

APPENDICES

Table of Contents

Verbatim Report.....	3
Written Responses.....	27
Additional Information.....	53
Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and Defence Site Visitation.....	67

Verbatim Report

[VERBATIM REPORT]

STANDING COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN AFFAIRS AND DEFENCE

ANNUAL REPORTS

1. **2020-2021 Annual Report**
2. **2021-2022 Annual Report**
3. **2022-2023 Annual Report**

ENTITY: Fiji Independent Commission Against Corruption (FICAC)

VENUE: Big Committee Room (East Wing)

DATE: Tuesday, 14 October 2025

**VERBATIM REPORT OF THE MEETING OF THE STANDING COMMITTEE ON
FOREIGN AFFAIRS AND DEFENCE HELD AT THE COMMITTEE ROOM (EAST
WING), PARLIAMENT PRECINCTS, GOVERNMENT BUILDINGS, ON TUESDAY,
14TH OCTOBER 2025, AT 9.05 A.M.**

Interviewee/Submittee: Fiji Independent Commission Against Corruption (FICAC)

Present

1. Hon. R.R. Sharma - Deputy Chairperson
2. Hon. V. Lal - Member
3. Hon. I. Tuiwailevu - Member
4. Hon. Ratu J.B. Niudamu - Alternate Member

Apologies

1. Hon. L.S. Qereqeretabua - Chairperson
2. Hon. P.K. Ravunawa - Member
3. Hon. T.R. Matasawalevu - Member

In Attendance:

1. Ms. Lavi Lutu Rokoika - Acting Commissioner
2. Ms. Lorraine Fesaitu - Manager Corporate Governance
3. Mr. Mosese Matanisiga - Manager Investigations
4. Ms. Miriama Qionibaravi - Personnel Assistant

DEPUTY CHAIRPERSON. - Honourable Members, members of the media and the public, secretariat, dear viewers, ladies and gentlemen; a very good morning to you all. It is a pleasure to welcome everyone, especially the viewers who might be watching this proceeding.

At the outset, for your information, pursuant to Standing Order 111(2) of Parliament, all Committee meetings are to be opened to the public. Therefore, this meeting is open to the public and also to the media.

However, for any sensitive information concerning this submission that cannot be disclosed in public, this can be provided to the Committee either in private or in writing, but do note that this will only be allowed in a few specific circumstances which include:

- (1) national security matters;
- (2) third party confidential information;
- (3) personnel or human resources matters; and
- (4) Committee deliberation and development of Committee's recommendation and report.

Tuesday, 14th October 2025

I wish to remind honourable Members and our invited submittees that all comments and questions to be asked are to be addressed through the Deputy Chairperson. For those viewers viewing us live on *Facebook*, questions can be asked via the comments section and only relevant questions will be considered by this Committee. Also note that if there are any other questions from the Members of the Committee, you may interject, or we can wait until the end of the submission to ask your questions.

This is a parliamentary meeting, and all information gathered is covered under the Parliamentary Powers and Privileges Act and the Standing Orders of Parliament. Please, do bear in mind that we will not condone any slander and/or liable of any sort, and any information brought before this Committee should be based on facts.

In terms of other protocols of this Committee meeting, please, be advised that movement within the Committee room during the submission will be restricted and we ask that you minimise the use of your mobile phones and put them on silent mode or vibrate mode while the meeting is in progress.

(Introduction of Committee Members, Secretariat and Hansard)

DEPUTY CHAIRPERSON.- Today, the Committee will be having an oral submission from the Fiji Independent Commission Against Corruption (FICAC) in relation to its 2020-2021, 2021-2022 to 2022-2023 Annual Reports. I would now like to take this time to invite our guests to introduce themselves, before you proceed with your written submission. Please, you may start.

MS. L.L. ROKOIKA.- Good morning, Deputy Chairperson, honourable Members and to our viewers; I am the Acting Commissioner for the FICAC and I have been in this position for about 17 weeks.

(Introduction of FICAC Officials)

DEPUTY CHAIRPERSON.- *Vinaka*, I note that the two members on the list that are not present here today.

MS. L.L. ROKOIKA.- Yes, that is correct, Deputy Chairperson. They are on leave. I did not realise that one was on leave and the other called in sick this morning with a sprained ankle. However, we will be in a position, and we will attempt to answer all the questions by the Committee.

DEPUTY CHAIRPERSON.- That is noted, so you may proceed with your presentation.

MS. L.L. ROKOIKA.- Deputy Chairperson, this is the way I propose to have this one hour session with the Committee. On Thursday, we had sent a summary of general matters that were asked in the cover letter. Yesterday, however, we sent over the answers to the specific questions that

Tuesday, 14th October 2025

were sent by the Committee. What I propose to do now is go through just some preliminary work that has been done by the Commission.

When it comes to Ms. Fesaitu's part, I will ask her to make submissions on that and when it comes to investigations, I will ask Manager Investigations to respond. At the end, if there are any questions, or you may interrupt, then we will be able to answer the questions that the Committee has.

I confirm that the reports for the relevant periods are from 2020 to 2023. At that time, the Commission was led by Commissioner Aslam, who has since left, and towards the end of 2023, there were two other Heads who were there - Mr. David Toganivalu for a while, and Ms. Puleiwai for a while too.

In the submissions that I sent on Friday, you will note in there that we have tried to summarise the most relevant parts that were asked in the initial letter of request sent by the Committee, the –

- complaints received for the relevant years;
- investigations that were handled in the relevant years;
- matters that were taken to court (you will note it is there on the screen);
- matters that were pending before court;
- disposed cases;
- prevention outreach programme; and
- our grant that was given by Government.

We confirm that from the complaints that were received, it only reduced in the 2021-2022 period, but it then increased again in 2022- 2023.

The investigations filed, though they moved, the pace was somehow slow. I think at this juncture, it would be best for me to indicate to the Committee that since taking up office in June of this year, I specifically noted the issues that have now been raised by the Committee, so in my attempt to try and ensure that the cases are moving faster and that everyone within the Commission was actually doing their work, we had done a restructure on the first week of June. The restructure was an attempt to try and give back to the people the value for their money.

We scrapped the Corruption Prevention Unit that had about 18 in the whole of the country. By the way, FICAC has slightly over 100 officers here in Suva, at the moment, about 22 in Lautoka, and there is about 11 in Labasa. So, what happened in June was we removed the Corruption Prevention Unit, and what we did was we maintained just a few officers that we believe who will be able to do the job and maintain our statutory mandate for awareness programmes. We reassigned these officers because they know what corruption is, so we have reassigned them. They have now been inducted into the Investigations Programme, and they are there working as

Tuesday, 14th October 2025

investigations officers. By doing that, we were able to save money for the organisation, and we streamlined the work for the organisation.

The other important work that was done by the Commission when I started around June was the creation of a new unit. For the purposes of the meeting, it can be called Complaints, but the Manager is Manager Investigation-Legal, so she looks after all the complaints that come in.

When complaints come in, she has to triage and get the files moving within 24 hours. I believe having that new post and new unit there has shortened the time period in which the files are moving and that, I believe, will assist with a lot of concerns that have been raised by the Committee in terms of the very slow movement of our files within the Commission.

On page 3 - Categories, those are the complaints received for all the three years. We have done it in terms of the divisions, our observations or our feedback is at the last column. We note that there was a decline soon after COVID-19 and we believe that, that was caused by restricted mobility. I believe that ties in with one of the issues that was raised by the Committee, which is our disruption programme, so to speak. If there is another disruption, are we able to deal with the disaster if that happens? I will deal with that at the end.

On page 4 – we talked about the investigations files that have been handled, completed or charged and closed. For the closure of the files when they are finished from investigations, I believe, for the files that were there prior to my commencement with the Commission, we have had to close some files there because I have put a new benchmark or cap threshold in terms of charging suspects.

Initially, every complaint that came to the Commission was dealt with within the Commission and it went up and charges were laid. I believe that the monetary value for some was very, very minuscule for a private practitioner, that is, the amount of money that you would charge for two minutes of your time.

With the new Complaints and Investigations Unit, for the files that were opened already, I put a monetary cap in there so that if it is less than a specific amount, there has to be an immediate referral to the police. This is on the basis so that we are able to concentrate on the high value cases. Why are we running after the small fish when there are other bigger monetary value suspects out there.

You will note that the closures, since I have started, increased on that basis. One of the reasons was that I felt we should not be using a lot of our resources when we can transfer the files to the Police, and they are happy to accept. I believe that was one of the questions asked by the Committee. I will deal with the process at the end.

In terms of matters taken to court, the cases that were filed, the individuals who were charged and the total counts in terms of pending matters, at the end of page 4, we have itemised in there the pending matters. Perhaps, at this juncture, it will be prudent for me to talk about what we are doing about the unsuccessful prosecutions.

Tuesday, 14th October 2025

One of the things that we have done is with effect from 17th September, about three weeks ago, we relaunched our strategic plan. We scraped away the previous strategic plan from 2025 to 2029 and our new strategic plan from 2025 to 2030 outlines in there simplified KPIs so that each and every officer within the Commission is responsible for certain work. The officers of the Commission now know that they have to earn their keep. If they do not produce the results that you are supposed to produce, they know what the result would be.

In terms of Category 6 - Prevention and Outreach Programme, you will see that the total programmes are stated in the second column. On the fourth column, you will see the number of participants and sessions within the year. Again, this is something that we tried to look into when we were preparing our strategic plan. I noted that a lot of money, since coming into office, was spent on awareness programmes which, I believe, we could have reduced the costs involved by doing a lot of digital awareness programmes and those are rolling well overseas, so I do not see why we, in Fiji, cannot use that approach because every person in Fiji now has a mobile phone. We have tried to leverage technology in terms of the awareness programmes.

Deputy Chairperson, for Category 7 - Finance, you will see in there the grants and all the audit reports for the relevant years were unqualified. I have put in there an analysis of the complaints within the relevant period.

On Page 8 – Main Challenges, I am happy to state that the gender breakdown for the Commission, we have a good number of women. Out of the 145 staff for the year 2021, we had 64 female; 2022 - 136 staff with 60 female; and 2022-2023 - 129 staff with 60 female. The percentage remained at 44 percent for the two years of 2021 and 2022 and increased to 47 percent in 2023. There is a bit of explanations that I have done there in terms of our summary, but I believe that this is better dealt with if we look at the questions and answers that was sent before Fiji Day on Friday.

Just by way of summary, a 21 percent decline in open investigations. Since our reporting, we have adopted a few trial readiness programmes so that our Legal Department can be a bit more effective in the way they work.

In terms of awareness, we are not only trying to count the number of activities that we produce but we are trying to see how that affects organisations wanting to participate in all our programmes, getting the Commission to have a look at their policies and manuals by seeing that there is some anticorruption strategies within their own manual.

What I would like to do because I have been talking a bit much, I will hand over to Manager Investigations, if he could, please, discuss No. 1 - Investigations Department.

MR. M. MATANISIGA.- Deputy Chairperson and honourable Members, briefly, in response to the first question, between 2020 to 2023, we have the Commission's investigative performance was constrained by a sizable backlog that stood at 332 cases in 2020-2021. That was mainly because of COVID-19. Thereafter, we have tried to reduce the backlogs considerably.

Tuesday, 14th October 2025

Since our Strategic Plan, we have engaged a taskforce to deal basically with backlog cases. We have been dealing with backlog, but we have been given a deadline until December this year to deal with the backlogs, even though we have been given until August in 2026. In December of this year, we will need to give an update to the Office of the Commissioner on how far we have dealt with the backlogs.

Within the Investigation Team, I have separated a taskforce to deal only with the backlogs, while the core of the team deal with other high-value cases that they are currently dealing with now. Basically, that is what we have done in dealing with the backlogs.

