



Royal Solomon Islands Police Force

Media Release

6th May 2026

RSIPF responds to WWII Explosive Ordnances exposed following TC Maila

The Royal Solomon Islands Police Force (RSIPF) Explosive Ordnance Disposal Department (EODD) has undertaken urgent response operations in Western and Choiseul Provinces following reports of World War II-era explosive ordnances being exposed along coastal areas in the aftermath of Tropical Cyclone (TC) Maila.

These hazardous items, long embedded in coastal and marine environments since World War II, were dislodged and brought to the surface by the strong wave action, storm surges, and coastal erosion caused by the cyclone.

The RSIPF EOD operational teams were deployed rapidly, responding to community reports in Western Province on 29 April 2026 and in Choiseul Province on 28 April 2026.

The Commissioner of Police, Mr. Ian Vaevaso, confirmed that in Western Province, the EOD deployment team conducted operations on Barabuni Island in Rendova Harbor, where more than 200 explosive ordnance items were recovered along the shoreline.

These items are believed to have been buried or submerged for decades and were subsequently washed ashore due to the cyclone's impact. The EOD team also conducts UXO responses to reports within Munda and surrounding areas that have been reported by the Halo Trust survey teams and has recovered more than 30 explosive ordnance items.

In Choiseul Province, a separate EOD team was deployed following similar reports from local communities. Operations conducted along the shoreline and in shallow waters near the Vosa community, close to Sasamunga, resulted in the recovery of more than ten (10) explosive ordnance items. Among these, seven were positively identified as 4.5-inch barrage rockets, a type of anti-aircraft munition historically used during World War II.

All recovered explosive ordnances have been assessed and safely relocated to designated secure holding areas. A total of 265 explosive ordnance items from both Western and Choiseul collections are currently awaiting further disposal procedures on a

later date, which will be conducted by qualified RSIPF EOD technicians in accordance with established safety protocols.

Commissioner Vaevaso emphasized the ongoing risk posed by unexploded ordnance (UXO), particularly following natural disasters that disturb previously stable environments. He reiterated that such items remain highly dangerous and can cause serious injury or loss of life if tampered with.

"I would like to acknowledge and commend our local communities for their vigilance and cooperation in promptly reporting these dangerous items. Your actions have directly contributed to preventing potential accidents and saving lives," Commissioner Vaevaso said.

The Commissioner also extended appreciation to the Australian Defense Corporation Program (DCP) for its continued support, including the provision of an embedded ADF EOD advisor and ongoing funding assistance. This partnership ensures that RSIPF EOD operations remain effective, responsive, and sustainable across the country.

Finally, I want to also thank The HALO Trust for your ongoing reporting of UXO calls to our EOD department. "This indicates a strong and trusted partnership in support of national coordination, as well as a shared commitment to community safety through timely information sharing, effective response, and the collective effort to reduce the risks posed by UXO in the country," said the police chief.

The RSIPF is calling on all communities throughout the Solomon Islands to exercise extreme caution. Members of the public are strongly advised not to touch, move, or interfere with any suspected explosive items. Instead, such findings should be reported immediately to the RSIPF EOD Department via their 24/7 contact numbers, 7495215 or 7495214, or to the nearest police station.

The RSIPF remains committed to safeguarding communities and mitigating the ongoing risks posed by Explosive Remnants of War (ERW), particularly in the wake of natural disasters that can re-expose these hidden dangers.

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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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