



# SOLOMON ISLANDS

## UPDATED ASSESSMENT OF R2P IMPLEMENTATION 2023



Asia-Pacific Centre for the  
Responsibility to Protect



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# SOLOMON ISLANDS

Solomon Islands still shaped by the violent conflict that triggered intervention from its Pacific neighbours. Significant progress has been made since then to restore order and governance. All development efforts, both domestic and those supported by neighbouring states, are seen in the light of the near-collapse in 2003.

Internationally, Solomon Islands is party to just under half of the human rights instruments most relevant to R2P. It does not have a national human rights institution, but does participate actively in international human rights monitoring.

Discrimination on basis of sexuality, gender and ethnicity is outlawed, and the judicial system is generally well-functioning although low in capacity. However, many discriminatory and SGBV laws are not well-enforced, which especially women and girls suffer under. 2/3 of all women have experienced domestic violence, and over a third of girls under 15 have been sexually abused.

Education is offered, but is not mandatory and is often deselected because of poverty. Solomon Islands has increased access to education as a priority.

Civil society is strong, and the population enjoys freedom of speech.

Solomon Islands is party to several regional organizations, but does not use these to promote R2P actively. It also generally refrains from voting on treaties referencing R2P in the General Assembly.

Solomon Islands still enjoys, and needs, support from neighbouring countries, which has put it in an interesting geopolitical situation. This will likely impact how resilient the country is to atrocity crimes in the future.

Its index score has dropped with three points since 2022.

Thematic Area	Indicator	Assessment	Notes
Basic Compliance	Protection of populations from atrocity crimes.	Strong Decrease	Solomon Islands still receives large amounts of aid and assistance from international donors and other Pacific countries in the post-RAMSI era, which increase governmental capacities. The population is effectively protected from atrocity crimes.
	Reduction of atrocity crime risks.	Fair Unchanged	Systematic issues like poverty, lack of access to education, and discrimination are prevalent, but are addressed through development partnerships.
	Dealing with past atrocities.	Fair Unchanged	No updated information could be found on this Indicator. It is clear, from the recent violence and rioting, that unresolved issues remain in Solomon Islands after 'The Tension' in 1997-2003, despite the work done by the truth and reconciliation commission. <sup>1</sup>
Policy Mechanisms	Appoint national R2P Focal Point.	Very Weak Unchanged	Solomon Islands has to yet to appoint a national R2P Focal Point. <sup>2</sup>
	Incorporate atrocity crime risks and dynamics into conflict analysis and/or development partnerships.	Weak Unchanged	Australia is the largest donor to Solomon Islands, and its donations are mainly centred on accomplishing the <i>National Development Strategy</i> . This plan's aim is to build long-term and sustainable socio-economic conditions. <sup>3</sup> Of the current aid delivered to Solomon Islands, receives, half is spent on grants improving governance and civil society measures in the country. <sup>4</sup> There is however, no explicit mention of atrocities or atrocity risks.
	Establish domestic mechanisms to hold the government accountable for upholding its responsibility to protect.	Very Weak Unchanged	No evidence could be found of such domestic mechanisms being present in Solomon Islands.
International Human Rights Obligations	Sign, ratify and implement relevant instruments of international law.	Fair Unchanged	Solomon Islands have signed and ratified five of the most relevant human rights treaties. The following treaties are neither signed nor ratified: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide</i></li> <li>• <i>Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment</i> [CAT]</li> <li>• <i>International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights</i> [ICCPR]</li> <li>• <i>The Arms Trade Treaty</i> [ATT].<sup>5</sup></li> </ul>

<sup>1</sup> Voloder, Dhrubak, 2021, 'Solomon Islands' deadly riots bring back memories for those who fled the country's ethnic tensions 20 years ago', *ABC*, 30th November. Available at: <https://www.abc.net.au/news/2021-11-30/honiaras-deadly-riots-echo-ethnic-tensions-of-20-years-ago/100658298> ; Solomon Islands Truth and Reconciliation Commission, February 2012, Final Report, <https://solomons.gov.sb/wp-content/uploads/2022/07/FINAL-Volume-3.pdf>

<sup>2</sup> Global Centre for the Responsibility to Protect (GCR2P), 2022. *Members of the Global Network of R2P Focal Points*, <https://www.globalr2p.org/resources/members-of-the-global-network-of-r2p-focal-points/>.

