



Report to the Pacific Islands Forum

Activities of the Regional Assistance Mission to Solomon Islands (RAMSI)

2015

1. In 2015, the partnership between the Solomon Islands Government (SIG) and Regional Assistance Mission to Solomon Islands (RAMSI) was very strong, with an emphasis on the drawdown process of RAMSI and cementing the Government's leadership role in the post-RAMSI period.
2. 2015 was a year of stability, vision-setting and focused police development for the Royal Solomon Islands Police Force (RSIPF) and RAMSI. This was in contrast to the high-tempo operational demands in 2014 flowing from significant political, economic and weather events.
3. Throughout the year, RAMSI – specifically its 15-nation Participating Police Force (PPF) and the Office of the Special Coordinator (OSC) – collaborated closely with the SIG and regional bodies to implement the policing capacity development priorities agreed in the *RAMSI PPF Drawdown Strategy 2013 – 2017* and reduce RAMSI's footprint and resourcing with the view to handing over complete policing and national security responsibilities before 30 June 2017.
4. The RSIPF, with RAMSI's support, continued to take significant steps towards becoming a modern, professional, independent and accountable police force. Considerable progress was made towards the limited rearmament of three specialist police functions and the national government approved a 20 per cent increase to the RSIPF budget in 2016.
5. RAMSI continued to embody its strong regional character, with representatives from all Pacific Islands Forum members represented in the mission during 2015 notwithstanding a 25 per cent reduction in the number of PPF personnel over the year.
6. The Solomon Islands Government worked hard to implement its policies relating to security, national reconciliation, and strengthening government machinery alongside the significant work that has been done within the SIG-RAMSI partnership.



POLICE OPERATIONS AND RESPONSES

7. The RSIPF demonstrated increasingly independent, proactive and effective planning and management across a wide range of complex security operations throughout the year. This included operations to: resolve resource and environmental disputes; arrest high-profile suspects; and, provide effective security in support of large-scale events, including a sub-regional Leaders' Summit. When requested, RAMSI's PPF provided support to RSIPF-led operations. Some key achievements are listed below.

Security operations, including Melanesian Spearhead Group Leader's Summit (June 2015)

8. In June 2015, Solomon Islands hosted the Melanesian Spearhead Group (MSG) Leaders' Summit, which was attended by Foreign Ministers and Leaders of the MSG countries and Territories and received a high level of local and international media coverage. During the summit, the RSIPF led the planning and delivery of security. The Summit occurred amid a heightened security threat environment fuelled by the prospect of high profile protests. The success and professionalism of the RSIPF demonstrated at the Summit contributed to increasing public trust and confidence in the RSIPF. PPF officers actively supported the planning phase and coordination of the operations but were only deployed during the delivery phase to provide 'lethal oversight' and security assurance through high visibility patrols.
9. In addition, the RSIPF, with minimal PPF input or assistance, planned and executed security operations in support of public events such as Queen's Birthday celebrations, ANZAC Day commemorations, the Free West Papua march, and the Solomon Islands Football Federation finals series.
10. The RSIPF also implemented a number of proactive crime prevention measures, including high visibility patrolling and boat safety operations over the Christmas period.

Mbike Island Shooting Joint Investigation (December 2014 – 2015)

11. A Joint RSIPF-RAMSI Taskforce worked throughout 2015 to pursue the perpetrators of a firearm and arson attack on a marine vessel on 9 December 2014 that was to transfer 17 newly-elected parliamentarians from Mbike Island to Honiara. Investigators overcame some initial challenges and arrested and charged five people with offences ranging from attempted murder and arson, to possession of an unlicensed firearm and wilful damage. The matter is currently before the courts. The joint investigation provided an opportunity for PPF advisers to mentor RSIPF taskforce members and share investigative techniques, including utilising forensics, obtaining telecommunications information and using re-enactments. The incident, which was the most blatant use of firearms in Solomon Islands in many years, also highlighted the importance of the ongoing limited rearmament project (see below).

