encouraged us all immensely in Bougainville in our time of great need to pursue peace for all our people at all cost. We know how much Bougainville was close to his heart until his death. He was always advocating for justice to prevail. And it was a joy to have him as our honoured guest, celebrate the New Bougainville government inauguration in June 2005, to which he had also been a fellow contributor.

Alan Weeks was a dedicated member of the Moral Re-Armament movement. He was strongly influenced by its tenets of honesty, purity, unselfishness and love, 'moral re-armament' of humankind and not 'military re-armament' by nation states.

His death is a great loss to the MRA movement, the Human Rights Community and to his many friends around the Pacific, Bougainville Autonomous Region and Papua New Guinea.

Our thoughts and prayers will be with you all for Alan Weeks' Memorial Service. May we all find comfort in the Lord and experience His compassion as we thank God for a truly well lived life in service to God and His people.

'May the Peace of God that transcends all understanding guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus. Finally, brothers, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is admirable – if anything is excellent or praiseworthy – think about such things... And the God of Peace will be with you.' (Philippians 4:7, 8&9b)

Hon. Joseph C. Kabui MHR
President
Autonomous Bougainville Government
Autonomous Region of Bougainville

From the South Bougainville Peace and Development Foundation

FROM THE PEOPLE AND THE LAND HE LOVED SO MUCH

Members of all civil society groups including church groups, community based organisations, Peace groups, friends and families of previous Trust-Building-Project between Papua New Guinea and Bougainville people from all walks of life on Bougainville, wish to convey our deepest and heartfelt condolence to Elizabeth Weeks (widow) and the children and relatives of the late Alan Weeks.

Thousands of kilometres of sea and sky had no limit to the life long commitment Alan had to the people of Bougainville. A quiet achiever, with a direct and transparent approach to issues he believed needed to be addressed for change, Alan was highly regarded by a lot of leaders as a mentor throughout various stages of the Bougainville crisis.

His history of concern for the people of Bougainville was a long one and at various levels of human interaction. Many Bougainvilleans appreciate his unselfish, caring and honest lifestyle. He lived a life that made changes wherever he set his foot.

We thank you for allowing us to share your great father with us.

We thank Australia for giving us your great son and mentor as we rebuild our shattered lives during and after the crisis.

The sudden demise of our friend, colleague and mentor has come as a tragic loss for Bougainville and those who knew him through his work both in Papua New Guinea and parts of the world.

May God console and give you peace in this time of bereavement.

Albert Joseph Noro
President-SBPDF

Jobson Misang
Committee Member

Ray Himata
Director-SBPDF