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**UNIVERSAL PERIODIC REVIEW
52ND SESSION**

**STATUS OF HUMAN RIGHTS IN THE SOLOMON ISLANDS
FOR THE 52ND SESSION OF THE
UNIVERSAL PERIODIC REVIEW**

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Introduction

1. The European Centre for Law and Justice (ECLJ) is a non-governmental organization dedicated to promoting and protecting human rights around the world. The ECLJ also holds Special Consultative status before the United Nations Economic and Social Council. This report discusses the status of human rights in the Solomon Islands for the 52nd session of the Universal Periodic Review (UPR).

Background

2. The Solomon Islands is a country located in the southwestern region of the Pacific Ocean and has a population of approximately 837,000 people.¹ The population is predominantly Christian, with approximately 95.3% of the population identifying as Christian and 3.2% belonging to other ethnic religions.²

3. The Solomon Islands' last review was held on May 10, 2021.³ As a result of the review, the Solomon Islands received 160 recommendations, 106 of which it supported.⁴ It was recommended by the United States of America, and supported by the Solomon Islands, that the government “[d]evelop, enact and implement comprehensive anti-human trafficking legislation” as well as “ratify the Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children.”⁵ It was also recommended by Niger, but only noted by the Solomon Islands, that the government “[s]ign and ratify the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights.”⁶ No recommendations were made regarding religious freedom.

Legal Framework

4. Under Article 6 of the Constitution of the Solomon Islands, “[n]o person shall be held in slavery or servitude. No person shall be required to perform forced labour.”⁷

¹ Hugh Michael Laracy & Sophie Foster, *Solomon Islands*, BRITANNICA (July 21, 2025), <https://www.britannica.com/place/Solomon-Islands>.

² *Solomon Islands: Major World Religions (1900-2050)* (World Religion Database, 2025), THE ASS'N OF RELIGION DATA ARCHIVES, <https://www.thearda.com/world-religion/national-profiles?REGION=0&u=204c&u=23r> (last visited Oct. 8, 2025).

³ *Universal Periodic Review – Solomon Islands*, OHCHR, <https://www.ohchr.org/en/hr-bodies/upr/sb-index> (last visited Oct. 8, 2025).

⁴ *Infographic – Solomon Islands*, OHCHR, <https://www.ohchr.org/sites/default/files/2022-02/SOLOMON-ISLANDS.pdf> (last visited Oct. 8, 2025).

⁵ OHCHR, UPR of Solomon Islands (3rd Cycle – 38th Session) Thematic List of Recommendations, https://www.ohchr.org/sites/default/files/2022-02/UPR38_Solomon-Islands_Thematic_List_of_Recommendations.docx (last visited Oct. 8, 2025).

⁶ *Id.*

⁷ CONST. OF SOLOMON ISLANDS 1978 (REV. 2009), art. 6, <https://antislaverylaw.ac.uk/country/solomon-islands/?dataset=adld> (last visited Oct. 8, 2025).

5. Under Article 76 of the Solomon Islands' Immigration Act 2012, individuals convicted of human trafficking are subjected to a fine, imprisonment not longer than five years, or both.⁸ Individuals convicted of trafficking a minor shall be subjected to a fine, imprisonment not longer than ten years, or both.⁹

6. Additionally, the Solomon Islands is operating under the National Action Plan to Combat Trafficking in Persons and Smuggling in the Solomon Islands, 2020-2025.¹⁰ The purpose of this new action plan is to bring together relevant agencies and stakeholders and strengthen prevention, protection, and prosecution efforts.¹¹

7. The Solomon Islands is not a party to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) nor is it a party to the Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children, supplementing the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime.¹² However, the Solomon Islands has an obligation under the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) to uphold the rights enshrined within. Under Article 4 of the UDHR, "[n]o one shall be held in slavery or servitude; slavery and the slave trade shall be prohibited in all their forms."¹³

