National Security Strategy 2025-2029

Protect,
Progress,
and Promote

Contents

Abbreviations

CSOs	Civil Society Organisations
EEZ	Exclusive Economic Zone
FHRDC	Fiji Human Rights and Anti-Discrimination Commission
FNU	Fiji National University
FPF	Fiji Police Force
FPWP	Foreign Policy White Paper
GANHRI	Global Alliance of National Human Rights Institutions
HADR	Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief
MDVA	Ministry of Defence & Veterans Affairs
MESC	Maritime Essential Services Centre
MSG	Melanesian Spearhead Group
NDP	National Development Plan
NSC	National Security Council
NSDR	National Security and Defence Review
NSS	National Security Strategy
PIF	Pacific Islands Forum
RFMF	Republic of Fiji Military Forces
SAR	Search and Rescue
SOC	Senior Officials Committee on National Security
WPS	Women Peace & Security

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[Independent Review Lead, Mr James Sanday (middle) with the participants at the National Security Strategy (NSS) Initiation Workshop at Novotel Lami]

Message from the Minister for Defence & Veterans Affairs

The NSS is focused on protecting what we value, building on our strengths, and promoting our national interests both at home and abroad. Fiji is a proud democracy, where the rights of individuals are enshrined in our Constitution, and where peace, stability, and prosperity form the foundation of our society.

In an ever-evolving global landscape, Fiji must remain vigilant in safeguarding its sovereignty, security, and resilience. The NSS provides a comprehensive, forward-looking framework to address emerging challenges and ensure a secure future for all Fijians. It embraces a whole-of-nation approach, reinforcing our collective responsibility to protect our people, uphold our values, and advance our national interests.

Our understanding of national security extends beyond traditional defence concerns. Security is deeply connected to economic prosperity, sustainable resource management, social cohesion, environmental resilience, human rights, and democratic governance. These elements are at the heart of our national identity and are essential for fostering a stable and prosperous Fiji.

National security is not the sole responsibility of our military or law enforcement agencies. It requires active participation from all sectors—government, civil society, local communities, and regional and international partners. Through trust, cooperation, and transparency, we are committed to ensuring that our security institutions serve the people of Fiji with integrity and accountability.

The NSS is the result of extensive consultations, reflecting the voices of our citizens. These discussions highlighted a fundamental need for trust—trust that our government is committed to the well-being of all Fijians, trust that our Constitution protects the rights and freedoms of every individual, and trust that diverse perspectives are valued in shaping our security policies. The NSS affirms this commitment by promoting inclusivity, transparency, and accountability in all aspects of national security.

Recognising that security is inseparable from equality, the NSS also integrates the Women, Peace, and Security (WPS) agenda, ensuring the meaningful participation of women in all areas of national security. A truly resilient Fiji can only be achieved when all members of society contribute to, and benefit from, peace and stability.

While the global security environment presents challenges, it also offers opportunities for collaboration and innovation. We are strengthening partnerships with our Pacific neighbours, international allies, and industry leaders to bolster cybersecurity, enhance climate resilience, and fortify regional security efforts. Our vision extends beyond Fiji—we aim to contribute positively to the security and development of the wider Pacific region.

The NSS is more than a policy document—it is a call to action. Every Fijian has a role to play in building a safer, more resilient, and more prosperous nation. By working together, we can ensure that peace, stability, and prosperity are not only sustained but strengthened for future generations.

I encourage every Fijian—every government agency, community leader, and international partner—to join us in realising this vision. Together, we can build a stronger, safer, and more secure Fiji.
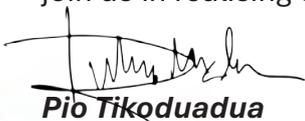
Pio Tikoduadua
Minister for Defence & Veterans Affairs
Suva, Fiji

Foreword

This NSS offers a comprehensive framework to guide Fiji's path towards a secure, stable and prosperous future. It lays out targeted actions that align with the nation's resources to achieve critical national objectives. To ensure accountability and foster ongoing progress, the NSS incorporates key performance indicators (KPIs) to monitor and evaluate the strategy's implementation over time.

The NSS is informed by the findings of the NSDR, which identified several pressing challenges for Fiji. These include a decline in public trust in state institutions—particularly within government and security agencies—as well as the escalating threat of illicit narcotics, which endangers public safety and community wellbeing. The NSDR also pointed to the pervasive rise in cybercrime affecting both the public and private sectors, along with urgent risks related to poverty, environmental degradation, and limited access to essential services. These issues demand immediate, coordinated action.

The NSS is one of three pivotal government strategies focusing on national security. The National Development Plan commits to safeguarding Fiji's sovereignty through measures that uphold territorial integrity, the rule of law, human rights, and democratic accountability. It also emphasises the importance of international trade and investment as foundations for peace, stability, and prosperity. Complementing this, the Foreign Policy White paper promotes the concept of an 'Ocean of Peace' to strengthen peace and security through cooperation across Fiji's neighbourhood and the broader Indo-Pacific region. Security and prosperity are central to Fiji's national interest, with the Whitepaper underscoring the necessity of a whole-of-nation approach to advance these goals.

With this collaborative approach, the NSS acknowledges the critical need for coordinated efforts across all sectors of government and civil society, including faith-based organisations, to address complex security risks. This strategy builds resilience at every level of society by leveraging the diverse strengths and expertise of stakeholders in achieving Fiji's long-term goal of a secure, stable, and prosperous Fiji. By fostering unity and collective action, the NSS aims to ensure that Fiji protects democratic principles and welfare of its citizens, builds from these foundations, and promotes the values extolled both within and beyond its borders.

Executive Summary

The NSS 2025–2029 provides a comprehensive roadmap for ensuring Fiji's security, stability, and prosperity in an increasingly complex global environment. Rooted in the findings of the NSDR, the NSS adopts a whole-of-nation approach, integrating the efforts of government agencies, civil society, and international partners to address evolving security challenges while promoting Fiji's national values and objectives.

Fiji's national security vision prioritises the protection of its sovereignty, economic resilience, social cohesion, and environmental sustainability. The NSS emphasises respect for human rights and democratic governance as foundational principles, ensuring that security policies align with Fiji's constitutional and international commitments.

Key global and regional trends, including geopolitical shifts, transnational organised crime, climate change, and cybersecurity threats, shape Fiji's security context. The NSS identifies these challenges as opportunities for strategic engagement and collective action, leveraging Fiji's leadership role in the Pacific to enhance regional stability and resilience.

The Role of the National Security Strategy

The NSS serves as Fiji's overarching framework for safeguarding its national interests, ensuring the safety of its people, and protecting its sovereignty in an increasingly complex security environment. It provides a clear vision and strategic direction for addressing current and emerging threats while strengthening Fiji's resilience against evolving challenges.

The NSS plays a multifaceted role, including:

1. **Defining National Security Priorities**

   The NSS establishes Fiji's core national security objectives, identifying the key threats and challenges that could undermine national stability, economic growth, and social cohesion. These threats include traditional security risks such as border security and law enforcement, as well as non-traditional challenges like climate change, cybersecurity threats, transnational crime, and economic vulnerabilities.

2. **Guiding Government Policy and Decision-Making**

   As a policy blueprint, the NSS informs government agencies, security institutions, and development partners about Fiji's security priorities. It ensures that security-related policies, laws, and resource allocations are aligned with national interests and that responses to emerging threats are proactively coordinated.

3. **Strengthening Whole-of-Government and Whole-of-Nation Approaches**

   Effective security cannot be achieved by any single entity. The NSS promotes inter-agency coordination across government ministries and enhances partnerships with civil society, the private sector, academia, and local communities. It fosters a Whole-of-Government and, ultimately, a Whole-of-Nation approach, ensuring that all sectors contribute to national security.

4. **Enhancing Civil-Military Relations**

   A key objective of the NSS is to reinforce democratic oversight of security institutions and ensure that civil-military relations remain balanced, transparent, and accountable. By strengthening governance and security sector reforms, the NSS supports the professionalisation of national security agencies, ensuring they operate in service of the Fijian people while upholding the country's democratic values.

5. **Ensuring Accountability and Continuous Improvement**

The NSS is not a static document—it is a living strategy that will be monitored, evaluated, and refined in response to evolving security dynamics. Through regular assessments and stakeholder consultations, Fiji's security framework will remain responsive, transparent, and accountable to the public and the government.

Strategic Priorities

Strengthening Security Sector Accountability. The NSS calls for robust civilian oversight, enhanced transparency, and clarity in the roles of the Republic of Fiji Military Forces (RFMF) and the Fiji Police Force (FPF) for adherence to democratic principles.

Addressing Emerging Threats. From climate change to cybersecurity threats, the NSS outlines proactive measures to adapt to a dynamic security landscape, including the integration of advanced technologies and the development of climate resilience strategies.

Promoting Regional and International Partnerships. Fiji will deepen its collaboration with Pacific neighbours and global allies to address shared challenges such as maritime security, disaster response, and transnational crime.

Building Social Cohesion. Recognising the legacy of social and political fractures, the NSS prioritises initiatives to rebuild community trust in security institutions and promote inclusive nation-building efforts.

Implementation Framework

The NSS introduces a detailed implementation plan guided by the "Ends, Ways, and Means" framework. This includes clearly defined goals, timelines, and key performance indicators to track progress. Resources will be reallocated to address imbalances, with a focus on strengthening maritime security, cybersecurity, and institutional coordination.

Conclusion

The NSS is Fiji's guiding framework for ensuring peace, stability, and resilience. By integrating comprehensive security measures with democratic governance, economic sustainability, and social cohesion, the NSS paves the way for a safer, stronger, and more prosperous Fiji.

The NSS 2025–2029 represents a bold step towards securing Fiji's future. It is people-focussed in that it reflects the collective aspirations of its people, the lessons from its past, and the demands of an interconnected world. By fostering resilience, trust, and innovation, Fiji aims to lead the Pacific region in advancing peace, stability, and shared prosperity.

Part One: Fiji and the World

Global Trends & Geopolitics

Fiji faces a complex and unstable global landscape marked by instability and widespread uncertainty. Across multiple regions, interconnected crisis pose significant threats to global stability. Russian military aggression in Ukraine including its threat of nuclear retaliation, the conflict in the Middle East, ongoing tensions in the Korean peninsula and the South China Sea, and disruptions to international shipping in the horn of Africa, have far reaching consequences across the globe. While Fiji is geographically distant from many of these conflict zones, its economy and security are still deeply connected to global events. Disruptions in trade routes, energy markets, and global financial systems can have direct impacts on Fiji's economic stability, food security, and supply chains.

For a small island nation like Fiji, intensifying geostrategic competition poses significant challenges towards progressing national security. Fiji's Foreign Policy White Paper (FPWP) notes that the strategic competition between the United States and China risks a region riven by division, insecurity, and instability. In this polarised environment, democracy and the rules-based international order that supports it, is facing unprecedented challenges. Fiji's highest strategic priority is to contribute to a stable Indo-Pacific region while navigating the challenges of a multipolar world. This aligns with Fiji's broader national security objectives, which include maintaining regional stability, enhancing diplomatic and security cooperation, and balancing relationships with major powers in a way that protects its sovereignty and national interests.

Our Immediate Region

We live in a diverse region. Members of the Pacific Islands Forum (PIF) have jurisdiction over 30 million square kilometres of land and sea.[1] There are over 10,000 islands in this broad region. These islands constitute the territories of twenty-six independent or quasi-independent states and dependent territories. Each territory or state reflects a cultural and ethnic identity of its own that combines to produce a highly complex region. The geographic and economic diversity of the region is matched by the diversity of its peoples and their culture. The main cultural grouping within the region is illustrated at Figure 1 below.

Fiji is a signatory to both the Biketawa and Boe Declarations of the PIF that recognise the centrality of regional security for national security. The FPWP notes that Fiji serves as the strategic hub and provides leadership for the Pacific Islands region within global forums. Fiji's stance and active engagement can help unify the Pacific Islands around shared priorities, balancing the benefits of external partnerships with the need to preserve regional sovereignty and identity. By fostering collective dialogue and strengthening regional integration - whether through trade agreements, joint infrastructure projects, or coordinated defence efforts - Fiji can help create a more resilient and self-reliant Pacific community.

