

SOLOMON ISLANDS

Introduction

The Solomon Islands is made up of an archipelago of islands about 1,860 kilometres north east of Australia. It consists of six large islands – Choiseul, Isabel, Malaita, New Georgia, Guadalcanal and Makira – twenty medium-sized islands, and hundreds of smaller islets and reefs. The total land area is 28,369 square kilometres. This makes Solomon Islands the second largest insular nation of the South Pacific, after Papua New Guinea (PNG). The country gained independence from Great Britain on 7 July 1978.

Solomon Islands is ethno-linguistically diverse: there are 87 distinct languages spoken by about 500,000 people. *Pijin* (pidgin)¹ is the *lingua franca*, spoken by a majority of the population. English is, however, the official language of schools and administration. Around 94% of the population is Melanesian, 4% Polynesians, and the other 2% consists of Micronesians, Asians and Europeans.

The cultural and ethnic diversity has implications for nation-building and national leadership. While promoting ‘unity in diversity’,² the divisions along linguistic, island and regional lines affect the development – or the lack thereof – of national consciousness. The civil unrest that started on Guadalcanal in late 1998 is partly due to island differences, but also because of broader socio-economic issues like urbanisation, unemployment, natural resource development, and land use and ownership that result from Government policies and administrative inefficiencies.³

In spite of this diversity there is a continuing attempt to cultivate a national consciousness, especially amongst the educated, urban dwellers and children of inter-island marriages; those for whom social groupings often cut across linguistic, ethnic and island boundaries.⁴

The issues of identity and nation-building, however, continue to be challenging ones. Identification with *wantok* (same language) or island groups, rather than a national identity, influences people’s perception of national leaders. This is because of the view that leaders are likely to access and use state resources to benefit only their particular islands, or *wantok* group. Furthermore, different parts of the country have different leadership systems or ways of organising and enforcing authority. Some societies have hierarchical and chiefly systems, while others have egalitarian ‘Big-man’ systems.

The Constitution of the Solomon Islands is the supreme law of the country. It provides for a single chamber Parliament that is tasked to ‘... make laws for the peace, order and good Government of Solomon Islands’.⁵ There are currently 50 members of Parliament,⁶ each representing a single-member constituency. Section 30 of the Constitution also provides for executive authority, vested in the Head of State – the Queen of England – and represented in-country by the Governor-

¹Solomon Islands *pijin* is similar to the PNG Tok *Pisin* and Vanuatu *Bislama*.

²Francis Saemala, ‘Constitutional Development’, in P Larmour (ed), *Solomon Islands Politics* (1983) 1-8.

³Tarcisius Tara Kabutaulaka, ‘Beyond Ethnicity: The Political Economy of the Guadalcanal Crisis in Solomon Islands’, Working Paper 01/1 *State, Society and Governance in Melanesia*, (2001); Judith Bennett, *Roots of Conflict in Solomon Islands – Though Much is Taken, Much Abides: Legacies of Tradition and Colonialism*, State, Society and Governance in Melanesia, Discussion Paper 2002/5 (2002); Jon Fraenkel, *The Manipulation of Custom: From Uprising to Intervention in the Solomon Islands* (2004); Clive Moore, *Happy Isles in Crisis: The Historical Causes for a Failing State in Solomon Islands* (2005).

⁴Christian Jourdan, ‘Stepping-stones to National Consciousness: The Solomon Islands Case’ in R J Foster (ed), *Nation Making: Emergent Identities in Postcolonial Melanesia* (1995) 127, 127-150.

⁵*Constitution of Solomon Islands* s 59(1).

⁶A *Constitutional Amendment Bill* that sought to increase the number of constituencies from 50 to 70 was passed by the Solomon Islands national Parliament in July 2009 (SIBC News, 30 July 2009).



General. Furthermore, it provides for the establishment of a Government, headed by a Prime Minister, who is elected by Parliament.

In addition to the national Parliament, the *Provincial Government Act 1996* provides for nine provinces with each province having its own Provincial Assembly.⁷ Each province is divided into Wards and each Ward has an elected member sitting in the Provincial Assembly. The number of provincial members varies between provinces. Each Provincial Assembly elects a Premier who heads the Provincial Government.

Elected leaders in Solomon Islands include the (i) Governor-General, (ii) Prime Minister, (iii) Members of Parliament, (iv) Provincial Premiers, and (v) Provincial Assembly Members. The conduct of these leaders is regulated by the Constitution, the *Leadership Code (Further Provisions) Act*,⁸ and various laws and regulations.

Besides these elected leaders, public servants and church leaders also provide important leadership at the national and local levels. Community leaders or ‘chiefs’⁹ provide leadership at the village levels.¹⁰ Churches provide valuable leadership, since most Solomon Islanders are members of a church denomination. In leadership, there is a strong link between churches, Government and community leaders. On Isabel, for instance, a ‘tripartite’ relationship evolved between the Church of Melanesia (Anglican), the Government and local Big-men, or chiefs. Consequently, the position of paramount chief on Isabel has traditionally been held by a Bishop of the Church of Melanesia from the island. Geoffrey White¹¹ discusses the attempts to formalise this tripartite relationship, which have created a sense of island-wide community that is not found in other islands. Isabel, however, is unique in that there is one dominant church denomination.

⁷*Provincial Government Act 1996* (Solomon Islands).

⁸*Leadership Code (Further Provisions) Act (Cap 86)* (Solomon Islands).

⁹The term ‘chief’ is used loosely to refer to anyone who provides leadership at the community level. Such a person may become leader through inheritance, selection, or simply recognised because of his (and sometimes her) leadership character (see Geoffrey White, *Indigenous Governance in Melanesia*, State, Society and Governance in Melanesia Discussion Paper 2007/5 (2007).

¹⁰Kabini Sanga and Keith Walker, *Apem Moa: Solomon Islands Leadership* (2005).

¹¹Geoffrey White, *Indigenous Governance in Melanesia*, State, Society and Governance in Melanesia Discussion Paper 2007/5 (2007).

¹²Section 73(3) stipulates four years as the term of Parliament. Section 74 provides for general elections.

¹³*Provincial Government Act 1996* section 9.

¹⁴Fraenkel, above n 5; Moore, above n 6.

¹⁵Rini’s election was widely perceived as a continuation of the old Allan Kemakeza-led Government in which he had previously served as deputy Prime Minister and, as a result of which, he had lost the confidence of many Solomon Islanders. On the day of the election of the Prime Minister a large crowd gathered outside the national Parliament building. When it was announced that Rini had been elected as Prime Minister, the crowd became agitated and later took to the streets in a riot that saw parts of the national capital destroyed (Dinnen and Firth, see below n 20). Rini’s election as Prime Minister and the subsequent riot were laced with allegations of misconduct by certain national leaders. Veteran politician and former Prime Minister, Francis Billy Hilly, for example, alleged that SI\$30 000 to SI\$50 000 had been offered to some members of Parliament to vote for Rini (*Solomon Star* (Honiara), 18 April, 2006). This allegation was never independently verified and no one has been charged.

¹⁶Sinclair Dinnen and Stewart Firth (eds), *Politics and State Building in Solomon Islands* (2008) <http://eprints.anu.edu.au/solomon_islands/pdf/whole_book.pdf> at 15 September 2008.

Section 1:

Principle 1 – Respect for the Law and the System of Government

- i) Respect for upholding of democratic processes and institutions, the rule of law and the independence of the judiciary and the legislature to:
 - a) Allow for peaceful and lawful transfer of power;

National elections are held every four years, as provided for by Section 74 of the Constitution¹² and governed by the *National Parliament Electoral Provisions Act (CAP 87)*. Provincial Assembly elections are also held every four years.¹³ Elections are generally free and fair, and the transfer of power is usually peaceful. Leaders, by-and-large, respect and uphold democratic processes and institutions responsible for the peaceful transfer of power.

Since independence, there were only two occasions when the transfer of power occurred under duress – both occurred in the last nine years. The first followed the June 2000 coup when the then-Prime Minister, Batholomew Ulufa’alu, was forced to resign by armed members of the Malaita Eagle Force (MEF). Manasseh Sogavare then took over as Prime Minister.¹⁴ The second incident happened in April 2006 and involved riots and civil unrest in Honiara. This followed the election of Snyder Rini as Prime Minister.¹⁵ As a result of the riots, Rini was forced to resign on 26 April, only eight days after being elected.¹⁶ There were also allegations that the



Members of Parliament for the East and Central Honiara constituencies, Charles Dausabea and Nelson Ne'e respectively, helped organise and incite the riots. The two were arrested, charged and jailed,¹⁷ but were later acquitted.¹⁸ Manasseh Sogavare was subsequently elected as Prime Minister to replace Rini, but was later deposed in a vote of no confidence on 13 December, 2007. He was replaced by Dr. Derek Sikua.

These events demonstrate how elections and the transfer of power can become violent. In the April 2006 incident, the perpetrators of violence were members of the public who disagreed with the outcome of the election of the Prime Minister. Although there were allegations that two Members of Parliament were involved in organizing and inciting the riots, the charges against them were later dismissed by the courts. Similarly, allegations that Members of Parliament received bribes,¹⁹ were never proven and no one was ever charged. In the past there have been similar allegations of large sums of money being exchanged during the election of Prime Ministers and during votes of no confidence. No one has ever been charged or prosecuted for such corruption. If these allegations are true, they indicate that although changes of power have largely been peaceful, some leaders may have been involved in unlawful practices that influence the formation of government and the transfer of power.