<sup>3</sup> Australian Government: Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, n.d., Australia's development partnership with Solomon Islands, <https://www.dfat.gov.au/geo/solomon-islands/development-assistance/development-assistance-in-solomon-islands> ; Solomon Islands Government, April 2016, *National Development Strategy*, <https://solomons.gov.sb/wp-content/uploads/2020/02/National-Development-Strategy-2016.pdf>

<sup>4</sup> Lowy Institute, 2023. *Pacific Aid Map*, <https://pacificaidmap.lowyinstitute.org/>. (The Solomon Islands can be selected from the map.)

<sup>5</sup> United Nations Treaty Collection (UNTC), 2022. *8. Arms Trade Treaty*, [https://treaties.un.org/pages/ViewDetails.aspx?src=IND&mtdsg\\_no=XXVI-8&chapter=26&clang=en#:~:text=The%20Treaty%20was%20adopted%20on,until%20its%20entry%20into%20force.](https://treaties.un.org/pages/ViewDetails.aspx?src=IND&mtdsg_no=XXVI-8&chapter=26&clang=en#:~:text=The%20Treaty%20was%20adopted%20on,until%20its%20entry%20into%20force.;); UNTC, 2022. *1. Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide*, [https://treaties.un.org/pages/ViewDetails.aspx?src=IND&mtdsg\\_no=IV-1&chapter=4&clang=en](https://treaties.un.org/pages/ViewDetails.aspx?src=IND&mtdsg_no=IV-1&chapter=4&clang=en); United Nations Human Rights

		It has also not ratified the <i>Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court</i> , although it remains a signatory. <sup>6</sup>
Sign and ratify the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court and cooperate fully with the Court.	Very Weak Unchanged	Solomon Islands remains a signatory party to the <i>Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court</i> , but has yet to ratify the treaty. <sup>7</sup>
Establish and maintain National Human Rights Institutions in accordance with the Paris Principles.	Very Weak Unchanged	Solomon Islands do not yet have a national human rights institution, but have in the past received human rights related advice from the Asia-Pacific Forum. <sup>8</sup> There is an office of an ombudsman. <sup>9</sup>
Ensure domestic promotion and protection of human rights, focusing on the elimination of discrimination.	Fair Unchanged	Rights and civil liberties of Solomon Islands' citizens are generally well respected by the government. However, women, children, and those in the LGBTIQ+ community face societal discrimination. There are laws prohibiting this, but they are poorly enforced.
		Domestic violence and sexual exploitation of children remain significant problems, and consensual same-sex relations remain criminalised. Discrimination and tensions related to ethnicity are forbidden, but similarly to the general discrimination remain. <sup>10</sup>
Participate in international peer review processes, including the Universal Periodic Review (UPR) of the UN Human Rights Council.	Strong Unchanged	Solomon Islands participated in its 3 <sup>rd</sup> UPR in May 2021 and accepted 106 of the 160 recommendations it received. <sup>11</sup> No evidence could be found of specific actions taken to address the recommendations yet.
		Solomon Islands continue to have three overdue reports relating to international treaties with reporting mechanisms. Two of these are more than ten years overdue. <sup>12</sup>
Cooperate fully with UN Human Rights mandate holders and those of relevant regional organisations.	Fair Decrease	Solomon Islands maintain their standing invitation for a visit, but none have been completed since 2011. <sup>13</sup>
Ensure equal access to justice.	Very Strong Unchanged	The judicial system in Solomon Islands is independent, and this right is respected by the government. Due to resource constraints, trials do not always happen in a timely manner, just as

