



Report to the Pacific Islands Forum

Regional Assistance Mission to Solomon Islands (RAMSI)

January 2016 – June 2017

1. The Regional Assistance Mission to Solomon Islands (RAMSI) will conclude on a high note, after 14 years of security and state-building support that has changed the course of Solomon Islands. The Leaders of Pacific Islands Forum (PIF) nations will travel to Honiara in the final week of June 2017 to celebrate the success of the RAMSI intervention and the enormous progress made by Solomon Islands since the Tensions. The Solomon Islands Government (SIG) will thank the 15 contributing nations for their investment in the security and future of the nation.
2. In the 18 months to 30 June 2017, SIG and RAMSI officials worked shoulder-to-shoulder to ensure that the Government and Royal Solomon Islands Police Force (RSIPF) are in the best possible position to assume full responsibility for policing and national security when RAMSI concludes on 30 June 2017. This included extensive community briefings on: Government preparations, the readiness of the RSIPF, the reasons why RAMSI is ending, and the security assistance that Pacific nations will continue to provide after RAMSI departs.
3. For the RSIPF, the reporting period was characterised by strong leadership, greater police discipline and expedited preparations for RAMSI's departure. While managing a number of complex security operations and high-profile criminal cases, including bribery and corruption cases against public servants and ministers, the RSIPF added 240 new recruits to its ranks, introduced random breath testing for alcohol and began issuing protection orders under new family violence laws. The RSIPF's leadership of community policing initiatives and responses to natural disasters also bolstered public confidence in the force.
4. SIG endorsed and rolled-out its Crime Prevention Strategy and the RSIPF's five-year Capability Plan. It also maintained the police budget amid fiscal pressures, appointed and ensured the smooth transition to a new Police Commissioner, rearmed two specialist police units, and led a final firearms amnesty and gun destruction program.
5. In addition to building public confidence in the RSIPF and the nation's security outlook, RAMSI focused on completing its promised training and infrastructure support to the RSIPF, preparing the RSIPF and the wider community for limited rearmament, strengthening leadership, standards and investigations capability, and transferring assets to SIG as it decommissions the RAMSI base. These activities were completed in accordance with the *RAMSI Participating Police Force Drawdown Strategy 2013-2017* and continued close



collaboration with SIG, RAMSI contributing nations, regional bodies and other development partners.

6. RAMSI maintained its strong regional character, with representatives from all 15 Pacific Island Forum (PIF) members to serve until the last day of the Mission. The RAMSI Participating Police Force (PPF) drew down from 115 in early 2016 to 99 officers by mid-year and will remain at this level until RAMSI's departure. RAMSI drew back to Honiara its last provincially-based advisers from Gizo, Western Province, in May 2016.

7. SIG and RAMSI welcomed the agreement in September 2016 by Forum Leaders that the significant progress made by Solomon Islands since 2003 permitted the conclusion of RAMSI's policing assistance mission in June 2017.

8. Importantly, SIG has continued to assure the people of Solomon Islands and the region more broadly that it is ready for the departure of RAMSI. Commending RAMSI, Prime Minister Manasseh Sogavare also advised United Nations member states that RAMSI would be concluding in June 2017 during his speech to the 2016 General Assembly.

SECURITY OPERATIONS AND RESPONSES

9. Throughout the reporting period, the RSIPF deterred and responded to crime (which remains at low levels by global standards) and dealt adeptly with a small number of civil disturbances. The RSIPF also proactively managed the security operations for a number of major, high-profile events.

Security Operations

10. In July 2016, the RSIPF successfully managed the planning and delivery of security operations for a series of complex, large-scale and overlapping events across two weeks. These events included a National Healing and Apology Week, the Solomon Games, Pacific Islands Development Forum (PIDF) and Melanesian Spearhead Group (MSG) Summit. The RSIPF also ensured a pro-West Papua gathering, attended by around 500 people, in the margins of the MSG Summit, remained peaceful. In addition to the presence of Pacific Leaders, an additional 10,000 people were in Honiara during the two week period.