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[1] Satish Chand. 2010. Shaping New Regionalism in the Pacific Islands: Back to the Future? ADB Working Paper No 61, October 2010
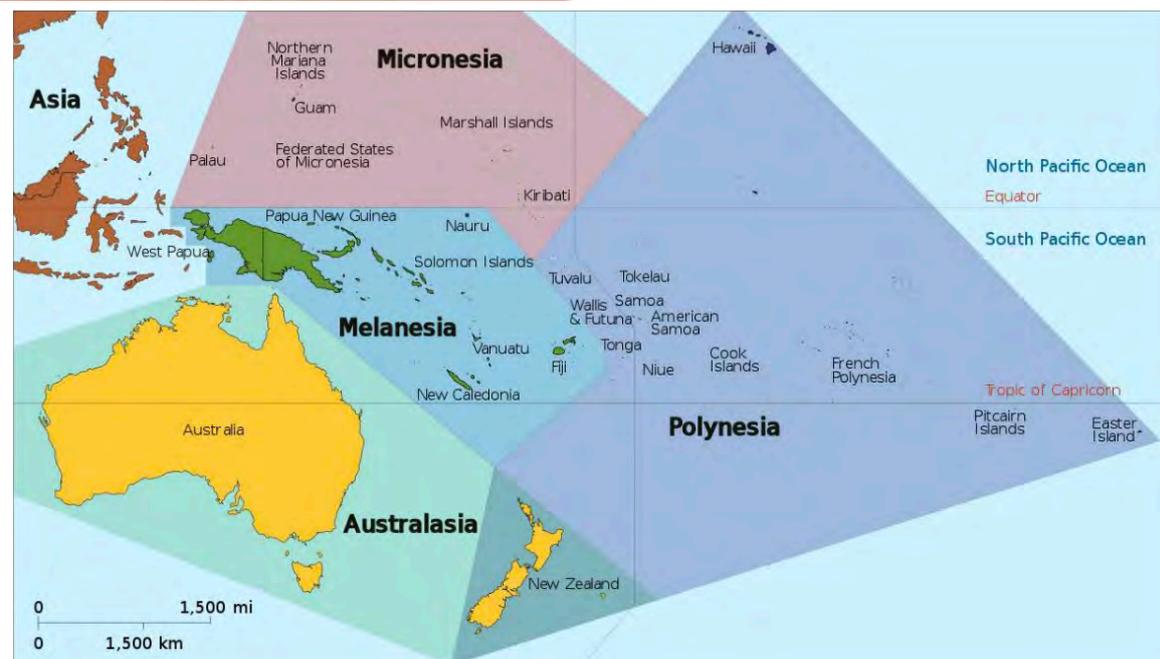
Source: Cultural groupings with the Pacific Islands. (n.d.). Pacific maps. Kaʻiwakīloumoku (Pacific Indigenous Institute). Retrieved December 18, 2024, from https://kaiwakiloumoku.ksbe.edu/pacific-maps

Figure 1. Fiji as the cultural and geographic hub of the island-Pacific

The Pacific region is not immune to instability. In the 1990s and 2000s, regional crises have occurred in the Bougainville and the Solomon Islands, leading to international support and assistance missions. Tension points in the region remain with issues around West Papua and debates surrounding political independence for Bougainville and New Caledonia. These tensions have ramifications for regional stability.

The National Security Context

Fiji's national security context is shaped by a combination of geopolitical, environmental, and socio-economic factors. These include:

Geopolitical Location: Fiji is centrally located in the South Pacific, making it strategically significant. Its longstanding relationships with regional powers, such as Australia, Japan, New Zealand, and the United States, as well as emerging powers like China and India, play a crucial role in its security dynamics.

Regional Stability: Fiji has a long and distinguished record in its contributions towards global peacekeeping operations and regional security missions. Its participation in organisations like the PIF and the Melanesian Spearhead Group (MSG) reflects its commitment to regional solidarity and security that entails peace, prosperity, and political stability.

Globalisation: Fiji is well-connected globally, with robust infrastructure—including airports, seaports, and the Southern Cross Cable—ensuring efficient transportation and communication links with the rest of the world. These international connections present both opportunities and risks to national security. Tourism, trade, e-commerce, and remittances all benefit from strong transportation and communications infrastructure, yet the same connectivity exposes Fiji to cybersecurity threats and the spread of illicit narcotics, which now reach even the most remote regions.

Climate Change and Environmental Security: As an island nation, Fiji is particularly vulnerable to the impacts of climate change, including rising sea levels and extreme weather events. This environmental vulnerability poses significant security challenges, affecting food and water security, as well as potential displacement of populations due to adverse climatic shocks.

Domestic Issues: Fiji has long grappled with political instability, military coups, and societal divisions, all pose significant challenges to national security. The government's ability to maintain internal stability, uphold democratic principles, and address socio-economic disparities is essential for fostering long-term peace and resilience. Recognising the need for national unity and reconciliation, the government has undertaken sustained efforts to heal divisions stemming from past conflicts. These initiatives aim to restore trust, promote social cohesion, and create an inclusive society where all communities feel valued and secure. The National Security and Defence Review (NSDR) identified an urgent need for a comprehensive and inclusive security framework that ensures civilian oversight and parliamentary accountability of security institutions. Strengthening governance structures and ensuring that security agencies remain transparent, professional, and responsive to democratic norms are key priorities.

A critical aspect of national security is building public trust in the military and police. This requires the professionalisation of security forces, enhanced community engagement, and strict adherence to human rights and the rule of law. Ensuring that security institutions operate with integrity, accountability, and in service of the Fijian people is fundamental to enhancing national stability and preventing future crises.

Transnational Threats: Fiji faces challenges from transnational crime, including drug trafficking and human trafficking, which require regional and international cooperation to effectively address.

Cybersecurity and Resilience: Fiji, along with all countries in the region, are grappling with the increased scale, sophistication and impact of cyber incidents and threats. This requires a whole-of-nation effort to address this cross-cutting issue.

Economic Resilience: Economic stability is a cornerstone of national security. Fiji relies heavily on tourism, which makes it susceptible to global economic fluctuations. Efforts to diversify the economy and improve resilience are vital for long-term security.

Military and Defence: Within the region, Fiji maintains a significantly sized military force. With a strength of almost 3,500, it is large relative to the population. The RFMF plays a crucial role in internal security and HADR. It has also made a lasting contribution to the promotion of peace across the globe through its continuous participation in international peacekeeping missions since 1978.

Overall, Fiji's national security context is complex and evolving, requiring a multifaceted approach that encompasses diplomacy, environmental resilience, domestic governance and collaboration with international partners.

Fiji's Strategic Personality

Fiji's strategic personality is influenced by its geographical location, historical background, cultural heritage and economic interests. As a nation, Fiji's personality is deeply rooted in its rich multicultural heritage deriving from its diverse population base. Its strategic personality is also rooted in its identity as a proud member of the Pacific Island family of nations where Fiji is the hub in terms of its geographic location and inter-connectivity. The latter is very much the product of the navigational voyages and migration patterns of the past. The cresting waves of the Pacific Ocean, have, for centuries connected Fiji to the rest of the islands of the Pacific. Throughout Micronesia, Melanesia and Polynesia there are commonalities in music, dance, storytelling, and general belief systems. These commonalities symbolise unity, resilience, adaptability and the timeless flow of our traditions that bind our communities together in a shared journey of exploration and discovery. Within the Pacific islands the spirit of mana

binds us all together. It underpins our linked partnership as a Pacific people and the mutual respect we have for each other.

At its core, Fiji's strategic personality is underpinned by a commitment to sovereignty, peace and stability. It is characterised by a pragmatic and forward-thinking approach to addressing both traditional and emerging security challenges, while also promoting regional cooperation and global engagement. In the context of the region, Fiji's strategic outlook is focussed on maintaining stability and promoting regional integration and cooperation through organisations such as the PIF and MSG. Additionally, Fiji has pursued a multilateral foreign policy approach, engaging with a diverse range of partners including traditional allies like Australia, Britain, New Zealand and the United States, as well as emerging powers like China and India.

As an independent sovereign nation, Fiji wishes to engage with the international community to pursue its interests and ensure its security and prosperity. Such a holistic approach ensures the country's resilience and sustainability in the face of evolving global challenges. By leveraging its strengths and values, Fiji can play a pivotal role in positively shaping the future of the Pacific region and beyond.

Developing a strategic personality that is uniquely Fijian yet resonates throughout the region involves several key elements:

- **Cultural Diplomacy.** Fiji's rich multicultural heritage, including its traditional ceremonies, dances and art forms, as well as sports, can be leveraged to build bridges with other countries in the region. Cultural exchange programs, festivals and artistic collaboration helps promote understanding and cooperation. Indeed, cultural diplomacy can play a vital role in strengthening relationships and foster a sense of shared identity within the region.

- **Soft Power Projection.** Through initiatives such as cultural exchanges, educational programs, sporting activities and humanitarian assistance, Fiji can enhance its soft power and influence in the region. By being seen as a reliable and benevolent actor, Fiji can strengthen its strategic position and influence regional dynamics.

- **Environmental Stewardship.** Fiji's natural beauty including its coral reefs and lush rainforests provides a platform for leadership in environmental conservation. By championing sustainable practices and advocating for climate action, Fiji can inspire other countries in the region to prioritise environmental protection.

- **Peacekeeping and Conflict Resolution.** By continuing to play an active role in maintaining peace and stability globally and within the region, can Fiji reinforce its reputation as a trusted partner in conflict resolution efforts.

- **Regional Integration.** Fiji can work towards fostering closer ties and cooperation among Pacific Island nations through regional organisations such as the PIF and MSG. By promoting dialogue and collaboration, Fiji can help to address common challenges and pursue shared goals (the proposed Ocean of Peace concept is a case in point).

- **Economic Development.** As a hub for trade and commerce in the South Pacific , Fiji is well placed to foster economic development and cooperation in the region. By actively promoting regional trade agreements, investing in infrastructure, supporting small businesses and entrepreneurs, leveraging its business acumen and prioritising sustainability, can Fiji play a pivotal role in driving economic development and cooperation within the region.

- **Good Governance and Democracy.** Upholding democratic principles, respecting human rights and promoting good governance are essential aspects of Fiji's strategic personality. By setting an example of transparency, accountability and inclusivity, Fiji can inspire trust and confidence among its regional neighbours. By actively promoting these values and engaging in collaborative initiatives, Fiji can continue to play a leading role in regional affairs and contribute to the collective security and prosperity of the region.

Photo supplied by Fiji Police Force.

Part Two: Fiji's National Security Policy

Fiji's Definition of National Security

National security is defined as:

..the pursuit of psychological and physical safety, which is the responsibility of the State, to prevent and respond to threats and risks to the well-being of its people and their way of life.[2]

In the Fiji context this means the absence of threats, whether real or perceived, to the core values of the people of Fiji. These values include a respect for human rights, a prosperous economy, a stable state, social cohesion, and a sustainable environment. National Security in Fiji is based on a people-centred approach, with the assumption that when the government prioritises the security and well-being of citizens, it fosters a safe, secure and prosperous populace, which, in turn, ensures the safety and security of the nation.

This definition of national security takes into account both traditional and non-traditional security threats as outlined in the expanded concept of security agreed by Pacific states in the 2018 *Boe Declaration on Regional Security*.[3]

The National Security Vision

The vision for the NSS is for all Fijians to live in peace and prosperity, assured that their rights are protected, and their communities are secure.

This vision underscores a commitment to:

Protection of Values – Ensuring the safety and preservation of values fundamental to the Fijian way of life, including respect for human rights, a prosperous economy, social harmony, environmental sustainability, and a stable democratic state.

Community Empowerment and Engagement – Encouraging active involvement from all sectors of society—communities, civil society, public and private sectors—for peace, prosperity, and social stability. This emphasises building trust, reinforcing the social contract, and fostering national unity across diverse cultural and religious communities.

Regional and International Collaboration – Strengthening Fiji's role within the Pacific region through partnerships with regional allies and international stakeholders, enhancing collective security, shared development, and resilience in areas such as cybersecurity, climate action, and economic growth.

Respect for Human Rights – Embedding human rights into every aspect of the national security framework to ensure the dignity and freedoms of all individuals are safeguarded, in alignment with Fiji's constitutional and international obligations. This will require programs aimed at mainstreaming gender equity and the rights of vulnerable populations.

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[2] NSDR page 14.

[3] The Boe Declaration affirmed an expanded concept of security which addresses the wide range of security issues in the region, both traditional and non-traditional, with an increasing emphasis on:

a. Human Security, including humanitarian assistance, to protect the rights, health and prosperity of Pacific people;

b. Environmental and resource security;

c. Transnational crime; and

d. Cybersecurity, to maximise protections and opportunities for Pacific infrastructure and peoples in the digital age.

Adaptability to Emerging Challenges - Fiji's security infrastructure must be proactive, agile, and equipped to address a broad spectrum of evolving threats. These range from natural disasters and economic disruptions to cybersecurity threats and geopolitical tensions. Emphasising innovation and the integration of cutting-edge technologies, Fiji can build a resilient security framework that anticipates challenges and adapts effectively to a rapidly changing landscape.

Strengthening Security Sector Accountability - A robust and accountable security sector is vital to fostering public trust and ensuring operational effectiveness. This requires enhanced civilian oversight, rigorous parliamentary scrutiny, and a whole-of-nation approach to improving national security.

