

09 August 2012

The Editor
Post-Courier
PO Box 85
Port Moresby

Re: Post-Courier Reporter Gorethy Kenneth Plagiarises The Garamut Blog

To Whom It May Concern,

In your **print edition** and **online edition** of the **Post-Courier**, dated **9 August 2012**, you published an article on your front page, and home page, titled "O'Neill delays cabinet line-up" with the subheading "Leo Dion is Deputy Prime Minister".

The article was written by your political reporter, Gorethy Kenneth, and was your newspaper's lead article on the date of its publication.

The URL to the electronic-version of the relevant article in your online edition can be found here: <http://www.postcourier.com.pg/20120809/news01.htm>.

Within this article, there are two cases of immediate concern - which I believe directly contradicts the Media Council of Papua New Guinea's General Code of Ethics for News and Media – and which I would like to bring to your prompt attention, and remedy.

Unacceptable Attribution of Direct Quote

Firstly, there is the instance of a direct quote (which is mine – and sourced from my blog, The Garamut, from the URL: <http://garamut.wordpress.com/2012/08/08/dion-becomes-deputy-prime-minister-with-regionalism-in-mind/>) which your reporter, Gorethy Kenneth, uses in this article and which she attributes to being sourced from "the social media".

The relevant quote follows:

"Although Leo Dion is a quality choice too – he has the experience, respect and leadership qualities required – from the perspective of purely the numbers' game which is so crucial in PNG politics, it is a rather illogical decision, and one that must have been made with a few distractions in mind – most importantly in this instance – the idea of 'regionalism'".

I would like to lodge my utmost objection to the attribution of this quote to the named source in your article as being "the social media".

In my opinion, attributing this very precise and specific quote, to simply "the social media" is unacceptable and is poor journalism.

This quote is one of only two quotes listed in Gorethy Kenneth's article. The first was a quote from Prime Minister Peter O'Neill – which was acknowledged appropriately. The second, my quote, was not attributed in an appropriate manner, and yet featured prominently in your lead article.

Section 10(b) [Misinformation] of the Media Council for Papua New Guinea General Code of Ethics for News and Media states:

“10(b): Aim to always attribute information to its source and make sure that source has the authority to speak for the organization or individual they claim to represent.”

For some reason, your reporter has chosen to attribute my quote to a source titled “the social media”, and not to its correct origin – being my blog, The Garamut.

The term “the social media” is a broad term which encompasses Facebook, Twitter, or social media tools like Pinterest, Flickr, YouTube or Tumblr. It is not a specific source, and represents a wide range of technology tools which are now widely used in media today.

It is my view that it is incorrect to attribute direct quotes a source such as “the social media” – direct quotes should be attributed to its source, in this case, my blog – The Garamut.

Plagiarising of Work

Secondly, and more seriously, in the **same article** dated **9 August 2012**, your reporter Gorethy Kenneth, plagiarises a direct line from the same post from my blog, The Garamut (URL: <http://garamut.wordpress.com/2012/08/08/dion-becomes-deputy-prime-minister-with-regionalism-in-mind/>).

I list a copy of the plagiarised line initially below – then list below this a copy of the paragraph of concern published by your newspaper:

The Garamut [Opening Paragraph]

“In a surprise move that will generate a wide range of reactions across the nation, Prime Minister Peter O’Neill will announce today that his Deputy Prime Minister will be Hon Leo Dion, Governor of East New Britain Province.”

And;

Post-Courier [Second Paragraph]

“In a surprise move which will generate a wide range of reactions from across the nation, Mr O’Neill announced Mr Dion’s appointment at the Government House, despite not living up to his promise of announcing ministerial portfolios for his 22 other Members that were appointed and sworn in yesterday, most of them relatively new.”

Section 12(a) [Public and Personal Standards] of the Media Council for Papua New Guinea General Code of Ethics for News and Media states:

“12(a): Do not plagiarise.”

The definition of ‘plagiarism’, as per the Oxford Dictionary 2010, is as follows:

“An act or instance of using or closely imitating the language and thoughts of another author without authorization and the representation of that author's work as one's own, as by not crediting the original author.”

It is clear that your writer, Gorethy Kenneth, and your newspaper being her employer, have plagiarised my work – and have consequently published it on your front page and distributed copies of my work, throughout Papua New Guinea.

The connection between my quote which I believe was attributed incorrectly, as highlighted as the first case of concern in this letter, and the second case of concern – the plagiarising – is also clear.

Both cases of concern were sourced from the same article on my blog, The Garamut; and were written and published on 8 August 2012 – at least twenty-four hours before your newspaper's edition was published on 9 August 2012.

As a writer, I recognize my work as soon as I see it. I have my own style and my own language – which is why when I read a copy of the Post-Courier 9 August 2012 edition this afternoon, I knew immediately that what I was reading on your front page were words from my blog.

I believe both these examples cited above are unacceptable and contradict good practice and the ethics of a good journalism and a good news media organization.

I have posted a copy of my concerns, with the relevant publications together (for comparison) on the PNG Facebook Group Sharp Talk, which to date, has generated 45 'Likes' and 132 comments. Not one comment has been in favour of your newspaper.

I do not wish to pick on your reporter, Gorethy Kenneth, nor on your newspaper. However, at the very least, I expect an explanation from your reporter, and yourself as the Editor, as to why my work has been plagiarised – and an appropriate response to the concerns which I have raised.

Furthermore, to remedy this situation, I believe I am due a written apology from your reporter, Gorethy Kenneth to be delivered to me privately, and a published comment from the Post-Courier in tomorrow's newspaper edition (**10 August 2012**), immediately acknowledging the mistake, apologizing for it, and thus rectifying the situation.

I acknowledge that I have no real legal basis to push these requests, as I write and operate my blog, The Garamut, under the moniker 'Tavurvur'.

However, I believe this is only the fair thing to do – and that is all that I ask – that I be treated fairly for what has been an unfair piece of journalism, which has reflected very poorly on your newspaper and your staff.

If the above is not addressed, then I will consider using my blog, The Garamut, to highlight this issue, to my audience – both domestically and internationally.

Kind regards,

Tavurvur

**Owner/Editor
The Garamut**

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(www.garamut.wordpress.com)

Copy:
Mr Peter Chegwyn, Chairman, South Pacific Post Ltd.