



STANDING COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN AFFAIRS AND DEFENCE

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



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Acronyms

FICAC	Fiji Independent Commission Against Corruption
CCTV	Closed-circuit television
CD	Compact Disc
UNPRAC	United Nations Pacific Regional Anti-Corruption Project
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme

Chairperson's Foreword

The Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and Defence, submits to Parliament this consolidated review report of the Fiji Independent Commission Against Corruption (FICAC) 2020–2021, 2021–2022, and 2022–2023 Annual Reports.

The Speaker of Parliament, on 18 July 2025, referred the reports to the Committee for review. As part of this process, the Commission appeared before the Committee on 14 October 2025, with the session broadcast live on Parliament's Facebook page and the Walesi Parliament Channel. In addition, the Committee conducted a site visit to FICAC's headquarters in Suva on 15 October 2025, to gain further insight into its operations and facilities.

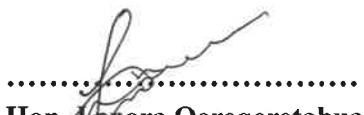
The Committee noted that the three reporting years reflected a period of significant operational challenges and transformation for the Commission. Despite the disruptions caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, the Commission continued to uphold its constitutional mandate of investigating and prosecuting corruption-related offences and promoting good governance across all sectors of society.

The Committee identified key operational challenges that require urgent attention, such as outdated infrastructure, limited staffing, and the need to modernise evidence management and digital systems.

As Fiji continues to uphold the principles of integrity, transparency, and accountability, it is imperative that national anti-corruption institutions are equipped to meet evolving challenges in governance and public trust.

The Committee notes that despite the challenges faced during the period under review and the issues highlighted during the site visit, the Commission has developed and published a [Strategic Plan 2025-2030](#) which should improve the Commission's deliverables.

I extend my appreciation to the FICAC management and staff for their cooperation during the Committee's review, and to the Members of the Committee for their diligence in compiling this bi-partisan report.



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Hon. Lenora Qereqeretabua
Chairperson

Recommendations

- 1.0 The Committee recommends that the Commission strengthen its Investigation Department to address case backlogs and improve operational efficiency. This should include:
 - 1.1 Streamlining investigative processes and enhancing coordination between the Investigation and Legal and Prosecution Units.
 - 1.2 Implementing digital case management systems to monitor and track investigations in real time, reducing delays and improving accountability.
 - 1.3 Allocating additional resources including investigators, to ensure timely handling of new and pending cases.
 - 1.4 Developing clear standard operating procedures (SOPs) for case intake, investigation, and referral to legal departments to minimise bottlenecks.
- 2.0 The Committee recommends that the Commission develop strategies to mitigate delays due to Court closures or rescheduling, including prioritising cases nearing statutory timeframes and establishing liaison mechanisms with Courts to expedite hearings.
- 3.0 The Committee recommends that the Commission increase resources for legal analysis and review, ensuring that investigation files are thoroughly examined and timely recommendations are made for charges or closures.
- 4.0 The Committee recommends that the Corruption Prevention Department strengthen and expand its outreach initiatives with efforts to focus on:
 - 4.1 Enhancing educational materials on government processes and regulatory functions to prevent exploitation and misinformation.
 - 4.2 Monitoring and evaluating the impacts of awareness programs to measure behavioural change, ethical conduct, and anti-corruption outcomes across public and private sectors.
- 5.0 The Committee recommends that the Commission develop and implement a workforce planning and retention strategy to address staffing issues. This strategy should include targeted recruitment, capacity-building initiatives, and succession planning to ensure that the Commission maintains adequate human resources to effectively deliver its mandate.
- 6.0 Given the increase in annual government grants during the years under review, the Committee recommends that the Commission strengthen its budget and expenditure management to ensure resources are used efficiently and support its priorities and performance targets.

- 7.0 The Committee recommends that the Commission establish clear and measurable Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) in future annual reports to enhance transparency, accountability, and the effective monitoring of its performance.
- 8.0 In response to the Committee's site visit to the Commission's headquarters on 15 October 2025, the Committee has made several findings and recommendations to address operational issues (*reference 3.3.12*).

