



PACIFIC ISLANDS FORUM



PACIFIC
FUSION
CENTRE

THE PACIFIC SECURITY OUTLOOK REPORT

2026

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Secretary General's Foreword



It is my privilege to present the 2026 Pacific Security Outlook Report, a comprehensive assessment of the evolving security landscape facing our Blue Pacific Continent. This report comes at a pivotal moment, as our region confronts a 'polycrisis'. The convergence of these challenges is testing our collective resolve and capacity to uphold the commitments made under the Boe Declaration and to advance the vision of the 2050 Strategy for a Blue Pacific Continent.

The past year has underscored the urgency of our mission. The Pacific continues to experience the worsening impacts of climate change, now widely recognised as the single greatest threat to our security, wellbeing, and prosperity. Our communities face rising sea levels, intensifying weather events, and threats to food and water security, all of which demand enhanced regional coordination and resilience. At the same time, global and regional flashpoints and shifting geopolitical dynamics are shaping the strategic environment in complex ways, placing additional strain on the multilateral systems that have long underpinned our collective peace and security.

Against this backdrop, the endorsement of the Blue Pacific Ocean of Peace Declaration by Forum Leaders in Honiara in September 2025 is both timely and visionary. It reaffirms our unwavering commitment to regional unity, peace, and cooperation, and calls upon all actors, state and non-state alike, to respect our sovereignty, the rules-based international order, and the mechanisms we have established for peace and security. If implemented in both spirit and intent, this Declaration can serve as a political anchor, enabling us to collectively navigate external pressures and internal challenges with strength and purpose.

The 2026 Outlook also highlights the need for urgent action on climate finance, the strengthening of regional security architecture, and the preservation of the rule of law. As we look ahead, our focus must remain on delivering tangible outcomes for Pacific people. This will require not only robust advocacy and regional solidarity but also innovative partnerships and the mobilisation of sustainable resources.

I commend the leadership of the Pacific Fusion Centre and the collaborative efforts of Forum Members, regional organisations, and our partners in the development of this report. It provides a frank, evidence-based analysis of the security environment and identifies clear opportunities for collective action. I encourage all stakeholders to engage with the findings and opportunities herein, and to work together in the spirit of the Blue Pacific to ensure a secure, peaceful, and prosperous future for our region.

Let us continue to stand united, drawing strength from our shared values and aspirations, as we navigate the challenges ahead. The Pacific's future depends on our ability to act with unified vision, courage, and collective resolve.

Baron Divavesi Waqa

Secretary General Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat

Strategic Outlook

Throughout 2026, the Pacific regional security outlook will continue to be shaped by geopolitical competition, detracting from Pacific Island Countries responding to Boe Declaration security priorities and strengthening the regional security architecture. Strengthening Pacific progress against the 2050 Strategy for a Blue Pacific Continent and the Sustainable Development Goals in this dynamic environment remains a priority.

Dynamic geopolitical competition will sharpen over the next 12 to 24 months with implications for Pacific foreign policy and the effectiveness of the multilateral system. The multilateral system will continue to be tested and remain strained and the Pacific will face outsized challenges elevating Pacific priorities and advocating outcomes. Important peace and security global frameworks such as the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) to be reviewed in 2026 will test the Pacific's collective resolve on nuclear weapons, testing and legacy issues.¹ Pacific Boe Declaration security priorities, including climate security, may face stronger competition for global political attention and resourcing.²

The sharpening competition between China and the US and its partners in the Pacific is driving an increasing appetite for security and defence agreements.³ These agreements are between Pacific Island Countries (PICs) and external partners as well as between Pacific Islands Forum members themselves. There is also an accompanying development of parallel security response mechanisms that are both sectoral and multisectoral, focused on Humanitarian and Disaster Relief (HADR), security and in some cases, stabilisation operations. This growth in mini-lateral and bilateral response mechanisms can make future responses to security threats in the region more difficult given the lack of a centralised politically mandated coordination mechanism.

Concurrent global flashpoints continue to deteriorate the international security environment. The Russian invasion of Ukraine, conflicts in the Middle East, tensions in the Taiwan Strait and threats on the Korean Peninsula are straining the multilateral system, while driving a range of traditional and non-traditional security threats. The Pacific is geographically distanced from many global flashpoints, but not immune to their implications. These challenges and flashpoints are impacting Pacific Island Countries' foreign policy positions. Varied, and at times polarised public sentiment on these dynamics can also lead to localised tension and outbreaks of violence, including within the Forum Membership.

Global economic growth may continue to be shaped by the impact of tariffs, weak trade, enduring conflict in Europe and the Middle East, and geopolitical uncertainty. The IMF projects that global growth will remain at 3.3% for 2026 and slightly drop to 3.2% for 2027 with technology, investment, fiscal and monetary policy potentially offsetting trade policy shifts.⁴

New fronts for geopolitical contestation are emerging in the Pacific. These include critical minerals and seabed mining, emerging technologies and space.

1 2026 signals critical moment to preserve nuclear order- The Korea Times

2 The role of geopolitics in a multipolar world | World Economic Forum

3 Naval base modernization highlights growing Australia-PNG-U.S. defense cooperation – Indo-Pacific Defense FORUM

4 World Economic Outlook Update, January 2026: Global Economy: Steady amid Divergent Forces



In this complex global security dynamic, climate change remains the single, greatest threat to Pacific security, wellbeing and prosperity and all climate indicators are worsening. Throughout 2026, worsening climate indicators and recurrent hazard events will continue to accelerate insecurity at local, regional and international levels.⁵⁶ In this context, Forum Leaders will also face a deteriorating transnational crime and cybersecurity outlook.

Faced with this complex strategic environment, Forum Leaders have endorsed the Blue Pacific Ocean of Peace Declaration at their meeting in Honiara in September 2025.⁷ The Declaration reaffirms the Pacific's commitment to international and regional peace, unity and cooperation.⁸ The Declaration calls on all state and non-state actors to respect PICs' sovereignty, the rules-based international order, Forum mechanisms for peace and security, and the recognition of the Pacific as an 'Ocean of Peace'.⁹ If the spirit and intent of the 'Ocean of Peace' is implemented, the Declaration provides a political anchor for managing external competition by harnessing the Pacific's collective will to be able to effectively navigate the challenges presented by a worsening strategic environment.

Climate Security

Current Situation

Climate change remains the single greatest threat to Pacific security, wellbeing and prosperity and all climate indicators are worsening. Forum Leaders continue to “recognise the grave and irreversible threat” posed by climate change on Pacific biodiversity, environment and the prosperity, wellbeing and livelihoods of its people.¹⁰ The past 11 years have been the warmest on record, with ocean warming continuing unabated. 2025 was recorded as one of the warmest years on record¹¹ in the South-West Pacific region. The Pacific saw a continuation of warmer than average sea surface temperatures with the possibility of La-Niña like conditions developing in the latter part of 2025.¹² These trends resulted in sea-level rise in the Pacific exceeding global averages, widespread climatic hazard events in the Pacific - in particular in Australia, New Zealand and Fiji - causing major disruptions to economic activity and livelihoods and wellbeing.¹³

Global progress to address climate change and mitigate its effects remains varied and landing strong and tangible outcomes at COP31 will be imperative for Pacific People. Major outcomes of COP29 included a new global finance goal to mobilise US\$300 billion per year from developed countries to developing countries, with the intent to scale up to US\$1.3 trillion per year by 2035.¹⁴ Current projections indicate

5 Climate change and security risks | UNEP- UN Environment Programme

6 Factsheet-Pacific-Climate-Security-Assessment-Guide.pdf

7 54th Pacific Islands Forum Leaders Communique_final.pdf

8 WORD TEMPLATE A4 [H]

9 Ibid.

10 54th Pacific Islands Forum Leaders Communique_final.pdf

11 WMO confirms 2025 was one of warmest years on record

12 Global Seasonal Climate Update for September-October-November 2025

13 State of the Climate in South-West Pacific 2024

14 Countries agree \$300 billion by 2035 for new climate finance goal – what next? | UN Trade and Development (UNCTAD)

the new climate finance goal will be difficult to achieve at current levels and the climate finance gap may continue to widen.¹⁵ Furthermore, with current commitments skewed towards mitigation rather than adaptation efforts which is needed specifically in the Pacific context, Pacific efforts will continue to be impacted into the future. Major outcomes of COP30 in Belem focussed on strengthening global resolve to limit global warming to 1.5 degrees.¹⁶ The Belem Political Package contains 29 decisions that will accelerate global climate action through finance, adaptation, a just energy transition and strengthening climate targets (Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs)¹⁷ as well as some movement on 'just energy transition'. But implementation against the backdrop of a worsening strategic environment remains to be seen.

COP31 offers an important opportunity to elevate Pacific climate priorities amidst a worsening climate outlook and strained multilateral system. Australia's bid to host the 31st session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (COP31) in partnership with the Pacific resulted in a negotiated outcome with Türkiye. While a "Pacific COP31" would have provided a generational opportunity to put the Pacific and its climate challenges front and centre of global climate considerations, maximising COP31 remains imperative. Under the negotiated Partnership Modalities for COP31 agreed with Türkiye,¹⁸ Australia and the Pacific will host Pre-COP including a Pacific Leaders Meeting in a Pacific country, appoint Pacific thematic champions, and hold a special session on access to climate finance, including a pledging platform for the Pacific Resilience Facility.¹⁹ A Pacific Pre-COP and global leaders meeting offers a unique opportunity to elevate Pacific climate priorities ahead of COP31 in Türkiye. Australia's role as COP31 President of Negotiations also offers an important opportunity to influence global negotiations amidst a challenging multilateral environment.

In July 2025, the International Court of Justice (ICJ) delivered its unanimous Advisory Opinion on Obligations of States in respect of Climate Change that affirmed the 1.5 degrees target under the Paris Agreement as legally binding.²⁰ The Opinion confirmed that states are obligated under international and customary law to undertake necessary preventive and precautionary measures to address the impacts of climate change.²¹ Although a positive development, the implications of the Advisory Opinion and how it will shape climate action and ambitions into the future remains to be seen.

