



Report to the Pacific Islands Forum on RAMSI activities

2014

1. 2014 was an important and challenging year for both Solomon Islands and the Regional Assistance Mission (RAMSI). Significant political, economic and weather events impacted on the country, having a major influence on the strategic focus of the Solomon Islands Government and its donor partners.
2. During the year the Office of the Special Coordinator (OSC) and RAMSI's Participating Police Force (PPF) collaborated closely with the Solomon Islands Government and regional contributors to progress the priorities identified in the RAMSI PPF Drawdown Strategy 2013-2017. With this support, and with new leadership in place following the appointment of a substantive Commissioner, the Royal Solomon Islands Police Force (RSIPF) took considerable steps forward in terms of performance, skills development and accountability.
3. RAMSI continued to embody its strong regional character with representatives from all Pacific Islands Forum members represented in the mission during 2014.

POLICE OPERATIONS AND RESPONSES

4. In 2014 the RSIPF was tested by a series of challenging events, including a death in police custody, major floods, incidents of civil disorder, and national general elections. While RAMSI's PPF provided support when requested, the RSIPF demonstrated an increased level of independence and professionalism in managing these and other complex security operations. This highlights the success of RAMSI's police capacity development investment in the RSIPF over many years.

a) Death in Police Custody (January 2014)

5. On 1 January 2014, a male Solomon Islander died in police custody at Henderson Police Station. Community attitudes toward the RSIPF in Eastern Honiara became hostile while negotiations between RSIPF and the community took place over issues regarding compensation. An RSIPF investigation was conducted into the death and while the cause of death is now known, no offender has yet been identified. An immediate review of watch house procedures occurred and the RSIPF acknowledged a system failure. With PPF support the RSIPF have implemented measures to address the issues identified in the review.



management of the Gold Ridge tailings dam and the future of the mine. While RSIPF and PPF continue to collaborate on security and contingency planning to respond to community concerns at the site as they arise, a long-term security and community engagement plan for the mine is needed.

d) Civil Disturbances (January and May 2014)

12. On 8 January 2014, a concert involving international reggae singer Julian Marley was attended by over 2000 people in east Honiara. During the concert a large crowd outside the venue damaged the fence and forced their way inside. Parts of the crowd confronted the venue security and police, throwing rocks and creating mass unrest. A public order incident was declared by the RSIPF and PPF were called for assistance; in line with the tiered response model. The crowd dispersed onto the highway, setting up road blocks and continuing to throw rocks at police.
13. The PPF's Specialist Response Group (SRG) were deployed to support the RSIPF's Police Response Team in regaining order. After a few hours of sustained engagement, requiring the use of less lethal munitions, the SRG brought the crowd under control and RSIPF took over monitoring the environment. The inability of the RSIPF's Police Response Team to effectively manage the initial escalation in behaviour was attributed to them not having easy access to less lethal munitions and weapons. These munitions and weapons were stored and managed by PPF at the time of the incident as RSIPF did not have sufficient infrastructure and processes to do so. This is being addressed as part of the Drawdown Strategy.
14. On 16 May 2014, a sustained civil disturbance involving over 300 people occurred in Honiara over community frustration with management of flood relief efforts. In the early evening, groups of youths began creating disturbances in eastern Honiara. The group, armed with stones and bush knives (similar to machetes), set up a number of roadblocks on the main highway. A hardware store was also burnt down. RSIPF officers attended the scene but had rocks thrown at them and were forced to withdraw. The RSIPF declared a public order incident, deployed its Police Response Team and requested the assistance of PPF. The crowd was subsequently dispersed using less-lethal munitions and tactics. This joint response provided a new benchmark for evaluating the RSIPF's growing public order management abilities and demonstrated the continual improvement in the response capability of RSIPF over time.

e) National General Election (November 2014)

15. In November the RSIPF conducted its largest and most visible operation since 2003, successfully overseeing the peaceful and orderly completion of the 2014 Solomon Islands national elections. During the elections – historically a flashpoint for civil disorder – the RSIPF demonstrated enhanced leadership and planning capability by delivering a complex, large-scale operation.



