



FORTNIGHTLY SECURITY UPDATE (FSU)

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Vanuatu

New Action Plan targets people trafficking: The Ministry of Internal Affairs (MoIA), in partnership with the International Organisation for Migration (IOM), [launched](#) Vanuatu's first National Action Plan on Trafficking in Persons.

The plan focuses on combating human trafficking and protecting vulnerable migrants. IOM's Vanuatu Office Head Carl Adams highlighted the positive potential of migration, facilitated by labour agreements and modern technology, but also warned of a concurrent risk of transnational crime, including in human trafficking. Internal Affairs Minister Napuat stressed the collaborative effort behind the plan, which focuses on Prevention, Protection, Prosecution, and Partnership. Both officials emphasized the importance of collaboration to achieve the plan.

Vanuatu has experience with people trafficking; 101 Bangladeshi victims of labour exploitation and trafficking were in the country between 2018 to 2022.

Comment: *The launch of the plan will help relevant government agencies and partners prioritise to both prevent and address human trafficking problems. This will matter more in our region in the years ahead as global connectivity increases and the likelihood of refugee movements caused by climate change, inter-state*

conflict, and economic disasters rises. This plan can help protect vulnerable migrants but also better position Vanuatu to combat transnational crimes more effectively. By focusing on prevention, protection, prosecution, and partnership, it sets a strategic framework for long-term safety and justice.



Attendees at the launch of the Vanuatu National Action Plan on trafficking in persons, 3 September

Freshwota evacuation centre works underway:

The ADB-funded, VT200 million Freshwota Emergency Evacuation Centre, was [announced](#) by Minister Andrew Napuat this week. Designed to house 280 people and withstand Category 5 cyclones, it will include a 60,000-litre water capacity, a generator, and will be elevated to evade flooding.

Minister Napuat emphasized its importance for community safety during disasters as well as its revenue generation potential – such as by hosting community events. Managed by the Port Vila City Council, the project is part of Vanuatu's broader efforts to mitigate climate change impacts. Local leaders and residents collaborated on the project.



Comment: *The new centre in Freshwota will likely play an important part in protecting citizens' welfare in future disaster scenarios, offering protection during cyclones, floods, and other disasters. Vanuatu is ranked by the World Bank and other institutions as the world's most at-risk country to natural disasters and extreme weather events, making climate change the greatest ongoing threat to our people and ecosystems.*

This facility will likely prove a wise investment into community safety and resilience and the project reflects Vanuatu's commitment to improve its coping and resilience capacities and to ensure a safer future for its citizens.



Minister Napuat unveiling the model design of the Freshwota Evacuation Centre, Daily Post.

Regional

PIF Leaders' Meeting wrap up: Climate change and climate financing [dominated](#) early talks at last week's meeting in Tonga. Leaders also [endorsed](#) the Pacific Policing Initiative (PPI), which would establish four police training centres in the Pacific, a multi-country police response capability, and a regional police coordination hub in Brisbane.

New Caledonia was also discussed in Tonga and on 29 August, French representatives [said](#) they'd

reached an agreement with Pacific leaders on the terms of a fact-finding mission to New Caledonia.

On the sidelines of the Forum, the Melanesian Spearhead Group, Chaired by Prime Minister Salwai, [reiterated](#) their commitment to the Melanesian people. The MSG called for a robust and unified approach to New Caledonia and highlighted the importance of supporting the Kanak population's right to self-determination.

The PIF's end-of-meeting Communiqué [included](#) a reference to Prime Minister Salwai's continued support for West Papua's cause. But, international media [highlighted](#) that the Communiqué released online on Friday was taken down and reissued after China's Pacific Envoy made complaints about Taiwan being referenced. An updated version of the document removed a section, which had mentioned Taiwan's "development partner" status in the PIF, in effect since 1993.