Horizon 2027

The shift to La-Niña conditions towards the end of 2025²² will influence weather patterns across the Pacific into 2026. Noting recent La-Niña trends²³, it may continue to shape weather patterns into early 2027. It is projected that this phase has an estimated 55% chance of occurring, and despite the cooling effect it generally has, projections indicate sea-surface temperatures across the Pacific will remain

15 Climate Finance Shadow Report 2025: Analysing Progress on Climate Finance Under the Paris Agreement- CARE Climate Change

16 COP30 strengthens resolve to hold the line on a 1.5C world | Pacific Environment

17 5 Outcomes from COP 30: What the Belém Political Package Really Delivered | United Nations University

18 COP31_Presidency_Modalities,

19 Türkiye-Australia Partnership modalities

20 Historic International Court of Justice Opinion Confirms States' Climate Obligations | International Institute for Sustainable Development

21 Ibid.

22 Global Seasonal Climate Update for September-October-November 2025

23 La Niña impacts felt throughout the Pacific | Pacific Environment



high.²⁴ This will have an impact on climate change indicators across the Pacific including weather-induced hazards. The tropical cyclone outlook for the South-West Pacific for November 2025 to April 2026 is assessed as normal to below normal activity with an estimated five to nine named tropical cyclones occurring.²⁵ Projections for the 2026 typhon season in the Northern Pacific may be shaped by the La-Niña phase, depending on its strength. The WMO assesses that temporary cooling by La Nina will not reverse the long-term trend of ocean warming and that this will continue unabated.²⁶ Even in seasons assessed as normal to below normal, a small number of severe events can generate outsized impacts for PICs, including service disruption and fiscal pressure.

Climate change and its impacts is transforming Pacific coastal and oceanic fisheries.²⁷ Worsening climate conditions impacts coral reef habitats and associated ecosystems²⁸ and is straining coastal fisheries²⁹ which many Pacific communities depend on for food security and income. These pressures may drive an increase in transboundary fishing of local, customary or coastal fisheries. Local food production will also be adversely impacted by slow onset-climate impacts and the increasing severity and frequency of natural disasters. This will affect food availability and quality across the region.

Globally, the Loss and Damage Fund has seen twenty-seven countries pledge US\$768.4 million³⁰ of which only US\$361 million has been paid.³¹ China and India, two of the world's biggest greenhouse gas emitters, have opposed mandatory payments into the Loss and Damage Fund citing their status as developing countries. Furthermore, the US withdrawal from the Green Climate Fund (GCF) will see a US\$4 billion cut in climate financing, putting significant pressure on GCF financing.³²

Efforts underway such as investments in early warning systems, implementation of policies such as the Framework for Resilient Development (FRDP) and mobilising the Pacific Resilience Facility (PRF) will require significant resourcing and funding. However, given the ongoing focus by major donors on multiple global flashpoints and increasing their defence spending, meeting existing and new climate finance goals in the very critical short to medium term may prove difficult and likely constrain the availability of development and climate financing for the Pacific.

These trends will have a negative impact on the Pacific's ability to deal effectively with the worsening impacts of the climate crisis given constrained and delayed finance is likely to slow implementation of resilience measures and increase reliance on a mix of funding sources that can be difficult to coordinate and absorb for PICs.

The ICJ Advisory Opinion and work towards converting it into a United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) resolution are positive outcomes. However, for the foreseeable future, worsening climate indicators coupled with slow progress in reducing carbon emissions, and continued difficulty in accessing funding for climate mitigation and especially adaptation, may negatively impact resilience and wellbeing across

24 La Niña may return but temperatures are likely to be above average

25 Southwest Pacific Tropical Cyclone Outlook-October 2025 | Earth Sciences New Zealand | NIWA

26 WMO confirms 2025 was one of warmest years on record

27 Pacific Assessment Reveals How Climate Change Is Recasting Fisheries and Aquaculture | The Pacific Community

28 Fisheries story: Climate change and Pacific coastal fisheries | FAME

29 Pacific Assessment Reveals How Climate Change Is Recasting Fisheries and Aquaculture | The Pacific Community

30 Climate Funds Pledge Tracker

31 A redefining moment for loss and damage funding

32 Trump rescinds \$4B in US pledges for UN climate fund – POLITICO

the region over the next 12 to 24 months.

Opportunities

Opportunities from the 2025 Pacific Security Outlook remain extant, with the following identified for the next 12 to 24 months:

- Work collectively as a Forum Membership to maximise COP31 outcomes for Pacific People. Global advocacy for a Pacific COP31 has elevated global awareness of Pacific climate priorities. Joint advocacy and close regional coordination can deliver tangible outcomes through a strong Pacific Pre-COP and leveraging Australia's role as COP31 President of Negotiations.
- Given the varied predictability of global multilateral climate financing mechanisms, work collectively across Forum Member partnerships to maximise contributions to the PRF. Securing direct contributions to the PRF, can ensure more sustainable funding source for targeted community and national projects. A dedicated COP31 session for Small Island Developing States will provide a space for pledges to the PRF.
- Leverage the Review of Regional Architecture (RRA), the implementation plan for the 2050 Strategy for the Blue Pacific Continent and the Boe Declaration Action Plan to strengthen collective regional responses to the Pacific climate outlook. With the on-going development of fit-for-purpose regional response mechanisms, there is an opportunity to continue to build the regions understanding of the nexus between climate change and insecurity and modalities to address this.

Environmental and Resource Security

Current Situation

The Pacific region has a wealth of natural resources, in particular, maritime resources that require close regional coordination to manage sustainably.

Similar to last year's report, nuclear issues have continued to be a focus within the Forum Membership. The Tokyo Electric Company conducted its 16th discharge of Advanced Liquid Processing System (ALPS) treated water that saw 7,838 cubic meters of treated water discharged into the Pacific Ocean between 30 October– 17 November 2025.³³ The International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) recently published its review of the ALPS treated water discharge which reaffirmed their view that the discharge is safe.³⁴ Furthermore, legacy concerns around the Runit Dome remain. Despite US positions that the Runit Dome is safe³⁵, it is expected that within 20 years, at forecasted rates of sea-level rise, the high tide will hit the edge of the Runit dome consistently,³⁶ significantly exacerbating the risk to its structural integrity. Any leakage from the Runit Dome will impact the health of the Pacific Ocean that can have

33 South Korea: Tritium Detected Near Fukushima, Levels Below Threshold

34 Publication of the IAEA Report on the Review of Handling ALPS Treated Water at TEPCO's Fukushima Daiichi Nuclear Power Station | Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan

35 Nuclear waste dump in Marshall Islands deemed safe by US govt | RNZ

36 Pacific Community's Statement at the International Court of Justice Public sitting on the Obligations of States in respect of Climate Change | The Pacific Community



significant impacts on Pacific fisheries, economies and food security.

Pacific tuna fisheries remain healthy. The Forum Fisheries Agency (FFA) confirms that the Pacific is the only region, globally, that can boast healthy stocks of skipjack, yellowfin, bigeye and albacore.³⁷ In 2025, Pacific Leaders held a high-level summit on ocean governance in Honiara, making a landmark commitment to tackle overfishing, IUU fishing, and climate-driven tuna migration and included a US\$107 million investment in climate adaptation for fisheries and the launch of a regional early warning system for tuna distribution shifts.³⁸ The measures that are in place to combat Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated (IUU) fishing are working as evidenced by an estimated reduction in economic losses due to IUU fishing from US\$152M in 2016 to US\$43M in 2021.³⁹ Monitoring, control and surveillance (MCS) efforts by the FFA and partners continue to be strengthened as unreported fishing or misreporting of catches by licensed vessels is more prevalent than ‘illegal fishing’ by unlicensed vessels per se.⁴⁰

The region remains divided on deep sea mining (DSM). The DSM Talanoa convened by the Pacific Ocean Commissioner in early 2025 provided an opportunity for Forum Members to share their views on DSM both within and beyond their national jurisdictions.⁴¹ A key outcome of the Talanoa was the need to strengthen science, data and traditional knowledge to inform the development of approaches to DSM and governance.⁴² Work continues at the International Seabed Authority (ISA) to develop robust regulations and standards that will balance safe extraction of minerals with the necessary environmental protections.⁴³ Within this context, the US has now committed to expediting the process for reviewing and issuing seabed mineral exploration licenses and commercial recovery permits in areas beyond national jurisdiction under the Deep Seabed Hard Mineral Resources Act. ⁴⁴ Following this, some PICs have updated their sponsorship agreements with deep sea mining operators to enable them to utilise the pathway provided by the US for their financial participation, including financial remuneration in US licensed deep sea mining operations.⁴⁵ Competition by external powers over critical minerals in the Pacific is coming to the fore and will drive and shape Pacific positions on DSM, including environmental and resource security considerations into the future.⁴⁶

Strains in the multilateral system are curbing efforts to strengthen environmental and resource security globally. Following 10 days of negotiations, Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee talks to develop an international legally binding instrument on plastic pollution, adjourned early on 15 August without consensus on a text of the instrument.⁴⁷ The next negotiation round is scheduled for February 2026.⁴⁸ The implementation of the Global Framework on Chemicals has commenced,⁴⁹ which presents a

37 Forum Leaders updated on Pacific fisheries and security cooperation to protect tuna- Pacific Islands FFA

38 REPORT: 2050 Strategy Regional Collective Actions Progress Report- 2025 | Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat

39 Ibid.

40 The Quantification of IUU Fishing in the Pacific- MRAG Asia Pacific

41 Deep Sea Minerals High-level Talanoa | Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat

42 Joint MFAI & SBMA Media Release: Pacific Islands Forum Convenes First Ministerial Talanoa on Deep Sea Minerals | TE KAUONO TUTARA E TE MANA TIAKI

43 STATEMENT: Nauru National Statement at UNGA 80 | Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat

44 Trump signs ‘deeply dangerous’ order to fast-track deep sea mining | RNZ News

45 Redefining the Rules: A New Generation of Sponsorship Agreements in Deep Sea Mining? – EJIL: Talk!

46 In the depths of the ocean, a new contest between the US and China emerges | Pacific islands | The Guardian

47 Talks on global plastic pollution treaty adjourn without consensus

48 Third Part of the Fifth Session | UNEP- UN Environment Programme

49 What is the Global Framework on Chemicals? | UNEP- UN Environment Programme



comprehensive plan to guide countries and stakeholders address the lifecycle of chemicals. Strong implementation has the potential to strengthen Pacific marine health, food safety and livelihoods across the Pacific.