16. A total of 882 polling stations throughout the nine Provinces captured the votes of an estimated 287,567 voters. Police commenced their detailed planning processes in early 2014 with 'OP NATION' running from 10th November until the 14th of December 2014.
17. The PPF committed a significant proportion of its available resources, as well as arranging for a surge of 90 additional officers from Pacific Islands Forum contributing member countries, to provide a backstop to the RSIPF if needed. Australia, New Zealand, Cook Islands, Vanuatu, Papua New Guinea, Tonga and Tuvalu, all contributed additional police personnel to the operation.
18. PPF advisors assisted the RSIPF with management, logistics, and contingency planning, prepositioning public order management groups and police patrols. In addition, the PPF provided advisor support to the RSIPF's management and staffing of Police Operations Centres and Forward Command Posts. At critical times, these roles were operating on a 24 hour, seven days a week basis to ensure operational outcomes were achieved by the RSIPF.
19. The RSIPF performed professionally and efficiently in managing the few, isolated, election-related security incidents that occurred in the provinces. Senior RSIPF officers were sent out across the country in advance of polling day to engage with communities, resolve issues and encourage an orderly polling environment. Increased joint RSIPF and PPF foot patrols presented a highly visible police presence, while a proactive and collaborative RSIPF and RAMSI national media campaign promoted law and order.
20. As a result of these and other efforts, the RSIPF were able to lead, plan for and deliver a safe and secure national election independently which is a testament to how far the force has advanced in recent years.

f) Shooting at Mbike Island (December 2014)

21. In the early hours of 9 December 2014 (the day of the vote for the new Solomon Islands Prime Minister) there was a firearm and arson attack on a marine vessel which had been used to convey 17 newly elected MPs to Mbike Island from Honiara. No one was injured or killed as a result of the incident.
22. A Joint Taskforce consisting of members from the RSIPF and PPF was formed to investigate the incident and one arrest has been made. Whilst the matter is ongoing, the joint approach is hoped to provide confidence to the Solomon Islands Government and the community that the RSIPF can manage significant investigations in the future. It has also provided the opportunity to highlight areas for further PPF training and mentoring.



23. The Mbike incident was the most blatant and visible use of firearms in Solomon Islands in many years. It has highlighted the importance of the ongoing limited rearmament project which RAMSI is delivering, so that RSIPF officers may protect themselves and community members against armed offenders into the future.

POLICE CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT

24. The RAMSI Participating Police Force Drawdown Strategy 2013-17 - developed jointly with the RSIPF, and the Ministry of Police, National Security & Correctional Services - has remained the agreed blueprint for RAMSI's police capacity development effort. During the reporting period, RAMSI PPF made substantial progress against each of the themes in the Drawdown Strategy.

a) Training and Leadership

25. On 29 August 2014, Australian Federal Police Assistant Commissioner Frank Prendergast was sworn in as Commissioner of the RSIPF. This followed 18 months of uncertainty and instability for the RSIPF as the entire Executive were acting in higher duties roles. The swearing in of a permanent Commissioner has provided strength and stability to the RSIPF and has resulted in considerable improvements in morale and performance.
26. Developing the next generation of RSIPF leaders and promoting leadership skills, ethical decision-making and accountability across all ranks of the force were quickly identified as joint priorities by the new Commissioner and RAMSI. To support these goals, RAMSI have funded a range of specialist training programs to improve the RSIPF's leadership capabilities. These have included courses in Command, Control and Coordination; Accountability, Authority and Responsibility; and the senior-level RSIPF Leadership Development Program.
27. The Professional Development Program (PDP) is delivered through the University of the South Pacific and targets RSIPF senior and middle management. In 2014 the PDP included 21 emerging RSIPF leaders; with 8 participants undertaking post-graduate studies, and one participant graduating. These courses have helped better equip RSIPF officers to take up management responsibilities and to perform in positions of leadership across the force.
28. In 2014, a total of 927 RSIPF officers received training supported by RAMSI, consisting of 742 men and 185 women. Almost 80% of all RSIPF officers received training in the following areas:
- Family Violence related (243 officers);
 - Use of Force (63 officers);
 - Leadership programs (140 officers);
 - Maritime (1 officer);



