



STANDING COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN AFFAIRS AND DEFENCE

Review Report of the Fiji Police Force 2020-2021 Annual Report



PARLIAMENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF FIJI
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Acronyms

CSI	-	Crime Scene Investigation
CRIS	-	Crime Record Information System
DUAVATA Model	-	Drawing Unity Amongst Various Agencies Through Acceptance Model
FPF	-	Fiji Police Force
HRMIS	-	Human Resource Management Information System
JEE	-	Job Evaluation Exercise
KPIs	-	Key Performance Indicators
NZ	-	New Zealand
NZIESR	-	New Zealand's Institute of Environmental Science and Research
PICP	-	Pacific Islands Chiefs of Police
PPE	-	Personal Protective Equipment
PMC	-	Police Medical Centre
RFL	-	Required Fitness Level
SCFAD	-	Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and Defence
SDG	-	Sustainable Development Goals
SO	-	Standing Order
SOCID	-	Serious and Organised Crime Intelligence Division
UNCDF	-	United Nations Capital Development Fund

Chairperson's Foreword

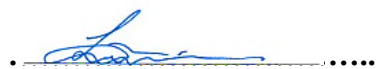
The Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and Defence (the Committee) hereby submits to Parliament its Review Report on the Fiji Police Force 2020–2021 Annual Report, which was formally referred to the Committee on 28th April 2025.

Guided by the theme “Preserving the Past and Securing the Future,” the 2020/2021 fiscal year reflected the Fiji Police Force’s (FPF) commitment to honouring its legacy while addressing emerging challenges in modern policing. Anchored in the values of Leadership, Service Orientation, Integrity, Excellence, Fairness, and Personal Responsibility, the FPF remains accountable to the Government and people of Fiji for maintaining safety and security. As mandated under Section 5 of the Police Act, its core responsibilities include protecting life and property, preserving public order, preventing and investigating crime, apprehending offenders, and enforcing the law.

To fulfil its mandate, the FPF operates across five strategic outputs: crime prevention and control, investigation and prosecution, intelligence gathering, road safety, and organisational effectiveness. These operations are governed by legislative and policy frameworks including the Fiji Constitution, Police Act, Crimes Act, and relevant financial, administrative, and occupational health and safety regulations, ensuring sound governance and institutional alignment.

The Committee undertook a comprehensive review of the report, culminating in a bipartisan document with 16 key recommendations. In support of this review, the Committee held an oral public submission with the Fiji Police Force on 7th May 2025 and conducted extensive site visits and Talanoa Sessions across multiple locations including Kavala, Vunisea (Kadavu), Rukua (Beqa), Sigatoka, Nadi, Lautoka, Vitogo, Tavua, Rakiraki, the Police Mobile Force (Nasinu), the Serious and Organised Crime Intelligence Division (SOCID), the K9 Unit (Nasova), Forensics (Nasese), the Psychology Office, and concluded with a Talanoa Session with the Police Commissioner at the Police Officers’ Mess.

On behalf of the Committee, I express our sincere appreciation to the Police Commissioner, Mr. Rusiate Tudravu, ACP Aporosa Lutunauga, and all committed police officers for their continued dedication and service to the people of Fiji. I also extend my gratitude to the members of the Committee for their valuable contributions in compiling this report, and to the Secretariat for their steadfast support throughout the review process. On that note, I respectfully submit this report to Parliament.