Comment: *Tonga's hosting of the biggest ever PIF meeting was a useful opportunity for forum members and subregional groupings like the MSG to coordinate and amplify voices on key concerns.*

But the alteration of the Communiqué distracted global media from some of the priorities leaders highlighted. And Taiwan-recognising PIF members Palau, Marshall Islands and Tuvalu may question whether the PIF still makes decisions by consensus, possibly leading to a new rift between members.



53rd Pacific Islands Forum Leaders Meeting.

PNG Speaker accepts motion for vote of no confidence: Speaker Job Pomat, has [announced](#) on the floor of parliament that a motion of no confidence in Prime Minister Marape has been presented to him and he has accepted it.

The opposition has been trying to file a motion since February, when the 18-month 'grace period' for the Marape government ended. MP Rainbo Paita, who had been a senior member of Marape's government until just months ago, [remains](#) the opposition's choice to head any new government.

Comment: *Parliament is expected to adjourn until 12 September, when it will proceed with the vote to determine whether Marape will stay or go.*

Marape managed to block four previous attempts to hold a vote of no confidence against him, but this vote appears likely to proceed. PNG politics is hard to predict but he might struggle to stay in power as PNG faces major challenges including fuel shortages, a depreciating kina, budget deficits, tribal violence and cost of living increases.



PNG Prime Minister James Marape and his challenger, Rainbo Paita

Solomon Islands' major hospital in emergency mode: The National Referral Hospital in Honiara has scaled down operations due to a [shortage](#) of consumables and anesthetic drugs, with the operating theatre now only focusing only on emergencies, caesarean births, and life-threatening cases. Services within the hospitals other departments remain normal.

The hospital is desperate to source necessary locally and from overseas, with some supplies awaiting clearance at a Honiara port.

The Ministry of Health said the first batch of medication had arrived from the Australian government's SBD\$9.1 million assistance for medicine last month.

Comment: *Hospital supply shortages has been an [ongoing](#) issue in recent years in the Solomons caused by late arrival of supplies from overseas through the ports and severe budgetary issues. Medication and medical supplies are critical for quality healthcare and patient care. It is important to maintain a steady supply of pharmaceuticals and supplies to facility- ties where they are needed while ensuring that resources are used in the most effective way.*



Solomon Islands Hospital (file image)

Disunity among New Caledonia's pro-independence parties: Only two of the FLNKS's four parties – UC and RDO – [attended](#) the group's congress last week. Both PALIKA and UPM refused to participate and have stated that the meeting's outcomes don't represent the FLNKS as a whole.

During the meeting, imprisoned activist and CCAT leader Christian Tein was nominated as the head of the FLNKS, despite being detained in France over his alleged role in rioting that began in May.

UPM President Tutugoro criticised Téin's appointment.

Separately, Veylma Falaéo [replaced](#) Roch Wamytan as the Chair of New Caledonia's Congress – the first woman to hold this position, after a surprise vote. Last Thursday, pro-France parties voted for Eveil Océanien (EO)'s candidate Falaéo, which saw her win 28 votes to Wamytan's 26. Loyalists accused Wamytan of being divisive and taking actions, like signing an MOU with Azerbaijan, without the Congress's awareness.

Comment: *The strong disagreements between New Caledonia's pro-independence parties could prolong violence and do harm to their shared goals. And animosity between the parties will likely complicate any negotiations with Paris and make engagement with others, like the Pacific Islands Forum's high-level delegation, trickier too. Meanwhile, the removal of Wamytan could lead to congress soon also taking a vote of no confidence in President Mapou's government.*



Kanak Liberation Party (PALIKA) during a press conference on 28 August.

Pope Francis visiting the region: The Pontiff arrived in Port Moresby today [6 Sep] as part of a 12-day [tour](#) of Indonesia, PNG, Timor-Leste and Singapore. While in PNG the Pope will hold a special church service for young people at Sir John Guise Stadium.

While in PNG, the Pope will likely raise climate change and associated natural disasters. He'll also visit Vanim, near the border with Indonesia, and it's expected people from West Papua will visit.

