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NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL SECRETARIAT

FORTNIGHTLY SECURITY UPDATE (FSU)

Vanuatu

VPF officers to be deployed for peacekeeping:

According to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, four VPF officers will soon be deployed to [South Sudan](#) and two to [Abyei](#) (an area with a “special administrative status” on the border of Sudan and South Sudan) for two to three years. The officers being deployed were part of a group who were trained in Indonesia.

From 2000 to 2010, Vanuatu [deployed](#) police peacekeepers on various missions. Operations resumed in 2013, with deployments ranging from one to 16 officers. Vanuatu ceased all peacekeeping missions after an incident in 2014.

Comment: *The deployment offers valuable opportunities to improve VPF members’ skills, build Vanuatu’s reputation and contribute to global initiatives to preserve peace. Upon returning home, officers may bring back knowledge that can strengthen the VPF in ways that could improve domestic leadership and law enforcement capabilities.*

But peacekeeping can also come with risks for participants. In fragile states, peacekeepers are sometimes targeted by politically motivated factions and diseases. The Republic of South Sudan gained nationhood in 2011, but outbreaks of violence, political upheaval and poor governance have undermined development

gains. South Sudan remains a fragile and unstable state.



Vanuatu Police Force officers attended peacekeeper training in Indonesia last year.

Political Parties Regulation Order to be signed soon:

Principal Electoral Officer (PEO) Guilain Malessas [announced](#) that the Ministry of Internal Affairs will soon sign a Regulation Order for the second phase of the Political Parties Registration Act. This will enable awareness campaigns across provinces before the registration process begins. The regulation includes practical measures to enforce the law and integrate it into daily operations.

Officials from the Vanuatu Electoral Office recently attended a workshop to deepen their understanding of the law. Malessas thanked the State Law Office for their support, noting that his staff are prepared to assist political parties with registration. The Act aims to bring stability to Vanuatu’s political landscape.

Comment: *The upcoming signing of the Regulation Order for the Political Parties*



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Registration Act could prove to be a significant step towards enhancing political stability in Vanuatu. Additional regulation of political parties via the Act could create a more transparent and accountable political environment, ultimately benefiting the nation's democratic processes and governance.



Principal Electoral Officer Guilain Malessas

Regional

Experts predicts average number of cyclones in South Pacific for 2024–25 season: Australia's Bureau of Meteorology (BOM) has [forecasted](#) that the number of [cyclones](#) during this year's South Pacific tropical cyclone season would be close to the average of 6 in the Eastern region and 4 in the Western region.

However, the BOM said severe cyclones were more likely because of warmer than average ocean temperatures were expected in the region.

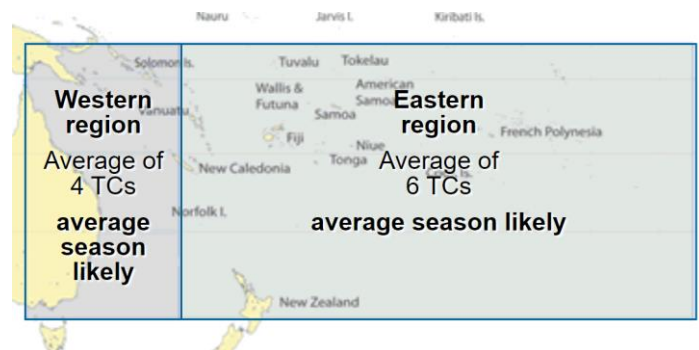
New Zealand's National Institute of Water and Atmospheric Research (NIWA) and MetService also predicted fewer or a normal number of tropical cyclones for the Pacific this season. But NIWA's cyclone outlook [report](#) also said severe cyclones were a greater risk in west (around

Vanuatu) owing to a developing La Niña causing warmer ocean water in the western Pacific.

Vanuatu's cyclone season starts from the month of November to April each year and the Vanuatu Meteorology and Geo-hazards Department (VMGD) will issue Vanuatu's cyclone forecast once all assessments are ready.