National Security Interests

Fiji's national security interests include:

- Security of Fiji from the threat of an attack from external and internal sources.

- Freedom to make independent decision on matters affecting the national well-being, and exercise sovereign authority over its terrestrial, maritime and air space.

- Avoidance of global conflict and the promotion of international efforts to promote global and regional peace and stability.

- Respect for the sovereignty and rights of all nations to live in peace.

- Secure lines of communications in our proximate area.

- Freedom of navigation in international waters.

- Growth in the world economy and stability of the international financial system.

- Protection of Fiji's resource environment and the promotion of ecologically/environmentally sustainable development.

- A favourable international image.

- National data sovereignty and robust protection measures; and,

- A just, harmonious and cohesive society.

National Security Objectives

Fiji's national objectives are defined as follows:

- To preserve Fiji's national sovereignty, security and political independence in the international political system.

- Within available resources, to contribute to the preservation of the rules-based order and its vital institutions, through active participation in global forums including international and regional peacekeeping missions.

- To foster and maintain peace, political stability, and economic prosperity within our immediate region through diplomacy, trade, and defence cooperation where appropriate.

- To preserve and respect the rule of law, both domestic and international.

- To safeguard Fiji's resource environment and promote ecologically sustainable development.

- To promote economic growth, political stability, and social cohesion within Fiji.

Fiji's National Security Aims

Fiji's NSS is built on three fundamental aims to promote the nation's well-being and advance its long-term interests by undertaking the following:

1. **Protect** – Safeguard Fiji's people, values, sovereignty, and assets, both tangible and intangible, against internal and external threats.

2. **Progress** – Foster national development, economic prosperity, and social stability, ensuring a secure and resilient future for all Fijians.

3. **Promote** – Contribute to regional stability and global security, reinforcing Fiji's role as a responsible and proactive member of the international community.

Fiji's Approach to National Security

Achieving Fiji's three national security aims requires a whole-of-nation effort, integrating robust domestic policies, strategic diplomacy, and strong partnerships at community, regional, and international levels. At the heart of Fiji's security approach is a firm commitment to sovereignty—ensuring that national interests remain at the forefront of security decisions. This aligns with the FPWP and the National Development Plan (NDP). Both documents provide a framework for safeguarding Fiji's security while actively contributing to regional and global peace.

Fiji must shape its security strategy on its own terms, reflecting its unique history, cultural identity, and strategic position. By adopting a context-driven approach, Fiji can effectively navigate complex global dynamics, protect its values and interests, and enhance its resilience in an evolving security landscape.

Constructive Engagement

Fiji will adopt national security policy of 'Constructive Engagement'. Underpinning this policy is the idea that Fiji must find its security in collaboration with others, through collective action and through engagement of all sectors of the Fiji community. It is characterised by a pragmatic approach to addressing both traditional and emerging security challenges, while also promoting regional cooperation and global engagement.

At the foreign policy level, it is premised on the idea Fiji wishes to have constructive relations with all countries and that Fiji must have a global outlook that takes account of the realities of changing geopolitical environment. Geopolitical competition will be managed by adopting a nuanced and pragmatic approach. Moreover, that Fiji's values and national interests will be at the core of its foreign and security policy choices, and that Fiji will engage based on what is in Fiji's best national interest are on each issue whilst being mindful of the values and expectations of the Fijian community.

At the domestic level, 'constructive engagement' reflects the Government's commitment to transparency and accountability to all segments of the Fijian community. Efforts must be 'people centred' and focused on addressing the needs and challenges of the Fijian people. Fiji's people and community are its greatest strength. The active participation and engagement of the community will be essential to taking a whole of nation approach to addressing Fiji's national security challenges.

Pragmatism

Underlying this approach is a recognition that as a small country with limited resources Fiji will need to be pragmatic in its approach. National security initiatives will be based on a pragmatic assessment of Fiji's capabilities, resources and circumstances and tailored to our unique context. Given Fiji's limitations in size and national resources, Fiji must find its security in cooperation with others.

Regionalism

Supporting Pacific responses to regional challenges will be key to addressing many of the shared security issues Fiji faces. Pacific issues will require Pacific solution. As such, Fiji will leverage its position as a 'regional strategic hub' for the benefit of its people and of the broader region. This approach aligns with Fiji's commitment under the 2050 Strategy for the Blue Pacific Continent and Boe Declaration to pursue collective efforts through the Pacific regional security arrangements to address emerging security challenges. The constructive engagement policy ultimately aligns with Fiji's strategic personality by reflecting Fiji's global outlook, regionalism, and people centred approach.

Photo supplied by the Fiji Government.

Part Three: Security Threats & Challenges

Fiji's approach to national security is shaped by domestic, regional, and global challenges. This section identifies the key threats to Fiji's security environment, helping to establish priorities and processes for:

1. **Protecting** the people of Fiji and their values.

2. **Progressing** national security to ensure stability and resilience.

3. **Promoting** peace and security within Fiji and beyond its borders.

These priorities will guide national security efforts over the next four years.

While Fiji adopts a comprehensive definition of national security, many challenges to Fijians' well-being and prosperity require responses beyond the security sector. Key issues such as health risks, food and water security, energy supply, and climate resilience fall primarily within the NDP, which provides a framework for sustainable development. As such, the NSS focuses on core national security threats, ensuring a targeted approach that complements broader development efforts.

Transnational Crime

Fiji's position in the South Pacific exposes it to various forms of transnational crime, including the smuggling of illicit goods, narcotics, human trafficking, illegal fishing, piracy, and environmental crimes.

Illicit narcotics and drug trafficking - Fiji is emerging as a regional hub for drug trafficking and a base for transnational organised crime (UNDOC, 2024). Organised criminal networks use Fiji primarily as a corridor to transport illicit narcotics from Southeast Asia and South America into high-demand markets like Australia and New Zealand, where higher incomes drive the drug trade. Fiji's weak border controls have facilitated the entry of illegal drugs, while the ongoing demand for narcotics threatens to further destabilise the nation's security infrastructure. Fiji is now increasingly viewed as a destination for organised crime, no longer serving merely as a transit point for illicit drugs.

Illicit narcotics pose a significant risk to Fiji's national security. The growing consumption of illegal drugs within communities not only fuel other crimes but also contributes to social instability and creates conditions for the spread of communicable diseases like HIV. The impact of these crime and health challenges puts additional strain on policing and public services. Of particular concern is the involvement of youth and vulnerable groups in narcotics, highlighting the urgent need for preventative measures. Leveraging community organisations, Faith-based organisations and youth support groups will be important in mitigating social harm, helping individuals transition out of drug use, and supporting community-wide prevention efforts.

Efforts to intercept illicit goods are hampered by Fiji's extensive archipelago and stretched border security agencies. Strengthening border security in Fiji necessitates enhanced customs and immigration processes, advanced surveillance and detection technologies at entry points, and collaborative efforts with neighbouring countries to effectively monitor and control its borders.
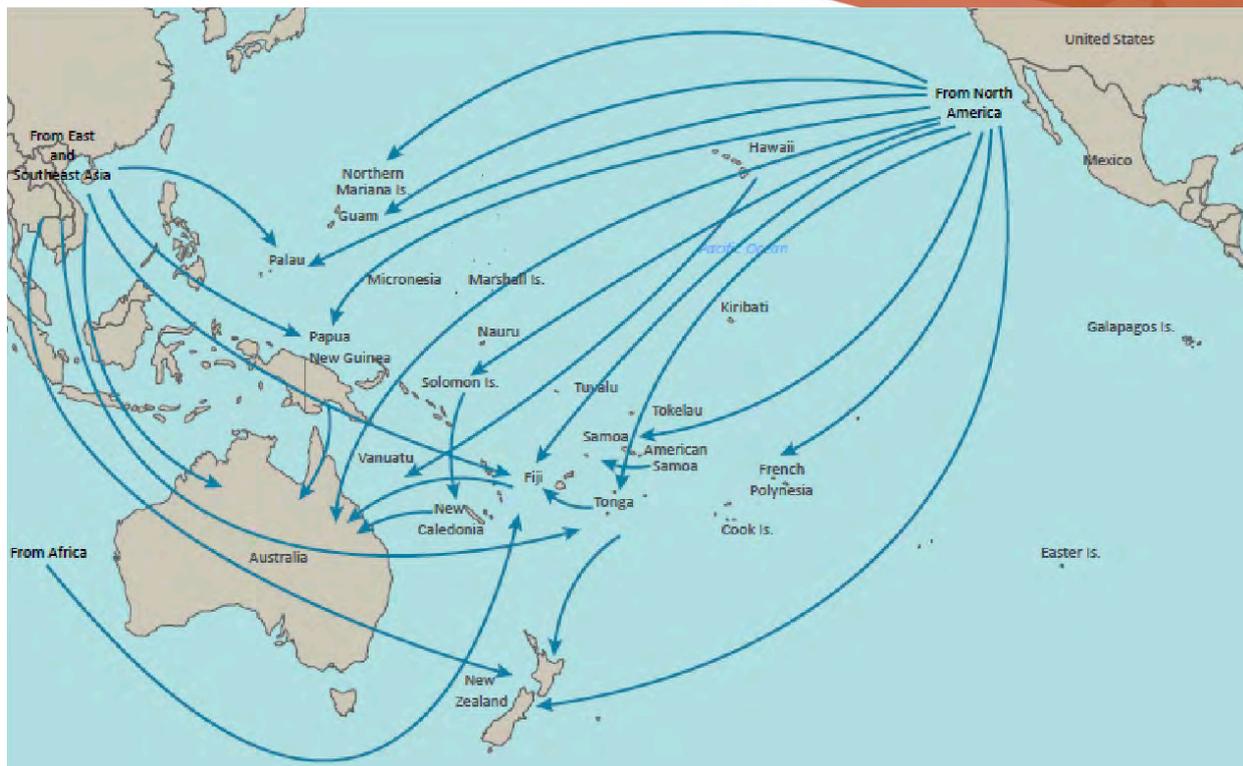
Figure 2. Trafficking routes for methamphetamine through the Pacific Islands

Human trafficking and illegal migration – Migration issues are also on the rise with asylum seeker, refugees and illegal immigrants arriving from the Middle East and South Asia. Fiji's border, immigration, and customs officials will require additional resources to effectively monitor and detect these threats. A lack of intelligence sharing on movement patterns among Fiji's government agencies and with regional and international partners further complicates border security.

Arms trafficking - The risk of weapons and ammunition trafficking into Fiji is also significant. International criminal syndicates involved in drug and human trafficking also engage in money laundering and often bring in weapons to protect their operations. Although weapons smuggling has yet to be detected in Fiji, the potential threat remains high.

Cybersecurity Threats

Fiji has experienced cyber-attacks that severely impacted networks, systems and data, highlighting a significant vulnerability. While the potential for future threats remains high, the State's capacity to prepare for and respond to these threats is currently in its infancy stages. In addition to the Cybersecurity Maturity Model Assessment for States that has been completed, Government is developing the National Cybersecurity Strategy which will provide a comprehensive overview of cyber threats and Fiji's plan to address these. Fiji has also been actively contributing to global and regional cyber forums as we build our cybersecurity posture.

Like other countries, Fiji remains vulnerable to cybersecurity threats against government, critical infrastructure and critical information infrastructure and the private sector. Given the critical importance of preparing for, mitigating, responding to and recovering from cyber threats and vulnerabilities, Fiji is establishing the National Computer Emergency Response Team (Fiji CERT) as Fiji's digital first responders to national cyber crises.

Cybercrime will continue to impact individuals and communities in Fiji. Cybercriminal tactics are evolving, employing increasingly innovative methods to carry out financial fraud, ransomware attacks, identity and data theft, and online scams. These types of attacks can have severe damage to affected entities; often these attacks are opportunistic, occurring anytime and anywhere. Although these types of crime are not new, the methods used are becoming more sophisticated and malicious.

Despite its mandate for national defence against external threats, the RFMF is not currently involved in defending against cyber-attacks targeting defence and national security infrastructure. Fiji will explore options to integrate cybersecurity as an operational domain of the RFMF or other security agencies. This will allow for the development of specialised capabilities for collaboration with other agencies in this domain.

Emerging Technologies

The rise of emerging technologies has created new avenues for cybercrime, with international criminal organisations supplying tools to commit these crimes to a global market. This makes it difficult to trace the origin of these cyber activities. Malicious use of new and emerging technologies such as Artificial Intelligence for misinformation and disinformation poses a threat, with potential to undermine the credibility of national leaders and erode public trust in governance structures.

Submarine Communication Cables

Fiji serves as a critical hub for the trans-Pacific undersea cable network, providing essential connectivity between Fiji, other Pacific nations, and global communications infrastructure. This network is a cornerstone of Fiji's digital economy, national security, and economic resilience, facilitating everything from financial transactions to emergency communications.