Hon. Lenora Qereqeretabua
Chairperson

Recommendations

- 1.0 The Committee recommends that FPF strengthens its internal oversight and integrity frameworks by enhancing grievance redressal mechanisms, public complaints tracking, and disciplinary transparency, ensuring full documentation of all complaints including animal cruelty, while upholding impartiality and accountability in all operations (*reference to points 3.3.1, 3.3.3, 3.3.7, 3.3.14, 3.3.15, 3.3.20*).
- 2.0 The Committee recommends that urgent attention be given to human resources, remuneration reviews and housing provisions, particularly in underserved areas. The Committee further recommends parity in pay for specialised roles including K9 handlers. (*reference to points 3.3.4, 3.3.19, 3.3.20, 3.3.21, 3.3.22, 3.3.24*).
- 3.0 The Committee recommends a Job Evaluation Exercise (JEE) be conducted as soon as practicable as the last one was conducted in 2003. (*reference to points 3.3.4, 3.3.20, 3.3.26*).
- 4.0 The Committee recommends that greater investment is made in equipping officers with non-lethal technologies, modern surveillance tools, and body cameras, while accelerating the Police Act review to enable the use of modern weapons. (*reference to points 3.3.9, 3.3.10, 3.3.20, 3.3.22*).
- 5.0 The Committee recommends that training and recruitment frameworks continue to evolve with support for ongoing professional development, updated certifications, and accredited instructor qualifications. (*reference to points 3.3.11, 3.3.20*).
- 6.0 The Committee recommends that community policing initiatives be reinforced through consistent participation in local meetings, expanded stakeholder networks (including schools and agriculture offices), and strengthened DUAVATA implementation in high-crime and rural areas (*reference to points 3.3.12, 3.3.19, 3.3.21*).
- 7.0 The Committee recommends that the K9 Unit be expanded, resourced with more vehicles and handlers, and permanently deployed in high-traffic and high-risk regions like the Northern Division, Lautoka, and ports, ensuring full operational coverage and maintenance support (*reference to points 3.3.13, 3.3.25, 3.3.20*).
- 8.0 The Committee recommends that the Government prioritise legislative amendments to support the operational use and legal admissibility of drone surveillance footage under the revised Fiji Police Act 1965 and allocate adequate funding for police operations in remote areas, including hardship allowances, PPE, sanitation, communication tools, and transport logistics. The Committee further recommends streamlining legal processes for drug exhibit destruction in consultation with the Ministry of Environment and expanding support for alternative livelihood programmes in partnership with the Ministry of Agriculture to reduce drug dependence in rural communities (*reference to point 3.3.17*).

- 9.0 The Committee recommends that the establishment of new police posts, such as the ones proposed in Kavala, Kadavu and Rukua Village, Beqa, be prioritised through formalised village-government coordination to improve presence in geographically isolated communities (*reference to point 3.3.18*).
- 10.0 The Committee recommends that the Diving Unit receives a dedicated budget to procure essential safety gear, decompression equipment, alongside establishment of diving-specific allowances reflecting the high-risk nature of underwater operations (*reference to point 3.3.23*).
- 11.0 The Committee recommends that legislative gaps affecting forensic operations especially around DNA collection and record expungement be urgently addressed, and that all divisions are equipped with adequate forensics tools, training, and staffing to support criminal investigations nationally and regionally (*reference to points 3.3.26, 3.3.27*).
- 12.0 The Committee recommends that SOCID, and Forensics receive increased budget allocations to expand capability in drug interdiction, synthetic drug monitoring, border security, and criminal investigations backed by legislative amendments to align with international standards (*reference to points 3.3.24, 3.3.26*).
- 13.0 The Committee recommends that critical infrastructure upgrades be prioritised across key police stations, such as Nadi, Vitogo Dog Unit, Nalawa, and Tavua with a focus on proper sanitation, air conditioning, barracks, safe evidence storage, and suitable working conditions to support officer performance (*reference to points 3.3.20, 3.3.21, 3.3.22*).
- 14.0 The Committee recommends that vehicle provision and transportation allowances be expanded across divisions to reduce officers' out-of-pocket expenses for duty-related travel and to enhance mobility in rural and emergency deployments (*reference to points 3.3.20, 3.3.22*).
- 15.0 The Committee recommends that closer collaboration be pursued with the Ministry of Agriculture to address livestock-related offences, road hazards, and stray animal enforcement, alongside an urgent review of outdated fines and land use regulations (*reference to points 3.3.19, 3.3.21*).
- 16.0 The Committee recommends that the Ministry of Education and the Police strengthen joint action on school-based drug awareness and juvenile intervention, while expanding youth engagement and deterrent programmes in tourist-heavy regions like Sigatoka (*reference to point 3.3.19*).

1.0 Committee Remit and Composition

Under 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 organizations. The members of the Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and Defence are as follows:



Hon. Lenora Qereqeretabua
Chairperson

Deputy Speaker of Parliament
Assistant Minister for Foreign Affairs



Hon. Rinesh Sharma
Deputy Chairperson



Hon. Ratu Isikeli Tuiwailevu
Member

Assistant Minister for iTaukei Affairs, Heritage and Arts



Hon. Penioni Ravunawa
Member

Assistant Minister for Health and Medical Services



Hon. Virendra Lal
Member

1.1 Committee Secretariat Team

Supporting the Committee in its work is a group of dedicated Parliament Officers serving as the Committee Secretariat. These officers are appointed and delegated by the Secretary-General to Parliament by Standing Order 15(3)(i). The Secretariat officers are as follows:

- Mrs. Susana Korovou – Senior Committee Clerk
- Mrs. Elesi Tabuyaqona – Deputy Committee Clerk

2.0 Background and Terms of Reference

The Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and Defence (the Committee), was referred the Fiji Police Force 2020-2021 Annual Report on 28th April 2025. The referral of the Annual Report was done in accordance with SO 38(2), whereby the Committee was assigned to investigate the contents of the report and provide a report to Parliament at a future Sitting.

