



Royal Solomon Islands Police Force

Media Release

29th August 2023

RSIPF clarifies release of Cr. John Szetu

The Royal Solomon Islands Police Force (RSIPF) wishes to respond to an article by Mr. Alfred Sasako in the Solomon Star newspaper article on 26 August regarding the release of Councillor (Cr.) John Szetu from the Central Police Watch House.

The release of Cr. Szetu was open and transparent and it was made on the best interest to protecting the integrity and image of the RSIPF and from possible civil lawsuit.

The RSIPF was held accountable in the past years for unlawful actions resulting in the Solomon Island Government having to pay millions of dollars in compensation to victims (claimants).

It is based on past experiences and pending number of civil claims currently before the High Court that the decision to release Cr. Szetu was made.

The RSIPF has no jurisdictional power over civil disputes and matters. The matter against Cr. Szetu is a civil matter and the High Court Order executed by the Central Police Response Team on Cr. Szetu has no Penalty Notice, which means police is not authorised to effect this Order.

The arrest made on Cr. Szetu for obstructing is viewed otherwise wrongful.

For this reason the Commissioner's office has the duty and responsibility to intervene and direct the release of this person to protect the integrity of the RSIPF.

Whilst taking that action, the Commissioner's office is also seeking further legal advice on this matter to determine whether to continue proceeding with the criminal matter against Cr. Szetu for obstruction during the execution of the Order.

The Commissioner's office acted responsibly to inform Honiara City Police Management on the reason for the release and has instructed an enquiry into this arrest incident to find out how Police involved in this High Court Order at the first place.

The RSIPF understands the execution of High Court Orders is the responsibility of the Sherriff of the High Court. Under RSIPF procedures, when a Police Station received a Court Order for execution regarding any civil matters, these Orders must be

communicated through the chains of command to the Commissioner's Office for proper legal advice and guidance.

There are many cases of such that Commissioner's office has provided guidance and directions for the RSIPF.

Police actions must be guided by law and anything done outside of it is unlawful.

The office of the Commissioner urged Mr. Sasako to seek factual information from the RSIPF, through its Media team, before publishing information that contains factual errors.

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<p>Media inquiries</p> <p>RSIPF Media Unit: 24016 or 23800 Ext 239</p> <p>Email: rsipf.media@rsipf.gov.sb</p>	<p>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.</p> <p>For ongoing news and information, please go to www.rsipf.gov.sb</p> <p>Follow us on Facebook Page: www.facebook.com/rsipf</p>
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