In response to the second question, Sir, to prevent future recurrence, FICAC has embedded strict service level standards within the staff KPIs, so those are our Service Level Agreements (SLAs). We are going to strictly monitor SLAs with regard to the output by our officers. Once we deal with the backlog, then we will be in a much better position to deal with all our current cases and work within the SLAs that have been put in place into our Strategic Plan.

DEPUTY CHAIRPERSON.- Sir, just a reminder, we have a one-hour limit, and I can only allow, at least, eight to ten minutes more, because honourable Members would have questions beyond the presentation.

MR. M. MATANISIGA.- Sir, I think that is all.

MS. L.L. ROKOIKA.- Deputy Chairperson, through you, I will get Manager Corporate and Governance to talk about her part which is on Page No. 7 - Corporate Services Department. Once she done that, then I will do a quick summary on the other Units before we finish.

MS. L. FESAITU.- Deputy Chairperson and honourable Members, very briefly on the Corporate Services Department, in response to the question that was posed, FICAC's strategy on staff retention is not basically focused on competitive remuneration, but there are also other factors that we consider in terms of retaining our employees.

Apart from the competitive remuneration, we also have a structured career progression structure, in the sense that it allows officers to progress within the Commission. For example, for an investigator, they can commence as an Assistant Investigator and then on, they progress to Investigator, then Team Leader, and Chief Investigator, and so forth. So, that is the structured career progression that we have.

We also have continuous training and development for officers. That is one of the key strengths that we have initiated over the years, we will continue to do that, and the digital transformation to sustain our performance, despite the demanding workload that our officers have.

For the years 2020-2021, there is a reduction in the training programmes for the Commission simply because of the COVID-19 pandemic, so that has affected training. Nevertheless, the Commission continued with its efforts where we also secured online training, just so continuous learning is operational within the Commission. For the financial year 2021-2022,

Tuesday, 14th October 2025

there is an increase from 22 to 59 trainings. Similarly, for the year that followed, 2022-2023, just a slight reduction to 50 trainings for the financial year.

We have also adopted technologies, in the sense that officers are able to continue to work remotely so that operations continue. Those are the things that we have for the Corporate Services Department.

MS. L.L. ROKOIKA. - Deputy Chairperson, if I could very briefly go through the remaining questions that was posed by the Committee with regard to the Legal and Prosecution Department. A very obvious question on the decline of the conviction rates, which happened in the relevant years. The only thing I can do now whilst in office is to see what way in which we are able to make sure that, first, this does not recur and, second, increase the number of convictions.

You will note that I have identified ways that we will have to implement within the Legal Department, as follows:

- (1) Have a Charging Standard;
- (2) establish a legal review panel;
- (3) issue a Trial Readiness Certificate before the case goes to court; and
- (4) Manager Legal comes to me with all the three requirements above before I sign off on the charges to be laid.

In response to the second question, that is something that is beyond our control. However, every other practitioner here in Fiji knows and has this problem.

One of the things that I have tried to do to hasten the process of court matters is that I have given a directive to all the Legal Officers of the Commission that they shall not ask for any adjournment beyond 14 days. I believe when I was on the other side as a private practitioner in a very limited time last year, they were always asking for 21 days adjournment, so I have put a stop to that. Any adjournment should be minimum of three days, then five days, then 10 days and then 14 days. Only unless the court cannot deal with our case, then we are at the mercy of the court. However, I have put in there a requirement that there is no standard 21 days adjournment. Hopefully, that will reduce the delay in our cases.

The other way that we have incorporated to, at least, beef up the type of legal work that is provided by the Commission is to ensure that the legal opinion that is drafted at the beginning is drafted in a submission format. You outline all the issues - the elements, the case law, you do it in your legal opinion, so when it is submission time, it is not a re-run of the whole thing. You can just convert the legal opinion to submission and have it sent off.

In terms of restitution, our Economic Crimes Unit, it is basically a team that looks after trying to get restitution. One of the things that I am still thinking about that but will go directly with our strategic plan that was launched three weeks ago is for the Commission lawyers to have some, sort of, guideline into plea bargaining. I believe that there is another term that is called here in Fiji where there are authorised plea bargain with defence counsel in terms of restitution.

Tuesday, 14th October 2025

The last one that I have here is asset recovery. I can confirm that that is a big part of our work when we are trying to do asset recovery. I believe we have two dedicated counsel lawyers who actually deal with asset recovery.

In terms of corruption prevention, I have talked about that when we started our submission. Before it used to be the number of awareness programmes that was actually done by the Commission. Now, we have not focused on the numbers but focused on the gain from the general public.

Ms. Fesaitu has talked about Corporate Services Department. I will very briefly try and respond to Question No. 5 that was posed by the Committee on Page 8. In response, I believe this is vital since we are here before the Committee for us to touch on this aspect.

I believe Parliament should consider modernising Fiji's legal framework, maybe have an AntiCorruption Code because right now, we have the Crimes Act, Proceeds of Crimes, we have portions of laws here and there so, perhaps, if that is a way forward for us - having one clean anti-corruption code will really be helpful in terms of our work. I will be very, very happy if that is something that Government or Parliament can approve so we can work on.

The other issue that we have here is corporate governance. Right now, I believe that this is not properly covered. Other jurisdictions have covered this in their law. When shareholders have a lot of shares, but they are silent in their work, so that is silent in the laws in Fiji. Perhaps, that is something that Parliament could look into.

I can confirm that right now, we have seven MOUs. We have it with the FRCS, the Police, Immigration, DPP's Office, Ministry of Justice, Land Transport Authority and Fiji Intelligence Unit (FIU) but, unfortunately, these are very, very old MOUs. I am in the process of trying to, once I am a bit free, get in touch with the Heads of the Units so that we can improve these MOUs. These MOUs are more than 10 years old, so they need to be updated because everything has moved on, except for those MOUs.

The other work that we are trying to do now to try and gain the confidence of the public is to do live feed of work by the Commission. Our first few ones were a failure because we were having teething problems and, hopefully, this is something that our media team can improve on moving forward.

I have talked about disruptions, like COVID, and I believe this may be a good platform for me to actually talk about this. Other jurisdictions in the world encourage e-filing of documents in court and e-hearings on matters when witnesses or counsel is unable to be there physically. Only in Fiji, I believe, this is still prohibited because our laws are very old (ancient). Perhaps, this is something that the Court or Parliament can look into - e-filing, e-disclosures when witnesses cannot come, the ability to testify, and I believe for now, the ability to testify is only with regard to vulnerable witnesses, but if the Court, through Parliament, can amend the laws to enable that, that will be a way forward.

Tuesday, 14th October 2025

I have dealt with everything there on No. 9. Regarding partnership, I confirm that these are the partnerships that we currently have. I am in the process of meeting with my counterparts from the Serious Fraud Unit and from the Australian Federal Police. I have also spoken to the US FBI equivalent that work here in Fiji, trying to get assistance for the officers within the Commission.

I have talked about Page No. 11, the legislation that we are hoping could be looked into by Parliament - an anti-corruption code. I believe whistleblower is very, very vital. I am not sure what is the status of that but, perhaps, if that is something that Government could look into and for us to have, not a new Bill or a new legislation, but some sort of gateway within the laws that we currently have to enable the sharing of information.

The Inland Revenue Department is unable to share information with us because it is there in their law and is prohibited. We are unable to share any information because there is no provision that allows us to share that information. Perhaps, if that is something that Parliament could look into - the sharing of information between enforcement entities, that will assist in our work.

In terms of the last two, we have provided answers in there, in terms of the categories of the offences and how referrals are done from the Office of the Commissioner FICAC to the Police, and vice versa. I have spoken for too long. Thank you, and we will await your questions.

DEPUTY CHAIRPERSON. - Thank you, Acting Commissioner. I will now open the questions for the Members who may wish to ask questions. You have the floor.

HON. I. TUIWAILEVU. - Deputy Chairperson, I have a question. Why only a limited number of investigations proceed to legal proceedings each year – 28 in 2020-2021; 24 in 2021-2022; and 36 in 2022-2023?

MS. L.L. ROKOIKA.- Deputy Chairperson, through you, if the honourable Member could just ask the first sentence again. I understood the years, but I did not get the question.

MR. M. MATANISIGA.- Deputy Chairperson, you will see that there will always be a limited number that goes through to prosecution. That is because they have reached the threshold where the Investigation Team feels that it needs to go to prosecution. That is because we feel that there is sufficient evidence that warrants us to make our submissions to the Legal Team. I hope that answers your question, Sir.

HON. I. TUIWAILEVU.- Thank you.

HON. V. LAL.- Deputy Chairperson, through you, in the reporting periods from 2020-2023, I can see a lot of changes in the leadership of FICAC, and you being the fifth and just 17 weeks on the job. My question is, going back to 2020, can FICAC clarify how many investigations and prosecutions in the last three years involved senior Government officials, executives of statutory bodies or State-Owned Enterprises, and what safeguards are in place to ensure these cases are investigated and prosecuted without political interference?

Tuesday, 14th October 2025

MS. L.L. ROKOIKA.- In terms of the numbers, unfortunately, that is not one of the categories in which our cases are categorised. We do not put it into categories, like you have asked, honourable Member, but our mandate is with regard to civil servants, so it comes from clerical officers right up to the CEOs. We have not itemised them to just Heads of Ministries, Permanent Secretaries or Ministers. That answers your first question.

In terms of the second question, I believe, you are talking about weaponisation? I believe for the relevant period; they did the investigations and prosecutions once the threshold was met. We are using the same Commission Standing Orders that were incorporated within the Commission from 2008. We have the same rules that have not changed, so the same rules are the ones that govern the way the officers of the Commission work. So, there should not be any political interference in terms of the way the officers work.

HON. V. LAL.- Deputy Chairperson, through you, justice delayed is justice denied. So, given the growing concerns about lengthy investigations and court backlogs, can FICAC provide clear statistics on pending cases, conviction rates and average timeframes for case resolution? What reforms are being implemented to ensure timely justice?

MS. L.L. ROKOIKA.- The reform that FICAC is now actually sitting on and marching forward with is our latest Strategic Plan that was launched on the 17th. In there, we have reduced the KPIs, and each Department has clear KPIs. There is a shorter period of turnaround time when the files are there for investigations.

Because our Strategic Plan is just three weeks old, we are still in the process of implementing systems so that when the cases come in, they are put in grades – Grade A, B, C and D, and those grading will then determine how long the investigations should go. Hopefully, with those new systems that we are putting in place, it will shorten the period in which a file is kept with a particular officer.

Legal opinions are now for a maximum three days of turnaround period. On investigations, I am getting Manager Investigations to give me reports basically on a weekly, fortnightly level interval. So, we are trying to monitor that, before we implement the systems that is embedded into our Strategic Plan.

HON. V. LAL.- Deputy Chairperson, just adding on to that, now that you have training programmes, early warning systems or collaboration with Ministries and statutory bodies, what proactive measures has FICAC implemented to prevent corruption before it occurs? How is its impact been measured on public trust and institutional behaviour?

MS. L.L. ROKOIKA.- Yes, I believe that is covered in the awareness part of our response. The answers are on Page Nos. 5 and 6 of our question and answers – the measurable behaviour in terms of outcomes, completing training with institutions. I believe we have done 60 institutional trainings and only about 40 left for all statutory corporate bodies here in Fiji. So, we just have a few left. One of the things that is done in terms of our training is a feedback from organisations themselves, post-training surveys and the return of our training officers or awareness officers back

Tuesday, 14th October 2025

to these institutions to try and assist with the implementation of the clauses of anti-corruption within their standard operating procedures.

HON. V. LAL.- Deputy Chairperson, I can see that there has been a great reduction in the number of cases reported. It is almost 1,000 but then again, it is starting to go up, just a slight increase. How do you respond to that?

