



Matanitu kei Viti
Fijian Government
फ़ीजी सरकार

Fiji National Security & Defence Review

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FIJI NATIONAL SECURITY & DEFENCE REVIEW

James N. Sanday

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Abbreviations

CSOs	Civil Society Organisations
FCS	Fiji Corrections Service
FHRDC	Fiji Human Rights and Anti-Discrimination Commission
FNU	Fiji National University
FPF	Fiji Police Force
FPWP	Foreign Policy White Paper
FRCS	Fiji Revenue and Customs Service
GANHRI	Global Alliance of National Human Rights Institutions
GCC	Great Council of Chiefs
HADR	Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief
JSIC	Joint Strategy and Investment Committee
LGBTQI	Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer, Intersexual
MHAI	Ministry of Home Affairs and Immigration
MEd	Ministry of Education
MOF	Ministry of Finance
MOFA	Ministry of Foreign Affairs
MLAB	Ministry of Labour
MSAF	Maritime Safety Authority of Fiji
NDP	National Development Plan
NGO	Non-Government Organisations
NSDC	National Security & Defence Council
NSDR	National Security and Defence Review
NSS	National Security Strategy

OSG	Office of the Solicitor General
PSC	Public Service Commission
PSF	Protective Security Framework
RFMF	Republic of Fiji Military Forces (RFMF)
SILB	Security Industry Licensing Board
SCNS	Secretaries Committee on National Security
WPS	Women Peace & Security

Foreword

The National Security & Defence Review (NSDR) proposes a new national security framework for Fiji's national sovereignty that emphasizes transparency and accountability in the management and development of the security sector. Civilian control and parliamentary oversight of the security sector are essential for long-term sustainability, with the security forces a key partner in this endeavour. The evolving global security environment, including the intense geopolitical contest in our region, necessitates a whole-of-government approach, which will be encapsulated in the forthcoming National Security Strategy (NSS). This strategy will leverage community support to enhance national security.

National security in Fiji is defined as the absence of threats, whether real or perceived, internal or external, to the safety, values, and dignity of the people of Fiji. These safeguards and values include respect for human rights, a prosperous economy, a stable state, social cohesion, and a sustainable environment. In other words, Fiji's NSDR is based on a people-centred approach, with the assumption that when the government prioritises the security and well-being of citizens, it fosters a safe, secure and prosperous populace, which, in turn, ensures the safety and security of the nation.

Fiji is also a signatory to all of the nine human rights conventions of the United Nations and the people-centred approach is consistent with Article 25 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights:

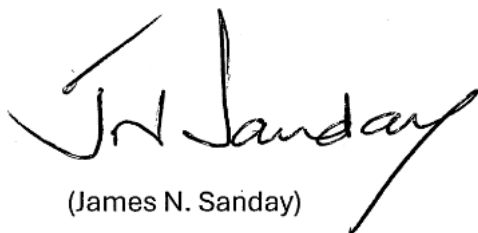
Everyone has the right to a standard of living adequate for the health and well-being of himself and of his family, including food, clothing, housing and medical care, and necessary social services, and the right to security in the event of unemployment, sickness, disability, widowhood, old age or other lack of livelihood in circumstances beyond his control.

Achieving these aims requires effective legislation, active community-state engagement, competent civil service agencies, sovereign-directed international engagement, and the integration of existing and emerging technologies. It is

underpinned by the commitment to uphold the rule of law and respect for due process by the government of the day. This will send a strong message to the citizenry. It will inspire both confidence and reciprocity not just by ordinary citizens, but all other arms of government, including the security forces. Simply put, it means that when it comes to national security and defence, the government must lead by example.

The NSDR recognises the necessity for a robust national security framework that is inclusive, transparent, and accountable. By addressing the challenges identified and implementing the proposed recommendations, Fiji can build a resilient security sector that protects and promotes the values and well-being of its people and serve as an example to the region.

God bless Fiji and its people.



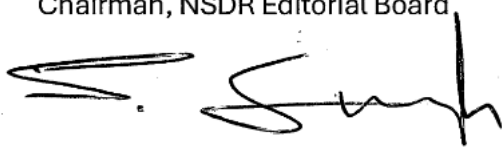
(James N. Sanday)

Independent Review Lead



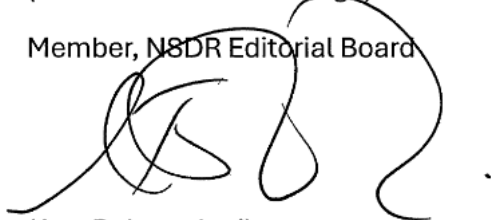
(Satish Chand)

Chairman, NSDR Editorial Board



(Shailendra Bahadur Singh)

Member, NSDR Editorial Board



(Ana Rokomokoti)

Member, NSDR Editorial Board

Executive Summary

Fiji's national security requirements are shaped by its unique geographic, political, economic, and social context. The overarching objective of its national security policy and strategy is to ensure the absence of real or perceived threats to the country's core values. These values include; respect for human rights, economic prosperity, state stability, social cohesion, and environmental sustainability. Achieving this requires a comprehensive, inclusive, and transparent approach to security that integrates community engagement, government coordination, and international collaboration.

Key Elements of Fiji's National Security Requirements

Comprehensive and Inclusive Security Framework. Fiji's national security framework must be inclusive, transparent, and accountable. It requires a whole-of-government approach that emphasizes civilian oversight, parliamentary accountability, and the active participation of civil society. Trust-building is critical, as there is a recognized need to enhance public confidence in security institutions, particularly the Republic of Fiji Military Forces (RFMF) and the Police Force. The National Security Strategy (NSS) will encapsulate these principles, aiming to foster a resilient and robust security sector.

Protection of Human Rights. Central to Fiji's national security is the protection and promotion of human rights. This aligns with Fiji's obligations under the UN Charter and international law, which mandate the state to uphold human rights. Security sector agencies must work in harmony with the state to ensure that human rights are respected and integrated into the national security architecture. Enshrining human rights is essential for fostering public trust and stability.

Community Involvement and Social Cohesion. National security in Fiji requires active community engagement. Collaborative efforts with key organizations, including traditional bodies such as the Great Council of Chiefs, religious groups like the Fiji Council of Churches, Fiji Muslim League, and Hindu organizations, are crucial. These partnerships can address challenges related to social fracturing, economic insecurity, and low community trust, fostering a united front against security threats facing the nation.

Leveraging International and Regional Partnerships. Fiji must continue to strengthen its regional leadership role, particularly within the Pacific Islands Forum, to address the securitization of development and economic activities in the Pacific. Collaborations with international partners provide opportunities to share technical expertise, build capacity, and collectively enhance regional security, especially in emerging domains like cybersecurity.

Mainstreaming Women, Peace, and Security (WPS). Integrating gender equity and WPS principles into the national security agenda is essential. Women's full participation in decision-making processes, policy implementation, and evaluation must be prioritized. Updating existing laws and policies to reflect gender considerations will create a more inclusive and effective security environment, ultimately leading to sustainable peace and security outcomes.

Use of Emerging Technologies. Incorporating existing and emerging technologies is critical for advancing Fiji's national security interests. This includes leveraging advancements in cyber capabilities to protect against growing cyber threats. Developing the necessary infrastructure and expertise will be vital in mitigating risks associated with technological vulnerabilities.

Economic and Environmental Security. A stable and prosperous economy and a sustainable environment are vital components of national security. Policies should address economic insecurities and environmental challenges, including adverse effects of climate change, which poses a significant threat to Fiji. Protecting natural resources and promoting sustainable development will contribute to the long-term security and resilience of the nation.

These considerations were instrumental in shaping the NSDR's approach to developing an appropriate security framework for Fiji. The framework will be fully articulated in the forthcoming National Security Strategy (NSS) document.

Structure of this Report

This document is divided into three main parts:

Part One: Outlines Fiji's National Security Architecture. This section outlines the structural components of Fiji's security apparatus, including the roles and responsibilities of various governmental and non-governmental entities. It emphasizes the need for an integrated approach, ensuring civilian oversight, and the involvement of diverse stakeholders, ranging from community organizations to international partners.

Part Two: Identification of the Main Security Threats and Challenges. This part identifies the key security threats facing Fiji, both internal and external. It covers issues such as economic insecurity, cyber threats, environmental challenges, geopolitical competition, and human rights concerns. The identification of these threats will help the NSDC and ultimately Cabinet, in prioritising the national security agenda and in the allocation of resources to address the most pressing challenges.

Part Three: Key Recommendations for Security Sector Reform. The final part proposes actionable recommendations to reform and strengthen Fiji's security sector. This will include strategies for enhancing transparency, building public trust, improving coordination among security agencies, incorporating gender perspectives, and mainstreaming human rights into the security framework. The goal is to create a resilient and inclusive security sector that protects Fiji's national interests and upholds the values of its people

This structured approach is designed to ensure that Fiji's national security framework is robust, inclusive, and capable of addressing both current and emerging challenges effectively.

Introduction

Purpose

1. The *National Security and Defence Review* (NSDR) has assessed the core risks to Fiji's national security. These risks were identified through several submissions and face-to-face consultations with stakeholders across government, the community, and civil society organisations. Findings are presented in **Part One** and **Part Two** of this report.
2. This report outlines the findings of the National Security and Defence Review (NSDR) and is being presented to the Minister for Home Affairs and Immigration, (the Honourable Pio Tikoduadua, MP) and through him, to the Government of Fiji. The strategic policy recommendations included in this report are intended to guide the formulation of Fiji's National Security Strategy (NSS). Should the Cabinet approve these recommendations, they will be developed further and included in the NSS. These recommendations are detailed in **Part Three** of this report.

Defining National Security

3. At the outset, the NSDR team decided on the following working definition of national security to guide the review process. This definition could be formally adopted in the NSS and its enabling legislation.

“National security entails the pursuit of psychological and physical safety, which is the responsibility of the State, to prevent and respond to threats and risks to the well-being of its people and their way of life.”¹

4. In the Fiji context this means the absence, whether real or perceived, of threats to the core values of the people of Fiji. These values include respect for human rights, the desire to live in harmony with others, a prosperous economy, a stable state, and a sustainable environment. This indicates the importance of both traditional and non-traditional threats to Fiji's national security. The definition

¹ This definition is adapted from a definition offered by Micheal Evans. See Michael Evans. (2007) 'Towards an Australian national security strategy: a conceptual analysis'. *Security Challenges* 3 (4): 113-130.

offered above ensures a comprehensive and holistic approach to safeguarding these core values.

5. Such values are protected through legislation, vibrant engagement between the community and the state, effective civil service agencies with the mandate to protect and progress the values of the people, sovereign-directed international engagement, and harnessing existing and emerging technologies. The role played by individuals, civil society organizations, government agencies, regional bodies, and international organizations in furthering national security can be best achieved through active collaboration. Such collaboration can only occur in an environment of trust.

Core Findings

6. The core finding throughout the NSDR consultations was that public trust in government institutions was deficient. The government must earn the trust of community and civil society organizations by ensuring that their perspectives are heard and their contributions to national progress and unity are recognized. Additionally, there is a significant deficit in trust that human rights, as enshrined in the Constitution and the various international conventions ratified by the government, are indeed respected by the different security sector agencies, particularly the military and police.
7. Rebuilding trust in the institutions of government, civil society, and the wider community is critical for national security. Such trust is essential to fostering a whole-of-nation commitment to national security. State institutions require strengthened democratic accountability, particularly in the security sector. The government and the public sector face an immediate challenge in regaining community trust. Little progress can be made in improving national security without the trust and support of the community.

The Policy Challenges

8. The core strategic policy challenge facing the Government of Fiji is to craft a national security framework that is sustainable, promotes transparency and democratic accountability while addressing current human security challenges faced by the community. This requires embedding democratic accountability, and civilian and parliamentary oversight, of the security sector.
9. The challenges posed to Fiji's national security by the new globalised security environment exceed the capability of any one government agency or security service. Fiji must therefore adopt a whole-of-government approach in the crafting of a National Security Strategy (NSS). The NSS will draw on the wider community for support to improve national security.
10. Fiji is seen as a leader within the Pacific Islands region. It can lead with a strong regional outlook to national security, especially in the face of the new globalised security environment and intensifying geopolitical contest in the region. Fiji is a signatory to the *2000 Biketawa Declaration* which emphasises good governance, democratic processes and the liberty of the individual under the law. Fiji is also a signatory to the *2018 Boe Declaration on Regional Security* which affirms a vision of a region of peace, harmony, security, social inclusion, and prosperity so that all Pacific peoples can live free healthy, and productive lives. Fiji is also a signatory to all of the nine human rights conventions of the United Nations.² The NSS presents an opportunity for Fiji to lead on matters of regional and global security.
11. Implicit in these declarations is an obligation for Fiji to conform to these international norms. It places an obligation on the Fiji government to implement governance arrangements that reflect and uphold these values and practices. Thus, the challenge for Fiji is to craft a national security framework that encapsulates these norms while accounting for Fiji's unique situation in a globalised security environment. It should also consider the changing nature of

² See paragraphs 155, 156 and 157 which lists these conventions and elaborates on the findings surrounding human rights.

security, which now encompasses traditional and non-traditional threats to Fiji's sovereignty and well-being of the people.

Government Mandate

12. In his address at the opening of Parliament in Suva on 03 February 2023, the President of the Republic of Fiji, His Excellency Ratu Wiliame Katonivere, announced that the Fiji Government would undertake a review of Fiji's defence and security arrangements and that this would include "finalising a National Security Strategy...and the necessary legal framework."
13. Following this announcement, the Cabinet directed that the Ministry of Home Affairs & Immigration (MHAI) conduct a *National Security and Defence Review*.
14. The Cabinet-directed purpose of the *NSDR* is the reform of Fiji's national security architecture, including instilling democratic accountability of Fiji's security agencies; namely, the Fiji Police Force (FPF) and the Republic of Fiji Military Forces (RFMF). The NSDR was mandated to initiate a whole-of-government *National Security Strategy*. The Terms of Reference of the NSDR are provided in Annex A.

Guiding Principles

15. The safeguarding of Fiji's national security requires a comprehensive approach, integrating community involvement, public and private sector participation, the engagement of our international partners to advance Fiji's national security interests. Other guiding principles for the NSDR include:
 - *Consultation-driven*. Fiji's national security architecture must be built through a consultative process that fully engages with the people of Fiji who are the key stakeholders in the stability and security of the nation;
 - *Nationally focussed*. Fiji should embrace current national security concepts and definitions and put in place resources and capabilities that protect Fiji from harm. It should prioritise homeland defence, human rights,

economic security, internal stability, and the overall well-being of its citizens;

- *Civilian-led*. The national security framework must consolidate civilian oversight of the police and the military. To promote this, a professionalisation agenda for the FPF, RFMF, and other security agencies must be established;
- *Sovereignty*. The NSDR must adhere to the spirit of being '*Made in Fiji for Fiji*'. It must be seen as a Fiji-led exercise comprising Fiji nationals with an accomplished record of service committed to addressing the contemporary security challenges facing the nation.