Horizon 2027

Leaders reiterated their call for regional solidarity in addressing the ALPS treated water discharge by Japan.⁵⁰ There remains a collective appetite for the region to develop its own capability to interpret and assess data and information related to nuclear issues that impact the Pacific⁵¹. Regional technical agencies like The Pacific Community (SPC) are taking the lead role in developing these approaches for the region. If this capability is developed over the next 12 to 24 months, it will enable the Pacific to engage in a more informed and deliberate manner in addressing these complex issues which have significant impacts on the environment, livelihoods and economies across the region.

Concerted collective efforts through established mechanisms such as the FFA, Parties to the Nauru Agreement (PNA) and Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission (WCPFC) will be required to sustain our fisheries and the benefits derived from them now, and into the future. Pacific led and owned frameworks such as the East New Britain Initiative (ENBi) aim to maximise the economic, social and employment benefits from the Pacific's tuna fisheries.⁵² The ENBi as it gains momentum, looks to align Pacific governments, industry and development partners to maximise the economic and social returns of fisheries to all PICs through development of a regional tuna fund, value-adding infrastructure and establishing processing hubs in the region.⁵³

A recent study contended that climate change will cause an overlap in policy and sustainable management considerations for Pacific tuna fisheries and emerging approaches to deep-sea mining given tuna will begin to move into international waters that have been zoned for deep-sea mineral exploration.⁵⁴ As Pacific tuna stocks move into areas beyond national jurisdictions, potentially impacting licensing fees and revenues, tuna management systems such as the PNA Vessel Day Scheme (VDS) designed to account for climate variability of tuna stocks within EEZs can be explored to manage these shifts.⁵⁵

The nexus between deep sea mining and competition over critical minerals in the Pacific will intensify over the next 12 to 24 months. Recently, a US-supported research vessel conducted a 21-day exploration voyage of the Cook Islands seabed⁵⁶ followed by a Chinese ocean research vessel voyaging from Fiji to the Cook Islands also conducting marine research.^{57 58} These voyages reflect the growing appetite for seabed data and access by major powers. The inclusion of critical minerals in bilateral agreements by partners may increase as competition over deep-sea minerals exploration and extraction sharpens into

50 54th Pacific Islands Forum Leaders Communique_final.pdf

51 Ibid.

52 Pacific Tuna Industry: Advancing the East New Britain Initiative (ENBi) for Inclusive and Sustainable Benefits- Pacific Islands FFA

53 Ibid.

54 Climate change to drive increasing overlap between Pacific tuna fisheries and emerging deep-sea mining industry | npj Ocean Sustainability

55 Chapter 12_0.pdf

56 Nautilus expedition reveals rich biodiversity in Cook Islands' deep-sea ecosystem | RNZ News

57 Public invited aboard Chinese vessel after deep-sea research mission- Cook Islands News

58 All information gathered from both research expeditions remain under the stewardship of the Cook Islands.



the future. As with other extractive industries, corruption, integrity of regulatory processes and elite capture should be safeguarded against.

The Secretariat for the Pacific Regional Environment Program (SPREP) will release a State of the Environment report in 2026 that will inform decision making to strengthen resilience of Pacific communities and ensuring a sustainable environment⁵⁹, including informing efforts to enhance environmental and resource security efforts.

Opportunities

Opportunities to address environmental and resource security are below:

- In line with outcomes from the 2025 Pacific Islands Forum Leaders Meeting, the region can continue to accelerate pathways for a long-term approach to provide interpretation, guidance and assessment of scientific data on all nuclear-related discharge and contamination issues.
- Continue dialogue through mechanisms such as the DSM Talanoa to build regional understanding and find commonalities around collective approaches to deep sea-mining and critical minerals.
- Explore opportunities for an in-depth study on the implications of the convergence of tuna migration patterns as a result of climate change and DSM.
- Engage with relevant CROP agencies in the Pacific and provide technical support in the implementation of the new BBNJ agreement – a possible opportunity in creating a regional community of practice for BBNJ.

Human Security

Current Situation

Climate insecurities are force-multiplying a range of development challenges and undercutting Pacific human security. The human security challenges identified in last year's report remain extant for 2026. A recent report by the SPC and UN Women highlights that specific population groups are lagging across the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). These groups include rural women, women and girls with disabilities, and those living in areas most impacted by the effects of climate change.⁶⁰⁶¹

Emerging risks identified in last year's report included the impact of increased consumption of high-risk dependence forming substances (like methamphetamines) or 'hard drugs' in the Pacific, and the impacts of changing social dynamics on children, are now assessed as current challenges that will shape human security across PICs over the next 12 to 24 months. Enduring human security challenges around

59 Development of 2025 State of Environment and Conservation in the Pacific Islands Regional Report gets underway | Pacific Environment

60 Pacific Gender Outlook reveals women's representation in parliaments one third of global average, and major gaps in meeting other SDGs | UN Women – Asia-Pacific

61 Fijian children exposed to marijuana, meth, heroin | RNZ News



gender and gender-based violence, health and education are now having an impact on broader drivers such as social cohesion and demographic trends across several PICs.

Impact of Disasters on Human Security

Climate-induced weather hazards will continue to significantly impact human security over the next 12 to 24 months.

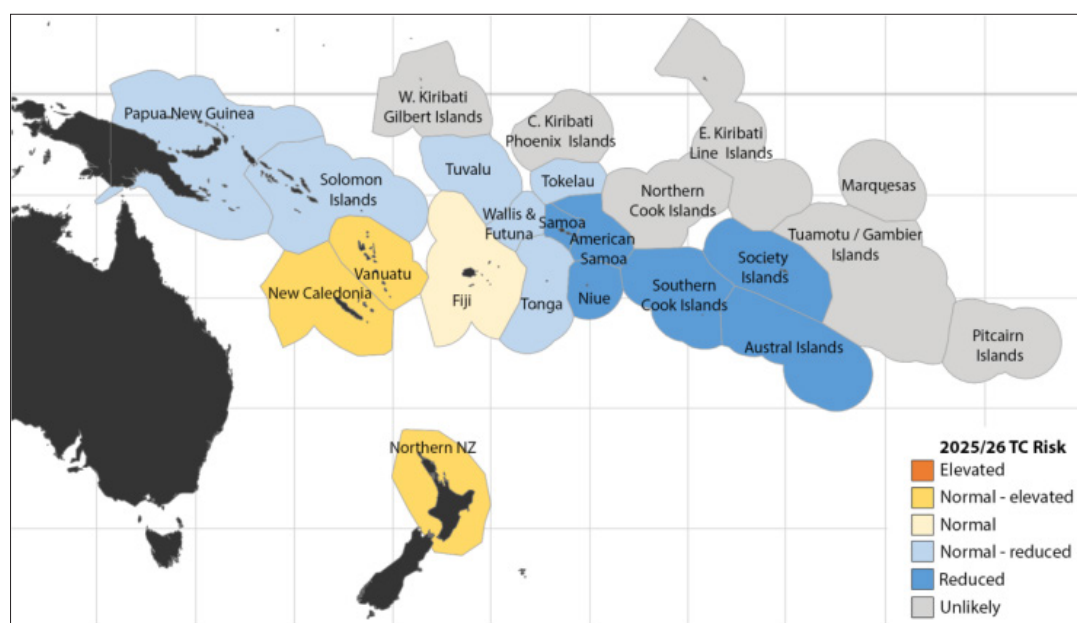


Figure 1: Tropical Cyclone Risk for the 2025-2026 season – source from NIWA (ESNZ_tc_outlook_2025-26.pdf)

New Zealand's National Institute of Water and Atmospheric Research (NIWA) estimates that between five to nine tropical cyclones may occur in the south Pacific between November 2025 – April 2026 with a higher risk of occurrence and impact around New Caledonia and Vanuatu.⁶² The impact of La-Niña towards the end of 2025 may also have an influence on weather patterns and the frequency and severity of weather induced hazards in the coming 12 months. Fluctuations in ENSO (El Niño-Southern Oscillation) cycle⁶³ exacerbate the effects of climate change in varied ways across PICs and will require continuous monitoring and preparedness for several regional humanitarian assistance and disaster relief (HADR) platforms.

Health Security

In the Pacific, climate sensitive diseases are of increasing concern. Dengue, leptospirosis and diarrhea and other waterborne diseases are common after weather hazard events⁶⁴ and dengue outbreaks were declared over the course of 2025 in several PICs, with 21 people dying as a result.⁶⁵ ⁶⁶ Respiratory

62 ESNZ_tc_outlook_2025-26.pdf

63 La Niña may return but temperatures are likely to be above average

64 The Pacific is turning the tide on climate and health | The Pacific Community

65 Epidemic and emerging disease alerts in the Pacific as of 11 November 2025- World | ReliefWeb

66 Dengue in the Pacific: Multicountry Situation (As of 1 December 2025)- Fiji | ReliefWeb

diseases such as pertussis and whooping cough were recorded in two PICs⁶⁷ with 3 infants succumbing to pertussis in Vanuatu and 1 infant in New Zealand⁶⁸; and measles cases were recorded in several PICs, as well as Australia and New Zealand^{69 70}.