- Driver Training (27 officers); and
 - Aviation Security (17 officers).
29. Additionally, officers received training in Public Order Management (POM) and Operational Safety Training (OST). In 2014, 379 RSIPF members received POM training. Sustaining these acquired skills remains the focus of ongoing training. The OST program has also progressed to concentrate on sustaining capability through ongoing skills maintenance training with training delivered to 1050 RSIPF members since February 2013.
30. Ensuring that knowledge gained from training can be sustainably maintained by the RSIPF is a fundamental principle underpinning the Drawdown Strategy. In this context, it is significant that the majority of OST and POM training was delivered by RSIPF officers themselves, oversighted by PPF mentors. An important milestone was reached in September 2014, when RSIPF OST Instructors conducted RSIPF POM Instructor Training for six Nauru Police Force members who travelled to Honiara. That the RSIPF is now in a position to conduct the “train the trainers” program with other police forces in the region is a major achievement.
31. In addition to the appointment of a substantive Commissioner, the leadership capability of the RSIPF was reinvigorated in 2014 through a program of targeted voluntary redundancies and the promotion of 21 officers to ranks ranging from Inspector to Deputy Commissioner, including the first female Deputy Commissioner.

b) Community Policing, Prevention of Gender Based Violence, Investigations

32. The RSIPF Community Policing and Family Violence Unit, with support from PPF advisors, continued to deliver public education and awareness workshops across all provinces. This was despite a number of unfilled vacancies within the Unit. In 2014, the RSIPF led community workshops that reached over 83 000 people across Solomon Islands. These sessions highlighted the social impacts of family violence, alcohol (including home brewed kwaso), logging, marijuana and sexual violence.
33. The workshops encouraged victims of family and sexual violence to report incidents to the police and internal programs encouraged police to complete a Family Violence Report (FV100). Since the introduction of the FV100 reports in 2012 the RSIPF has seen a significant increase in recording reports - from 55 in 2012 and 65 in 2013, to 806 in 2014. This can be attributed to increased community awareness and targeted RSIPF training. While the increase in reporting is positive, the problem of family and domestic violence remains endemic across Solomon Islands (as in many countries) with the vast majority of cases never brought to the police.
34. In-house, RSIPF Commissioner Prendergast has put in place a zero tolerance policy in regards to RSIPF officers engaging in domestic violence. This message is regularly reinforced to RSIPF officers through circulars and Senior Executive-held



musters. Officers have also been informed that any member accused of family violence will be suspended from duty pending investigation.

35. In a highly significant development, the Solomon Islands Government passed the Family Protection Bill 2014 in August 2014. Whilst awaiting implementation, this new legislation formally recognises protection orders; provides the basis for assistance to victims of domestic violence including through advice and counselling; promotes prevention efforts and awareness of domestic violence; and establishes new offences and strict penalties. PPF provided advice on New Zealand experiences to guide the development of procedures and notices to the RSIPF, the Ministry of Justice and the Ministry of Women's Affairs. The PPF is in the process of developing a nationwide training package for the RSIPF, to help the force meet its extensive new obligations under the legislation, for implementation in 2015/16.
36. To support the RSIPF in its efforts to curb gender-based and sexual violence, in 2014 RAMSI completed a major renovation and refurbishment of the RSIPF Sexual Assault Unit. The renovation included the construction of family and child friendly interview rooms. The new facility will encourage greater reporting of physical and sexual abuse crimes and it is hoped will lead to more investigations and arrests.
37. The RSIPF's Sexual Assault Unit works closely with a new clinic, called "Seif Ples" (Safe Place). Founded jointly by the Ministries of Police and Health, and supported by the Honiara City Council, Seif Ples opened in July 2014 and is located on the grounds of the RSIPF Headquarters. The Clinic provides triage and support for victims of family violence and sexual violence. The Clinic's original project sponsors completed their commitments to the program in December 2014. RAMSI has committed to funding the contract of the Seif Ples Manager for an additional six months to provide sufficient time to recruit and train a Solomon Islander to manage the Centre as an employee of the RSIPF.
38. During 2014, the RSIPF Investigations and Prosecutions areas were strengthened through the introduction of planning tools, such as investigation plans and an evidence matrix. Investigators in the RSIPF's National Criminal Intelligence Directorate (NCID) now complete an investigation plan for new matters referred to RSIPF. This ensures consistent approaches to investigations by outlining what inquiries need to be carried out, when investigations should take place and how long they are likely to take. The new evidence matrix will assist police to produce better briefs of evidence, as all sources of proof are considered by specialist investigation teams. The RSIPF Academy, with the assistance of PPF, has developed a training package for all investigators to familiarise them with these tools.
39. In the past, the police and prosecutors tended to work in isolation. The PPF has encouraged the NCID teams to have early and ongoing consultation with both Police Prosecutions and Director of Public Prosecutions. Developing closer working relationships is resulting in improved quality of briefs of evidence.