2.1 Procedure and Program

Public Submission (written and oral)

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 invited the Fiji Police Force to provide an oral public submission on 7th May 2025 and carried out site visits and Talanoa Sessions in various locations, including Kavala, Vunisea (Kadavu), Rukua (Beqa), Sigatoka, Nadi, Lautoka, Vitogo, Tavua, Rakiraki, the Police Mobile Force (Nasinu), Serious and Organised Crime Intelligence Division (SOCID), the K9 Unit (Nasova), Forensics (Nasese), the Psychology Office, and also held a Talanoa Session with the Police Commissioner at the Officer's Mess.

A summary of the submission is provided in a later part of this report, under the heading 'Committee's Deliberation and Analysis'. Copies of the written submission and the verbatim from the meeting can be obtained from the online Appendices of this report, which can be accessed from the Parliament website: www.parliament.gov.fj.

3.0 Committee Deliberation and Analysis

3.1 Introduction

The Fiji Police Force (FPF) is committed to being a *Recognized, Respected, Resilient, Responsive, and Vibrant Police Force*, as reflected in its Vision. Its Mission is to *create a safe and secure Fiji* through adherence to best practices, international standards, and technological innovations. The 2020/2021 fiscal year was guided by the central theme, *“Preserving the Past and Securing the Future,”* highlighting the FPF’s dual focus on honouring legacy and preparing for modern policing challenges.

Grounded in the core values of Leadership, Service Orientation, Integrity, Excellence, Fairness, and Personal Responsibility, the FPF is accountable to the Government and the people of Fiji for ensuring their safety and security. Under Section 5 of the Police Act, the Force is mandated to protect life and property, preserve public order, prevent crime, detect and apprehend offenders, and enforce the law. To deliver on these responsibilities, the FPF focuses on five key strategic outputs: *effective crime prevention and control, efficient investigation and prosecution, reliable intelligence, road safety, and organisational effectiveness*. Its operations are guided by a range of legislative and policy frameworks, including the Fiji Constitution, Police Act, Crimes Act, and other relevant financial, administrative, and occupational health and safety regulations, ensuring strong institutional alignment and governance.

3.2 Summary of the 2020-2021 Annual Report

A Snapshot of Annual Performance

FPF demonstrated resilience and adaptability throughout the 2020/2021 fiscal year, particularly in its response to the COVID-19 pandemic. Working alongside regional and domestic partners, including the New Zealand Police, Australian Federal Police, Ministry of Health, and Ministry of Economy, the FPF played a critical role in maintaining public safety. Guided by the theme *“Preserving the Past and Securing the Future”*, the Force adapted its strategies to combat emerging threats such as cybercrime, drug smuggling, human trafficking, and climate-related risks, achieving a 2% reduction in overall crime. Key developments included the establishment of the National Narcotic Bureau, the launch of a Fusion Center to enhance intelligence capabilities, and the operationalisation of the FPF Psychology Unit.

The year also saw significant investments in infrastructure, human resource development, and technology. International support from Japan, China, and regional partners contributed to modernising facilities such as the National Command Centre and equipping the FPF with advanced tools like drones, CCTV, and video conferencing systems. The Force recorded a 2% increase in personnel and the promotion of 300 officers, supported by the rollout of the Human Resource Management Information System (HRMIS) and a nationwide Customer

Service Training initiative. Community policing was revitalised through national symposiums, while the FPF also continued its humanitarian role with international deployments.

KPI	2019–2020	2020–2021	% Change	Outcome
Overall Crime	19,234	18,785	-2%	Reduction achieved
Serious Crime	2,416	2,541	+5%	Increased due to rises in Eastern & Southern Divisions
Crime Against Women	2,763	2,725	-1%	Slight decline
Crime Against Children	1,101	1,116	+1%	Slight increase
Drug Cases	1,575	898	-43%	Major reduction
Detection Rate	75%	70%	-5%	Still met target
Prosecution Success	93.6%	94.6%	+1%	Exceeded target
Complaints Against Police	966	749	-22%	Significant improvement
Road Fatalities	52	37	-29%	Major reduction

The Fiji Police Force recorded notable improvements in key performance areas despite the challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic. A 2% reduction in overall crime, a 43% drop in drug-related cases, a 22% decrease in complaints against police officers, and a 29% decline in road fatalities marked significant progress. Although serious crimes and crimes against children increased slightly, the Force maintained a strong prosecution success rate of 94.6% and a stable overall detection rate of 70%.