The NSDR Team

16. The NSDR team is led by the Independent Review Lead, **Mr James (Jim) Sanday**. The team includes an Editorial Board led by **Professor Satish Chand** (Chair and economist), with additional members including **Ms Ana Rokomokoti** (legal advisor) Assistant Professor of the FNU Faculty of Law, and **Dr Shailendra Singh** (communications advisor) an Associate Professor of Pacific Journalism at USP. Executive support to the Review was provided by a Secretariat led by Mr Akuila Savu of the MHAI.

Methodology

17. The NSDR team produced several documents to shape the process and guide the NSDR team in delivering a national security strategy (NSS) as per the Terms of Reference. These included a strategy design document (Exercise *Tuvani Rawa*) and the NSDR Project Plan. The Project Plan outlined the review's research focus areas, the public consultation process, data collection and analysis methods, risks and limitations, and ethical considerations. These documents provided the necessary strategic guidance for the conduct of the Review (see Figure 1 below).



Figure 1. NSDR Project Documents

18. Overall, the review used an open, honest, and explorative approach to gain an understanding of, and build consensus on, national security challenges through a process of stakeholder consultations. This approach reflected the importance of listening to, and in the process, developing trust between the community and government administration. The review focus areas included:
 - Fiji's threat environment and the global and regional security landscape;
 - Fiji's national interests and objectives for defence, security, and policing;
 - strategic implications for Fiji's security services including financial sustainability considerations;
 - the role of the Ministry of Home Affairs in Fiji's national security architecture;
 - the role and resourcing of government agencies with the primary mandate to deliver security services in the areas of the police, military, immigration, and customs;
 - civil-military relations including the interface between civil society and the disciplinary forces;
 - whole-of-government defence and security coordination mechanisms;
 - women, peace and security considerations;
 - potential legislative and regulatory changes in the security sector; and,
 - international and regional engagements with a specific focus on Fiji's foreign policy settings.
19. The consultations with the community, government, and civil society provided the primary data for the NSDR. The review team acknowledges the goodwill from all stakeholders who presented their views candidly and respectfully. For their part,

the Review team engaged in active listening, maintained an open perspective on issues canvassed by the stakeholders, and analysed this information to formulate the NSDR. A list of stakeholders consulted in the NSDR is provided in Annex B.

Limitations of this Report

20. The review team held more than 55 consultations with representatives from civil society, the private sector, members of the public, and government agencies. Despite these thorough consultations, the views expressed in this report are not (and could not be) completely representative of all stakeholders. However, a second opportunity will be provided to stakeholders, vide a workshop, to validate the findings.
21. This report outlines Fiji's current national security threats and challenges. The dynamic nature of the new globalised security environment implies that new threats and challenges will emerge and that nations such as Fiji will need to adapt to survive. The *National Security Strategy* (NSS) will therefore require continued monitoring and updating to ensure its ongoing relevance.

Next steps

22. The Fiji government's guidance on the findings and proposed recommendations are required to assess **resourcing** and **prioritisation**. Proposed security sector reforms will then be developed into a *National Security Strategy* (NSS), which will be co-designed with key security agencies. The NSS will then be submitted to the Government for its consideration by the end of November 2024.
23. The NSS must be both visionary and implementable. The success of the NSS should be judged by the extent to which its recommendations are implemented. For the NSS to be successful, some of the recommendations will need to be implemented immediately while others will take time. Implementation will require resourcing in the form of investments in capital, personnel, and intelligence gathering. The nature of these investments will require long-term funding.

A full-page background image featuring a soldier in profile, facing right. He is wearing a black tactical helmet with a chin strap, a black tactical vest over a blue and black camouflage t-shirt, and black gloves. He is standing on the deck of a ship, with various ship structures, including railings and equipment, visible in the background. The lighting is natural, suggesting daylight. The text 'Part One: Fiji's National Security Architecture' is overlaid in white, bold, sans-serif font on the left side of the image.

Part One: Fiji's National Security Architecture

The National Interests

24. Defining the national interests is essentially an effort to define basic needs, issues, and factors in which a nation has a stake, and which it can justifiably employ resources (including military resources) to advance or defend those interests.
25. The following national interests were identified in stakeholder consultations and by the NSDR review team. These interests served as a working guide for the review team and should be more deeply explored in the NSS design. Ultimately, they must be formally endorsed by the Government of Fiji. These national interests include:
 - Security of Fiji from the threat of an attack from external and internal sources;
 - Freedom to exercise our sovereign authority over our terrestrial space, maritime space, and air space;
 - Freedom to make independent decisions on matters affecting our national well-being;
 - Avoidance of global conflict and the promotion of international efforts to promote global and regional peace and stability;
 - Respect for the sovereignty and rights of all nations to live in peace;
 - Secure lines of communications in our proximate area;
 - Freedom of navigation in international waters;
 - Growth in the world economy and stability of the international financial system;
 - Protection of Fiji's resource environment and the promotion of ecologically/environmentally sustainable development;
 - A favourable international image;
 - National data sovereignty and robust protection measures; and,
 - A just, harmonious and cohesive society.

Fiji's National Objectives

26. Fiji has no formally declared national objectives although some of these are implicit in political party manifestos and various government policy documents.³ Based on an assessment of Fiji's national interests as outlined above, Fiji's national objectives can be defined as follows:

- To preserve Fiji's national sovereignty, security and political independence in the international political system. This includes the exercise of sovereignty over Fiji's land territory, airspace, maritime space and offshore resources;
- Within available resources, to contribute to the preservation of the rules-based order and its vital institutions, through participation in global peacekeeping missions;
- To foster and maintain peace, political stability, and economic prosperity within our immediate region through diplomacy, trade, and defence cooperation where appropriate;
- To preserve and respect the rule of law;
- To safeguard Fiji's resource environment and promote ecologically sustainable development;
- To promote economic growth, political stability, and social cohesion within Fiji.

27. Promoting the national interest and national objectives requires a whole-of-nation approach to national security. This includes robust internal measures, astute diplomacy, and cooperation with regional, international, and community partners. Fiji must find its security in collaboration with others. In this context, diplomacy should be Fiji's first line of defence. Effective diplomacy will help Fiji navigate the complexities of global politics, ensuring that the nation's values and interests are protected while contributing to regional and international peace and security.

³ At the time of finalising this report the NSDR review team had not received a final version of the National Development Plan.

National Development, Security, & Foreign Policy

28. Fiji is a regionally central archipelagic nation with over 300 islands, a culturally diverse population, and a globally dispersed diaspora. The nation has had a turbulent political past having suffered four coup d'états in the past half a century. As a result, the nature of Fiji's security environment cannot be separated from its social and political realities, economic base and development aspirations, nor its international relationships and offshore posture.
29. A key theme in this report is that Fiji's national development, national security, and foreign policy interests are deeply interlinked. These linkages are generally well recognised but not sufficiently actioned by the Fiji government, Civil Service, and Disciplined Forces. Figure 2 illustrates the relative role of each agency within the development-security-foreign policy nexus and the guiding strategic policy settings of the Fiji government.



Figure 2. Development-Security-Foreign Policy Nexus.

30. While Cabinet is responsible for coordinating government effort across Ministries, a subordinate mechanism at the executive level is necessary to coordinate policy, strategy, investment, and operational activity across the NDP, FPWP, and NSS.

This gap in coordination results in under-utilised national power and, at times, a government that works at cross purposes. It impedes the Fiji government's ability to progress peace, prosperity, and security for all Fijians.

31. Despite this, the foundations exist for the Fiji Government to integrate its strategies, policies, and laws into a whole-of-nation effort on national security. However, stakeholders reported that individual agencies often operate in isolation from one another. A competitive atmosphere among government agencies and tenacity in protecting their respective mandates has impeded a collective and coordinated approach to securing the national interest.
32. The NSS, and the MHA as its custodian, have a crucial role to play in coordinating the whole-of-nation effort on national security. This should be a core focus of the new NSS. Fiji's current national security architecture is illustrated below in Figure 3.



Figure 3. Fiji's National Security Architecture.

33. Fiji's strategic personality—its sense of optimism, welcoming nature, community and family focus —embodies the approach required to strengthen its national security architecture. Faith also plays a significant role in bringing people together—especially in times of crisis. These features serve as the foundations to unite the Fijian people to address the security challenges facing the nation. This will be a key focus of this report and the proposed security sector reforms.

National Security & Defence Council

34. As a Republic, Fiji's system of government vests executive authority in the President, who acts on the advice of the Prime Minister. The Prime Minister exercises the primary executive functions of government, including national security, through the collective decision-making of the Cabinet. Unlike other Westminster systems of government, the Cabinet is not formed by convention but is codified in the Fiji Constitution.
35. Fiji's National Security & Defence Council (NSDC) comprises the Prime Minister, the Minister for Home Affairs and Immigration, the Minister for Foreign Affairs, the Attorney General, and the Minister for Finance. The Permanent Secretary for Home Affairs and Immigration serves as the secretary while the Commander of the Republic of Fiji Military Forces and the Commissioner of Police are permanent members of the NSC. However, the NSDC does not have a legislative or Constitutional basis. Consequently, any decision of the NSC must be referred to the Cabinet for ratification.
36. **Executive support to the NSDC.** The NSDC requires a formal legal basis to function. It also requires a resourced Secretariat (the MHA can provide such a Secretariat from within its resources). The role and purview of the NSDC will be strengthened by the establishment of a *Secretaries Committee on National Security (SCNS)* that will support the NSDC, which is further discussed in the Part Three on security reforms.⁴

⁴ The establishment of a SCNS has also been canvassed in the 2024 Foreign Affairs White Paper, p. 59.

Ministry Of Home Affairs & Immigration

37. The Ministry of Home Affairs and Immigration (MHAI) is the nation's primary agency for providing policy advice on national security matters. The Ministry's role is to provide strategic leadership and policy guidance to ensure a safe, secure and prosperous Fiji for all Fijians. The key security agencies under the MHAI are the Republic of Fiji Military Forces (RFMF) and Fiji Police Force (FPF) – have clear responsibilities specified in law.⁵ The MHAI, in contrast, does not have the same clarity specified in law. This discrepancy risks confusion over the role of the Ministry in setting Fiji's strategic policy direction on defence and national security matters.
38. The Home Affairs component of MHAI comprises approximately 40 personnel. The Immigration component of MHAI comprises 193 positions with just over half occupied; recruitment initiatives are underway to recruit personnel into the vacant positions. The MHAI 2024-25 budget is \$21.4 million. The Home Affairs segment budget is \$6.5 million, of which \$2 million is requisitioned for the establishment of a Narcotics Bureau. The Immigration segment budget is \$14.9 million.

Republic Of Fiji Military Forces

39. The Republic of Fiji Military Forces (RFMF) has primary responsibility for the territorial defence of Fiji. Under s 131(2) of the Constitution the RFMF has the responsibility to “ensure at all times the security, defence, and well-being of Fiji and all Fijians.” The defence priorities of the RFMF are outlined in its core strategic planning document, *Beyond 2022*. These priorities include: (i) a secure Fiji, (ii) regional security, (iii) climate change response, (iv) partner interoperability, (v) contributions to global peace and human rights.
40. The RFMF comprises approximately 4,040 active personnel (3,700 Army, 340 Navy) supported by a further 6,000 territorial force personnel.⁶ The RFMF 2024-25 budget is \$169.5 million. This includes \$56.7 million for global peacekeeping missions. The RFMF also operates significant national assets including central

⁵ See the 2013 Constitution, Republic of Fiji Military Forces Act 1949, Police Act 1965, and the Corrections Service Act 2006.

⁶ International Institute for Strategic Studies, *The Military Balance 2024*, Routledge, 2024.

and remote military bases, Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief (HADR) stores, maritime port infrastructure, patrol boats, wheeled armoured troop carriers (Bushmasters), and communications systems.

Fiji Police Force

41. The Fiji Police Force (FPF) is the primary national law enforcement agency. The FPF mandate is outlined in the Police Act 1965 which stipulates its responsibility to (i) maintain law and order; (ii) preserve the peace, (iii) protect life and property, and (iv) prevent and detect crime.
42. The FPF Strategic Development Plan 2020-24 outlines the primary capability priorities. However, these have been superseded by the new government's announcement of the *Police Reset* (2024) and the *Restore Blue* (2023).
43. The FPF comprises approximately 4,600 police officers.⁷ The FPF 2024-25 budget is \$226.8 million. The FPF annual budget has increased by approximately 2.5% year-on-year since 2018-19. This is a relatively high growth rate compared to other security agencies. The FPF maintains police outposts throughout the Fiji Islands and operates a large fleet of police vehicles and watercraft.

Intelligence

44. Fiji's national security architecture lacks a centralised national intelligence assessment capability. Intelligence functions are spread across individual government agencies. For example, the MHA relies primarily on open sources for strategic intelligence while its Immigration department has its own immigration intelligence network. The MOFA operates a diplomatic information network. The RFMF specialises in military intelligence at the operational and tactical levels. The FPF collects and assesses criminal intelligence and provides domestic security services. The FRCS collects and assesses customs intelligence, etc.

⁷ F. Chaudhary, '7000 more officers in 5 years' The Fiji Times, 28 February 2023, <https://www.fijitimes.com.fj/7000-more-officers-in-5-years/> (accessed 26 July 2024).

Although there are merits for individual agency's managing distinct intelligence streams (contestability, separation of powers), they must however have robust intelligence sharing mechanisms. Fiji's intelligence functions are not fused into a joint national intelligence body at the apex of government. This deficiency can lead to potential gaps in information flows and a lack of capacity in the crafting of a cohesive response strategy.

45. To better serve national leadership and ensure a more coordinated and effective approach to intelligence, the government must consider establishing a centralized national intelligence framework that integrates the various intelligence functions. This will enhance strategic decision-making, improve situational awareness, and ensure that the Prime Minister and Cabinet receive timely, comprehensive, and actionable intelligence.

Security Sector Expenditure

46. Expenditure for the security sector is summarised below. Figure 4 provides an overview of forecast expenditure for 2024-25. Figure 5 provides a benchmark index of security sector expenditure against 2018-19 and shows budget changes since that period. This index benchmark is appropriate since the national government implemented cost-cutting reforms in 2019-20 as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic.
47. The security sector accounted for 10 percent of the total government expenditure of \$4.1 billion in 2024-25. Of this, the FPF accounts for 53 percent, the RFMF (including peacekeeping) accounts for 40 percent, Immigration 4 percent, and MHAI just 1 percent. The NSS should focus on the appropriate mix of resources in the security portfolio to ensure effectiveness.