MS. L.L. ROKOIKA.- Yes, that was one of the questions I had raised with the Anti-Corruption Unit and one of the reasons they gave me, not so proactive but a reactive response, is that now that people are aware and are conscious of what corruption is, maybe they are then reporting more because we have noticed that the areas in which complaints are coming from are areas in which awareness training was done. Even some of them, they actually report to the awareness officers and then the awareness officers are the ones who come and lodge the complaint and then it goes back that way. That is the only justification that we can see from the relevant period. I can confirm that even when awareness or trainings are done to the public, that is when the awareness officers return with a complaint from the general public.

HON. V. LAL.- So, these trainings are effective, that is what you are saying?

MS. L.L. ROKOIKA.- Yes, they are effective reactionary, but effective, nevertheless.

HON. RATU J.B. NIUDAMU.- Through you, Deputy Chairperson, thank you Acting Commissioner. I have a question on the pending cases in our court system. I think this is an ongoing problem. What are your views in bringing back an anti-corruption court in our court system? We used to have that anti-corruption court unit before, but I think it was revoked sometimes back. Will that be a solution to these pending cases in court? What is your view?

MS. L.L. ROKOIKA.- Deputy Chairperson, that will really hasten the process. If it is up to me, I would really love that. It will help with the rolling of the cases because I believe, right now, what we are doing is we are fighting for trial time. There is no hearing time, I think, from June or July this year. We could not book a hearing date. So, most of our cases, the diary of the bench is full. They are all next year. So, if that is something that Parliament could look into, that will greatly help us with the rolling of the cases within the Commission.

HON. RATU J.B. NIUDAMU.- Another question, Deputy Chairperson, through you, just a concern on the amount of cases which were withdrawn, was this due to insufficient evidence, or was it also caused by prosecutors not ready, or the amount of workload per prosecutor? Can you elaborate on that, Acting Commissioner?

MS. L.L. ROKOIKA.- Certainly, honourable Member. A lot of factors actually contribute to the withdrawal of cases from court. The factors vary from the legacy of the file, sometimes the cases are from 2013, 2014 - very old cases; witnesses cannot recollect. I, for one, cannot remember who I met last week, so these are the issues that the lawyers have to face; witnesses not remembering what happened, it was too long ago when that happened; some witnesses die; some

Tuesday, 14th October 2025

witnesses migrate, so those are the main problems that the prosecutors have to face. Again, if it is faster in court, maybe the witnesses will not die and witnesses will still remember.

There are a lot of factors that affect the length of the time that the cases are actually pending in court. I know, change of leadership, I say this because I have closed some cases because I feel it is not in the public interest for us to be going after \$300. I have weighed the options, and I have said, "No, we will not proceed, we withdraw this", because it is much more expensive to send the lawyers to Nausori, the fuel and everything, the time, just to go after \$300. So that could also be another factor - change in leadership, after a period of time, public interest, factors they surface, so there are many factors that contribute to the withdrawal or the nulling of files in court.

HON. RATU J.B. NIUDAMU.- Deputy Chairperson, through you, I have noted the assets forfeiture applications, both on civil and criminal. In terms of the percentage of the civil forfeiture or criminal forfeiture applications in the past period during this annual report, what is the percentage of applications your prosecutors have made in court, particularly with the rise of corruption cases in our country and other criminal cases? Is there a high number of forfeiture applications coming now to our court?

MS. L.L. ROKOIKA.- Deputy Chairperson, through you, I can confirm for the relevant period is zero. However, I can confirm that from last year and this year, we have had a few that was \$52,000, the military case and the \$2.5 million, I think, it was the Housing Authority case. That is one of the main things that we are trying to focus on recently because currently, the Proceeds of Crimes Act allows for us to go to court and get non-conviction restraining orders, so that helps. When we suspect that there is a movement or going to be movement on the said property, there are provisions of the law that allow Commission Officers to go and get court orders to restrain and these are paper applications, it should be easy for us to do.

Before applications are filed in court, we need to have a strong basis because we do not want the court to say that there is not enough evidence and throw our applications out. That is why we have the Economic Crimes Unit to actually look into that.

HON. RATU J.B. NIUDAMU.- Deputy Chairperson, this is my last question. I noted in your recommendation that you have recommended if the Proceeds of Crimes Act can be refined, can you elaborate on that?

MS. L.L. ROKOIKA.- Deputy Chairperson, I find that particular legislation a bit problematic. The reason why I say that is because there is a different application for restraint and there is a different application for forfeiture. The only entity or the only person that can do that is the Office of the Attorney-General. With all due respect to the office, there are a lot of things that the Office is doing and it may be prudent for Parliament to re-look into that and see if there is someone else, I am not sure, but the law states that the Commission needs to write to the Attorney-General, the Attorney-General will then write back to approve, and then once there is an arrangement there, then the sale can take place. But we cannot sell unless there is a restraint order from court.

Tuesday, 14th October 2025

There are too many moving parts, so to speak, in that legislation. If that could be streamlined so that the process is easy, so whilst while we are doing all this organisation, the person is running away with the money. So, simplify it so that it is workable. Other jurisdictions deal with it that way and it is very simple. It is all these administrative work, by the time everything is ready, the suspect is gone with all the money. I had written that because that was a problem I was facing a few weeks ago.

HON. V. LAL.- Deputy Chairperson, just going back to one example given by Acting Commissioner in regards to a case involving \$300 and sending a lawyer to Nausori which is very expensive, what happens to those cases? Are these cases referred to some other authorities or just closed off?

MS. L.L. ROKOIKA.- I will respond to the question in two parts. Our mandate is against Government entities and Ministries/Departments. Whenever there is a charge or there is a withdrawal, we actually write to the concerned entity and tell them that this has happened, and your process needs updating. Then we liaise and try and get them to be able to handle their own messes.

In terms of low value cases, we send them off to the Police. Just recently, I think there was a file that came up and we had the same issue. Because restitution is an important part of our work, we try to get the suspects in to see how restitution can be done. It is not just closed off, but the suspect is brought in because we try and see that the suspect needs to be responsible, to some extent, for the illegality of the work that he/she has done.

HON. I. TUIWAILEVU.- Deputy Chairperson, I noticed that some new cases are being expedited or fast-tracked ahead to court rather than the old cases, like Housing Authority.

MS. L.L. ROKOIKA.- Why are some cases?

HON. I. TUIWAILEVU.- New cases are fast-tracked to court rather than the old cases, like Housing Authority.

MS. L.L. ROKOIKA.- Is there one specifically, honourable Member, that you are referring to? It depends on the lawyer itself, if the lawyer is vicious and be able to push and get a hearing date, it will get a hearing date. So, that is the other way that I have tried to deal with it in the Commission, for them not to put long adjournments and get the case over and done with so that they can handle other files.

In terms of expediting certain files, is there any specific one that you are referring to, please?

HON. I. TUIWAILEVU.- Case on former staff.

MS. L.L. ROKOIKA.- Oh, yes. I will be conflicted in my response, but I was private counsel at that time, and I insisted and insisted for it to go. The FICAC was not pushing. They said, "Oh, it is up to the court, let the court decide". I insisted because I had cases back in the Cook

Tuesday, 14th October 2025

Islands that I had to attend. So, I pushed and pushed and got a hearing date very, very early. It was my job then, as a private counsel, not because of the Commission lawyers. My apologies.

HON. RATU J. NIUDAMU.- Deputy Chairperson, I have another question. Regarding staff turnover, we are talking about prosecutors and investigators because FICAC is a specialised area where we need our prosecutors and investigators to have more experience than others in the field. My question is, since you have started your role as Acting Commissioner of FICAC, what have you done to try and retain these experienced prosecutors and investigators? I would simplify it in terms of their salary, in terms of the workload that they carried out because I believe, FICAC investigates a lot of corruption cases. How do you see it in terms of the workload that your investigators and prosecutors have and whether there are enough prosecutors and investigators at FICAC right now?

MS. L.L. ROKOIKA.- Deputy Chairperson, through you, to answer your question, honourable Niudamu, I have not put in anything in place to ensure retention. The reason why I say that is because I believe that they need to be working more for the money that they are paid. I believe they need to earn their keep, so to speak. I feed them with the cases all the time, and investigations, and if they have to run away, I think they will probably run away because they feel there is too much work, but I believe that they have to earn their keep and do the work that is assigned to them. Perhaps, Manager Investigations will probably have a different view on this, but I believe that they are there to do a job, they need to do the job and be fast in doing the job.

DEPUTY CHAIRPERSON.- On that note, I have a question on that because in the last Report that the Committee tabled in Parliament, it was noted that there needs to be a competitive compensation package, but that seems very different from your answer. For this year's financial year, only \$8.5 million budget has been allocated, compared to the other three years where you had \$10 million. Is this the reason for lack of reduced staff or what is the reason for the lack of funding?

MS. L.L. ROKOIKA.- Deputy Chairperson, through you, no, we were surprised at the reduction, but I believe at that time, the reduction was because there were other factors that probably affected our submissions for the monies that we need. However, I have to make do with that money that we have and ensure that they have to earn their keep. That is all we have, and they have to work. I believe in terms of the private sector; the officers have been trained well. They are paid well and so they have to deliver.

What I have done now, we have tried not to incur extra expenses. I have tried to live within the \$8 million. It would have been better if we had the old budget that was given to us last year, but it is on that basis that I have not been able to replace my staff who have resigned. I am very conscious of that. Out of all the software we need to get, we just get the main software, not the other software. It has been a give and take for me and Manager Finance because we have a reduced budget. I can confirm that two of our officers have retired and one left, but because of the financial constraints, I cannot replace them.

Tuesday, 14th October 2025

DEPUTY CHAIRPERSON.- That is noted. Another recommendation that I am following up on is FICAC, in collaboration with Ministry of Education for the National Anti-Corruption Curriculum in the schools. Has this been done? You have seven MOUs, you have said that they are outdated, so where are we on that?

MS. L.L. ROKOIKA.- The MOUs?

DEPUTY CHAIRPERSON.- You have stated about seven MOUs with other agencies and institutions that are outdated, but my focus is on Ministry of Education. What is FICAC doing with Ministry of Education in terms of awareness to the children on anti-corruption?

MS. L.L. ROKOIKA.- First of all, we do not have any MOU with Ministry of Education, Deputy Chairperson. Secondly, in terms of awareness on anti-corruption, this is something that was very high in terms of anti-corruption awareness. They were doing it on a periodic basis, and they were going out. I have pulled that back. The reason why I have pulled that back is because prior to my taking office, they were doing awareness for primary school students and I believe children, at that age, it will be money better spent elsewhere, but not at that age. Maybe, at university, maybe at high school, but not the kid's programme.

DEPUTY CHAIRPERSON.- Madam, that is well, noted. However, we strongly feel that the anti-corruption, financial literacy and management needs to be incorporated in schools going up to tertiary because children get 50 cents or \$1 for their snacks and the things that they buy and it is teaching them money management.

Moving forward, can you explain how the FICAC Board managed to increase \$5,000 to each member? When did this happen, under which Commissioner, and can FICAC, again, sit, discuss and probably increase it to \$10,000 per member? Where is the line? How much did this increase in total cost the taxpayers? I need your clarification on this.

MS. L.L. ROKOIKA.- Deputy Chairperson, through you, in terms of Question No. 1, we are very much a part of including anti-corruption work into the curriculum. That is what the awareness team is about and that is what we will try and push for and include, going forward. That is the answer to Question No. 1.

In terms of Question No. 2, there is no Board of the Commission. The Commissioner has the sole function and power to remunerate, employ, and terminate staff. In terms of the \$5,000, this decision was made by Acting Deputy Commissioner at that time, Frances Puleiwai, and the \$5,000 was paid to each and every staff of the Commission at that time, except for her, because her terms and conditions is determined by the Judicial Services Commission.

DEPUTY CHAIRPERSON.- So, any Acting Commissioner can think of an amount, like \$10,000, for this year, and distribute it across the Commission?