HR Metric	2020	2021	Change
Establishment	5,029	5,132	+2%
Manpower Strength	4,600	4,812	+7%
Vacancies	429	322	-25%
Promotions (Regular Force)	—	300+	Boosted morale
Overseas Mission Officers	—	27	18 Male, 9 Female
Gender Ratio (All Cadres)	—	76% Male / 24% Female	—

The FPF strengthened its human capital with a 7% increase in manpower and over 300 officer promotions. The organisation reduced its vacancy rate by 25% and deployed 27 officers on UN peacekeeping missions. Workforce gender balance was at 76% male and 24% female. Training efforts remained strong, with 929 officers attending core courses, 545

attending workshops, and personnel benefitting from a range of overseas programs in areas such as cybercrime, disaster response, and leadership.

Country/Agency	Support Provided	Value/Impact
Japan	Maritime equipment	F\$5.7M
China	ICT gear, traffic equipment	F\$1.5M
AFP & NZ Police	Upgraded National Command Centre	Major operational boost
UN	Peacekeeping missions (27 officers)	Global exposure
Korea, US, Interpol, PICP	Strategic cooperation, training	Ongoing

International partnerships were instrumental in enhancing operational capabilities. Japan and China provided equipment worth over F\$7 million, while the Australian Federal Police and New Zealand Police supported the upgrade of the National Command Centre and leadership training. The FPF also assumed the chairmanship of the Pacific Islands Chiefs of Police (PICP), strengthening regional cooperation.

Activity	Key Achievements
Community Policing	Youth engagement, school programs, awareness drives
Crime Stoppers	Increased visibility via media, 24/7 hotline
Drug Enforcement	Joint ops with AFP/NZP, drone surveillance
Forensics	660 autopsies; reduced suicide cases
Juvenile Bureau	108 child offender cases; inter-agency collaboration

Operationally, the FPF continued its focus on community policing, crime scene investigations, drug enforcement, and juvenile protection. Drone technology, forensic tools, and targeted operations helped disrupt criminal activity. Community outreach remained active through school programs and public awareness campaigns, despite pandemic restrictions.

Service Area	Key Metrics / Output
Police Medical Centre (PMC)	6,231 general consultations; 284 chronic cases
COVID Support	Fever screening, isolation room upgrades
Welfare Claims	Continued insurance processing
Chaplaincy	23 church services, 89 devotions, 16 counselling sessions
Psychology Unit	729 sessions (counselling, training, engagements)

The Force made considerable advancements in health and staff welfare. Over 6,000 outpatient consultations were conducted, and mental health support was institutionalised through the establishment of a Psychology Unit. The Chaplaincy and Counselling Unit expanded its reach, offering support to staff and families. The Police Medical Centre was upgraded to support COVID containment and routine health services.

Infrastructure and IT development were key focuses. Police stations in several locations were refurbished, five satellite communications hubs were launched, and the Human Resource Management Information System (HRMIS) was initiated. The Communications and Media Units enhanced internal operations and public engagement, with increased use of social media and live updates contributing to higher public trust and visibility.

Overall, the Fiji Police Force demonstrated resilience, adaptability, and commitment to continuous improvement across all aspects of policing from crime reduction and human resource development to international engagement and community support. The report reflects a force that is both evolving and responsive to the dynamic demands of national and regional law enforcement.

3.3 Committee Findings

3.3.1 Governance and Integrity

The FPF reaffirmed its stance in ensuring its operations are free from political interference. Internal checks, such as the Internal Affairs Division and the Chaplaincy Office, help uphold professional standards and organisational integrity. The Force acknowledged that while misconduct does occur among a few officers, established mechanisms are in place to investigate and maintain public trust.

3.3.2 Narcotics Bureau and Drug Operations

The Narcotics Bureau, initially formed with 84 personnel during the reporting year, has transitioned to ministerial oversight. It continues to support joint efforts with the FPF in tackling Fiji's drug problem. Multiple waves of drug operations in Kadavu and Vanua Levu were conducted, involving deployments and the uprooting of thousands of marijuana plants. FPF acknowledged delays in destroying seized drugs due to legal processes and court requirements and welcomed any information regarding alleged internal misconduct involving drug exhibits.

3.3.3 Internal Oversight and Misconduct

The FPF confirmed that some drug exhibits had gone missing in the past, but investigations were carried out and responsible officers held accountable. It reiterated its commitment to accountability, transparency, and proactive internal monitoring.

3.3.4 Personnel and Resourcing

FPF noted a significant \$18.2 million budget saving due to unpaid acting allowances, unfilled positions, and other internal criteria. Vacant positions from 2020 were later filled. The last Job Evaluation Exercise (JEE) was conducted in 2003, and FPF requested the Committee's support for a long-overdue JEE to address evolving professional and operational needs, and officer welfare.