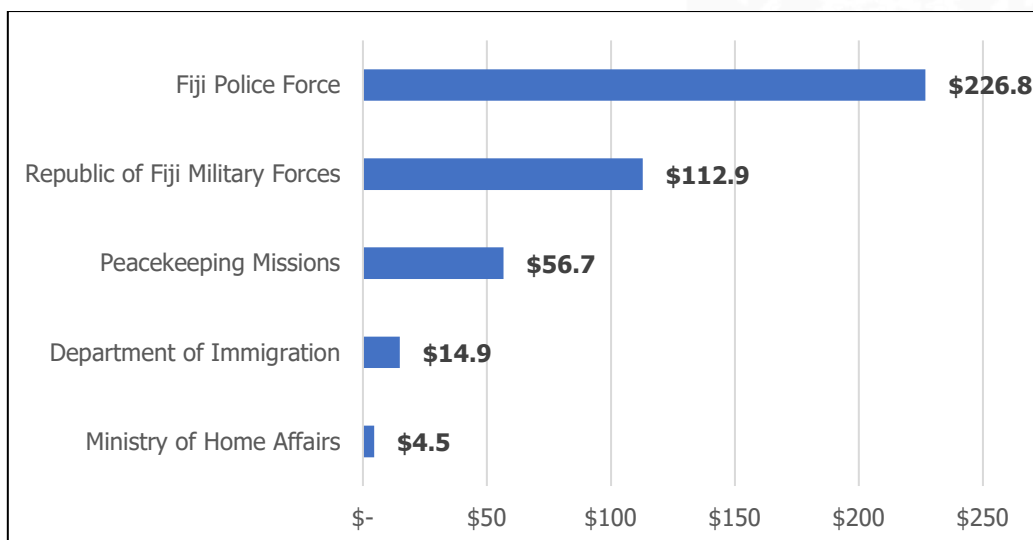


Figure 4. Security sector expenditure 2024-25 (\$millions).⁸

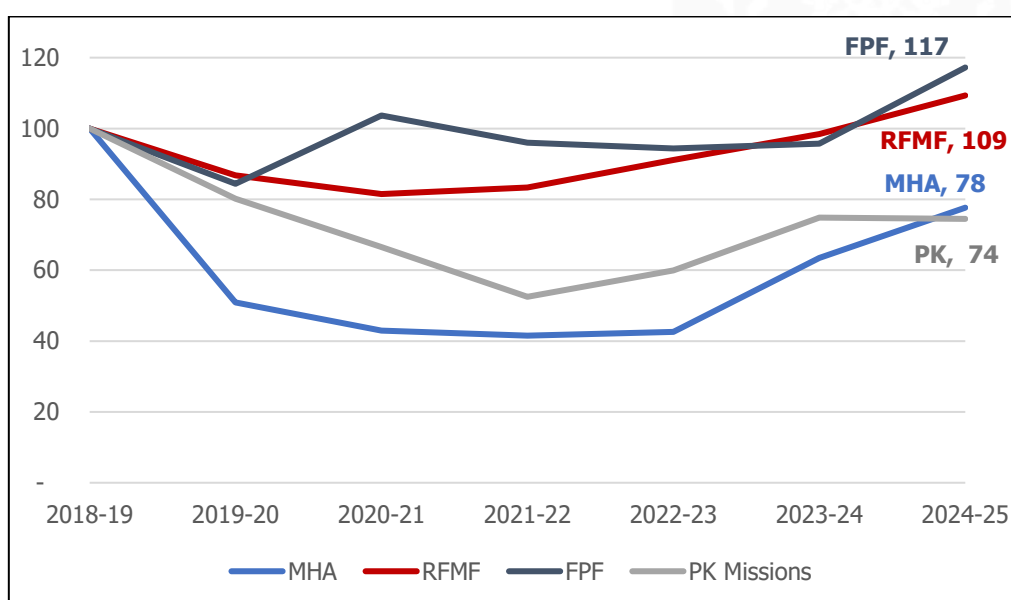


Figure 5. Security sector expenditure indexed to FY2018-19.⁹

Coordination Across Government Agencies

48. Government agencies collectively provide critical services in support of national security objectives that complement the role of the formal security sector. Critical agencies include the Ministry of Health and Medical Services, the Fiji Customs

⁸ Parliament of the Republic of Fiji, *Budget Estimates 2024-2025*, https://www.parliament.gov.fj/wp-content/uploads/2024/06/Final-Budget_2024.pdf, (accessed 26 July 2024).

⁹ Ibid. See the Parliament of the Republic of Fiji's national budget statements for the relevant years.

and Revenue Service, the National Disaster Management Office, the Maritime Safety Authority of Fiji, and others.

49. Whole-of-government security coordination primarily occurs through existing national strategic committees, issue-specific legislation, and the goodwill and partnerships developed at the personal level between agencies.
50. Joint strategic policy-setting across agencies occurs through the Permanent Secretary's Development Sub-Committee of Cabinet (DSC) and the *National Development Plan* led by the Ministry of Finance. Legislative instruments also establish coordination mechanisms; however, these tend to be issue-based such as the *National Disaster Management Act 1998* and the *Biosecurity Act 2008*.
51. Whole-of-government coordination at the operational level is also issue-based and occurs through established inter-agency organisations. This includes the Fiji Maritime Surveillance & Rescue Coordination Centre (FMSRCC) and the National Emergency Operations Centre (NEOC).

Civil Society Organisations

52. Civil society organisations (CSOs) play a critical role in delivering national security. They were consulted extensively for this review. CSOs are engaged in a range of matters central to human security e.g. human rights, women's security and gender-based violence, people with disabilities, and environmental protection. Furthermore, representatives from industry, faith-based organisations, and ethnic-based organisations were also consulted. The information provided via these consultations and the willingness of those consulted to contribute towards improving national security points to CSOs being an under-utilised resource.
53. However, some CSOs remain reluctant to engage with security agencies due to the legacies of human rights abuses during past coups. The reluctance of some CSOs to fully engage with the security sector is an issue that needs to be urgently addressed by the parties concerned as it impedes collaboration for improved service delivery.

Private Security Industry

54. The private security industry is overlooked and undervalued but are a key player in the security sector in that they are the first point of contact/first responders in the protection of private and public property, business houses, critical infrastructure etc. They should therefore be included as an integral part of Fiji's protective security framework and be supported by appropriate legislation and regulations.
55. More than 3,000 security providers operate in Fiji yet only 35 private security companies are registered with the Security Industry Licensing Board (SILB). The unregistered security providers operate without a Security Master License (SML) and often provide services outside of their approved security activities. These companies are non-compliant with the Security Industry Act of 2010 which is outdated and needs an urgent review.
56. As of June 2024, the Cabinet approved the drafting of an updated Security Industry Act. The Law Reform Commission will provide expertise in legal drafting and the MHA will find a subject matter expert to provide expertise in the review. Technical support including the use of emerging technology to support the industry is being explored.
57. Improved regulation is also needed to ensure the private security industry operates efficiently and effectively. There is a need to mitigate the threat of *trusted insiders* within the private security industry, particularly in the security of critical infrastructure and in the storage of dangerous goods e.g. explosives at mine sites.



Part Two: Security Threats and Challenges

Trust Deficit In Government Institutions And The Security Sector

58. Trust emerged as a pivotal theme during the consultations. Underscoring each of the consultations was the message that trust is a vital element of Fiji's national security architecture. And that every effort must be made to regain public trust in the Government and its vital institutions, especially the military and the police by, among other things, exemplary behaviour in respecting due processes, upholding the rule of law and reinforcing democratic principles.
59. **Erosion of trust in government.** Stakeholders in the community voiced their perceptions of government inefficiency, nepotism, and corruption. This perception may be a legacy from the authoritarianism of the previous administration but it does highlight the need for sensitivity in government decision-making and its messaging. For example, the recent decision to increase the salaries of parliamentarians, which was then followed later by the Government announcing a delay in welfare payments for the poor. There were other incidents cited including concerns about the fair and just application of the rule of law.
60. This creates a public perception that the government and its lawmakers in parliament are self-serving. The concern is that community trust and confidence in the government and public institutions are being undermined. Such distrust could lead to a decline in civic engagement. This 'trust deficit' is contributing to the fragility of Fiji's democracy. Restoring and maintaining public trust requires lawmakers to address the root causes of these perceptions. Moreover, they should also fully engage with the community and treat them as a valued resource in shaping national progress and unity. The actions of parliamentarians must be transparent, accountable, and genuinely focused on the well-being of the people.
61. **Erosion of trust in security forces.** The trust in the security forces that existed in their commitment to serving the people and protecting their legislated rights were eroded following each coup. The 2013 Constitution has not helped restore trust by widening the mandate of the RFMF under Section 131 (2) which introduced a guardian role for the military. However, confidence in the security

agencies in being able to deliver on this role has been undermined by human rights abuses in the past. The deployment of armed soldiers and police to Bau island to arrest the chief and his herald who were involved in a traditional chiefly installation ceremony, was quoted as an example of the security forces having overstepped their mark.

62. **The RFMF.** The concern surrounding the RFMF is primarily a legacy of its actions in the coups of 1987, 2000, and 2006. Stakeholders within the civil service and civil society organisations were quick to relay their experiences of abuses that took place at the hands of the security forces. Some civil society representatives including NGOs shared their experiences of the suppression and abuse of their human and civil rights during the coups and its aftermath. Others identified the risk of future military intervention in politics as a latent and ongoing threat that underpins their distrust. One civil society organisation argued that immunity provisions in the Constitution increase the possibility of future coups and should be removed. Some stakeholders consulted by the Review team reported that the immunity provisions in the 2013 Constitution promotes a coup culture and that it is bad for Fiji.
63. The leadership of the RFMF is aware of the low and fragile levels of community trust in them, and the reasons behind this. Steps are being taken to address this trust deficit through the *RFMF Reconciliation and Restoration initiative*. This is a promising step toward rebuilding trust with affected members and their families and restoring internal cohesion within the military. Some stakeholders indicated this initiative could be extended to other government agencies, civil society, and the broader public. The proposed government-sponsored *Truth and Reconciliation Commission* provides an opportunity for such a national reconciliation process to occur.
64. To their credit, the military leadership now understands the grave impact of a coup on state stability, national development, and social cohesion. They are also acutely aware of the reputational damage it has caused Fiji as a nation and to the legitimacy and credibility of the RFMF. At the personal level, this has affected the mental health of RFMF members, their families, and even their livelihoods. They are now wary of the risks of future coups and insurrection. Some senior

officers expressed concern about the risk of future coups by trusted insiders operating in collusion with external *provocateurs* or insurgents who set out to corrupt segments of the military for political ends. They pointed to the history of coup behaviour within the RFMF to validate their concerns.

65. As a safeguard, the military identified the importance of force protection measures such as a contact reporting system, personal security vetting, and internal security controls, especially for weapons and ammunition. Military officers also now understand that the deep social, political, and economic challenges confronting the nation cannot be resolved by military means and that it was a fallacy in the first place to think they could do so. They also demanded greater clarity in their legislated mandate as stipulated under section 131(2) of the Constitution.
66. **The Fiji Police.** Similarly, there are also low levels of community trust in the Fiji Police Force. There are a multitude of causal factors including the legacies of human rights abuses in the aftermath of the coups and the more recent intrusion of illicit narcotics into the country with the alleged complicity of some police officers. Stakeholders across government and civil society were quick to detail allegations of police corruption, including police brutality and human rights abuses. One civil society organisation demanded a commission of inquiry into the operations of the Fiji Police Force. Questions of police integrity seriously undermine public trust with ramifications for community support towards improving national security and the capacity of the state to maintain law and order.
67. Senior police representatives noted the adverse impact on police culture arising from the appointment of senior military officers to the post of Commissioner of Police (COMPOL). One senior police officer described the impact of military leadership on the core identity of the police force: *"We can no longer tell what the colour blue looks like"*. They assert that the appointment of military officers to the senior leadership of the police resulted in the promotion of a 'warrior culture' and a preference for the use of coercive methods when dealing with the public.
68. This attitudinal shift has also undermined somewhat the independence of the police investigative process since junior police officers were expected to follow orders and directive, without question, from senior officers. Moreover, applying

strict military discipline and a coercive mindset to community policing has led to a heightened risk of human rights abuses that in turn has fuelled community fear of and distrust in the police. Stakeholders also blamed militarisation as harming the service culture of the FPF. Similarly, the Fiji Corrections Service (FCS) has gone further down this militarised path where the FCS now dress in military-style uniforms and parade in public with swords and military assault rifles etc.

69. However, some police explained that the perceptions of low levels of public confidence in their effectiveness were overstated. They argue that some 'bad apples' within the force have tarnished their reputation.¹⁰ Furthermore, many crime types required a whole-of-government response yet the police were blamed for issues outside of their mandate. Examples include the rising use of illicit drugs that is a community wide problem requiring input from health, education, and community organisations. Some stakeholders suggested that the term 'police service' replace 'police force' to promote a cultural transformation of service to the community and the protection of civil liberties. But simply changing the labels will not guarantee the required change. A cultural transformation is required with a transformative leader at the helm to lead the necessary reforms.
70. The *Restore Blue* and *Police Reset* initiatives provide a mechanism to comprehensively address these challenges within the police force. *Restore Blue* introduces an important cultural transformation to switch from a warrior culture to a guardian culture within the police. *Police Reset* introduces development partnerships with peer nations that share Fiji's liberal-democratic values and institutional structures. The partnership will focus on priority development areas in (i) leadership, ethics, and strategic plans, (ii) human resources, (iii) intelligence, and (iv) special operations and technologies. These reform initiatives require Cabinet endorsement and must be linked to broader security sector reforms to ensure whole-of-government alignment for greater strategic impact and service delivery.

¹⁰ The Acting Commissioner of Police revealed that between 2021-2024, 28 police officers were charged with drug offences. See Andrew Naidu, *More Good than Bad: Force has no place for corrupt officers*. Fiji Times 28 Aug 2024, p.1

Geopolitics And Foreign Interference

71. A high tempo of international engagement is stretching the state's ability to assert sovereign decision-making. The increased tempo has led some government officials to describe Suva as now becoming 'a crowded space'. International actors often pursue their foreign policy goals through direct Ministerial engagement. This is normal international diplomacy, except where such foreign engagement deliberately circumvent the checks and balances vital to democratic accountability.
72. The Review was told that some diplomatic officials target elected officials to bypass civil service oversight in the delivery of donor funds. The recipients in this case are not sensitised to the security implications of foreign assistance, particularly where they have a commercial remit. All this undermines the sovereignty of Fiji's executive government and the role the civil service plays in the making of public policy. This creates security risks at the domestic level in that it encourages the politics of patronage that could corrupt the political and government decision-making process.
73. Rising geopolitical competition between development partners creates risks and opportunities. Fiji needs to improve coordination across the government to prioritise its development objectives and protect areas of sovereign vulnerability. Not all government sectors are aware of the security risks associated with international development and finance. These risks arise through direct bilateral engagement as well as with third-party actors who are insensitive to the implications of Fiji's foreign policy choices, particularly concerning the US-China rivalry.
74. Fiji's engagement with major powers, either directly or through third-party actors, can lead to risks that may not align with its national interests or foreign policy objectives. These risks can stem from pressure to take sides, economic dependence, or unintended consequences of diplomatic actions, all of which could impact Fiji's security, sovereignty, and regional standing.

75. Ensuring that Fiji's foreign policy decisions are made with a clear understanding of these risks and that they are sensitive to the broader geopolitical context, is crucial for maintaining the country's autonomy and freedom of choice in protecting its national interests. This will require a nuanced approach that balances meaningful engagement with major powers like the US and China while safeguarding Fiji's sovereignty and its unique position in the region.
76. The heightened geopolitical risk demonstrates the importance of the foreign policy and security nexus. Fiji cannot expect to exercise development, trade, and economic foreign policy choices independent of their implications for national security. This will require closer collaboration across the diplomatic and security arms of government.
77. The Government of Fiji's concept of the *Blue Pacific* as an *Ocean of Peace* provides a mechanism for Fiji to assert a Pacific understanding of the rules-based order.¹¹ By shaping collective will, Fiji can help ensure that the security interests of Pacific nations are aligned with sustainable development goals and regional stability. This approach will be essential as the region faces increasing external pressures and challenges associated with the new globalised security environment.