MS. L.L. ROKOIKA.- A Commissioner that is not careful, but it will not happen under my guard.

Tuesday, 14th October 2025

DEPUTY CHAIRPERSON.- That is a yes? That there is a leeway to increase any amount of money across the Commission, that is what I am asking.

MS. L.L. ROKOика.- Again, the Commission has the powers, but there are guidelines and ways in which money is supposed to be paid. That is why we have KPIs, that is why you have to do the job, so that once you do the job, it is proven that you have done the work and then you will be compensated for the hard work that you have done.

I am currently amending our Commission's Standing Orders (CSOs) and creating our first ever Standard Operating Procedures (SOP) that will allow me or any other person subsequent to me, to have the powers to do that because there will be guidelines in terms of how money is supposed to be paid, and our workers or staff need to be compensated.

DEPUTY CHAIRPERSON.- I believe that, that should come from a third party and not within. There needs to be proper oversight where members within cannot just determine how much they should receive.

I have another question. I went through your Strategic Plan, yet you have received a reduced budget of \$2 million compared to the previous years. There is political neutrality. So, when any government comes in, they are aligned with defined politics here. Politics is alignment to policies, in simple, values and principles. A government comes in. If the President's term is to expire, they nominate, of course, it is government, they have majority, chances are that their nominee becomes the President. The President is at his job, but the President, with the advice of the Attorney-General and the Judicial Service Commission (JSC) will appoint the Commissioner to FICAC.

My question here is, it is all connected, they are all, sort of, aligned to the policies or the mandate or principle. How do you still determine political neutrality? The FICAC, the way it is changing its Commissioners, I feel this was done from the previous Government, the way this is structured is undemocratic, in my opinion. It still gives leverage to people who align with one set of policies against the other, and I feel this is undemocratic. So, how do you still maintain political neutrality in your Strategic Plan?

MS. L.L. ROKOика.- Deputy Chairperson, my apologies, in terms of everyday work or in terms of the way the Strategic Plan is drafted?

DEPUTY CHAIRPERSON.- Both.

MS. L.L. ROKOика.- In terms of my work, I believe, embedded into the function of prosecution, legal and my office is a check and balance. Within the investigation teams, there are investigators there with their own political affiliations, family ties and everything, but they are the ones who do the investigations, they collect everything and comes to legal. When it comes to legal, all the lawyers in there have their own political affiliations, they have their own families, they assess and then make their recommendations, and then it comes to me. Very often or 99 percent of the time, I will go with the recommendations. The other times that I will not go with the recommendations is when I believe that they have to do more investigations or do some more

Tuesday, 14th October 2025

research on some aspect of the law, whether this is the correct charge, or maybe we should do an alternate count to the charges.

There are the checks and balances throughout from when the complaint is lodged, right up to the decision when a charge is filed.

I believe, to some extent, at least, covers the concerns of the Parliamentarians, if they believe that our work has some political leanings. There are too many officers involved in one file for one person to ultimately make the decision. It is too many.

DEPUTY CHAIRPERSON.- On what honourable Lal had previously stated, I think the Committee will request for a categorised set of types of crimes in the executive. I will say why, when it comes to Government tenders, above \$50,000, it is a tender, but below \$50,000, there have been cases coming to us where it is whom you know, and they are trying to get things done.

We, sort of, want to close these gaps because this is taxpayers' money, it is a cost to all of us. So, I believe, we would like to see the kind of people, the corruption that is happening at all levels in the Executive, keeping the other electoral profiles aside, we would like to see that in the Executive because this is something that we hear from the community, and it does not reflect good on Government and Parliament.

I think we have surpassed the time we have, but my last question to you is on social media presence. What is FICAC doing right now because I believe visibility is very low? Where are we with the social media presence in terms of awareness?

MS. L.L. ROKOIKA.- Deputy Chairperson, our Commission's Standing Orders were done by one Mr. George Langman, a very old gentleman. When he did it, traditional media was very good, and because I am still in the process of amending our Commission Standing Orders, it is still there.

Our media team who have been in the system for too long still try and think of traditional media as the way forward. I have tried to change that, and we have practiced doing live feeds. Still, no experts, but it is still work in progress, because that will increase our public trust index. I am happy to state that I am pushing for our staff to be able to do live feeds so that work done by the Commission is not recorded, edited and then broadcast later on. We are doing that and, hopefully, it will get better within time.

HON. I. TUIWAILEVU.- How many cases are successfully completed during your tenure?

MS. L.L. ROKOIKA.- For the last 16 weeks?

HON. I. TUIWAILEVU.- Yes.

MS. L.L. ROKOIKA.- I probably have to check the news media. I do not keep track, and I apologise for that. I can provide it, through Deputy Chairperson, if that is needed.

Tuesday, 14th October 2025

DEPUTY CHAIRPERSON.- Thank you, honourable Members, and thank you, Acting Commissioner and your Team. We do understand the challenges before you, and we understand the constraint budget. We have gone through your Strategic Plan and this Committee is here to oversight, take your recommendations and table them to Parliament.

I wish to sincerely thank you all for availing yourselves to this meeting. We thank you for your time and hope that you will avail yourselves, if the Committee has any further queries on this matter.

On that note, I declare this meeting closed. *Vinaka.*

The Committee meeting adjourned at 10.20 a.m.

Written Responses

**Submission to the Standing
Committee on Foreign Affairs and
Defence**
**FICAC Annual Report 2020-2021,
2021-2022 and 2022-2023**

FIJI INDEPENDENT COMMISSION AGAINST CORRUPTION (FICAC)

WRITTEN SUBMISSION TO THE STANDING COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN AFFAIRS AND DEFENCE

ANNUAL REPORTS 2020–2021, 2021–2022, 2022–2023

Date of Submission: 9 October 2025

Oral Presentation: 14 October 2025 (9.00am–10.00am) Venue:
Parliament Big Committee Room 2

1. Purpose and Scope

This submission responds directly to the Committee's terms of reference for the 3 Annual Reports (2020–2021; 2021–2022; 2022–2023). It summarises key outputs and outcomes, presents a trend analysis across the period, provides the gender breakdown with a focus on women in leadership, explains alignment to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) actually evidenced in the reports, and identifies principal challenges together with short-term plans grounded in the 3 reporting years (noting contextual events such as COVID-19 recovery and the 2022 General Elections).

2. Institutional Mandate

FICAC operates under s 115 of the Constitution and the FICAC Act 2007. Investigations, Legal & Prosecution, Corruption Prevention, and Corporate Services delivered core functions across the period. These functions remained consistent throughout the three reporting years.

3. Headline Results by Year

Category	2020–2021 (1 Aug 2020 – 31 Jul 2021)	2021–2022 (1 Aug 2021 – 31 Jul 2022)	2022–2023 (1 Aug 2022 – 31 Jul 2023)
Complaints Received	1,359 (C/E 947; West 238; North 174)	373 (C/E 250; West 42; North 81)	534 (C/E 374; West 69; North 91)
Investigations	396 files handled; 64 completed (28 charges; 36 closures)	392 files handled; 115 completed (24 charges; 91 closures); 229 carried over	387 files handled; 173 completed (36 charges; 137 closures); 177 carried over
Matters Taken to Court	18 cases / 36 individuals; 22 charge categories (119 counts)	21 cases / 32 individuals; 18 charge categories (81 counts)	20 cases / 40 individuals; 16 charge categories (100 counts)

Pending Before Courts	–	177 matters (Magistrates' Courts majority)	173 matters
Disposed Cases	26 (17 convictions; 3 withdrawn; 2 acquittals; 1 nolle; 1 stay refused; 2 appeals – leave refused)	15 (9 convictions; 4 abated/withdrawn; 2 acquittals) → ~60% conviction rate	21 (8 convictions; 6 acquittals; 5 nolle; 2 withdrawn) → 38% conviction rate (<i>affected by election caseload & staff turnover</i>)
Prevention & Outreach	103 programmes; Anti-Bribery campaign (6 institutions / 69 sessions); Good Kiddo & Business Integrity initiatives	201 anti-bribery sessions (33 organisations); 5 Ethics/Values workshops; Young Leaders Seminar; Integrity Competition; interagency training	168 anti-bribery sessions; 6 Ethics/Values workshops; PACRC regional conference
Finance	Govt grant ≈ \$8.01 m; expenditure ≈ \$7.95 m; unqualified audit	Govt grant ≈ \$7.89 m; expenditure ≈ \$7.89 m; unqualified audit	Govt grant ≈ \$10.52 m; expenditure ≈ \$9.84 m; unqualified audit

CATEGORY 1 - Complaints Received (By Division and Year)

Year	Complaints Received	Suva	Lautoka	Labasa	Observations / Context
2020–2021	1,359	947	238	174	High volume due to post-COVID complaint surge and increased public awareness.
2021–2022	373	250	42	81	Sharp decline attributed to COVID restrictions, reduced mobility, and limited outreach.
2022–2023	534	374	69	91	Rebound in complaint numbers as normal operations resumed and public confidence returned.

CATEGORY 2 - Investigations (Files Handled, Completed, Charges, Closures)

Year	Files Handled	Files Completed	Charges Laid	Closed after review	Notes / Analysis
2020–2021	396	64	28	36 with 268 pending	Backlog management under pandemic conditions; 64 concluded files, about 45% leading to charges.
2021–2022	392	115	24	91 with 162 pending	Higher clearance rate reflecting improved triage and resource redeployment post-lockdown.
2022–2023	387	173	36	137 with 41 pending	Record-high clearance rate; increased closure efficiency

Category 3: Matters Taken to Court (Cases and Charge Counts)

Year	Cases Filed	Individuals Charged	Charge Categories	Total Counts	Commentary
2020–2021	18	36	22	119	Mostly abuse of office, bribery, and obtaining advantage by deception.
2021–2022	21	32	18	81	Mix of procurement-related and false information offences.
2022–2023	20	40	16	100	Higher number of individuals charged due to election-linked offences.

Category 4: Pending Matters Before the Courts

Year	Total Pending Cases	Jurisdictional Breakdown	Comments
2020–2021	152	Data not disaggregated in report	Case progress limited due to pandemic adjournments.
2021–2022	177	Predominantly Magistrates' Courts	Reflects accumulated backlog from prior two years.
2022–2023	173	Predominantly Magistrates' Courts	Slight reduction; backlog stabilised through trial readiness reforms.

Category 5: Disposed Cases (By Outcome and Year)

Year	Total Disposed	Convictions	Acquittals	Withdrawn / Abated	Nolle Prosequi	Appeals	Conviction Rate	Context
2020 – 2021	26	17	2	3	1	3 (2 refused)	65%	Stable outcomes despite COVID court limits.
2021 – 2022	15	9	2	4	–	–	60%	Improved appeal success; moderate trial tempo.
2022 – 2023	21	8	6	2	5	–	38%	Older cases with poor witness recollection and staff turnover.

Category 6: Prevention & Outreach (Programmes, Attendance, and Impact)

Year	Total Programs	Institutions Reached	# of Attendees	Key Initiatives	Observed Impact
2020–2021	8	Public and Private sector institutions Government Ministries & Departments Communities Schools	181 sessions	Anti-Bribery Campaign, Business Integrity, Private Sector Awareness Public Sector Awareness Community Awareness Corruption Risk Assessment & Methodology Workshop School Awareness Anti-Bribery Campaign Ethics & Values Workshops Good Kiddos	Foundation year – established brand recognition for “I Don’t Accept Bribes”.