3.3.5 Performance and KPIs

While the FPF did not fully achieve its government-set KPIs such as a 10% reduction in crime, it did record partial improvements. Officials attributed shortfalls to resource and infrastructure limitations but highlighted the Force's capacity to meet or exceed targets when adequately supported.

3.3.6 Health, Fitness and Mental Well-being

The Committee noted that the FPF enforces quarterly required fitness level (RFL) tests and health audits, linking the results to salary progression and acting appointments. The Psychology Unit was established in 2020, to provide counselling and mental health support

to officers, with referrals coordinated through HR and medical staff to ensure officers' holistic wellbeing.

3.3.7 Complaints and Whistleblower Mechanisms

The FPF operates a structured grievance redressal mechanism guided by a Grievance Handling Policy and three internal associations; Subordinate Association; Inspectorate Association; and Gazetted Officers Association. Officers must follow proper channels, and bypassing the command structure is considered a disciplinary offence. The system aims to maintain order and discipline while allowing grievances to be fairly addressed.

3.3.8 Strategic Planning and Institutional Development

A key highlight for the 2020–2021 financial year was the launch of the Fiji Police Force 2020–2024 Strategic Plan, along with the development of a contingency framework for infectious diseases, including COVID-19 protocols and guidance. It has begun consultations for its next Strategic Plan (2025–2030) aiming to build on progress in technology, infrastructure, and service delivery.

3.3.9 Cybercrime and Technology

The Cyber Crime Unit, supported by the Australian Federal Police and equipped with a digital forensics lab, has led to convictions and improved case handling. Citing cybercrime as an emerging and significant national threat, the FPF requested that the unit be strengthened to reflect the evolving complexities of cybercrime.

3.3.10 Use of Force and Modernisation

While only the Police Mobile Force is authorised to carry firearms, FPF aspires to equip more officers with body cameras to enhance transparency and security. Bodycams are currently used by specialised units only.

3.3.11 Recruitment and Training

Applicants require a minimum Form 6 qualification, physical fitness, swimming ability, and a clean criminal record. Recruits undergo a six-month training course, followed by probation and a final qualifying course. The FPF's recruit programme was accredited as a Level 4 certificate under the Higher Education Commission in 2022.

3.3.12 Community Policing and Stakeholder Engagement

FPF promotes its DUAVATA Model “Drawing Unity Amongst Various Agencies Through Acceptance” as a means to address root causes of crime. This approach partners with churches, families, schools, and community leaders. While stakeholder engagement is a priority, the FPF acknowledged lapses in their attendance at community meetings and pledged to address this.

3.3.13 K9 Unit and Border Protection

With support from New Zealand Police, the K9 Unit is expected to expand to ports like Savusavu and Lautoka. More K9 assets are planned for other ports of entry.

3.3.14 Public Complaints and Accessibility

The 917 Helpline is now operational 24/7 at the National Command Centre. The FPF acknowledged failures in logging reports from the public and assured the Committee that such incidents are being addressed, with necessary disciplinary action taken.

3.3.15 Animal Protection and Enforcement

FPF confirmed that all complaints, including those under the Protection of Animals Act, must be officially recorded. Officers failing to log complaints are disciplined, and the Force reiterated its commitment to enforcing animal protection laws.

3.3.16 Suicide Trends

The FPF confirmed a spike in male suicides during COVID-19 years, possibly linked to mental health effects of isolation and economic hardship. However, it lacks the capacity to conduct in-depth causation analysis and noted the need for cross-sectoral mental health collaboration.

3.3.17 Drug Operations in Kavala, Kadavu

During a site visit the Fiji Police Force highlighted to the Committee the significant operational challenges in executing drug-related missions, especially in remote regions such as Kadavu. While drones have proven useful in locating marijuana plantations, they are not designed for rugged terrain or extended surveillance, and current legislation does not yet support their footage being admissible in court, though this is under review in the Fiji Police Act 1965. Officers working in these difficult environments lack basic support, including hardship and remote allowances, proper personal protective equipment (PPE), and sanitary provisions, some even using meal allowances to purchase hygiene items. Water sources are unreliable, often limited to nearby creeks, and there are persistent communication issues due to poor reception. Uprooting marijuana plants is manageable, but transporting them over long distances (e.g., 7 kilometres through dense terrain) poses serious physical and logistical challenges. Legal restrictions, particularly environmental concerns raised by the Ministry of Environment, prohibit the use of chemical-based destruction and on-site burning of seized drugs, while legal protocols delay destruction, some exhibits have awaited court orders for months. In the meantime, the drugs must be securely stored as court evidence. Additionally, transporting suspects to central facilities like Vunisea remains a costly burden, often covered out-of-pocket by officers. Similar issues were reported in other parts of Fiji. To reduce drug

dependence in local communities, the FPF is also working with the Ministry of Agriculture to identify suitable alternative crops.