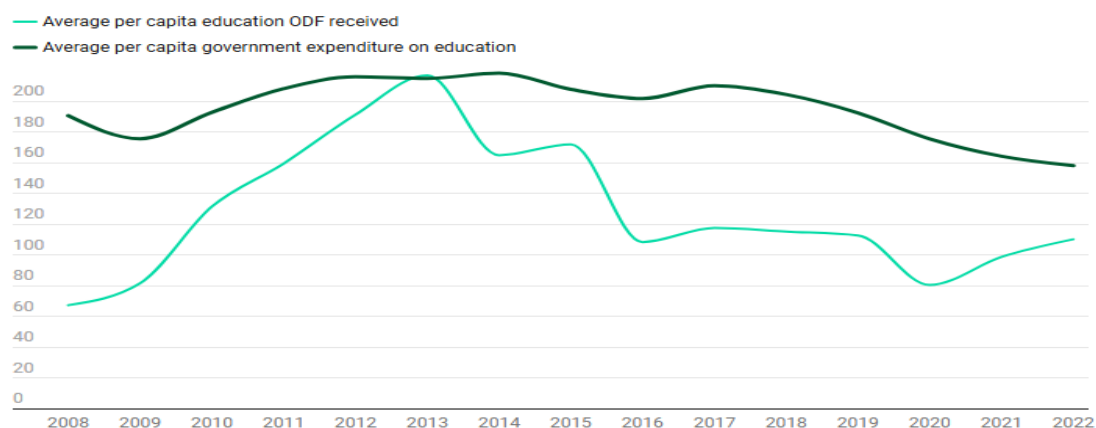
Given the interconnectedness of PICs, the increased mobility of people across the Pacific, and an increase in people who are injecting “hard drugs,” communicable diseases will continue to pose a challenge to the health of Pacific communities. Although considerable progress has been made around vaccination in the Pacific, gaps remain⁷¹ with an average of two out of fifteen children missing one or more childhood vaccines.⁷² Non-communicable diseases (NCDs) continue to be the number one killer across the Pacific.⁷³

Education

A report by the Pacific Community found that educational outcomes across the Pacific are being challenged by enduring factors such as access and retention in education, in particular at the secondary level; low quality of education related to quality of teachers, relevance of curricula etc).⁷⁴ A Lowy report further states that since 2020, less than 5 percent of development finance flows into the Pacific are for the education sector.⁷⁵ As depicted below, both donor partner and government spending on the education sector has seen a net decrease which may have a direct causal effect for the drop in education standards and outcomes across the Pacific.

Donor and government spending on education in the Pacific Islands

Per capita, US\$ constant 2022



Note: Both calculations are made using simple country averages, COFA states have been excluded due to distortive effects of Compact payments

Source: Lowy Institute Pacific Aid Map, World Bank DataBank - Get the data - Created with Datawrapper

67 Ibid.

68 Epidemic and emerging disease alerts in the Pacific as of 20 January 2026- World | ReliefWeb

69 Ibid.

70 Ministry of Health- Take Action – Protect Against Measles Now!!

71 Reaching every child in the Pacific with vaccines vital to save lives

72 Going the extra mile to deliver vaccines in Fiji

73 The Pacific is turning the tide on climate and health | The Pacific Community

74 The status of Pacific education 2024 Special edition

75 Pacific education: Backsliding outcomes and a financing freefall- Islands Business

Social Cohesion

Pacific social cohesion remains influenced by demographic and social factors as well as through the rise of misinformation and targeted disinformation. Several key trends in demographic and social factors include a growing youth bulge, internal migration from rural to urban centers which place an increasing strain on environmental health and services, and ageing populations.

Notwithstanding the positive impacts of labour mobility, the unaddressed unintended consequences of labour mobility on family units and children who are left behind continue to impact Pacific communities.⁷⁶ Women, who take on extra work at home in the absence of relatives, are disproportionately affected, and common occurrences of abandonment, extramarital affairs and missing remittances result in children being neglected.⁷⁷ In addition, since 2020 children in the Pacific are facing increasing levels of violence due to increased migration, climate change, digital connectivity and COVID-19.⁷⁸

The growing use of hard drugs such as methamphetamine and cocaine and the unsafe and risky behaviours associated with their use is also impacting social cohesion and increasing health risks such as HIV and sexually transmitted infections (STIs).⁷⁹ This directly affects the health and wellbeing of individuals using these drugs and also impacts the moral fabric of close-knit families and communities across the Pacific.⁸⁰ The disproportionate impact of criminal deportees on receiving communities is also having an effect on social cohesion.^{81 82}

Horizon 2027

The human security of Pacific Peoples will continue to be threatened by a range of intersecting drivers. The resurgence of measles, polio, whooping cough and other vaccine preventable diseases may be attributed to the disruption to regular vaccination programs by COVID-19 and other structural factors. Non-communicable diseases will remain the leading cause of Pacific mortality over the coming 12 to 24 months.

As economic growth in the region is projected by the Asian Development Bank (ADB) to reduce in 2026,⁸³ reliance on imports and the second order effects of global flashpoints on supply chains into the Pacific will continue to drive household spending considerations that may negatively impact food security, nutrition, health and wellbeing. Climate change and other environmental pressures will continue to challenge food and water security. Emerging concerns around the health and social impacts of increasing use of hard drugs such as cocaine and methamphetamine will need to be addressed through a whole of government approach rather than a purely law enforcement effort. Social cohesion and economic pressures will remain and continue to intensify. This may increase risks to human security at the individual, family and community level.

76 The Impact of Pacific Labour Mobility Schemes on Children Left Behind | UNICEF Pacific Islands

77 Ibid.

78 Children in the Pacific face increasing levels of violence- Save the Children Australia

79 Fiji's HIV cases surge due to bluetoothing, chemsex and needle-sharing

80 Placing Pacific's fight against transnational organized crime on the global agenda

81 PRNSC-2025-Report-digital.pdf

82 Products of Australia: The International Consequences of Australia's Deportation Policy- Australian Institute of International Affairs

83 Growth in the Pacific to Accelerate to 4.1% in 2025, Moderate to 3.4% in 2026 — ADB | Asian Development Bank



Although there is a clear and present danger posed by climate-induced weather events, regional developments such as the Pacific Humanitarian Response Coordination Mechanism (PResCoM) the South Pacific Defence Ministers' Meeting's (SPDMM's) Pacific Response Group (PRG), the Pacific Policing Initiative Pacific Police Support Group (PPSG) and the Joint Heads of Pacific Security (JHoPS) will result in more timely and contextualised, fit-for-purpose responses to emergency and crisis situations that directly endanger Pacific communities. The PRG's mandate has also been broadened to include stabilisation operations in support of national and human security considerations.⁸⁴

On the gender front, various PICs have improved levels of women's participation in decision making, particularly in Polynesia and Micronesia (Micronesia Gender Equality Framework)⁸⁵, and the integration of gender responsive policy making has improved due to the increasing availability and use of gender data.⁸⁶ This may have a positive impact on the mainstreaming of gender into peace and security efforts across the Pacific. The continued implementation of the commitments contained in the Pacific Leaders Gender Equality Declaration (PLGED)⁸⁷ under the oversight of the Pacific Women Leaders Meeting will strengthen coordination and unity of effort to address gender issues.

Opportunities

Opportunities to strengthen human security approaches across the Pacific include the following:

- Harmonise social, health and law enforcement measures in a 'whole of society' approach to address the impact of hard drugs on Pacific communities and individuals.
- Continue to support the development and implementation of HADR focused regional response mechanisms that respond to civilian needs.
- Consider strengthened investments by PICs and partner development assistance for health, including addressing the psychosocial aspects of drug use including increasing prevalence of HIV.
- Consider strengthening funding for education by PICs and development partners to continue to lift education standards at all levels by addressing the systemic challenges highlighted in the SPC's State of Education Report.⁸⁸
- Support the accelerated implementation of PLGED and mainstreaming of Women, Peace and Security (WPS) into regional security frameworks and mechanisms.
- Continue to address the unintended consequences of labour mobility and internal and external migration on social cohesion.

84 Joint Communique- South Pacific Defence Ministers' Meeting | Defence Ministers

85 56391cf4d298bcd4a29e58673d6a9a9e.pdf

86 Pacific Gender Outlook reveals women's representation in parliaments one third of global average, and major gaps in meeting other SDGs | UN Women – Asia-Pacific

87 Revitalised Pacific Leaders Gender Equality Declaration | Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat

88 The status of Pacific education 2024 Special edition



Transnational Crime

Current Situation

Transnational organised crime (TNOC) remains an enduring threat to the peace and security of the Pacific. In line with last year's report, trafficking in hard drugs (methamphetamine and cocaine), trafficking in persons and trafficking in illicit goods such as tobacco and wildlife remain significant TNOC vectors for the Pacific.⁸⁹ In addition, the establishment of Outlaw Motorcycle Gangs, Central and South American cartels and Asian and Chinese crime syndicates in the Pacific, are amplifying the risk of TNOC.⁹⁰ This is evidenced by the increasing numbers of South American and Asian/Chinese nationals being arrested for TNOC activities across the Pacific.