Arrest of Edmund Sae (October 2015)

12. On 14 October 2015, Edmund Sae was arrested in Malaita for the 2003 murder of former Police Commissioner Sir Frederick Soaki. The long-awaited arrest of Sae was a significant achievement for the RSIPF and closed a chapter in the pursuit of justice for



crimes committed during the ‘Tensions’. Sae’s arrest was made possible by the skill and commitment of the RSIPF National Intelligence Division (NID), supported by RAMSI advisors. Although the arrest was executed by armed PPF officers, the investigation and the submission of the evidence brief were undertaken RSIPF officers. The community reaction and media coverage of Sae’s arrest was overwhelmingly positive and the subsequent boost in trust and confidence in the RSIPF in Malaita led to further witnesses coming forward. Sae is currently in custody and awaiting trial.

POLICE CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT

13. The *RAMSI PPF Drawdown Strategy 2013-17*, which was developed jointly with the Solomon Islands Government, remained the blueprint for RAMSI’s capacity development activities during the reporting period. RAMSI also worked closely with the RSIPF and Ministry of Police, National Security and Correctional Services to ensure its initiatives aligned with the RSIPF’s 2015 work plan and broader SIG priorities.
14. RAMSI’s support to the RSIPF continued amid a progressive reduction in personnel numbers – from 154 PPF officers to the agreed Drawdown target of 115 by December 2015. Of note, RAMSI withdrew its permanent presence from Auki, the capital of Malaita Province (the 12th of, at one time, 13 provincial PPF locations), in mid-2015. The withdrawal recognised the progress made by provincial police and improvements in the law and order situation. By the end of 2015, the PPF only maintained a permanent provincial presence in Gizo, Western Province.
15. Notwithstanding its reduction in size and geographic spread, RAMSI made substantial progress against each of the agreed thematic areas:

a) Training and Leadership

16. Effective leadership and strategic planning was a hallmark of the RSIPF in 2015. Under the direction of the well-established Commissioner, the RSIPF took large strides towards becoming a professional and accountable police force and continued to earn the trust of national and provincial political leaders.
17. The RSIPF developed and began to implement a multi-year work plan that was informed by a series of strategic and financial assessments supported by RAMSI. The RSIPF also developed a proactive crime prevention policing model, which will be implemented in 2016, that will increase community and cross-government cooperation, ensure RSIPF decision making is informed by intelligence, and foster a deeper sense that everyone is responsible for making Solomon Islands a safe and secure country.
18. With ongoing PPF advice and mentoring support, the RSIPF Commissioner has worked closely with his Executive to build a cohesive, capable, ethical and accountable leadership team. In 2015, 15 senior RSIPF officers were appointed to management positions (from Deputy Commissioner to Inspector levels) and 14 senior officers commenced a RAMSI-funded Senior Executive Enhanced Development Strategy (SEEDS) program, which will help identify future leaders of the RSIPF. RAMSI also offered a senior-level Leadership Development Program. Leadership and management training was also delivered at lower ranks, including through an Accountability, Authority and Responsibility (AAR) course. Separately, 21 emerging leaders undertook



the Professional Development Program delivered by the University of the South Pacific. Eight officers also undertook post-graduate studies, with one graduating during the year.

19. The strengthening of the RSIPF's leadership, improvements in operational effectiveness, and the increased tempo of community engagements (including the activities of the RSIPF Community Policing team and support for the multi-agency national consultations on limited staged rearmament) were noticed and commended by Solomon Islanders. Local media coverage became more balanced; highlighting RSIPF successes alongside traditional reporting on criminal activity.
20. In 2015, a total of 511 RSIPF officers received training supported by RAMSI, consisting of 409 men and 102 women. The majority of training delivered to RSIPF personnel – from recruit training to specialist skills development – was delivered, however, by RSIPF officers oversighted by PPF mentors. In addition to leadership and management training, RSIPF officers were trained in areas ranging from family violence and use of force, to aviation security and driving.
21. The Police Response Team (PRT) continued to be an example of an effective, self-sustaining unit. The PRT undertook self-managed public order management skills maintenance. Further, the RSIPF provided operational safety training and defensive tactics training to seven trainers of the Nauru Police Force.
22. Upholding professional standards was a focus in 2015. The RSIPF's Professional Standards and Internal Investigation (PSII) team accelerated its investigations, supported by the PPF. In the first half of 2015, 12 officers were dismissed; contributing to a total of 30 dismissals since the current Commissioner commenced in August 2014. These actions boosted public perceptions of the RSIPF.