Given its strategic importance, protecting these cables from cyber threats, physical damage, and sabotage is a national priority. Any disruption could severely impact connectivity, commerce, governance, and emergency response capabilities. Ensuring the security, redundancy, and resilience of this infrastructure is essential to safeguarding Fiji's digital future.

Challenges

Fiji's responses to cybersecurity threats are challenged by low cybersecurity awareness within the community and economy. Poor cyber hygiene practices when using technology and platforms means sensitive personal and business information and data could be exploited by cybercriminals and malicious cyber actors.

Government, critical infrastructure and critical information infrastructure are constantly needing to adapt to the evolving threat environment and invest in capabilities that protect, deter, mitigate, manage and respond to cyber-attacks.

Another key challenge is a small cyber workforce and not enough technical expertise needed to boost cybersecurity and resilience. This is further exacerbated by the emigration of top cyber professionals and specialists to work abroad.

The private sector is on the frontlines of the technology revolution, making international and industry partnerships essential to strengthening Fiji and the region's cybersecurity resilience. By working closely with the private sector, exchanging technical expertise, and sharing critical information with regional

and international partners, Fiji can significantly bolster its cybersecurity capabilities. A collaborative approach with multi stakeholders will help ensure Fiji is prepared to face of growing cybersecurity threats.

The Fiji Government's vision and approach for uplifting Fiji's cybersecurity and resilience will be set out in the imminent National Cybersecurity Strategy and Action Plan.

Climate Change and Environmental Security

Climate change is the greatest threat facing Fiji and the broader Pacific region. It poses an existential challenge, as rising sea levels, saltwater intrusion, increasingly severe cyclones, flooding, and prolonged droughts devastate ecosystems, disrupt livelihoods, and displace communities. These environmental crises have already resulted in loss of life, economic instability, and forced migration within Fiji and across the region.

The impacts of climate change are felt most acutely by the most vulnerable, particularly women, children, persons with disabilities, and rural communities. Women and girls face heightened risks in the aftermath of disasters, including loss of safety, exposure to gender-based violence, and restricted access to essential services. Displacement exacerbates existing inequalities, deepening socio-economic marginalisation and increasing the burden on already strained resources.

Photo supplied by Fiji Government

Fiji recognises that climate security is national security. Addressing this crisis requires a comprehensive, multi-sectoral response that includes:

- Strengthening climate resilience through sustainable infrastructure, early warning systems, and adaptive land-use policies.

- Enhancing disaster preparedness and response, including gender-responsive evacuation planning and targeted support for at-risk groups.

- Investing in nature-based solutions, such as mangrove restoration and reforestation, to mitigate coastal erosion and flood risks.

- Advocating for international climate justice, ensuring that Fiji and other Pacific nations receive adequate financing and technical support to combat climate-induced threats.

- Developing long-term strategies for climate-induced displacement, including relocation planning, land tenure security, and social integration programs.

Fiji remains committed to leading global and regional climate action, recognising that securing the environment is fundamental to ensuring national and human security for future generations.

Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Response

Fiji is vulnerable to climatic events due to both the increase in frequency of extreme weather events and the vulnerability of local and isolated communities form extreme weather events. The increasing frequency and intensity of climatic events, including tropical cyclones and floods, place growing demands on Fiji's Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief (HADR) operations. While these climate events have immediate humanitarian costs, they also create long-term displacement risks that threaten social cohesion. Land holds profound cultural significance for Pacific peoples, and the loss of land and home deeply affects social bonds and cultural identity. Environmental disasters also disproportionately impact women and children which can have longlasting social impacts.

Fiji has been successful in responding to natural disasters as they occur but has been less effective in proactively building resilience and preparedness. Civilian-led agencies like the National Disaster Management Office (NDMO) serve as primary coordinators of disaster response, while security forces, especially the RFMF, play a critical role in providing rapid response capabilities in logistics, materials, and personnel.

Strengthening trust and collaboration between civil society organisations (CSOs) and the military is essential to improve national disaster management capacity. For the RFMF to work effectively with CSOs and the NDMO, it must deepen its understanding of democratic accountability processes and recognise that community leadership and social cohesion are crucial for building resilience against climate change impacts.

Photo supplied by Republic of Fiji Military Forces.

Illegal Unreported and Unregulated Fishing

Illegal, Unreported, and Unregulated (IUU) fishing poses a significant threat to Fiji's economy, food security, and environmental sustainability. It contributes to overfishing, depleting marine resources that are vital for coastal communities, local fisheries, and the broader economy.

Fiji's fisheries sector plays a critical role in national food security, providing nutrition and livelihoods for many Fijians, particularly in coastal and island communities. Additionally, commercial fishing is a key source of domestic revenue, supporting employment and government income. However, IUU fishing undermines sustainable fisheries management, reducing fish stocks, threatening marine biodiversity, and eroding economic benefits for both artisanal and commercial fishers.

To combat IUU fishing, Fiji is committed to:

- Strengthening maritime surveillance and enforcement through coastal patrols, aerial monitoring, and satellite tracking technologies.

- Enhancing regional and international cooperation to share intelligence, enforce regulations, and prosecute offenders.

- Implementing stricter licensing and reporting requirements for both domestic and foreign fishing vessels.

- Promoting sustainable fishing practices and supporting community-based marine conservation initiatives.

- Advocating for stronger global action against IUU fishing through diplomatic engagement and participation in international fisheries agreements.

By taking a multi-faceted approach, Fiji aims to protect its marine resources, uphold sustainable fisheries management, and secure the economic and food security interests of its people.

Deep Sea Mining

Deep-sea mining offers both economic opportunities and environmental risks for Fiji. The extraction of minerals like cobalt, nickel, and rare earth elements from the seabed has the potential to drive economic growth, but it also raises serious concerns regarding environmental degradation, including biodiversity loss and habitat destruction. The release of sediment plumes could damage marine ecosystems, which are crucial for food security and livelihoods in Fiji's coastal communities.

Fiji advocates for a precautionary approach to deep-sea mining, emphasising environmental protection and regulatory oversight. Key strategies include:

- Conducting thorough environmental impact assessments before any mining operations.

- Strengthening national and regional regulations to ensure that mining activities are sustainable and accountable.

- Exploring alternative economic opportunities to reduce reliance on deep-sea mining, such as blue economy initiatives and ecotourism.

- Prioritising marine conservation and ensuring that deep-sea mining does not harm Fiji's marine biodiversity or the livelihoods of its people.

Fiji calls for international collaboration to establish strong regulations governing deep-sea mining, ensuring that economic benefits do not come at the cost of the environment.

Social Fracturing and Trust in Government

Social Cohesion

The (NSDR) identifies social cohesion as one of Fiji's most pressing security challenges and a critical development priority. Fiji's social fabric remains fragile, with structural vulnerabilities that heighten the risk of political instability. Historical divisions—rooted in ethnicity, religion, regional disparities, land ownership, and economic opportunities—can be traced back to the colonial era, when the introduction of indentured labour and the fusion of diverse social structures created deep-seated societal fractures. These long-standing cleavages have fuelled grievances, competing narratives and political divisions, at times leading to radicalisation and unrest.

This persistent social fragmentation has strained inter-ethnic relations, contributed to political instability, and, in some cases, was used to justify military coups and civil disturbances. Given Fiji's history, achieving long-term stability and security requires national unity built on inclusive governance, equal economic opportunities, and strengthened civic trust.

A whole-of-nation approach is essential to enhancing social cohesion as a foundation for national security. This includes:

- Promoting civic engagement and fostering inclusive national identity beyond ethnic lines.

- Ensuring democratic accountability and civilian control of security forces to prevent political manipulation.

- Addressing socio-economic disparities to reduce grievances that can fuel instability.

- Strengthening inter-community dialogue to build trust, reconciliation, and long-term peace.

Without social cohesion, political stability remains fragile, making Fiji vulnerable to further disruptions and divisions. A unified and inclusive society is essential for sustainable peace, security, and democratic resilience.

Trust in Government

The NSDR identifies a deficit in public trust as a fundamental challenge to Fiji's democratic resilience and national security. Community confidence in government institutions and security agencies has been eroded due to concerns about human rights, civil liberties, corruption and institutional accountability. Restoring this trust is essential to fostering a whole-of-nation commitment to security and governance.

A lack of trust in government institutions undermines civic engagement, weakens public confidence in democracy, and creates conditions for political instability. If left unaddressed, this trust deficit could further erode social cohesion and diminish public cooperation with law enforcement and security agencies, ultimately weakening national security.

To rebuild trust, the government and security sector must:

- Demonstrate transparency and accountability in decision-making.
- Uphold human rights and civil liberties to ensure security forces operate within democratic principles.
- Engage communities in security discussions to foster inclusivity and responsiveness.
- Strengthen parliamentary and civilian oversight of security agencies to reinforce public confidence.

Restoring trust in government is an immediate priority for enhancing Fiji's national security, democratic stability, and social cohesion. Without public confidence in institutions, meaningful progress in security reforms will remain limited.

Economic Security

Access to essential resources such as food, water, energy, wage employment, and public services is becoming an increasingly significant challenge in Fiji, creating conditions conducive to broader security risks. These challenges are exacerbated by a growing youth population, rising unemployment, and expanding state subsidies in areas like transport, education, and welfare. Additionally, the country faces a loss of skilled labour due to emigration, further undermining economic stability. Many poverty-affected communities also suffer from inadequate housing security, with large numbers living in informal settlements that lack secure land tenure, safe water, and sanitation services.

The scale of welfare dependency is also significant, with nearly 100,000 people—approximately 10% of the population—relying on government assistance. In contrast, only about 20,000 people (roughly 2% of the population) contribute to the national income tax base. Moreover, the size of the civil service, which employs about 33,000 people (7% of the workforce), places additional strain on public finances. This growing fiscal pressure is compounded by a narrow economic base, as nearly 40% of Fiji's GDP is derived from tourism alone, making the economy highly vulnerable to external shocks.

Fiji is also experiencing high levels of net emigration, particularly among skilled workers who seek better opportunities abroad. Although youth unemployment has declined from its peak during the COVID-19

pandemic, the 2023 rate of 15.2% remains high and surpasses that of regional peers. This rising youth bulge, combined with limited economic opportunities, exacerbates security risks. The impact on law and order is most acutely felt in the rising prevalence of illicit narcotics use and the associated increase in crime. The root causes of these issues are complex, extending beyond economic limitations to include social, cultural, and political factors.

While addressing the drivers of economic insecurity does not fall solely within the remit of the security sector, the sector often serves as the first line of response to the broader effects of these challenges. This underscores the need for coordinated whole-of-government efforts to address the interlinked economic, social, environmental, and human rights issues that shape national security. Effective responses require integrating economic resilience, social stability, and human security into the broader security framework to mitigate the long-term risks associated with economic insecurity.

Photo supplied by Fiji Ports Terminal Ltd.

Economic Coercion

Maintaining Fiji's sovereignty in an evolving global landscape requires building resilience against economic coercion. As highlighted in Fiji's NDP, the shifting geopolitical order is mirrored by transformations in the international economic system. The rise of protectionism, coupled with the increasing integration of economic policy and national security, poses new challenges for Fiji's economic independence and strategic decision-making.

Economic coercion can take various forms, including:

- Trade restrictions and sanctions, which may limit Fiji's access to key markets or essential goods.

- Targeted global movements and boycotts, particularly in sectors such as tourism and exports, which are vital to Fiji's economy.

- Foreign investment pressures, where economic dependencies could be leveraged to influence national policies.

To safeguard its economic sovereignty, Fiji must:

- Diversify its economic partnerships to reduce dependence on any single nation or market.

- Strengthen domestic industries to enhance self-sufficiency and economic resilience.

- Align trade and investment policies with national security priorities to mitigate external economic   pressures.

- Engage in regional and international economic diplomacy to uphold a rules-based trading system that protects Fiji's interests.

Navigating this increasingly complex global economic order will require Fiji to integrate economic resilience into its national security and foreign policy strategies, ensuring that its economic decisions remain free from undue external influence.

Critical Infrastructure and Critical Information Infrastructure

Fiji's critical infrastructure—including transportation networks, energy grids, water supply systems, telecommunications, and health services—is essential to national security, economic stability, and public well-being. Fiji's critical information infrastructure, the ICT/telecommunications infrastructure, networks, assets and systems that enable critical infrastructure, must be defined and protected from threats. Disruptions, whether from natural disasters, cyber-attacks, or sabotage, have severe social and economic consequences.

Key vulnerabilities include:

- Energy Security – Fiji's dependence on imported fuel makes its energy sector vulnerable to global supply chain disruptions and price volatility. Expanding renewable energy sources and enhancing energy storage capacity are vital to reducing this risk.

- Water and Food Security – Climate change-induced droughts, floods, and saltwater intrusion threaten Fiji's freshwater resources and agricultural production, impacting livelihoods and food availability.

