



**TRANSPARENCY
SOLOMON ISLANDS**
clean government, honest business

P.O Box 1665, Suite 226, Hyundai Mall, Mendana Avenue, Point Cruz, Honiara, Solomon Islands.

Email: eo@tsi.org.sb

Phone: (677) 20391 / 28319

ABOUT TRANSPARENCY SOLOMON ISLANDS.

Transparency Solomon Islands is the local chapter of Transparency International here in Solomon Islands. The Organization was formed in 2003. Transparency Solomon Islands is a not-for-profit organization committed to fight corruption and promoting transparency, accountability and good government in Solomon Islands. TSI focus on the public, private and civil sector. TSI relies on funding from members and donor organisation both in Solomon Islands and worldwide to undertake its work. TSI works with everyone from children, schools, community governance structures/ groups, national government, international organisations and agencies. Transparency Solomon Islands works to reduce corruption at the rural Communities, public services and national government.

CORE BUSINESS OF TRANSPARENCY SOLOMON ISLANDS

Engage in activities, projects, and programmes aimed at reducing corrupt activities and promote the principles of transparency, accountability and good governance. TSI also do a lot on community advocacy on roles and responsibility of a leader.

Engage with integrity institutions, government ministries, civil society and related organisation in Solomon Islands.

Raise public awareness on the nature, consequences and implications of corruption in the Solomon Islands with regards to public, private and civil sector.

SUBMISSION DATE: Thursday 15th October 2020

CYCLE PERIOD: 3rd Cycle

Table of Content

Page

About Transparency Solomon Islands..... 1

Core Business of Transparency Solomon Islands 1

Submission Date 1

Cycle Period 1

Table of Content 2

Executive Summary 3

Key Issue (1) Corruptions 3

Key Issue (2) Right to Information 4

Key Issue (3) COVID - 19 SOPE and Responses 5

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Transparency Solomon Islands bring to the Human Rights Council an alternative view about the human rights situation in Solomon Islands.

There are a lot of human rights issues in the Solomon Islands, however, Transparency Solomon Islands identify three (3) human rights issues that are relevant to its core function

The Issues are: 1. Corruption

2. Rights to Access to Information

3. COVID-19

KEY ISSUES and RECOMMENDATION.

1. CORRUPTION

Transparency Solomon Islands commends the Solomon Islands Government for passing of the Anti-Corruption Act (ACA 2018) in 2018, after two years of development. The formation of the Anti-Corruption Commission and enforcing of the Anti-Corruption Act is very important in the fight to reduce corruption in the country.

The Anti-Corruption Act 2018 put in place the key provisions established in the Act to forming the Solomon Islands Independence Commission Against Corruption (SIICAC). According to the Anti-Corruption Act under the Section 8, Functions and Powers, The Commission has the following powers and functions; (a) to determine the appropriate action to take on conclusion of corruption investigation (b) to prosecute corruption offences with consent of the Director of Public Prosecutions

Division 4 of the Anti-Corruption Act 2018 under "Staff and Authorised Officer of Commission Director General (Section 1) The Judicial and Legal service commissions established by section 117 of the constitution must appointed a person to be Director General of the Commission." Section 3 "The Director General has the following Powers; (a) manage day to day operation of the commission, including managing its staff members. (b) Appoint and direct authorised officers in the exercise of their power and the performance of their functions.

However, the Anti-Corruption Act is yet to implement a number of key provisions as mention above including the recruitment of human resources for the SIICAC secretariat. There has also been insufficient resource allocation from the government for implementation of the Solomon Islands Independence Commission Against Corruption (SIICAC).

RECOMMENDATION

Transparency Solomon Islands recommends the Solomon Islands Government to

1. Urgently recruit the Director General to enable the appointment of the Integrity Officers as per the Anti-Corruption Act.
2. Urgently implement the act to combat lots of corrupt actions that took place within the public service.

KEY ISSUE and RECOMMENDATION

2. RIGHTS TO ACCESS TO INFORMATION

The Chapter 2 of the Solomon Islands constitution clearly explain “PROTECTION OF FUNDAMENTAL RIGHTS AND FREEDOM OF THE INDIVIDUAL”. The Fundamental rights and freedoms of the individual in the Solomon Islands under the constitution needs to made clear and understandable to the citizens. It is their constitutional rights to know about their fundamental rights and have access to public information.