c) Mobility, Infrastructure and Logistics

40. As an archipelago of almost 1,000 islands, Solomon Islands remains a challenging environment in which to deliver services. The RSIPF remains highly dependent on logistical assistance from the PPF to reinforce, supply and patrol remote communities and border areas.
41. The PPF maintain a presence in Honiara, Auki and Gizo in advisory/capacity development roles, after it withdrew from other provincial police posts in 2013 in line with the RAMSI / Solomon Islands Government Transition Strategy 2011-13. In 2014, the PPF continued mentoring programs for Provincial Police Commanders, to improve logistics and to enhance communication across the country.
42. Given the imperative of improving the RSIPF's mobility ahead of national elections, last year RAMSI gifted 44 vehicles to the RSIPF. These were delivered across a number of provinces to replace existing worn down RSIPF vehicles. This has helped improve the RSIPF's ability to respond to calls from the public as well as provide a greater reach to communities accessible by road. In addition, approximately 100 RSIPF officers have undertaken varying levels of driver training since 2010, increasing the number of RSIPF officers authorised to drive vehicles.
43. Improving the working conditions of RSIPF officers has also been a key priority. In 2014 the PPF focus on infrastructure support shifted to building and refurbishing of police stations and office buildings. This included:
 - securing land and preparing designs for a new fire station in central Honiara;
 - new police stations in Auki and Tetere and refurbishment of Noro Station;
 - refurbishment of a building at Rove to provide a dedicated office for the Sexual Assault Unit;
 - provision of a new kitchen and dining area at the Police Academy at Rove;
 - commencement of a new Forensic Building that will also provide a second level to accommodate some of the corporate services teams at Rove; and
 - planning and design for the construction of a new office at Rove for the National Response Division (Police Response Teams and Close Personal Protection Teams) which will include a Police Armoury.
44. PPF advisors worked closely with the RSIPF Police Infrastructure Department and the Ministry for Police, National Security and Correction Services on all projects. Where appropriate projects were delivered jointly to build the RSIPF and Ministry's understanding of contract and project management. The construction of the Forensic Building at Rove is one such example.



d) National Emergency and Disaster Response

45. In 2013 a project was initiated to establish a National Emergency and Disaster Response Training Facility at Hells Point. This facility is critical to improving the RSIPF's capability in this area. However, the project remained stagnant throughout 2014 as a result of a land dispute. RAMSI has been encouraging relevant Solomon Islands Government ministries to resolve this issue without success.
46. The Solomon Islands Maritime Rescue Coordination Centre (MRCC) received a huge boost in capacity as a result of RAMSI-sponsored training in the latest search and rescue software. Search and Rescue Mapping Analysis Program (SARMAP) models the movements of people and vessels in the water based on real time environmental conditions including wind and water currents. This modelling has the potential to vastly reduce the time taken to locate and rescue victims at sea as it plots a search area to which sea and air assets can be directed. In June 2014, RAMSI funded SARMAP training for MRCC officers. The MRCC is now leading the South Pacific in coordinating maritime search and rescue operations.