- Transportation and Logistics – Ports, airports, and roads are critical to Fiji's economy, particularly for trade and tourism. Strengthening these assets against climate hazards, cyber threats, and geopolitical risks is crucial.

- Critical Information Infrastructure – Given Fiji's progression into a digital economy and Fijians' increased reliance on secure digital technologies, the integrity of Fiji's ICT and telecommunications environment and critical information infrastructure, including subsea

cables, networks and government data infrastructure, must be safeguarded against cyber threats

- Health Infrastructure – A resilient healthcare system is essential to managing pandemics, biosecurity threats, and emergency medical responses. Ensuring supply chain security for pharmaceuticals and medical equipment is a priority.

To safeguard these essential systems, Fiji will:

- Develop a National Cybersecurity Strategy and Action Plan.

- Implement risk assessment frameworks to identify vulnerabilities and strengthen resilience.

- Invest in climate-resilient infrastructure to withstand extreme weather events.

- Protect critical information infrastructure and critical infrastructure from cyber incidents by owners and operators adopting proactive cybersecurity and resilience measures.

- Establish public-private partnerships to improve infrastructure security and disaster response capabilities.

- Develop regional cooperation strategies to mitigate supply chain risks and strengthen energy and food security.

By prioritising critical infrastructure and critical information infrastructure resilience, Fiji can ensure national security, economic continuity, and long-term stability in the face of evolving threats.

Photo supplied by Fiji Road Authority

Military Intervention in Politics

Military interventions in politics have had significant negative impacts on Fiji, affecting its democratic governance, social cohesion, and international relations. More specifically, these negative effects include:

- **Erosion of Democratic Institutions.** Military intervention has weakened democratic institutions and processes, such as the independence of the judiciary, freedom of the press, and electoral integrity.

- **Political and Economic Instability.** Military interventions have often led to cycles of political instability, with frequent changes in government disrupting long-term planning and reform. This instability hampers efforts to address socio-economic issues effectively and undermines investor confidence, slowing economic growth and development.

- **Human Rights Concerns.** Military rule is often accompanied by restrictions on civil liberties, including limits on freedom of speech, assembly, and press freedom. In Fiji, military interventions have frequently led to crackdowns on political opponents, activists, and media, which creates a climate of fear and discourages civic participation.

- **Social Fracturing and Reduced Trust.** Military intervention in politics has deepened ethnic and social divides. In Fiji, this is particularly significant, as past interventions have often been perceived as favouring one ethnic group or political faction over others, leading to mistrust between communities and weakening social cohesion. This fracturing undermines efforts toward inclusive nation-building and mutual respect among Fijians.

- **Impact on the Economy.** Political instability from military intervention harms Fiji's economy by deterring foreign investment and disrupting tourism, a major economic sector. Additionally, militarised governance in Fiji has diverted resources from essential social services, such as health and education, toward defence and security, impacting the broader population's well-being.

- **Strained International Relations.** Fiji's military interventions have often led to diplomatic isolation, with other nations and international organisations condemning these actions, sometimes leading to sanctions or suspension of aid and support. For instance, Fiji's membership in organisations like the Commonwealth and the PIF has been affected by these interventions, reducing its influence and collaborative opportunities in the region.

These issues highlight the complex and damaging consequences of military intervention in politics. Establishing robust civilian oversight mechanisms, encouraging transparency, and focusing on a professionalisation agenda for the RFMF, are essential steps to ensuring a stable and democratic future for Fiji. More importantly, they are essential for regaining public trust in the security forces.

Part Four: The National Security Architecture

To achieve the NSS desired end state Fiji needs a coordinated and collaborative security sector with robust coordination and accountability mechanisms. Government agencies and the security forces require clear roles and responsibilities to perform effectively. Confusion over roles and legal mandates undermines effective civil-military relations. Resource prioritisation, operational coordination, and performance metrics also require clear lines of responsibility. Integrating security efforts across government is an immediate priority to lift the performance of the security sector as a whole.

The following section outlines the key roles and functions of agencies in Fiji's National Security Sector.

National Security Council

The highest responsibility for the security of Fiji rests with the Government, led by the Prime Minister and Cabinet. Fiji's National Security Council (NSC) is the peak decisionmaking body on national security issues. Select Cabinet members will sit on the NSC supported by a Secretariat within MDVA and advised by relevant security officials and experts.

In line with their constitutional duties, Commander of the RFMF and Commissioner of Police will participate as advisers to the NSC on military and policing matters in a nonvoting capacity.

The NSC will consider matters of the highest priority and strategic important including:

- Decisions on national security and foreign policy priorities and strategies;
- Fiji's intelligence priorities;
- Introduction and reform of national security legislation;
- Deployment of the disciplined forces domestically and overseas;
- Entering into international agreements and treaties;
- Crisis response; and
- Major capability acquisitions and investments in the national security sector.

Senior Officials Committee on National Security

The NSC will be supported by a Senior Officials Committee on National Security (SOC). SOC will comprise the Permanent Secretaries of each Minister on the NSC plus the Commissioner of Police and the Commander of the RFMF.

The SOC will serve as the primary forum for providing coordinated advice from the civil service and disciplined forces to Government on National Security and Foreign Policy matters. SOC is responsible for coordinating Fiji Government agency information and providing consolidated advice to Government. The SOC will serve as the central coordination mechanism for national security issues across government and for implementing decisions by the NSC, including implementation of the NSS and FPWP.

National Security Council Secretariat

The NSC and SOC will be supported by a Secretariat based in MDVA.
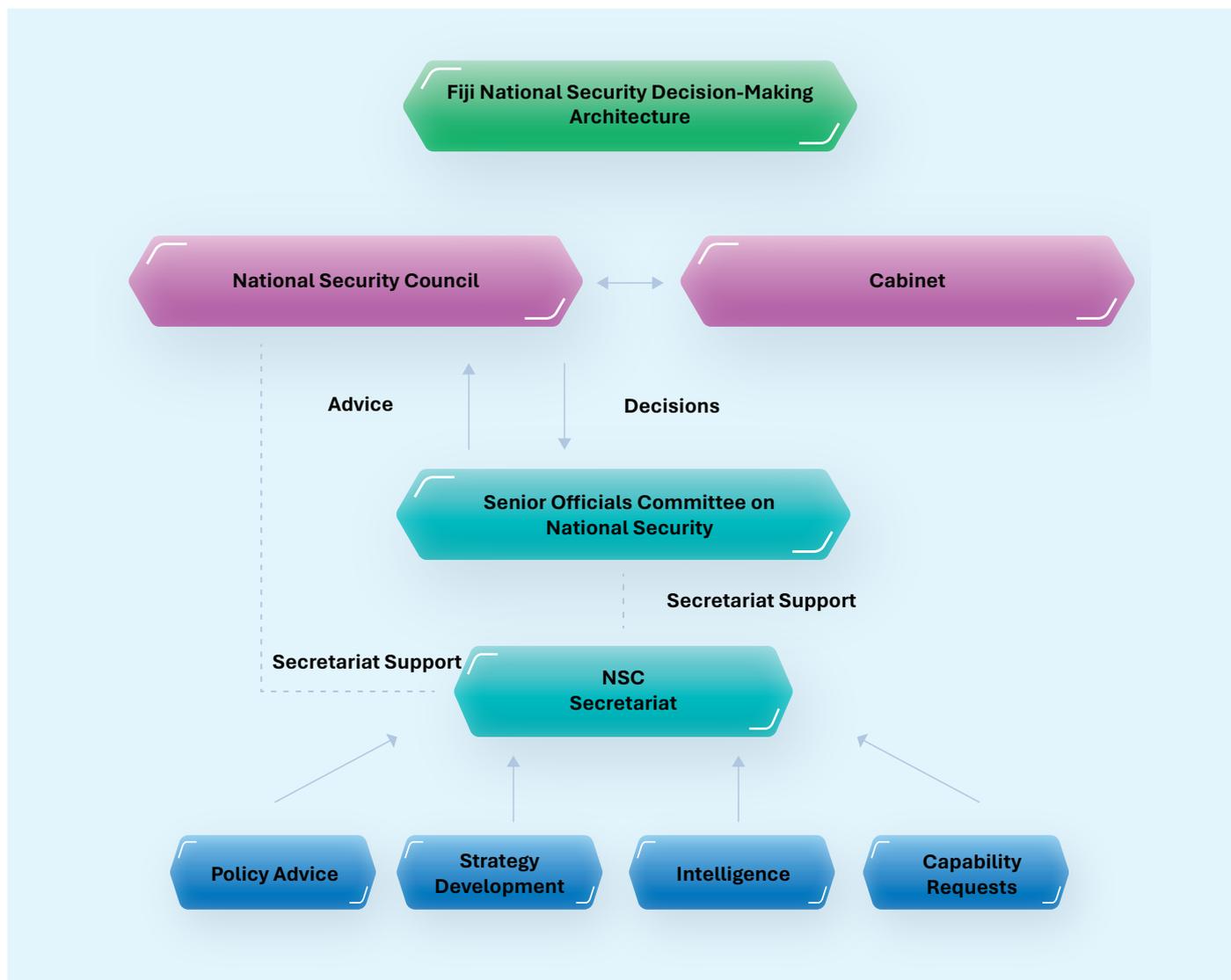
Figure 3. National Security Decision Making Architecture

Central Security Agencies

Robust well-resourced civil agencies are critical to ensuring Government receives comprehensive and coordinated national security advice and implementation of national security priorities. Operational excellence in the contemporary security environment requires proactive strategic and operational leadership from the civil service. The relevant Ministries have a critical role in ensuring the security forces have the appropriate Ministerial and civilian direction to engage all arms of government at both the strategic and operational levels.

The central security agencies in Fiji as at June 2025 are:[5]

- **Ministry of Defence and Veterans Affairs:** responsible for policy advice on defence and security matters.

- **Ministry of Policing:** responsible for policy advice on policing and crime.

- **Ministry of Foreign Affairs:** responsible for Fiji's foreign policy and international relationships.

- **Ministry of Immigration:** responsible for border control and immigration matters.

- **Ministry of Finance:** responsible for funding of national security sector and initiatives.

Supporting Agencies

Advancing Fiji's national security requires a whole-of-government approach given the interconnected nature of modern security threats. Agencies supporting the central security agencies include:

- **Attorney-General's Department, Office of the Solicitor General and Ministry of Justice:** responsible for legal advice, national security legal policy and drafting of national security legislation;

- **Ministry of Communications:** responsible for policy advice on cybersecurity threats and coordinating cybersecurity capacity building support for criminal justice authorities;

- **Ministry of Trade:** responsible for economic and trade security and resilience.

- **Ministry of Multi-Ethnic Affairs:** responsible for social cohesion issues;

- **Ministry of Women, Children and Social Protection:** responsible for supporting implementation of the Women, Peace and Security agenda;

- **Ministry of Environment:** responsible for supporting environmental security initiatives.

Disciplined Forces

The disciplined forces play an important role in safeguarding the safety and security of Fijians. As the lead operational agencies, the disciplined forces are responsible for operationalising Government policy and responding to security threats and challenges.

Fiji Police Force

The FPF is the primary national law enforcement agency. The FPF mandate is outlined in the Police Act 1965 which stipulates its responsibility to (i) maintain law and order; (ii) preserve the peace, (iii) protect life and property, and (iv) prevent and detect crime.

Fiji aspires to a FPF that is a modern, efficient, and community-centred organisation that ensures the safety, security, and well-being of all citizens and visitors. Structural reforms will be required to achieve this aim.

Over the next four years, the FPF will reform to modernise the police force to address contemporary and emerging criminal issues. Modern security threats such as illicit narcotics, human trafficking, and cyber threats including cybercrime will require new capabilities and legislative frameworks to combat.

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[5]The exact responsibilities of Ministries are subject to change depending on Ministerial portfolio responsibilities.

Similarly, reforms will be required to increase community trust in the FPF. Cultural transformation is needed to switch from a warrior culture to a guardian culture within the police. Accountability and integrity frameworks will also need to be strengthened to reduce corruption, increase ethical behaviours and improve compliance with human rights obligations.

Photo supplied by Fiji Police Force

Republic of Fiji Military Forces

The RFMF has primary responsibility for the territorial defence of Fiji. Under s 131(2) of the National Constitution the RFMF has the responsibility to "ensure at all times the security, defence, and well-being of Fiji and all Fijians." This broad responsibility has led to ambiguity over the RFMF's role within the national security sector. Addressing this ambiguity is critical to ensure that the RFMF remains under civilian control, serving as a loyal and accountable instrument of the state. Clarifying this role supports Fiji's democratic aspirations.

Under the NSS, the RFMF's primary role is the defence of Fiji's sovereignty, and its secondary role is to support nation-building tasks as defined by the elected government of the day.

