



15 March 2019

### **RSIPF urges students to see police as a friend**

Students at the Kokeqolo and Dundee Community High Schools at Munda in the Western Province have been urged to see police as a friend as more officers will be deployed into the Province to provide security during the National General Election (NGE) on 3 April 2019.

As part of the community engagement in Western Province in preparation for the NGE Officers of the Royal Solomon Islands Police Force (RSIPF) from Honiara and Gizo visited both Schools on 14 March 2019.

About five hundred students from both Schools attended the awareness program with presentations from the team of RSIPF officers.

Deputy Commissioner (DC) Operations Gabriel Manelusi told the students, "Any change in Solomon Islands will depend on our students of today. You must honour our country well. Value your education. Respect your parents, guardians and your teachers."

"I must assure you all that RSIPF is ready for the NGE. RSIPF will provide security for this coming NGE. Police will deploy a patrol boat to provide security in the Western Province during the NGE along with additional manpower to assist the officers currently stationed in the Province. Officers of the Police Response Team will also be deployed in Western and Choiseul Provinces for the NGE," says DC Manelusi

DC Manelusi adds, "At the request of the Solomon Islands Government, the combined Australian Defence Force (ADF) and New Zealand Defence Force (NZDF) task force will provide logistic and communication support to the RSIPF and Solomon Islands Electoral Commission (SIEC) in the lead up to, and throughout the Election."

"I must make it clear here that the assistance from Australia and New Zealand is in logistics and communication. The assistance cannot be seen as the return of another RAMSI operation. RSIPF is fully capable and is confident it can provide security during the NGE. We have been preparing and training towards this for nearly a year now and we are ready to show our people that RSIPF is able to ensure we have a safe and secure NGE," DC Manelusi emphasises.

The NGE 2019 is being led and delivered by the Solomon Islands Government. The joint Task force comprising of the Australian and New Zealand Defence Forces is providing support, if needed in the areas including:

- Providing air and sea-lift support across the provinces
- Support for communications for the Solomon Islands officials running the election
- Back-up for the RSIPF's own election support operation, through the provision of logistics, communications and strategic lift, again if needed."

"I just want to make it very clear here to you my good students and teachers that the presence of ADF and NZDF is not the Regional Assistance to Solomon Islands (RAMSI)." The only officers that will be carrying arms are the members of the RSIPF's Police Response Team (PRT)," says DC Manelusi.

DC Manelusi explains: 'You can expect to see helicopters around Honiara and the provinces from the second half of this month. You will also see ADF and NZDF personnel around Honiara and Henderson International Airport. A Royal Australian Navy hydrographic survey ship will be in the Solomon Islands later this month.'

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**Media inquiries**

RSIPF Media Unit:  
24016 or 23800 Ext 239

Email:  
[rsipf.media@rsipf.gov.sb](mailto:rsipf.media@rsipf.gov.sb)

The Royal Solomon Islands Police Force (RSIPF) was established in 1954. Its mission is 'To provide a safe and peaceful Solomon Islands by strengthening relationships with the community'. The RSIPF strive to provide efficient and effective policing services for the Solomon Islands and expect RSIPF officers to adhere to the RSIPF values.

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