A recent nationally focused study conducted in Tonga highlighted that TNOC is being accelerated by the increase in criminal deportees from Australia, New Zealand and the United States due to social exclusion and lack of opportunities to support themselves; Tonga has evolved from a transit point into a domestic market for drugs; and TNOC is placing growing pressure on the integrity and capacity of law enforcement within Tonga.⁹¹

At the regional level, there is a growing connectivity between regional and external criminal syndicates in PICs⁹² as evidenced by the recent arrests in Fiji of a known Fijian drug dealer, Chinese nationals and woman from Yap in the Federated States of Micronesia.⁹³ The increasing prevalence of hard drugs in the Pacific is heightening risks to the health, safety and wellbeing of Pacific communities, where newly born babies are testing positive for methamphetamine exposure and an increase in drug-related child welfare cases.⁹⁴

Trafficking in persons remains a threat to the Pacific. As highlighted in the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime's (UNODC's) '2023 Regional Report on the Existing Capacities to Measure Trafficking in Persons in the Pacific Islands', the region is a destination for trafficked persons for sexual exploitation or forced labour, particularly in the fishing, hospitality, domestic and agricultural industries.⁹⁵ The 2025 US State Department Trafficking in Persons (TIP) Report⁹⁶ highlights that 9 PICs including New Zealand are not doing enough to combat TIP.⁹⁷ There may also be a growing link between trafficking in persons and modern slavery that may have an associated regional element or impact.⁹⁸ As assessed in the UNODC Report on TNOC in the Pacific, the trafficking of other illicit goods such as cigarettes and wildlife is increasing.⁹⁹

89 Transnational Organized Crime in the Pacific: Expansion, Challenges and Impact

90 Virginia-Comolli-Martin-Thorley-A-crowded-space-Foreign-organized-crime-groups-in-the-Pacific-islands-GI-TOC-May-2024.pdf

91 Tonga_shifting_TNOC_Landscape_-_Trends_and_Implications_for_Law_Enforcement.pdf

92 Virginia-Comolli-Martin-Thorley-A-crowded-space-Foreign-organized-crime-groups-in-the-Pacific-islands-GI-TOC-May-2024.pdf

93 Known Fijian dealer, Yapese woman, and Chinese nationals nabbed in major drug crackdown | Fiji Sun

94 Methamphetamine exposure in newborns soars in CNMI, new report reveals | RNZ News

95 UNODC_RegionalReport_PacificIslands_2023.pdf

96 2025 Trafficking in Persons Report- United States Department of State

97 NZ and Pacific nations failing to tackle human trafficking- US report | RNZ News

98 Thousands of modern slavery victims estimated in New Zealand, report finds | RNZ News

99 unodc.org/roseap/uploads/documents/2024/TOCTA_Pacific_2024.pdf



Horizon 2027

The forecast for the region over the next 12 to 24 months remains in line with last year’s report. TNOG actors will continue to seek and engage in more sophisticated modalities to conduct their activities in and through the region as they endeavour to evade law enforcement efforts.

Drug demand in Australia and New Zealand will continue to drive trafficking of methamphetamines and cocaine through and into the region.¹⁰⁰ In French Polynesia, 4.87 tonnes of cocaine was interdicted in the Pacific ocean with the shipment reportedly bound for Australia.¹⁰¹ There is a growing link between Pacific diaspora in Australia, in particular, being involved in drug trafficking, further cementing pathways from points of origin through PICs to destination markets.^{102 103} In early 2026, a massive cocaine bust worth AUD780 Million in Fiji saw 4 Ecuadorian nationals and several Fijian nationals arrested.^{104 105} Investigations also include the possible use of a narco-sub.¹⁰⁶ Additionally, the recent discovery of three narco-submarines¹⁰⁷ in the Solomon Islands in 2025, if proved to have been used to transport drugs into the region, demonstrates an increasing sophistication being employed by TNOG actors in order to avoid detection. This may also point to strengthening of law enforcement awareness of traditional modalities of smuggling (small yachts, shipping containers and increased cooperation and collaboration across the Pacific and international law enforcement (including the Pacific Transnational Crime Network (PTCN)).

As bad actors seek to strengthen their operations in the Pacific, actively managing corruption, insider risks and compromise remain a priority for Pacific law enforcement over the next 24 months. Recent arrests have strengthened the regions position. In Fiji, police officers have been arrested for unlawful possession of liquid methamphetamines¹⁰⁸ and in PNG police officers were arrested for possession of methamphetamines.¹⁰⁹ Gaps in regulatory environments, monitoring, surveillance and enforcement capabilities, will see TNOG actors continue to operate through and/or establish themselves in parts of the Pacific.

The Pacific Regional Transnational Organised Crime (TNOG) Disruption Strategy, launched in April 2024, remains a useful framework to coordinate responses. Burgeoning sectoral approaches to address Pacific capabilities, law enforcement efforts and information sharing are being strengthened through the Regional Law Enforcement Secretariats¹¹⁰, the PTCN and the Forum Fisheries Agency (FFA). In relation to strategic capability to interdict TNOG actors using Pacific maritime spaces, the South Pacific Defence Ministers’ Meeting (SPDMM) have committed to enhancing maritime security and encouraged the South-West Pacific Heads of Maritime Forces to implement an intelligence-led operation focused

- 100 Crossroads of crime and resilience
- 101 Authorities in French Polynesia prevent close to five tonnes of cocaine from reaching Australia | Australian Federal Police
- 102 Fijian duo charged over massive \$94m cocaine haul in Australia | Fiji Sun
- 103 Fijian gang at centre of Sydney drug bust- Islands Business
- 104 Six men to answer charges over Fiji’s largest cocaine shipment- ABC Pacific
- 105 Tongan among five latest remanded over Fiji’s record cocaine seizure, police confirm
- 106 Fiji police allegedly seize \$780m cocaine shipment in drug operation targeting Pacific Ocean ‘narco sub’ - ABC News
- 107 ‘Narco submarines’ found in Solomon Islands highlight Australia’s defence capability gap | news.com.au — Australia’s leading news site for latest headlines
- 108 Two more arrests in Police-linked liquid meth case | Fiji Sun
- 109 Papua New Guinea police officers arrested after meth raid | RNZ News
- 110 These include the Pacific Islands Chiefs of Police (PICP), Pacific Immigration Development Community (PIDC), Oceania Customs Organisation (OCO)



on TNOC.

These efforts will assist in combating TNOC. However, given that in the current environment, cross-sectoral efforts are difficult to coordinate and information sharing continues to be strengthened, law enforcement efforts may continue to be outpaced by the agility and flexibility of TNOC actors.

Opportunities

Countries may wish to consider the following opportunities as below:

- Leverage regional processes such as the Review of Regional Architecture to strengthen Pacific coordination on policing and TNOC/TSOC responses including potentially establishing political level coordination through a Security or Policing Ministerial.
- Accelerate implementation of the Pacific TNOC Disruption Strategy through the development of cross-sectoral implementation plans at the national level and leverage the Boe Declaration Action Plan to strengthen coordinated implementation.
- Work collectively to ensure Forum Member strategic assets – such as naval and maritime police vessels, aerial surveillance and satellite monitoring systems – can detect and disrupt TNOC activities in the Pacific maritime space.
- Consider the development or utilisation of fit-for-purpose digital information sharing platforms across all law enforcement sectors to facilitate the real-time sharing of information to combat TNOC activities.
- Prioritise greater use of financial intelligence to detect and disrupt increasing flows of illicit funds and remove the proceeds of crime. Encourage closer collaboration between the Pacific Financial Intelligence Community of regional FIUs and regional law enforcement forums such as the Pacific Islands Police Chiefs.
- Further enhance data collection on, and establish national frameworks to, address human trafficking and exploitation that is occurring within the region, and work with partners to address trafficking flows at their source.
- Explore opportunities such as establishing more laboratory testing facilities for drugs in the region and strengthening supply chain integrity through private-public partnerships.

Cybersecurity

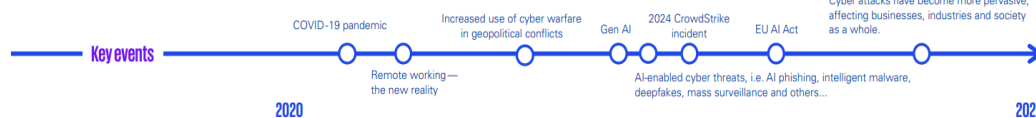
Current situation

The cyber environment in the Pacific continues to evolve at an unprecedented rate of change and the region is strengthening its cyber posture; a Pacific capability gap remains. Cyberattacks across the Pacific have had significant social and economic consequences at all levels of the community, disrupting



critical services, impeding economic activity and resulting in financial losses.¹¹¹ The increasing adoption of digital connectivity and emerging technologies such as artificial intelligence (AI) are redefining almost every facet of society, making cybersecurity not just a national security concern, but a universal issue of concern across all aspects of society globally and in the Pacific.

Trend analysis 2020 – 2025



Source: KPMG Report – *Cybersecurity Considerations 2025*¹¹²

The graphic above shows that cybersecurity is not a static function¹¹³ and shows how cyber-threats have changed over the last five years- in particular, the use of cyber warfare as part of geopolitical competition, the introduction of AI as a readily available tool, and the pervasiveness of cyber-attacks and cybercrimes impacting governments, business, industry and individuals.

In 2025, the Pacific saw several major cyber-attacks. In February, Palau’s Ministry of Health and Human Services experienced a ransomware attack which led to the theft of sensitive information that was published online¹¹⁴ and crippled their financial system.¹¹⁵ In May, the Central Bank of Solomon Island’s information systems experienced an attack, however impact was minimal due to their cybersecurity plan.¹¹⁶ In February 2025, Samoa issued an advisory on APT40¹¹⁷, an alleged People’s Republic of China (PRC) state-sponsored cyber group that is increasing its activities into the Pacific,¹¹⁸ as exemplified by a large-scale phishing campaign by APT40 in PNG¹¹⁹ and other potential PIC targets. In June, Tonga faced a significant cyber-attack on its Ministry of Health information systems with data published online in the attack.¹²⁰

At the community and individual levels, phishing scams can exploit Pacific culture where online scammers use local languages, pretend to be trusted family or community members and the request is for urgent help.¹²¹ A University of Auckland study found that scammers can potentially exploit the communal nature of Pacific cultures which are focused on helping one another.¹²²

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Cybercriminal and state-sponsored actors will continue to target the Pacific due to weak regulatory

¹¹¹ Peace and Security | Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat

¹¹² Cybersecurity considerations 2025

¹¹³ Ibid.

¹¹⁴ Palau health ministry on the mend after Qilin ransomware attack | The Record from Recorded Future News

¹¹⁵ Pacific Cyber Week 2025 shows the way forward | The Strategist

¹¹⁶ CBSI Confirms Cyber Attack On System But Impact “minor” — Solomon Business Magazine

¹¹⁷ APT40- SamCERT Cyber Threat Advisory_FINAL_0.pdf

¹¹⁸ Samoa Issues Alert on Chinese APT40 Hackers Targeting Pacific Region- Samoa Global News

¹¹⁹ Government-backed actors exploiting WinRAR vulnerability

¹²⁰ Frequently Asked Questions- Cyber-Attack on Tonga’s Ministry of Health

¹²¹ How email phishing scams can exploit Pacific culture – University of Auckland

¹²² Ibid.

environments, lagging online safety and cybersecurity standards and systemic capability and capacity constraints. Given the increased tempo of cyberattacks on state and/or public information systems, it is likely this trend will continue over the next 12 to 24 months.