b) Community Policing and Prevention of Gender Based Violence

23. RSIPF's community police, supported by RAMSI advisers from Papua New Guinea, New Zealand and Australia, continued an extensive and wide ranging programme of community engagement, including in remote communities. The outreach activities highlighted the social impacts of family violence, alcohol (including home-brewed *kwaso*), logging, marijuana and sexual violence.
24. The RSIPF continued to lead the Solomon Islands public service in addressing gender-based violence. The RSIPF community policing and family violence teams conducted a nation-wide series of family violence workshops that encouraged survivors to report incidents to the police and led to strengthened internal RSIPF reporting systems. Reports of family and sexual violence rose – from 55 in 2012 to 844 in 2015, although under-reporting, like domestic violence itself, remained endemic.
25. RAMSI also supported RSIPF preparations ahead of the gazettal in 2016 of the Family Protection Act 2014, which will enable police to issue instant protection orders and establishes new offences with strict penalties. The RSIPF, for example, developed and started to deliver in 2015 a nationwide training package so frontline officers could understand their powers and obligations under the new legislation.



26. The Office of the RAMSI Special Coordinator also facilitated a review of RSIPF's gender policies and partnered with a local non-government organisation (READ Solomon Islands) to publish a children's story book addressing gender issues for use in community policing, school visits and education activities.

c) Mobility, Infrastructure and Logistics

27. RAMSI PPF continued to provide mentoring programs for all Provincial Police Commanders in the areas of logistics and supply chain management.

28. In November, the RSIPF commissioned into service nine Stabicraft mid-range maritime vessels, gifted by RAMSI, to support policing operations in Guadalcanal and throughout the provinces. Infrastructure to store, launch and retrieve these vessels was provided by RAMSI in Auki, Gizo and Honiara. These vessels will help the RSIPF to police the 1000-island Solomon Islands archipelago as RAMSI reduces its maritime assets.

29. RAMSI's long-standing infrastructure development program began to draw to a close, consistent with the Drawdown Strategy and efforts to ensure police infrastructure was sustainable. In 2015, RAMSI delivered or commenced the following projects:

- Police stations at Auki, Tetere and White River;
- Cell blocks in Tingoa and Lata that meet UN standards (to be completed in 2016);
- Fire Station at Central Police Station (to be completed in 2016);
- Modern forensics and administration facility at Rove Police Headquarters (under construction); and
- Construction of a multi-functional National Response Division (NRD) facility at Rove Police Headquarters (to be completed in 2016), including a refurbished high-security armoury – a key component of the limited rearmament project.

30. The RSIPF, with the assistance of RAMSI, continued to develop essential information and communications technology (ICT) infrastructure and systems throughout the reporting period. This included: connecting provincial police posts to the national government's SIGNet, introducing the Judicial Information Management System (JIMS) to record and manage arrests and prosecutions (also supported by the Australian Government), creating an RSIPF website, and the ongoing management of the family violence (FV100) database. The computerised dispatch system, which logs, responds to, and monitors incidents, was also developed further and integrated with the JIMS system to provide the RSIPF Police Communications Centre with the ability to better manage incidents.

31. RAMSI also installed and provided train-the-trainer training on a fingerprint scanning and database system at the Rove Fingerprints Bureau and at the Central Watch House. The RSIPF, which is now independently and sustainably training its officers on this system, has already seen significant results. For example, the database enabled the arrest of an offender responsible for a series of mid-year break-ins and theft of property from RSIPF Headquarters and from expatriates' homes in Honiara.