Transnational Organised Crime

78. Fiji's geographical location in the South Pacific makes it vulnerable to transnational organised crime such as the smuggling of illicit goods, illicit narcotics, human trafficking, illegal fishing, piracy, and environmental crimes. Border security requires improved customs and immigration processes, better surveillance and detection technology at points of entry, and international cooperation with neighbours to effectively monitor and control borders.
79. Illicit narcotics are one of the primary threats to Fiji's national security. The increased consumption of illicit narcotics in the community leads to other crime that in turn creates social instability and provides fertile grounds for the spread

¹¹ See Prime Minister Rabuka's address delivered to the 3rd EU Indo-Pacific Ministerial Forum on 2 February 2024 titled 'Geopolitical and Security challenges'.

of communicable diseases such as HIV (Figure 6).¹² The crime and health consequences raise demands for policing and associated government services. The involvement of youth and vulnerable groups in illicit narcotics is particularly alarming. Stakeholders identified an increased role for faith-based groups and youth support organisations to alleviate social harm, transition addicts out of drugs, and support prevention efforts.

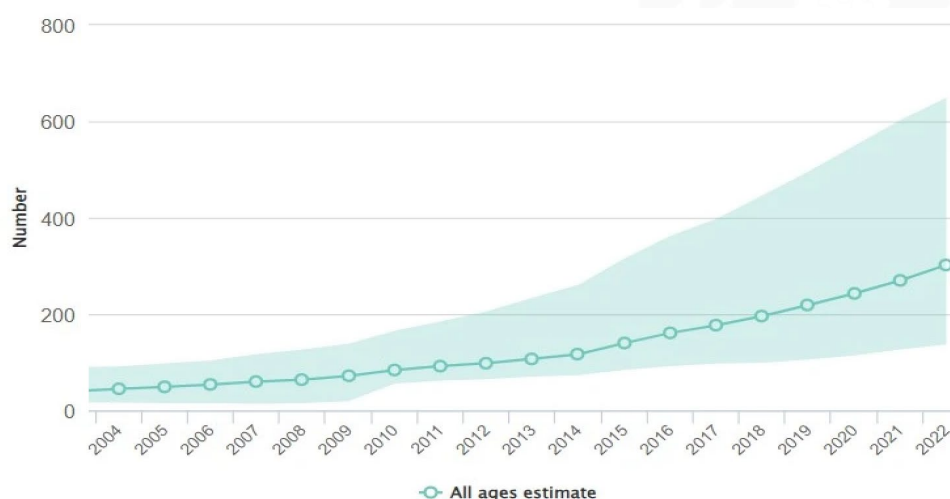


Figure 6. New HIV infections in Fiji (all ages), 2004-2022.¹³

80. Reports from first responders including police and medical personnel indicate that the consumption of illicit narcotics is on the rise with severe ramifications for the community. While a compromised security sector and weak border security have contributed to the entry of illicit narcotics, continuing and expanding demand for illicit narcotics risks further weakening of the security apparatus of the State. Fiji is now a destination for organised crime and not just a transit point for illicit narcotics.
81. Organised criminal groups primarily use Fiji to transport illicit narcotics from Southeast Asia and South America into Australia and New Zealand. High demand and high per capita income in these destination countries drives the supply chain. In previous decades, the comparatively high sale price of illicit

¹² UNAIDS report for 2023 notes that HIV infections increased by 241 percent since 2010, placing Fiji second amongst the top five nations with the most rapid rate of increase.

¹³ UNAIDS, 'UNAIDS Calls for Collective Responsibility And Community Support To Address Fiji's Growing HIV Epidemic', 12 March 2024, <https://unaids-ap.org/2024/03/12/unaids-calls-for-collective-responsibility-and-community-support-to-address-fijis-growing-hiv-epidemic/>, (accessed 26 July 2024).

narcotics relative to low incomes in the Pacific meant local demand was muted.¹⁴ However, increasingly low-cost production of illicit narcotics (such as mixing with cheaper additives like Fentanyl) is creating market opportunities along these shipment routes including in Pacific nations such as Fiji.

82. Locally established criminal syndicates are now seeking profits through domestic sales in addition to trafficking and protection fees.¹⁵ Moreover, the high profits generated in Australia and New Zealand allow for significant losses of stock in transit. Some stakeholders reported that getting just 10 percent of the stock through to Australia and New Zealand was sufficient to generate a profit, meaning that the balance of the 90 percent could leak out at the transit points.
83. Interdiction efforts are challenged by Fiji's large archipelagic geography coupled with stretched and developing border security agencies. Low morale and remuneration within security agencies, coupled with weak oversight mechanisms, create vulnerabilities in the security sector that criminal groups exploit, including through bribery of agency officials at the point of detection.
84. Human trafficking and illegal migration are also increasing, particularly from South Asian countries. Asylum seekers and refugees are primarily from the Middle East and South Asia. Border, immigration, and customs officials are stretched relative to increased illegal activity—there are insufficient resources to properly monitor and detect illegal activity at the border.
85. Official decision-makers reported the risk of interference in the independent operation of the Department of Immigration. This included requests for expedited visa processing outside of due process. A lack of information and intelligence sharing on people movements by responsible Fiji government agencies and with regional and international partners also hampers border security.
86. There is also a risk of weapons and ammunition trafficking into Fiji. Officials with intimate knowledge of illicit narcotic smuggling and human trafficking point out that international criminal syndicates usually also smuggle weapons to protect

¹⁴ M. Devany et al., 'Illicit drug use and responses in six Pacific Island countries', *Drug and Alcohol Review*, vol. 25, no. 4, 2006.

¹⁵ J. Coyne & T. Westendorf, 'High rollers: a study of criminal profits along Australia's heroin and methamphetamine supply chains', *Australian Strategic Policy Institute*, 30 March 2021, <https://www.aspi.org.au/report/high-rollers>, (accessed 26 July 2024).

their illegal business activity. Although weapons smuggling has not been detected, the risk is high.

Cyber Security

87. Cyber-attacks have been experienced by the government and the private sector, with data systems and critical infrastructure severely affected. The potential for future threats persists while the state's capability to prevent or respond to this threat is very low.
88. Criminals are now innovating their methods of crime. The main forms of cybercrime include financial fraud, ransomware attacks, identity and data theft, online scams, and money laundering schemes. These crime types are not new, but their methods are becoming more sophisticated and increasingly malicious.
89. Emerging technologies have resulted in new industries for cybercrime and espionage, with international criminal organisations selling their tools to a global criminal market. This also makes the origin of criminal activity difficult to detect and disrupt. The deployment of artificial intelligence for malicious purposes is an emerging threat to the nation. They are also designed to undermine the reputation of leaders in society as well as faith in our governance structures.
90. Cybersecurity is a known unknown. Government and security leaders are aware of the challenge but do not have sufficient information on the scope and impact of cyber vulnerabilities, or the necessary actions and investments to build cyber security resilience.
91. While security agencies are modernising equipment, infrastructure, and education to combat these threats, the pace of change is slow. The Department of Immigration, for example, is undertaking a digital transformation. However, Fiji does not have the local industries and technical skills to match the rapid pace of development of high-end technologies. Skill gaps are compounded by the emigration of Fiji's top scientists and specialist workers for offshore employment.
92. The Fiji government lacks a clear focal point to coordinate responses to cyber security incidents. MHA has the mandated responsibility for the protection of critical infrastructure, while the Ministry of Communications is responsible for Information and Communication Technology, cybersecurity and digital

infrastructure. The reality is that cyber security threats have a cross-cutting impact on these domains. The current fragmented approach to cybersecurity represents a crucial weakness that must be urgently rectified.

93. Fiji has experienced cyber-attacks from outside its national border. Some of these attacks may have been conducted by state or state-sponsored actors. However, the RFMF is not engaged in defending the nation from foreign cyber-attacks despite its responsibility for national defence against external threats. This suggests that Cybersecurity be included as an operational domain of the RFMF. Associated capabilities need to be built into the RFMF organisational structure to enable it to operate in the cyber domain in partnership with others.
94. The private sector is at the forefront of the technology revolution. Strengthening international and industry partnerships is crucial for enhancing Fiji and the region's resilience against cyber threats. By collaborating with the private sector, sharing technical expertise, and exchanging critical information, Fiji can significantly boost its capabilities in cybersecurity. Indeed, a collaborative approach with global partners and local IT professionals will ensure a more secure Fiji against cyber threats.

Climate Change & Environmental Security

95. Climate change and its impact on the environment through the rise of sea levels and intruding salinity, more intense tropical cyclones and floods, and extended droughts is an existential threat to island communities and the nation as a whole. These alarming trends have caused the loss of life, and livelihoods and the forced displacement of communities in Fiji and across the Pacific.
96. These climatic events have an immediate humanitarian cost but also risk long-term displacement and represent a threat to social cohesion. Land binds Pacific peoples and the loss of land and home severely affects their social bonds and cultural identity. Communities in low-lying coastal areas are most at risk to future climate change-induced disasters. At the regional level, the people of Kiribati are likely to be displaced from their homeland in the coming years. Fiji's offer to resettle displaced Kiribati people presents domestic challenges on questions of

land rights and social integration. These security challenges require government coordination across the spectrum of prevention, response, and resilience.

97. The government has been effective in responding to natural disasters in their aftermath but less so in building preparedness and resilience for such events. Civilian-led agencies such as the National Disaster Management Office (NDMO) are the lead government coordinators for disaster response. The security forces, particularly the RFMF, play a critical role during natural disasters by providing rapid response capabilities including material, logistics, and personnel. However, the security forces are generally engaged in the response phase rather than in the design of preventative measures.
98. Civil society groups have voiced their reservations in working with the RFMF in providing relief during natural disasters. This is partly due to the legacy of human rights abuses that took place following the coups (see paragraph 53). However, there is also a cultural difference between civil society's dialogue and consultative-based planning, compared to the military's command and control style with a singular focus on 'getting the job done'.
99. There is an urgent need to strengthen relationship and trust between civilian society organisations and the military to improve national capacity in disaster management. In working with CSOs and the NDMO, the RFMF must better understand the processes of democratic accountability and appreciate that community leadership and social cohesion are essential for building national resilience to the impacts of climate change.

Social Fracturing Leading to Political Instability

100. Fiji is characterised by many structural features that make the nation vulnerable to political instability. Foremost is a polity divided by ethnicity, religion, region of residence, and land and business ownership. These divisions emerged following colonisation, the introduction of indentured labourers, and the complex melding of diverse social and political structures. These divisions fuel grievances that have historically provided the basis for an opposing narrative which is a driver for political division and radicalisation. In this sense, social fracturing, which has

harmed inter-ethnic relations and caused political instability over the past, poses an ongoing threat to stability of Fiji as a nation-state.

101. Each of the past coups have led to sharp contractions in GDP, a significant jump in emigration, and an extended period of military rule where rifts between communities were widened and democratic accountability eroded. The militarisation of public service has had a deep and lasting impact on the nation's political culture, economy, and quality of governance.

Economic Security

102. Access to food, water, energy, wage employment, and public services is a growing challenge and creates the conditions for other security risks. This includes a youth bulge, rising unemployment, civil service strikes, high and expanding levels of state subsidies (for transport, education, and welfare), and loss of skilled labour to emigration. Poverty-affected communities also lack housing security with many living in informal settlements without access to secure land, safe water, and sanitation services.
103. The size of the population on welfare is significant at nearly 100,000 people (~10% of the population), while the proportion paying income tax is very low at approximately 20,000 people (2% of the population). The size of the government with 33,000 employed (7% of the workforce) in the civil service is also large. This puts significant pressure on public finance. The economic base, on the other hand, is narrow with nearly 40% of GDP generated by tourism alone.
104. Fiji is also experiencing higher levels of net emigration with skilled workers seeking new opportunities offshore. Although youth unemployment has declined from an unprecedented spike during COVID-19, the 2023 rate of 15.2% remains high and exceeds regional peers (Figure 7). This rising youth bulge coupled with limited economic opportunities creates security risks. The implications for law and order are most acutely seen in the increased use of illicit narcotics and the related increases in crime. There is a complex array of factors driving this trend in addition to limited economic opportunities.



Figure 7. Youth unemployment in Fiji (2014 – 2024).¹⁶

105. Although the drivers of economic insecurity are not the primary responsibility of the security sector, they are often the first responders to follow-on effects. This heightens the importance of whole-of-government coordination. It also elevates the centrality of economic, social, environmental, and human rights challenges in addressing national security.

Regionalism & Partnerships

106. Fiji's strategic location and vibrant diplomatic relationships within the South Pacific enhance its national security through effective collaboration with regional actors and international partners. Several key ways Fiji can harness these partnerships to strengthen its national security include its collective regional identity, intelligence sharing, capability partnerships, joint operations, and engagement with international organisations. The issues highlighted below will be elaborated upon and included in the NSS.

107. *Collective Regional Identity.* Fiji plays a vital role in fostering a sense of collective identity among Pacific Island nations. Organisations such as the Pacific Islands Forum (PIF) and the Melanesian Spearhead Group (MSG) promote regional solidarity and cooperation. This collective identity not only strengthens political

¹⁶ Youth unemployment refers to the share of the labour force aged 15-24 without work but available for and seeking employment. World Bank, 'Youth Unemployment Rate for Fiji', retrieved from Federal Reserve Bank of St. Louis, <https://fred.stlouisfed.org/series/SLUEM1524ZSFJI>, (accessed 26 July 2024). See also International Labour Organization, 'Pacific Employment and Social Monitor', 25 April 2024, <https://www.ilo.org/publications/pacific-employment-and-social-monitor-april-2024-towards-resilient-labour>, (accessed 26 July 2024).

alliances but also enables a united front when addressing shared security challenges, such as climate change, transnational crime, and natural disasters.

108. *Intelligence Sharing.* Intelligence sharing among regional partners is crucial for enhancing situational awareness and responding promptly to security threats. Actively engaging in information exchange with neighbouring countries aids in combating issues such as illegal fishing, human trafficking, and illicit narcotics trafficking. Enhanced intelligence cooperation allows for more effective monitoring of maritime activities and borders, leading to quicker responses to emerging threats. Presently, Fiji does not have a formal national intelligence capability (or service) and this represents a serious capability gap.
109. *Capability Partnerships.* Fiji benefits from capability partnerships with regional and international actors, which focus on improving the skills, resources, and technology available to its security forces. Training programs, exchanges, and joint exercises enhance Fiji's defence capabilities and preparedness. Cooperation with countries like Australia (through the *Vuvale* relationship) and New Zealand (the *Duavata* relationship), as well as engagements with multinational forces in global peacekeeping missions, builds operational readiness, interoperability, and diplomatic relations.
110. *Joint Operations.* Conducting joint operations with regional partners was identified as a critical aspect of Fiji's future national security strategy. These operations can include coordinated maritime patrols, humanitarian missions, and disaster response efforts. The Australian-initiated *Pacific Maritime Security Program* (PMSP) provides a framework for the development of further capabilities and multi-lateral engagements in the maritime security space including joint operations and support. The *Duavata* partnership with New Zealand reflects Fiji's strong security relationship with that country that has its roots in history. By working alongside our traditional partners as well as other nations, Fiji can leverage additional resources and expertise to improve the effectiveness of regional maritime security operations. Collaborative efforts during natural disasters exemplify this synergy, ensuring a more robust response to save lives and mitigate risk.