2021–2022	6	Public sector institutions Government Ministries & Departments Civil Society Organisation Schools	215 sessions 1 FICAC national seminar (115 student leaders) 1 FICAC National Integrity Competition (167 participants)	Ethics & Values Workshops, Integrity Competition, Youth Seminars. Public Sector Awareness CSO Awareness Ethics & Values Workshops Anti-Bribery Campaign FICAC Young Leaders Seminar FICAC Integrity Competition	Measurable behaviour change noted in repeat institutions; expanded youth reach.
2022–2023	7	Public and Private sector institutions Government Ministries & Departments Communities Schools Tertiary Institution	210 sessions (182 participants)	Anti-Bribery Campaign Ethics & Values Workshop Community Awareness Good Kiddo School Awareness Tertiary Institution Awareness Pacific Anti-Corruption Regional Conference	Regional credibility strengthened; reinforced Fiji's SDG 16.5 standing.

Category 7: Finance (Government Grant and Expenditure)

Year	Govt Grant	Expenditure	Audit Opinion	Remarks
2020–2021	≈ \$8.01 million	≈ \$7.95 million	Unqualified	Tight fiscal management during lockdown period.
2021–2022	≈ \$7.89 million	≈ \$7.89 million	Unqualified	Maintained 100% budget utilisation with efficiency savings.
2022–2023	≈ \$10.52 million	≈ \$9.84 million	Unqualified	Increase reflects staffing restoration and digital upgrades.

4. Three-Year Trend Analysis (2020–2023)

Indicator	2020–2021	2021–2022	2022–2023	Trend / Commentary
Complaints Intake	1,359	373	534	COVID-related contraction in 2021–22 followed by recovery in 2022–23 as restrictions lifted.
Charging Activity (Cases Filed)	28	21	20	Slight year-to-year decline; reflects tighter case triage, court delays, and resource diversion during 2022 elections.
Disposed Convictions	17	9	8	Gradual decrease as election-related matters and staff turnover slowed trial preparation.
Acquittals / Nolle / Withdrawals	6	6	13	Increase in 2022–23 linked to complex election dockets and prosecutorial continuity gaps.
Awareness & Prevention Reach	181 sessions	215 sessions	210 sessions	Major expansion in 2021–22 sustained in 2022–23; PACRC enhanced regional partnerships.
Finance & Audit	\$8.01 m grant / \$7.95 m spend	\$7.89 m / \$7.89 m	\$10.52 m / \$9.84 m	Unqualified audits each year; spending consistently within appropriation.

5. Gender Breakdown and Women in Leadership

Year	Total	No. Female	Female %	No. Male	Male %	Key Observations
2020–2021	145	64	44%	81	56%	Stable gender balance; gradual inclusion of women in administrative and legal roles.
2021–2022	136	60	44%	76	56%	Maintained parity; several women assigned acting managerial roles and training in investigations.
2022–2023	129	60	47%	69	53%	Increase in female leadership; higher representation in Corporate Services, Legal, and Prevention.

Leadership participation: Women continued to progress into supervisory/managerial roles—particularly in Corporate Services and Prevention—supported by targeted training and rotational exposure.

6. Alignment with SDGs Evidenced in the Annual Reports

FICAC's work over the three reporting years directly supports SDG 16.5 and 16.6, which focus on reducing corruption and building strong institutions. Through its investigations, prosecutions, and consistent delivery of court outcomes, the Commission has strengthened integrity within the public sector. The annual publication of audited reports and case data has reinforced transparency, accountability, and public trust in Fiji's anti-corruption framework.

In relation to SDG 5.5, FICAC has demonstrated steady progress in advancing women's participation and leadership. Female representation has moved closer to parity, with a growing number of women taking on managerial and supervisory roles across Legal, Corporate Services, Investigation, and Prevention divisions. This upward trend reflects the Commission's continued commitment to gender equality and the empowerment of women within governance and enforcement institutions.

FICAC's initiatives also align with SDG 17.17, which emphasises partnerships for sustainable development. The Commission has strengthened collaboration with UNPRAC and UNDP, and maintained close working relationships with domestic partners such as the Fiji Revenue and Customs Service, the Police, and the Department of Immigration. These efforts culminated in 2023 with the Pacific Anti-Corruption Regional Conference (PACRC), which established a shared regional platform for knowledge exchange, cooperation, and collective integrity building across the Pacific.

7. Main Challenges (as recorded in the reports)

Between 2020 and 2022, the COVID-19 pandemic presented unprecedented challenges to public health, resulting in widespread adjournments and significantly limited physical access to hearings and witnesses. These disruptions slowed investigative progress, extended case timelines, and contributed to the accumulation of pending matters before the courts.

In late 2022, the national election period placed extraordinary demands on FICAC's operational capacity. The Commission was required to maintain a 24-hour response to electoral complaints, manage high case volumes, and provide rapid assessments of allegations. This intensive workload inevitably affected the pace of charging decisions and delayed trial preparation as resources were redirected to manage election-related obligations.

The 2022–2023 period also saw several changes within the prosecutorial division, resulting in continuity pressures across a number of long-running cases. Staff movement created challenges in maintaining consistent oversight of files, particularly during trial preparation and handover stages. These shifts heightened risks around brief readiness and contributed to variations in conviction rates during the year.

Regional and divisional logistics constraints further tested FICAC's ability to deliver complex investigations. With operations spanning offices in Suva, Lautoka, and Labasa, travel and fleet costs remained significant. Staffing distribution and distance between offices also impacted the speed of coordination and supervision of high-priority casework, especially where inter-agency collaboration was required.

8. Short-Term Plans (grounded in the three years)

FICAC's immediate focus is on addressing the backlog of pre-2023 matters that are already before the courts. The Commission will prioritise these cases to ensure that justice is both timely and effective. This will be achieved by enforcing stricter disclosure practices and implementing early asset restraint procedures in major cases, allowing for more efficient use of investigative and prosecutorial resources.

Strengthening trial readiness remains a key operational priority. The Commission has introduced standardised brief checklists and internal peer-review mechanisms to ensure every case meets evidentiary and admissibility standards before the first court mention. An appeal strategy is now embedded at the stage of charge approval to secure consistency and resilience of prosecutions throughout all judicial stages.

Building capability within the workforce is critical to sustaining these improvements. FICAC will continue to enhance its expertise in courtroom advocacy, financial-crime analysis, and digital forensics. These initiatives draw upon technical support from international partners such as UN-PRAC, the Basel Institute, and the Asia/Pacific Group on Money Laundering, building on training and collaboration established between 2021 and 2023.

Corruption prevention will remain a core pillar of institutional work. The Commission will continue nationwide anti-bribery awareness programmes and expand corruption-risk assessment (CRAM) workshops for ministries and state-owned entities. Lessons and outcomes from the Pacific Anti-Corruption Regional Conference will be incorporated into new bilateral memoranda of understanding with regional partners to deepen preventive cooperation.

Transparency will continue to underpin all operations. The Commission is committed to maintaining timely publication of audited financial reports and court outcomes, preserving the accountability standards reflected consistently across the past three Annual Reports.

9. Conclusion

The data from the three reporting years clearly illustrate the impact of external conditions on FICAC's operations. Complaints declined sharply in 2021–2022 as a result of COVID-19 restrictions and limited public engagement. This trend reversed in 2022–2023 once normal operations resumed, showing renewed public confidence in reporting and a gradual return to pre-pandemic levels of investigative activity.

Court outcomes must be viewed in the wider operational and contextual environment. Conviction ratios fluctuated across the three years due to several interrelated factors, including pandemic-related adjournments, an unprecedented surge in election-related matters in late 2022, and periods of staff turnover within the Legal Division. These circumstances affected trial scheduling and case continuity, resulting in year-to-year variations in success rates.

Throughout the period under review, the Commission demonstrated sound financial management and value for money. Each financial year received an unqualified audit opinion, confirming compliance and integrity in expenditure. Operational costs remained within approved appropriations, while external training and conferences were largely supported by international partners, allowing for capacity-building without additional fiscal burden.

FICAC's integrity education programmes have continued to expand their reach and measurable influence. The national anti-bribery campaign was designed not only for awareness but for behaviour change, embedding ethical decision-making across public institutions. The Pacific Anti-Corruption Regional Conference further strengthened this objective, serving as a regional platform to share lessons and multiply the impact of preventive education throughout the Pacific.

Gender equity and leadership development have been central to the Commission's internal reforms. Over the three years, women's representation has steadily increased, with a growing number assuming leadership and supervisory responsibilities. This reflects a deliberate commitment to building a strong female leadership pipeline across both enforcement and governance areas.

Looking ahead, the Commission will sustain its pragmatic focus on improving case quality and operational efficiency. Attention will centre on strengthening brief preparation, reducing case cycle times, and enhancing collaboration with partner agencies. These foundations, established between 2020 and 2023, position FICAC to deliver faster, fairer, and more coordinated anti-corruption outcomes in the years ahead.

Across the three Annual Reports, FICAC demonstrates operational continuity through a disruptive period, sustained outreach, and prudent financial stewardship. The Commission acknowledges areas for improvement—particularly consistency in cycle time and trial readiness and has set immediate, practical steps to enhance results using the platforms and partnerships established from 2020 to 2023.

Submitted by:



Ms. Lavi Rokoika

Acting Commissioner

Fiji Independent Commission Against Corruption

9 October 2025

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Committee on Foreign Affairs and
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**FICAC Annual Report 2020-2021,
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**FIJI INDEPENDENT COMMISSION AGAINST CORRUPTION
(FICAC)**
**ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS FROM THE STANDING
COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN AFFAIRS AND DEFENCE**

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Venue: Parliament Big Committee Room 2

Executive Summary

This briefing pack consolidates the Fiji Independent Commission Against Corruption's responses to the Standing Committee's questions on its Annual Reports for 2020–2023. It is structured in the exact question–answer format provided by the Committee. Each answer reflects reforms implemented under the Commission's transformation agenda from 2024 onwards, with measurable progress in investigation efficiency, prosecutorial quality, prevention impact, and institutional modernisation.

Key highlights include:

- a. A 21% decline in open investigations by Q3 2025 through triage, gate-based decision controls, and accountability tracking.
- b. Adoption of Trial-Readiness Certificates, post-judgment reviews, and a unified charging standard improving conviction quality.
- c. Shift from activity-driven awareness to results-based behavioural metrics, targeting corruption-prone sectors.
- d. Launch of digital case management systems, staff performance frameworks, and targeted training linked to outcomes.
- e. Proposals for unified corruption offences, whistleblower protection, asset recovery, and corporate liability.

1. Investigation Department

- a. **What concrete actions is FICAC taking to clear the backlog of investigation cases that have persisted from 2020 to 2023, and what measurable progress has been achieved so far?**
 - i. Between 2020 and 2023, the Commission's investigative performance was constrained by a sizeable backlog that stood at 332 cases in 2020–2021 and reduced to 177 by 2022–2023. The primary cause of delay stemmed from fragmented processes, limited coordination between

investigation and legal functions, and insufficient digital oversight. In response, FICAC has instituted a comprehensive backlog-reduction and timeliness framework under the 2025–2030 Strategic Plan, guided by the principle that justice delayed is justice denied. At the moment the commission is in the process of classifying the complaints received by the commission through a harm–complexity matrix into Grades A, B, C, or D to ensure disciplined prioritisation. Grade A cases: those of high public interest, complex value, or cross-border character, which are fast-tracked with a 90-day target and are subject to fortnightly case-management reviews. This grading system, will be integrated into the Case Management System (CMS), to ensure that investigation resources are channelled toward matters of the greatest national importance.

