



STANDING COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN AFFAIRS AND DEFENCE

Consolidated Review Report of the Fiji Police Force 2017-2018 and 2019-2020 Annual Reports



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Chairperson's Foreword

I am pleased to present the Consolidated Review Report of the Fiji Police Force 2017-2018 and 2019-2020 Annual Reports. These Annual Reports were tabled on 14th July, 2023 and referred to the Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and Defence ("Committee") to review and report back to Parliament in its subsequent sitting.

The Committee conducted a joint submission/consultation with the Ministry of Home Affairs and Immigration and the Fiji Police Force on the 29th of August 2023. The submissions were both oral and written with the oral submission broadcast live on the Parliament Facebook page and Parliament Channel. The general public who joined the live session on Facebook raised questions relating to the works of the Fiji Police Force. Two questions from the public were put to the Fiji Police Force for their reply/consideration.


The Committee reviewed both the Annual Reports and the Verbatim Report from the submission made and requested for more information in the process of finalising this report. The findings and recommendations pertaining to this report are derived from issues concerning the works of the Police during the years under review. This report is structured in a way where the recommendations are referenced to the relevant paragraph number in the report.

The Committee commends the good work of the FPF in progressing these Annual Reports. While applauding the achievements of the FPF, the Committee identified some opportunities for improvements; these are outlined in the report in the form of recommendations.

I take this opportunity to thank the Honourable Minister, the Fiji Police Force 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 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.



Hon. Viliame Naupoto
Chairperson

Acronyms

ACABH	Assault Causing Actual Bodily Harm
CAP	Complaints Against Police
CAS	Complaints Against Service
CR	Crime Register
DCR	Daily Crime Report
DVRO	Domestic Violence Restraining Order
FPF	Fiji Police Force
GBV	Gender Based Violence
KPI	Key Performance Indicator
MoWCSP	Ministry of Women, Children and Social Protection
NOD	Neglect of Duty
SDG	Sustainable Development Goal
SO	Standing Orders

Recommendations

The Committee recommends the following:

- 1) That relevant Ministries and Agencies look at the merits of setting up a single dedicated emergency number e.g. 911 and the setting up of a supporting Emergency Communications and Dispatch Unit. The Committee was informed that a paper along the vein of this recommendation was prepared by the then Ministry of Defence, National Security and Immigration in 2018 but has been shelved up to the date of this report (*reference to paragraph 3.1.1*).
- 2) That the Fiji Police Force be assisted in terms of appropriate and adequate facilities for storage and administration of Exhibits (*reference to paragraph 3.1.2*).
- 3) That the Fiji Police Force fast track the implementation of body-worn and vehicle-mounted cameras and that they be assisted financially through the normal budgetary process or through development partner assistance (*reference to paragraph 3.1.4*).
- 4) That the Fiji Police Force be assisted and resourced better to increase and improve their counselling capacity for their personnel (*reference to paragraph 3.1.5*).
- 5) That all specialists within the Fiji Police Force be paid allowances (*reference to paragraph 3.1.6*).
- 6) That the Fiji Police Force in collaboration with relevant agencies seriously look at developing effective strategies to help reduce the number of road fatalities (*reference to paragraph 3.1.7*).
- 7) That the Fiji Police Force take seriously and act swiftly on animal cruelty reports (*reference to paragraph 3.1.8*).
- 8) That the Fiji Police Force improve their capacity to deal with hate crimes (*reference to paragraph 3.1.10*).
- 9) That community policing efforts continue to be supported and strengthened (*reference to paragraph 3.1.12*).

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 – 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 Fiji Police Force 2017-2018 and 2019-2020 Annual Reports (“Annual Reports”) for scrutiny on 14th July, 2023. The Annual Reports were 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 Reports in a subsequent Parliament Sitting.

2.1 Procedure and Program

i. Public Submission (written submission and oral 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 Committee had called for a joint oral public submission from the Ministry of Home Affairs and Immigration and Fiji Police Force on 29th August, 2023. 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.

The Committee during its public submission tabled two questions from the public that joined the Facebook live session.