111. *Engagement with International Organisations.* Fiji's active involvement in international organisations such as the United Nations and other multilateral organisations strengthens its diplomatic ties that enhance its international networks. By harnessing regional actors and international partnerships, Fiji builds its national security. A collective regional identity fosters collaboration, while intelligence sharing, capability partnerships, and joint operations build a resilient security framework. Fiji needs to position itself as a key player in promoting peace and security in the region and globally.

A military helicopter, likely an Apache, is shown from a low-angle perspective, flying towards the viewer. The helicopter's main rotor blades are blurred due to motion. The background features a clear blue sky with some light clouds, a distant mountain range, and a body of water. The text "Part Three: Security Sector Reform" is overlaid in white, bold, sans-serif font.

Part Three: Security Sector Reform

The Core Reform Pillars

112. This section identifies priority security sector reform areas that sets the parameters for the NSS. The proposed recommendations for reforms are organised into six pillars; namely,

- Integrated and Coordinated Security Sector
- Accountable and Trusted Security Forces
- Operational Excellence
- Future-ready Security Capabilities
- Responsive and Inclusive National Security
- Sovereignty and International Engagement

Annex C presents the summary recommendations based on this section. Annex D outlines the proposed reform plan for the security sector that will form the basis for the new NSS, which is supported by the recommendations.

Formalise Civilian Leadership & Strategic Coordination in The Security Sector

113. Government agencies and the security forces require clear roles and responsibilities to perform effectively. Confusion over roles and legal mandates undermines effective civil-military relations. Resource prioritisation, operational coordination, and performance metrics also require clear lines of responsibility.

114. Stakeholders repeatedly expressed the need to clarify that the military's primary role is to defend Fiji's people, territory, and sovereignty, and to participate in nation-building tasks as defined by the elected government of the day. Stakeholders emphasised the importance of a professionalisation agenda for the military and the broader security sector to address this.

115. The introduction of legislative reforms for MHAI, the RFMF, and the FPF present pragmatic options to achieve the above. Such reforms may be initiated through parliamentary processes without requiring amendments to the Constitution. The

RFMF has requested clarity in its role given the ambiguity of s.131(2) of the constitution: this may be achieved less onerously through incremental amendments to the 2013 Constitution and the updating and amendments to the RFMF Act 1949.

116. Integrating security efforts across government is an immediate priority to lift the performance of the security sector as a whole. This could be progressed by formalising the role of the NSDC to ensure an integrated and coordinated security sector.¹⁷ These are high-priority reforms that must be designed in close collaboration with all stakeholders.
117. The government spends 10 percent of its total budget on the security sector of which a half is allocated to police, two-fifths to the RFMF, and the remainder to Immigration and the MHA. Investments into the security sector through major capital acquisitions and investments in new capabilities are growing. The portfolio of assets at the disposal of the security sector needs to be aligned to emerging security risks to ensure the best use of public funds. Returns to investment in the security sector could be lifted through the proposed Secretaries Committee on National Security (SCNS - see next paragraph). Such a committee will provide a focal point for prioritising security investments and support the NSDC with key strategy and investment decisions.
118. The SCNS will play a crucial role in the coordination and oversight of national security matters at the Permanent Secretary level. It should comprise department heads chaired by the PS Home Affairs because the MHA is responsible for managing the national security apparatus in Fiji. The SCNS will serve as a central coordinating body, ensuring that the various elements of the government's national security apparatus work together effectively to safeguard the nation's national security interests. In times of national emergencies or security crises, the SCNS will play a pivotal role in coordinating the government's response. This includes mobilizing resources, directing inter-agency collaboration (military, police, foreign military assistance etc), aligning strategies, sharing information and avoiding duplication of effort.

¹⁷ The draft Foreign Policy White Paper (FPWP) makes a very similar recommendation.

119. Having a properly resourced NSDC will improve its effectiveness in providing oversight and direction to the security sector. It will serve as an integrated, agile and responsive national security decision-making authority. The future NSS should identify how the NSDC is incorporated into Fiji's national security architecture.
120. **Centre for Excellence** Improving joint professional education for MHA, the RFMF, and FPF in national security & defence/strategic studies and civil-military relations is crucial to ensure these reforms are implemented to the full. Joint professional education would promote inter-agency linkages, shared national security purposes, and career development pathways. A Centre of Excellence in National Security & Strategic / Defence Studies (the title can be decided later) should be established at the Fiji National University. The proposed centre could include a twinning arrangement with similar institutions in the region. More details on this proposal are attached in Annex E.

Strengthen Institutional Accountability & Restore Community Trust

121. The restoration of community trust in the security sector is of fundamental importance. Without this trust, the security forces cannot effectively deliver on their mandate to protect the security, peace, and prosperity of all Fijians.
122. Existing reform initiatives are already underway to rebuild trust in the RFMF (*Reconciliation and Restoration*) and the FPF (*Restore Blue* and *Police Reset*). However, these initiatives should be coordinated and aligned under a **Security Sector Reform & Governance (SSRG)** programme led by MHA which may require additional resourcing to perform this task. More information on the proposal for an SSRG is given in Annex F.
123. Eradicating perception of corruption is also essential to restoring trust in the security sector as well as the integrity and effectiveness of security operations. Increased force protection measures are critical to address corruption and trusted insider threats. This requires expanding and standardising Protective

Security Frameworks and security personnel vetting processes across MHAI, the RFMF, and FPF.

124. High-risk areas for corruption such as illicit narcotics operations require independent oversight and regular auditing by the Fiji Independent Commission Against Corruption (FICAC). The Police Act 1965 should also be updated to emphasise the role of the Fiji Police Force as a police service; this could include renaming the organisation as the Fiji Police Service.
125. These measures will collectively work to uphold the accountability of the security forces, reduce the risks of corruption and reverse institutional decay, and thereby rebuild community trust.

Operational Excellence Through Whole-Of-Government Action

126. The national capabilities required to combat Fiji's contemporary and emerging security threats do not solely reside in the military and police. This is particularly true of transnational organised crime, cyber security threats, and environmental security challenges. These issues require national collaboration between the agencies responsible for border, maritime, health, education, and cyber matters.
127. Detecting and disrupting transnational organised crime at the border requires collaboration between Immigration, Customs, the RFMF and Police. In this regard, the Fiji Maritime Surveillance & Rescue Coordination Centre (FMSRCC) is an exemplar of whole-of-government strategic coordination. The future Maritime Essential Services Centre (MESCC) is a vital pathway to expand and institutionalise this whole-of-government approach to maritime and border security.
128. Whole-of-government cooperation at the strategic planning level of maritime and border security should be replicated at the operational level. The scale of investment required to establish RFMF's maritime capability (assets, infrastructure and personnel development) cannot be replicated across other government agencies such as MSAF, the FRCS, and the FPF. The RFMF's capabilities must be increasingly harnessed for the benefit of the nation's

maritime security through joint interagency maritime operations. Appropriate whole-of-government command structures should be reviewed and adjusted to ensure Customs, MSAF, and Immigration operations are coordinated, resourced, and prioritised.

129. Addressing the social harms of transnational crime and border security threats such as illicit narcotics and human trafficking requires different skill sets and expertise and is not the primary or sole responsibility of law enforcement agencies. The Ministry of Health, Ministry of Education, and the Ministry of Youth and Sport all have a critical role to play in building community resilience and harm reduction. These agencies must play a strategic advisory and service-delivery role in the operation of the newly announced Narcotics Bureau.
130. Operational excellence in the contemporary security environment requires proactive strategic and operational leadership from MHA as the lead civilian national security agency. MHA must lead the whole-of-government effort in progressing national security. The RFA and FPF, alongside the Fiji Civil Service more broadly, will continue to perform their specialist functions as mandated through legislation and the forthcoming NSS. MHA has a critical role in ensuring the security forces have the appropriate Ministerial and civilian direction to engage whole-of-government at both the strategic and operational levels. A review of the Ministry's structure, resourcing, and capability to perform this role is urgently required.
131. Effective whole-of-government action on the complex impacts of national security threats requires increased awareness of the duties of all agencies to respond to the community's expectations for safety and security. National performance metrics are required to highlight the responsibilities of different whole-of-government agencies under Fiji's *National Security Strategy*. Modernising key bodies of legislation and regulation is also necessary to clarify the remit and powers of different agencies where their roles have become unclear in the evolving contemporary security environment.

Ensure Fiji's Security Investments are Future-Ready & Strategic

132. Fiji's remote and outer islands are the nation's frontline defence to border and maritime security threats. However, the security sector is not adequately resourced, postured using real-time intelligence or prioritised to respond to rising transnational crime and natural disasters. As an example, the force posture of the RFMF, FPF, and supporting maritime agencies could be focused on policing the most dense (and riskiest) maritime approaches such as those in the Northern and Eastern Divisions (Figure 8).

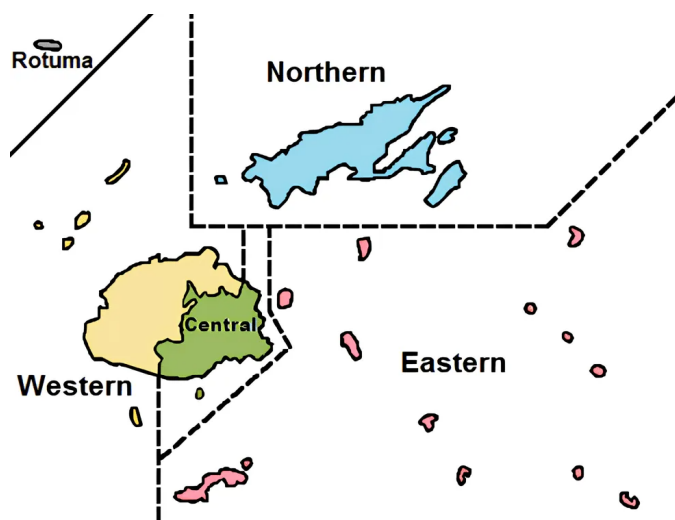


Figure 8. Fiji's Divisional Boundaries

133. The RFMF force structure and operational capacity primarily focuses on land operations. This is a legacy of its history as an army focused on internal security operations and in its participation in overseas campaigns/wars serving the global interests of its colonial masters at the time.¹⁸ The RFMF *Strategic Plan 2022-2027* recognises that the military has limited capabilities in Fiji's outer islands.¹⁹ The fact is that 11.9% of the RFMFs allocated expenditure of \$226.8 million for

¹⁸ This includes Fiji's participation as a member of the NZ Expeditionary Force involved in the liberation of Samoa in 1914; service with the British Army in WW1 (1914-18), service with US forces in the Solomon Islands campaigns of WW2 (1939-45); the British counter-insurgency campaign in Malaya (1952-56); and service with various UN peacekeeping missions since 1978.

¹⁹ Republic of Fiji Military Forces, *Strategic Plan 2022-2027*, Government of Fiji, p. 8.

the years 2024-25 (Figure 9) is allocated to its maritime component (i.e. the Naval Division and the Hydrographic Unit). Investments in the RFMF should now focus on strengthening its presence in the maritime spaces/approaches in Northern and Eastern Fiji. This should be a priority in RFMF capability development planning.

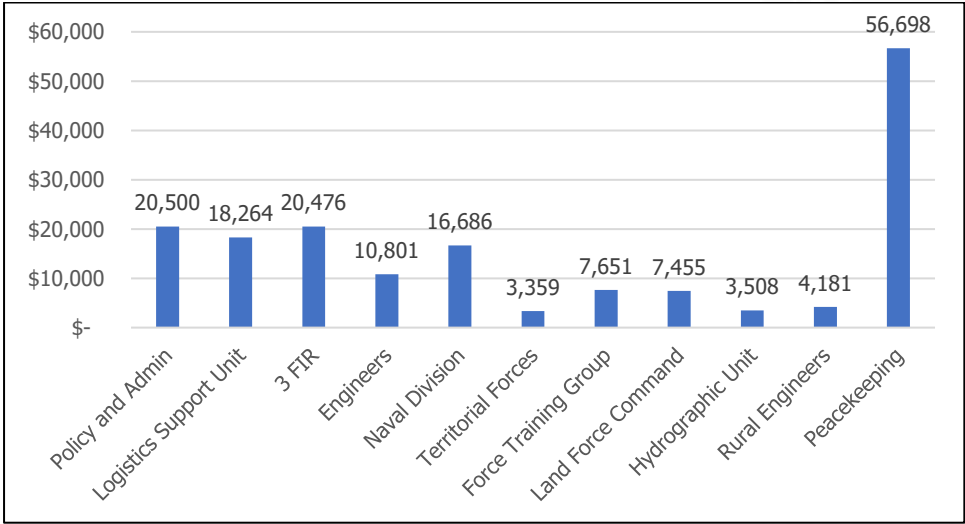


Figure 9. Republic of Fiji Military Forces budget 2024-25 (\$'000s).²⁰

134. The Fiji Police (FPF) operational activity and force posture are concentrated on Viti Levu in the Central, Western, and Southern Division police commands. Figure 10 shows the FPF budget is weighted toward headquarters, corporate, and support services. Police operations in the Northern and Eastern divisions account for 15% of the police budget for 2024-25.

²⁰ Parliament of the Republic of Fiji, *Budget Estimates 2024-2025*, https://www.parliament.gov.fj/wp-content/uploads/2024/06/Final-Budget_2024.pdf, (accessed 26 July 2024).

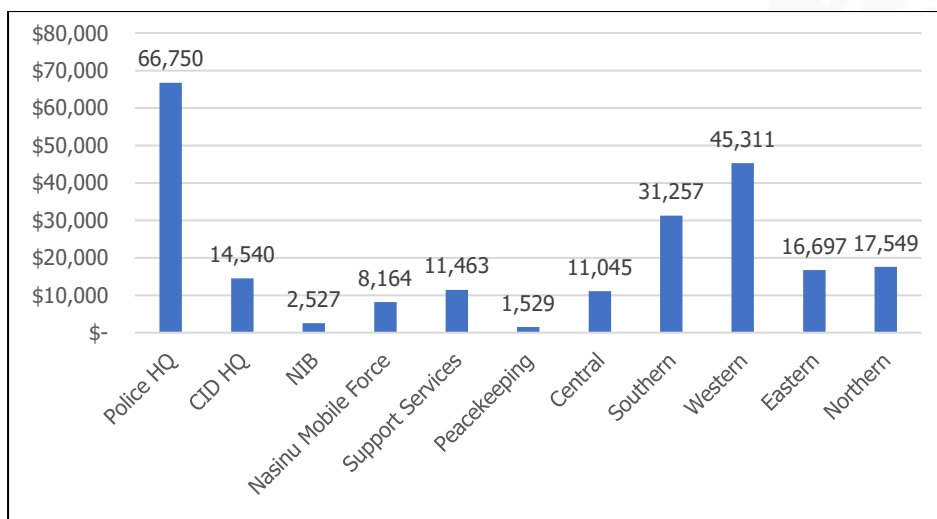


Figure 10. Fiji Police Force budget 2024-25 (\$'000s).²¹

135. **Maritime strategy.** A comprehensive maritime security strategy is required to improve the surveillance and patrolling of Fiji's territorial waters and maritime space. This will require collaboration with regional partners for joint maritime operations. A layered defence strategy in the maritime domain that utilises technological solutions including satellite surveillance technology and its integration with aerial and surface-based platforms linked to robust command and control arrangements, should form the basis of Fiji's maritime strategy.
136. However, the RFMF and FPF cannot pivot toward a maritime-focused security posture by themselves. This shift must be a national endeavour that requires a whole-of-government effort supplemented by local industry, community support, and the involvement of international partners. Fiji should design a master plan for its maritime security capabilities, including capital investments and supply chains. Priority should be given to the development of its sovereign maritime industry including port facilities, shipyards, and the upskilling of its domestic workforce.
137. International partnerships provide a vital source of capital investment in Fiji's maritime capabilities. These include the Australian-gifted Guardian-class Patrol Boats *RFNS Savenaca* and *RFNS Puamau*, the Japan-gifted Police Patrol Boat *M.V. Liga ni Lawa*, and the China-gifted Hydrographic vessel *RFNS Kacau*.