The incidents cited above highlight the dynamism and vulnerability of Solomon Islands politics, especially during elections. They point to the need for firstly, greater security during elections, especially during the election of the Prime Minister. This has already been taken into consideration by the Solomon Islands Police following the April 2006 incident. Secondly, they highlight the need for changes in and closer scrutiny of the systems and processes for electing Prime Ministers and forming governments. This was highlighted by the report of the Commission of Inquiry into the April 2006 Honiara Civil Unrests.²⁰ Thirdly, they highlight the need for broad changes to how political parties are formed and organised.

Despite this, elections and the transfer of power in Solomon Islands have largely been fair, free and peaceful. Solomon Islands leaders generally allow and support the peaceful transfer of power.

b) Respect and promote the separation of powers by ensuring the financial autonomy of the judiciary and Parliament and ensure that the judiciary and Parliament are free from unlawful interference by the executive;

The Constitution²¹ provides for the establishment of Parliament and the courts, and the separation of powers between them. Most Solomon Islands leaders respect and promote the separation of powers and the autonomy of the Judiciary and Parliament. There is respect for the courts and their decisions are generally enforced.

In spite of this, the financial autonomy of the Judiciary is not always guaranteed because of fiscal constraints and the fact that finance is controlled by Parliament. Major budgetary constraints affect the ability of the courts to effectively perform their duties. Further, law enforcement agencies like the police are under-resourced, affecting their ability to enforce the law. While this does not necessarily imply that

¹⁷ *Solomon Star* (Honiara), 9 May 2006.

¹⁸ SIBC News, 11 November 2007
<<http://www.sibconline.com.sb/story.asp?IDThread=143&IDNews=20589>> at 11 November 2007.

¹⁹ *Solomon Star* (Honiara), 18 April 2006.

²⁰ Commission of Inquiry, Solomon Island Government, *Commission of Inquiry into the April 2006 Honiara Civil Unrest in Honiara: Recommendations, Conclusions and Findings* (2006)
<http://www.parliament.gov.sb/files/library%20and%20information/commission_of_inquiry/Commission_of_inquiry.pdf> at 15 July 2008.

²¹ *Constitution of Solomon Islands* ch VI, VII.





there is unlawful interference of the Judiciary by the Legislature and Executive, it highlights the fact that financial constraints could limit its ability to effectively carry out its responsibilities.

During the period of civil unrest from 1999 to 2003, the ability of the Judiciary and law enforcement agencies like the police to perform their duties effectively was greatly diminished. This was due in part to the fact that some members of the police force joined the criminal elements and partly because of the lack of resources available to enable the law and justice institutions to effectively perform their duties. In spite of this, the courts in Solomon Islands remained relatively independent, even during those difficult times. The leadership of the courts, headed by the Chief Justice, was committed to ensuring the autonomy of the courts.

Things have changed since the deployment of the Regional Assistance Mission to Solomon Islands (RAMSI) in July 2003. Under RAMSI's Law and Justice Program, assistance has been directed to the police, courts and the prison service. The regional intervention force '...is helping to rebuild the Solomon Islands Police Force and to strengthen the criminal justice system. RAMSI wants to rebuild institutions that serve the people, and that the people themselves can be proud of and trust.'²²

In recent years, political interference in the Judiciary, either during trial or during the writing of judgments was limited. Leaders generally respect the independence of the Judiciary. This was so, even in cases where political leaders found themselves on the wrong side of the law. Since the deployment of RAMSI, two former Prime Ministers and a number of Cabinet Ministers have been arrested, charged and imprisoned.²³ In all these cases, the courts operated without prejudice and political interference.

Apart from the above, there were other cases that illustrate Solomon Islands leaders' respect for and promotion of the separation of powers of the Judiciary and Parliament, and ensuring that they are free from unlawful interference by the Executive. In late 2007, for instance, a number of Cabinet Ministers in the Sogavare-led Government resigned, leaving the Prime Minister with a minority Government. The Opposition requested the Governor-General to call a special meeting of Parliament so that a motion of no confidence in the Prime Minister could be moved. The Governor-General initially refused, stating that this was a political matter that needed to be dealt with politically. When the Governor-General eventually called for a Parliament meeting on 13 December, 2007, the Prime Minister refused to facilitate the meeting, opting instead to re-schedule it to 24 December, supposedly to give him time to regain the support of Members of Parliament. He took the matter to court, but the High Court decided against him, and the meeting was scheduled as directed by the Governor-General.²⁴ Sogavare accepted the court's decision, called a meeting, and was subsequently voted out in a motion of no confidence.

As exemplified by the above cases, Solomon Islands leaders, in general, respect and promote the autonomy of the Judiciary and Parliament, and ensure that they are free from unlawful interference by the Executive. In spite of this, the fact that the Judiciary depends on the Government and Parliament for financial and other resources is an issue of concern. While it is not seen as a problem now, this could,

²²Regional Assistance Mission to Solomon Islands, *Law and Justice* (2008) <<http://www.ramsi.org/node/268>> at 15 August 2008.

²³They included former Prime Ministers, Alan Kemakeza and Ezekiel Alebua, and Government Ministers and members of Parliament, Charles Dausabea, Nelson Ne'e, Peter Shanel, Daniel Fa'afunua, Benjamin Una, and Alex Bartlett.

²⁴*Solomon Times Online*, 12 December 2007.



in the future, affect the independence of the Judiciary. There is therefore a need to find ways to ensure the financial autonomy of the Judiciary and Parliament. This is challenging for a country with limited resources.

ii) Upholding a just, fair and honest Government through:

a) Respect for and enforcement of the decisions of courts and independent tribunals;

Amongst Solomon Islands leaders, there is a general respect for and enforcement of the decisions of the courts and independent tribunals. Although there were challenges to law enforcement during the period of civil unrest, as stated above, the decisions of the courts have been diligently enforced, even in cases involving leaders and politically powerful individuals. This was illustrated by the cases referred to above, and others that will be discussed below.

In cases where it seems that the decisions of the courts were not respected and enforced, there are often public expressions of concern. In 2008, former Prime Minister Allan Kemakeza was convicted and sentenced to six months in jail for ordering an attack on a Honiara law firm in 2002. Under Section 51(1) of the Constitution, ‘... if a member of Parliament is sentenced by a court in any part of the world to death or to prison (by whatever name called) for a term of, or exceeding, six months, including a suspended sentence, he shall forthwith cease to perform his functions as a Member of Parliament, and his seat in Parliament shall become vacant...’

Kemakeza served his term and was released in January 2009. He, however, appealed the High Court decision.²⁵ While waiting for the Court of Appeal to decide, the Government in December 2008 passed a motion in Parliament allowing Kemakeza to retain his seat as a Member of Parliament. The Speaker of Parliament did not allow him to attend Parliament meetings until the Court of Appeal decided on his case. In the meantime, Kemakeza continued to receive his salary as a Member of Parliament, but not other entitlements as stipulated under *Parliamentary Entitlements Regulations*.²⁶

There were expressions of concern about the constitutionality of the motion and the Legislature’s potential interference with the courts.²⁷ The Attorney-General, however, clarified that the Parliamentary motion was in line with Section 51(1) of the Constitution which states that the Speaker:

‘... may, at the request of the member, from time to time extend that period for thirty days to enable the member to pursue any appeal in respect of his conviction or sentence so however that extensions of time exceeding in the aggregate one hundred and fifty days shall not be given without the approval of Parliament signified by resolution.’

The Attorney-General states that ‘Parliament can exercise such power for purposes of enabling a member to pursue any appeal in respect of his conviction or sentence.’ He said that was the purpose of the motion and ‘the resolution passed by the Parliament has no weight or effect on the appeal lodged by Sir Allan Kemakeza or the DPP. The resolution merely extends the time for the Parliamentary seat to become vacant but does not determine the fate of the appeal’.²⁸ Sir Allan Kemakeza eventually lost his Parliamentary seat when he withdrew his application for appeal against his conviction.²⁹

²⁵ *Solomon Star* (Honiara), 5 January 2009.

²⁶ *Solomon Star* (Honiara), 16 February 2009.

²⁷ *Solomon Star* (Honiara), 8 January 2006.

²⁸ *Solomon Star*, (Honiara), 10 January 2009.

²⁹ SIBC News, 31 July 2009.





The reports of independent tribunals are respected and taken seriously, although the enforcement of the decisions of such tribunals is often not as diligently executed. Thus, whilst leaders generally have respect for and enforce the decisions of the courts and independent tribunals, how this is carried out depends largely on the availability of financial, personnel and other resources. The RAMSI Law and Justice Program has made a significant difference. The question, however, is whether or not the Solomon Islands Government will be able to sustain this if and when the RAMSI programs end.

b) Enforcement of lawful instructions and lawfully created policies;

The enforcement of lawful instructions and lawfully created policies has been a challenge for Solomon Islands leaders. This is not entirely due to a lack of will on the part of leaders. It is, as indicated above, also because of the lack of resources and weak institutions. This has affected the ability of the state to enforce lawful instructions and lawfully created policies.