e) Corporate Support, Policy and Governance

47. Strengthening the RSIPF's enabling services so as to provide the foundations for organisational sustainability remains critical if the force is to be able to continue to develop into a modern and efficient police service into the future. As such, RAMSI has placed high priority on improving the 'back of house' sections of the RSIPF, investing in the areas of finance, human resources, logistics, policy and governance.
48. In March 2014, six members from RSIPF Finance and Logistics travelled to Australia with their respective counterparts to undergo training in logistics and finance management, customer service, strategic planning of procurements and budget forecasting. Since this training occurred PPF advisors have observed improved business practices by individuals and their teams.
49. More broadly, a review of the RSIPF's corporate structure and functions was commenced in the latter part of 2014 by RAMSI. The review will focus on improving services to support and sustain front line policing and national security activities in Solomon Islands.
50. The Police Act 2013 came into effect on 1 March 2014. This was the culmination of many years of effort, with RAMSI funding the drafting of the Act and assisting the government with national community consultations as it was developed. The new Act provides a solid and sustainable foundation to support the RSIPF to maintain law and order and to ensure community safety. Copies of the Act have been distributed to all RSIPF by RAMSI, while the RSIPF and PPF have developed training on its provisions. This training has been delivered to 191 RSIPF officers since April 2014,



with these officers now having the tools to further train their peers in provincial police posts.

f) National Security Capabilities (including limited rearmament)

51. In 2013 the Solomon Islands Government requested that RAMSI assist it to develop a limited and phased rearmament program for the RSIPF. During 2014, RAMSI progressed Phase 1 of this program through developing governance arrangements and training curriculums, identifying suitable weapons platforms and progressing infrastructure needs. Under the project, the three parts of the RSIPF that are being trained are the Police Response Team, Close Personal Protection and the Civil Aviation portfolio. The Solomon Islands Government will decide whether to proceed with issuing these RSIPF officers with firearms at the end of phase 1 of the project, scheduled for later in 2015.
52. The RSIPF, with support from RAMSI, delivered outreach presentations explaining the limited rearmament program to ten community groups, including a session with Solomon Islands media organisations in Honiara and Guadalcanal province. The response from communities has overall been positive, though some stakeholders, particularly women's groups, have expressed concerns. The Community Education Working Group has also conducted briefings with Members of Parliament and held meetings at markets and police stations in and around Honiara.
53. The joint Border Security Review finalised by the RSIPF and RAMSI in late 2013 was not taken forward by the former Solomon Islands Government during 2014. The current Government has indicated that improving border security is a priority and the Review will be updated for the Government's consideration in 2015.
54. In August 2014, the RSIPF National Emergency Management Special Events Planning (NEMSEP) team managed all aspects of planning and national security operations for visits by the US Secretary of State, the Archbishop of Canterbury, and the Governor-General's re-appointment Ceremony. The RSIPF's Close Personal Protection, the Police Response Team and Traffic provided motorcades, advances and site security. The PPF deployed armed support and the RSIPF provided a high level public order management response. The RSIPF gained significant experience through its management of these events, which will benefit the force into the future.

GENDER EQUITY

55. All RAMSI-supported training development programs delivered in 2014 sought to reinforce the importance of gender balance and equality within the workforce. Two female RSIPF officers now hold senior executive ranks – one Deputy Commissioner and one Assistant Commissioner. This equates to one third of the Senior Executive ranks in the RSIPF. The RSIPF consists of approximately 17% females, a figure which has not increased in recent years but which nonetheless is



one of the highest rates within the Solomon Islands public service. Percentages of women by substantive rank are as follows:

▪ Deputy Commissioner	50%
▪ Assistant Commissioner	25%
▪ Chief Superintendent	0%
▪ Superintendent	17%
▪ Inspector	9%
▪ Station Sergeant	5%
▪ Sergeant	14%
▪ Constable	18%