²¹ Parliament of the Republic of Fiji, *Budget Estimates 2024-2025*, https://www.parliament.gov.fj/wp-content/uploads/2024/06/Final-Budget_2024.pdf, (accessed 26 July 2024).

However, these acquisitions are supply-driven and are shaped by the geopolitical interests of its donors rather than aligned to Fiji's needs (see paragraph 115).

138. **A maritime capability master plan** should mitigate supply-driven risks and strengthen Fiji's capacity to assert its sovereignty. By focusing on core national security capability pathways, such a plan would ensure that Fiji's maritime assets are not only fit for purpose but also strategically aligned with its broader security objectives. Such a Master Plan should be based on:

- *Asset Modernization and Acquisition.* The identification of gaps in capability followed by the acquisition of additional assets such as patrol vessels, and surveillance systems, and the construction of the necessary infrastructure to support increased maritime operations in Northern and Eastern Fiji. This includes the upgrading of wharves and jetties in the outer islands;
- *Supply Chain Resilience.* Developing a robust supply chain strategy that reduces dependency on foreign suppliers and ensures the availability of critical resources, spare parts, and maintenance capabilities within Fiji or through reliable regional partnerships;
- *Sovereignty Assertion.* Enhancing the capacity to monitor and secure Fiji's Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ), protect fisheries, and respond to illegal, unreported, and unregulated (IUU) fishing. This also includes enforcing maritime laws and regulations to assert sovereignty over maritime territories.
- *Capability Development.* Investing in training and capacity-building programs for the RFMF and other maritime security personnel to ensure they are equipped with the skills necessary to operate advanced maritime systems. The FNU Maritime School at Laucala Bay is a useful resource here.
- *Interagency Collaboration.* Strengthening coordination between the Naval Division, Police, Fisheries, FRCS, MSAF, and other relevant agencies to create a cohesive and integrated maritime security framework.
- *International Partnerships.* Leveraging relationships with regional and international partners to enhance Fiji's maritime capabilities through joint

exercises, shared intelligence, and access to advanced technology and expertise.

- *Sustainability and Environmental Protection.* Incorporates measures to protect the marine environment, recognizing the importance of sustainable development in the region.
- *Community Engagement.* Involving local communities in maritime security efforts, especially in coastal areas, to ensure their participation in safeguarding and preserving marine resources. The integrated community coast watch scheme in Kadavu is a model that should be replicated throughout Fiji.

139. By focusing on these areas, Fiji can build a resilient maritime capability that not only addresses current risks but also strengthens its ability to protect its sovereignty and secure its maritime interests in the long term.

Digital Infrastructure

140. Fiji's capital investments and operational posture for maritime and border security must also be supported by developments in digital infrastructure and information and communication technology. Current initiatives in the Department of Immigration and the FRCS to introduce better surveillance and detection technology at points of entry are a positive step forward. In achieving this, these organisations should engage the private sector and the IT industry which are at the forefront of the technology revolution. This engagement should be led through a central focal point in government.

141. The Ministry of Communications' forthcoming Cyber Security Strategy must urgently address the fragmented approach to cybersecurity. A whole-of-nation response must include developing robust cyber security policies, investing in training for government personnel, and fostering public-private partnerships to enhance resilience against cyber threats.

142. Regional peers like Australia have established an Ambassador for Cyber and Critical Technologies, a Cyber Security Centre, and eSafety Commissioner. Fiji could establish a similar combined function with both the MHA and the Ministry for Communication working collaboratively in the digital space. This will require

new investment and recruitment of appropriately qualified cyber professionals into the Fiji civil service. This function could run whole-of-government cyber security incident exercises to increase national preparedness.

143. Cyber resilience requires significant and long-term investments in new technology and capabilities. To accelerate Fiji's nascent cyber security sector, the government should prioritise immediate low-cost reforms to existing technology, training, and workforce security culture. This should also leverage regional capability partnerships such as the Pacific Cyber Security Operational Network (PaCSON), of which Fiji is a member.

National Security: The Nation's Responsibility

144. Community and civil-society support is essential for most state-led security responses. Increased engagement of youth, the unemployed, and low-income and disadvantaged households should be a priority. Whole-of-government agencies can expand their community and civil society outreach through a range of mechanisms, including by leveraging existing positive relationships.
145. The formal security sector should improve its community engagement in partnership with the Ministry of Youth and Sport, the Ministry of iTaukei Affairs, and the Ministry of Education. This engagement should involve young and disadvantaged groups of people in the design and delivery of community programmes to address law and order challenges. This could also include expanding funding for placements in security sector cadet programmes for youth from low-income and diverse households.
146. These community programmes should also build skills development and employment pathways in the security sector to support national development. High-demand jobs and skillsets should be prioritised and continually reviewed, such as engineering and maritime-related trades.
147. The community fisheries and surveillance project established in Kadavu provides an excellent example of effective collaboration between the community and the formal security sector. This project mobilises the local community and police resources in the surveillance and protection of nearby waters. By involving local

communities in security initiatives, the government can raise awareness and encourage cooperation in identifying and reporting threats to the security forces.

Vulnerable Populations

148. Vulnerable groups include ethnic minority groups (viz, the Melanesian descendants of the 'blackbirding trade'), the LGBTQI community, and people with disabilities. These groups exist on the fringes of society and seldom included in conversations of national importance – such as matters relating to national security. Their voices risk being drowned out by the clamour of the larger groups. They are also the first to be affected by an increase in unemployment in an economic downturn. Higher incidents of crime also disproportionately impact these groups who are at a heightened risk of targeted violence in both their physical and psychological forms.
149. A peak advocacy organisation in Fiji representing people with disabilities pointed out during the consultations that approximately 14.6% of Fiji's population are impaired with a disability and these numbers are increasing – they claim NCDs are accounting for up to three amputations a day in Fiji.²² During humanitarian emergencies, the rights of the disabled are ignored. They are not sufficiently informed of the situation and thus lack situational awareness. There are reported cases of deaf people being beaten up by police for not adequately following police instructions.
150. Minorities and People with disabilities seek greater government commitment to a policy of *Equity & Inclusion* that serves their needs e.g. promotes a work culture that values diversity and inclusivity. It was suggested that workplaces include *Diversity, Equity & Inclusion Champions* (call them *DEI champions*)²³ to promote a culture of inclusivity. People with disabilities are indeed an under-utilised resource. All this heightens the importance of whole-of-government support and coordination. It also emphasises the importance of security leaders maintaining

²² In 2019, healthcare care costs for death and disability from NCDs was estimated at F\$591 million. Shayal Devi, 'Dr Lalabalavu: NCDs cost \$591 million', Fiji Times, 9 August 2024, p.3.

²³ The word '*dei*' in the vernacular Fijian language means 'firm, fixed in place'. The acronym DEI helps convey the idea that a commitment to diversity, equity and inclusion of vulnerable populations are firmly fixed in place in the workplace.

a greater awareness of the social and economic challenges and the complex ways they impact law and order and state stability.

Mainstreaming Gender Equity

151. Mainstreaming Women, Peace, and Security (WPS) and gender equity is essential to ensure that women are fully integrated into all aspects of peace and security, from decision-making processes to implementation and evaluation of policies. This is evidenced by the role various women's groups played in peacebuilding efforts in the immediate aftermath of the coups. Mainstreaming WPS involves a commitment to updating existing laws and policies to reflect gender considerations and promoting women's participation in the security sector. Such reforms will help create an inclusive environment where women's contributions are recognised and valued, leading to more effective and sustainable peace and security outcomes.
152. Mainstreaming inclusive and gender-informed approaches to security will only be effective if they receive appropriate investment. Community engagement on WPS must be undertaken through a dedicated and focused programme that is well-resourced. Key advocates and civil society partners that need adequate support and resources include the Fiji Women's Rights Movement (FWRM), the Fiji Women's Crisis Centre FWCC), the Fiji Human Rights & Anti-Discrimination Commission (FHRDC), the National Council of Persons with Disability (NCPD), and the Fiji Council of Social Services (FCOSS).

Mainstreaming Human Rights

153. Human Rights is foundational to individual-freedoms as enshrined in the Constitution and via UN treaties that Fiji has signed. Fiji has an obligation under the UN Charter to promote human rights within the context of security. Moreover, under international law, the state has the primary duty to protect and promote human rights. Fiji has ratified all the core nine human rights treaties. These core human rights treaties are outlined in Figure 11.

Treaty	Acronym	Year ratified	What the treaty covers
Convention on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination	CERD	11 January 1973	Prevents discriminatory practices based on race
International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights	ICCPR	16 August 2018	Ensures the protection and promotion of civil and political rights including the right to vote, freedom of expression, etc.
International Covenant on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights	ICESCR	16 August 2018	Ensures the protection and promotion of ESC rights including the right to work, the right to a culture, etc.
Convention against Torture, Cruel, Inhuman, Degrading Treatment	CAT	14 March 2016	Guarantees the protection of people from torture, and cruel, inhumane, and degrading treatment, especially from the State.
Convention on the Elimination of All forms of Discrimination against women	CEDAW	28 August 1995	Protects and promotes women's rights to eliminate discriminatory practices against women.
Convention on the Rights of the Child	CRC	13 August 1993	Protects and promotes children's rights such as the right to life, education, to a family etc.
Convention against Enforced Disappearance	CPPED	19 August 2019	Guarantees that the State will protect people from extra-judicial killings and enforced disappearance.
Convention on the Rights of Migrant Workers	CRMW	19 August 2019	Protects migrant workers' rights in the country, including the right to life,

			freedom of movement, right to work, etc.
Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.	CRPD	7 June 2017	Ensures that State actions are responsive to the needs of persons with disabilities as well as ensuring non-discrimination for persons with disabilities.

Figure 11: Human Rights Treaties²⁴

154. Security sector agencies in Fiji should work with the State to uphold and defend human rights. Embedding human rights principles into Fiji's national security architecture strengthens the legitimacy and effectiveness of agencies in the security sector. Doing so will help promote trust between the state and its citizens, reinforcing the idea that true security includes the protection and promotion of human rights. The strategy will require developing partnerships with key agencies such as the FHRDC, the Fiji Women's Rights Movement, and other NGO's and CSO's in providing training, capacity building, and technical expertise to build the human rights capacity of security officials in Fiji.

The Proposed Nation-Building Framework

155. The mainstreaming and embedding of human rights into Fiji's national security architecture can be obtained by making Human Rights a fundamental pillar of the proposed nation-building framework for Fiji. Respect for human rights is fundamental to rebuilding trust of the community in the government.

156. **The main constructs.** The main components of the proposed Nation-building framework are:

- Fiji's national values and interests form the foundations or underpinnings of a sustainable security framework ;
- The foundations support a platform based on respect for the Rule of Law and Good Governance;
- The four pillars of the structure are:

²⁴ We acknowledge Romulo Nayacalevu for presenting this figure as part of his submission to this review.

- Internal Security;
- Sustainable development;
- Being a Good International Citizen; and
- Respect for Human Rights.

157. More detailed depiction of the four foundational pillars of the nation-building structure, as shown in Annex G, are as follows:

- **Pillar 1. Internal Security.** This is the primary responsibility of the civil authorities as well as the military and police. Other agencies in the security sector also have a role here. The object of the Internal Security (IS) programme in this framework is to maintain the lawful authority of the elected government as well as maintain law and order. In the Fiji context, this programme also covers strengthening the security apparatus of the state including the professionalisation of the military and police as well as other agencies in the security sector e.g. Border Security, Customs, the private security industry, etc.
- **Pillar 2. Sustainable Development.** This pillar includes programmes undertaken by the civilian machinery of government to achieve balanced political, economic and social progress. The object of this programme is to remove the causes, or potential causes of community distrust and discontent by introducing visible social, political and economic reforms. Two crucial priorities in the Fiji government's efforts should be poverty alleviation nationwide and improving the participation of Indigenous Fijians in the national economy. In this context, Government support for the GCC-backed poverty alleviation projects in the province of Rewa is crucial in that it serves as a model for Indigenous Fijian development.
- **Pillar 3. Being a Good International Citizen.** This pillar recognises that as a member of the UN, Fiji should support the rules-based order and its vital institutions. Fiji has done so by actively participating in the UN's flagship activity – peacekeeping (elaborated on in paragraphs 168 -169 which deals with Global Peace Operations). However, expenditure of \$1

million on the PIF region as against \$57 million outside of the neighbourhood may not be aligned with the national security interests of Fiji.

- **Pillar 4. Respect for Human Rights.** As explained in paragraphs 153-154, mainstreaming of Human Rights including the Mainstreaming of Gender Equity and the rights of the vulnerable populations is critical to improving human security.

A Common Name for All

158. Some stakeholders argued that using the term Fijian as a national label binds the people as one, thus promotes social cohesion. They suggest that the leader of the Fiji Government should seek the formal approval of the Great Council of Chiefs for the use of the term Fijian as the label for the nationality of all Fiji citizens. Referring this issue to the Great Council of Chiefs, who are the custodians of indigenous Fijian identity, is in itself an act of reconciliation. It provides the opportunity for the Great Council of Chiefs to consider the issue and, like their ancestors who signed the Deed of Cession on 10 October 1874, leave a lasting legacy and demonstrate they have the nation's best interests at heart. Such an act of reconciliation will profoundly improve social cohesion.

Media Engagement

159. Public communication and media engagement will be important to demonstrate the government's commitment to improved relations with civil society. Current media engagement creates a perception that national security is solely the business of the security forces. This is apparent from media articles on the NSDR, which are often accompanied by pictures of soldiers and military vehicles. Fiji's national security lies in the hearts and minds of every Fijian. The success of state-led security responses hinges on robust support from the community and civil society.

160. Effective communication of this message to the public is paramount. It fosters a cooperative environment where all members of society understand their role and

contribute to national security. Building **strong partnerships** and **trust** between the state and its citizens ensures unity of purpose in the face of national security threats and challenges.

161. The security sector and community leaders should work together on these initiatives. Collaborating with key organizations like the GCC, religious groups, and cultural organizations will be crucial in addressing the security challenges of low community trust, social fracturing, and economic insecurity. By engaging these influential bodies, the security sector can foster stronger community ties and create a more unified approach to national security.
162. Key organisations include the GCC, the Fiji Council of Churches, the Methodist Church, the Pentecostal Churches, the Catholic Church, the Fiji Muslim League, and Hindu Organisations. Their goodwill towards improving national security could be harnessed to help address the security challenges of low community trust, social fracturing, and economic insecurity.

