



25 February 2021

### **RSIPF officers threatened and intimidated at the SI/PNG border**

The Royal Solomon Islands Police Force (RSIPF) officers from the National Response Team deployed at the SI/PNG border had been threatened and Intimidated by Bouganvillians at the Western border with Papua New Guinea yesterday 24 February 2021.

Deputy Commissioner National Security and Operation Support Ian Vaevaso says, four officers from the Police Response Team (PRT) left Kariki base on 115 stab craft to conduct surveillance patrol along the SI/PNG border prior to PM visit to Nila in the Short land islands.

While they were patrolling the border along the Nunungari atolls at the SI side of the border, officers sighted one white ray Boat powered with a 15hp Yamaha with 3 Bouganvilleans on board.

Deputy Commissioner Vaevaso says, “RSIPF officers approached them in a friendly and professional manner and advised them to leave since our border is still closed and they are crossing our border illegally.”

“In response, one of the adult male aggressively shouting and stated that they are fishing on their fishing ground. Team further explained to them on the issue of our border but they did not want to comply. Our officers then withdrew back a few meters away and observe their movements.”

DC Vaevaso said, “While the officers still at the scene, they sighted two other white Ray boat powered with 15hp Yamaha with two people on board each believed to be part PNG and Bougainville from Nunungari Island approaching their relatives at the atoll and have a conversation. Their movements and actions looked suspicious.”

“The officers’ team leader advised the drone operator to deploy the drone for surveillance observation on the boats to capture any footage or images of dangerous weapons or firearms. As the Bouganvilleans sighted the drone flying, they get violent and started intimidating our officers with bush knives, axes and spear guns. During that time, the drone was captured by the Bouganvillians.”

DC Vaevaso says, “The Bouganvillians tried to lure our officers to go ashore at Nunungari Island with the intention to attack them. Since they outnumbered our officers, they withdrew out to a safe distance from the shoreline and made contact with Tactical commander for a backup.”

“Not long after, the Bouganvilleans left the scene and cross back to the PNG side of the common border.”

I call on our good people of Bougainville to respect the State of Public Emergency that the Government has in place declaring the Solomoni Islands western border as an emergency

zone to prevent the coronavirus COVID 19 from coming into our communities through the western border region. The State of Public Emergency supercedes any traditional crossing arrangements that have existed previously. These are not normal times. RSIPF officers are in the western border region to ensure the State of Public

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**For any media inquiries**

RSIPF Media Unit contact:

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, secure and peaceful Solomon Islands'. The RSIPF strive to provide efficient, capable and responsive policing service and expect RSIPF officers to adhere to the RSIPF values.

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