The United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime report, on TNOC in the Pacific highlighted the impact of cyber-related crimes on Pacific communities ranging from financial scams, online child sexual exploitation, tourism and romance scams¹²³ and request for urgent help scams. A trend that may increase is the use of cyber technologies to facilitate criminal and TNOC activities such as prostitution, human trafficking, drug trafficking and illegal gambling.¹²⁴ Emerging issues such as cryptocurrency and virtual assets are likely to impact PICs given that these technologies are outstripping the capabilities of Pacific law enforcement and financial regulatory agencies.¹²⁵

Mitigating the threat of ‘scam centres’ run by bad actors, including Asian crime syndicates in countries such as Cambodia, Myanmar and Laos to Timor Leste, neighbouring Australia and on the periphery of the Pacific.¹²⁶ Asian crime syndicates targeted Timor Leste due to a greater amount of commercial activity coupled with lesser regulatory oversight.¹²⁷ The Pacific may see the emergence of such “scam centres” if cybersecurity capability and capacity constraints persist. Increasing community awareness of cyber safety issues remains crucial to safeguarding Pacific communities from malicious actors.

The continuing emergence and growth of AI technology and the risks and opportunities that accompany such technology will be an issue that will require careful management over the next 12 to 24 months. PICs may need to consider collective development of legislation, oversight and monitoring for the effective utilisation of AI to address capacity and capability constraints in dealing with AI and other emerging technologies.

Given the increasing rate of cyber-attacks on public or state information systems and increasing incidents of cybercrimes such as online scams and phishing, regional cooperation and coordination remain important to tackling the significant cyber challenges faced in the Pacific. Support from regional organisations such as the Pacific Cyber Security Operational Network (PacSON) and programs such as Cyber Safety Pasifika, Australia’s Cyber RAPID teams¹²⁸ alongside external partners will be important for the Pacific in addressing cyber incidents and threats in a timely manner.¹²⁹ Strengthening support for the UN Convention on Cybercrime and the Lagatoi Declaration, as well as accelerating their implementation, remains pivotal.

Opportunities

Opportunities to address cybersecurity challenges remain extant from last year’s report. Further to these, countries may wish to consider the below:

123 unodc.org/roseap/uploads/documents/2024/TOCTA_Pacific_2024.pdf

124 Ibid.

125 Ibid.

126 UN says there’s evidence organised crime scam centres are moving from South-East Asia into new frontier of the Pacific- ABC News

127 Ibid.

128 Cyber Affairs and Critical Technology | Australian Government Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade

129 Cyber Affairs and Critical Technology | Australian Government Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade



- Accelerate the implementation of the Lagatoi Declaration and its Action Plan to situate the region appropriately to address regional ICT and cybersecurity requirements, while also leveraging the Review of Regional Architecture and the Boe Declaration Action Plan review to strengthen Pacific cybersecurity.
- Continue to improve data collection and information sharing on cyber threats within the region. Particular attention may be needed on cyber threats impacting individuals, children and marginalised/vulnerable sections of the community.
- Consider a regional approach to Pacific cyber attribution, building on the experiences of Pacific Island Countries.
- Continue to support bodies such as Australia's Cyber RAPID teams, PaCSON and Cyber Safety Pasifika¹³⁰ and continue to raise awareness and capacity build through conferences like the Pacific Cyber Capacity Building and Coordination Conference (P4C).¹³¹

Preserving the Rule of Law

Current Situation

Preserving the rule of law amidst global security challenges and strains in the multilateral system remains challenging for many Pacific island countries. According to the World Justice Project Rule of Law Index 2025, "rising authoritarianism is driving a "rule of law recession" mainly through a reduction in civic space (freedom of expression, assembly and participation) and weakening checks and balances (auditing, legislative checks on the executive and judicial limits on government power)".^{132 133}

In this dynamic, PICs' ability to preserve the rule of law has been shaped by factors not limited to corruption, misinformation and disinformation, foreign interference and institutional strength.¹³⁴ These factors are now exacerbated by geopolitical competition. The Corruption Perception Index Report by Transparency International (TI) found that, over the past several years, PICs have shown little improvement in addressing corruption.¹³⁵ The report further found that some PICs are hampered in their ability to respond effectively to the impacts of climate change due to poor governance and weak integrity systems.¹³⁶ Trust in public institutions remains of concern across the Pacific.

Foreign interference is a driver for political uncertainty and influencing governance struggles in the Pacific. A recent article published by the Australian Institute of International Affairs contends that several actors may have been involved in disinformation in the Pacific.¹³⁷ Examples cited were: China

130 CSP Coming Soon

131 Pacific nations unite to address cybersecurity challenges- Oceania Cyber Security Centre

132 WJP Rule of Law Index 2025 Global Press Release | World Justice Project

133 Ibid.

134 From previous iterations of the Pacific Security Outlook Report, these factors have consistently been highlighted.

135 2024 Corruption Perceptions Index: Countries on... - Transparency.org

136 Ibid.

137 Foreign State-Sponsored Disinformation in the Pacific Islands » NZIIA- New Zealand Institute of International Affairs



uses disinformation and influence campaigns against Taiwan; and Russia and China state-sponsored media had pushed news that there was a US conspiracy to remove a former Prime Minister of the Solomon Islands.¹³⁸

Misinformation and targeted disinformation campaigns continue to threaten Pacific regional security and social cohesion. A recent study on social media, human rights and democracy in the Pacific¹³⁹ highlighted that on average 88 percent of respondents in three PICs surveyed encountered false information on social media and acknowledged the impact of misinformation on public opinion. The study also showed the high reliance on social media platforms for information and that during elections, social media was the preferred modality to receive and access information on electoral processes and candidates.¹⁴⁰ Democratic processes may be tested as a result of these uncertainties and ongoing influence campaigns and actions by domestic and external interests.

In PNG, there is a growing trend for youths to be recruited by political actors and tribal clans to carry out attacks against rival groups using high-powered firearms which undermines rule of law, disrupts service delivery and causes instability.

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The Pacific region will continue to navigate a landscape of political uncertainty, challenges to governance and capacity constraints that, coupled with growing foreign influence driven by geopolitical and geostrategic considerations, will test the strength of democracy, the rule of law and trust in public institutions over the coming 12 to 24 months.

Uncertainty will feature across the Pacific political spectrum, with several major elections due to take place in 2026 including in Cook Islands, Fiji, New Caledonia, Niue and New Zealand. Elections in New Caledonia, for instance, may include a referendum on the Bougival Accord and its accompanying “Elysee Oudinot Agreement” which is a central consideration for preserving the rule of law within the new ‘state within the French state’. Elections in Cook Islands may also feature as a referendum on its recent comprehensive partnership with China and elections in Fiji are inherently volatile given its political history.

Although the Teieniwa Vision serves as the region’s commitment to combat corruption in all its forms, many PICs still have inadequate national anti-corruption measures, nor do they have the required institutional capacities to effectively combat corruption. Corruption will continue to persist and may increase given the involvement of external actors bidding for influence and access, stagnant wages and salaries in the public sector, and the increasing prevalence of TNOC actors in the region.

Political volatility in some PICs will continue to be exacerbated by misinformation and targeted disinformation campaigns across media platforms.

138 Ibid.

139 Social Media, Human Rights and Democracy in the Pacific: Evidence and analysis from Fiji, Solomon Islands and Samoa- GOV.UK

140 Ibid.



Opportunities

Opportunities to preserve the rule of law are extant with last year's report, as follows:

- Enhance collective efforts in combatting corruption by accelerating implementation of the United Nations Convention against Corruption (UNCAC) and its principles through the Teieniwa Vision, including by strengthening linkages and information sharing between anti-corruption bodies in the region.¹⁴¹
- Promoting Pacific leadership on reinforcing the rules-based order and addressing violations of international law to drive global action and draw attention to Pacific priorities.
- Coordinate across the Forum Membership to strengthen community awareness of misinformation and disinformation and sharing instances of targeted disinformation campaigns within the Forum Membership.
- Explore adaptive existing legal and policy frameworks within and external to the region that provide flexible and agile approaches to identifying and addressing undue foreign influence.

Economic Security

Current Situation

Strengthening economic security remains a priority for the Forum Membership and is a critical enabler to strengthening responses across Boe Declaration security challenges. Economic growth in the Pacific region was expected to increase from 3.6 percent in 2024 to 4.1 percent in 2025.¹⁴² According to the Asian Development Bank, although growth is good, uncertainty posed by the geopolitical environment and trade projections continue to pose risks to growth.¹⁴³ Growth has been largely driven by record high resource outputs from PNG, as growth across other parts of the south Pacific remain stagnant or revised slightly downwards. In the northern Pacific, all three economies grew in 2025 with Palau's economy growing by 8.2 percent. Inflation levels remain steady across the Pacific.

De-risking and correspondent banking relationships (CBR) remain an issue of concern for several PIC economies, as covered in last year's report. There are some concerns that if CBR results in the withdrawal of conventional banking services, more opportunities may arise for TNOC actors and state-based actors to operate in the region. Several PICs including PNG, the Republic of the Marshall Islands (RMI) and Nauru had their mutual evaluation reports for compliance and effectiveness to Anti Money Laundering/Countering Financing of Terrorism (AML/CFT) measures published in 2024 with varying deficiencies identified. Niue was due to have its report completed in 2025. PICs' ability to adhere to AML/CFT standards is vital to maintaining correspondent banking relationships. The Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat in conjunction with the World Bank continue to assist PICs with CBR.