Most Solomon Islands leaders are law-abiding and follow lawful instructions and lawfully-created policies. There are, however, some who failed to adhere to and enforce lawful instructions and lawfully created policies. The Office of the Auditor-General (OAG), for example, in its special reports to Parliament in 2005 and 2006, notes that there is ‘widespread non-compliance with guiding legislation, financial instructions and general orders’.³⁰ The Auditor-General states that this and other issues the report identified were due to ‘opportunities’ which permitted them to occur, and ‘incentives’ which encouraged rather than discouraged maladministration. The Auditor-General also notes that there is a lack of ‘demand’ for good governance amongst citizens, which exacerbates the problem.³¹ This was especially the case during the period of civil unrest when state institutions and the economy were significantly weakened, giving some leaders the opportunity and incentive to deviate from lawful instructions and lawfully created policies.

c) Compliance with the letter and spirit of the laws, which are made for the benefit of the public;

Examples of non-compliance with lawful instructions and lawfully-created policies are numerous. One example is the case of former Prime Minister and Premier for Guadalcanal Province, Ezekiel Alebu, who was charged with four counts of embezzlement. He had used SI\$194,000 of Guadalcanal Provincial funds for personal purposes during his term as Premier for the Province, ignoring the rules and regulations provided under the *Leadership Code (Further Provisions) Act*,³² the *Public Finance and Audit Act*,³³ and the *Financial Instructions*.³⁴ He was sentenced to three-and-a-half years in prison.³⁵ Similarly, in December 2007, the then-Member of Parliament for East Honiara, Charles Dausabea, was convicted of fraudulent conversion and sentenced to twenty-one months in prison. The charge related to Government funds disbursed in 2001 and deposited into Dausabea’s personal bank account.

The special reports by the Auditor-General highlight many cases of non-compliance with legislation, lawful instructions and policies. This has resulted in millions of dollars being lost due to maladministration and the corrupt and fraudulent disbursement of public funds. The reports puts the amount foregone in lost revenue at about SI\$433 million, which is greater than the country’s GDP.³⁶

³⁰Office of the Auditor General, Solomon Islands Government, *An Auditor-General’s Insight into Corruption in Solomon Islands Government* (2007) 4.

³¹Ibid 5.

³²See above n 11.

³³*Public Finance and Audit Act (Cap 120)* (1996 ed) (Solomon Islands).

³⁴Solomon Islands Government, *Financial Instructions* (2004).

³⁵SIBC News, 5 July 2007.

³⁶Office of the Auditor General, above n 34; According to the Central Bank of Solomon Islands the country’s GDP in 2008 was SI \$394.5 million, up from \$369.9 million in the previous year (Central Bank of Solomon Islands, *Annual Report 2007* (2008) 14.



Since the deployment of RAMSI, compliance has improved, but more needs to be done to ensure that lawful instructions and lawfully created policies are enforced. The improvements are indicated by the number of cases that have been investigated, as well as the fact that integrity institutions like the Leadership Code Commission, Ombudsman's Office and the Office of the Auditor-General are performing their duties much more effectively than prior to the RAMSI intervention.

d) Disclosure of fraud, corruption and mal-administration, of which the leader has become aware;

Over the years, there have been allegations of fraud, corruption and maladministration amongst leaders. However, up until recently, very few cases were investigated and those involved were not reprimanded. This was partly because of the weakness of law enforcement institutions and integrity bodies like the Ombudsman and Leadership Code Commission. As indicated above, it was also because of inadequate resources. Furthermore, those who were aware of such cases were often reluctant to disclose them because those involved may have been friends, *wantoks*, relatives or business partners. Also, most incidents of corruption occur between consenting individuals who might not wish to disclose it.

Nevertheless, leaders have spoken out emphasising the fight against corruption. Sir Peter Kenilorea, Speaker of the national Parliament has urged political leaders and civil servants to publicly place the fight against corruption at the top of their agenda.³⁷ In addition, the Chairperson of the Leadership Code Commission told Government Ministers and Permanent Secretaries attending an integrity and corruption workshop that a top down approach must be applied when dealing with integrity and corruption prevention in the public service.³⁸ Further, testifying at the Commission into the April 2006 riots, the Environment Minister called for the establishment and strengthening of links between anti-corruption bodies in the country and the police.³⁹

Through RAMSI's Machineries of Government (MOG) and Law and Justice Program, the country's integrity and law enforcement institutions have been strengthened. Consequently, leaders can be held accountable for fraud, corruption and maladministration. It is this potential to be caught that could entice leaders to disclose incidents of fraud, corruption and maladministration of which they are aware. The arrests that have so far been made resulted largely from the work of the Police Fraud Squad, rather than from disclosure by leaders.

On incidents where leaders disclosed fraud, corruption and maladministration of which they become aware are rare, this study is not aware of any such case in the last few years. Second, it is uncertain that the Solomon Islands Government would be able to maintain effective institutions if and when RAMSI withdraws. This means that there is a need to build and maintain a leadership culture that makes it 'normal' to disclose of fraud, corruption and maladministration. Creating such leadership culture will be challenging, but not impossible.

e) Refraining from exertion of pressure, and abuse of persons carrying out their lawful duties;

It is difficult to determine whether or not leaders refrain from exerting pressure and abusing persons carrying out their lawful duties. This is because, if such

³⁷ *Solomon Star* (Honiara), 6 March 2008.

³⁸ *Solomon Star* (Honiara), 7 March 2008.

³⁹ *Solomon Star* (Honiara), 6 February 2008).





'refrain' did occur, it was exercised personally and is often not publicly reported. It is, on the other hand, easier to determine instances where political leaders exert pressure and abuse persons carrying out their lawful duties. Whether or not this signifies widespread exertion of pressure and abuse of persons carrying out their duties is difficult to determine.

In contemporary Solomon Islands, it is possible for political leaders to exert undue pressure on civil servants. This is because in the last decade, there has been an increasing politicisation of the public service. As one Solomon Islands lawyer points out, there was a '... growth of political interference into the affairs of public service'.⁴⁰ Senior civil servants, such as Permanent Secretaries, have over the years become political appointees, rather than being appointed by the Public Service Commission, as required by the *Public Service Commission Regulations*: 'The Commission, or any officer to whom they have delegated appropriate powers, shall decide on and make all appointments to the Public Service.'⁴¹ Such political appointments mean that senior civil servants could be too close to their Ministers. Further, the Public Service Commission is so weak that it is often unable to carry out the responsibilities vested on it by the *Public Service Act*.⁴² Although this does not necessarily mean that leaders exert pressure and abuse civil servants in the performance of their duties, it could create a situation where such pressure is possible, affecting civil servants' ability to make independent professional decisions.

A case in 2007 could constitute leaders pressuring and abusing public officers in the lawful performance of their duties. This case involved the former Commissioner of Police, Shane Castle, who was dismissed, then later declared as an 'undesirable immigrant' and deported from the country in January 2007. This was because he was insistent on investigating the former Attorney-General, Julian Moti's illegal entry into the country, and the alleged involvement of some Government Ministers in facilitating this.⁴³

The above indicates that although most Solomon Islands leaders do not generally exert pressure on and abuse persons carrying out their lawful duties, there were instances where such abuses did occur. Further, there may have been other cases which were not reported. The above also suggests that the increasing politicisation of the public service could create a situation where pressure on and abuse of civil servants will be more likely in the future.

f) Refraining from using any legal immunity or privilege as a cloak or shield for behaviour of a lower ethical standard than that reasonably expected of the leader by citizens;

As in the case above, it is difficult to measure whether or not leaders refrain from using legal immunity or privilege as a cloak or shield for behaviour of a lower ethical standard. As stated above, if this did occur, it would have been a private decision and unlikely to be publicly reported. It is, on the other hand, easier to ascertain when leaders misuse legal immunities and privileges.

In 2008, the privileges for Parliamentarians were outlined in the *Parliamentary Entitlements Regulations 2008*.⁴⁴ There were no reported cases in 2008 of leaders misusing the privileges accorded to them.⁴⁵

⁴⁰SIBC News, 1 June 2009.

⁴¹*Public Service Commission Regulations 1998* (Solomon Islands) section 18.

⁴²*Public Service Act and Regulations (Cap 92)* (1996 ed) (Solomon Islands).

⁴³SIBC News, 11 January 2007.

⁴⁴*Parliamentary Entitlements Regulations, 2008* (Solomon Islands).

⁴⁵However, in July 2009, a Special Select Committee of Parliament was tasked to look at the privileges of members of Parliament and make recommendations to the Prime Minister. At present, Members of Parliament have immunity on the floor of Parliament against defamation. This means that they cannot be held liable for what they say on the floor of Parliament. The Special Select Committee, in its report, recommended that Members of Parliament should also have immunity from arrest on civil cases while they are still members of Parliament. The Deputy Prime Minister, Fred Fono, said that Members of Parliament should also be exempted from appearing in court during their term in Parliament (One Television, 3 July 2009). This could be interpreted by the public as a misuse of legal immunities.



g) Establishing and empowering bodies, such as an Ombudsman Commission, to independently investigate public complaints against Government actions;

The Office of the Ombudsman is established under Section 96 of the Constitution, although the Office itself was not established until 1981. The Ombudsman is appointed for a term of five years. The selection committee comprises the Chief Justice (who chairs the committee), the Speaker of Parliament and the Chair of the Public Service Commission. The Ombudsman can only be removed from Office for gross misconduct. The Office had been without an Ombudsman since the last Ombudsman stepped down in 2006. The initial candidate for the Office of Ombudsman (as selected by the selection committee) was turned down by the Governor-General on the recommendation of the then Attorney-General for political reasons. The Governor-General's decision was taken to court by the candidate where the decision was over-turned. The Solomon Islands Government then appealed against the High Court's judgment. The High Court judgment has recently been upheld and the original candidate has now taken up the position.

The whole process has taken over a year and severely impeded the operations of the Office, particularly in terms of morale, where the process was seen as being a form of political interference in the operation of the Office. The other consequence is the fact that no annual reports from the Ombudsman have been tabled in Parliament since 2006. This was because there was no power of delegation. While the Office had gone forward with its investigations without an Ombudsman being appointed, this provision in the Constitution on the Ombudsman prevented the Office from tabling its reports. This delay has also led to a further increase in the backlog of cases waiting for investigation by the Office. With current staffing levels it will be many years before they will be able to clear this backlog. The Ombudsman Office has called for legislative changes in the wake of the debacle surrounding the appointment of the current Ombudsman. A draft bill is being prepared that will allow for the creation of a Deputy Ombudsman position thereby allowing for a form of delegation in the event of there being no Ombudsman in office. The possibility of adding mediation to the powers of the Office (in addition to just investigation) is being considered, as it is a process more appropriate to the Solomon Islands context.