32. These ICT systems assist the RSIPF to direct its resources appropriately, deliver corporate and enabling services, and monitor and report on its performance to SIG. They also help improve police response times to, and the resolution of, incidents.

d) National Emergency and Disaster Response

33. For the first time since the ‘Tensions’, RSIPF officers were deployed by SIG in 2015 to a neighbouring country to provide logistics support to the government and people of Vanuatu in the immediate aftermath of Cyclone Pam.
34. In Honiara, RAMSI continued to provide advice and support to the Solomon Islands National Disaster Management Organisation and the RSIPF incident management response capability, both in times of routine activity and during crises. RAMSI also supported the Solomon Islands Maritime Rescue Coordination Centre (MRCC) with ICT assistance and training on how to coordinate search and rescue operations.
35. When requested and resources permitted, RAMSI provided air and maritime support to Search and Rescue (SAR) activities and aeromedical evacuations (AME) from remote locations when lives were significantly at risk. RAMSI and the RSIPF also began to explore a sustainable approach to SAR and AME once RAMSI departs.
36. In June 2015, RAMSI delivered the Emergency Medical Care & Transport Sustainability Project. This included the provision of medical equipment and basic first aid training to RSIPF officers who provide first-response fire and ambulance services.

e) Corporate Support, Policy and Governance

37. RAMSI supported a range of analyses and internal reviews that were delivered or implemented in 2015 to strengthen the RSIPF’s corporate and enabling services and inform mid-term strategic planning. These included the RSIPF Review into Corporate Services, the Cost of Policing study, and the RSIPF Gender Snapshot Report.
38. The Cost of Policing study helped the RSIPF secure a significant budget increase (20%) in 2016.
39. In late 2015, the RSIPF Commissioner commissioned a five-year Capability Plan to inform SIG decision-making and guide future development partners. The RSIPF and Ministry of Police, National Security and Correctional Services also considered ways to increase civilian support to the RSIPF to maximise operational service delivery by uniformed officers.

f) National Security Capabilities, including limited rearmament

40. The SIG made good progress in 2015 towards the limited staged rearmament of three specialist policing functions – specifically, close personal protection, airport security and the police response team (less than 10% of the RSIPF). Governance arrangements such as the Commissioner’s Order on the Use of Force and standard operating procedures were established, the types of policing weapons were selected, operational and use of



force training continued, and essential infrastructure was refurbished. This was done with the strong backing and assistance of RAMSI.

41. The SIG also led an extensive series of nation-wide consultations on its rearmament plans, including with all provincial governments. There were high levels of support for limited staged rearmament of the RSIPF providing appropriate safe-guards were in place. The clear majority accepted that it was time for the RSIPF to assume full responsibility for policing and national security.
42. The SIG, through the Parliamentary Committee on Border Security took the initiative to address border-related issues between Solomon Islands and Papua New Guinea. The Committee visited Western and Choiseul Provinces in October 2015 to collate views and information from chiefs and elders, the provincial governments, and the communities on law and order and security.
43. Furthermore, in 2015, the RSIPF continued to take great strides to address law enforcement issues along the border. At a policy level, RAMSI and the Joint Border Agency Committee (JBAC) reviewed border-related issues and recommended a multi-agency and whole-of-government approach to security issues, including law enforcement, immigration and customs matters. PPF Advisors helped strengthen inter-agency relationships and coordination on border issues. Operationally, the gifting in late 2015 by RAMSI of Stabicraft police vessels enhanced the RSIPF's capacity to monitor the border.

GENDER EQUITY

44. All RAMSI-supported training and development programs delivered in 2015 reinforced the importance of gender balance and equality. The gender composition of the RSIPF continued to improve, particularly in frontline leadership roles. This is, in part because of RSIPF's gender targets in recruitment and promotion rounds. The percentage of female officers recruited has doubled since RAMSI arrived in Solomon Islands in 2003.
45. Currently, 16% of the force are women. This is one of the highest rates in the Solomon Islands public service. The percentages of women by substantive rank are as follows:
 - Deputy Commissioner 50%
 - Assistant Commissioner 25%
 - Chief Superintendent 0%
 - Superintendent 12%
 - Inspector 13%
 - Station Sergeant 5%
 - Sergeant 15%
 - Constable 18%
46. For the first time, members of the RSIPF participated in the Australasian Council of Women and Policing (ACWAP) Conference in Sydney. The officers delivered a well-received presentation on RSIPF initiatives to achieve greater gender balance and provided a positive example to other regional police forces.