11. There were no large-scale security incidents during the final 18 months of RAMSI's presence. In August 2016, general duties officers from Malaita Province quickly brought under control an outbreak of violence in the provincial capital, Auki. In February 2017, police detained over 70 people on Rendova Island, Western Province, following an attack on a logging camp. In May 2017, the RSIPF quieted tensions following an attempt by a landowning company to evict illegal settlers on the outskirts of Honiara. In each of these cases, the RSIPF demonstrated its capacity to act independently and to balance conventional and cultural dispute resolution mechanisms to navigate and resolve public order issues. RAMSI advisors supported the RSIPF by providing operational planning advice and aerial support where required.

12. Testament to the RSIPF's growing maritime capabilities, the RSIPF also apprehended three illegal Vietnamese 'blue boat' fishing vessels in its waters in March 2017.



Community safety

13. The RSIPF introduced random breath testing during 2016 and supported an extensive public awareness campaign on the risks of drink-driving and associated penalties. RAMSI supported the RSIPF to procure the necessary equipment and trained RSIPF officers on the devices. Since the implementation of Random Breath Testing a total of 294 cases have been referred to the Solomon Islands Magistrates Court. Proceedings have been finalised in 230 of these cases, with a 100 per cent prosecution success rate.

14. In September 2016, the RSIPF and RAMSI PPF supported Operation Render Safe, a multinational military initiative, to recover and destroy unexploded ordnance in four provinces. The RSIPF demonstrated their world-class ordnance disposal capability. Over 25,000 ordnance items were recovered during the operation.

15. The RSIPF also led efforts to collect and destroy illegal firearms to make Solomon Islands safer. A nation-wide weapons amnesty, which was conducted between 22 May and 9 June 2017, netted 18 firearms, including two high-powered rifles likely to have been stolen from the Rove armoury in 2000, and large stocks of ammunition. RAMSI provided planning advice, supported community messaging and provided independent oversight of weapon collection and destruction. SIG also secured the cooperation of the churches, provincial governments and former combatants.

Corruption and fraud

16. The RSIPF and Ministry of Finance and Treasury (MOFT) established ‘Taskforce Janus’ in 2016 to investigate individuals in the Solomon Islands public service and their associates suspected to be involved in fraud and corruption. In 2016, three arrests were made, including the head of a ministry. The RSIPF’s leadership and professionalism in investigating corruption was widely and resoundingly praised and it bolstered community confidence in the RSIPF’s integrity and capabilities. These prosecutions are now before the courts.

17. The RSIPF also arrested and charged another four people through the ongoing investigation into the SBD \$10 million health sector fraud that was uncovered in 2013, and a Minister of the Crown for the alleged misuse of constituency development funds.

Mbike Island Shooting Joint Investigation

18. Taskforce Alpha, a joint taskforce consisting of members from the RSIPF and RAMSI, continued its investigations and offered a reward to elicit further information on the firearm and arson attack on a marine vessel on 9 December 2014 that had been used to convey 17 newly-elected Members of Parliament from Honiara to Mbike Island. While the matter is still ongoing, RSIPF investigators have continued to demonstrate professionalism and resolve and the joint nature of the Taskforce has provided an opportunity for RSIPF officers to receive on-the-job mentoring from the RAMSI PPF, building RSIPF capacity in investigation techniques.

POLICE CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT

19. In line with the *RAMSI PPF Drawdown Strategy 2013-17*, RAMSI worked in partnership with the RSIPF and Ministry of Police, National Security and Correctional Services



and in-service training – was delivered by RSIPF officers, with RAMSI officers playing no or only a peripheral role. This included the training of 70 new Police Response Team (PRT) officers, and 47 close personal protection (CPP) officers in 2017.