The Office investigates and reports on complaints lodged with it. The Office is required to provide an annual report outlining its activities for the year, which is then tabled in Parliament. While the Office possesses wide-ranging powers for the pursuit of investigations, including magistrate's powers of summons and enforcement, these are not matched by similar powers to enforce decisions or recommendations reached as a result of their investigations. While cases may be referred to Parliament, unless debated there, no action may result from the investigation. The end results of investigations are available to complainants and they may pursue civil proceedings if they so choose. This path has been followed in the past. The Office reports through the Prime Minister's Office from which the Ombudsman Office's budget also flows. There are currently no strategic plans in place in the Office.





Despite reports being regularly tabled in Parliament, they are rarely, if ever, acted upon. The key breakdown in this process appears to be that the reports are never debated.

h) Ensuring that the Auditor General reports directly and in a timely manner to Parliament/Congress;

The Office of the Auditor-General (OAG), as stated above, is established under Section 108 of the Constitution. The independence of the office is guaranteed by Section 108(5), which states that, 'In the exercise of his functions under this section, the Auditor-General shall not be subject to the direction or control of any person or authority.' The powers and responsibilities of the Auditor-General are further provided for in Sections 34 to 37 of the *Public Finance and Audit Act (Cap 120)*. This includes the responsibility to certify the accounts of the Solomon Islands Government and report on the outcome of such audits to the national Parliament through the Speaker and/or the Speaker and the relevant Minister(s) twelve months after the end of the financial year. The Auditor-General is required to submit audit reports on financial statement audits to either the Minister for Finance, the Minister responsible for the Special Fund or activity, or the Provincial Government. Audits of the Ministries are also required to be submitted to the Speaker for tabling in Parliament.

In spite of these constitutional and legislative requirements, the OAG has, since independence, been under-resourced, hence affecting its ability to effectively perform its duties. There is, for example, no legislated guarantee of funding for salaries of auditors and other operating costs of the OAG. At present, the Auditor-General has strong support from the Public Accounts Committee and key Members of Parliament, which ensures that the budget bid by the Auditor-General is passed through Parliament in the *Appropriation Act*. In the years between independence and after the commencement of the RAMSI intervention, the budget for the OAG was reduced to the point where there were only two auditors, and thus, the OAG could not perform its mandated functions. There is currently no legislative protection to prevent this happening again. Consequently, prior to the deployment of RAMSI, many Government accounts had not been audited. The Auditor-General's 2007 Annual Report notes that, 'The need for a legislative reform has been acknowledged by the Public Accounts Committee and the MOG for some years and is included in the current MOG Plan'.⁴⁶

Under RAMSI's MOG Program, the OAG was assisted to strengthen the Government's financial management practices. This has contributed enormously to the capacity building of the OAG.⁴⁷ As result of the assistance from RAMSI's MOG Program, in 2005 and 2006 ten 'special' reports were tabled in Parliament covering a period of four years, from 2000 to 2004. There have been varying degrees of uptake of OAG recommendations of the numerous financial statements and special audits. The key findings of the OAG were referred to the Public Accounts Committee (PAC), and subsequently tabled in Parliament.

Despite the detailed and extensive nature of these reports, little has been done to address the issues raised and to investigate those implicated of criminal activities. Consequently, in October 2007, the Auditor-General put out another report titled, '*An Auditor-General's Insights into Corruption in Solomon Islands Government*'. In this

⁴⁶Office of the Auditor General, Solomon Islands Government, *Office of the Auditor-General Annual Report 2007 (2007)* 11.

⁴⁷Ibid 16-18.



report, the Auditor-General reiterated the points made in the previous reports and said that, 'Amounts foregone in lost revenue or corruptly or fraudulently disbursed as identified in the Special Audits were some SI\$433 million'.⁴⁸

There is a need to continue to strengthen the OAG in order to encourage greater financial accountability. The OAG does not have the power to prosecute those it finds to have broken the law; instead it depends on the law enforcement institutions. This demonstrates the need to strengthen those institutions. Furthermore, there is a need to review the legislation that provides for the OAG, with the objective of empowering the Auditor-General.

iii) Protection of fundamental human rights:

Chapter II of the Constitution contains the Bill of Rights, which provides for the protection of fundamental rights and freedom. This is based on the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the European Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms.

Generally, Solomon Islands leaders respect these rights and ensure that they are protected. So far, there are no instances where the Government or its agents have committed arbitrary and unlawful killings.

While Solomon Islands leaders generally respect and protect fundamental human rights, there have been instances where leaders and the responsible institutions of Government have failed to adequately protect these rights. These incidences occurred because of institutional weakness, a lack of community and individual awareness of these rights, or perhaps because of a complete disregard of these rights and freedoms. This was particularly evident during the period of civil unrest, when the institutions of Government (especially law enforcement) were severely weakened. During that period there were killings, torture, rape of women, and other acts committed by militants and some renegade members of the police force that constituted a fundamental violation of human rights. It could, therefore, be argued that during the period of civil unrest, the institutions of the state and leaders, collectively, failed to do enough to protect human rights.

A few leaders were allegedly involved in the violation of rights. In January 2002, a Government Minister was involved in threatening and extorting SI\$5,000 from a local newspaper, the *Solomon Star*, because it carried a news report, an editorial and a letter to the editor about the Minister allegedly assaulting a taxi driver at the Honiara Central Market.⁴⁹ Such incidents are rare however, and have not occurred in recent years, especially after the deployment of RAMSI. In addition, as mentioned elsewhere in this document, a former Prime Minister, Allan Kemakeza, was found guilty of ordering an attack on a Honiara law firm.⁵⁰ A further example is of a leader who was sent to jail for nine months, having been found guilty of unlawful wounding and possessing a weapon in a restricted area.⁵¹

Apart from the period of civil unrest, Solomon Islands has a relatively good human rights record and leaders have played an important role in creating and maintaining this record. Leaders can further promote human rights by ensuring that institutions that promote human rights are strengthened, and in helping promote community awareness about these rights.

⁴⁸Office of the Auditor General, above n 34, 4.

⁴⁹International Freedom of Expression eXchange, *PINA appeals for support for threatened newspaper* (2002) <http://www.ifex.org/solomon_islands/2002/02/01/pina_appeals_for_support_for_threatened/> at 10 July 2008.

⁵⁰Radio New Zealand International, 2 November 2007 <<http://www.rnzi.com/pages/news.php?op=read&id=36190>> at 3 November 2007.

⁵¹*Solomon Star* (Honiara), 27 August 2008 2.



Principle 2 – Respect for Cultural Values, Customs and Traditions

- i) Respect for cultural values, customs, traditions and indigenous rights and observation of traditional protocols in the exercise of power:

In Solomon Islands, like in other Pacific Island countries, there is a general recognition and respect of custom – or *kastom* as it is referred to in *pijin* (pidgin) – traditions, and cultural values and practices. These are viewed as important, and are promoted as the foundation of society.

The Constitution recognises ‘customary law’ as a formal source of law and emphasises it in various sections of the Constitution: the Preamble, Section 15(5)(d) and Section 75. According to Jennifer Corrin Care, this recognition serves two main purposes: ‘First, it shows respect for customary law and confirms its importance at national level. This aim is demonstrated in the Preamble, which commences by stressing pride in the ‘worthy customs’ of Solomon Islands’ people.’ Second, it serves to integrate customary law into the formal system.⁵² Apart from the constitutional provisions, in 1993, the then-Minister for Justice circulated the draft of a Customs Recognition Bill for comments. A second draft of the Bill was circulated in 1995.⁵³ Since then, the Bill has not been tabled in Parliament.

As a result of this recognition, Solomon Islands leaders are expected to respect *kastom* and cultural values, and observe traditional protocols in their exercise of power. There are, however, a number of issues and challenges associated with this. First, in a country that is culturally and linguistically diverse like Solomon Islands, cultural values and practices that might be appropriate in one part of the country might not be acceptable in another. This could create tensions and conflicts. This demands leaders to find common values and practice and promote those, rather than the *kastom* and traditions that divide.

Secondly, *kastom* is sometimes misused to serve personal agendas. The practice presented as custom might actually be manipulated to serve the purpose of those who invoke it. A classic example is the use – or rather the misuse – of the *kastom* of ‘compensation’ to extort money, not only from individuals, but also from the state. Over the years, individuals or groups have extorted hundreds of thousands of dollars from the state in the name of compensation. In 2008, some individuals demanded and received SI\$50,000 from the Government after a public notice containing insulting words towards Malaitans was posted outside the Magistrates Court in Honiara. The ‘compensation’ was paid after some Malaitans gathered and threatened to cause public disorder and destroy properties. It was later revealed that the note was written by a Malaitan for the purpose of extorting money from the Government.⁵⁴ The Government made the payment despite the fact that the use of threat to demand compensation is unlawful.

This was, however, not an isolated incident and the Government was conscious of past incidents that resulted in public disorder. In October 1989, the state paid SI\$200,000 to some Malaitans after they rioted and destroyed parts of Honiara following allegations that a notice containing scurrilous words targeted towards Malaitans was posted at the Central Market in Honiara. A Malaitan Cabinet Minister was jailed for two months for his alleged involvement.⁵⁵ In 1998, some

⁵²Care, Jennifer Corrin, ‘Customary Law and Human Rights in Solomon Island: A commentary on *Remesio Pusi v James Leni and Others*’ (1999) 43 *Journal of Legal Pluralism*, 135, 137–38.

