



30 March 2021

RSIPF reminds communities at the western border that the threat of COVID-19 is real

The Royal Solomon Islands Police Force (RSIPF) reminds people in the western border with Papua New Guinea that the threat of the COVID-19 entering our country through Bougainville is real and everything must be done to prevent it.

Deputy Commissioner, Operations, Juanita Matanga emphasised the threat when she conducted awareness talks with members of the public at the Taro Market and Vurango Village on 26 March 2021 and at Moli Village on 28 March 2021.

“This COVID-19 is a challenging issue for all of us here in Solomon Islands and more especially those of you here in Choiseul and Western provinces because of the threat of the virus coming across from neighbouring Bougainville,” said DC Matanga during the awareness meetings.

“COVID-19 has impacted on our normal norms and practices including interactions with your people on Bougainville. We must accept that we are not in normal times. That is the reason why I have to come down to talk with you so we can work together to fight this virus.”

“Our people must stop going across to Bougainville and we must stop Bougainvilleans from coming to our side. This should continue under the COVID-19 situation has been brought under control,” DC Matanga told the communities she met with during her visit to Choiseul Province

She explained, “Once COVID-19 has been transmitted into communities we have no way escaping it because of how we live. So am urging you my good people to please adhere to the health protocols and work together with our frontline police officers who are working hard to protect us all.”

“I strongly appeal to the few people who think they can sneak across the common border in their outboard motors to stop this immediately as you are not only putting your lives in

danger but the lives of your family members and the rest of the people in your community and the nation of Solomon Islands.”

Speaking during the awareness meeting at Moli Village on 28 March, a member of the community Raphael Singa said, “We are so fortunate that DC Matanga has availed herself to come and speak to us. We had one incident two weeks ago when one of our community members was picked up at night by his father from Bougainville and went across the same night. Now the communities fear what will have when he comes back.”

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For any media inquiries

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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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