Human Trafficking

8. While exact statistics regarding human trafficking in the Solomon Islands are unknown, it has been estimated that approximately 5–15 people per year have fallen victim to human trafficking over the past four years.¹⁴ The Solomon Islands is a source, transit, and destination for human trafficking.¹⁵ These victims include men, women, and children, who are exploited for both forced labor and prostitution.¹⁶ Men are typically trafficked for forced labor on fishing vessels, while women are forced into prostitution near logging camps.¹⁷ Children are also not immune to the dangers of human trafficking and have been subjected to both labor and sex trafficking.¹⁸ In particular, girls between the ages of fifteen and seventeen are at risk for being trafficked and forced into prostitution in hotels, casinos, and nightclubs.¹⁹

⁸ Immigration Act 2012, art. 76, <https://antislaverylaw.ac.uk/country/solomon-islands/?dataset=adld> (last visited Oct. 8, 2025).

⁹ *Id.* at art. 77.

¹⁰ UNODC, REGIONAL REPORT ON THE EXISTING CAPACITIES TO MEASURE TRAFFICKING IN PERSONS IN THE PACIFIC ISLAND 36 (2023), https://www.unodc.org/roseap/uploads/documents/Publications/2023/UNODC_RegionalReport_PacificIslands_2023.pdf.

¹¹ *Id.*

¹² *Ratifications Status for Solomon Islands*, OHCHR, https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/TreatyBodyExternal/Treaty.aspx?CountryID=160&Lang=EN (last visited Oct. 8, 2025); *Chapter XVIII Penal Matters 12. A Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children, Supplementing the United Nations Convention Against Transnational Organized Crime*, U.N. TREATY COLLECTION, https://treaties.un.org/pages/ViewDetails.aspx?src=TREATY&mtdsg_no=XVIII-12-a&chapter=18.

¹³ G.A. Res. 217 (III) A, Universal Declaration of Human Rights, art. 4 (Dec. 10, 1948).

¹⁴ REGIONAL REPORT ON THE EXISTING CAPACITIES TO MEASURE TRAFFICKING IN PERSONS IN THE PACIFIC ISLAND, *supra* note 10 at 36.

¹⁵ *Solomon Islands*, GLOBAL ORGANIZED CRIME INDEX, https://ocindex.net/country/solomon_islands (last visited Oct. 8, 2025).

¹⁶ *Id.*

¹⁷ *Id.*

¹⁸ *Id.*

¹⁹ *Id.*

9. Children are among the most at risk of being trafficked. A recent survey interview of 115 boys and 55 girls found that at least 5 of them were sexually exploited.²⁰ Additionally, sixty of the children reported being trafficked for labor and were forced to work in hazardous conditions like unloading cargo from ships and scavenging for mechanical parts.²¹

10. From 2017 to 2020, authorities secured sixteen convictions related to human trafficking.²² However, from 2020–2023 there were only seven human trafficking investigations that resulted in two convictions.²³ The reason for this decrease is the of lack of resources and funding. Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020, the Immigration Division had an annual budget of SBD 380,000 to conduct counter trafficking activities.²⁴ Since then, the budget has been slashed to just SBD 60,000.²⁵

11. Another roadblock to combating human trafficking in the Solomon Islands is the lack of comprehensive anti-human trafficking legislation.²⁶ While human trafficking is criminalized in the Solomon Islands, gaps in the legislation have made it difficult for authorities to charge perpetrators with human trafficking.²⁷ Rachel Olutimayin, the Director of Public Prosecutions, explained that the current law fails to criminalize separate offences that are related to human trafficking and instead uses a limited definition of human trafficking.²⁸ This has made it difficult to obtain evidence to satisfy all the elements of human trafficking.²⁹ Because of this, the prosecutors are unable to charge individuals with human trafficking.³⁰ The Deputy Director of Immigration shared that they are reviewing the Immigration Act and working to create a stand-alone human trafficking legislation.³¹ This would be an important development because it would allow prosecution of individuals who are not directly involved in the exploitation of the victims but were involved in recruiting or transporting the victims.³²