⁵³*Ibid* 139.

⁵⁴SIBC News, 21 January, 2008.

<<http://www.sibconline.com.sb/story.asp?IDThread=143&IDNews=21433>> at 21 January 2008.

⁵⁵Moore, above n 6, 52.



female students from Malaita at Ruavatu Secondary School on Guadalcanal were allegedly raped by male students. Parents and guardians from Malaita demanded compensation before the police could carry out investigations to determine whether or not the alleged rapes did occur. The national Government paid them SI\$16,000 from the Guadalcanal Province's Education Grant. In addition, in late 1998, the Guadalcanal Province demanded SI\$2.5 million compensation for 25 Guadalcanal people murdered by Malaitans. This was calculated based on SI\$100,000 per head.

Throughout the period of civil unrest the extortion of money from the state through the misuse of compensation became widespread and a financial burden for the Government. Millions of dollars were demanded in compensation claims and to satisfy these claims the Government borrowed SI\$281.7 million from the Export-Import (EXIM) Bank. According to the Auditor-General's report, this money was grossly mismanaged.⁵⁶

The above demonstrates that while customs and traditional values and practices are generally respected by leaders, there is the possibility of these being misused.

Section 3:

Principle 3 – Respect for Freedom of Religion

i) Respect for religious belief and practice:

Section 11 of the Constitution provides for freedom of religion and reads:

'(1) ...the said freedom includes freedom of thought and of religion, freedom to change his religion or belief, and freedom, either alone or in community with others, and both in public and in private, to manifest and propagate his religion or belief in worship, teaching, practice and observance.

(2) Every religious community shall be entitled, at its own expense, to establish and maintain places of education and to manage any place of education which it wholly maintains.'

Generally, Solomon Islands leaders and citizens respect people's religious beliefs and practices. Political leaders have affiliation with one of the Christian denominations. They therefore have an important role in ensuring that the freedom of religion, as provided for under the Constitution, is respected and enforced. To maintain freedom of religion, the political leaders worked closely with the Solomon Island Christian Association, the national ecumenical Christian non-Governmental organisation in the Solomon Islands, which comprises the dominant Christian denominations in the country: Anglican (Church of Melanesia), Roman Catholic, South Seas Evangelical Church (SSEC), Methodist (United Church) and the Seventh Day Adventists (SDA). In the past two decades, there has been a flourishing of evangelical churches. Other religions, including Jehovah's Witness and Islam are beginning to establish themselves in the country. Islam has a more recent history, attracting suspicion and prejudice from other established religious groups.

In 2008 and 2009, there were incidents on Malaita which highlight the tensions between some followers of a Christian denomination and Muslims, who make up a small, but steadily growing population. A member of the Muslim community was arrested and charged with assault.⁵⁷ Both Muslim and Christian leaders

⁵⁶Office of the Auditor General, above n 34, 11.

⁵⁷SIBC News, 30 December 2008

<<http://www.sibconline.com.sb/story.asp?IDThread=151&IDNews=24342>> at 30 December 2008.





condemned the violence, and called on the two groups to reconcile and address their differences, and made a commitment to respecting the law and maintaining peace.⁵⁸

Overt conflicts between religious groups are however, rare. Tensions between the different Christian denominations are mitigated by the existence of the Solomon Islands Christian Association (SICA), the umbrella organisation for the major Christian churches. Leaders in the Government and churches tend to encourage religious tolerance. This will, however, be tested as more non-Christian religions establish themselves in the country.

Section 4:

Principle 4 – Respect for People on whose behalf Leaders Exercise Power

i) Proper use of official powers:

Many Solomon Islands leaders use the powers vested in their office in the manner required by the laws and regulations that govern the conduct of public officials. The Constitution, the *Leadership Code (Further Provisions) Act*, the *Standing Orders of Parliament*, and the *General Orders* govern the conduct of public officials. In addition, the leaders' conduct is also governed by the cultural and moral values of their society.

Cases in which leaders have misused their official powers and privileges especially relate to the use and disbursement of public resources. The Auditor-General reports of 'corrupt officials using positions of influence to assist family and friends',⁵⁹ and points to 'Officials acting outside of authority or acting without appropriate authority'.⁶⁰ This amounts to a misuse of official powers and has resulted in the mismanagement of public resources.

An issue that has always attracted public attention is the use and management of the Rural Constituency Development Fund (RCDF). About SI\$1 million is given annually to a Member of Parliament for the purpose of "constituency development". Members of Parliament have overall power and the discretion over the disbursement of this fund. In some cases, Members of Parliament have used that money either for personal gain, or given it relatives and political supporters.⁶¹

The fact that official powers have often been misused highlights the need to strengthen integrity institutions like the Ombudsman, the Leadership Code Commission and the Office of the Auditor-General (OAG). These institutions play an important role in ensuring that leaders perform their duties as stipulated under the rules and regulations. It also highlights the need for law enforcement institutions to investigate the findings of the OAG and prosecute those that might have committed criminal activities. Furthermore, it highlights the need for public awareness and for the public to have access to public information.

ii) Honesty in dealing with the people and Parliament, with any misleading information corrected at the earliest practical opportunity:

Laws like the *Leadership Code (Further Provisions) Act* and regulations like the *General Orders* provide guidelines for the conduct of political leaders and civil

⁵⁸SIBC News, 3 January 2009
<<http://www.sibconline.com.sb/story.asp?IDThread=5&IDNews=24367>> at 4 January 2009.

⁵⁹Office of the Auditor General, above n 51, 8.

⁶⁰Office of the Auditor General, above n 34, 5.

⁶¹*Solomon Star*, 13 February 2009
<http://solomonstarnews.com/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=6496&Itemid=45&change=103&changeown=87> at 14 February 2009



servants. These are designed to ensure proper conduct, honesty and integrity in the execution of official duties.

Leaders' honesty in dealing with the people and Parliament and with correcting any misleading information at the earliest practical opportunity, has been eroded over recent years. The public perception in Solomon Islands is that politicians are more dishonest than honest. This is due largely to how politicians have used (or misused) public money in the past. This has affected people's trust in Parliament and confidence in Government. More generally, it affects the relationship between state and society and further weakens Government capacity and credibility. As such, it is difficult to determine whether leaders are honest or dishonest. It is only safe to say, therefore, that there are varying degrees of honesty, and not all leaders are dishonest.

With the development of the media and greater public access to information, there is added pressure on leaders to be honest in their dealings with people and Parliament; to provide accurate information and promptly correct misleading information. An example of a timely response by the Government to correct itself was when the Constitutional Reform Unit attempted to control how the media should report on its meetings. The Unit had issued a memorandum of understanding to all media groups to sign if they wanted to cover the unit's meetings. The local media rejected this move as an attempt to control the media. Taking into consideration backlash from the media association, the Government urgently responded and accepted that dealings with the media should not be conducted in a way which impinges on media freedom.⁶²

Apart from the print media reports, Parliament meetings are broadcast on radio and television. The introduction of television has changed the dynamics of Parliamentary politics because people are now able to see their Members of Parliament perform in Parliament. The internet has also created greater awareness. Official documents are now available on official websites and numerous private Solomon Islander-operated websites and blogs. Information can now be quickly shared through websites and personal e-mails.

iii) Publicising information on legal wrongdoing, ethical lapses and false or misleading statements:

Section 98(3) of the Constitution states:

'The Ombudsman shall make an annual report and may make such additional reports to Parliament as he deems appropriate concerning the discharge of his function, and may draw attention to any defects which appear to him in the administration or any law.'

Further, Section 108(3) provides that, 'The public accounts of Solomon Islands... shall be audited and reported on annually by the Auditor-General...' Section 108(4) goes on to state that, 'The Auditor-General shall submit his reports to the Speaker who shall cause them to be laid before Parliament; and he shall also send a copy of each report to the Minister of Finance and the Minister concerned.'

In Solomon Islands, institutions like the Leadership Code Commission, the Ombudsman and Office of the Auditor-General have, in the past, not functioned as effectively as expected. This is partly because of the lack of resources to enable the integrity institutions to perform their duties as required under the Constitution and the laws guiding these institutions. It is also because of a lack of political

⁶² *Solomon Star*, 20 September 2008 2.





will to ensure that these institutions are strengthened. The late Auditor-General, Augustine Fatai expressed disappointment over the way in which Government Ministries and Departments have failed to respond to recommendations made in their audited reports concerning Government Departments.⁶³ In recent years, there have been positive developments as a result of assistance provided by RAMSI's Machinery of Government (MOG) program. This assistance has resulted in the strengthening of the capacity of the Office of the Auditor-General.⁶⁴

International institutions such as Amnesty International, Transparency International and Global Integrity also play an important role in publicising information about legal wrongdoings, ethical lapses and false or misleading statements by leaders. Transparency International has a national chapter known as Transparency Solomon Islands, which actively comments on the conduct of leaders.⁶⁵

Furthermore, as mentioned above, the public media plays an important role in publicising information about the conduct of leaders. There is however, a need to further improve the media industry to make it accessible to a majority of people. Radio is the most accessible form of media. The establishment of rural internet facilities has contributed a great deal to improvements in communication and the dissemination of information.⁶⁶ These are, however, limited to only a few locations in the country.

iv) Giving priority to official duties over private interests:

Section 11 of the *Leadership Code (Further Provisions) Act* prohibits the use of public office for personal benefits, while Section 13 states that, 'A Leader who in furthering his personal business interests neglects or fails to give priority to his official business is guilty of misconduct in office.' This is also consistent with the *General Orders*. Many Solomon Islands leaders give priority to official duties over private interests. Many civil servants are dedicated and perform their duties diligently, even during the period of civil unrest when many of them did not receive regular pay.