Treaty Bodies, n.d. *View the ratification status by country or by treaty*,

[https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/\\_layouts/15/TreatyBodyExternal/Treaty.aspx?CountryID=160&Lang=EN](https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/TreatyBodyExternal/Treaty.aspx?CountryID=160&Lang=EN) ; IRRC n.d., *Declaration of succession of the Solomon Islands to the Geneva Conventions*, <https://international-review.icrc.org/articles/declaration-succession-solomon-islands-geneva-conventions>

<sup>6</sup> Parliamentarians for Global Action, n.d. *Solomon Islands and the Rome Statute*, <https://www.pgaction.org/ilhr/rome-statute/solomon-islands.html>.

<sup>7</sup> ICC Project, n.d., *Solomon Islands*, <https://www.aba-icc.org/country/solomon-islands/>

<sup>8</sup> Asia-Pacific Forum, n.d., *Supporting the establishment of national human rights institutions*, <https://www.asiapacificforum.net/support/what-we-do/establishment-of-nhris/>

<sup>9</sup> Solomon Islands Government, 14<sup>th</sup> July 2020, *About the Office of the Ombudsman of Solomon Islands*, <https://www.ombudsman.gov.sb/about-us.html>

<sup>10</sup> U.S Department of State, 2023. *2022 Country Reports on Human Rights Practices: Solomon Islands*, 'Section 6. Discrimination and Societal Abuses', <https://www.state.gov/reports/2022-country-reports-on-human-rights-practices/solomon-islands> ; Freedom House, 2023. *Freedom in the World 2022: Solomon Islands*, <https://freedomhouse.org/country/solomon-islands/freedom-world/2022>

<sup>11</sup> United Nations Human Rights Office of the High Commissioner (UNOHCHR), 2021. *Solomon Islands Infographic*, <https://www.ohchr.org/sites/default/files/2022-02/SOLOMON-ISLANDS.pdf>

<sup>12</sup> UNOHCHR, n.d. *Late and non-reporting States*, [https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/\\_layouts/15/TreatyBodyExternal/LateReporting.aspx](https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/TreatyBodyExternal/LateReporting.aspx).

<sup>13</sup> UNOHCHR, n.d. *View Country visits of Special Procedures of the Human Rights Council since 1998*, <https://spinternet.ohchr.org/ViewCountryVisits.aspx?visitType=all&country=SLB&Lang=en>.

			appeal trials often use foreign judges. <sup>14</sup> The independent judiciary was one of the goals of the RAMSI-aid given by Australia in 2003. <sup>15</sup>
	Criminalise incitement to commit genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleansing and crimes against humanity.	Strong <b>Increase</b>	Solomon Islands <i>Penal Code</i> criminalizes genocide, <sup>16</sup> and through its international treaty obligations war crimes are also criminalized, but there remains no explicit legislation for ethnic cleansing or crimes against humanity.
	Take measures to counter and prevent violent extremism.	Strong <b>Unchanged</b>	Solomon Islands have not experienced many terrorist attacks. The country has a plan for countering financing of terrorism and has been a part of the Asia-Pacific Group on Money Laundering since 2007. <sup>17</sup>
	Enact and implement laws protecting vulnerable groups, particularly in relation to sexual and gender-based violence.	Fair <b>Decrease</b>	Nearly two-thirds of all women aged 15-49 in the Solomon Islands have suffered violence at the hands of an intimate partner, and 37% of girls under 15 have been sexually abused. This is one of the highest rates of reported SGBV in the world. <sup>18</sup> Rape, including spousal rape, and domestic violence are criminalized. Police are trained to deal with the situations when reported, but there is stigma attached to being raped and sexually abused. <sup>19</sup>
	Protect individuals and groups fleeing atrocity crimes and their risk, in accordance with International Refugee Law.	Very Weak <b>Unchanged</b>	Solomon Islands, a non-signatory to the Refugee Convention, has no system or process for granting asylum as well as no known refugees within the country. It cooperates with UNHCR to provide aid for internally displaced people. <sup>20</sup>
Domestic Implementation	Conduct a national assessment of risk and resilience.	Very Weak <b>Unchanged</b>	No evidence could be found of such a national assessment being conducted in Solomon Islands.
	Cultivate and protect an active, diverse and robust civil society.	Strong <b>Unchanged</b>	The right to freedom of expression, freedom of assembly, and freedom of association are well-respected by Solomon Islands. <sup>21</sup>
	Ensure a legitimate, effective and civilian controlled security sector.	Fair <b>Unchanged</b>	The security sector is largely responsible and effectively under civilian control. <sup>22</sup> Regular unrest has provided for regular use of the security forces.
	Ensure the education system reflects the ethnic, national and cultural diversity of society, and sets examples of inclusiveness.	Fair <b>Decrease</b>	The education system in Solomon Islands has 6 years of primary school, 7 years of secondary educational and then offers pathways into vocational as well as tertiary education. Education is not mandatory, and access to education is limited by poverty, but about 60% of children are enrolled in primary education. <sup>23</sup>