Protection of Fiji's sovereignty

The RFMF's core role is to protect Fiji's sovereignty across the land and maritime domains. The RFMF should be focused against traditional threats (both symmetric and asymmetric) by providing a deterrent and response capability.

- **Land:** The provision of readily deployable forces to deter unwelcome lodgements on Fiji's sovereign territory. It also includes aid to the FPF and the civil authorities in times of unrest.

- **Maritime:** monitoring Fiji's 1.3 million square kilometre Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ), providing hydrographic services for safe maritime transport, and conducting search-and-rescue missions that extend beyond the EEZ.

Support to Nation-building

The RFMF's secondary role is to support nation-building activities as determined by the Government. This may include:

- **Humanitarian & Disaster Response:** supporting national disaster and crisis responses though assistance to the National Disaster and Response Organisation.

- **Infrastructure development:** supporting rural development through engineering support.

- **Youth programs and outreach:** training of youth and the provision of civic education through the Schools Cadet program and other outreach programs.

- **Regional stability:** through bi-lateral and multilateral defence relationships with regional countries strengthens security cooperation and help promote regional stability.

- **Global peacekeeping:** Peacekeeping remains a key operational activity for the RFMF, aligning with Fiji's national security strategy, foreign policy, and economic interests. Continued investment in training, international partnerships, and strategic planning will ensure that Fiji maintains its reputation as a committed and capable contributor to global peace and security.

Photo supplied by Republic of Fiji Military Forces

Fiji Corrections Service

The Fiji Corrections Service role and functions are outlined in section 130 of the Fiji Constitution and the Corrections Service Act 2006. Its role is to:

1. Secure custody of all convicted and non-convicted inmates;

2. Maintaining the safety of all convicted and non-convicted inmates; and

3. Effective rehabilitation of all convicted inmates.

Coordination Mechanisms

Fiji will prioritise strengthening coordination mechanisms to develop a more effective and efficient national security sector. The NSDR found the security sector continues to operate in silos despite the increasingly sophisticated and inter-connected threats facing Fiji. Combined and coordinated actions are required to effectively respond to these threats and leverage all arms of Government and the community.

Improving coordination will reduce duplications of efforts and create efficiencies, ensuring Government services are provided responsibly.

Over the next four years, Fiji will prioritise maintaining and establishing appropriate coordination mechanisms.

Photo supplied by Fiji Police Force

Part Five: Strategic Priority Areas (SPA)

Addressing Fiji's security challenges will require comprehensive and coordinated multi-agency efforts. As a small nation with limited resources, Fiji will need to be pragmatic in its approach to ensure resources are used most effectively and targeted at the highest priority issues. The following section outlines Fijis' strategic priority areas which will be focused on in the next four years.

SPA1: Modernisation of the Security Forces

Fiji's security sector must undergo modernisation and realignment to meet the demands of an evolving security landscape. The aim is to create a tightly integrated security sector with aligned missions and cultures, sharing best practice, leveraging complementary capabilities and getting the benefits of scale. Key priorities include a clarification of institutional roles, the upgrading of capabilities, and enhancing coordination across agencies responsible for national security.

Enhancing Capabilities

Modernising equipment, infrastructure, and training for the military, police and border agencies are essential for their effectiveness. Investments in specialised skills, emerging technologies, and intelligence-sharing systems will enhance their ability to combat threats such as cybercrime, transnational crime, and the narcotics trade. This includes improving border security measures.

Increasing Collaboration

Strengthening collaboration between the military, police, and other agencies will foster a whole-of-government approach to national security. This will require clear leadership and oversight from civilian agencies, supported by a modern legislative framework to coordinate efforts effectively.

Regional Integration

Security forces will also need to be capable of integrating with Pacific neighbours to respond to shared challenges in the Pacific. Greater integration and interoperability with Pacific neighbours will enable Fiji to support regional responses to instability and crisis in line with Fiji's commitment to Pacific regional security under the Boe Declaration.

Photo supplied by Republic of Fiji Military Forces

Democratic Accountability and Diversity

The strategic repositioning of Fiji's security forces must balance operational effectiveness with the principles of democratic oversight, accountability, and respect for human rights. The disciplined forces must be held to the highest standards of public service, ensuring they remain trusted institutions that serve the people of Fiji. Improving the participation of women and increasing diversity will be important means of ensuring the security forces reflect the modern Fiji.

SPA2: Development of National Intelligence Capabilities

Fiji's national security decision-makers and officers require comprehensive and timely intelligence to understand Fiji's threat landscape and make informed decisions. Fiji's national security architecture lacks a centralised national intelligence assessment capability. Intelligence functions are spread across individual government agencies. These functions are not fused into a joint national intelligence body at the apex of government. This deficiency represents a critical capability gap as it can lead to potential gaps in information flows and a lack of coherence in the crafting of a cohesive response strategy.

Fiji will explore establishing a centralised intelligence framework that integrates the various intelligence functions to better serve the national interest. Doing so will enhance strategic decision-making, improve situational awareness, and ensure that the Prime Minister and Cabinet receive timely, comprehensive and actionable intelligence. This includes developing appropriate horizon scanning and early warning assessments to identify new and emerging security challenges to support proactive security responses.

Robust policies and frameworks will be required to ensure Fiji's intelligence capabilities are exercised ethically and do not unduly infringe on the civil and human rights of Fijians. The proposed architecture will incorporate mechanisms for oversight to promote transparency, accountability, and ethical intelligence practices. Maintaining public trust will be an ongoing priority.

SPA 3: Maritime Security

Enhancing Maritime Security is vital for protecting natural resources within the EEZ, securing our maritime borders, and building resilience against the impacts of climate change. With its reliance on the ocean for resources, trade, and tourism, Maritime Security initiatives are crucial for ensuring that Fiji's maritime assets are managed sustainably and can continue to support the country's development and international standing.

Fiji's Maritime Security efforts will be focused on:

- **Protection of Maritime Sovereignty:** including developing robust systems for maritime domain awareness and monitoring Fiji's EEZ. This will require a layered approach using technological solutions including the integration of satellite surveillance technology with aerial and surface-based platforms.

- **Countering Maritime Crime:** combatting Illegal, Unreported, and Unregulated (IUU) Fishing and trafficking and Smuggling through Fiji's territorial waters.

- **Climate and Environmental Security:** Integrating climate adaptation measures, such as disaster preparedness and coastal resilience, into maritime security planning. Establishing frameworks for protecting marine biodiversity and addressing pollution in Fiji's waters.

- **Strengthening Maritime Governance:** Fostering collaboration between government agencies, the Fiji Navy, law enforcement, and local communities through joint task forces and clear governance structures. Developing Community-Centric Approaches to enhance local involvement in maritime governance to promote community resilience, deter criminal activities, and enhances safety in Fiji's maritime regions.

- **Economic Security:** Protect Fiji's critical infrastructure, including transportation and communications networks, from threats like cyber attacks and terrorism.

- **Regional and International Cooperation:** Leverage Fiji's leadership in the PIF and partnerships with organisations like the PIF Fisheries Agency (FFA) and international allies.

- **Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Response (HADR):** Improve Fiji's SAR capacity to respond to emergencies in its vast maritime domain and enhance readiness for delivering aid and support to communities affected by natural disasters.

Maritime Security Committee

Fiji's Maritime Security Committee serves as the national maritime security coordination forum to oversee Fiji's approach on maritime security. The Committee will oversee the formulation of a Maritime Security Strategy, coordinating efforts between government ministries, law enforcement agencies and the wider community including the 'Vanua' in maritime security.

Maritime Essential Services Centre (MESC)

The MESC will operate as a multi-agency, multipurpose facility supporting joint maritime security operations. It will house the Republic of Fiji Navy Headquarters, Rescue Coordination Centre, Suva Coastal Radio Station and Fiji Hydrographic Office.

The MESC's primary purpose is to support multi-agency maritime security operations. This includes search and rescue, maritime domain surveillance, counter-narcotics trafficking and protection again illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing.

Maritime Capability Master Plan

Developing a Maritime Capability Master Plan is crucial for Fiji given its geographical, economic, and strategic context as an island nation. Fiji's economy relies heavily on maritime sectors, including fisheries, tourism, and shipping. Ensuring the sustainability and security of these industries requires robust maritime capabilities. A well-defined master plan would address threats and enhance the nation's ability to strengthen maritime domain awareness (MDA) through surveillance and reconnaissance systems.

In the context of regional security, Fiji has a responsibility to contribute to collective regional maritime security. A master plan would align Fiji's capabilities with regional initiatives such as the PIF Fisheries Agency (FFA), the Niue Treaty on Cooperative Surveillance & Enforcement, and other regional frameworks such as the Regional Assistance Mission to the Solomon Islands (RAMSI). A Maritime Capability Master Plan will act as a comprehensive roadmap to secure, manage, and sustain Fiji's maritime domain, ensuring its resilience against current and future challenges while capitalising on its competitive advantage in the region.

SPA 4: Counter-Narcotics

National efforts to counter illicit drug activities in Fiji will be priority for Fiji over the next four years. Responding to the drug crisis will require a whole-of-nation effort and increased coordination between government agencies.

The National Counter-Narcotics Strategy 2023-2028 will guide counter-narcotic efforts facilitated through inter-agency collaboration. Under the strategy, efforts will be focused on seven key areas:

- Strategic Area 1: Demand reduction (prevention and awareness)
- Strategic Area 2: Supply reduction and alternative development
- Strategic Area 3: Harm Reduction (including treatment services)
- Strategic Area 4: Legal reform
- Strategic Area 5: Data collection, analysis and information sharing
- Strategic Area 6: Establishment of a Drug Court
- Strategic Area 7: Partnership, coordination and international cooperation

The Counter-Narcotics Bureau will be the lead operational agency tasked with drug enforcement efforts.

Counter-narcotic efforts will be supported by more robust maritime security arrangements outlined above. Close collaboration with Fiji's international partners will be required to address the transnational shipment of narcotics through Fiji and the broader Pacific.

Photo supllied by FIji Police Force.

SPA 5: Cyber Security

Cybersecurity policy is crucial for Fiji as it navigates the digital era, ensuring the protection of digital transformation, national resilience, economic stability and social welfare. Under Fiji's National Cybersecurity Strategy, Fiji's vision and plan of action to uplift Fiji's cybersecurity and resilience will be set out. The Strategy will take a whole-of-nation approach that will detail measures to safeguard Fiji from cyber threats.

SPA 6: Climate Security

Climate security is a critical national security issue for Fiji, as rising sea levels, extreme weather events, and environmental degradation threaten livelihoods, food and water security, and the resilience of communities. The increasing frequency of climate-related disasters not only exacerbates economic and social vulnerabilities but also challenges governance and national stability. Addressing climate security requires a proactive, whole-of-society approach that integrates disaster risk reduction, sustainable development, and regional cooperation to safeguard Fiji's future.

SPA 7: Social Cohesion

Improving social cohesion in Fiji is one of the foremost security challenges and a critical developmental priority. To date, Fiji has lacked comprehensive social cohesion strategy, even as the nation has borne the heavy cost of ethnic tensions, political instability and a recurring coup culture.

The findings of the NSDR underscored that social fracturing poses a persistent threat to Fiji's stability. Consultations conducted in the Review confirmed widespread underdevelopment, deprivation, and dissatisfaction as primary sources of unrest.

Addressing these challenges requires a holistic and long-term social cohesion strategy that integrates economic, cultural, and institutional reforms. Approaches will require inclusive, transparent, and sustained efforts that recognise the complexity of Fiji's social fabric. Past failures underscore the necessity of inclusive consultations and consensus-building. Stability achieved by force or exclusion is often superficial and short-lived, as underlying grievances remain unresolved. Fiji must embrace a participatory approach to forge lasting unity, recognising that social cohesion is not just a security imperative but the foundation of a prosperous future.

Under the NSS and associated programs, Fiji will explore developing projects to improve social cohesion within the Fijian community. These programs may include projects at the national and grass-roots level.

Part Six: Security Sector Reform

The Desired End State

The desired end-state of the NSS is a secure, resilient, and cohesive society that protects the values, well-being, and aspirations of all Fijians. This vision is underpinned by a whole-of-nation approach that emphasises transparency, accountability, and respect for human rights within a responsive and capable security sector. By addressing both traditional threats and emerging risks—such as climate change, cyber threats, and transnational crime—Fiji aims to future-proof its security framework while upholding democratic principles.

Ultimately, Fiji's NSS aspires to create a national security environment where all citizens feel safe, empowered, and connected, supported by institutions that are trusted to protect their interests and reflect their values. This vision is achieved through a dynamic and adaptive framework that evolves alongside emerging threats, fostering unity, resilience, and the capacity to navigate the complexities of the modern security landscape.