The special reports produced by the OAG in 2005 and 2006 highlight how many Solomon Islands leaders prioritise their private interests over official responsibilities. The report identifies 'Officials using positions of influence to assist associates to receive benefits' and 'Conflicts of interests not declared'.⁶⁷ A classic example is the increase in entitlements to Parliamentarians (see above). Further, the newspapers are full of letters to the editor by people complaining about how the Rural Constituency Development Fund (RCDF) was used to serve the political interests of Members of Parliament rather than the development of the constituency. In letter to the *Solomon Star*,⁶⁸ a voter complains that, 'Since our MP's election in 2006 ..., only his voters and supporters have benefited a lot from the fund [RCDF].' Similar claims were made in the hundreds of letters written to the local newspapers.

In an incident in July 2001, the then-Minister for National Unity, Reconciliation and Peace and Deputy Prime Minister, Allan Kemakeza, awarded himself SI\$800,000 as 'compensation' for properties he allegedly lost during the civil unrest. His Permanent Secretary, Lucian Ki'i, received SI\$700,000.⁶⁹ Although both

⁶³*Solomon Star*, 16 January 2008.

⁶⁴Office of the Auditor General, above n 51, 16-18.

⁶⁵*Solomon Times Online*, 13 February 2009.

⁶⁶People First Network (PFnet), 10, 29 April 2008 <<http://www.peoplefirst.net.sb/>> at 30 April 2008.

⁶⁷Office of the Auditor General, above n 34, 4.

⁶⁸*Solomon Star* (Honiara), 22 June 2009.

⁶⁹*Solomon Star* (Honiara), 15 July 2001



were subsequently sacked by the Prime Minister, the people saw this as an example of leaders serving themselves.

v) Performance of public duties uninfluenced by fear of personal cost or any hope of personal benefit:

Section 8 of the *Leadership Code (Further Provisions) Act* stipulates that leaders must disclose private interests to ensure that there is no conflict of interest in the performance of their official duties. Section 11(1) states that, 'Any leader who directly or indirectly asks or accepts, on behalf of himself or any associate of his, any benefit in relation to any action in the course of his official duties (whether such action has already been taken, is continuing or is to be taken in the future) or by reason of his official position, is guilty of misconduct in office.'

The concern here is that leaders should perform their duties uninfluenced by the fear that it will cost them personally and with no expectation of personal benefit. Generally, Solomon Islands leaders today perform their duties uninfluenced by fear of personal cost. This is unlike the time of civil unrest when many leaders were fearful of their personal safety. The former Prime Minister, the late Bartholomew Ulufa'alu was forced to resign by armed militants. Things have changed since the deployment of RAMSI and the re-establishment of law and order.

In spite of the above, leaders – especially politicians – are constantly self-conscious about how their action affects them personally. They are, for example, conscious about how their actions will win votes in the next election. Consequently, they disburse finances like the RCDF in a manner which they hope will benefit them personally in the next election. As one of the voters mentioned above states, his Member of Parliament only gives money to those who supported him in the last election and from whom his Member of Parliament expects support in the next election.⁷⁰

vi) Public and private conduct that does not lead to a conflict of interest, or in which the fair and impartial exercise of duties might be compromised:

The public and private conduct of a leader that leads to a conflict of interest is regarded as misconduct in office. Section 8(1) of the *Leadership Code (Further Provisions) Act* interprets a 'conflict of interest' and states that:

Every Leader shall, within three months of his becoming a Leader, and thereafter at intervals not exceeding two years, give a separate statement in respect of himself, his spouse and each of his children setting out to the best of his knowledge –

- (a) all directorships in any company or corporation held by each of them;
- (b) the business occupations of each of them;
- (c) the holdings of each of them of any shares of, or debentures or other securities charged upon, any company or corporation;
- (d) the total income received by each of them during the period to which the statement relates and the sources of each of those incomes;
- (e) all business transactions involving a sum of five hundred dollars or more entered into by each of them during the period to which the statement relates;
- (f) subject to subsection (4), all gifts received by each of them during the period to which the statement relates, and the value of each of such gifts; and
- (g) the assets acquired by each of them during the period of which the statement relates.

An example relating to Section 8(1)(e) is the incident in which several members of Parliament, including some Government ministers, obtained loans of SI\$50,000

⁷⁰*Solomon Star* (Honiara), 22 June 2009.



each from a private business man. Although the Chairman of the Leadership Commission stated that the incident would be investigated,⁷¹ at the time of writing this report there was no indication if any such investigation was ever carried out.

Section 14(1) of the *Leadership Code (Further Provisions) Act* states that:

A leader who, or whose spouse or child under eighteen, –

- (a) accepts any loan of money; or
- (b) holds any franchise; or
- (c) accepts any gift or other benefit or advantage, from any person, company, corporation or incorporated association is guilty of misconduct in office.

Two cases involving leaders raised the issue of conflict of interest. The first was the awarding of a contract to a contractor to build roads and an airstrip from which a Member of Parliament was alleged to have benefited. Moreover, it was alleged that the contract did not follow the tendering process.⁷² The second case, involving the same Member of Parliament, was over the procurement and installation of computers for schools in 2007.⁷³ During the writing of this report, these two incidents have not been thoroughly investigated.

vii) Ensuring that public facilities are used only for public purposes and not for personal purposes unless authorised by legislation or by a public decision of Cabinet:

Regulation on the proper use of public facilities is provided for in Section 11(2) of the *Leadership Code (Further Provision) Act*, ‘... a Leader, who, except in the course of and for the purpose of his official duties or his official position, uses or allows his name or his official position to be used for the benefit of himself or any other person’ is guilty of misconduct in office. For civil servants, the *General Orders* also outlines how public facilities should be used.

There were widespread cases of misuse of public facilities for personal purposes, or to benefit *wantoks* and friends. The Auditor-General, for example, reports that over the years, there was ‘Widespread non-compliance with guiding legislation, financial instructions and general order’.⁷⁴ This has led to the poor management and the misuse and abuse of public facilities like offices, vehicles, official residences, etc. During the 2006 general elections, members of the public raised concerns about ‘Government Ministers including the Prime Minister and provincial politicians abusing official facilities for personal gains.’ They claimed that public officials – especially incumbent politicians – contesting the elections ‘... used at public expense, fuel, motor powered boats, computers and telephones to promote their own ideologies’.⁷⁵ There were also cases of misuse of Government vehicles, as pointed out by the Permanent Secretary for Infrastructure and Development in April 2007, following a number of accidents in which Government vehicles, driven by unauthorised individuals, were damaged. The Permanent Secretary said that ‘only permanent secretaries, government ministers and constitutional post holders are allowed to ‘garage’ vehicles.’ However, he said that, ‘some ministries are still abusing the system by allowing drivers and other public officers to ‘garage’ vehicles’.⁷⁶ Further, during the change of Government from the Sogavare to Sikua, Government vehicles were not returned for the use of the new Government. As a result, the late Auditor-General advised former Government Ministers and political appointees to voluntarily surrender those vehicles for Government services.⁷⁷

⁷¹*Solomon Times Online*, 10 October 2008.

⁷²*Solomon Star*, 12 September 2008.

⁷³*Solomon Star*, 19 July 2008.

⁷⁴Office of the Auditor General, above n 34, 4.

⁷⁵SIBC News, 8 March 2006

<<http://www.sibconline.com.sb/story.asp?IDThread=19&IDNews=14707>>

⁷⁶SIBC News, 15 April 2007

<<http://www.sibconline.com.sb/story.asp?IDThread=31&IDNews=18750>> at 15 April 2007.

⁷⁷*Solomon Star* (Honiara), 3 January 2008.



Section 5:

Principle 5 – Respect for Members of the Public

- i) Treatment of members of the public honestly and fairly with proper regard for their rights and obligations:

Respecting the rights of citizens is provided for in Chapter II of the Constitution, which provides for the Bill of Rights. Furthermore, the *Leadership Code (Further Provisions) Act* is designed to ensure that leaders treat members of the public with honesty, fairness and proper regard for their rights and obligations.

Generally, many Solomon Islands leaders are conscious of the rights of citizens, and strive to treat them honestly and fairly. Leaders at both the national and provincial levels respect the rights of individuals as provided for in the Constitution. In the past, there have not been major cases of mistreatment of members of the public by leaders.

Section 6:

Principle 6 – Economy and Efficiency

The Solomon Islands domestic economy grew by about 6.7 per cent in 2008, lower than the growth of 10.8 per cent in 2007.⁷⁸ This was attributed to slow growth in most sectors. Nominal Gross Domestic Product (GDP) per capita for 2008 was US\$1,019, a rise from US\$840 in 2007; in real terms, GDP per capita grew by 3.8 per cent.⁷⁹ At the end of 2008, inflation was at 19.4 per cent.⁸⁰

The Central Bank reported that the Solomon Islands' 'financial system remains relatively strong and stable in 2008, despite the global meltdown'. However, the financial sector was indirectly affected through international trade.⁸¹

The Human Development Indicator for Solomon Islands in 2008 was 0.591, giving it a ranking of 134 out of 179 countries. This means that Solomon Islands is classed as a country with medium human development in 2008.⁸²

- i) Ensuring that public resources are not wasted, abused, or used improperly or extravagantly:

Although the *Leadership Code (Further Provisions) Act* does not specifically make reference to 'public resources', Sections 11 and 20 of the Act refer to the use of public office and public information respectively. The management of financial resources is regulated by the *Public Finance and Audit Act* and the *Financial Instructions*. Furthermore, the *General Orders*, which regulate the conduct of civil servants, are also designed to ensure that public resources are not wasted, abused or used improperly or extravagantly.