<sup>14</sup> U.S Department of State, 2023. 2022 Country Reports on Human Rights Practices: Solomon Islands, ‘Section 1. Integrity of the Person, <https://www.state.gov/reports/2022-country-reports-on-human-rights-practices/solomon-islands> ; Freedom House, 2023. Freedom in the World 2022: Solomon Islands, <https://freedomhouse.org/country/solomon-islands/freedom-world/2022>

<sup>15</sup> RAMSI, n.d., *About Us*, <https://www.ramsi.org/work/>

<sup>16</sup> International Criminal Court Project, 2023. *Solomon Islands: Overview*, <https://www.aba-icc.org/country/solomon-islands/>.

<sup>17</sup> Australia-Pacific Group on Money Laundering, n.d., *Solomon Islands*, <https://apgml.org/members-and-observers/members/details.aspx?m=eed1590a-5054-4596-9b39-60e2b845aca1>

<sup>18</sup> International Women’s Development Agency, 30<sup>th</sup> November 2023, “*It’s everybody’s business*”: *Addressing gender-based violence in Solomon Islands*, <https://iwda.org.au/its-everybodys-business-addressing-gender-based-violence-in-solomon-islands/#:~:text=Solomon%20Islands%20has%20one%20of%20hands%20of%20an%20intimate%20partner>

<sup>19</sup> U.S Department of State, 2023. 2022 Country Reports on Human Rights Practices: Solomon Islands, ‘Section 6. Discrimination and Societal Abuses’, <https://www.state.gov/reports/2022-country-reports-on-human-rights-practices/solomon-islands>

<sup>20</sup> U.S Department of State, 2023. 2022 Country Reports on Human Rights Practices: Solomon Islands, ‘Section 2. Respect for Civil Liberties: f. Protection of Refugees’. <https://www.state.gov/reports/2022-country-reports-on-human-rights-practices/solomon-islands>

<sup>21</sup> U.S Department of State, 2023. 2022 Country Reports on Human Rights Practices: Solomon Islands., ‘A. Freedom of Expression, Including for Members of the Press and Other Media’; Freedom House, 2023. *Freedom in the World 2023: Solomon Islands*, ‘D. Freedom of Expression and Belief’.

<sup>22</sup> U.S Department of State, 2023. 2022 Country Reports on Human Rights Practices: Solomon Islands, ‘Executive Summary’.