141 Pacific Islands Law Officers' Network

142 Asian Development Outlook (ADO) December 2025: Growth Steadies But Uncertainty Lingers

143 Ibid.



Implementation and rollout of the Pacific Roadmap for Economic Development (PRED) by Forum Members commenced in 2025. The PRED will provide a framework to coordinate, prioritise and phase the implementation of economic and development actions that support the achievement of the 2050 Strategy.¹⁴⁴

Pacific Island countries are also heavily reliant on international markets and supply chains to remain connected to the global economy, primarily due to physical remoteness. The region's physical remoteness and excessive cost of transportation create difficulties in maintaining resilient supply chains for supplies and resources, including food. In the aftermath of the December 2024 earthquake in Vanuatu, the country experienced suspensions in telecommunications and internet, interruptions to clean water supply and damaged Port Vila's Bauerfield International Airport and Port Vila Central hospital. Food insecurity rose significantly during this period, with 55 percent of households finding it difficult to access markets to purchase food immediately after the earthquake.¹⁴⁵

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Global growth in 2026 is expected to remain steady, forecasted at 2.6 percent down from 2.7 percent in 2025, then slightly increasing to 2.7 percent in 2027.¹⁴⁶ Global growth over the next 12 to 24 months will continue to be impacted by tariffs, uncertain trade conditions and geopolitical uncertainty but is expected to remain resilient.¹⁴⁷ Growth in the US economy will be 2.2 percent in 2026, while China's economy will slow from 4.9 percent growth in 2025 to 4.4 percent in 2026.¹⁴⁸

Growth in the Pacific region in 2026 is expected to slow from 4.1 percent in 2025 to 3.4 percent in 2026.¹⁴⁹ The impact of US tariffs is expected to be slight across the Pacific, with several PICs having their tariffs adjusted to 15 percent down from a higher rate.¹⁵⁰ However, countries like Fiji have revised their growth projections in 2026 as a result of the indirect impact of US tariffs on its major trading partners.¹⁵¹ US tariffs and stable growth in the global economy over 2026 will shape economic growth across the Pacific.

The impact of climate change, climate-induced disasters and geological hazards will continue to exacerbate structural vulnerabilities across Pacific economies. The unintended consequences of labour mobility and migration is beginning to be felt. Negative trends in education and health statistics across the Pacific may have an impact on economic resilience in the near- to mid-future.

As noted in last year's report, the growing convergence between business interests, financial crimes and complex transnational crimes¹⁵² may have a distortionary effect on markets and may impact foreign reserves across affected PICs, especially those that have large volumes of trade with Asian business entities in extractive industries.

144 REGIONAL FRAMEWORK: Pacific Roadmap for Economic Development 2025-2030 | Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat

145 Socio-economic Impacts of the December 2024 Earthquake in Vanuatu: Insights from High-frequency Phone Surveys

146 Global Economy Shows Resilience Amid Historic Trade, Policy Uncertainty

147 Global Economy Shows Resilience Amid Historic Trade, Policy Uncertainty

148 Ibid.

149 <https://www.adb.org/news/growth-pacific-accelerate-4-1-percent-2025-moderate-3-4-percent-2026-adb>

150 Tariff tensions: Pacific islands brace for impacts of Trump policy

151 Growth in the Pacific to Accelerate to 4.1% in 2025, Moderate to 3.4% in 2026 — ADB | Asian Development Bank

152 Virginia-Comolli-An-industry-of-crime-Foreign-businesses-and-illicit-practices-in-the-Pacific-GI-TOC-April-2024.pdf



Efforts on de-risking and strengthening CBRs in the Pacific will continue over the next 12 to 24 months. PNG will likely be grey listed by the Financial Action Task Force (FATF) for AML/CFT deficiencies in 2026 which will have grave implications for investment, trade and ease of doing business.¹⁵³ This follows PNG's mutual evaluation process in 2023. Australia, Fiji and Vanuatu will undergo mutual evaluation in 2026. Vanuatu has been on the FATF grey list for AML/CFT deficiencies from 2015/2016 and was taken off in 2018.¹⁵⁴ PICs including Fiji, Palau, Samoa and Vanuatu are currently listed by the European Union (EU) for harmful preferential tax regimes.¹⁵⁵

Energy security is an emerging issue that will have an impact on Pacific economies over the long term. Global energy markets will be shaped by strategic competition; resilience building by diversification of energy sources; and the boom in AI data centres sucking in energy resources.¹⁵⁶ This will impact the Pacific in relation to achieving its Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs)¹⁵⁷, transition to clean energy, and energy requirements to keep their economies going. As stated in last year's report, energy resilience through local renewable energy projects and improving energy infrastructure will remain critical.¹⁵⁸

Over the coming 12 to 24 months, the World Bank assesses that the global economic context has become less favourable due to increasing trade policy restrictions, uncertainty about further trade policy changes and a potentially deteriorating global growth outlook.¹⁵⁹ For PICs, these external conditions can limit sustained growth, delay or prevent their full recovery to or above pre-COVID economic conditions and impact overall resilience.

Opportunities:

- Progress the implementation of the Pacific Roadmap for Economic Development (PRED) in particular:
 - “Unlocking Blue Pacific Prosperity” or the Blue Economy through technical and policy assistance and identifying opportunities for public co-investment.
 - Emphasising investment in new sources of growth in high potential sectors, including building up infrastructure; mainstreaming resilience into development plans, and ensuring macro-economic stability through diversification and fiscal buffers against shocks.
- Build on existing mechanisms such as the Asia/Pacific Group on Money Laundering (APGML) and national and regional financial intelligence, compliance and supervision efforts to assist PICs with compliance to FATF AML/CFT measures.

153 “PNG Braces for FATF Grey Listing as Central Bank Warns of Economic Fallout” — News — PNG Business News
 154 Vanuatu prepares for global AML assessment in 2026 - Financial Markets Association of Vanuatu
 155 Taxation: member states update EU list of non-cooperative tax jurisdictions- Consilium
 156 Global energy in 2026: Growth, resilience and competition | World Economic Forum
 157 Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) | UNFCCC
 158 Integrating renewable energy sources into grids | McKinsey
 159 Global Economic Prospects

Traditional Security

Current Situation

Concurrent global flashpoints continue to deteriorate the international security environment while political volatility in several regional flashpoints continue to shape regional security considerations.

The Russian invasion of Ukraine conflict has broader implications beyond Europe on the Indo-Pacific region, in particular with the involvement of North Korea supporting Russia with troops.¹⁶⁰ Aside from indirect impacts on the Pacific, like inflationary spillovers, the provision by some PICs of flags of convenience¹⁶¹ to international shipping will likely be subjected to greater scrutiny and may have reputational impacts¹⁶² if and when their flags are used by Russia, Iran or North Korea to evade sanctions. Palau and Vanuatu are currently on the Paris Memorandum of Understanding¹⁶³ blacklist with the Cook Islands on the gray-list.¹⁶⁴ The Republic of Marshall Islands is the only PIC white-listed for satisfactory regulatory performance.¹⁶⁵

At the time of publication of this report, the situation in the Middle East is highly dynamic and remains tense with the potential for escalation at any time. The Israel-Hamas conflict has reached a ceasefire brokered by the US in conjunction with Qatar and Egypt.¹⁶⁶ Tensions in the Red Sea continue with Houthi attacks on international shipping and recently detained UN officials for allegedly spying for Israel.¹⁶⁷ Iran has been weakened by the attacks carried out by Israel and the US and is currently unable to mobilise its proxies effectively.¹⁶⁸

The South China Sea and Taiwan Strait continue to be arenas for contestation and manoeuvring between China and the US and its partners. The potential for strategic miscalculation remains.

In the region, the political uncertainty surrounding the future of New Caledonia and Bougainville will continue to be of concern as potential regional flashpoints.

Regional coordination through meetings such as JHOPS and the ongoing strengthening of regional response mechanisms can strengthen Pacific regional security. Work to deliver a regional operations deployment framework; the PRG (a SPDMM initiative) broadening its scope from HADR to stabilisation operations; and the Pacific Policing Initiative (PPI) and its Pacific Police Support Group (PPSG) are proactive actions to strengthen collective responses to Pacific security in view of an uncertain strategic landscape.

The Blue Pacific Ocean of Peace Declaration endorsed by Forum Leaders in 2025, in tandem with the Biketawa and Boe Declarations will frame regional collective responses to traditional security threats.

- 160 Kim Jong-un admits North Korean troops clearing landmines for Russia | North Korea | The Guardian
- 161 Pacific island office enabling sanctions-busting 'shadow fleets'
- 162 Flags of Convenience: A Cloak for Illicit Maritime Activity (Part I)- Global Financial Integrity
- 163 White, Grey and Black List | Paris MoU
- 164 How Weak Flag Oversight Is Undermining the Legitimacy of Pacific Island States – The Diplomat
- 165 Ibid.
- 166 Trump's Gaza peace plan struggles to progress as Israel and Hamas face tough choices
- 167 Yemen's Houthis appear to pull back from Red Sea shipping attacks | Houthi News | Al Jazeera
- 168 A view from Tehran: GCC-Iran relations after the bombing of Qatar and the Gaza cease-fire | Clingendael



Horizon 2027

Traditional security threats will continue to be a key area of concern for Pacific countries over the next 12 to 24 months. Russia's invasion of Ukraine is ongoing. The continuing support by North Korea to Russia is worrying given the financial aid, military technology, food and energy it receives in return.¹⁶⁹ This may have the potential to fuel North Korea's nuclear program which will have negative impacts on security on the Korean Peninsula, the broader region and the Pacific.¹⁷⁰ The outlook for the South China Sea and Taiwan Strait over the next 12 to 24 months will be shaped by China's continuing military buildup in order to be ready to invade Taiwan by 2027, also the 100th year anniversary for the Peoples Liberation Army.¹⁷¹

Although conflict in Gaza between Israel and Hamas has de-escalated, its impacts will continue to be felt in the Pacific. At the community level, disagreements have emerged driven by social and religious factors across PICs. Antisemitism is on the rise in the region¹⁷² with several incidents occurring from 2024 culminating in the shooting in Bondi, Sydney, Australia targeting a Jewish gathering for 'Hanukkah' that saw sixteen people killed and forty wounded.