Comment: *In a globally warmer climate, it is generally more difficult for tropical cyclones to form due to less favourable atmospheric conditions. However, due to increased energy provided by warmer oceans, the tropical cyclones that do form are likely to be more intense and produce more rainfall.*

Even tropical lows that don't intensify into cyclones can still produce damaging winds, widespread rainfall, and dangerous flooding. Rising sea levels also increased the risk of storm surge from tropical cyclones.



The BOM calculates the long-term average number of tropical cyclones using data from the 1969–70 season up to the most recent season.

PNG security force shoot 6 people near Porgera mine: PNG security personnel [shot](#) six people – one fatally – and [arrested](#) dozens of illegal miners in an operation in Enga province, in the volatile Highlands region.

Authorities deployed additional officers and authorised the use of lethal force last month to quell fighting between illegal miners and landowners around Porgera gold mine.

For the second time in the past month, work on the gold mine was [suspended](#) due to criminality, disruptions to fuel transfers, and illegal roadblocks on the highway.

Comment: *Porgera goldmine held great promise for development when it began production in 1990. While it brought better services and raised significant revenue for the local and national government. But the population of Porgera jumped from 4,000 to over 70,000, which led to tensions and, eventually, fierce fighting.*



Mining vehicles destroyed by locals near Mulitaka, near the Porgera mine

Samoa prepares to host CHOGM: From 21-26 October, leaders from 56 Commonwealth nations and more than three thousand other guests will [gather](#) in Apia for the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting ([CHOGM](#)). King Charles will be among the attendees.

Preparations have been ongoing for years, with businesses and communities contributing to the effort. Members of the Pacific Police Support Group (PPSG) [arrived](#) in Apia earlier this week to assist with security support for the event. The

VPF is also providing security and escort work at CHOGM as part of a joint operation with other Pacific Island Countries.

CHOGM is the Commonwealth's primary political meeting held every two years, where leaders discuss global economic, environmental and security challenges and how to work together to overcome them. Climate change and efforts to keep up with advances in artificial intelligence are at the top of the agenda as Commonwealth leaders meet.

Comment: *This CHOGM will be the first held in a Pacific Island State. Hosting such a large multinational event is a huge logistical exercise, and the sinking of the Manawanui is additional strain on Samoa's people and resources.*

In the months leading up to the meeting, threats of infectious diseases such as monkeypox entering the country are keeping Samoa's Health Ministry on high alert. Following a deadly measles outbreak in 2019, some villages in Samoa still have low vaccination rates.

Pacific CHOGM members include: Australia, Fiji, Kiribati, Nauru, New Zealand, Papua New Guinea, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tonga, Tuvalu and Vanuatu.



Samoa's Prime Minister Afioga Fiamē Naomi Mata'afa in a recent press conference.

Solomons churches and government collaborate on health:

With research suggesting that Non-Communicable Diseases (NCDs) account for approximately 70% of deaths in Solomon Islands, a three-day summit was [held](#) to enhance cooperation between the health ministry and more than 20 churches across Honiara. The Pacific Community (SPC) and World Health Organisation (WHO) also joined the talks.

The focus of the meeting was to strengthen the role of churches in NCD prevention and control and to review an MOU between stakeholders, aimed at improving health outcomes.

Comment: *With around 92% of Solomon Islanders identifying as Christian, church involvement in spreading awareness about NCD prevention can help counter the prevalence of NCD-related deaths.*

NCDs, epidemics, and other health challenges not only cost lives but pose some of the greatest threats to national productivity and economic outcomes. So, the health sector is a critical aspect of national security. Countering NCDs with the help of churches and through advocacy from public figures like sports stars, may be worthwhile initiatives to help reduce NCD cases.