<sup>23</sup> Scholaro, n.d. *Education System in the Solomon Islands*, <https://www.scholaro.com/db/Countries/Solomon-Islands/Education-System>

			The government is committed to increasing educational access and launched its second national action plan to achieve this goal in 2022. Australia, New Zealand and UNICEF support Solomon Islands with implementing this plan. <sup>24</sup>
	Prevent nationals committing atrocity crimes overseas.	Fair <b>Decrease</b>	No new evidence could be found regarding this Indicator. The <i>Penal Code</i> covers the prosecution of genocide, but other atrocity crimes remain unaccounted for.
Bilateral and Multilateral Relations	Participate in international, regional, and national discussions on the further advancement of R2P.	Weak <b>Unchanged</b>	Solomon Islands has not provided a statement at any recent discussions or debates on R2P.
	Leverage existing mechanisms and institutions (including regional and sub-regional organisations) to encourage States to fulfil their responsibility to protect.	Weak <b>Unchanged</b>	Solomon Islands often does not vote on General Assembly resolutions that have reference R2P:  <b>UN General Assembly Resolutions:</b> <sup>25</sup> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 2018: Extrajudicial, summary or arbitrary executions A/RES/73/172: <b>abstained</b>.</li> <li>• 2018: Situation of human rights in the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea A/RES/73/180: <b>adopted without vote</b>.</li> <li>• 2018: Situation of human rights in the Syrian Arab Republic A/RES/73/182: <b>yes</b>.</li> <li>• 2019: Situation of human rights in the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea A/RES/74/166: <b>adopted without vote</b>.</li> <li>• 2019: Situation of human rights in the Syrian Arab Republic A/RES/74/169: <b>did not vote</b>.</li> <li>• 2020: Situation of human rights in the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea A/RES/75/190: <b>adopted without vote</b>.</li> <li>• 2020: Extrajudicial, summary or arbitrary executions A/RES/75/189: <b>did not vote</b>.</li> <li>• 2020: Situation of human rights in the Syrian Arab Republic A/RES/75/193: <b>did not vote</b>.</li> <li>• 2021: Promoting a culture of peace and tolerance to safeguard religious sites A/RES/75/258: <b>adopted without vote</b>.</li> <li>• 2021: The responsibility to protect and the prevention of genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleansing and crimes against humanity A/RES/75/277: <b>did not vote</b>.</li> <li>• 2022: Extrajudicial, summary or arbitrary executions, A/RES/77/218: <b>did not vote</b></li> <li>• 2022: Democratic Peoples Republic of Korea, A/RES/77/226: <b>adopted without a vote</b></li> <li>• 2022: Myanmar/Burma, A/RES/77/227: <b>adopted without a vote</b></li> <li>• 2022: Syria A/RES/77/230: <b>abstained</b></li> </ul>
	Encourage and assist States to fulfil their R2P in situations of	Weak <b>Increase</b>	Solomon Islands possesses broad support for the self determination of West Papua and has

<sup>24</sup> Solomon Islands Government, 2022. *Solomon Islands strengthens commitment to improved access to quality education for all children*, <https://solomons.gov.sb/solomon-islands-strengthens-commitment-to-improved-access-to-quality-education-for-all-children/#:~:text=The%20Solomon%20Islands%20Education%20Sector,all%20children%20in%20Solomon%20Islands..>


<sup>25</sup> GCR2P, 2021. *UN General Assembly Resolutions Referencing R2P*, <https://www.globalr2p.org/resources/un-general-assembly-resolutions-referencing-r2p-2/>. (Voting records for each resolution were accessed using the UN’s Digital Library: General Assembly of the United Nations, n.d. *Voting Records*, <https://www.un.org/en/ga/documents/voting.asp>.)