- ii. Each investigation is assigned to a designated case owner, who prepares a one-page investigation plan detailing key evidentiary requirements, dependencies, and timelines of 30, 60, and 90 days. This single-ownership model, which will be monitored through CMS dashboards, will eliminate duplication and allow senior management to trace accountability in real time. In parallel, the Commission has introduced an Investigation - Legal Unit where a qualified lawyer is attached from the initiation of an investigation to advise on the charge standard, assess evidential sufficiency, and guide witness preparation. This early alignment between investigators and Manager Investigation-Legal has shortened decision times and strengthened the quality of case files. To institutionalise timeliness, a three-gate decision process is currently been embedded: Gate 1 tests evidential sufficiency, Gate 2 authorises the charge decision, and Gate 3 confirms trial readiness. Every file must either advance or close at each gate, ensuring that dormant matters cannot accumulate.
- iii. In July 2025 the Commission commenced an operational surge to resolve legacy matters and duplicate complaints arising from similar facts. This targeted exercise ran through September 2025 and resulted in the closure of numerous Category C files and the consolidation of overlapping investigations. As a direct outcome of these measures, open investigations have decreased by 21 percent compared with the 2022–2023 financial year baseline, while the average investigation cycle time has fallen from more than 240 days to approximately 150 days. The objective set in the Strategic Plan is to achieve a 70 percent clearance of all pre-2025 backlog cases by December 2025, with cycle-time reductions of 100 percent across all case grades by August 2026.

b. [What measures is FICAC taking to reduce the persistent backlog of cases \(332 in 2020–2021, 229 in 2021–2022, 177 in 2022–2023\)?](#)

- i. To prevent future recurrence, FICAC has embedded strict service-level standards within staff KPIs. Service Level Agreement (SLA) compliance

will now be monitored through CMS alerts, and automatic escalation occurs at 60- and 90-day intervals for any case approaching delay thresholds. Investigations are further supported by digital forensics capacity, intelligence-led targeting, and joint investigator–prosecutor teams for complex cases. By February 2026, all Grade A cases will reach a charging decision within 9 months, Grade B cases within 6 months, and Grade C cases within 3 months, consistent with Strategic KPI 1.1. These structural reforms ensure that backlogs are not only cleared but also sustainably prevented, positioning the Commission to deliver on its 2030 vision of speed, integrity, and impact.

2. Legal & Prosecution Department

- a. Given the decline in conviction rates from 65% in 2020–21 to 38% in 2022–23, what specific measures is FICAC implementing to strengthen prosecution outcomes and improve case management?
 - i. During the reporting period from 2020 to 2023, conviction rates declined from 65 percent in 2020–2021 to 38 percent in 2022–2023, largely due to inconsistent case preparation, inadequate pre-trial coordination, and the absence of systematic trial-readiness assessments. To address these weaknesses, the Commission has overhauled its legal and prosecution framework under the Strategic Plan 2025–2030, which targets a sustained conviction rate of at least 85 percent by 2026 and 90 percent by 2030. This renewed prosecutorial strategy is anchored on four key interventions which will be: the introduction of a formal Charging Standard, the establishment of a Legal Review Panel, the enforcement of a Trial-Readiness Certificate (TRC) system, and the application of a structured After-Action Review (AAR) for every judgment delivered.
 - ii. Under the new system, no information may be filed unless it meets the Charging Standard, which requires evidence mapped to each statutory element of the offence, credibility assessments of key witnesses, and a sufficiency matrix validated by the Legal Review Panel. This pre-charge vetting ensures that weak or incomplete cases are filtered out early, and only those meeting the evidentiary threshold proceed to prosecution. The Trial-Readiness Certificate, issued by the Manager Legal before any matter is listed, certifies that disclosure has been completed, witnesses have been proofed, exhibits have been agreed, and potential voir dire issues have been pre-assessed. This measure will significantly reduce adjournments and improve first-mention readiness. Internal monitoring through the *(trial)* Case Management System indicates that 70 percent of all prosecutions are now trial-ready at first mention, compared with less than 45 percent in 2022.

b. Pending cases remain high (152 in 2020–2021, 177 in 2021–2022, 173 in 2022–2023). What steps have been taken by FICAC to address delays in the judicial process?

- i. To address the problem of lengthy case pendency, where the number of matters before the courts remained high at 152 in 2020–2021, 177 in 2021–2022, and 173 in 2022–2023, the Commission has introduced strict gentleman time frames for matters that are before the court whereby counsel is only permitted to request for 3 to maximum of 14 days adjournment until and unless the court diary cannot facilitate our request.
- ii. The Legal Division has also prioritised appeal quality and sustainability of convictions, with the Strategic Plan setting a target of 70 percent success on appeal by 2026 and 80 percent by 2027
- iii. Another way in which the commission is trying to tackle this problem is the implementation of the requirement that legal opinions are supposed to mirror submissions so that there is no repetition of work by Counsel when they are writing their opinions, which in turn can be simply amended to be a submission format.
- iv. Moreover, the Commission will introduce a policy linking early guilty-plea negotiations with restitution, striking a balance between efficiency and deterrence. Each case concludes with an After-Action Review, analysing reasons for success or failure, evidentiary challenges, and judicial commentary. Findings are integrated into periodic Continuous Professional Development (CPD) sessions to strengthen institutional learning.
- v. Beyond improving conviction outcomes, FICAC is also focused on strengthening asset recovery and financial accountability through its Asset Recovery Impact KPI (3.5), which targets at least 50 percent of the value of identified assets restrained or recovered by 2026, increasing to 70 percent by 2027. Dedicated Counsel now work alongside investigators from the outset to prepare restraint applications within sixty days of case initiation, a significant improvement on the pre-2024 average of 120 days. These measures, anchored in digital tracking, performance contracts, and rigorous internal quality control, will ensure that FICAC not only prosecutes more effectively but does so with greater consistency, transparency, and impact.

3. Corruption Prevention Department

a. How does FICAC assess the real impact of its national anti-corruption awareness initiatives—such as the “I Don’t Accept Bribes” campaign and youth programs—on changing public attitudes and institutional behaviour?

- i. Now FICAC assesses the impact of its national campaigns through measurable behavioural and institutional outcomes rather than event

numbers. The “I Don’t Accept Bribes” Campaign, launched on 9 December 2020, has reached 62 of the 102 targeted institutions, with the remaining 40 scheduled for 2026

- ii. Major institutions including the Land Transport Authority, Housing Authority, iTaukei Land Trust Board, and Reserve Bank of Fiji have completed the campaign with direct participation from senior executives, signalling leadership commitment to integrity.
- iii. Impact assessment combines data from post-training surveys, policy adoption rates, and complaint trends. Institutions that completed the campaign recorded a 35 percent increase in gift and conflict-of-interest declarations and a 17 percent rise in self-reported readiness to report bribery. Media analytics show over 16,000 organic views and 2,000 engagements across social platforms, while participant feedback highlighted a stronger willingness to reject and report bribery. The campaign also catalysed procedural reviews several ministries began revising internal SOPs to reduce corruption risks.
- iv. To strengthen the link between awareness and prevention, FICAC has integrated campaign outcomes into the National Anti-Corruption Plan (NACP) and Corruption Risk Assessment Methodology (CRAM). Under the Strategic Plan 2025–2030, at least 4 CRAMs will be conducted per quarter, reaching 100 percent of ministries and state-owned enterprises by 2027. This ensures that awareness directly supports policy reform and institutional safeguards.
- v. Youth engagement forms a key component of this impact strategy. Through the Young Leaders Seminar and FICAC Integrity Competition, the Commission reached 115 student leaders from 39 schools and 58 schools nationwide, reinforcing civic responsibility and integrity education in line with SDG 16 and UNCAC.

b. [How has FICAC evaluated the effectiveness of awareness campaigns?](#)

- i. FICAC evaluates campaign effectiveness through both quantitative and qualitative measures aligned with its Strategic KPI Framework (2025–2030). Each initiative is assessed on its cost-effectiveness, behavioural outcomes, and institutional follow-up actions. Evaluation tools include participant feedback, pre- and post-training surveys, digital engagement analytics, and compliance tracking within institutions.
- ii. Post-campaign assessments show measurable behavioural change: participants demonstrated a 28 percent improvement in knowledge retention and a 17 percent increase in reporting intent compared to pre-training baselines. Institutional audits show enhanced internal compliance, reflected in the rise of declaration filings and policy updates following campaign participation.

- iii. At the systemic level, the Commission now tracks these outcomes through the Public Trust Index (KPI 4.3), which will establish a national baseline in 2026 and aims to increase public confidence in integrity institutions by 5 percentage points by 2026 and 15 points by 2030. The integration of evaluation data into the Case Management System ensures that campaign outcomes inform broader anti-corruption policy.
- vi. Overall, effectiveness is now defined by tangible change stronger institutional compliance, reduced tolerance for bribery, and improved citizen trust rather than the number of events conducted.

4. Corporate Services Department

- a. With rising public complaints and fluctuating staffing levels, what strategies has FICAC adopted to enhance staff retention, capacity building, and the use of technology to manage increased workload effectively?
 - i. FICAC's workforce strategy focuses on competitive remuneration, structured career progression, continuous training, and digital transformation to sustain performance amid growing workloads and rising public complaints. While staff retention is not based solely on pay, competitive remuneration remains vital for technical and professional positions. The Commission's salary framework now supports vertical career progression, allowing investigators to advance from team leader to chief investigator, replacing the earlier single-tier structure that limited professional growth. This reform, together with transparent promotion criteria, has strengthened retention by linking performance, skill, and advancement.
 - ii. Training and development are core to capacity building. Between FY2020–2021 and FY2021–2022, the number of training programmes increased from 22 to 50, despite the disruptions caused by COVID-19. During the pandemic, the Commission adopted online and hybrid courses to maintain learning continuity, recording 50 trainings in FY2021–2022, more than double the previous year. Training resumed in-person in 2023 with a balanced mix of online (13), local (28), internal (5), and overseas (4) sessions. These initiatives reflect FICAC's commitment to sustained professional growth and operational resilience.
 - iii. Technological adaptation has also been key. Officers were equipped with laptops and remote-access systems during the pandemic, ensuring continuity of investigations and prosecutions. Attendance, workflow, and case progress are now monitored through the Case Management System (CMS), enabling real-time tracking, electronic disclosure, and remote collaboration. These reforms have modernised operations, improved data reliability, and supported workload management across divisions.

- iv. FICAC continues to lose some trained officers to higher positions in the public service and migration, reflecting the high calibre of its workforce. Nonetheless, the Commission remains an attractive employer in Fiji's legal and enforcement sector due to its structured career pathways, leadership development, and technological efficiency.
- b. How effective are FICAC's training and development programs (50 in 2022–2023) been in building institutional capacity?
 - i. Training and development programmes have become a strategic driver of institutional capability rather than an administrative function. In 2022–2023, 50 training programmes were completed across investigations, legal, and governance divisions, focusing on digital forensics, prosecution techniques, and integrity-based leadership. Evaluation reports indicate measurable improvements in case cycle times, evidence handling, and trial readiness, aligning with Strategic KPI 3.4 (Prosecution Readiness) and KPI 1.1 (Timeliness).
 - ii. The programmes are also contributing to cultural and professional maturity within the organisation. Officers have developed stronger analytical and advocacy skills, enhancing both investigative depth and prosecutorial quality. Continuous collaboration with partners such as the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), the Basel Institute on Governance, and the Pacific Islands Law Officers' Network (PILON) has provided access to regional expertise and joint training in anti-money-laundering, asset recovery, and cybercrime enforcement.
 - iii. Overall, FICAC's investment in staff development has directly improved institutional capacity, accountability, and morale. These programmes ensure that the Commission remains adaptive, technically skilled, and capable of meeting its growing mandate under the Strategic Plan 2025–2030, where professional excellence and digital efficiency are central to achieving speed, integrity, and impact.

5. Cross-Cutting / Strategic Oversight

- a. What key institutional and legislative reforms does FICAC recommend Parliament consider to strengthen Fiji's national anti-corruption framework and improve public trust in the Commission's work?
 - i. FICAC recommends that Parliament consider reforms that modernise Fiji's legal framework, clarify offences, and institutionalise accountability. Central to this is the consolidation of corruption-related provisions in the *Crimes Act 2009* and *FICAC Act 2007* to create a single, coherent statute defining offences, penalties, and evidentiary standards. This would align Fiji's system with the *United Nations Convention against Corruption (UNCAC)* and improve prosecutorial consistency.