PUBLIC AFFAIRS AND COMMUNITY OUTREACH

56. RAMSI continued to connect with local communities throughout 2014. Consistent with the Drawdown Strategy, RAMSI's public messaging has shifted from solely providing reassurance that RAMSI remains an active contributor to security in Solomon Islands to primarily promoting the progress and successes of RSIPF as the lead guarantors of national security and policing.
57. RAMSI provided support to the Solomon Islands Government in conducting community outreach activities in areas of policy priority such as limited police rearmament, the prevention of violence against women and girls, reconciliation and contemporary policing and security issues. RAMSI also provided mentoring and advisory support to the RSIPF's media team.
58. The Mission also sought to promote stronger linkages between police and the private sector. This included conducting briefings with individual businesses; a highly successful week-long program of joint RSIPF and PPF activities during the Solomon Islands Trade Expo in July 2014; and participation in the Australia/Solomon Islands Business Forum in Brisbane in August 2014.
59. RAMSI has continued its national radio presence but reduced the frequency of broadcasts during 2014 from twice weekly to a single monthly, *Talking Truth*, programme. The content focused on contemporary security issues relevant to Solomon Islanders including rearmament of the RSIPF and gender based violence, with a variety of guests from RAMSI, RSIPF and other Solomon Islands agencies.
60. The Mission's web presence was enhanced in 2014 with the launch of the new RAMSI website (<http://www.ramsi.org>). The website highlights RAMSI's priorities during the Drawdown phase and emphasises the value of all contributing Pacific Islands Countries to RAMSI's successes.

OTHER COORDINATION

61. The RAMSI Triumvirate; the Special Coordinator, Permanent Secretary RAMSI and the Pacific Islands Forum Representative in Honiara met regularly throughout the



year. The Triumvirate coordinates RAMSI's activities and ensures the priorities of the Mission are aligned with those of the Solomon Islands government and the Forum. The Triumvirate also regularly briefed the Solomon Islands Governor-General, His Excellency Sir Frank Kabui on the Mission's progress.

62. The Board of Management (BOM) continued to meet in 2014, though RSIPF and PPF operational priorities often necessarily saw meetings rescheduled. The BOM is hosted by PPF and is comprised of representatives from the RSIPF, the Ministry of Police, the Correctional Services of Solomon Islands, the Office of the Special Coordinator, and the Office of the Prime Minister and Cabinet. It remained a critical dialogue mechanism enabling members to evaluate progress under the Drawdown Strategy and to exchange views on policing and security priorities.
63. The Solomon Islands Government, the RSIPF and communities on the Weathercoast continue to progress toward reconciliation. In 2014, RAMSI supported this important endeavour through coordination efforts, advisory support and the provision of logistics to key reconciliation events.
64. RAMSI continued to facilitate high-level engagement with contributors from around the region. This included the 10th Enhanced Consultative Mechanism Meeting and the Forum Regional Security Committee Meeting in Suva in June.
65. A number of senior ministers and officials visited the RAMSI headquarters in 2014. They included:
 - Hon Gordon Darcy Lilo, Prime Minister of Solomon Islands
 - Hon Clay Forau Soalaoi, Minister for Foreign Affairs and External Trade, Solomon Islands
 - Hon Michael Keenan MP, Minister for Justice, Australia
 - Ms Dennise Mathieu, Deputy Assistant Secretary for Australia, New Zealand and Pacific Islands Affairs, United States
 - Senator the Hon Brett Mason, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister for Foreign Affairs, Australia
 - Hon Danny Phillip, former Prime Minister of Solomon Islands
 - Mr Mark Mitchell, New Zealand Member of Parliament
 - Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat election observer mission
 - Delegation of senior military and government personnel from the United States National Defense University

Drawdown

66. RAMSI is currently funded until 30 June 2017. The premise underpinning the RAMSI Drawdown Strategy is that the mission will progressively draw down towards that date, in line with the increased capability of the RSIPF. Consultations with the Solomon Islands Government, the Pacific Islands Forum and regional contributing countries on the future of any post-2017 support to policing and security in Solomon Islands will begin in 2015.

