

Prince Charles sends condolences to PNG on death of its first Prime Minister

World news story

The Prince of Wales has sent a condolence message to the Prime Minister of Papua New Guinea James Marape, following the death of Grand Chief Michael Somare, PNG's first Prime Minister.



HRH with Sir Michael Somare at Clarence House in 2008.

Charles, The Prince of Wales, said:

My wife and I were profoundly sad to learn of the death of Sir Michael Somare. Our thoughts and deepest condolences to the nation on his passing.

Having first visited PNG in 1966 and represented Her Majesty the Queen at your Independence in 1975, I know what a remarkable role Sir Michael played in leading his people to independence, and then as prime minister and parliamentarian in ensuring it accomplished democracy. Sir Michael's service to his nation was exceptional. The people of PNG have lost a statesman who had led international efforts to protect one of our planets greatest assets our rainforest and the wider Asia Pacific community has lost a wide eldest statesman. Our hearts go out to the all the people of PNG at such a very sad time.

For my part I have fond memories of meeting Sir Michael during my visits to PNG over the past 55 years, and in particular, of his unending energy and dedication in pursuit of peace and environmental sustainability. Without him the connection for rainforest nations simply would not exist.

However inadequate it may be on such a very sad occasion my wife and I wanted to express our profound sympathy to the people of PNG as you grieve the loss of your first prime minister. I trust that Sir Michael's enduring legacy of peace and all that he achieved with the collation of rain forest nations will be maintained by future generations.

Published 22 March 2021