3.3.18 Establishment of a Police Post on Beqa

During a talanoa session at Rukua village, Beqa, and in reply to questions from the Community, the Assistant Commissioner of Police, ACP Lutunauga highlighted that discussions are ongoing on the establishment of a Police Post on Beqa. He requested that a formal letter identifying the land on which the facility is to be built be submitted by the villages. This would enhance law enforcement presence and service delivery on the island.

3.3.19 Issues highlighted at the Sigatoka Talanoa Session

The Committee was informed that transport and manpower are among the most pressing challenges for the Fiji Police Force in Sigatoka. The area of responsibility spans from Mango Bay, Namatakula to Navutu Bridge, including regions such as Kavanagasau, Naviago, Keasi, and Motukana, making adequate personnel deployment critical. A major infrastructure concern is the lack of a proper police post in the town area—the previous station was lost due to a land dispute, and officers now operate out of a container near the bus stop, which is considered unsuitable and unhealthy for officers.

Drug-related offences, particularly involving school children, were flagged as a growing concern. The Police have been conducting awareness campaigns in schools, and children found in possession of drugs are brought in with their parents, then referred to the Juvenile Bureau through Divisional Crime Officers for appropriate action. Officers in Sigatoka are currently equipped with capsicum spray, but the need for better tactical equipment was acknowledged for situations involving resistance or danger.

Crime Officer Saleshe Kumar added that livestock theft remains a persistent issue and suggested collaboration with the Ministry of Agriculture to raise awareness among farmers, particularly concerning stray animals causing road accidents. Drug operations in Keyasi have been ongoing, but logistical delays, especially in the drug analysis process, make it difficult to act on time, as raided farms may become unrecognisable by the time teams return. Further, the Vodafone liaison process for identifying criminals is slow, with only one liaison officer handling the entire Western Division, and calls were made to decentralise this function. Sigatoka also has only one fire station, and clarity on jurisdictions between agencies was requested. The police station has 160 officers, but there is a shortage of traffic officers to adequately patrol the busy main highway and tourist zones. The Police requested increased manpower and resources to effectively manage the growing demands in this vital and high-profile region.

3.3.20 Issues highlighted during the Nadi Police Station and Lautoka Police Station Site Visits

The Committee was informed that the new Nadi Police Station has severe infrastructure defects. These include an overflowing sewer line affecting the lift, flooding in the cells during rainy days, and non-functional air conditioning among others. Manpower remains a critical issue, with 174 officers currently stationed there. Due to the strict RFL policy, unfilled positions resulted in \$18.1 million allocated for salaries being returned to government.

At the Lautoka Police Station, 11 officers cover three districts (Coral Coast, Nadi, Lautoka), with vehicle support from Tourism Fiji and the Water Police Unit. However, logistical challenges persist, officers often pay for minibus travel out-of-pocket to reach remote areas. The local CID Unit, with 38 officers, faces stress-related gaps when personnel are on leave, has no dedicated vehicles, and frequently sends teams to Suva to retrieve investigation files. Other complaints involved tourist misconduct, including interference with local youth, and recurring property theft and loss from hotels and the community.

The current number of K9 dogs nationwide is 13. Currently there are five dogs in the Western Division, whereby two; Simba and Princess are operating from Vitogo. The other 3 dogs, from New Zealand are currently housed in the FDDU kennel in Namaka. These 3 dogs will later be transferred to the old Dog Section in Namaka once renovations by the police Building and Maintenance Unit are completed.

The Vitogo Dog Unit, established in 1961, covers a massive population of over 340,000, including 30 police posts and hundreds of schools, yet faces a lack of basic facilities, such as toilets and bathrooms. The Unit currently operates with two K9s which are high-performing dogs (Simba and Princess), working in 12-hour rotations. However, it only has one vehicle with limited daily fuel and relies on imported dogs due to local breeding constraints. The Lautoka K9 Unit was closed due to OHS (occupational health and safety) issues. The 5 dogs, 2 in Vitogo and 3 in Namaka, are currently serving the division.

Across divisions, officers stressed the need for improvements in infrastructure, operational support, specialised training, and welfare provisions. Notably, the FPF expressed interest in uplifting five programmes: strategic planning, ethics, HR, operational capabilities, and leadership development. A divisional management committee policy is also in place to improve governance and oversight.

Overall, the FPF requested attention to critical resourcing issues, vehicles, allowances, specialised equipment (e.g. sniffer dogs), improved facilities, and better retention incentives

to maintain operational readiness and service delivery across high-demand and tourism-heavy regions.