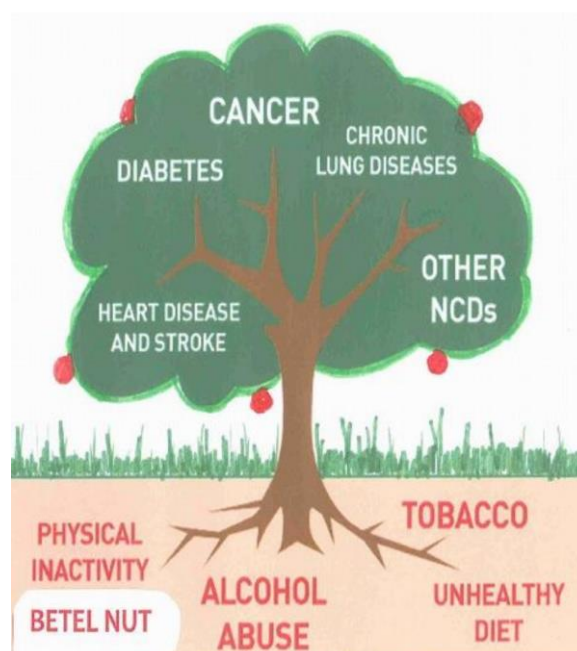
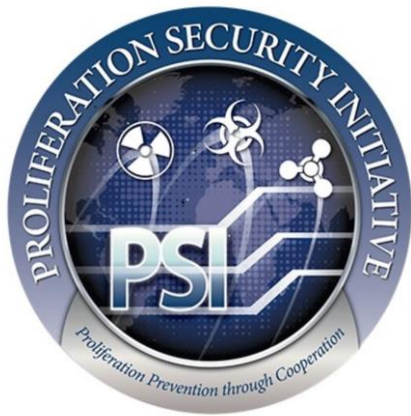


Image from a Solomon Islands Ministry of Health and Medical Services NCD awareness [document](#)

Tonga joins group against proliferation of weapons of mass destruction:

Tonga has [endorsed](#) the Proliferation Security Initiative (PSI), a global effort to prevent the trafficking of weapons of mass destructions (WMD), their delivery systems, and related materials to and from state and non-state actors of concern.

The US, which launched the initiative in 2003, welcomed Tonga's participation in the PSI, noting it is the 115th state to endorse it, and the ninth this year. Endorsing states commit to work to prevent WMD shipments in their territories and to improving laws and procedures for rapid information exchange.



The Proliferation Security Initiative (PSI) logo

Comment: *Tonga's decision to join the PSI means there are now six pacific island countries involved in the initiative – including Vanuatu. Endorsement of the PSI by these PICs shows a strong and proactive stance against WMD trafficking and underscores PICs' commitment to a nuclear weapon free Pacific, and can help enhance regional stability.*

International

US demands Israel allow more aid into Gaza as UN calls on Israel to keep peacekeepers safe:

The US has [written](#) to Israel, giving it 30 days to boost humanitarian aid access in Gaza or risk having some US military assistance cut off. The letter, sent on Sunday, comes amid a new Israeli offensive in northern Gaza that has reportedly killed many civilians.

Separately, the United Nation's Secretary-General [reiterated](#) calls for the Israeli Defence Force (IDF) to ensure the safety and security of UN personnel and property, following the breach of a UN peacekeeping position by IDF vehicles in southern Lebanon. This followed an earlier incident where five [UNIFIL](#) peacekeepers were injured and UN premises were damaged.

The UN has also [called](#) for an investigation into an Israeli air strike that killed 23 people in northern Lebanon on Monday.



UNIFIL APCs depart from a base in Lebanon to patrol the Lebanon-Israel border on 5 October 2024

Comment: *UNIFIL is a peacekeeping force in Lebanon originally set up by the UN Security Council in March 1978. It was established to oversee the Israeli withdrawal from Lebanon and to restore peace and security in the area.*

After a 34-day war in Lebanon between Hezbollah and Israel in 2006, in which 1,100 Lebanese people were killed, UNIFIL's mandate was expanded to monitor the cessation of hostilities and support Lebanese armed forces deployed throughout southern Lebanon.

As of September 2, 10,058 UNIFIL soldiers are deployed in Lebanon. They come from 50 countries.

US and China meet ASEAN leaders: Last Friday, United States Secretary of State Antony Blinken [told](#) the leaders of the 10-member Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), that the US was worried about China's "increasingly dangerous and unlawful actions" in [disputed](#) regional waterways.