1.0 Committee Remit and Composition

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



Hon. Lenora Qereqeretabua
Chairperson
Deputy Speaker of Parliament
Assistant Minister for Foreign Affairs



Hon. Rinesh Sharma
Deputy Chairperson



Hon. Ratu Isikeli Tuiwailevu
Member
Assistant Minister for iTaukei Affairs, Heritage and Arts



Hon. Penioni Ravunawa
Member
Assistant Minister for Health and Medical Services



Hon. Virendra Lal Member



Hon. Taito Rokomatu
Member

1.1 Committee Secretariat Team

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

- Ms. Tirisiane Logavatu – Senior Committee Clerk
- Mrs. Elesi Tabuyaqona – Deputy Committee Clerk

Committee contact details:

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2.0 Background and Terms of Reference

2.1 Presentation of the Annual Report

2.1.1 The Speaker of Parliament, on 18 July 2025, referred the FICAC 2020-2021, 2021-2022 and 2022-2023 annual reports to the Committee for review. The referral was made pursuant to Standing Order 38(2), which mandates that all annual reports tabled in Parliament be referred to the relevant Standing Committee for examination and report back to Parliament.

2.1.2 The Committee is responsible for reviewing matters concerning Fiji's international relations, development assistance, foreign direct investment, national security oversight, and engagement with multilateral organisations.

2.1.3 The FICAC annual reports fall outside the Committee's mandate, but the referral was made to assist in balancing the distribution of workload among the Standing Committees of Parliament.

2.2 Procedure and Program

Public Submission

2.2.1 In relation to Standing Order 111 (1), the Committee is committed to upholding public trust in Parliament, by ensuring that there is public participation and that all such participation is given due consideration. The Fiji Independent Commission Against Corruption appeared before the Committee at a public hearing in Suva on 14 October 2025. The public submission was broadcast live on Parliament Facebook page and aired on the Walesi Parliament channel.

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

Site Visit

2.2.3 As part of its review of the FICAC annual reports, the Committee conducted a site visit to the Commission's headquarters in Suva on 15 October 2025. The purpose of the visit was to observe FICAC's operational setup, understand its investigative and prosecutorial processes, and assess the adequacy of its facilities and resources.

3.0 Committee Deliberation and Analysis

3.1 Introduction

- 3.1.1 This report presents a consolidated summary and analysis of the FICAC annual reports for the financial years 2020-2021, 2021-2022, and 2022-2023. It highlights key achievements, challenges, and provides recommendations for improvement to support the Commission's Constitutional mandate.
- 3.1.2 FICAC was established under the Fiji Independent Commission Against Corruption Act No.11 of 2007 (“the Act”) on 4 April 2007 and continues in existence by virtue of Section 115 of the 2013 Constitution of the Republic of Fiji.
- 3.1.3 FICAC is mandated to investigate and prosecute corruption-related offences by Public Officers, employees of Government and Government-related organisations. Its structure includes the Office of the Commissioner and four (4) distinct departments for Investigations, Legal and Prosecution, Corruption Prevention, and Corporate Services. The functions of the four departments remained consistent throughout the three reporting years in review.

3.2 Committee Findings

The Committee findings are outlined below:

3.2.1 The Committee noted that the **Investigation Department** had fluctuating trends in the number of new cases registered, cases under investigation, cases pending investigation and files closed or referred for legal action within the Department:

3.2.1.1 Case Volume and Registration:

The total number of new cases varied significantly over the three years — 113 (2020–2021), dropping to 33 (2021–2022), and then rising sharply to 158 (2022–2023). This indicates recovery in investigative activities following pandemic-related disruptions.

3.2.1.2 Case Backlog and Investigations:

A consistently high number of cases were carried forward each year (283 → 359 → 229), reflecting ongoing challenges in clearing backlogs. However, the reduction from 359 to 229 carried-forward cases suggests gradual improvement in case resolution.

