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# **STANDING COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN AFFAIRS AND DEFENCE**

## **Review Report of the Ministry of Defence and National Security 2017-2018 Annual Report**



**PARLIAMENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF FIJI  
Parliamentary Paper No. 75 of 2023**

*July 2023*

# Table of Contents

<b>Chairperson’s Foreword.....</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Acronyms.....</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Recommendations.....</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>1.0 Committee Remit and Composition.....</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>2.0 Background and Terms of Reference .....</b>	<b>7</b>
2.1 Procedure and Program.....	7
<b>3.0 Introduction .....</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>4.0 Committee Deliberation and Analysis .....</b>	<b>8</b>
4.1 Oral and Written Evidence Received.....	8
4.2 Evidence received via written and verbal submission .....	8
<b>5.0 Gender Analysis.....</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>6.0 Conclusion .....</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>7.0 Members’ Signatures .....</b>	<b>12</b>
<b>8.0 Appendices .....</b>	<b>13</b>

## **Chairperson's Foreword**

I am pleased to present the Review Report of the Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and Defence (FAD) on the Ministry of Defence and National Security 2017-2018 Annual Report. This Annual Report was tabled on 29th July, 2022 in the previous Parliament Term and was reinstated in this new Parliament Term.

The previous FAD Committee received a written and verbal submission from the Ministry of Defence and National Security and had commenced deliberation and formulating this review report. This Committee did not receive nor asked for new submissions but continued from where the previous Committee left off. However, the Committee requested for an update on the pending papers highlighted in the Annual Report. The Committee reviewed both the Annual Report and the Verbatim from the submission made to the previous Committee in the process of finalising this report.

The recommendations in this report are made as applicable to the reporting period of the Annual Report. I make this point to underscore the fact that a lot had been done by the Ministry up to now and there had been announcements made by the current Minister along the vein of some of the recommendations.

The Committee commends the good work of the organisation in progressing this Annual Report. While applauding the achievements of the Ministry, the Committee had identified some opportunities for improvements; these are outlined in the report.

The Committee wishes to congratulate the Ministry on the Gender Representation chart reflected in the report and recommends that it takes note of the recommendation on this matter in this report.

I take this opportunity to thank the Honourable Minister, Permanent Secretary and all staff including their families for a job well done and their dedication to securing the nation for all Fijians and visitors to our shores.

I take this opportunity to also thank the previous and current members of the Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and Defence for compiling this bipartisan report.

On behalf of the Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and Defence, I submit this report to Parliament.

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**Hon. Viliame Naupoto**  
**Chairperson**

## Acronyms

<b>CSD</b>	Corporate Services Division
<b>DNS</b>	Director National Security
<b>FPF</b>	Fiji Police Force
<b>KPIs</b>	Key Performance Indicators
<b>MLO</b>	Military Liaison Officer
<b>NAD</b>	National Assessment Division
<b>NICC</b>	National Integrated Coordination Centre
<b>NSDC</b>	National Security Defence Council
<b>NSDR</b>	National Security Defence Review
<b>PLO</b>	Police Liaison Officer
<b>RFMF</b>	Republic of Fiji Military Forces
<b>SDG</b>	Sustainable Development Goal
<b>SFD</b>	Security Forces Division
<b>SO</b>	Standing Orders

## Recommendations

The Committee recommends the following:

1. That priority be given to the reviewing of both the Police Act 1987 and the Republic of Fiji Military Forces Act 1949.
2. That required resources (funding and training) be given to the development of the Incident Response Management Framework.
3. That due consideration be given to the adoption of the following pending papers:
  - a. Search and Rescue Bill;
  - b. National Security Strategy; and
  - c. National Security Defence Council (NSDC) Bill.
4. That the Ministry provides achievements and non-achievements of Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) in all its future reports and the reasons for non-achievements.