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.

ii. Oral and Written Evidence Received

The Committee had a joint discussion session with the Fiji Police Force and the Ministry of Home Affairs and Immigration staff headed by the Permanent Secretary on the two Annual Reports and the verbatim of that discussion is attached as *Appendices*.

3.0 Committee Deliberations and Analysis

3.1 Introduction

The purpose of the review was to scrutinise the performance of the Fiji Police Force as reported in its 2017-2018 and 2019-2020 Annual Reports.

This review report is a consolidated report on the two Fiji Police Force Annual Reports from 2017-2018 and from 2019 – 2020. The Annual report of the year in between the two reports (2018-2019) was tabled earlier in Parliament and has been reviewed by the Committee. The review report was tabled by the Committee in the March 2023 sitting of parliament and debated in the September Sitting.

The two Annual Reports reflect the police performance, achievements, areas of improvement including a synopsis of statistics collated by FPF and the audited financial statements of the periods under review as required under the Financial Act 2004.

The achievements highlighted are reflective of the commitment by the Fiji Police Force in delivering the set deliverables despite the many challenges it faced during this implementation period. In particular, the fiscal year 2019-2020 was a challenging year for the Force due to the occurrence of the global COVID-19 pandemic and the widespread destruction of Cyclone Harold that struck Fiji at the height of the COVID-19 crisis.

The plans developed by the Force is aimed at adopting a whole of population approach in keeping Fiji a safe and secure country.

The Committee after reviewing the two Annual Reports identified pertinent issues confronting the FPF today and in this report offer some suggestions in the form of recommendations that the Committee believes will bring about improvements.

3.1.1 Emergency Contacts

The Committee noted that the National Emergency Numbers; 911, 917 and 919 are currently hosted at the Police National Command Centre in Totogo manned by twenty (20) officers. The Centre has Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) in place on actions to be taken when an emergency is reported. During the public submission, the Chairperson tested the emergency numbers – 911, 917 and 919. The emergency numbers 911 and 917 remained unanswered when the Chairperson hung up after the twelfth ring, 919 was answered after the sixth ring. The delays in the answering of calls could be a contributing factor to the increase in CAS and CAP. The Committee notes that Fiji has several numbers allocated for different emergencies. In emergency situations, trying to remember the correct number to dial could lead to loss of life and property. This may not be the most efficient way of dealing with emergencies given the that the merits of having just one emergency number like 911 and having a Communication and Dispatch Unit to man it should be looked at by the FPF and relevant agencies.

3.1.2 Exhibits

An aspect of Police work is the safekeeping and administration of Exhibits. This is not reported in the Annual reports under review. Exhibits are simply items kept in police custody in the course of police work. It ranges from lost and found properties to properties seized in the course of investigation. These include Exhibits which will be required, or is likely to be required, as evidence in subsequent court proceedings or to further Police investigation. An example of an exhibit would be a knife which may connect a person in a murder case. A full explanation on Exhibits, its safekeeping and administration was provided to the Committee during the discussion session and can be accessed in the verbatim that is attached.

The FPF highlighted the lack of adequate spaces and proper security measures to administer the safe storage of exhibits and has resulted in missing exhibits due to theft or misplacement. The Committee noted the desperate need of the FPF in this area and recommends that better and more secure storage facilities be provided.

3.1.3 Crime Statistics

The Committee noted that the way that crime statistics is presented in the Annual Reports does not provide a clear overall picture of the status of the criminal landscape in that reporting period. The Committee notes that a more detailed Crime Statistics Annual Report is available in the Fiji Police Force website. The FPF during the submission indicated that they have a new statistics template that they will use in future reports.

3.1.4 Complaints against Service (CAS) and Complaints against Police (CAP)

The Committee noted that in both the Annual Reports, there was a notable increase in Complaints against Service and Complaints against Police (CAS and CAP). In the reporting year 2017-2018 there was an increase of 60 percent. There was an 8 percent increase in the 2019-2020 period. During the discussion session, the FPF informed the Committee that the increase was due mainly to failure to attend to reports, failure to carry out initial action of complaints received, providing feedback, attitude and behaviour of officers and management of investigation processes and procedures amongst other reasons.