In a meeting with ASEAN leaders the day before, Chinese Premier Li Qiang didn't refer to territorial disputes but described the South China Sea as a "shared home for ASEAN and China".

ASEAN has been trying to negotiate a "code of conduct" with China to lower the risk of an armed clash over territorial disputes – especially [between](#) China and the Philippines. Vietnam's prime minister, Pham Minh Chinh, called for the ASEAN code of conduct on the South China Sea to be completed and for a peaceful resolution of the offshore disputes.



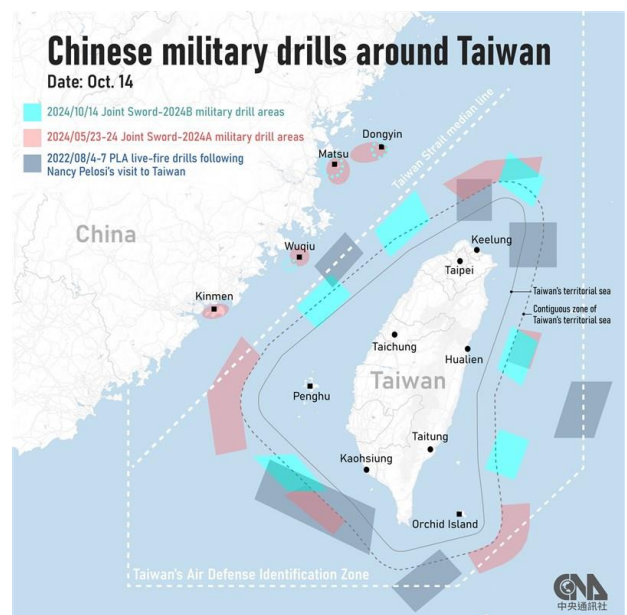
China's Premier Li Qiang addresses the 27th ASEAN-China Summit during the 44th and 45th ASEAN Summits in Laos. 10 October 2024.

Comment: The ASEAN nations an important role in regional stability and security in the Asia-Pacific region. Peace and prosperity among the ASEAN countries increases their potential as trading partners for PICs and sources of investment that can help to stimulate economic growth and development in the islands.

China conducts war games around Taiwan: China has [launched](#) new military exercises, named "Joint Sword-2024B", near Taiwan drawing condemnation from Taipei and concern from Washington. The drills covered several

regions of Taiwan including the east, north and west coast, with Chinese ships and a record number of 153 Chinese aircraft involved.

Taiwan criticised the exercises as provocations, while Beijing said they were necessary to protect China's sovereignty. The European Union urged both sides to show restraint and resolve tensions through dialogue. The drills followed a speech by Taiwan's President in which he said that Beijing had no right to represent Taiwan.



Map displaying areas where military drills have been conducted around Taiwan since 2022.

Comment: China's exercises, likely intended as a warning to Taiwan's pro-independence movements, will likely increase geopolitical tensions, with possible flow-on effects for the Pacific region, including Vanuatu.

Major powers like China and the United States will likely compete for sway around the world. And as competition intensifies, smaller countries may come under more pressure to offer security concessions. PICs may find it easier to resist unwanted advances by working in regional groupings. So, fostering regional ties and

maintaining dialogue could help maintain stability and peace in our neighbourhood.

Marshall Islands wins UN Human Rights Council seat with climate, nuclear justice agenda:

Marshall Islands was last week [elected](#) to sit on the United Nations Human Rights Council from next year. Marshall Islands intends to take forward climate change and nuclear justice as its top priorities.

At the UN General Assembly in September, Marshall Islands President Heine warned that “common multilateral progress is failing us in the hour of greatest need, perhaps most at risk are human rights.” And she said accountability must apply to all nations “without exception or double standard.”

Comment: *Currently there are no Pacific Island nations represented on the 47-member peak UN human rights body. Marshall Islands stood in the election with the full backing of the PIF membership – demonstrating the potential value of strong regional cooperation.*



President Heine at the 79th UNGA with Marshall Islands diplomats, on 24 Sept 2024.