28. Of note, RSIPF officers also provided training in the Pacific region at the request of its neighbours. It delivered public order management tactics training to the Vanuatu Police and an Operational Safety Trainer Qualifier Program to the Samoa Police Service. That the RSIPF is now in a position to deliver training programs independently to both its own force and to the broader region is a major achievement.

b) Community Policing and Prevention of Gender-Based Violence

29. The RSIPF began implementing in 2016 the Government's *Crime Prevention Strategy 2016-2018*, which centres on building partnership with communities and stakeholders to prevent crime, solve problems and investigate incidents. To introduce the Strategy and implement the supporting *National Tactical Plan*, the RSIPF community police, supported by RAMSI advisers, conducted an extensive and wide-ranging program of community engagement that reached over 83,000 Solomon Islanders across all provinces. The sessions focused on addressing the four drivers of crime identified in the Strategy: alcohol and drug abuse, family violence, issues affecting youth, and environmental and resource issues (e.g. logging and mining). Through the sessions the RSIPF advocated community ownership of social issues and using traditional and *kastom* systems of justice to solve low-level, non-criminal, issues.

30. RAMSI strongly endorsed the Crime Prevention Strategy and associated policing model, which is well suited to the Solomon Islands context and builds community confidence in the RSIPF and the stability of the nation. The communities of Central Province were the first to establish Crime Prevention Committees in each of the provincial wards, and other provinces are expected to finalise their committees before RAMSI concludes.

31. The *Family Protection Act 2014* came into force in April 2016, criminalising family violence. The RSIPF, with the Ministry of Women, Youth, Children and Family Affairs, led the efforts of the Solomon Islands public service to implement the Act, including through the establishment of a Family Violence officer position and its continued support to the RSIPF's *Seif Ples* Gender-based Violence Crisis and Referral Centre. Supported by RAMSI advisors, the RSIPF community policing and family violence teams delivered a series of training workshops to over 500 RSIPF officers and held community consultations encouraging survivors to report incidents to police. The RSIPF has issued a total of 297 police safety notices since the implementation of the Family Protection Act in 2016. Solomon Islands Courts have issued Protection Orders and handed down convictions where appropriate. Conviction and sentencing procedures are continuing to evolve with a view towards further reducing the incidence and impact of family violence in communities.

c) Mobility, Infrastructure and Logistics

32. Throughout the reporting period, RAMSI focused on delivering its promised mobility and infrastructure projects so that, on its departure, the RSIPF is able to independently deliver a professional level of policing service to provincial communities.



33. During 2016, the last of the nine RAMSI-gifted Stabicraft maritime vessels were brought into service to support provincial policing operations in Guadalcanal, Western Province, Malaita, Tulaghi and Choiseul. With these vessels the RSIPF are now able to patrol remote communities and border areas without substantial assistance from RAMSI.

34. RAMSI also gifted and delivered three 4WD Striker fire-fighting vehicles to the RSIPF in Auki (Malaita Province), Gizo (Western Province) and Honiara.

35. RAMSI continued its program of infrastructure development. In 2016 RAMSI completed and handed-over the headquarters facility of the National Response Department (NRD) at Rove Police Headquarters, which included a state-of-the-art, high-security armoury – a critical component of the limited rearmament project.

36. In 2017, RAMSI completed the following infrastructure projects:

- a Fire and Rescue Station at the Central Police Station, Honiara;
- a new police station at Tulaghi (Central Province);
- safe storage facilities for non-lethal weapons at the police stations in Gizo and Auki;
- cell blocks in Gizo that meet international human rights standards;
- a modern forensics and administration facility at Rove Police Headquarters, Honiara;
- a new police station and emergency management complex at Naha, East Honiara; and
- boat ramps and shelter at Tulaghi, Taro (Choiseul Province) and Buala (Isabel Province).

37. RAMSI also relocated to RSIPF locations in Honiara temporary accommodation and ablution blocks and various training facilities following the drawdown of RAMSI personnel. RAMSI configured some of these buildings into additional office space, training rooms and conference facilities. RAMSI also donated facilities to the *Seif Ples* gender-based violence crisis centre, Christian Care Centre family violence respite centre, National Referral Hospital, and Tetera Prison Farm.