12. Further inhibiting the Solomon Islands efforts to combat trafficking is the lack of funding allocated to investigation, providing awareness, victim protection, and assistance services.³³ The Solomon Islands lacks human trafficking specific services like shelters, and foreign victims are not provided with temporary residence permits, which is necessary to collect evidence and thoroughly investigate cases of human trafficking.³⁴ The lack of victim

²⁰ Ronald Toito'ona, *Report Reveals Worst Forms of Child Labour in Solomon Islands*, IN-DEPTH SOLOMONS (Aug. 5, 2024), <https://indepthsolomons.com.sb/report-reveals-worst-forms-of-child-labour-in-solomon-islands/>.

²¹ *Id.*

²² REGIONAL REPORT ON THE EXISTING CAPACITIES TO MEASURE TRAFFICKING IN PERSONS IN THE PACIFIC ISLAND, *supra* note 10 at 15.

²³ IOM, COUNTRY CAPACITY ASSESSMENT ON TRAFFICKING IN PERSONS: SOLOMON ISLANDS 27-8 (Dec. 2023), https://roasiapacific.iom.int/sites/g/files/tmzbd1671/files/documents/2024-05/tip-assessment_sol_final.pdf.

²⁴ *Id.* at 6.

²⁵ *Id.*

²⁶ *Id.* at 2.

²⁷ *Id.*

²⁸ *Current Trafficking Related Laws Affects Prosecution Of Cases*, SOLOMON ISLAND BROAD. CORP. (Mar. 30, 2023), <https://www.sibconline.com.sb/current-trafficking-related-laws-affects-prosecution-of-cases/>.

²⁹ COUNTRY CAPACITY ASSESSMENT ON TRAFFICKING IN PERSONS: SOLOMON ISLANDS, *supra* note 23 at 29.

³⁰ *Id.*

³¹ *SIG to Establish a Stand-Alone Legislation on Human Trafficking*, SOLOMON ISLAND BROAD. CORP. (July 20, 2020), <https://www.sibconline.com.sb/immigration-act-under-review/>.

³² *See generally* COUNTRY CAPACITY ASSESSMENT ON TRAFFICKING IN PERSONS: SOLOMON ISLANDS, *supra* note 23.

³³ *Solomon Islands*, *supra* note 15.

³⁴ *Id.*

services hinders investigations, discourages victims from testifying against their traffickers out of fear of retaliation, and there is no incentive for them to deal with the lengthy legal processes.³⁵ This is especially a problem when the Director of Public Prosecutions has stated that the lack of evidence has made it difficult for authorities to investigate and prosecute cases of human trafficking.³⁶

13. Further, even though the Solomon Islands has supported recommendations to ratify key international agreements, it has yet to ratify the ICCPR and the Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons Especially Women and Children, Supplementing the United Nations Convention Against Transnational Organized Crime.³⁷ These international agreements enshrine the right that no one shall be held in slavery and that the government has a responsibility to “prevent and combat trafficking in persons.”³⁸ All of the reasons discussed above show why the Solomon Islands has failed to combat human trafficking and help the victims effectively.

Recommendations

14. As demonstrated above, the Solomon Islands has failed to combat human trafficking. We urge the Solomon Islands to immediately ratify the ICCPR and the Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons Especially Women and Children, Supplementing the United Nations Convention Against Transnational Organized Crime. We also urge the Solomon Islands to reform its laws regarding human trafficking so that they fall in line with these international agreements. Additionally, we urge that Solomon Islands allocate the necessary resources needed to investigate cases of human trafficking and provide victims with the services they need so that they can assist in the successful prosecution of their traffickers.

³⁵ *Id.*

³⁶ *Id.*

³⁷ *Ratifications Status for Solomon Islands*, OHCHR, https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/TreatyBodyExternal/Treaty.aspx?CountryID=160&Lang=EN (last visited Oct. 8, 2025).

³⁸ *Id.*