Despite the existence of these laws and regulations, there is evidence of widespread wastage, abuse and improper or extravagant use of public resources, especially finance. This is explicitly documented in the Auditor-General's ten special audit reports of 2005 and 2006. As stated elsewhere in this document, the Auditor-General has stated that, 'Amounts foregone in lost revenue or corruptly or fraudulently disbursed as identified in the Special Audits were some SI\$433 million'.⁸³

⁷⁸Central Bank of Solomon Islands, *Annual Report 2007* (2008) 7, 14.

⁷⁹Ibid.

⁸⁰Ibid.

⁸¹Ibid 39.

⁸²United Nations Development Programme, 2008 *Statistical Update: Solomon Islands: The Human Development Index – Going Beyond Income* (2008) UNDP <http://hdrstats.undp.org/2008/countries/country_fact_sheets/cty_fs_SLB.html> at 15 November 2008.

⁸³Office of the Auditor General, above n 34, 4.



Principle 7 – Diligence

i) Exercise of proper diligence, care, and attention:

Laws and regulations like the *Leadership Code (Further Provisions) Act* and the *General Orders* are designed to ensure leaders exercise proper diligence, care and attention in carrying out their duties. Others in high office also remind leaders about diligence. Former Governor General, Sir Nathaniel Waena, is reported to have ‘... called on leaders to lead with diligence and dedication putting the interests of ordinary Solomon Islanders first in the course of their duties’.⁸⁴ There are, however, some examples where leaders have not exercised proper diligence, care and attention in their official duties. The Government’s handling of Julian Moti,⁸⁵ for example, was a case that gave the Solomon Islands Government an unfavourable reputation both locally and internationally.

ii) Always seeking to achieve high standards of public administration:

In the period after independence, the standard of public administration in Solomon Islands was reasonably good. It has, however, deteriorated over the years. According to Andrew Nori⁸⁶:

...the British also left behind a very elaborate, well structured system of institutions in Government... the regulations they developed in finance, public service management and things like use of Government property are among the best in the world... over the years the problem was the gradual moving away from observing the requirement of those rules and regulations... the growth of political interference into the affairs of public service.

This became worse during the period of civil unrest, when law and order weakened and there was widespread disregard for laws and regulations like the *Leadership Code Act* and the *General Orders*. Consequently, there were rampant allegations of corruption in the public service.

There is recognition amongst leaders of the need to improve the public service in order to improve the standard of public administration and measures have been put in place to do this. Under the RAMSI Machinery of Government Program, for example, a Public Service Improvement Program (PSIM) was introduced in 2008. The Minister for Public Service, Milner Tozaka, told Parliament that PSIM is an institutional strengthening program aimed at improving the Government’s capacity to deliver services. PSIM aims to assist the Public Service Commission, the Ministry of Public Service and all other Government agencies to strengthen human resource management and improve the delivery of Government services.⁸⁷ Efforts have been made to improve the Institute of Public Administration and Management (IPAM), the public service training agency. The Minister for Public Service, Milner Tozaka, said that the improvement of IPAM ‘... was guided by the principle that training is to enable the public service to improve productivity and provide better services’.⁸⁸

⁸⁴SIBC News, 15 May 2007
<[http://www.sibconline.com.sb/story.asp?IDThread=160
&IDNews=19104](http://www.sibconline.com.sb/story.asp?IDThread=160&IDNews=19104)> at 15 May 2007.

⁸⁵See above n 48 and accompanying text.

⁸⁶SIBC News, 1 June 2009
<[http://www.sibconline.com.sb/story.asp?IDThread=143
&IDNews=25636](http://www.sibconline.com.sb/story.asp?IDThread=143&IDNews=25636)> at 1 June 2009.

⁸⁷SIBC News, 1 August 2008.

⁸⁸SIBC News, 6 August 2008.



Section 8:

Principle 8 – National Peace and Security

i) Promotion of peace, security and harmony:

Issues of national peace and security are important for Solomon Islands, especially given the experiences of the civil unrest and the subsequent deployment of RAMSI. Throughout the civil unrest and the years following it, there have been attempts to re-establish law and order and restore peace in the country. Following the signing of the Townsville Peace Agreement in October 2000, the National Peace Council (NPC) was established and worked to facilitate reconciliation between individuals and communities. The deployment of RAMSI in July 2003 saw the restoration of law and order, and relative peace and security in the country.

In recent years, Solomon Islands leaders have been focused on finding ways to establish sustainable peace. In pursuit of this agenda, the national Government established the Ministry of Peace and Reconciliation with its program to facilitate peace and reconciliation among warring parties. Whilst current programs are only focused on Malaita and Guadalcanal, plans are underway for similar activities to be extended to other islands.⁸⁹ To demonstrate its commitment to maintain peace and stability, the Government, enacted the *Truth and Reconciliation Commission Act* that provided for the establishment of a Truth and Reconciliation Commission that would facilitate national reconciliation.⁹⁰⁹¹ National peace, security and harmony continue to be issues that are promoted by leaders in Government, churches and non-Government organisations (NGOs).

These efforts were not helped by allegations that two Members of Parliament were involved in inciting and organising the April 2006 riots in Honiara. The two were later acquitted of any involvement.⁹²

Much of the security concern in Solomon Islands is domestic. Internationally, Solomon Islands most immediate concern is its border with Papua New Guinea. The leaders of these two countries have cooperated to ensure the safety of their border.⁹³

ii) Refusal to give or obey an illegal order to use force against another citizen:

Solomon Islands leaders have rarely been confronted with a situation where they have to obey an illegal order to use force against another citizen. Even during the period of civil unrests, the 'official' use of force by the state, decided on by national leaders, was limited. This is despite the fact that state properties were on occasions used with the intention to harm other citizens. In such cases, the orders were given and executed by non-state groups and individuals who had taken control of state properties.

There were, however, cases in the past where leaders either gave orders, or were suspected of giving orders to use force against other citizens. The most well known case was that of former Prime Minister, Sir Allan Kemakeza, ordering an attack on a Honiara law firm. This was referred to above. A former Member of Parliament, Alex Bartlett, was also faced with charges dating back to the ethnic tension for allegedly procuring others and giving them orders to burn homes by claiming ownership of a particular area in Honiara.⁹⁴ However, pursuant to a common law rule, it was not unlawful to burn one's own property and Bartlett was acquitted of all charges.⁹⁵

⁸⁹*Solomon Star*, 25 March 2008.

⁹⁰People First Network, above n 71.

⁹¹In 2009, the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) was launched by Nobel Peace Laureate, Archbishop Desmond Tutu from South Africa (*Solomon Star* (Honiara), 29 April 2009).

⁹²Radio New Zealand International, 6 December 2007 <<http://www.rnzi.com/pages/news.php?op=read&id=36887>> at 7 December 2007.

⁹³Mission & Justice, 'Solomon Islands and PNG Conclude Border Talks' <<http://www.missionandjustice.org/solomon-islands-and-png-conclude-border-talks/>> at 10 July 2009.

⁹⁴*Solomon Star* (Honiara), 23 August 2008 4.

⁹⁵*Regina v Bartlett* (2008) SBHC 103 HCSI-CRC 327.





In another incident, it was alleged that some leaders were involved in organising ten men from Kwaio on Malaita to travel to the Weather Coast of Guadalcanal in 2002 to kill militant leader, Harold Keke. Instead, the men were killed by Keke and his men. A Commission of Inquiry was established to investigate the killings and who was involved. The Commission's report was never made public. In recent years, however, there were no known cases where leaders either gave or obeyed illegal orders to use force against another citizen.

Section 9:

Principle 9 – Respect for Office

- i) **Exercise authority and interact with people in a manner that is open, transparent, accountable, participatory and decisive but fair and equitable:**

Many Solomon Islands leaders are beginning to be conscious of the need to exercise authority and interact with people in a manner that is open, transparent, accountable, participatory and decisive, whilst still fair and equitable. This is partly because citizens now have greater access to information, when compared with the situation in the past. One outcome, for now, is that the people desire open, transparent, accountable and participatory leadership. This is reflected by the consultative processes that the Government has put in place with regards to the making of laws, responding to inquiries, and publicising reports. The Government has consulted with the public in the process of making legislation. Examples of this include the proposed Political Party Integrity Bill. Furthermore, Parliamentary Committees have been required to consult the public. There is the Foreign Relations Committee, which looks at the work of RAMSI and undertook nation-wide consultations. Commissions of Inquiry have also made wide public consultations. An example is the Commission of Inquiry into the April 2006 riots in Honiara. Through the Solomon Islands national Parliament website,⁹⁶ numerous reports are made available. This improves openness, transparency and accountability.

- ii) **Seek to strengthen the integrity of a leader's Office and its effectiveness:**

One of the challenges for Solomon Islands is to improve the public image and integrity of leaders' offices, and to enhance their effectiveness. As stated above, the public image of the integrity of Parliament and politicians has been negatively affected by the actions of some leaders. This has resulted in the decline in the public's trust of politicians and confidence in Government, which subsequently affects the ability of the Government to effectively carry out its responsibilities. It is therefore important that leaders seek to strengthen the integrity and effectiveness of the offices that they hold.