38. RAMSI continued to support the roll-out of essential information and communications technology (ICT) infrastructure and systems, notably the accessibility and functionality of the Justice Information Management System (JIMS). During the reporting period, all but two provincial capital police stations were connected to the JIMS system, which records and manages arrests and prosecutions, and is integrated with the RSIPF dispatch system. RAMSI also supported a trial of a Global Positioning System (GPS) that tracked police vehicles with potential to be integrated with the police dispatch system.

d) National Emergency and Disaster Response

39. In December 2016, the RSIPF provided critical, first-response support to communities following a magnitude 7.8 earthquake that struck off the coast of Makira Province. This included using the RAMSI-gifted Long Range Acoustic Device in Honiara immediately after the incident to communicate safety instructions, and strong support for disaster relief operations and damage assessments in coordination with the National Disaster Management Office. RAMSI provided helicopter support for aerial surveys of the affected areas. The



RSIPF also supported relief efforts in the nation's southern provinces following Cyclone Donna in May 2017.

40. In November 2016, RAMSI delivered Marine Search and Rescue (MARSAR) training. The technical training also resulted in improved operational coordination between the RSIPF and the Maritime Safety Authority Regional Coordination Centre (SIMSA RCC) and strengthened government-wide search and rescue and response capabilities.

41. RAMSI also delivered Command, Control and Coordination (C3) refresher training with the RSIPF Executive, including a major exercise scenario that familiarised RSIPF officers with the standard operating procedures of the new Police Operations Centre and Police Forward Command Post.

42. When requested and resources permitted, RAMSI provided air and maritime support to search and rescue activities and aeromedical evacuations from remote locations when lives were at risk.

e) Corporate Support, Policy and Governance

43. RSIPF leaders made great strides in strengthening the organisation's policy settings and corporate support functions ahead of RAMSI's departure. RAMSI supported these reforms, conscious that 'back of house' reforms will help ensure the sustainability and affordability of the RSIPF post-RAMSI.

44. In addition to adopting the *Crime Prevention Strategy*, SIG endorsed the RSIPF's *Capability Development Plan 2016-2020* in August 2016. The costed Plan, which was supported by RAMSI and developed following a capability review funded by RAMSI, identifies future capability gaps and needs in the RSIPF, particularly once RAMSI departs. The Plan sets out how the RSIPF will spend promised budget increases and will guide the work of post-RAMSI police development partners.

45. In November 2016, the RSIPF Executive and Provincial Police Commanders agreed on the organisation's *Strategic Directions 2017-2020*, which centred on crime prevention and service delivery. This document will be the blueprint for workforce and strategic planning over the next five years and informed the RSIPF's 2017 Annual Business Plan and Work Action Plan, which were developed at the same time.

46. The RSIPF Human Resource Department benefited from a series of external courses on human resource management practices and delivery, and joined two Solomon Islands-based networks of HR practitioners.

47. The RSIPF, with RAMSI support, also strengthened its external and internal communications. This included the promotion of a revamped website, creation of a Facebook page, and the re-establishment of a weekly radio program, *Police blo iu an iu*, on the national broadcaster and another radio program on crime trends on the youth-orientated PAOA FM.

48. The RSIPF and RAMSI also launched an Environmental Crime Manual.

f) National Security Capabilities, including limited rearmament



49. The limited rearmament of the RSIPF occurred in May 2017, following years of extensive preparatory work by RAMSI and the RSIPF. The selected officers in the Police Response Team and Close Personal Protection team have received a high level of training from RAMSI, particularly on use of force and tactical decision-making. Officers that did not meet the high standards were transferred elsewhere. Robust organisational governance, standard operating procedures and systems were also put in place to secure, issue, carry, use and return firearms, as well as to ensure the highest standards of professional behaviour.

50. In June 2016, RAMSI handed over a purpose-built National Response Department (NRD) facility, which includes headquarters for the RSIPF's specialist police units and a police armoury equipped with biometric security and closed circuit television monitoring. The facility better equips officers to provide timely responses to security incidents.