3.3.21 Issues highlighted during the visit to Tavua Police Station, Nalawa Police Post and the Rakiraki Talanoa Session.

In Nadarivatu and the interior, police face ongoing challenges related to stray cattle damaging farms, with insufficient transport and manpower to respond before damage is done. There is a call for stronger partnerships with the iTaukei Affairs Board, including attention to the 1996 village by-laws which need review, especially on unregistered settlements and alcohol restrictions in villages. Infrastructure concerns were also raised that officers contribute personally to maintain a heritage building in Tavua, which still lacks basic amenities such as functioning air-conditioning.

In Rakiraki and Nalawa, police infrastructure is in poor condition, particularly in Nalawa, where the station lacks a functional office, and barracks have not been maintained since Tropical Cyclone Kina. Only one officer-in-charge (OC) oversees the entire district, with minimal staffing: 12 officers in Nakorotubu, 38 in Nalawa, and only one vehicle per location. Poor road conditions and delays in repairing community infrastructure further affect operations. Officers reported a high frequency of domestic violence and theft cases, often requiring daily community awareness sessions with village heads.

Manpower remains a major concern. Officers travel daily from Rakiraki to Nalawa, often at their own expense, \$10 round-trip, with no official transport allowance or barracks provided in Nalawa. Housing limitations exacerbate the problem, with only four single spaces in Nakorotubu and no rentals available.

Officers work shifts of 4–5 personnel, which is insufficient to cover the area's high-demand zones. The cattle issue continues to generate tension in the area, with calls for the Ministry of Agriculture to enforce land-use restrictions and revise the outdated \$20 fine for stray cattle. The MOA is reportedly reviewing six Acts, including one on stray animals.

Overall, the discussions reflect a pattern of under-resourcing, infrastructure degradation, rising demand for services, and logistical difficulties in Fiji's interior and rural policing zones. Officers and community representatives appealed for stronger inter-ministerial coordination, increased manpower, housing, transportation support, and legislative reform to help the Fiji Police Force deliver effective law enforcement and community support in these regions.

3.3.22 Police Mobile Force (PMF)

The Police Mobile Force (PMF) is in urgent need of reform and restructuring. Officers highlighted a critical shortage of vehicles, operational equipment, and manpower, with current deployments often relying on staff from other police stations. This impacts their ability to respond effectively, especially during ministerial guard duties, state functions, and drug operations, which draw heavily from their personnel pool. Morale among officers is low due to limited promotion opportunities and instability in unit postings. PMF reported delays in the provision of new uniforms, inconsistencies in the quality of supplies received from government vendors, and an absence of specialized gear for operations such as search and rescue. The unit has not received any new rescue equipment in the last five years and relies heavily on the National Fire Authority, despite this being a policing responsibility. Armoury updates are overdue—most weapons are outdated or restricted due to legislative gaps, such as the inability to deploy tasers. The unit needs chainsaws, PPE, shovels, wheelbarrows, and other basic field equipment. A manpower increase from 270 to 350 is requested to meet the rising demand, alongside an expansion plan to decentralise PMF operations across Western and Southern Divisions.

3.3.23 Diving Unit (PMF)

The Diving Unit lacks dedicated specialised vehicles, modern gear, and key safety equipment such as decompression chambers, shark deterrents, lifelines, and depth sounders. Divers operate within a 12-nautical-mile limit under police jurisdiction, but similar constraints faced by the Navy are also impacting police operations. The cost of medical clearance of FJD \$2,000 per diver is prohibitive under current budgets, and officers receive no risk, diving, or medical allowances despite the hazardous nature of their duties. Although the divers are well-trained, equipment and funding shortages compromise their operational effectiveness.

3.3.24 Serious and Organised Crime Intelligence (SOCID)

This unit focuses primarily on drug intelligence and interdiction, with operations targeting the trafficking of methamphetamine, which has an estimated street value of FJD \$800 per gram. However, the department faces major budgetary constraints and lacks vehicles. Monitoring synthetic drug imports, particularly through pharmaceuticals, is challenging due to the absence of legislation aligning with UNODC drug schedules. There are no current powers to arrest individuals for glue sniffing or to shut down sellers. The unit is advocating for revisions to the Illicit Drugs Control Act, expanded lists under Schedules 1 and 2, and strengthened collaboration with stakeholders. The current operational budget for the

Transnational Crime Unit (TCU) stands at only FJD \$8,000 annually, which severely limits capability leading to some officers using their own private vehicles during operations.

3.3.25 K9 Unit – Nasova

The Nasova-based K9 Unit is under-resourced and lacks dedicated capability to service the Northern Division. Eastern Division services are extended from Suva. There is a high demand for dog services, especially at borders, but vehicle shortages, limited handler housing, and a substantial salary gap between Customs and Police dog handlers are key concerns. Dog replacements are sourced from New Zealand, with monthly checks and assessments. Additional investment is needed for personnel and infrastructure.