3.2.1.3 Legal Referrals and Prosecutions:

Files referred to the Legal and Prosecution Department remained relatively stable (46 → 48 → 37), while the number of cases proceeding to court showed modest variation (28 → 24 → 36), indicating a steady flow of prosecutable matters despite case volume fluctuations.

3.2.1.4 Cases Pending or Under Investigation:

A large portion of cases each year remained pending or under active investigation — 286 in 2020–2021, 229 in 2021–2022, and 177 in 2022–2023. The downward trend reflects gradual progress in addressing the backlog and enhanced investigative efficiency over time.

3.2.1.5 Case Closures:

The number of files closed increased significantly over the three years (36 → 91 → 137), showing improved efficiency in case resolution and greater capacity to conclude investigations.

3.2.1.6 Overall Trend:

The data reflects an initial slowdown in 2020–2021 due to COVID-19 impacts, followed by gradual recovery and operational improvement in 2022–2023, marked by higher case intake, more closures, and a reduction in backlog.

3.2.2 The Committee noted that FICAC's investigative challenges were largely due to fragmented processes, limited coordination between investigation and legal units, and insufficient digital oversight.

3.2.3 The Committee noted that the **Legal and Prosecution Department** had varying levels of case progress and conviction outcomes across the three reporting years, reflecting the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic and gradual recovery in court operations thereafter.

3.2.3.1 Court Operations and Case Progress:

In 2020–2021, progress was significantly affected by Court closures during the second wave of COVID-19, leading to widespread adjournments and rescheduling of hearings. Case management gradually stabilised in 2021–2022 and 2022–2023, as normal court operations resumed.

3.2.3.2 Cases Pending Before Courts:

The number of pending court cases remained high throughout the period, increasing from 152 in 2020–2021 to 177 in 2021–2022, before slightly decreasing to 173 in 2022–2023. This trend indicates a continuing backlog but also a modest improvement in case clearance by 2023.

3.2.3.3 Investigation File Reviews:

The number of investigation files reviewed varied moderately — 52 in 2020–2021, 48 in 2021–2022, and 61 in 2022–2023 — suggesting sustained attention to case assessment and legal readiness. The increase in 2022–2023 reflects greater departmental productivity.

3.2.3.4 Charging and Legal Action:

The number of charges filed or taken to Court fluctuated over the three years:

2020–2021: 18 charges filed

2021–2022: 5 new charges plus 21 cases brought before the Courts

2022–2023: 20 charges filed.

This shows a recovery in prosecution activity following the disruptions of the pandemic period.

3.2.3.5 Case Disposals:

Cases disposed of each year fluctuated from 26 (2020–2021) to 15 (2021–2022), and 21 (2022–2023), indicating gradual progress in clearing older matters despite persistent delays.

3.2.3.6 Conviction Rates:

Conviction rates declined over the three years — from 65% (2020–2021) to 60% (2021–2022) and 38% (2022–2023). This downward trend may reflect increased case complexity and resource constraints affecting prosecution outcomes.

3.2.3.7 Nature of Offences:

Across all three years, the most common offences included bribery, obtaining a financial advantage, money laundering, and conspiracy to defraud, showing consistent patterns in corruption-related behaviour.

3.2.3.8 Overall Trend:

The data indicates that while COVID-19 disruptions in 2020–2021 led to significant backlogs and deferred prosecutions, subsequent years saw gradual normalisation of

court processes, increased legal reviews, and renewed charging activity. However, the declining conviction rate underscores the need for strengthened prosecution strategies and case management systems.