	emerging and ongoing crisis, such as good offices and preventive diplomacy.		advocated for this through the Pacific Islands Forum and the Melanesian Spearhead Group. However, it has the minority opinion in these fora and has done nothing further. No information on the Solomon Islands stance on Myanmar could be found.
	Strengthen regional and international networks for atrocity crime prevention.	Very Weak Unchanged	No new evidence could be found of Solomon Islands strengthening regional and international networks.
	Strengthen the role and capacity of regional organisations.	Weak Unchanged	No new updates could be found for this Indicator.
	Support the development and work of regional human rights and other preventive capacities.	Weak Unchanged	Solomon Islands have received assistance in variety of ways and from a variety of donors, of whom Australia is the largest supporter. This has increased the country's capacities for human rights protections and improvements in governance, and been well-received by the governments of Solomon Islands.
	Support atrocity prevention through development and assistance partnerships.	Weak Unchanged	The Solomon Islands is one of the countries in the world put most at risk by climate changes, and at great need for support to mitigate these challenges. <sup>26</sup> This has a positive effect on atrocity prevention, as the food insecurity and loss of space by climate change furthers instability in the country.  In the past years, there has been periodic protests. Previously Australia has supported the government in protest-responses, but in 2022 Solomon Islands entered a security agreement with China. The effects of this remain yet to be seen.
United Nations, prevention, Peacekeeping, and assistance	Support the early warning and capacity building efforts of the UN Office on Genocide Prevention and R2P.	Weak Unchanged	No information could be found on whether the Solomon Islands supports the UN Office on Genocide Prevention and R2P.
	Support the strengthening of the UN's capacity for atrocity prevention, including through the UN Human Rights system.	Fair Unchanged	The Solomon Islands continues to cooperate with the UN and other international actors on a range of governance issues to improve its capacities.
	Support preventive actions on atrocity crimes.	Weak Unchanged	No updated information could be found for this Indicator.
	Contribute to United Nations peacekeeping operations (especially those with a protection of civilians mandate).	Weak Unchanged	The Solomon Islands currently has no peacekeepers deployed on missions. <sup>27</sup> The barrier to this is resources.
	Develop the capacities needed to support civilian protection, including through the training of military and civilian personnel for peacekeeping.	Fair Unchanged	Australia and China have both contributed training packages to Solomon Islands. This is both potentially useful in building long-term capacities for civilian protection, but may also be an arena of geopolitical competition. <sup>28</sup>
	Support the Kigali Principles.	Very Weak Unchanged	Solomon Islands does not support the Kigali Principles.
	Support UN Security Council veto restraint on issues relating to atrocity prevention.	Very Weak Unchanged	Solomon Islands does not support the French/Mexican initiative on the suspension of

<sup>26</sup>Ride, Anouk, United States Institute of Peace, 2<sup>nd</sup> November 2023, *Climate Change and Conflict in Solomon Islands*, <https://www.usip.org/publications/2023/11/climate-change-and-conflict-solomon-islands#:~:text=Environmental%20Risks%20in%20Solomon%20Islands&text=Meanwhile%2C%20climate%20change%20is%20affecting,for%20both%20food%20and%20income>.

<sup>27</sup> UN Peacekeeping, n.d., *Troop and police contributors*, <https://peacekeeping.un.org/en/troop-and-police-contributors> (Soloman Islands can be chosen in the drop-down menu)

<sup>28</sup> Powles, Anna, 2023, 'Geopolitical duel in the Pacific: Solomon Islands security at risk as Australia and China compete', *The Interpreter via the Lowy Institute*, 7<sup>th</sup> July 2023. Available at: <https://www.loyyinstitute.org/the-interpreter/geopolitical-duel-pacific-solomon-islands-security-risk-australia-china-compete>



veto,<sup>29</sup> or the ACT Code of Conduct in cases of mass atrocities.<sup>30</sup>

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<sup>29</sup> GCR2P, 2022. *List of Supporters of the Political Declaration on Suspension of Veto*, <https://www.globalr2p.org/resources/list-of-supporters-of-the-political-declaration-on-suspension-of-veto/>.

<sup>30</sup> GCR2P, 2022. *List of Signatories to the ACT Code of Conduct*, <https://www.globalr2p.org/resources/list-of-signatories-to-the-act-code-of-conduct/>.