



## Royal Solomon Islands Police Force

### Media Release

6<sup>th</sup> January 2026

### **Honiara Magistrates Court Sets Legal Precedent on Misuse of Public Funds**

Honiara, Solomon Islands – 5 January 2025:

The Honiara Magistrates Court has delivered a landmark sentencing, sentencing a former school teacher from Malaita Province to four years' imprisonment for embezzlement involving mistakenly deposited public funds on 5 January 2026.

The court reaffirmed a critical legal principle: money mistakenly deposited into an individual's account does not belong to them, and knowingly using it constitutes theft.

The conviction relates to a mistaken government payroll payment made in December 2017, where a total of \$3.8 million was incorrectly deposited into the offender's bank account. Rather than reporting the error, the individual transferred and spent a portion of the funds.

Eight months later, the Solomon Islands Government (SIG) detected the mistake and successfully recovered \$2.4 million, leaving \$1.3 million unrecovered, which formed the basis of the embezzlement charge.

The court ruled that the deliberate use of the funds amounted to a criminal offense, setting a clear legal precedent in the Solomon Islands that knowingly spending money that does not belong to you is a serious crime.

The successful prosecution reflects the strong collaboration and dedication of the Royal Solomon Islands Police Force (RSIPF), the Ministry of Finance and Treasury (MoFT), Task Force Janus, and the Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions (DPP).

In response to the case, the Accountant General confirmed that the Payroll Team has strengthened its pay-run checking processes to prevent similar incidents from occurring.

This includes additional scrutiny of fortnightly payrolls that exceed normal salary levels and cannot be explained by approved payroll adjustments such as rent deductions or leave payouts.

Acting Commissioner of Police Mathias Lenialu said the ruling sends a strong message to the public.

“Public funds belong to the people of the Solomon Islands. Any misuse of these funds is a betrayal of trust and will not be tolerated. This case sends a clear message: integrity is non-negotiable. If you receive money that is not yours, the only right action is to report it immediately.”

The outcome serves as a reminder that accountability and honesty remain fundamental obligations, particularly where public resources are concerned.

**End//...**

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**Media inquiries**

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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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