- 3.2.4 The Committee noted that FICAC's conviction rate declined from 65 percent to 38 percent, primarily due to inconsistent case preparation, weak pre-trial coordination, and the absence of systematic trial-readiness assessment.
- 3.2.5 The Committee observed a gradual increase in the number of individuals charged, rising from 36 in 2020-2021 to 40 in 2022-2023. While chargeable offences have slightly decreased, from 22 to 16 over the three-year period, the total number of counts fluctuated, peaking at 119 in 2020-2021 and reaching 100 in 2022-2023. The Committee also noted a shift in offences, with recent years reflecting a greater focus on obtaining financial advantage and conspiracy to defraud.
- 3.2.6 The Committee noted that the **Corruption Prevention Department** promoted transparency and integrity through the "I Don't Accept Bribes" campaign, awareness sessions, workshops, and community engagements. Between 2020 and 2023, the campaign reached 53 institutions. The Department conducted over 470 awareness sessions, and engaged students, civil servants, and private sector participants. The Department also educated communities on government processes and rural development projects to prevent exploitation and misinformation, reinforcing ethical conduct and anti-corruption practices across all sectors.
- 3.2.7 The Committee noted that despite the awareness outreach conducted by the Commission, a total of 1,359 complaints were received in 2020-2021, comprising of 315 corruption-related and 1,044 non-corruption-related cases. In 2021-2022, the complaints decreased to 373, of which 123 were corruption-related and 250 non-corruption-related. However, in 2022-2023, the complaints rose to 534, comprising of 200 corruption-related and 334 non-corruption-related cases.

The Committee was informed that non-corruption related complaints were not within the jurisdiction of the Commission to investigate, therefore, were referred to the Government Informational Referral Centre (GIRC), relevant Government Ministries and Departments.

- 3.2.8 The Committee observed a gradual decline in the Commission's workforce from 145 officers in 2020-2021 to 129 officers in 2022-2023. Gender representation remained relatively balanced over the three reporting periods, with male officers comprising 56 percent in 2020-2021, decreasing slightly to 53 percent in 2022-2023, while female representation increased from 44 percent to 47 percent, reflecting steady progress toward gender balance within the Commission.
- 3.2.9 The Committee acknowledges that the Commission was allocated annual government grants to fund its operational and capital expenses. Budget allocations increased from \$7.98 million

in 2020–2021 to \$10.51 million in 2022–2023, with corresponding expenditures of \$7.95 million, \$7.89 million, and \$9.83 million respectively. The Committee further noted that the Commission received unqualified audit opinions for all three financial years, indicating sound financial management and compliance with audit standards.

3.3.10 The Committee noted that FICAC's operations were significantly impacted by external and logistical challenges during the years under review. The COVID-19 pandemic caused widespread court adjournments, limited access to witnesses, and contributed to case backlogs. The 2022 national elections further stretched the Commission's resources, as staff were required to manage continuous electoral complaints and assessments, delaying charging decisions and trial preparation. Additionally, staff turnover within the Legal and Prosecution Division disrupted case continuity and affected trial readiness, contributing to fluctuating conviction rates. The Committee also notes that logistical constraints across FICAC's divisional offices in Suva, Lautoka, and Labasa affected coordination and increased operational costs.

3.3.11 The Committee observed that the Commission's Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) for the years under review and for the upcoming year were not clearly defined, emphasising that well-defined KPIs are essential for enabling more effective scrutiny of the Commission's performance.

3.3.12 The Committee identified several critical challenges affecting the Commission's efficiency and capacity to fulfil its mandate following its site visit to the Commission's headquarters on 15 October 2025. The challenges are outlined below:

- a) **Transcription Processes:** The Commission relies on outdated manual transcription methods that are time-consuming and labour-intensive. The Committee highlighted the need for automatic speech-to-text software, high-quality microphones, and foot-pedal controls to enhance accuracy and efficiency.
- b) **Office Space and Infrastructure:** The Commission faces office space limitations and aging infrastructure, which hinder productivity, confidentiality, and staff wellbeing. Many assets are in poor condition and require urgent replacement to ensure safety and functionality.
- c) **Staffing:** The Committee notes the lack of staff, particularly investigators, resulting in delays in investigations and court proceedings.
- d) **Digital Forensics:** While the Commission conducts digital forensic work, the Committee stressed the importance of up-to-date software and tools and recommended adopting international best practices in digital forensics.
- e) **Data Security and Storage:** Interview recordings are currently stored on compact discs (CDs), posing risks of loss, damage, or unauthorised access. The Committee recommends implementing secure servers or cloud-based storage systems.