“Whereas every person in Solomon Islands is entitled to the fundamental rights and freedoms of the individual, that is to say, the right, whatever his race, place of origin, political opinions, colour, creed or sex, but subject to respect for the rights and freedoms of others and for the public interest, to each and all of the following, namely:- (a) life, liberty, security of the person and the protection of the law; (b) freedom of conscience of expression and of assembly and association; and (c) protection for the privacy of his home and other property and from deprivation of property without compensation, the provisions of this Chapter shall have effect for the purpose of affording protection of those rights and freedoms subject to such limitations of that protection as are contained in those provisions, being limitations designed to ensure that the enjoyment of the said rights and freedoms by an individual does not prejudice the rights and freedoms of others or the public interest.”

The right to have access to information is important for all Solomon Islands citizens. The present Solomon Islands Government have decided to put a side lots of information that should be seen by the public so that the Citizens are aware of the information to make inform choices.... The CDF Audit Reports, Shipping Grants, Church grants, COVID-19 ESP Funds to name a few.

Solomon Islands government needs to enact laws that give rights to the citizens on information such as Auditor Reports, Procurement and awarding of contracts, CDF acquittal reports, how many projects implemented in the constituencies as per CDF and COVID-19 ESP.

Rights to access information on climate change issues with regards to the people living in the low lining atoll islands. Rights to access information from the Government Ministries with regards to public issues on Land, Forestry and Environmental. All the information are public information and must made available for the public to see.

The right to have access to information will enable citizens to freely have access to information and educated themselves about issues and developments in the Solomon Islands.

RECOMMENDATION

Transparency Solomon Islands recommends that the Government of Solomon Islands to develop a right to information law and fully fund its implementation.

ISSUE and RECOMMENDATION

3. COVID-19 RESPONSES

Solomon Islands recently report two (2) positive COVID-19 cases and the governments’ oversight committee and the Prime Minister should look at how effective to regulate the State of Public Emergency (SOPE) and its responses to stop the spread of the Coronavirus in Solomon Islands. The first state of public emergency (SOPE) was launched in March 2020 then got extended in July 2020 up until November 2020. Currently, Solomon Islands recorded two (2) positive cases and four (4) others in

the Isolation Centre. The State of Public Emergency Regulations needs to be change and properly articulated based on the current state of COVID-19 in Solomon Islands.

Solomon Islands Government through donors and its revenue collection have received and collected millions of dollars to combat the negative impacts of COVID-19 on the government and the country as a whole. The negative impacts is mainly only the agriculture, health, education, and all the productive sectors. As part of the governments' response to fight the negative impacts of the COVID-19 on the economy of Solomon Islands, the executive government, issued a lot of money to the companies in the names of Economic Stimulus Package (ESP) to keep the country's economy afloat.

During the State of Public Emergency responses Government awarded each Member of Parliament \$600,000.00SBD. This funds are part of the Economic Stimulus Package. Earlier during the State Public Emergency Response the Members of Parliament receive \$250,000.00SBD as part of their discretionary funds. In September 2020, the members of parliament receive another \$250,000.00SBD additional to the previous discretionary funds.

Transparency Solomon Islands understands the need to keep the nation's economy afloat during this world's pandemic but must not take the opportunity to spend the funds unnecessary. Solomon Islands is one of the COVID-19 free country in the world and the emergency powers should concentrate on important issues such as Border Control, compulsory quarantine and concentration on maintaining the economy of the country during the COVID-19 times. Executive government must not use the COVID-19 to keep on extending the SOPE for their own purposes and to suppress the citizens of their rights to talk and express one's opinion and for their own political benefit.

RECOMMENDATION

Transparency Solomon Islands Government recommends to

- Review the State of Public Emergency Powers and enforce only the relevant provisions. Solomon Islands didn't record a positive case yet. People should free to move around to engage with their normal daily activities. Only the Borders and point of entry should be.
- Audit all COVID- 19 related funds.