According to the FPF, the overall contributor is supervision or the lack thereof. Managers need to strengthen their supervisory roles, make rational decisions and be tactful in their leadership. Continuous training and professional development should be strengthened to improve work standards and ethics. The Committee fully supports the work to be undertaken by the FPF to improve their services.

The Committee discussed with the FPF the use of body-worn and vehicle-mounted cameras (bodycam and dashcam), given these are widely used by other Police forces around the world and, in general, has been proven to assist in:

- Strengthening transparency, accountability and public trust.
- Resolving public complaints more quickly.

- Improving interaction between the public and the police.
- Improving evidence gathering.¹

In a study conducted by the National Institute of Justice in the United States, it was found that there is a correlation between the use of body worn cameras and successful prosecution of criminal cases.²

The FPF informed the Committee that they have started using bodycams limited to Search and Rescue, and CID in the reconstruction of crime scenes. Police vehicles are not provided with dashcams. One of the biggest drawback for the FPF is the cost associated with the use of these recording devices and the subsequent support services that they will require. The FPF highlighted some possible disadvantages of the use of body-worn and vehicle mounted cameras but the advantages greatly outweighs the disadvantages. The use of cameras is aligned to modern day policing to improve the effectiveness of police operations.

The Committee is of the view that Sir Robert Peel’s second principle of law enforcement developed in 1829 still holds true today. His second principle states that “The ability of the Police to perform their duties is dependent upon public approval of Police existence, actions, behaviour and the ability of the Police to secure and maintain public respect.³ Today almost 200 years later, the ability of law enforcement to fight crime effectively continues to depend on the public’s perception of the legitimacy of the actions of officers.

The Committee is of the very strong view that the use of body-worn cameras and vehicle mounted cameras will significantly assist the Police in the maintenance of public respect and trust in their work.

3.1.5 Psychological Counselling Unit

Police officers often experience stress when executing their job. Stress and trauma experienced by police officers in the line of duty have negative impacts on officers’ health and wellbeing. Psychological support and counselling is imperative to be able to perform their duties more efficiently. The Committee notes that there were no reports on psychological analysis or counselling sessions provided to the police officers. However, the Committee was informed that the FPF has only one (1) psychologist. The Committee was notified that in the current reform of the structure of FPF, a Unit specifically for Psychological Support will be established with the appropriate personnel. The Committee recommends that the Unit be given budgetary provision to support the setting up of the Unit.

¹ Royal Canadian Mounted Police: <https://rcmp.ca/en/body-worn-cameras>

² Research on Body-Worn Cameras and Law Enforcement: <https://nij.ojp.gov/topics/articles/research-body-worn-cameras-and-law-enforcement>

³ Policing Principles: https://police.stanford.edu/pdf/PolicingPrinciplesOutline_013020.pdf

3.1.6 Allowances

The FPF have some specialists that are not paid specialist allowances. The Committee was informed that the FPF have prepared a submission for the payment of allowances to all specialists and the Committee recommends that the Force be provided with budgetary resources to allow them to do so.

3.1.7 Road Fatalities

The Committee notes with concern the growing number of road fatalities. The Fiji Police Force reported that for the period of 1 January to 23 August 2023, there have been 60 road fatalities compared to 23 for the same period in 2022. The Fiji Police Force has revamped its traffic operations through their joint operations with LTA and continues to conduct stop checks, radar operations, breathalyser operations and media awareness to address the issue. There are only eighteen (18) Hand-Held Laser Speed Detector Machines currently being used by the FPF. The Committee recommends that more Hand-Held Laser Speed Detector Machines be provided to the Police. The Police highlighted that the two main causes of road fatalities are speeding and driving under the influence of alcohol.

3.1.8 Cruelty to Animals Statistics

The statistics in the two Annual reports does not show the number of cases that are Animal cruelty related however, during the discussion session the FPF informed the Committee that the number of incidents relating to Animal Injury fluctuated over the past five years. In 2018, there were 40 reported cases of animals being injured. This number slightly decreased to 35 cases in 2019, followed by a slight decrease to 34 cases in 2020.