- ii. The Commission also proposes introducing corporate liability for failure to prevent bribery, supported by a public debarment regime for companies convicted of corruption. Further, Parliament is urged to enact a Comprehensive Whistle-blower Protection Act and expand witness-protection provisions to cover anonymity, electronic filing with the Court Registry and remote testimony and hearing
- iii. At the moment, the Commission has Memoranda of Understanding with the FRCS, Police, Immigration, ODPP, MOJ, LTA, and FIU to streamline case referrals and data sharing; however, these memoranda are dated and will need to be updated soon. Under the Strategic Plan, at least another 7 MoUs should be fully operational by 2027. Regular quarterly dashboards and bi-annual peer reviews benchmarked against CPIB Singapore and ICAC Hong Kong will maintain transparency and strengthen public confidence in FICAC's independence.
- iv. In addition, the Commission now conducts controlled live-feed sessions of selected operational work and internal proceedings, allowing real-time visibility of lawful activities and decision-making processes. This transparency initiative is designed to demonstrate integrity in practice, strengthen accountability, and build direct public trust in the institution.

b. [What contingency plans are in place following the COVID-19-like disruptions \(2020–2021, p23\)?](#)

- i. The Commission's continuity planning now focuses on digital resilience rather than temporary crisis response. Guided by the Strategic Plan 2025–2030, the Commission is transforming into a technology-based agency where investigations, prosecutions, and prevention work continue seamlessly, even during national disruptions.
- ii. The Case Management System (CMS) remains the centrepiece of this transformation. It will integrate complaints, investigations, legal workflows, and performance metrics in real time. Phase 1 is operational, and Phase 2 will be introducing automated analytics, and Phase 3 will be public dashboards to be completed by mid-2026. This system tracks every case, flags delays, and supports electronic disclosure/Court Registry filing to maintain momentum when physical operations are affected.
- iii. To strengthen this platform, FICAC is expanding its Digital Transformation Programme. All case data will migrate to secure cloud infrastructure by mid to end 2026, supported by ISO 27001 cyber-security standards. Officers are equipped with encrypted laptops and mobile devices that enable mandatory digital communications. This ensures that investigations, prosecutions, and governance meetings can continue without interruption in any emergency.

- iv. The Commission is also building a public-facing digital portal to allow online complaints, real-time progress updates, and controlled live-feed access to selected internal activities. This initiative enhances transparency, fosters trust, and demonstrates how technology can make accountability visible.
- v. By fully embracing modern technology, FICAC will not only withstand disruptions but operate faster, safer, and more transparently. Digital systems now anchor every core function ensuring that the fight against corruption continues without pause, regardless of circumstance.

c. Which international partnerships (UNDP, UNODC, UN-PRAC) have been most effective in supporting Fiji's anti-corruption work (2020–2021, p23; 2021–2022, p23)?

- i. Strategic partnerships remain essential to building technical capacity and regional credibility. The UNDP and UN-PRAC Partnership has been instrumental in prevention and youth-integrity programmes, particularly through the "I Don't Accept Bribes" Campaign, the Young Leaders Seminar, and the Integrity Competition. These initiatives have promoted anti-corruption values among more than 50,000 students and staff across public institutions.
- ii. The UNODC partnership has strengthened FICAC's compliance with UNCAC obligations, providing technical assistance in Mutual Legal Assistance training, asset-recovery procedures, and in-person training. At present, there is no formal framework for cooperation. However, from September 2025, the Office of the Commissioner is working to formalise Memoranda of Cooperation between FICAC and its foreign counterparts. These will include the Australian Federal Police, the New Zealand Serious Fraud Office, the Pacific Transnational Crime Coordination Centre, and the International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs Pacific Islands (ILN) to strengthen joint investigations, intelligence sharing, and specialised training in complex financial and corruption-related crimes. Under the Strategic Plan, Fiji aims to host the Pacific Anti-Corruption Conference annually from 2028, establishing the nation as a regional integrity hub.

d. What legislative or institutional gaps should Parliament address to strengthen Fiji's anti-corruption framework?

FICAC recommends that Parliament address several key gaps to strengthen Fiji's anti-corruption framework.

- i. First, corruption offences are spread across multiple statutes, including the *Crimes Act 2009*, *FICAC Act 2007*, and *Companies Act 2015*. These should be consolidated under a single **Anti-Corruption Code** to ensure consistency, faster prosecution, and clearer accountability.
- ii. Second, Fiji lacks a specific offence for failure to prevent bribery or governance breaches that lead to corruption. Boards and executives should be held criminally liable where inadequate oversight or internal controls enable misconduct. This should be supported by a corporate debarment regime (blacklisting or barring) for entities found to be complicit in corruption.
- iii. Third, a Comprehensive Whistleblower Protection Act is needed to safeguard those who report misconduct, alongside stronger witness protection provisions allowing anonymity and remote testimony.
- iv. Fourth, the *Proceeds of Crime Act* should be refined to enable quicker asset restraint and recovery arising from governance-related offences.
- v. Finally, statutory data-sharing gateways and MoUs between FICAC, Police, ODPP, FRCS, the Registrar of Companies, and the FIU should be formalised to close investigative gaps, prevent duplication and strengthen coordination between agencies.
- vi. These reforms focused on consolidation, corporate liability, whistleblower protection, asset recovery, and governance accountability will modernise Fiji's anti-corruption laws and strengthen public confidence in the integrity system.

6. What categories of offences are reported to the Fiji Police Force and to the Fiji Independent Commission Against Corruption (FICAC)? Additionally, what is the procedure followed by the Police when referring a matter to FICAC for investigation?

i. **Categories of offences**

The Fiji Police Force and the Commission share complementary but distinct mandates. The Police are responsible for enforcing all criminal laws, including offences under the *Crimes Act 2009*, *Domestic Violence Act*, *Drugs Control Act*, and other general statutes. FICAC's jurisdiction, established under the *FICAC Act 2007*, is limited to corruption and corruption-related offences involving public officials or public bodies. These include bribery, abuse of office, soliciting or offering corrupt benefits, fraud against the government, election-related corruption, and any conduct where a public officer uses his or her position for personal gain. Where a matter involves both general criminality and elements of

corruption, FICAC and the Police cooperate to determine jurisdiction, ensuring the case is investigated by the most appropriate authority.

ii. Referral procedure

The police procedure is best left to the police to respond; however, upon receipt of a referral from the Police, the Commission, through its complaints officer and registry, registers the case, and sends the file along with all relevant evidence to the Manager Investigations, who then allocates the file to an investigation team. An acknowledgement of the referral is then sent to the Police confirming receipt. Regarding Commission referral, once a decision to refer is made, the legal team prepares a referral letter, which is registered with the Commission before being sent to the Commissioner of Police, along with the investigation file containing all evidence and work conducted by the Commission to date. Upon the police's acknowledgement, the file is closed and considered complete. In cases involving overlapping offences, joint tasking or information-sharing is arranged under the existing Memorandum of Understanding between FICAC and the Police. This process ensures that investigations are coordinated, lawful, and free from duplication.

Submitted by:



Ms. Lavi Rokoika
Acting Commissioner
Fiji Independent Commission Against Corruption

13 October 2025

Additional Information

Responses to Additional Questions from the Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and Defence

Submitted By:

Fiji Independent Commission Against Corruption

Consolidated Annual Report of the Fiji Independent Commission Against Corruption (FICAC) 2020-2021, 2021-2022 and 2022-2023 Annual Reports

Introductory Note

The Fiji Independent Commission Against Corruption (FICAC) is pleased to provide the following additional information in response to the Committee's request for clarification arising from its review of the **Consolidated Annual Report of FICAC for the financial years 2020–2021, 2021–2022, and 2022–2023**. The Commission acknowledges the Committee's observations regarding remuneration authorisations and institutional capacity and welcomes the opportunity to elaborate on these matters.

The responses that follow set out FICAC's position and provide a comprehensive outline of its institutional needs, including staffing levels, office space requirements, IT infrastructure, and digital system upgrades necessary to strengthen governance, accountability, and operational efficiency across all divisions.

Additional Questions to FICAC

The Committee noted that the \$5,000 increment per Commission officer was authorized by the then Acting Deputy Commissioner, Ms. Francis Puleiwai. It was further clarified that the Commissioner holds sole authority over remuneration matters, subject to existing guidelines.

1. Under which Commissioner was the \$5,000 staff increment approved?

Ms Francis Puleiwai - Former Acting Deputy Commissioner (A/DC)

2. In which financial year did this allocation occur?

The payment was done in Pay 26/2023 in December 2023, and it has been accounted in the Commission's 2024 Annual Financial statement.

3. How many Commissioner officers were involved in the decision-making process regarding this allocation?

The former A/DC had directed the former Manager Corporate, who was in charge of Human Resource and Finance Department who led the Salary review exercise in discussion with the Principal Accountant (still employed) and Human Resource Officer (still employed).

4. What criteria or considerations were used to determine the \$5,000 figure?

Three options were proposed:

A. Option 1 - review of individual staff salary against performance and years of service which shall determine the percentage of salary increase;

- B. Option 2 - \$5,000 salary across the board for all staff considering the lapse in the staff annual performance reviews;
- C. Option 3 - One off bonus payout to all staff

Was there an independent review for the pay increase?

No. This was raised at the initial discussion, however, this did not happen with the instruction received that the payout needs to take place at the soonest – in December 2023 (within 2 weeks).

5. What is the standard procedure for approving such allocations, and was this procedure followed in this instance?

Staff salary reviews are normally conducted based on the instructions of the Commissioner and the Deputy Commissioner where there is a lapse in annual performance reviews or the need to review staff salary in line with the local job market as staff retention strategy in retaining technical and critical positions. The sole authority and discretion of FICAC administration, control and direction rest with the Commissioner and the Deputy Commissioner under Section 115 of the 2013 Constitution of the Republic of Fiji subsection 11 (a-d) and FICAC Act 2007 so the salary increase of the \$5,000 was well within the powers vested onto the Acting Deputy Commissioner.

6. Does FICAC have the mandate to adjust or increase staff-related allocations at its own discretion?

Yes, the FICAC Commissioner and the Deputy Commissioner under Section 115 of the 2013 Constitution of the Republic of Fiji subsection 11 (a-d) and FICAC Act 2007.

7. What was the total budget figure before and after the increase, and how did this adjustment result in a budget shortfall?

The initial 2023 -2024 Personnel Emolument budget was \$6.28M and the total annual implication of the \$5k increment was \$664,890 that includes the Salaries that accounts the employers FNPF and TPAF levy which was funded within the saving of the 2023 -2024 PE budget from the vacant positions that were not filled however this Ministry of Finance did not consider the Commission's additional request in the 2024 -2025 budget so it resulted in the shortfall.

8. Could the Manager Finance provide the Committee with details of the budget allocation submitted to the Ministry of Finance?

Tabulated below is the details of the Commission's budget proposal for 2024 2025 budget for Personnel Emolument that included the shortfall accounts the existing and new vacancies budget request. The Commission had requested \$7,466M and Ministry of Finance approved \$6,486M.

In December 2023, the Commission reviewed the salaries of the FICAC staff and majority of the officers were awarded increment in their salaries that was long overdue since 2019. Overall expenditure under this SEG has an increase in funding due to the following:

An additional \$1,18M was requested to cater for shortfall of ongoing mandatory payment of salaries for the current Establishment of 131 staff based on the new revised salaries and provision for existing and new vacant positions that will be filled in near future to strengthen the manpower of respective Departments to successfully deliver the desired outcomes outlined in the Commission's 2024-2025 ACP. The total of \$1.18M includes the FNPF employers share and the TPAF levy.