Diaspora Policy

163. Fiji should also look to harness its diasporic populations as they are the link between the local and international interests.²⁵ The diaspora number approximately 250,000 with the majority living in Australia, Canada, New Zealand, the United Kingdom, and the United States of America. Many of those living overseas retain strong connections with Fiji. Their remittances to Fiji amounted to \$FJD 1.25 billion in 2023 (10 percent of GDP).
164. The size of Fiji's diasporic population and its remittances suggests that the government should do more to harness its potential contribution to national development. The Fiji diaspora includes many highly talented and skilled professionals who wish to return and make a meaningful contribution to their country of birth. Current Fiji immigration policies provide an insufficient incentive for the return of talented populations to Fiji. They should be replaced by 'circulation friendly' migration policies that permit overseas diasporas and

²⁵ Diaspora/diasporic populations refer to international migrants who, although dispersed from their homelands, remain in some way part of their community of origin.

transnational entrepreneurs to return and commute between Fiji and destination countries. The idea of ‘transnationality’ in the context of a more globalized world will promote the circulation and recirculation of lost talent. A formal government *Return of Talent Programme* (ROTP) may serve as the foundation to generate or encourage the return of this lost talent and human capital. Such a program could be promoted under the aegis of a national diaspora policy. (See Annex H).

165. By fostering economic prosperity, social stability, and international engagement, a diaspora policy that promotes these outcomes aligns well with the broader goals of national security.

International Security Engagement And Sovereignty

166. Fiji’s strength is in its ability to harness regional actors and international partnerships. A collective regional identity, intelligence sharing, capability partnerships, and joint operations all boost Fiji’s national security outcomes.
167. Fiji should develop an *International Security Engagement Plan/Strategy* (ISES) to ensure Fiji’s national security interests are guided by, and inform, its foreign policy. This will have to be jointly developed by MHA and MOFA, in close consultation with the RFMF and FPF. This will help counter foreign interference and the undermining of the civil service role in the crafting of national policy.

Global Peace Operations

168. Fiji makes important contributions to **global peace support operations** which helps maintain the stability of the rules-based order and its vital institutions. By participating in global peacekeeping missions, Fiji promotes the enforcement of international laws and norms that underpin global stability. And it is in Fiji’s national interests that it does so. However, the Fiji government should consider whether the weight of effort is proportionate to emerging regional security challenges closer to home. In 2024-25, Fiji will spend \$56.7 million on global peacekeeping missions compared to approximately \$1 million on regional security operations such as the Solomon Islands Assistance Force (SIAF).
169. **Re-balancing.** The Fiji government should consider rebalancing its investment between global peacekeeping and regional security operations – meaning a

greater focus on the local threat challenges (e.g. the importation of illegal narcotics into Fiji) and participation in stability operations in Fiji's immediate neighbourhood. The aim is to align its investments in Middle East peacekeeping with current (and emerging) national security threats and challenges. This could include expanding its assistance to the Solomon Islands (SIAF) and rotational maritime operations in cooperation with regional partners - as exemplified by the rotation of Fijian naval personnel to assist the Cook Islands crew its Guardian patrol boats. For illustration only, Figure 13 demonstrates how this could be achieved by 2030 by progressively reallocating 10% of the global peacekeeping budget to RFMF to upgrade its response capability and involvement in local and regional security operations. By 2030, these contributions would be approximately equally resourced.

170. Historically Fiji has quickly reacted to regional security crises, including disaster relief and stability operations. These are likely to increase in the future and Fiji must shift toward a proactive regional security posture. Rather than wait for security incidents to occur, Fiji's diplomatic and international security engagement should work to establish standing regional operational commitments with our neighbours and partners. This shift would require a coordinated diplomatic effort to support Fiji's neighbours and work with existing regional military partners like Australia, New Zealand, Papua New Guinea, and Tonga. Many of Fiji's partners in Asia and the Pacific, such as China, India, Indonesia, Malaysia, and South Korea are already involved in global peace operations and would be keen to work with Fiji in this field.

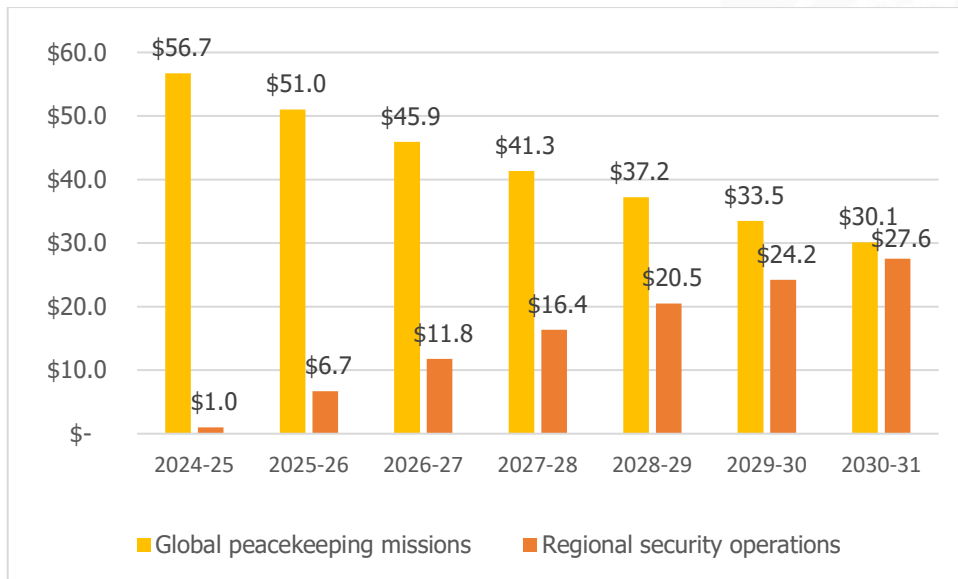


Figure 12. Global peacekeeping versus regional security investments (2024-25 to 2030-31) (\$millions).

Operational Conditions of Service

171. Any shift in Fiji's strategic posture towards regional-security operations must be supported by a review of operational conditions of service, veteran support services, and honours and awards. Fiji's veteran affairs is primarily oriented to recognise and support service personnel returning from global peacekeeping operations. This should be reviewed to ensure appropriate support and recognition for members' service in regional theatres. Similarly, contributions by the FPF towards domestic security threats could be recognised via honours and awards.
172. This approach will directly support the Prime Minister's Zone of Peace concept. Fiji will gain increased security benefits from its regional security contributions. This will likely include increased regional stability, reduced transnational crime, improved regional security integration with our partners, and a bolstered reputation for regional leadership. This ensures the RFMF and FPF remain operationally active in both global and regional theatres while responding to the increased security challenges in Fiji's immediate neighbourhood.

Conclusion

173. Fiji's national security requirements demand a holistic and forward-looking approach that embraces inclusivity, transparency, and collaboration. By integrating human rights, community engagement, gender equity, international partnerships, technological advancements, and sustainable development, Fiji can build a resilient security framework that safeguards the well-being of its people and secures its national interests. The development and implementation of the National Security Strategy (NSS) will be pivotal in realizing this vision, ensuring that Fiji remains a stable, secure, and prosperous nation.

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Annexures

- A. NSDR Terms of Reference
- B. Stakeholder Consultation List
- C. NSDR Summary of Recommendations
- D. NSDR Security Sector Reform Plan-on-a-Page
- E. Centre for National Security & Defence Studies
- F. Security Sector Reform & Governance Program
- G. The proposed Nation-building Framework
- H. Return of Talent Programme Concept

TERMS OF REFERENCE

NATIONAL SECURITY AND DEFENCE REVIEW

1. His Excellency, the President of the Republic of Fiji, announced the need for a special review of Fiji's defence and security system in his speech at the 2023 opening of Parliament. A National Security and Defence Review will use a whole-of-nation approach to outline a sustainable vision for Fiji's democracy and security.
2. The Independent Review Lead will report to the National Security Council.
3. The Independent Review Lead, working closely with the Ministry of Home Affairs and Immigration, will investigate the following areas:
 - i. Fiji's threat environment and the global and regional security landscape;
 - ii. Fiji's national interests and objectives for defence, security and policing;
 - iii. strategic implications for Fiji's security services including financial sustainability considerations;
 - iv. the Republic of Fiji Military Force's core role and force structure;
 - v. the role of the Ministry of Home Affairs in Fiji's national security architecture;
 - vi. relations between civil service policymakers and the Disciplined Forces;
 - vii. whole-of-government defence and security coordination mechanisms;
 - viii. women, peace, and security considerations;
 - ix. potential legislative and regulatory changes in the security sector; and
 - x. implications for Fiji's foreign policy settings.
4. The review will use an impartial and collaborative approach to build consensus in the community and with whole-of-government stakeholders, including the nation's military and security forces.

Annex B

Stakeholder Consultation List

All stakeholders identified below have been invited to provide a written submission and attend a face-to-face discussion in the course of the review.

#	Stakeholder	Written submission	Interview/ Focus group
Government agencies			
1.	Republic of Fiji Military Forces	X	X
2.	Ministry of Housing	X	
3.	Ministry of iTaukei Affairs	X	
4.	Ministry of Youth and Sports	X	
5.	Ministry of Agriculture and Waterways	X	
6.	National Disaster Management Office		X
7.	Ministry of Rural and Maritime Development		X
8.	Ministry of Foreign Affairs		X
9.	Fiji Police Force		X
10.	Ministry of Home Affairs		X
11.	Department of Immigration		X
12.	Cyber Security Taskforce		X
13.	Pacific Islands Forum		X
14.	Maritime Safety Authority of Fiji		X
15.	Fiji Revenue and Customs Service	X	X
16.	Ministry of Finance	X	X
17.	Maritime Security Committee		X
18.	WPS National Action Plan Taskforce	X	X
19.	Solicitor General		X
20.	Counter Terrorism Threat Assessment Taskforce		X
21.	Office of the Prime Minister	X	
22.	Ministry of Education	X	
23.	Ministry of Communications		X

24.	Ministry of Tourism & Civil Aviation		X
25.	Ministry of Fisheries	X	
26.	Fiji Maritime Academy	X	
27.	Ministry of Education	X	
Civil Society Organisations, Community Leaders, Faith-based organisations			
28.	Great Council of Chiefs Chair		X
29.	Fiji Women's Rights Movement	X	X
30.	Fiji Women's Crisis Centre	X	X
31.	Security Industry Board		X
32.	Pacific Disability Forum		X
33.	KiAson Global (Ex British Army)	X	X
34.	Fiji Council of Social Services		X
35.	Citizen Constitution Forum	X	X
36.	Fiji Muslim League		X
37.	Fiji Council of Churches		X
38.	Fiji Islands Security Services Association (FISEA)	X	X
39.	Fiji Human Rights & Anti-Discrimination Commission		X
40.	Fiji Pentecostal Churches Fellowship	X	X
41.			
42.	Shree Sanatan Dharm Brahman Purohit Sabha Fiji		X
43.	Arya Pratinidhi Sabha of Fiji		X
44.	Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat		X
Private members of the public			
45.	Dr Mosmi Bhim	X	X
46.	Isoa Raduadua	X	
47.	Jalesi Nakarawa	X	
48.	Jessie Biusaya	X	
49.	Rajnish Lal	X	

50.	Timoci Naivalulevu	X	
51.	Pradeep Singh (Kenzotech Fiji Ltd)	X	X
52.	Romulo Nayacalevu (ANU)	X	
53.	Kirra Services (Canberra, Australia)		X
54.	Natasha Khan	X	
55.	Biu Matavou	X	

Annex C

NSDR Summary of Recommendations

#	RECOMMENDATION	PRIORITY	AGENCY	CABINET DECISION
1	Formalise and strengthen organisational roles, coordination mechanisms, and democratic decision-making processes in the security sector.			
1.1	Establish a NSS taskforce to deliver a National Security Strategy led by MHAI with the RFMF and FPF that considers the findings and incorporates the Cabinet endorsed recommendations of this report.	High	MHAI, RFMF, FPF	Approved / Not Approved
1.2	MHAI introduce legislation to formalise the role, scope, and responsibilities of the Minister and Ministry responsible for policy direction on defence, security, and policing matters.	High	MHAI, OSG	Approved / Not Approved
1.3	MHAI and RFMF update the RFMF Act 1949 to clarify the RFMF's primary role as defence against external threats that serves the democratically elected government of the day.	High	MHAI, RFMF, OSG	Approved / Not Approved

1.4	MHAI introduce legislation to formalise the role of the National Security Council (NSC) including its Ministerial composition and status.	High	MHAI, OSG	Approved / Not Approved
1.5	Establish a Secretaries Committee on National Security (SCNS) to coordinate and oversight matters of national security, including investment, at the highest levels of government.	Med	MHAI, RFMF, FPF	Approved / Not Approved
1.6	Establish a Centre of Excellence in National Security & Strategic/Defence Studies at the Fiji National University.	Med	MHAI/ Min Ed.	Approved / Not Approved
2	Expand and mainstream initiatives to restore community trust and counter corruption in the security sector.			
2.1	MHAI to introduce a Security Sector Reform & Governance (SSRG) programme (with resourcing) to coordinate initiatives to build capability and manage reforms in the security sector.	High	MHAI	Approved / Not Approved
2.2	MHAI and the FPF to integrate Restore Blue and Police Reset under the forthcoming National Security Strategy.	Med	MHAI, FPF	Approved / Not Approved
2.3	Expand and standardise the Protective Security Framework and personnel security vetting processes throughout the civil service.	High	MHAI, RFMF, FPF	Approved / Not Approved

2.4	Support the Fiji Human Rights Commission (FHRC) for it to regain full international accreditation through the Global Alliance of National Human Rights Institutions (GANHRI).	High	FHRC	Approved / Not Approved
2.5	MHAI and the FPF to update the Police Act 1965 to emphasise the role of the FPF as a service-based organisation.	High	MHAI. FPF	Approved / Not Approved
3	Strengthen whole-of-government collaboration to deliver operational excellence in the security sector.			
3.1	MHAI to review its structure, resourcing, and capability to perform strategic and operational leadership as the lead civilian national security agency	High	MHAI	Approved / Not Approved
3.2	MHAI to review and update the Security Industry Act 2010 to improve regulation within the private security sector.	Med	MHAI, OSG	Approved / Not Approved
3.3	MHAI and Ministry of Education to introduce formal training, certification, and licensing standards to support the professionalisation of the private security industry and compliance with the updated Security Industry Act.	Low	MHAI, Min. Ed	Approved / Not Approved
4	Ensure Fiji's security sector capabilities (personnel, assets, and infrastructure) are future-ready and strategically prioritised, with a focus on border, maritime, and cyber security.			