- f) **Dedicated Anti-Corruption Court:** The Committee was informed of the Commission's wish to re-establish a dedicated Anti-Corruption Court under FICAC to expedite the determination of corruption-related cases.
- g) **Reporting Clarity:** The Committee noted that annual reports lack clarity, particularly regarding positions held by civil servants found guilty of gaining unlawful financial benefit and recommends greater transparency in future reports.
- h) **Investigation Safety and Tools:** The Committee identified the need for enhanced safety and recording equipment, including panic alarms, CCTV, audio systems, body-worn cameras, and forensic examination kits to ensure accountability, evidence integrity, and officer safety.

4.0 Sustainable Development Goals

4.1 SDG 5 – Gender Equality

4.1.1 Staffing

In alignment with SDG 5.5, the Committee noted FICAC's continued commitment to promoting gender equality, as reflected in the steady increase in female representation across key divisions, particularly in managerial and supervisory roles.

Female representation rose from 44 percent in 2020–2021 to 47 percent in 2022–2023, indicating progress toward narrowing the gender gap. The Committee further noted that FICAC's recruitment and promotion processes are based on merit, ensuring fairness and equal opportunity.

4.1.2 Development of Anti-Corruption Toolkit for Women-Owned MSME in Fiji

The Committee noted that during the 2020-2021 reporting period FICAC's partnership with UNPRAC and UNDP in developing the Anti-Corruption Toolkit for Women-Owned MSMEs in Fiji in the 2020-2021 reporting period. The toolkit aimed at helping women entrepreneurs understand anti-corruption laws and their application.

4.1.3 Public Engagement and Youth Programs

In September 2021, the Commission, in partnership with the United Nations Development Program, launched the **Integrity Competition** for students and civil servants nationwide. The Committee noted higher participation from female students and civil servants, reflecting strong female engagement in integrity and anti-corruption initiatives.

Category	Female Entries	Male Entries	Total
Poster (Years 5–8)	15	12	27
Essay (Years 9–10)	48	23	71
Essay (Year 11)	19	11	30
Civil Servants	24	15	39

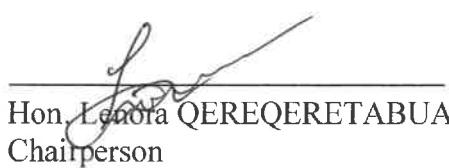
5.0 Conclusion

The Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and Defence, after careful examination of the FICAC 2020–2021, 2021–2022, and 2022–2023 annual reports, acknowledges the Commission’s work for maintaining its constitutional mandate in the face of operational, financial, and technological challenges. The Committee recognises FICAC’s continuous efforts to strengthen transparency, accountability, and integrity across the public sector.

The Committee reiterates the need for greater investment in institutional capacity, infrastructure, and digital modernisation to ensure operational efficiency and resilience. Recruitment of additional investigators and technological upgrades are vital to enable the Commission to meet its growing workload and evolving corruption threats.

The Committee expresses its appreciation to the FICAC management and staff for their cooperation throughout the review process.

6.0 Committee Members' Signatures



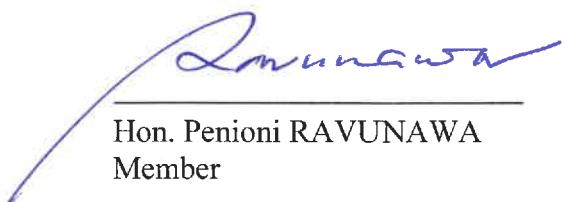
Hon. Leorla QEREQERETABUA
Chairperson



Hon. Rinesh SHARMA
Deputy Chairperson



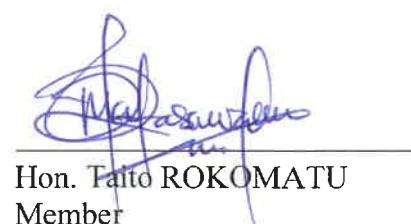
Hon. Isikeli TUIWAILEVU
Member



Hon. Penioni RAVUNAWA
Member



Hon. Virendra LAL
Member



Hon. Taito ROKOMATU
Member

7.0 Annexure

Published evidence

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

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