51. An extensive nation-wide program of community consultations by the RSIPF, RAMSI and the Ministry of Police, National Security & Correctional Services, which reached 10,000 people in 2016 alone, provided the people of Solomon Islands with clarity about and confidence in the limited rearmament of the RSIPF and helped to generate overwhelming public support for the Government's initiative.

52. Limited rearmament enables the RSIPF to safely and effectively protect Solomon Islanders and the nation as well as ensure Solomon Islands is able to meet its international obligations to provide armed security at its international airport and to protect visiting dignitaries. It enables the RSIPF to deal with armed offenders and manage crocodile populations.

53. The Government's final decision in December 2016 to rearm the police was taken very deliberately. At the launch ceremony, Solomon Islands Prime Minister Manasseh Sogavare acknowledged that firearms had been central to the downfall of the nation. He concluded that the RSIPF has regained the confidence of the people, but it had a duty to maintain and prove that it deserves that trust.

54. The implementation of limited rearmament occurred without incident.

55. The RSIPF also took a number of measures to strengthen the policing of its borders, including by strengthening its provincial presence, leading joint work with other border protection agencies and commencing negotiations of a Memorandum of Understanding on Police Cooperation with Papua New Guinea. SIG also concluded a Maritime Border Agreement with Vanuatu.

GENDER EQUITY

56. The RSIPF Executive took a number of steps to improve gender equality and women's empowerment within the organisation. As a result, the RSIPF Women's Advisory Network has been reinvigorated and female recruitment levels are now set at 50 percent. For the first time, female officers joined the ranks of the RSIPF Fire and Rescue Department, Maritime Unit, and Police Response Team.



57. The RSIPF consists of approximately 20 percent women, one of the highest rates within the Solomon Islands public service (16% in 2015). Percentages of women by substantive rank at the end of 2016 and end of 2015 were as follows:

	<u>End 2016</u>	<u>End 2015</u>
Deputy Commissioner	100%	50%
Assistant Commissioner	50%	25%
Chief Superintendent	0%	0%
Superintendent	21%	12%
Inspector	13%	13%
Station Sergeant	6%	5%
Sergeant	16%	15%
Constable	22%	18%

58. RAMSI also supported the RSIPF’s women’s empowerment efforts by conducting a ‘gender snapshot’ of the RSIPF, at the request of the Commissioner. The snapshot recommended pathways to build a more inclusive internal culture.

PUBLIC AFFAIRS AND COMMUNITY OUTREACH

59. RAMSI and SIG undertook jointly an extensive program of community consultations during 2016 and 2017 in accordance with an agreed Joint Communications Plan. Public messaging centred on explaining why RAMSI was concluding and the preparedness of the RSIPF and the Solomon Island Government to assume full responsibility law and order. In addition to engaging ordinary Solomon Islanders in the community, SIG and RAMSI briefed ministers, parliamentarians, provincial governments, senior officials, police commanders, faith leaders, the media, the business chamber, the National Women’s Summit and Guadalcanal and Malaita Leader Summits.

60. All provincial governments and the vast majority of the population, including most of the business community, accepted that it was time for the 15-nation mission to conclude and for regional security assistance to Solomon Islands to continue through bilateral programs. In particular, they welcomed the assurances from SIG and RAMSI officials that the Royal Solomon Islands Police Force was now a capable and professional force that was ready to resume full responsibility for policing and national security. Understandably, some of the more vulnerable sections of the community would prefer that RAMSI remain, but they also understood that RAMSI had achieved its mandated tasks.

61. As noted above, RAMSI also supported strongly SIG’s outreach activities on the RSIPF’s Crime Prevention Strategy and community policing model, limited police rearmament, firearms amnesty, family violence and random breath testing.

62. RAMSI continued its monthly national radio program, *Talking Truth*. The content focused on the RAMSI drawdown and the RSIPF’s leadership on contemporary security issues. RAMSI also used a range of traditional and social media platforms to engage stakeholders.