## 1.0 Committee Remit and Composition

Pursuant to Standing Order 109 (2) (e) the Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and Defence is mandated to look into matters related to Fiji's relations with other countries, development aid, foreign direct investment, oversight of the military and relations with multi-lateral organisations. The members of the Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and Defence are as follows:



**Hon. Viliame Naupoto**

*Chairperson of the Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and Defence*



**Hon. Lenora Qereqeretabua**

*Deputy Chairperson*

Deputy Speaker of Parliament  
Assistant Minister of Foreign Affairs



**Hon. Jovesa Vocea**

*Member*

Assistant Minister of Rural and Maritime  
Development and National Disaster Management



**Hon. Isikeli Tuiwailevu**

*Member*

Assistant Minister of i-Taukei Affairs



**Hon. Ioane Naivalurua**

*Member*

## **1.1 Committee Secretariat Team**

Supporting the Committee in its work is a group of dedicated Parliament Officers who make-up the Committee Secretariat, and are appointed and delegated by the Secretary-General to Parliament pursuant to Standing Order 15 (3) (i). The Secretariat team is made of the following Parliament officers:

- Ms. Susana Korovou – Senior Committee Clerk
- Mrs. Darolin Vinisha – Acting Deputy Committee Clerk

## **2.0 Background and Terms of Reference**

The Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and Defence, hereinafter referred to as the Committee, was referred the Ministry of Defence and National Security 2017-2018 Annual Report (“Annual Report”) for scrutiny on 29<sup>th</sup> July, 2022. Due to the dissolution of Parliament on 30 October 2022, this Annual Report was reinstated on 13<sup>th</sup> February 2023 in the new term of Parliament. The Annual Report was referred to the Committee pursuant to Standing Order 38 of the Standing Orders of the Parliament of the Republic of Fiji, whereby the Committee was assigned with investigating its contents and to report back on the Annual Report in a subsequent Parliament Sitting.

## **2.1 Procedure and Program**

### **(i) Public Submission (written submission and verbal submission)**

In relation to Standing Order 111 (1), the Committee is committed to upholding public trust in Parliament, by ensuring that there is public participation and that all such participation is given due consideration. The previous Committee had called for an oral public submission from the Ministry on 19<sup>th</sup> September, 2022. The Committee ensured that its meetings were open to the public and media, except during such deliberations and discussions to develop and finalise the Committee’s report.

A summary of the submission is provided in a later part of this report, under the heading ‘Committee’s Deliberation and Analysis’ and copies of the written submission can be obtained from the online Appendices of this report, which can be accessed from the Parliament website: [www.parliament.gov.fj](http://www.parliament.gov.fj).

### **3.0 Introduction**

The Standing Committee is established under Section 109 (2) (e) of the Standing Orders (SO) of the Parliament of the Republic of Fiji.

The purpose of the review was to scrutinise the performance of the Ministry of Defence and National Security for the year 2017-2018 as reported in its Annual Report.

The report reflects the achievement of activities for the thirty-one (31) Outputs identified under the six (6) Outcomes derived from the National Development Plan and the Roadmap for Democracy and Sustainable Socio-Economic Development.

The achievements highlighted are reflective of the commitment by the Ministry in delivering the set deliverables despite the many challenges it faced during this implementation period.

The plan developed by the Ministry for this reporting period had recognised the important role that citizens play in the security of the nation.

The Committee after reviewing the report identified pertinent issues confronting the Ministry today and opportunities for improvements.

### **4.0 Committee Deliberation and Analysis**

#### **4.1 Oral and Written Evidence Received**

The previous Committee received oral and written submission and the current Committee received an update on the pending papers from the Ministry of Home Affairs and Immigration as listed in *Appendix A*.