In 2008, to assist the leaders in carrying out their roles and responsibilities, a workshop was organised for Members of Parliament that brought together prominent local and regional experts. The aim of the workshop was to assist the national Parliament to ensure that its Parliamentary committees perform their proper roles with an emphasis on engaging the community through committee work.⁹⁷

⁹⁶National Parliament of Solomon Islands, <<http://www.parliament.gov.sb/>> at 12 July 2008.

⁹⁷People First Network, above n 71.



Many Solomon Islands leaders have attempted to carry out their roles and responsibilities by following the laws and regulations, including through accounting for the disbursement of public money. The Minister for Public Service and Member of Parliament for North Vella La Vella, Milner Tozaka, for example, demonstrated this by submitting to the responsible ministry a record of how the RCDF was spent in his constituency.⁹⁸ Because of the increasing outcry relating to the use of the RCDF, the Government passed a motion aiming at introducing a regulatory mechanism to put in place how the RCDF is to be disbursed.⁹⁹



⁹⁸SIBC News, 23 April 2009
<[http://www.sibconline.com.sb/story.asp?IDThread=175
&IDNews=25277](http://www.sibconline.com.sb/story.asp?IDThread=175&IDNews=25277)> at 24 April 2009.
⁹⁹*Solomon Star* (Honiara), 2 September 2008 3.



BIBLIOGRAPHY

I. Articles/Books/Reports

Asian Development Bank, *Annual Report 2008: Solomon Islands* (2008) Asian Development Bank <<http://www.adb.org/solomonislands/default.asp>> at 12 October 2008

Bennett, Judith, *Wealth of the Solomons: A history of a Pacific Archipelago, 1800–1978* (1987)

Care, Jennifer Corrin, 'Customary Law and Human Rights in Solomon Island: A commentary on *Remesio Pusi v James Leni and Others*' (1999) 43 *Journal of Legal Pluralism*, 135, 135–44

Central Bank of Solomon Islands, *Annual Report 2007* (2008)

Central Bank of Solomon Islands, *Annual Report 2008* (2009)

Commission of Inquiry, Solomon Island Government, *Commission of Inquiry into the April 2006 Honiara Civil Unrest in Honiara: Recommendations, Conclusions and Findings* (2006) <http://www.parliament.gov.sb/files/library%20and%20information/commission_of_inquiry/Commission_of_inquiry.pdf> at 15 July 2008

Dinnen, Sinclair and Stewart Firth (eds), *Politics and State Building in Solomon Islands* (2008) <http://epress.anu.edu.au/solomon-islands/pdf/whole_book.pdf> at 15 September 2008

Fraenkel, Jon, *The Manipulation of Custom: From Uprising to Intervention in the Solomon Islands* (2004)

Jourdan, Christian, 'Stepping-stones to National Consciousness: The Solomon Islands Case' in R J Foster (ed), *Nation Making: Emergent Identities in Postcolonial Melanesia* (1995) 127, 127–150

Moore, Clive, *Happy Isles in Crisis: The Historical Causes for a Failing State in Solomon Islands* (2005)

Office of the Auditor General, Solomon Islands Government, *An Auditor-General's Insight into Corruption in Solomon Islands Government* (2007)

Office of the Auditor General, Solomon Islands Government, *Office of the Auditor-General Annual Report 2007* (2007)

Sanga, Kabini and Walker, Keith, *Apem Moa: Solomon Islands Leadership* (2005)

Saemala, Francis, 'Constitutional Development', in P Larmour (ed), *Solomon Islands Politics* (1983) 1–8

United Nations Development Programme, *2008 Statistical Update: Solomon Islands: The Human Development Index – Going Beyond Income* (2008) UNDP <http://hdrstats.undp.org/2008/countries/country_fact_sheets/cty_fs_SLB.html> at 15 November 2008

2. Case Law

Regina v Bartlett (2008) SBHC 103 HCSI-CRC 327

3. Legislation

Leadership Code (Further Provisions) Act (Cap 86) (Solomon Islands)

National Parliament Electoral Provisions Act (Cap 87) (Solomon Islands)

Parliamentary Entitlements Regulations, 2008 (Solomon Islands)

Provincial Government Act 1996 (Solomon Islands)

Public Finance and Audit Act (Cap 120) (1996) (ed.) (Solomon Islands)

Public Service Act and Regulations (Cap 92) (1996) (ed.) (Solomon Islands)

Public Service Commission Regulations 1998 (Solomon Islands)

Truth and Reconciliation Commission Act 2008 (Solomon Islands)

The Constitution of Solomon Islands

4. Other Sources

Bennett, Judith, *Roots of Conflict in Solomon Islands – Though Much is Taken, Much Abides: Legacies of Tradition and Colonialism*, State, Society and Governance in Melanesia, Discussion Paper 2002/5 (2002)



International Freedom of Expression eXchange, *PINA appeals for support for threatened newspaper* (2002) <http://www.ifex.org/solomon_islands/2002/02/01/pina_appeals_for_support_for_threatened/> at 10 July 2008

Kabutaulaka, Tarcisius Tara, 'Beyond Ethnicity: The Political Economy of the Guadalcanal Crisis in Solomon Islands', Working Paper 01/1 *State, Society and Governance in Melanesia*, (2001)

Mission & Justice, 'Solomon Islands and PNG Conclude Border Talks' <<http://www.missionandjustice.org/solomon-islands-and-png-conclude-border-talks/>> at 10 July 2009

National Parliament of Solomon Islands, <<http://www.parliament.gov.sb/>> at 12 July 2008

One Television, 3 July 2009

People First Network (PFnet), 10, 29 April 2008 <<http://www.peoplefirst.net.sb/>> at 30 April 2008

Radio New Zealand International, 2 November 2007 <<http://www.rnzi.com/pages/news.php?op=read&id=36190>> at 3 November 2007

Radio New Zealand International, 6 December 2007 <<http://www.rnzi.com/pages/news.php?op=read&id=36887>> at 7 December 2007

Regional Assistance Mission to Solomon Islands, *Law and Justice* (2008) <<http://www.ramsi.org/node/268>> at 15 August 2008

SIBC News, 8 March 2006 <<http://www.sibconline.com.sb/story.asp?IDThread=19&IDNews=14707>>

SIBC News, 11 January 2007 <<http://www.sibconline.com.sb/story.asp?IDThread=80&IDNews=17747>> 11 January 2007

SIBC News, 15 April 2007 <<http://www.sibconline.com.sb/story.asp?IDThread=31&IDNews=18750>> at 15 April 2007

SIBC News, 15 May 2007 <<http://www.sibconline.com.sb/story.asp?IDThread=160&IDNews=19104>> at 15 May 2007

SIBC News, 5 July 2007 <<http://www.sibconline.com.sb/story.asp?IDThread=151&IDNews=19646>> at 6 July 2007

SIBC News, 11 November 2007 <<http://www.sibconline.com.sb/story.asp?IDThread=143&IDNews=20589>> at 11 November 2007

SIBC News, 5 December 2007 <<http://www.sibconline.com.sb/story.asp?IDThread=151&IDNews=21109>> at 5 December 2007

SIBC News, 21 January, 2008 <<http://www.sibconline.com.sb/story.asp?IDThread=143&IDNews=21433>> at 21 January 2008

SIBC News, 1 August 2008 <<http://www.sibconline.com.sb/story.asp?IDThread=175&IDNews=23089>> at 1 August 2008

SIBC News, 6 August 2008 <<http://www.sibconline.com.sb/story.asp?IDThread=172&IDNews=23137>> at 6 August 2008

SIBC News, 30 December 2008 <<http://www.sibconline.com.sb/story.asp?IDThread=151&IDNews=24342>> at 30 December 2008

SIBC News, 3 January 2009 <<http://www.sibconline.com.sb/story.asp?IDThread=5&IDNews=24367>> at 4 January 2009

SIBC News, 23 April 2009 <<http://www.sibconline.com.sb/story.asp?IDThread=175&IDNews=25277>> at 24 April 2009

SIBC News, 1 June 2009 <<http://www.sibconline.com.sb/story.asp?IDThread=143&IDNews=25636>> at 1 June 2009

SIBC News, 31 July 2009

Solomon Islands Government, *Financial Instructions* (2004)

Solomon Islands Government, *General Orders* (2007)

Solomon Islands Government, *Standing Orders of Parliament* (1988)

Solomon Star (Honiara), 9 May 2006

Solomon Star (Honiara), 18 April 2006

Solomon Star (Honiara), 12 September 2008

Solomon Star (Honiara), 2 September 2008

Solomon Star (Honiara), 27 August 2008

Solomon Star (Honiara), 23 August 2008

Solomon Star (Honiara), 19 July 2008

Solomon Star (Honiara), 6 March 2008

Solomon Star (Honiara), 25 March 2008

Solomon Star (Honiara), 7 March 2008

Solomon Star (Honiara), 6 February 2008

Solomon Star (Honiara), 3 January 2008

Solomon Star (Honiara), 5 January 2009

Solomon Star (Honiara), 10 January 2009

Solomon Star (Honiara), 13 February 2009 <http://solomonstarnews.com/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=6496&Itemid=45&change=103&changeown=87> at 14 February 2009

Solomon Star (Honiara), 16 February 2009

Solomon Star (Honiara), 1 June 2009

Solomon Star (Honiara), 22 June 2009

Solomon Times Online, 12 December 2007

Solomon Times Online, 10 October 2008 <<http://www.solomontimes.com/news.aspx?nwID=2797>>

Solomon Times Online, 13 February 2009 <<http://www.solomontimes.com/news.aspx?nwID=3574>>

White, Geoffrey, *Indigenous Governance in Melanesia*, State, Society and Governance in Melanesia Discussion Paper 2007/5 (2007)