4.1	MoF and MHAI to conduct a force posture review of the police, military, and related maritime agencies in Fiji's remote islands to strengthen border and maritime security in the Eastern and Northern Division .	High	MHAI, MoF	Approved / Not Approved
4.2	Establish a maritime security strategy and a maritime capability masterplan to ensure a whole-of-government approach to maritime security and to prioritise future investment in accordance with the national interest.	High	MHAI, RFN, FRCS, MSAF	Approved / Not Approved
4.3	Establish a cybersecurity security and digital strategy and a cybersecurity and digital capability masterplan to ensure a whole-of-government approach to cyber security and to prioritise future investment in accordance with the national interest.	High	MHAI	Approved / Not Approved
5	Strengthen, fund, and resource community and civil society engagement in the formal security sector, especially the young and disadvantaged.			
5.1	Explore a common name for Fiji citizens so as to promote social cohesion, engender a distinct national identity, and unify the people to pursue a common agenda (e.g., combat	Med	OPM, Min. iTaukei, Min. Multi-	Approved / Not Approved

	crime, illicit drug use, poverty, environmental vandalism, etc) for the promotion of national security.		cultural Affairs	
5.2	Introduce dedicated long-term funding for Human Rights education and Women, Peace, and Security programmes.	High	MHAI, RFMF, FPF	Approved / Not Approved
6	Strategically focus international and regional security engagement, particularly to protect sovereignty.			
6.1	Establish an International Security Engagement Strategy that takes into account the new developments in the geo-strategic environment.	High	MHAI, MOFA	Approved / Not Approved
6.2	MHAI and MOFA to conduct a review of Fiji's intelligence capabilities with a view to capitalising on the synergies across all agencies in the security sector.	High	MHAI, MOFA	Approved / Not Approved
6.3	Harness the diaspora to contribute to Fiji's national security, including remittances, overseas networks, talent circulation, and foreign direct investment. Formulate a Diaspora policy to encourage return required talent.	Med	MHAI, MOFA	Approved / Not Approved
6.4	Balance investments in global peacekeeping missions with regional security operations for addressing contemporary security threats and challenges as reflected in the NSDR.	High	MHAI, MOFA, RFMF	Approved / Not Approved

6.5	Review the operational conditions of service, veterans support services, and honours and awards to ensure service personnel (RFMF, FPF) are recognised and supported for their contributions to regional and local security operations.	High	OPM, MHAI	Approved / Not Approved
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NSDR Security Sector Reform Plan-on-a-Page

Annex D



Vision: Fijians and the Fiji nation is protected from threats to their security, peace, and prosperity.

Mission: Fiji's Security Sector is professional, integrated, responsive, and accountable to the Government and people.

NSDR OBJECTIVE

**Integrated &
Coordinated Security
Forces**

**Accountable &
Trusted Security
Forces**

**Operational
Excellence**

**Future-ready Security
Capabilities**

**Responsive &
Inclusive Security**

**Sovereignty &
International
Engagement**

OUTCOME

- Clear roles in the security sector
- Shared purpose
- Nationally coordinated security strategy & budget decisions
- Joint professional development career pathways

- Strong community support for the security forces
- Force protection measures & independent oversight counters corruption risks

- Whole-of-government security coordination
- Reduced social harm of trans-national crime
- Civil-military collaboration to harness national efforts

- Increased maritime and border security capability
- Grow technical expertise in cyber & emerging tech.
- Robust private security regulation in high-risk areas

- Civil society engaged in security reform processes
- Young, vulnerable, & minority groups included in law & order services
- Community leaders champion change

- Advance Zone of Peace policy
- Increased regional leadership
- Leverage regional partnerships & strengths
- Integrated foreign policy & security nexus

RECOMMENDED ACTION

- MHAI Legislation
- RFMF Act 1949
- Formalise National Security Council
- SCNS (MHAI, RFMF, FPF)
- FNU Centre of Excellence in National Security

- SSRG programme
- RFMF Restoration and Reconciliation
- Restore Blue and Police Reset
- Protective Security Framework & Personnel Vetting
- Police Act 1965

- Review MHAI capacity to exercise WoG leadership
- Modernise legislation
- National metrics

- Maritime Strategy & Capability Plan
- Increase North & East force posture
- MHAI central focal point for cybersecurity
- Cyber & critical tech. industry partnerships
- Update Security Industry Act 2010

- Institutionalise Ministry-led engagement with community & faith-based organisations
- Shared "Fijian" national identity
- Fund and mainstream Women, Peace, & Security
- Nation building

- Expand regional security operations
- International Security Engagement Strategy
- Intelligence review
- Security sector contributions to FPWP
- Countering foreign interference/bribery legislation

PILLAR ONE

PILLAR TWO

PILLAR THREE

PILLAR FOUR

PILLAR FIVE

PILLAR SIX

Annex E

PROPOSAL FOR A *NATIONAL SECURITY & STRATEGIC/DEFENCE STUDIES CENTRE*

AT THE FIJI NATIONAL UNIVERSITY

Introduction

It is proposed that a ***National Security & Defence Studies Centre (NSDSC)*** be established by the Fiji National University (FNU) and that it operates out of the FNU campus at Nasinu, in Suva, Fiji. The NSDSC will be an educational centre for members of the public wishing to specialize or gain further knowledge in the domains of national security and defence studies.

Objectives of the NSDSC

- Advance the mission of the Fiji National University (FNU) to serve Fiji and the wider Pacific region by providing education and training for employability, conducting impactful research, and engaging proactively with stakeholders.
- Facilitate collaboration between state-funded civil institutions, the security sector (especially the Republic of Fiji Military Forces and Fiji Police Force), and other relevant security agencies.
- Address national and regional priorities through education and research.
- Foster/promote closer civil-military relationships.
- Establish effective partnerships with the Fiji Police Force, Republic of Fiji Military Forces, government, and other stakeholders.
- Conduct defense and security-related teaching, outreach, and research to contribute to national and regional development.

Scope

- **Educational Hub:** The NSDSC aims to be a premier educational centre for national security and defence studies in Fiji and the surrounding region.
- **Target Audience:** The centre will cater to members of the public, serving members of the Fiji Police Force, the Republic of Fiji Military Forces, the civil service, and employees of various security sector agencies within Fiji and the region.

- **Professional Development:** To help personnel develop their professional capacity through affordable, relevant, and quality courses taught by practitioners, academics, and invited specialists.
- **Course Offerings:** Initially, the centre will offer courses at the certificate, diploma, and tertiary/graduate levels, with plans to expand to post-graduate courses in National Security & Defence.

Potential Benefits

- **Capacity Building:** The NSDSC will enhance the capabilities of Fiji's security forces and civil service by providing specialized training and education.
- **Regional Cooperation:** By welcoming participants from the region, the centre can foster greater regional cooperation and understanding in security and defence matters.
- **Professional Development:** Offering a range of courses will allow for continuous professional development of individuals in the security and defence sectors.
- **Research and Development:** The centre could become a hub for research and development in national security and defence, contributing to policy-making and strategic planning.
- **Strategic Importance:** The establishment of the NSDSC underscores Fiji's commitment to addressing security and defence challenges in a structured and comprehensive manner.

Implementation & Resource Considerations

- **Curriculum Development:** Developing a robust and relevant curriculum that addresses both theoretical and practical aspects of national security and defence. The curriculum will consist of short courses, undergraduate courses, and ultimately, post-graduate courses.
- **Faculty and Expertise:** Recruiting experienced faculty and experts in the field to provide high-quality education and training.
- **Infrastructure & Resourcing:** The Nasinu campus will need to establish the resource requirements to support this proposal.
- **Collaboration and Partnerships:** Forming partnerships with other educational institutions, think tanks, and security agencies to enhance the learning

experience and provide diverse perspectives. This includes the RFMF Officer School at Vatuwaqa where (say) their Grade 2 Officers course offers a 25% Advanced Standing for the proposed FNU *Diploma in National Security & Defence Studies* which should be a prerequisite for attendance at a military staff/war college.

- **Accreditation and Recognition:** Securing accreditation for the courses offered to ensure they are recognized both locally and internationally.

Conclusion

The establishment of the *National Security & Defence Studies Centre* (NSDSC) by the Fiji National University (FNU) at its Nasinu campus in Suva, Fiji, will be a significant development for Fiji. The objective is to make it a leading institution for national security and defence studies, benefiting not only Fiji but also the broader region. It will also complement the Fiji Government's professionalization agenda for the RFMF and other agencies within the security sector.

Annex F

SECURITY SECTOR REFORM & GOVERNANCE

Purpose

- The SSRG will be the umbrella programme that will manage all reforms in the security sector.
- It will form part of the organisational structure of the MHA and will be headed by an experienced officer at the Deputy Secretary/Colonel-Brigadier level who will work to the PSHA and be supported by executive staff from within MHA

What is SSRG?

‘...the measures which might be taken, often with international assistance, to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of the security sector (RFMF, Law Enforcement, Border Protection, etc) and to make its management more responsive to the requirements of a parliamentary democracy’.

SSRG Role

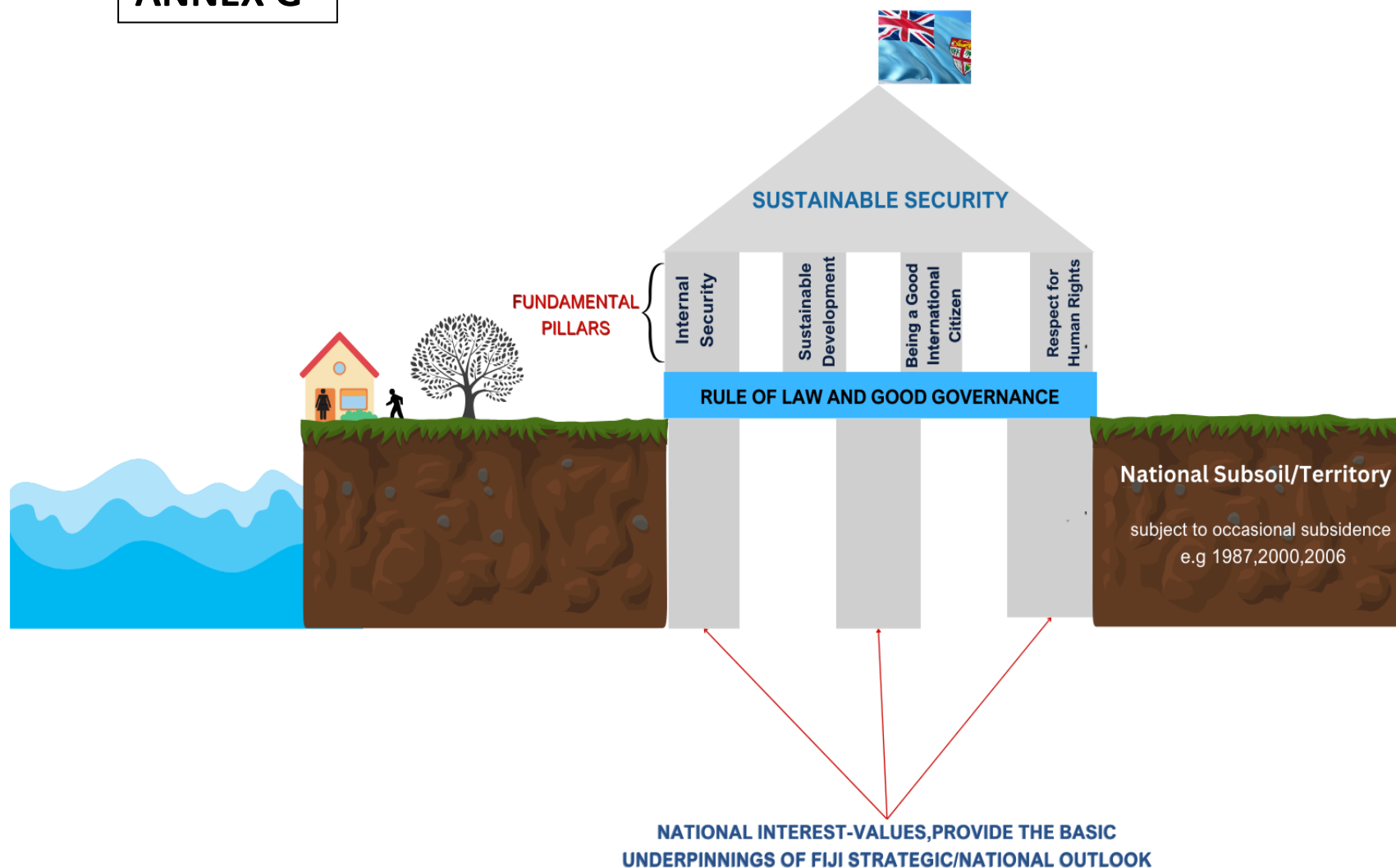
- To approve and coordinate **all** partner/donor activity concerning the security sector (all partner/donor activity to be channelled through the Government’s SSRG programme);
- Build the capacity of security-sector organisations to perform their legitimate functions;
- Strengthen civilian management and control of the security sector;
- Promote democratic values and norms in security and military professionals;
- Foster respect for human rights and the rule of law within security-sector organisations
- Strengthen the capacity of civil society to perform monitoring functions
- Foster transparency of the security sector and budget management

- Promote regional confidence-building mechanisms
- Incorporate security-sector reform into the political dialogue in Fiji

Annex G

ANNEX G

THE NATION BUILDING FRAMEWORK



The main components of the proposed Nation-building framework are:

- Fiji's national values and interests form the foundations or underpinnings of a sustainable security framework;
- The foundations support a platform based on respect for the Rule of Law and Good Governance;
- The four pillars of the structure are:
 - Internal Security;
 - Sustainable development;
 - Being a Good International Citizen; and
 - Respect for Human Rights.

Annex H: RETURN OF TALENT PROGRAMME

Why a ROTP? An important goal is to realize greater economic potential in the development of new technologies, creation of business as well as international transfer of knowledge and best practice. Returning citizens will bring new knowledge, technologies, capital, contacts & linkages that are useful for national development. Fiji emigrants possess technical and business skills, commercial relationships and financial capital that can be harnessed to make long-distance economic contributions through direct foreign investment, venture funding and commercial and educational exchanges. Returning citizens also have linguistic ability and socio-cultural affinity. The employment of returning citizens in selective key positions in the public and private sectors will ensure the upskilling of the present workforce under experienced and qualified mentors.

How Will the ROTP Work? Some ideas as to how the programme could work include:

- Purpose of ROTP. To obtain critical talent segments. Focus on strategic resource management through the identification of critical/key talent across the public and private sectors i.e. focus on attracting scarce talent populations.
- Private Sector Engagement. The emphasis should be on developing partnerships between local and international capital. Qualified companies and individuals from overseas can form partnerships with local landowners and entrepreneurs e.g. in hotel operations, residential aged care facilities, and establishment of village cottage industries etc.
- Public Sector Engagement. The PSC in conjunction with ministries should be required to identify (as part of the strategic planning process) gaps in existing capability that could be filled by overseas Fiji citizens i.e. the expatriate diaspora. Individual ministries to be responsible for identification and the deployment of talent within ministries. Talent flows must be linked to development gaps and the need for upskilling of the Civil Service.
- Priorities. (1) The Professionalisation of the civil service and the strengthening of the judiciary (2) the revitalization and diversification of the agricultural sector (3) improving the public health and education system (4) the development of

digital expertise including the employment of AI to enhance innovation and productivity (5) achieving sustainable security for the nation.

- National Database. Set up a national database of skilled migrants abroad e.g. 'Fiji Network of Skills Abroad'. Invite talented members of Fiji's diaspora to apply for inclusion in the database.
- Source of Funding. The ROTP could be the subject of a development dialogue between Fiji and donor/migrant-destination countries such as Australia, New Zealand, the UK, Canada and the USA.

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