PUBLIC AFFAIRS AND COMMUNITY OUTREACH

47. RAMSI continued to engage with Solomon Islands communities throughout 2015, visiting every province during the year. Consistent with the Drawdown Strategy, RAMSI's public messaging remained primarily focused on promoting the progress and successes of RSIPF as the lead guarantors of national security and policing.
48. RAMSI also supported the SIG's community outreach activities on 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 media unit.
49. RAMSI continued its monthly national radio programme *Talking Truth*. Content focused on contemporary security issues, especially the limited staged rearmament.

REGIONAL AND NATIONAL COORDINATION

50. The RAMSI Triumvirate – comprised of the Special Coordinator, SIG Deputy Secretary responsible for RAMSI and the Pacific Islands Forum Representative in Honiara – met regularly throughout the year. The Triumvirate oversaw RAMSI's activities and ensured the priorities of the Mission remained aligned with those of SIG and members of the Pacific Islands Forum. The Triumvirate also regularly briefed the Solomon Islands Governor General, His Excellency Sir Frank Kabui GCMG CSI OBE.
51. SIG and RAMSI also engaged PIF member nations / RAMSI contributing nations through the annual Enhanced Consultative Mechanism Meeting and the Forum Regional Security Committee Meeting.
52. The RAMSI Board of Management (BOM) met regularly in 2015 and was the primary mechanism to guide and evaluate RAMSI-supported projects, discuss RAMSI's drawdown, and exchange views on policing and security priorities. The BOM was chaired by the PPF Commander 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 RAMSI Special Coordinator.
53. A number of senior ministers and officials visited the RAMSI headquarters in 2015. They included:
 - Hon Manasseh Sogavare, Prime Minister of Solomon Islands and Ministers of the DCC Government Cabinet.
 - Hon Steven Ciobo MP, Australia's Parliamentary Secretary for Foreign Affairs and Trade and Investment
 - United States Ambassador to Solomon Islands, Mr Walter North
 - H.E. Natasha Stott-Despoja AM, Australian Ambassador for Women and Girls
 - Vice Admiral Ray Griggs AO CSC RAN, Vice Chief of the Australian Defence Force
 - Commissioner Andrew Colvin, Australian Federal Police
 - Melanesian Spearhead Group Chiefs of Police



- Delegation of senior military and government personnel from the United States National Defense University
- Delegation of senior military and government personnel from the Australian Centre for Defence and Strategic Studies

POST-RAMSI INITIATIVES AND PREPARATIONS

54. The SIG and RAMSI, as well as RAMSI contributing nations, continued to affirm throughout 2015 that RAMSI would conclude – in accordance with the Drawdown Strategy – on 30 June 2017, and that further bilateral support to the RSIPF would be required after RAMSI departed to sustain capacity gains.
55. The SIG committed to properly resourcing the RSIPF and other law enforcement agencies. As evident in the 2016 budget, SIG has increased the budget allocation to the RSIPF significantly (20%) with a view to providing further phased budget increases towards a target of 4 per cent of government expenditure by 2020.
56. SIG also committed to: ensuring lasting stability and security is attained through meaningful reconciliation between Solomon Islanders and conflict rehabilitation; embarking on long-term national development strategies; and initiating political, legal, social and economic reforms that embrace nation building. Some of the important programs and initiatives undertaken in 2015 included, but were not limited to, Truth and Reconciliation Commission undertakings, reconciliation programs, anti-corruption programs, reform of the political parties system, improvements to electoral representation, the pursuit of constitutional federalism, implementation of land reform programs, and productive sector reforms to foster economic development.
57. To continue to coordinate RAMSI's departure and the transition to a post-RAMSI environment, SIG established a cross-government working group and a joint SIG–RAMSI drawdown forum met three times in 2015. Similarly, RAMSI and lead bilateral police assistance donors also met on several occasions.
58. PIF oversight and engagement in 2015 was valued by SIG and RAMSI. As the Forum Regional Security Committee noted, due to the immediacy of the 2017 timeframe, it will be important that Pacific Islands Forum Leaders remain cognisant of and engaged in RAMSI's drawdown. PIF involvement will also be important in 2016 as discussions progress on future models of bilateral policing assistance by PIF members.

