



Royal Solomon Islands Police Force

Media Release

5th August 2026

RSIPF Drone Unit Selected for PIF Leaders Meeting Support

Royal Solomon Islands Police Force (RSIPF) Drone Support Unit (DSU) Officer-in-Charge Sergeant (Sgt) Moli Puiaraha and Police Constable (PC) Christopher Walerefoa have been selected to deploy with the Pacific Police Support Group (PPSG) in support of security operations for the upcoming Pacific Islands Forum Leaders Meeting (PIFLM) in Palau.

The deployment is a significant achievement for the RSIPF and the Solomon Islands, recognising the Drone Support Unit as a leading Unmanned Aircraft System (UAS) capability among Pacific police organisations. The selection reflects the unit's operational experience, professionalism and commitment to modern policing.

Assistant Commissioner (AC) National Operations, Lionel Kapisa, said the selection demonstrates the growing capability and professionalism of the RSIPF.

AC Kapisa said, "This deployment reflects our commitment to building modern policing capabilities that support our communities and regional security. The selection of Sgt Puiaraha and PC Walerefoa demonstrates the confidence our regional partners have in the capability, professionalism and readiness of our officers. I acknowledge the hard work of the DSU and the support from RAPPP in strengthening our training, capability and operational readiness."

Over recent years, the RSIPF DSU has supported major national events, critical incidents, search and rescue operations, disaster response, crime scene management, public order operations and specialist tactical deployments. Through the use of unmanned aircraft systems, the unit has provided real-time aerial intelligence that has enhanced decision-making, improved officer safety and strengthened policing outcomes.

The unit has also achieved a significant milestone by becoming one of the first law enforcement agencies in the Pacific to obtain certification under the Civil Aviation Authority of Solomon Islands (CAASI) Part 102 framework, demonstrating its commitment to safe, professional and compliant UAS operations.

Sgt Puiraha said the deployment is a proud milestone for the unit and reflects the dedication of its members.

She said, "This is a proud moment for our unit and the RSIPF. Being selected reflects the confidence our regional partners have in our capability and professionalism. We are proud to have achieved certification under the Civil Aviation Authority of Solomon Islands (CAASI) Part 102 framework, demonstrating our commitment to safe, professional and compliant drone operations. We look forward to supporting the Pacific Islands Forum Leaders Meeting while representing Solomon Islands on the regional stage."

"I would also like to thank RAPPP for their continued support. Their guidance, training and investment in our capability have helped prepare us for opportunities like this meeting, and we are excited to put our skills into practice in Palau," Puiraha said.

The continued growth of the DSU has been supported through the RSIPF–Australian Federal Police Policing Partnership Program (RAPPP), with assistance in governance, training, operational capability and aviation compliance frameworks. This partnership has strengthened the unit's readiness to support both national and regional policing requirements.

As part of their preparation, Sgt Puiraha and PC Walerefoa will travel to Pinkenba, Queensland, on 14 August for pre-deployment induction and operational recertification training with the PPSG. They will then deploy to Palau from 26 August to 8 September to provide aerial surveillance, situational awareness, operational intelligence and specialist unmanned aircraft support during the PIFLM security operation.

The deployment highlights the confidence regional policing partners have in RSIPF capabilities and reinforces Solomon Islands' growing contribution to regional security. It also provides an opportunity to strengthen partnerships, exchange knowledge and further enhance the DSU's capability.

The RSIPF wishes Sgt Puiraha, PC Walerefoa and the wider PPSG every success and looks forward to the experience and knowledge they will bring back to strengthen policing capabilities in Solomon Islands.

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Captions for photos

For any media inquiries RSIPF Media Unit contact: 24016 or 23800 Ext 239	The Royal Solomon Islands Police Force (RSIPF) was established in 1954. Its mission is 'To provide a safe, secure and peaceful Solomon Islands'. The RSIPF strive to provide efficient, capable and responsive policing service and expect RSIPF officers to adhere to the RSIPF values.
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Image 1: Sergeant Moli Puiaraha and Police Constable Christopher Walerefoa prepare for a drone flight surveillance exercise at Tasimboko as part of their operational preparations for the upcoming PIFLM security deployment in Palau.

Image 2: Sergeant Moli Puiaraha and Police Constable Christopher Walerefoa conduct a flight surveillance exercise with RAPPP Drone Support Unit Advisor Phill Anderson as part of their preparation for the Palau deployment

Image 3: RSIPF Drone Support Unit team members (left to right): RAPPP Drone Support Unit Advisor Phill Anderson, Sergeant Moli Puiaraha and Police Constable Christopher Walerefoa.

Image 4: Sergeant Moli Puiaraha operates a drone during a flight surveillance exercise while children observe the technology and policing capability in action.

Image 5: Police Constable Christopher Walerefoa operates an FPV drone during a flight exercise as children gather to watch the demonstration.