REGIONAL AND NATIONAL COORDINATION



63. SIG appointed a Special Secretary responsible for RAMSI matters in the Office of the Prime Minister, Mr John Wasi, in early 2016 to oversee and coordinate SIGs preparations for the RAMSI drawdown and transition to post-RAMSI support from PIF members. This senior official led cross-government efforts, partnered RAMSI in the extensive community engagement program and supported the negotiation of post-RAMSI, bilateral, policing and security assistance with development partners. Drawing on its wealth of experience, RAMSI also guided the development of post-RAMSI programs.

64. The RAMSI Triumvirate – the Special Coordinator, SIG Special Secretary for RAMSI and the Pacific Island Forum Representative – met regularly throughout 2016 and 2017. The Triumvirate oversaw RAMSI’s activities and ensured the mission remained aligned with Solomon Islands Government priorities and those of the Pacific Islands Forum.

65. The frequency of the quarterly RAMSI Board of Management (BOM) meetings was increased in 2016 as the end of RAMSI approached. The BOM continued to be a useful mechanism for formal dialogue, evaluating progress against the Drawdown Strategy and exchanging views on policing and security priorities. It was chaired by the Commander of the RAMSI PPF and included representatives from the RSIPF, the Ministry of Police, National Security & Correctional Services, the Office of the Prime Minister and Cabinet and the Office of the Special Coordinator.

66. A National Organising Committee (NOC) – comprising the heads of six government ministries and agencies, the Honiara City Clerk, RAMSI Special Coordinator and the Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat representative in Honiara – was also formed and met regularly to plan for end of RAMSI activities and farewell celebrations.

67. RAMSI and SIG also engaged with RAMSI contributing nations at senior levels. Forum members were engaged through the annual Enhanced Consultative Mechanism (ECM) on RAMSI, which met in Honiara in May 2016, and the Forum Regional Security Committee meeting in Suva the following month. The RAMSI Special Coordinator also travelled to the capitals of five RAMSI contributing nations to discuss the drawdown and briefed Pacific Islands News Association members and PIF delegations ahead of the 2016 PIF Leaders’ Summit in the Federated States of Micronesia. The Special Coordinator and Special Secretary also briefed the PIF Secretariat and diplomatic corps in Suva in March 2017 on the farewell celebrations.

68. Additionally, SIG and RAMSI briefed a number of visiting ministers and officials in Honiara, including the Australian and New Zealand Foreign Ministers, the Australian Minister for International Development and the Pacific, two Australian Senators, the Australian Ambassador for Women and Girls, senior Australian and New Zealand foreign ministry officials, a New Zealand Police Deputy Commissioner, and visiting US military commanders. High-level delegations led by heads of government and state accepted invitations to attend the RAMSI Farewell celebration in late June 2017.

POST-RAMSI INITIATIVES AND PREPARATIONS

69. Beyond supporting the RSIPF, SIG continued its efforts to build lasting stability and security through meaningful reconciliation between Solomon Islanders and conflict rehabilitation; pursuing long-term national development strategies, and initiating political, legal, social and economic reforms that supported nation-building. Some of the important



programs and initiatives undertaken in 2016 included: a National Apology by the Government for issues relating to the Tensions; a National Healing Week during which the former militant groups reconciled; UNDP-supported summits with the provincial and community leaders of Guadalcanal and Malaita Provinces; the tabling of a suite of anti-corruption bills in Parliament; further consultations on reforms to the political parties and electoral systems; the ongoing pursuit of constitutional federalism; significant progress towards the commencement of three major infrastructure projects (a hydro-electric dam, undersea internet cable, and sports stadium); land reform advancements; and the firearm collection and destruction program. SIG also appointed a Director responsible for National Security within the Ministry of Police, National Security and Correctional Services and began formulating a National Security Policy.

70. SIG accepted an offer by Australia to deliver a substantial bilateral policing development assistance program once RAMSI concludes and to negotiate a treaty that will enable Solomon Islands to request assistance from Australia or an Australia-led coalition in relation to a disaster or security situation. It also agreed that New Zealand would deliver a complementary bilateral police assistance program focused on crime prevention and community policing.