3.3.26 Forensics Division

The Forensics Division, established in 2012, includes chemistry labs in the Western, Northern, and Central (Nakasi) Divisions consisting of seven units with 133 forensic staff. The FPF forensics division is the regional forensic hub for 21 Pacific countries. While drug analysis capabilities are up to date for cannabis, white drugs, and urine, there is no capacity for blood analysis. Due to budget limitations, many procurement requests remain unfulfilled, affecting critical case work. The Bio Lab, staffed by 11 personnel, handles DNA and sexual assault cases, but lacks enabling legislation. A new DNA Bill is currently being drafted by the Office of the Solicitor-General. The Forensic Science Service manages records through the CRIS (Crime Record Information System) which was undertaken by a New Zealand contractor, Mr. Steve Sinclair of Broad IT NZ. The CRIS upgrade commenced in 2017 and was structured into four phases. The FPF is currently in the final phase of this project.

Additionally, it is also worth highlighting that the digitisation of Police Clearance applications, allowing submissions to be made online to the Criminal Records Office, is a separate initiative funded by the United Nations Capital Development Fund (UNCDF). This component is being managed under the leadership of the Director of IT of the FPF, who serves as the Project Manager.

3.3.27 Pathology Unit

The Pathology Unit, with 19 positions, is understaffed, with no proper office space and faces procurement difficulties. There is a need for a regional forensic setup in Fiji and specialist doctors. Staff retention remains a key challenge due to limited resources and incentives.

3.3.28 Crime Scene Investigation (CSI) Office

The CSI Unit operates with 14 officers, managing nine stations. Each crime scene typically requires deployment of a five-member team to collect and submit evidence. Challenges include long body holding periods (up to six months), and shared morgue facilities. Bodies are held in morgues solely for identification purposes, particularly when they are unrecognizable and require DNA confirmation through reference samples from family members. The Fiji Police Force (FPF) does not have its own morgue facilities; all post-mortems are conducted at hospital morgues under an MoU with the Ministry of Health. Forensic training for FPF officers is provided locally at the Forensic Science Services in Nasova and through international partners such as the Australian Federal Police, New Zealand Police, the Pacific Forensic Working Group, and New Zealand's Institute of Environmental Science and Research (ESR).

3.3.29 Psychology Unit

The unit manages voluntary, compulsory, and performance-triggered psychological interventions. While extra marital affairs are no longer an offence, psychological impacts and behavioural assessments are still monitored. The unit is currently developing a structure to support sustainable service delivery and staff well-being. Plans are in place to publish findings and refurbish the working space.

Cross-Cutting Observations

Across all units, budget shortfalls, equipment deficits, legislative gaps, and manpower limitations are common challenges. Officers repeatedly highlighted the need for updated laws (especially around tasers, synthetic drugs, and DNA evidence), modern operational tools, fairer compensation structures, and the decentralisation of specialised services. Units also emphasised inter-agency partnerships and greater parliamentary support for police budget reforms to ensure improved national security, public safety, and institutional effectiveness.

4.0 Relevance to Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

The Fiji Police Force (FPF) plays a critical role in advancing the Sustainable Development Goals, particularly SDG 16 and SDG 5. In line with SDG 16, the FPF is responsible for upholding the rule of law, ensuring public safety, preventing and investigating crime, and promoting justice, peace, and inclusive communities. Through community policing, law enforcement, and accountability mechanisms, the FPF fosters trust and social cohesion. In support of SDG 5, the FPF is actively engaged in promoting gender equality by addressing gender-based violence, supporting female officers in leadership roles, and implementing policies that empower women and girls within the force and in society. Despite ongoing challenges such as resource constraints and capacity development, the FPF remains committed to these goals through strategic partnerships, reforms, and continuous training.

5.0 Conclusion

The Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and Defence has conducted a thorough review of the Fiji Police Force 2020 – 2021 Annual Report. The Committee report is bi-partisan and has 16 recommendations for consideration.

6.0 Committee Members' Signatures



Hon. Lenora Qereqeretabua
Chairperson



Hon. Rinesh Sharma
Deputy Chairperson



Hon. Ratu Isikeli Tuiwailevu
Member



Hon. Penioni Ravunawa
Member



Hon. Virendra Lal
Member

7.0 Appendices

Published evidence

Written evidence, transcripts, and supporting documents can be viewed on the Parliament website at the following link:

<https://www.parliament.gov.fj/committees/standing-committee-on-foreign-affairs-and-defence/>