A concerning trend has emerged with regards to the theft of farm animals including cattle, livestock and dogs in the past five years. In 2018, there were 374 reported cases of theft of these animals, indicating a significant problem. This number increased to 428 cases in 2019 and the year 2020 recorded a further increase, with 503 cases reported.

3.1.9 Hate Crimes

The Committee was informed that for the periods under review, there were not much cases recorded in the crime reports however, there were a number of reports registered at police stations and at the Headquarters. According to the FPF, one of the main challenges faced by FPF when investigating hate crimes is the “thin line” between freedom of speech and hate crimes. Fiji has a number of legislations that to some extent deal with “hate crime” and these includes; the Online Safety Act 2018, Cybercrime Act 2021, Malicious Act, and Crimes Act 2009. However, the Committee is of the view that these legislations be reviewed to clearly address the above challenge.

3.1.10 K-9 Unit

The K-9 Unit is instrumental in police operations. They assist police during drug operations, search and rescue, fugitive apprehension and public relations. The

Committee noted that the Annual report does not provide a detailed report on the Unit and request that a detailed report be provided in future reports.

3.1.11 Police Process and Procedures

The Committee was informed of the police process and procedures on traffic stops and random search (attached in the Verbatim Report). According to the FPF, the powers of the Police are stipulated in the LTA Act, Section 73. The provisions therein highlights the powers of controlling and stopping traffic for issuance of infringement notices on public places and streets. However, the powers should not compromise the customer service of a Police Officer and he/she must serve the public with humility and decency.

3.1.12 Community Policing

Community policing is an integrated approach of proactively preventing crimes through the partnership of respective stakeholders by taking ownership of the safety and security of their communities.

The Fiji Police Force through consultation and reviews over time has developed a key instrument of community policing which is the DUAVATA Framework. The approach is conceptualized on the ADRI model, an apparatus within the framework for operationalization through community engagement. The ADRI Model involves the planning phase (Approach), the implementation phase (Deployment), the Results phase is the outcomes, while Improvements (review) phase is the feedback mechanism through monitoring and evaluation to better the workings of the framework.

The DUAVATA approach of community policing in Fiji requires collaborative effort from all stakeholders to work together as a ‘whole of population’ approach in the successful implementation of programmes and activities to build bridges within our communities and to prevent crime.

The Committee was informed that in 2017 and 2018, the FPF had laid a platform for the review of the *Duavata* Community Policing. The Ministry of Home Affairs and Immigration had indicated that it has established a project “Restore Blue”. The Ministry specified that it has a consultant funded by UNDP undertaking the review of Police Operation. A report on the review will be tabled to the Minister responsible in December 2023.

4.0 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 FPF in the year 2017-2018 reported a twenty-three percent (23%) of women representation in the workforce. In 2019-2020, there was an increase of women representation to twenty-four percent (24%). This indicates that the FPF continues to ensure promotion of equal employment opportunity with gender representation. The Committee suggests that in future reports that an indication of the target that FPF intends to achieve on this important issue be included.

5.0 Conclusion

The Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and Defence has fulfilled its mandate approved by Parliament which was to scrutinise the Fiji Police Force 2017-2018 and 2019-2020 Annual Reports. The Committee has conducted its review and formulated the findings with regard to FPF'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 Fiji Police Force in the future.

6.0 Members' Signatures



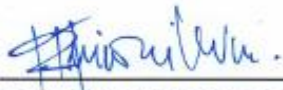
Hon. Viliame Naupoto
Chairperson



Hon. Lenora Qereqeretabua
Deputy Chairperson



Hon. Jovesa Vocea
Member



Hon. Isikeli Tuiwailevu
Member



Hon. Ioane Naivalurua
Member

7.0 Appendices

No	Date	Agency/Organisation	Written Evidence	Oral Evidence
1	29 th August, 2023	Fiji Police Force	✓	✓