Pope Francis has already visited Indonesia, where he met outgoing president, Joko Widodo, and held mass at a Jakarta stadium.

Comment: *The trip will be the longest and farthest trip the 86-year-old has taken during his pontificate. Maintaining his personal security will be one of the challenges he'll face during the trip, as individuals and groups [attempt](#) to use papal visits as an opportunity to draw attention to their causes – including through violent acts.*



Preparations for Pope Francis visit to PNG, 1 September 2024

International

Polio found in Gaza: UN agencies and local health officials this week [launched](#) a campaign to vaccinate 640,000 children against polio following the discovery of the first confirmed case of type 2 polio in Gaza in 25 years. The first case was reported last week in a 10-month-old boy had no routine vaccinations because of the war.

To be effective, the World Health Organization (WHO) says at least 90% of children under 10 must be immunised in a short time frame. Hamas and Israel agreed to humanitarian pauses in

fighting between 6am and 3pm for few days to enable vaccination teams to conduct their work. Israel agreed to allow 1.3m doses to be brought into Gaza and Israel Prime Minister Netanyahu said his country saw the prevention of a polio outbreak as important for the region.

Comment: *Polio is a highly contagious disease that can cause paralysis and death, particularly in young children. A wider regional outbreak of the virus might occur if it's not dealt with quickly. There are no known cases of polio in the Pacific but infections have been [recorded](#) in Indonesia. While there is no cure for polio, widespread immunisation has helped prevent its spread elsewhere.*



A health worker administers the polio vaccine to a Palestinian child in az-Zawayda, central Gaza.

Brazil bans social media platform X: All five judges on a Supreme Court panel have [voted](#) to uphold a ban on Elon Musk's X social media platform in Brazil.

The company missed a deadline to name a legal representative in the country after X failed to follow directions, issued by Supreme Court Justice Alexandre de Moraes, to remove accounts run by "digital militias" accused of spreading disinformation in the country.

Justice de Moraes said X will remain suspended until it complies with his orders, and he also set a

daily fine for people or companies using virtual private networks, or "VPNs", to access it.

Meanwhile, SpaceX satellite internet service, Starlink – which Musk also owns – has said it will [comply](#) with court orders to block X in Brazil. Musk has been publicly berating Brazil's administration for months, after its court issued orders related to his businesses.

Comment: *The feud between Musk and Brazil's courts highlights tensions between digital sovereignty, freedom of information, and the influence of powerful tech actors. Brazil's conflict with Musk's ventures could undermine national connectivity, but it also serves as a warning to those using disinformation.*

This situation underscores the need for robust tech policies, an independent judiciary, and strong legislation to address complex telecommunications and technology issues effectively.



Starlink said it'd comply with a Brazilian Court order to block social media platform, X

Philippines claims more hundreds of Chinese vessels in its EEZ: The Philippine military [says](#) it had monitored more than 200 Chinese vessels across Manila's exclusive economic zone (EEZ) in the South China Sea over the past week – the highest number recorded this year.

According to Manila, most of the ships and boats were spotted near Sabina (Escoda) Shoal, a disputed reef and scene of an incident on 31 August, where Manila accused the Chinese coast guard of ramming a Philippine Coast Guard vessel.

71 Chinese vessels were monitored at Sabina Shoal, from 27 - Aug to 2 Sep, compared with 53 the previous week, officials said. The Chinese vessels reportedly comprised of 53 [maritime militia](#) boats, nine Navy ships and nine Coast Guard vessels. Sabina Shoal has been the site of maritime standoffs between Philippine and Chinese personnel in the past weeks.

Comment: Manila calls South China Sea waters within its EEZ – 200 nautical miles from its own coastline – the West Philippine Sea. However, Beijing claims the area as its own. The area continues to be a hotspot for confrontations and is a flashpoint that could trigger a wider conflict.

