

Solomon Islands Low (Moderate)

The 2023 Pacific Games were held from 19 November 2023 in the Solomon Islands after several years of planning and construction. 80% of funding was contributed from foreign sources including \$1 billion Solomon Islands dollars from China.¹ This is one element of an increasingly strong diplomatic and security relationship between the Solomon Islands and China. The Pacific Games have been described as “...another example of the tug-of-war between major powers jockeying for regional influence and security positioning in Solomon Islands and the Pacific...”²

The potentially adverse impacts of China’s influence on local businesses and workers have also been highlighted,³ and there may be a risk of rising ethnic tensions which have erupted in the past in riots and the targeting of Chinese shops. There are also concerns about the integrity of electoral processes,⁴ with the Solomon Islands election scheduled for April this year.⁵ The election was delayed for several months, which the government blamed on the Pacific Games. The government is now in caretaker mode, and police forces have met in Honiara to develop strategies for the election period and voting day.⁶ Careful monitoring and efforts to stabilise and de-escalate any rising tensions during the election period will be crucial.

Concerns remain more broadly about the level of corruption and lack of institutional transparency in the country, with Transparency International giving it a score of 42/100 on perceptions of corruption.⁷ While the Solomon Islands has had an Independent Commission Against Corruption (SIICAC) since 2018, the government does not provide operational funding and little progress has been made to reduce the prevalence of corruption or to hold offenders accountable.⁸

In February 2024, the Right to Information Initiative was launched in the Solomon Islands, a joint project between the University of The South Pacific and the United Nations Development Program under the Strengthening Anti-Corruption, Transparency and Accountability in Pacific Island Countries program.⁹ The initiative aims to foster more transparent and accountable governance through a range of tools (mobile applications, website, RTI digital literacy e-course) in recognition of access to information as a fundamental human right.

The Solomon Islands continues to struggle with a range of socio-economic issues, from youth unemployment to a lack of public infrastructure, and inadequate health services. Environmental degradation and increasing risk of climate-related disasters is also a problem.

On the environmental front, the Solomon Islands has developed a renewables readiness assessment that identifies ways to accelerate the use of renewables and speed up energy transition efforts. This is intended to address issues of energy security and sustainability, which are exacerbated by rapid population growth and high levels of poverty.¹⁰

Recommendations

The Solomon Islands Government should:

- Work with regional partners on security, policing and other shared issues with a view to continuing peace and stability.
- Ensure the protection of human rights during the 2024 National Election, including by ensuring the safety of voters.
- Ensures that the national election is free, fair and transparent.
- Take steps to prevent the escalation of community tensions during the election campaign and prevent the incitement of ethnic or other prejudices.

Neighboring governments should:

- Support the Solomon Islands in training and capacity building on human rights and atrocity prevention.
- Offers support for the 2024 elections as required.

¹ Charley Piringi, China 'gifts' and cost concerns: Pacific Games stir controversy in Solomon Islands, The Guardian, 5 September 2023, [China 'gifts' and cost concerns: Pacific Games stir controversy in Solomon Islands | Pacific islands | The Guardian](#)

² Ruth Liloqula, Behind the shine of the Pacific Games lurks poor governance and corruption, DevPolicyBlog, 29 January 2024, [Behind the shine of the Pacific Games lurks poor governance and corruption - Devpolicy Blog from the Development Policy Centre](#)

³ KOJI UEMA, Nikkei Film: Solomon Islands, the divisions created by pro-China policy, 28 January 2024, <https://asia.nikkei.com/Politics/International-relations/Indo-Pacific/Nikkei-Film-Solomon-Islands-the-divisions-created-by-pro-China-policy>

⁴ Ruth Liloqula, Behind the shine

⁵ Solomon Islands poll date set, RNZ, 30 January 2024, [Solomon Islands poll date set | RNZ News](#)

⁶ RSIPF gears up for NGE, Solomon Star, 6 February 2024, <https://www.solomonstarnews.com/rsipf-gears-up-for-nge/>

⁷ Transparency International Corruption Perceptions Index, [2022 Corruption Perceptions Index - Explore... - Transparency.org](#)

⁸ Kabui: Solomon Islands Independent Commission Against Corruption, a tiger without teeth, Solomon Islands Broadcasting Corporation, 5 February 2024, <https://www.sibconline.com.sb/kabui-solomon-islands-independent-commission-against-corruption-a-tiger-without-teeth/>

⁹ Solomon Islands sees official launch of Right to Information initiative, Devdiscourse, 5 February 2024, <https://www.devdiscourse.com/article/business/2799209-solomon-islands-sees-official-launch-of-right-to-information-initiative>

¹⁰ Solomon Islands Drives Action with Plans to Increase Renewables Use, The International Renewable Energy Agency (IRENA), 6 February 2024, <https://www.einpresswire.com/article/686501705/solomon-islands-drives-action-with-plans-to-increase-renewables-use>