#### **4.2 Evidence received via written and verbal submission**

The submission received was extensively considered and deliberated upon by the Committee. It was noted that the previous Committee had highlighted various issues and are summarized below;

- 4.2.1 The Committee was informed that as per the Ministry's Output 18 to *Develop mechanism to allow for a legal and smooth transition of command should there be a need for RFMF intervention* under the key Pillars "*Maintenance of Sovereignty and Territorial Integrity*", the Republic of Fiji Military Force (RFMF) and Fiji Police Force (FPF) continues to operate within the ambits of their respective legislation. However, the Ministry is currently reviewing both the Police Act 1987 and the Republic of Fiji Military Forces Act 1949 and part of the review will see the outlining of a callout and handover procedure between the FPF and RFMF during times of distress or emergency that would require RFMF intervention. This will also include provisions that clearly state the different levels of emergencies/threats that will require intervention from the RFMF.



- 4.2.2 The review of the Police Act 1987 and the Republic of Fiji Military Forces Act 1949 were put on hold during the reporting period.
- 4.2.3 The Ministry in collaboration with Border agencies and the Ministry of Health and Medical Services are working towards upgrading and digitising Fiji's border systems in pursuit of a contact-less process with a seamless flow of passengers. The goal is to integrate all processes and systems to facilitate easier exchange of information with the processing of each visitor entering our sea and air ports of entry. The Ministry is also upgrading Fiji's border systems through the development of an effective Incident Response Management Framework. This will greatly complement Fiji's border security policies and plans and will enhance our contingency responses in the event of a security threat to Fiji's territorial borders. It is envisioned that this framework will identify relevant agencies that are required to respond to any threat or security issue and will outline clear cut lines of command, control and communications and decision-making points.
- 4.2.4 During the year of review, the Committee had noted that there were five (5) staff resignations. The Ministry in its response had highlighted that these resignations were mostly for greener pastures purposes. The Ministry has continued providing the best to its employees in terms of professional and personal level support and included as part of the Ministry's institutional strengthening program, the provision of support for officers to undertake programs (locally and overseas) for capacity building purposes.
- 4.2.5 The National Security Strategy is still under review during the reporting period of this annual report and would require discussions at the Cabinet Level before it is approved.
- 4.2.6 The Committee was briefed that the National Integrated Coordination Centre (NICC) has been equipped however, it is operating at minimal capacity due to the pending National Security Defence Council (NSDC) Bill before Cabinet.
- 4.2.7 The Committee noted that Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) were not used to evaluate the performance of the Ministry. As a result, the Committee was limited in its assessment of the Ministry's performance. The Committee can only provide a proper assessment of the Ministry's performance if the Ministry provides in its report achievements and non-achievements of KPIs and reasons for non-achievements.
- 4.2.8 The Committee notes that there was a decrease in Budgetary Allocation for the year under review, however it did not deter the Ministry from facilitating its required activities. The utilization rate improved by four percent (4%) from the previous reporting period.

## **5.0 Gender Analysis**

The Parliament of Fiji Standing Orders 110(2) requires the Committee to give full consideration to the principle of gender equality so as to ensure all matters are considered with regards to the impact and benefit on both men and women. The Ministry during the year under review, reported that out of the total number of employees, 55% were female whilst the remaining 45% were male. This indicates that the Ministry continues to ensure promotion of equal employment opportunity with gender representation. The Committee suggests that in future reports that an indication of the level of posts held by females be included.

## **6.0 Conclusion**

The Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and Defence has fulfilled its mandate approved by Parliament which was to scrutinise the Ministry of Defence and National Security 2017-2018 Annual Report. The Committee has conducted its review and formulated the findings with regard to the Ministry's performance.

The Committee report is bi-partisan and the key areas highlighted by the Committee in its recommendations would improve the overall performance of the Ministry in the future.

## **7.0 Members' Signatures**

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**Hon. Viliame Naupoto**  
**Chairperson**

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**Hon. Lenora Qereqeretabua**  
**Deputy Chairperson**

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**Hon. Jovesa Vocea**  
**Member**

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**Hon. Isikeli Tuiwailevu**  
**Member**

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**Hon. Ioane Naivalurua**  
**Member**

## 8.0 Appendices

No	Date	Agency/Organisation	Written Evidence	Oral Evidence
1	19/09/22	Ministry of Defence, National Security	✓	✓