



AFP

AUSTRALIAN FEDERAL POLICE

Peacekeeping in the Pacific

Police participation in overseas peacekeeping operations is older than the AFP, but two overseas deployments have done more than any others to put peacekeeping and capacity-development work on the public agenda: Timor-Leste and the Solomon Islands.

Following a request from the Solomon Islands Government and the Pacific Island Forum in 2003, the Australian Government organised 11 Pacific nations into a regional force to assist our Melanesian neighbour restore law and order after a break down of the rule of law.

The multinational force became known as the Regional Assistance Mission to Solomon Islands (RAMSI).

Along with members of New Zealand and other Pacific nations' police, approximately 235 AFP and Australian Protective Service personnel arrived in country in July 2003 as part of the Participating Police Force to help the Royal Solomon Islands Police Force restore law and order services.

The AFP's role in Solomon Islands wasn't new to the organisation.

In 1964, members of the Commonwealth Police (the AFP's predecessor) were sent to Cyprus as part of the United Nations Peacekeeping Force to help prevent further fighting between Greek and Turkish Cypriots. In 1974, the United Nations Mission was expanded to supervise a ceasefire and maintain a buffer zone separating the communities and undertake humanitarian activities.

Australia's commitment in Cyprus has spanned 45 years, making it one of the few countries to have had a continuous presence there since the beginning of the UN mission. In 2009, the AFP deployed its 96th contingent to Cyprus where there are 15 AFP members working.

The AFP has sent officers to UN missions on the Thailand/Cambodia border in 1989, to Cambodia in 1992, Somalia in 1993, Mozambique in 1994 and contributed to a multinational force that was tasked to restore democracy in Haiti in 1994.

Unquestionably, the AFP's two most significant peacekeeping and capacity development roles are in Timor-Leste, with the United Nations Integrated Mission in Timor-Leste (UNMIT), the Timor-Leste Police Development Program (TLPDP) and in the Solomon Islands (with RAMSI).

The need for dedicated section of the AFP to manage growing international deployments led to the establishment of the International Deployment Group (IDG) in February 2004 to provide logistical support for missions; and a body of suitably trained men and women ready for deployment.

Training focuses on cultural sensitivities, remote first aid, principles in capacity development, team building and UN police training modules. A purpose-built training facility that looks like a typical village or town in a country where an AFP member may be deployed is used so police officers can experience conditions and different cultures first-hand before they depart for a mission.

The AFP is the first police force in the world to receive UN recognition for its pre-deployment training program.

RAMSI is Australia's first multi-agency and multinational led stabilisation and restoration of Government operation and is a shining star example of what a strategic and competent policing response should be according to Andrew Carpenter of the Department of Peacekeeping Operations, UN in New York.

The AFP has been in Timor-Leste (East Timor) since 1999 beginning with participation in the UN contingent during the popular consultation polls in August 1999. Since then, the AFP has provided members to every UN mission in Timor-Leste. Currently, there are 50 AFP members deployed to the United Nations Integrated Mission in Timor-Leste.

Like RAMSI, the AFP Timor-Leste Police Development Program (TLPDP) is also providing the Policia Nacional de Timor-Leste (PNTL) with the institutional strengthening and governance frameworks that is the basis of an effective police force. This bilateral police-to-police arrangement will develop and strengthen the leadership, vocational and management capabilities of the PNTL and enhance policing skills. The program began in 2004.

Bilateral and multilateral capacity development programs are also conducted by the AFP through the Pacific Police Development Program in Papua New Guinea, Samoa, Nauru, Vanuatu and Tonga.

Vanuatu Police Force capacity building program began in 2005 and will continue until 2011. With the AFP's support, the Government of Vanuatu will create a professional, accountable and community-oriented police force with the leadership skills and training to allow it to deal with contemporary policing challenges. Reinforcing Vanuatu's law enforcement capability is essential not just for the peace and prosperity of Vanuatu and its citizens but for the greater Asia-Pacific region as well.

The Tonga Police Development Program began in 2008 with AFP and New Zealand police members sent to Tonga to help local police develop a plan that would professionalise them.

The Samoa Police Program, also funded by the AFP under the Pacific Police Development Program, officially began on 1 January 2009. This program involves an AFP advisor working in areas such as training, human resources, finance and community policing.

The Papua New Guinea–Australia Policing Partnership is operating under the Pacific Police Development Program and is being advanced in two phases.

Phase one began in September 2008 with the deployment of AFP officers to Port Moresby to establish organisational relationships and to develop an understanding of the Royal Papua New Guinea Constabulary's (RPNGC) long-term development needs.

To determine a plan for phase two, a small team of specialist members from the AFP are working in partnership with senior executives from the RPNGC on how to support regional commands, provincial policing and criminal investigations, prosecutions, financial investigations, community policing, transnational crime and intelligence, internal investigations and training.

Stabilisation and capacity-development roles are two ways the Australian Government helps Pacific island nations strengthen their law and justice sectors and help maintain peace and order in our immediate region. The AFP's Pacific Transnational Crime Coordination Centre is another, providing an intelligence centre for the transnational crime units that now populate the Pacific.

Providing this type of dynamic help can only be achieved through the performance of our people, the AFP's most valuable asset.

Currently the AFP International Deployment Group manages 75 members deployed to three United Nations Missions in Cyprus, Timor-Leste and Sudan.

Approximately 300 members are deployed to multi and bilateral international missions in Afghanistan, Cambodia, Timor-Leste, Papua New Guinea, Nauru, Solomon Islands, Vanuatu, Tonga and Samoa.

Over 70 AFP members are deployed to domestic operations in the Northern Territory and Australia's external territories of Jervis Bay, Norfolk Island, Christmas Island and Cocos (Keeling) Islands.