Divergent foreign policy positions are emerging where PICs like PNG¹⁷³ and Fiji¹⁷⁴ have established their embassies in Jerusalem while Australia has recognised a State of Palestine¹⁷⁵. The potential for PICs, in particular Fiji, to participate in an International Stabilisation Force in Gaza may have broader security implications for the region.¹⁷⁶ The outbreak of protests and violence in Iran in early January 2026 has left 16,500 people dead and 300,000 injured¹⁷⁷ and the US, Israel and other powers are monitoring the situation closely. Any regime change in Iran will have far reaching implications for the middle-east and globally.

In the Pacific, the positioning of military and strategic assets into the region is likely to increase over the next 12 to 24 months. This was demonstrated in the recent past by China increasing visibility around its military capability through the conduct of an intercontinental ballistic missile test¹⁷⁸ and freedom of navigation patrols¹⁷⁹, including circumnavigating Australia¹⁸⁰. US submarines have started to make port calls into Australia as the first step under AUKUS towards obtaining conventionally-armed nuclear-powered submarines.¹⁸¹ The US continues to strengthen its presence in the northern Pacific and its maritime presence across the Pacific through ship-rider arrangements enabling them to operate in PIC Exclusive Economic Zones (EEZs).

169 Kim Jong-un admits North Korean troops clearing landmines for Russia | North Korea | The Guardian

170 Pacific leaders condemn North Korea's threat- Island Times News

171 Classified US intelligence warns of China's preparations for Taiwan invasion- ABC News

172 Bondi Beach Attack: A Timeline of Rising Antisemitism in Australia Since the Gaza War | TIME

173 Kundu Jerusalem | DFA

174 FIJI OFFICIALLY INAGURATES EMBASSY IN JERUSALEM-(18-09-2025 | Office of the Prime Minister Fiji

175 Australia to recognise Palestinian statehood; New Zealand may follow | Israel-Palestine conflict News | Al Jazeera; Australia recognises the State of Palestine | Australian Minister for Foreign Affairs.

176 Israel signals possible peacekeeping role in Gaza- The Fiji Times

177 Iran crackdown left 16,500 dead, 330,000 injured- Sunday Times | Iran International

178 China test-fires intercontinental ballistic missile into Pacific

179 Defence briefs Pacific nations on China's naval flotilla but 'final destination' unknown- ABC News

180 Chinese Task Force Circumnavigates Australia, Causing Local Stir

181 USS Minnesota (SSN 783) Advances AUKUS with Port Visit to HMAS Stirling > U.S. Pacific Fleet > News



Bougainville will continue to be a regional security concern with significant implications for Papua New Guinea (PNG), the Melanesian sub-region and the broader Pacific. Despite the Melanesian Agreement¹⁸², sustained commitment by PNG is viewed to be uncertain; with President Toroama of the Autonomous Region of Bougainville stating that they will unilaterally declare independence if the referendum result is not ratified by 1 September 2027.¹⁸³ Bougainville's Panguna mine has one of the richest copper deposits in the world of one billion tonnes, and 12 million ounces of gold.¹⁸⁴ External partners such as China¹⁸⁵ and the US¹⁸⁶ are already being approached to support mining operations as an economic basis to support Bougainville's independence, which could heighten internal tensions and link them to geopolitical contestation.

The way forward on New Caledonia remains ambiguous despite the provisional Bougival Agreement¹⁸⁷, that grants New Caledonia a 'state within the French State' status. In January 2026, the French President Macron and five parliamentary groups from New Caledonia, with the exception of the Front de Libération Nationale Kanak et Socialiste (FLNKS), the largest pro-independence party, signed the Elysee-Oudinot Agreement.^{188 189} This agreement further articulates the text of the Bougival Agreement with a central outcome being constitutional change to replace the 1998 Noumea Accord, which was the basis for the political referendum process on the question of New Caledonian self-determination.¹⁹⁰ New Caledonia's territorial elections will likely be postponed for a fourth time, as negotiations on a new institutional future framework continue.¹⁹¹ The ongoing political ambiguity may give rise to further escalation of civil disorder and protests in the near to mid future, although France has maintained an elevated security presence in the territory following the riots.

Opportunities

A key opportunity to be explored over the next 12 to 24 months is the Blue Pacific Ocean of Peace Declaration (BPOPD) and its application to Pacific engagement with global flashpoints and in managing regional flashpoints and promoting peace and security across the Pacific. This may also include opportunities for regional dialogue through existing peace and security declarations and mechanisms and gaining recognition for the BPOPD by external partners¹⁹².

182 "PM Marape and President Toroama Sign Melanesian Agreement, Affirming Commitment to Bougainville Peace Process" — News — PNG Business News

183 Ishmael Toroama's election victory pushes Bougainville towards independence by 2027

184 Panguna Copper Deposit, Papua New Guinea | NASA Jet Propulsion Laboratory (JPL)

185 Bougainville wants independence. China's support for a controversial mine could pave the way- ABC Pacific

186 Bougainville chasing United States support for independence and Panguna mine reopening | RNZ News

187 It is up to the people of New Caledonia to decide their future- France ONU

188 FLNKS formally rejects Bougival Accord for New Caledonia- Islands Business

189 New Caledonia agreement signed in Paris- Islands Business

190 New Caledonia agreement signed in Paris- Islands Business

191 Ibid.

192 WORD TEMPLATE A4 [H]



Implications of Dynamic Geopolitics

Current Situation

The Pacific remains of strategic significance to external actors. The geopolitical competition between the US and China continues to strain the multilateral system. The trickle-down effect of this contestation is beginning to be felt in the Pacific in critical sectors such as health, education as geostrategic considerations begin to influence development assistance considerations to a greater extent.

The first year of US President Trump's second term in office has seen the Pacific become part of US-imposed global tariffs, receiving an increasing number of criminal deportees, new visa restrictions and conditions on immigrant and non-immigrant visas^{193 194}, and feel the effects of rollbacks to funding of multilateral organisations such as the World Trade Organisation (WTO)¹⁹⁵ and the World Health Organisation (WHO)¹⁹⁶. The withdrawal of the US from the Paris Agreement for the second time will have significant implications for Pacific efforts to effectively adapt to and mitigate the impacts of climate change.¹⁹⁷

PICs continue to utilise available bilateral, regional and multilateral approaches to effectively deal with the opportunities and risks that materialise from a dynamic and ever-evolving geopolitical environment.

Horizon 2027

Engagement with the Pacific will remain a priority for many external actors, particularly within the context of future geopolitical manoeuvring of the US and China. As a result, several key emerging trends will play out over the next 12 to 24 months that involve external and Pacific actors alike.

Given the sharpening geostrategic landscape driven by US and China competition, and the prevalence of military and strategic assets in the region, there is an increasing appetite for security and defence agreements between PICs and external partners as well as amongst Pacific Island Forum members themselves. The Forum Membership is also continuing to sign agreements within the Membership, reflective of shared interests and shared geography. Many of these agreements also seek to enhance collective ability to respond to shared security priorities. In 2025, Papua New Guinea and Solomon Islands signed an Agreement Concerning the Administration of Special Areas and Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) on Combined Surveillance of the Common Maritime Border; Solomon Islands and Fiji strengthened bilateral ties with a security agreement; and Australia and PNG signed a mutual defence treaty, the PukPuk Treaty.¹⁹⁹ In January 2026, Kiribati and New Zealand signed a Statement of Partnership. Australia and Vanuatu are in the process of finalising a security agreement.²⁰⁰ Australia and Fiji will pursue treaty negotiations in line with their growing security partnership²⁰¹ and Australia and Tonga have announced a statement of intent to negotiate the Kaume' a Ofi agreement in 2025.

193 Bonds, blockings and bans: a massive new-year shakeup to Pacific-US travel | RNZ News

194 US to suspend immigrant visa processing for 75 countries, including Fiji- ABC News

195 White House drops World Trade Organization from list of funding cuts | Reuters

196 The Consequences of the U.S.'s Withdrawal from the WHO | Johns Hopkins | Bloomberg School of Public Health

197 U.S. Withdrawal from the Paris Agreement: Process and Potential Effects | Congress.gov | Library of Congress

The trend of securitisation of development assistance and cooperation arrangements with the region will continue. External partners are weaving areas of cooperation in development and economic agreements that may have security implications. The Comprehensive Strategic Partnership Agreement between China and the Cook Islands¹⁹⁸ focuses on economic and technical cooperation, blue economy and seabed minerals research that can have security implications. Recently, a US-based research vessel carried out scientific exploration of areas of Cook Islands' EEZ¹⁹⁹ that was closely followed by a Chinese research vessel, linked to naval interests for the same purpose²⁰⁰.

Over the next 12 to 24 months, the emergence of new areas for geopolitical contestation in the Pacific may converge around seabed mining and critical minerals as a result of Trump's policy that allows for the US to issue seabed mining licenses²⁰¹; and space policy and emerging technologies. Pacific voices may be limited in dealing with these emerging issues as they are most likely to be advanced through mini-lateral groupings dependent on relevant expertise, capacity and capability.

Opportunities

A key opportunity to be explored over the next 12 to 24 months will be the diplomatic levers the Pacific can employ through the implementation of the Blue Pacific Ocean of Peace Declaration in relation to managing the impact of great power competition on the region and enhancing regional solidarity and cohesion in the face of a sharpening geopolitical and geostrategic landscape.

Opportunities also exist for garnering international support for the Blue Pacific Ocean of Peace Declaration such as recognition by the UN General Assembly for instance.

198 Cook Islands and China formalise agreements to strengthen partnership and cooperation- Office of the Prime Minister Cook Islands

199 NOAA-Supported Expedition on E/V Nautilus to Explore Deep Waters of the Cook Islands- NOAA Ocean Exploration

200 Chinese research vessel linked to naval interests surveys Cook Islands waters | RNZ News

201 Deep sea mining frontrunner set to sidestep UN oversight , pivots to US route | RNZ News



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