- a. FNPF Employer Share - From January 2023, FNPF employer/employee contribution has been restored to 8% employee's contribution and 10% employers share. The 7% to 10% increase from January 2023 automatically affected the Commission's budget; therefore, the Commission requests additional funding of \$254,205 to cover the increase in the FNPF percentage.
- b. TPAF Levy - This allocation is automatically affected taking account of the new revised salary within the FICAC Establishment.

Item No.	Expenditure Item	Revised	Baseline	Change	Proposed Budget	Approved
		Estimate	2024-2025		2024-2025	2024- 2025
1	Personnel Emolument	5,726,338	5,726,338	989,808	6,716,146	\$5,926,338
2	FNPF - Employer Share	400,843	400,843	254,205	655,048	\$400,843
3	Benefit & Allowance - Deputy Commissioner	73,200	73,200	-73,200	-	\$73,200
4	Housing	28,000	28,000	-	28,000	28,000
5	TPAF Levy	58,263	58,263	9,178	67,441	58,263

Total	\$6,286,644	\$6,286,644	\$1,179,991	\$7,466,635	\$6,486,644
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9. Could FICAC also provide a comprehensive list of its institutional needs, including staffing levels, office space requirements, IT infrastructure, and digital software needs?

A. Investigations Department

The Investigations Division urgently requires several safety, recording, and forensic tools to strengthen operational capacity and accountability. The installation of panic and duress alarms in all interview rooms is essential to protect both suspects and officers during high-risk interviews. When activated, these alarms immediately alert the security or control centre, ensuring rapid response in emergencies.

The Department also needs CCTV cameras and audio recording systems within interview rooms to provide a complete, time-stamped record of all interviews. This measure enhances transparency, protects the rights of suspects and witnesses, and safeguards officers against false allegations. Complementing this, the use of body-worn cameras during field operations will create an independent and verifiable record of interactions, improving evidentiary integrity and public confidence.

Furthermore, the Division requires a forensics and mobile device examination kit, including hardware and software for analysing mobile phones, computers, and digital storage media. This will allow investigators to collect, preserve, and analyse electronic evidence without risk of damage or data loss, ensuring compliance with evidentiary standards and digital forensic best practices.

B. Complaints Division

To strengthen accessibility and public trust, the Complaints Division requires a secure online complaints portal that enables citizens and public officials to lodge complaints digitally—with the option of remaining anonymous. This innovation will encourage more reporting of corruption and misconduct while protecting whistle-blowers.

In addition, the Division seeks a digital case tracking and management system to log, assign, and monitor each complaint from registration through to resolution. This ensures accountability, prevents oversight or loss of files, and allows the Commission to generate accurate statistical reports for oversight bodies.

C. Registry and Evidence Management

The Registry needs to modernise its evidence-handling systems to meet chain-of-custody and audit requirements. It requires secure physical storage facilities equipped with restricted access and CCTV surveillance to prevent tampering or unauthorised handling of evidence.

Moreover, the establishment of a Digital Evidence Management System is critical. This secure digital repository would allow the cataloguing, storage, and retrieval of electronic materials such as photographs, videos, and scanned documents. It would enhance efficiency, traceability, and transparency in evidence management across all investigations.

D. Digital Forensics Unit

The Digital Team requires updated forensic recovery software capable of retrieving deleted or hidden data from computers, mobile devices, and cloud sources. This capability is essential for uncovering digital trails, reconstructing corrupt transactions, and supporting complex financial or cybercrime investigations.

E. Transcription Services

The Transcription Unit seeks to improve efficiency by acquiring automatic speech-to-text software that converts audio interviews directly into text, significantly reducing manual workload and turnaround times. To complement this system, the Unit also needs high-quality microphones and foot-pedal controls that facilitate clear audio capture and hands-free playback, allowing staff to review and correct transcripts accurately and efficiently.

F. Legal Department

The Legal Division requires an institutional subscription to LexisNexis, the leading digital legal research platform. This tool enables lawyers to access upto-date case law, legislation, and precedents across multiple jurisdictions. It is indispensable for timely and accurate preparation of legal opinions, charge sheets, and submissions. However, the annual subscription cost has escalated, and funding support is sought to reinstate and sustain this critical service.

G. IT and Cybersecurity

FICAC urgently requires organisation-wide migration to Microsoft 365 Business Premium. This cloud-based suite integrates secure email, document storage, and collaboration tools across all departments, replacing obsolete and unsupported software currently in use. The platform will centralise communication, strengthen cybersecurity through multi-factor authentication and data loss prevention, and ensure business continuity in the event of system failures or cyber-attacks.

H. Finance Division

The Finance Unit requires a budgeting and reporting system that automates financial statements, expenditure tracking, and report generation. This software will enhance

accuracy, reduce manual errors, and improve timeliness of financial reporting to Parliament, auditors, and oversight agencies.

I. Media and Public Awareness Unit

To improve communication and transparency, the Media Unit needs a professional-grade camera capable of capturing both still images and video footage for press releases, awareness campaigns, and official documentation. Previous requests for such equipment were deferred due to budget limitations. A modern camera would enable the Unit to produce high-quality multimedia content in-house, reducing outsourcing costs and improving public engagement.

Closing Note

FICAC remains committed to maintaining full transparency and accountability in its operations and to working collaboratively with the Parliamentary Standing Committee in strengthening institutional capacity across all areas of its mandate. The Commission appreciates the Committee's continued oversight and support, particularly in addressing resourcing and infrastructure needs that are critical to ensuring the effective investigation, prosecution, and prevention of corruption in Fiji.

Submitted by



Lavi Rokoika (Ms)

Acting Commissioner

17 October 2025

Responses to Additional Questions from the Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and Defence 2025

Submitted By:

Fiji independent Commission Against Corruption

Consolidated Annual Report of the Fiji Independent Commission Against Corruption (FICAC) 2020-2021, 2021-2022 and 2022-2023 Annual Reports

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Additional Questions to FICAC

The Committee noted the lack of information pertaining to the positions held by civil servants found guilty of gaining unlawful financial benefit in the annual reports.

1. Can the Commission provide a breakdown of the positions of civil servants found guilty of gaining unlawful financial benefit for the three reporting years in review?

Date of Sentence	Full Name	Occupation
20/1/2020	Iosefo Rabeka	Divisional Registrar West, Ministry of Justice (BDM Lautoka)
20/3/2020	Laisiasi Valesu	Land Acquisition Officer, Water Authority of Fiji
21/2/2020	Ana Laqere	PWD Officer
21/2/2020	Vaciseva Lagai	PWD Officer
21/2/2020	Vilisi Tuitavuki	PWD Officer
29/4/2020	Ravnesh Vidya Sagar	Revenue Collector, CWM
4/5/2020	Adi Filomena Adibalena Vuravura	TLTB Official, Korovou
8/5/2020	Taniela Kepa Cavu Jerema	Provincial Council Officer, Bua
14/7/2020	Kalisi Sakiusa	Principal Immigration Officer (Manager, Passport & Citizenship)
17/8/2020	Samuela Wainibuli	Recorder, CWM
18/8/2020	Tomasi Raikivi	Revenue Collector, Savusavu Magistrates Court
11/9/2020	Ilisavani Vualiku	School Manager, Naboro Sawani Kula Primary School
28/9/2020	Rosalia Tubuna Muavesi	Assistant Culture & Development Officer, Department of Heritage

7/10/2020	Barbara Laba	Post Fiji Officer
23/10/2020	Vasiti Tabuakuru	Former Temporary Relieving Packer, Pharmaceutical & Biomedical Services
7/12/2020	Timaima Mocevakaca	Nausori Town Rate Officer
28/1/2021	Filimoni Bola	Vehicle Examiner, LTA Ba
27/1/2021	Vaciseva Lagai	PWD Officer
27/1/2021	Ana Laqere	PWD Officer
11/1/2021	Laisasia Valesu	Land Acquisition Officer, WAF
23/3/2021	Raneel Ravind Prasad	Clerical Officer, Attorney-General's Office
9/4/2021	Siliva Senivasa	Agricultural Technical Officer, Naqali Station (Ministry of Agriculture)
24/6/2021	Sereima Rokovada	Immigration Officer
22/10/2021	Pritam Singh	Tax Officer, FRCS
3/11/2021	Pailato Odro	Revenue Collector, Ministry of Fisheries (Rakiraki Ice Plant)
3/11/2021	Usenia Susu	Provincial Treasurer
29/4/2022	Semi Salaucha Masiolomani	Health Inspector
20/5/2022	Nikolau Nawaikula	Member of Parliament
20/7/2022	Rigieta Naicovi	Provincial Treasurer, Namosi Provincial Council
15/7/2022	Ratu Suliano Matanitobua	Member of Parliament
22/9/2022	Salote Radrodro	Member of Parliament
3/10/2022	Yogendran	Court Officer, Lautoka
26/1/2023	Hari Krishna	Principal Education Officer, Ministry of Education
3/2/2023	Vijendra Prakash	Member of Parliament
3/3/2023	Joji Waqamailau	Senior Technical Officer, Ministry of Health
10/3/2023	Shannon Shahil Chand	IT Technician, Judicial Department
28/4/2023	Aniz Ahmed	Vehicle Examiner, LTA
18/7/2023	Marlie Rota	Executive Officer, Rabi Council
15/12/2023	Torika Maibau	Judicial Officer, Lautoka
18/12/2023	Ivamere Biutuni	Agricultural Assistant, Ministry of Agriculture

2. Could the Commission provide details (items and costs) on the most recent renovation of the top floor of the FICAC Office, which accommodates the Executive and Commissioner's offices?

The total renovation cost for Level 4 for financial years ended 2020 -2023 was \$36,859.79 and the furniture cost for the Commissioner's office was \$11,517.43 as tabulated below;

RENOVATION WORKS AT LEVEL 4

Supplier	Payment Reference	Description	Amount VEP
Quality Plumbing	PV 19560/19412	Media Room	7,889.65
Modern Aluminium	PV 17517/17532	HR/Inventory/Training	11,128.81
KAD Quantity Surveyors	PV 17531	HR/Inventory/Training	17,841.25
			\$ 36,859.71

Purchase of Office Furniture - Executive/ Commissioner's Office

Supplier	Payment Reference	Description	Amount VEP
Pacific Green	PV 17463/17437	Sofa Set for DC's Office	3,785.32
Pacific Green	PV 17463/17437	Sofa Set for DC's Office	4,176.15
Pacific Green	PV 17463/17437	Coffee Table for DC's Office	826.61
Pacific Green	PV 17463	Tavura tall lamp for DC's Office	666.06
Pacific Green	PV 17520	Teakwood carved cupboard	2,063.30
			\$ 11,517.43

Who has access to the CCTV cameras placed in the interview rooms?

At Headquarters, access is limited to the Level 2 Boardroom, so only the Manager of Investigations and the Office of the Commissioner have access to the CCTV live feed for real-time viewing. The system is used solely for *monitoring and training purposes* and is not continuously turned on.

3. **Is it connected to the whole CCTV system?** No, the interview-room CCTV operates as an isolated system, separate from the main building CCTV network.
4. **Can the Commission confirm if the cameras in the interview rooms can be accessed remotely from the Labasa and Lautoka office?**

No. The interview-room cameras are not connected to the network and, therefore, cannot be accessed remotely from any other divisional offices.

Submitted By:



Lavi Rokoika (Ms)
Acting Commissioner

30 October 2025

Standing Committee on Foreign
Affairs and Defence Site Visit to the
Fiji Independent Commission Against
Corruption (FICAC), Headquarters –
Wednesday 15 October 2025

Site Visit to the Fiji Independent Commission Against Corruption (FICAC), Headquarters, on Wednesday 15 October 2025

The Committee conducted a site visitation to the Fiji Independent Commission Against Corruption, Headquarters, on Wednesday 15 October 2025 to observe its operations, facilities and to gain a better understanding of the Commission's functions achievements and challenges highlighted in its 2020-2021, 2021-2022 and 2022-2023 annual reports.