The Core Reform Pillars

Fiji will undertake a Security Sector Reform & Governance program to implement the recommendations of the NSDR. The proposed reforms are organised into six pillars which are diagrammatically represented at Annex A.

I.   Integrated and Coordinated Security Sector.

This pillar focusses on formalising and strengthening the organisational role, coordination mechanisms, and democratic decision-making processes both within and across the security sector. Government agencies and the security forces require clear roles and responsibilities to perform effectively. Confusion over roles and legal mandates undermines effective civil-military relations. Resource prioritisation, operational coordination, and performance metrics also require clear lines of responsibility.

Outcomes

- Establish clear roles in the security sector
- Develop a shared purpose across the security sector
- Nationally coordinated security strategy & budget decisions
- Joint professional development pathways

Action Items	
Immediate	• Reform the RFMF Act • Introduce reforms to formalise the Role and Powers of the National Security Council • Establish a Senior Officials Committee on National Security
Long-Term	• Establish a Centre of Excellence in National Security at the Fiji National University (FNU)

II.   Accountable and Trusted Security Forces

This pillar focusses on expanding and mainstreaming initiatives towards restoring community trust and countering corruption in the security sector. The restoration of community trust in the security sector is of fundamental importance. These measures will collectively work to uphold the accountability of the security forces.

Outcomes

- Strong community support for the security forces

- Force protection measures & independent oversight to counter corruption risks

Action Items	
Immediate	• Update the Police Act 1965 to respond to new and emerging threats. Support the Fiji Human Rights and Anti-Discrimination Commission (FHRDC) for it to regain full international accreditation through the Global Alliance of National Human Rights Institutions (GANHRI).
Medium-Term	• Expand and standardise the Protective Security Framework and personnel security vetting processes throughout the civil service.

III.   Operational Excellence

This pillar focusses on strengthening collaboration across government agencies for operational excellence in the security sector.

Outcomes

- Whole-of-government security coordination

- Reduced social harm of transnational crime

- Civil-military collaboration to harness national efforts

Action Items	
Immediate	• Review MDVA's structure, resourcing and capability to perform strategic and operational leadership as the lead civilian national security agency. • Review and update the Security Industry Act 2010 to improve regulation within the private security sector. • Conduct a review of Fiji's intelligence capabilities.
Medium-Term	• Introduce national matrix for monitoring and evaluation of progress. • Improved compliance with the revised Security Industry Act.

IV.   Future-ready Security Capabilities

The aim here is to invest in capabilities to address emerging risks to national security. This pillar focuses on building Fiji's security sector capabilities to counter modern threats and challenges impacting Fiji's security. This includes adapting to increasing maritime threats and emerging areas such as cyber-security.

Outcomes

- Increased maritime and border security capability
- Expanded technical expertise in cyber & emerging technologies.
- Robust private security regulation in high-risk areas

Action Items	
Immediate	• Conduct a force posture review of the police, military, and related maritime agencies in Fiji's remote islands to strengthen border and maritime security in the Eastern and Northern Division. • Establish a cybersecurity security and digital strategy and a cybersecurity and digital capability masterplan.
Medium-Term	• Establish a Maritime Strategy & Maritime Capability Master Plan • Increase North & East force posture

V.   Responsive and Inclusive National Security

This pillar aims to engage a 'whole of nation' approach to national security. Engaging the community and civil-society support is essential to augment state-led security responses. This pillar focuses on expanding community and civil society outreach to improve community involvement in responding to security threats and challenges. This includes mainstreaming gender and human rights considerations within the national security sector.

Outcomes

- Civil society engaged in security reform processes
- Young, vulnerable, & minority groups included in law & order services
- Community leaders champion change

Action Items	
Immediate	• Institutionalise Ministry-led engagement with community & faith-based organisations • Promote social cohesion for national security. • Introduce dedicated long-term funding for Human Rights education and **Women, Peace, and Security** programs.
Medium-Term	• Explore a common name for Fiji citizens so as to promote social cohesion, engender a distinct national identity, and unify the people to pursue a common agenda for the promotion of national security.

VI.   Sovereignty and International Engagement

This pillar aims to promote national interests and values of Fiji beyond its national borders for national security. Engaging with Pacific and global partners will remain crucial to supporting Fij's security efforts and enabling responses to regional challenges.

Outcomes

- Advance the Oceans of Peace concept
- Increased regional leadership
- Leverage regional partnerships & strengths
- Integrated foreign policy & security nexus

Action Items	
Immediate	• Establish an International Security Engagement Strategy. • Strengthen foreign interference/bribery legislation. • Review the operational conditions of service, veterans support services, and honours and awards to ensure service personnel (RFMF, FPF) are recognised and supported for their contributions to regional and local security operations.
Medium-Term	• Promote the need for a Diaspora Policy for national security that encourages remittance receipts, talent circulation, business networks, and foreign direct investments.
Long-Term	• Balance investments in global peacekeeping missions with regional security operations for addressing contemporary security threats and challenges as reflected in the NSDR.

Part Seven: National Security Strategy Implementation

Fiji's NSS will require comprehensive and coordinated action over the next four years to achieve its aims. Anchored in the principles of good governance, inclusivity, and resilience, the NSS responds to an increasingly dynamic and interconnected global security environment. This section outlines a roadmap to address traditional security threats while proactively managing emerging challenges such as climate change, cyber threats, and transnational crime.

National Expenditure and Resource Allocation

Fiji's expenditure within the national security sector will be maintained to safeguard sovereignty, maintain stability, and address emerging threats. Maintaining a safe and secure Fiji is crucial to facilitating Fiji's prosperity and economic development. However, this expenditure must be balanced with Fiji's national development needs. National security expenditure must be rigorously prioritised to support Fiji's national interests to ensure a return on investment.

Fiji's National Security expenditure comprises approximately 10 percent of total government expenditure. This expenditure is directed to security-related institutions, including the MDVA, the Ministry of Immigration, the Ministry of Policing, the RFMF and the FPF.

Under the NSS, the mix of expenditure both between and within the security agencies must be optimised to improve national security. While the overall expenditure on national security is substantial, the distribution of funds within and across agencies reveals significant imbalances that undermine strategic priorities. Under the NSS, resources will be increased for policy and coordination mechanisms to improve efficiencies. Similarly, investments should be weighted to the highest priority areas, such as protecting Fiji's maritime domain.

Investing in Strategic Capabilities

Achieving the strategic vision and goals outlined in Fiji's NSS requires targeted investments in skills, infrastructure, and emerging technologies. Key areas for improvement include:

- **Maritime Security:** Expanding the Navy's capacity through enhanced personnel training, acquisition of modern patrol vessels, and improved surveillance technology to secure Fiji's Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ).

- **Police Capabilities:** Modernising Police capabilities to respond to new and emerging threats.

- **Cybersecurity and Resilience:** Strengthening cybersecurity capabilities by upskilling personnel in advanced technologies and establishing robust digital systems to counter cyber threats.

- **Coordination and Oversight:** Increasing funding for relevant Ministries to enable effective interagency coordination, policy formulation, and monitoring of national security initiatives.

- **Monitoring and Evaluation:** Establishing rigorous systems to evaluate resource use and outcomes, ensuring that national security objectives are achieved efficiently.

Rebalancing expenditure across and within security agencies is essential to aligning resources with Fiji's strategic priorities. Targeted investments in maritime infrastructure, cybersecurity capabilities, and the upskilling of security personnel will bolster Fiji's ability to address both traditional threats and emerging challenges such as climate change, cybercrime, and transnational crime.

Strengthening interagency coordination mechanisms will further enhance efficiency and ensure a unified approach to national security. To complement domestic funding, international partners can be leveraged for specific initiatives, such as climate resilience, advanced training, and technology acquisition. By optimising resource allocation, fostering collaboration, and focusing on measurable outcomes, Fiji will build a robust and adaptive national security framework while maintaining fiscal responsibility.

New investments in the security sector will be considered by the **National Security Council,** taking into account Fiji's national priorities and fiscal sustainability. It is essential that new capabilities meet Fiji's national security needs, are appropriate to Fiji's context and capacity and are sustainable within Fiji's limited resources. New capabilities must be able to be maintained and sustained in order to support Fiji's long term security interests.

Photo supplied by Republic of Fiji Military Forces

Implementation and Coordination Frameworks

The NSS vision and goals will be realised through adequate funding and allocation of resources to support the recommendations outlined in the NSDR. This will be complemented with Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) to track progress and ensure accountability. Finally, a separate and standalone Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning (MEL) framework will be created to assess progress with implementation and allow adaptation of strategies to address emerging threats (see Annex B).

Women, Peace and Security

To build a safe, secure and prosperous Fiji, the defence and security sector must be gender-responsive, as diverse as the populations it serves and connected to community and civil society groups.

Effective implementation of the NSS will include integration of gender equity and WPS principles into the national security agenda. This involves including considerations of the gendered dimensions of security and insecurity and the tactical, operational and strategic levels.

Mainstreaming gender is a priority in the implementation of Fiji's security sector reforms and will be expanded upon in a WPS Action Plan for the Security Forces.

Photo supplied by Republic of Fiji Military Forces

Security Sector Reform and Governance Program

A **Security Sector Reform & Governance (SSRG)** Program will be established within MDVA to implement the NSS in consultation with relevant agencies.

The SSRG serves as the overarching framework for advancing structural reforms within Fiji's security sector. It is tasked with implementing the NSS and the recommendations outlined in the NSDR. The SSRG aims to address evolving security challenges while fostering sustainable and constructive civil-military relations.

The SSRG will establish a four-year reform plan aligned to the NSS. The SSRG will establish annual work plans aligned with the Ministry of Finance's budget process and approved by the National Security Council (NSC).

The annual activities of the SSRG shall be agreed to by the National Security Council on advice from the Official Committee on National Security. The role of the NSC is to provide Government agreement to SSRG activities, allocate resources and establish SSRG priorities. The role of the SOC is to ensure SSRG activities are coordinated and prioritised across the national security sector and are operationally feasible and effective. Progress of the SSRG will be reported to the SOC on a six monthly basis.

Legislative Reform Program

A Legislative Reform Program will be established to drive critical updates to national security legislation within Fiji. It will package necessary legislative reforms into a phased program of work to ensure reforms are prioritised, coordinated and sequenced. The program will be designed to ensure limited legal drafting resources are used effectively and reforms are aligned with broader national security priorities and objectives. By taking a holistic view of required reforms, urgent reforms can be prioritised and sequenced to ensure funds and staffing are allocated effectively. It will also identify opportunities to leverage international partners resourcing and expertise.

Working with international partners

Given Fiji's limited resources, leveraging the support and expertise of our international partners will be crucial. Fiji can enhance its security sector's skills, resources, and capabilities by engaging with global partners. These collaborations can include training, technical assistance, and knowledge-sharing initiatives, especially in fields like counterterrorism, cybersecurity, and environmental security.

However, managing these partnerships in a way that preserves Fiji's sovereignty and aligns with its values and strategic priorities remains paramount. Fiji's engagement with international partners on security issues will be guided by Fiji's FPWP and future International Security Engagement Strategy.

Integrating security sector capabilities with Pacific neighbours will be a priority in line with the FPWP 'Family First'. Integrating regional responses allows Pacific nations to address shared security challenges by pooling resources and leveraging relative strengths.

Fiji will maintain its active participation in regional security forums. This includes working through the Pacific's regional security architecture anchored around the PIF.

Photo supplied by Fiji Police Force

Conclusion

This NSS coordinates across all arms of national power to enhance Fiji's security, stability and prosperity in an increasingly interconnected and complex world. By prioritising transparency, accountability, human rights, and inclusive community engagement, the strategy establishes a framework for a secure, stable, and resilient Fiji. It emphasises the importance of strong governance, civilian control of security agencies, and regional and international collaboration in addressing both traditional and emerging threats.

Through this strategy, Fiji commits to a proactive, whole-of-nation approach to national security. This means working collaboratively with communities, civil society, regional partners, and international allies to protect the core values that define Fiji, including respect for human rights, social cohesion, economic prosperity, and environmental sustainability. Recognising that security is not solely the domain of the State, the NSS actively integrates community perspectives and prioritises inclusive engagement across gender, religious, and ethnic lines.

Moving forward, the success of this strategy will rely on rigorous implementation, continual adaptation, and genuine public trust in Fiji's security institutions. Establishing mechanisms for accountability and providing opportunities for community feedback are essential to building trust and ensuring that security policies remain transparent and people-centred. Furthermore, developing a security sector that is responsive to the unique challenges faced by Pacific Island nations will not only benefit Fiji but will also strengthen security for the broader region.

The NSS sets Fiji on a path toward a secure and prosperous future, prepared to navigate and lead in an evolving security landscape. As we advance, Fiji's commitment to these principles will guide its progress, ensuring the well-being and safety of all Fijians now and in the generations to come.

God bless Fiji and its people.

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The Core Reform Pillars

Vision: Fijians and the Fiji nation are protected from threats to their security, peace, and prosperity.

Mission: Fiji's Security Sector is professional, integrated, responsive, and accountable to the Government and the people.

	PILLAR ONE	PILLAR TWO	PILLAR THREE	PILLAR FOUR	PILLAR FIVE	PILLAR SIX
NSS OBJECTIVE	Integrated & Coordinated Security Forces	Accountable & Trusted Security Forces	Operational Excellence	Future-ready Security Capabilities	Responsive & Inclusive Security	Sovereignty & International Engagement
OUTCOME	• Clear roles in the security sector • Shared purpose • Nationally coordinated security strategy & budget decisions • Joint professional development career pathways	• Strong community support for the security forces • Force protection measures & independent oversight counters corruption risks	• Whole-of-government security coordination • Reduced social harm of trans-national crime • Civil-military collaboration to harness national efforts	• Increased maritime and border security capability • Grow technical expertise in cyber & emerging tech. • Robust private security regulation in high-risk areas	• Civil society engaged in security reform processes • Young, vulnerable, & minority groups included in law & order services • Community leaders champion change	• Advance Zone of Peace policy • Increased regional leadership • Leverage regional partnerships & strengths • Integrated foreign policy & security nexus
RECOMMENDED ACTION	• RFMF Act 1949 • Formalise National Security Council • Joint Strategy & Invest. Committee (MDVA, RFMF, FPF) • FNU Centre of Excellence in National Security	• SSRG programme • RFMF Restoration and Reconciliation • Restore Blue and Police Reset • Protective Security Framework & Personnel Vetting • Police Act 1965	• Review MDVA capacity to exercise WoG leadership • Modernise legislation • National metrics	• Maritime Strategy & Investment Plan • Increase North & East force posture • Cyber & critical tech. industry partnetships • Upadate Security Industry Act 2010	• Institutionalise Ministry-led engagement with community & faith-based organisations • Shared "Fijian" national identity • Fund and mainstream Women, Peace, & Security	• Expand regional security operations • International Security Engagement Strategy • Intelligence review • Security sector contributions to FPWP • Countering foreign interference/bribery legislation

Monitoring, Evaluation & Learning (MEL)

What is it?

Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning (MEL) is aimed at ensuring that the National Security Strategy (NSS) remains effective, adaptive, and impactful. Through well-defined indicators, progress can be measured against desired outcomes, enabling the achievement of the NSS Vision and Mission. The inclusion of "learning" emphasises the importance of continuous quality improvement by assessing gaps in outcomes, identifying underlying causes, and refining interventions accordingly. Mid-term and end-term evaluations will provide critical insights into the effectiveness and efficiency of the strategy, guiding adjustments for future programming.

Monitoring and Evaluation Responsibilities

The Ministry of Defence & Veterans Affairs (MDVA) will oversee the periodic monitoring and evaluation of the NSS in collaboration with Government and Non-Government stakeholders. This process will focus on progress against the six objectives and recommendations outlined in the National Security and Defence Review (NSDR). The goal is the establishment of robust "Whole of Government" and "Whole of Nation" mechanisms capable of responding to and mitigating national security threats effectively.

A dedicated NSS Monitoring and Evaluation Unit within the Ministry of Defence & Veterans Affairs will lead the effort, ensuring the strategy aligns with Fiji's National Security Objectives while addressing emerging threats. Regular consultation with stakeholders will enhance the relevance and public alignment of NSS implementation, feeding into mid-term and final reviews for iterative improvement.

MEL Framework

A comprehensive MEL framework will be developed, detailing:

- **Indicators:** Based on the SMART model (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, Time-bound), with baseline data collected where necessary. Indicators will be designed to be both contextually relevant and internationally comparable.

- **Baseline Data:** Establishing benchmarks prior to intervention.

- **Targets:** Annual and overall targets for each indicator.

- **Data Sources:** Means of verification for progress.

- **Measurement Frequency:** Regular intervals for monitoring progress.

- **Responsible Agency:** Designation of accountability for each indicator.

- **Budgetary Requirements:** Financial support for achieving outcomes.

- **Reporting Mechanisms:** Processes for ensuring transparency and accountability.

Budgetary Considerations

Adequate funding is critical for achieving the goals outlined in the NSS. Budget allocations must support activities required to meet indicators, as well as provide the necessary human capital to ensure effective implementation. The MEL framework will integrate into the Government Budget Cycle, ensuring consistent and sufficient resourcing for responsible agencies.

Reporting and Accountability

To uphold transparency and maintain public trust, a robust reporting mechanism will be implemented. Regular reporting will ensure that progress is visible to decision-makers and the public alike. Key reporting structures include:

- **Internal Reporting:** Regular updates to the Ministry of Defence and Veterans Affairs' Executive Management, the Minister, and the proposed Senior Officials Committee on National Security (SOC).

- **National Oversight:** Reporting to the National Security Council, the Cabinet, and the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and Defence.

- **Cross-Political Reporting:** Updates provided to the Leader of the Opposition to ensure bipartisan understanding and alignment with national security priorities.

This transparent and inclusive approach ensures that progress on the NSS is recognised across the political spectrum and by the citizens it aims to protect.

NATIONAL SECURITY STRATEGY ACTION ITEMS

Action Items	Agency Responsible	Resourcing Requirements	Timeline	Priority	KPIs for M&E
Pillar 1: Formalise and strengthen organisational roles, coordination mechanisms, and democratic decision-making processes in the security sector.					
1.1 Introduce reforms to formalise the role of the National Security Council (NSC) and the Minister responsible for National Security.	MDVA	Budget for legal drafting resources (if required)	Timeframe: 3-4 months	High	• Cabinet decision on NSC • Introduction of legislation (if required)
1.2 Establish a Senior Officials Committee on National Security (SOC) to coordinate and oversee matters of national security, including investment, at the highest levels of government.	PMO MDVA	Budget for personnel to staff SOC Secretariat	Timeframe: 3-12 months	Medium	• Establishment of SOC Secretariat • Establishment of SOC Terms of Reference and Standard Operating Procedures • Introduction of legislation (if required)
1.3 Establish a National Security Law Reform Program to update the: • **RFMF Act 1949 to clarify the mandate and roles of the RFMF; and** • **Police Act 1965 to respond to new and emerging threats.**	MDVA RFMF FPF	• Budget for legal drafting resources.	18-36 months	High	• Establishment of Legal Reform Program • Consultation of proposed legal reforms • Introduction of legislation to Parliament

1.4 Establish a Centre of Excellence in National Security & Strategic/ Defence Studies at the Fiji National University.	MDVA Ministry of Education	• Budget for scoping study.	24-36 months	Medium	• Establishment of taskforce to scope project • Undertake scoping study • Establishment of Centre of Excellence

Pillar 2: Expand and mainstream initiatives to restore community trust and counter corruption in the security sector.

2.1 Integrate *Restore Blue* and *Police Reset* under the forthcoming National Security Strategy.	MDVA Fiji Police Force	• Nil	Immediate	Medium	• Nil
2.2 Expand and standardise the Protective Security Framework and personnel security vetting processes throughout the civil service.	MDVA	• Budget for legal drafting resources • Budget for increased staffing in MDVA security section	Six months	High	• Establish Protective Security Framework • Periodic reporting on progress of implementation to FPSF governance structure. implementation plan by August 2025
2.3 Support the Fiji Human Rights Commission (FHRC) for it to regain full international accreditation through the Global Alliance of National Human Rights Institutions (GANHRI).	Nil	• Funding to be negotiated with the Ministry of Finance under Head 13 – Independent Institutions of the National Budget.	12-24 months	High	• Human Rights Commission regains full international accreditation through the Global Alliance of National Human Rights Institution.

Pillar 3: Strengthen whole-of-government collaboration to deliver operational excellence in the security sector.

3.1 Review MDVA's structure, resourcing, and capability to perform strategic and operational leadership as the lead civilian national security agency	MDVA	• Budget for staffing increase • Budget for infrastructure to support relocation	6-18 months	High	• Establishment of professional development framework • Establishment of new policy division • Relocation to new building
3.2 Review and update the Security Industry Act 2010 to improve regulation within the private security sector.	MDVA	• MDVA to work with Fiji Law Reform to secure funding for this work	12 months	Medium	• Initiate review of Security Industry Act by Quarter three (FY 2024/25) • Periodic reporting at quarterly meeting of Security Industry Regulation Licencing Board on progress of implementation
3.3 Introduce formal training, certification, and licensing standards to support the professionalisation of the private security industry and compliance with the updated Security Industry Act.	MDVA	• Additional resources will be in MDVA security unit to coordinate capacity building and enforcement functions of SIRLB.	12 months	Low	• Pilot compulsory foundation security course to Security Industry Regulation Licencing Board (SIRLB) Quarter 2 (2024/2025 FY) • Industry Training Commences Quarter 3(2024/2025 FY) • Pilot specialised security course offering introduced Quarter 1 (2025/2026 FY) • Periodic Reporting to quarterly meetings of SIRLB

3.4 Conduct a review of Fiji's intelligence capabilities with a view to capitalising on the synergies across all agencies in the security sector.	MDVA MOFA RFMF FPF	• Budget for scoping study. • Resources for infrastructure, personnel and capabilities to be determined by scoping study	3-4 years	High	• Detailed options scoping and proposal to Cabinet (year one) • Establishment of structure and accompanying legislation (year two) • Introduction of information sharing legislation (year three)
Pillar 4: Ensure Fiji's security sector capabilities (personnel, assets, and infrastructure) are future-ready and strategically prioritised, with a focus on border, maritime, and cyber security.					
4.1 Conduct a force posture review of the police, military, and related maritime agencies in Fiji's remote islands to strengthen border and maritime security in the Eastern and Northern Division.	MDVA, RFMF, Finance	• Budget to conduct scoping study • Staffing allocation of experienced officers.	12-24 Months	High	• Establish inter-agency Working Group • Develop scope of the force posture review • Comprehensive security assessment • Establishment of M&E Framework • Annual Review
4.2 Establish a maritime security strategy and a maritime capability masterplan to ensure a whole-of-government approach to maritime security and to prioritise future investment in accordance with the national interest.	MDVA	• Nil. Funding for consultant provided by international partners	6-12 months	High	• Establishment of Maritime Security Strategy.

4.3 Establish a cybersecurity security and digital strategy and a cybersecurity and digital capability masterplan to ensure a whole-of-government approach to cyber security and to prioritise future investment in accordance with the national interest.	Ministry of Communications	• Nil. Funding for development of National Cybersecurity Strategy will be determined as part of the strategy implementation process.	6-12 months	High	• Development of the National Digital Strategy 2025-2030 and Implementation Plan • Development of the National Cybersecurity Strategy 2025-2030 and Action Plan. • Oversight of the whole-of- nation implementation of the two strategies. • Operationalising of the National Computer Emergency Response Team (Fiji CERT)
Pillar 5: Strengthen, fund, and resource community and civil society engagement in the formal security sector, especially the young and disadvantaged.					
5.1 Explore a common name for Fiji citizens so as to promote social cohesion, engender a distinct national identity, and unify the people to pursue a common agenda (e.g., combat crime, illicit drug use, poverty, environmental vandalism, etc) for the promotion of national security.	Ministry of Multi-Ethnic Affairs	• Budget for social cohesion projects	Immediate	Medium	• Establishment of work program to consider a common name for Fiji citizens.

5.2 Introduce dedicated long-term funding for Human Rights education and Women, Peace, and Security programs.	MDVA	• To be determined as part Women Peace and Security Action Plan	Immediate	High	• Introduction of Women Peace and Security Action Plan for the Security Sector. • National WPS Action Plan (longer term)

Pillar 6: Strategically focus international and regional security engagement, particularly to protect sovereignty.

6.1 Establish an International Security Engagement Strategy that takes into account the new developments in the geo-strategic environment.	MDVA MOFA RFMF Police	• Budget for ISEA scoping study • Staffing allocation	12-18 months	High	• Establish ISEA Terms of Reference • Establish ISEA Taskforce/ working group • Completion of ISEA.
6.3 Harness the diaspora to contribute to Fiji's national security, including remittances, overseas networks, talent circulation, and foreign direct investment. Formulate a Diaspora policy to encourage return required talent.	MOFA	Nil.	Ongoing	Medium	• Establishment of diaspora policy.

6.4 Balance investments in global peacekeeping missions with regional security operations for addressing contemporary security threats and challenges as reflected in the NSDR.	MDVA	Nil	Ongoing	High	• N/A
6.5 Review the operational conditions of service, veterans support services, and honours and awards to ensure service personnel (RFMF, FPF) are recognised and supported for their contributions to regional and local security operations.	MDVA RFMF	Nil. Review to be conducted within internal staffing and resources	6-12 months	High	• Review of Operational Service awards by the College of Honour.