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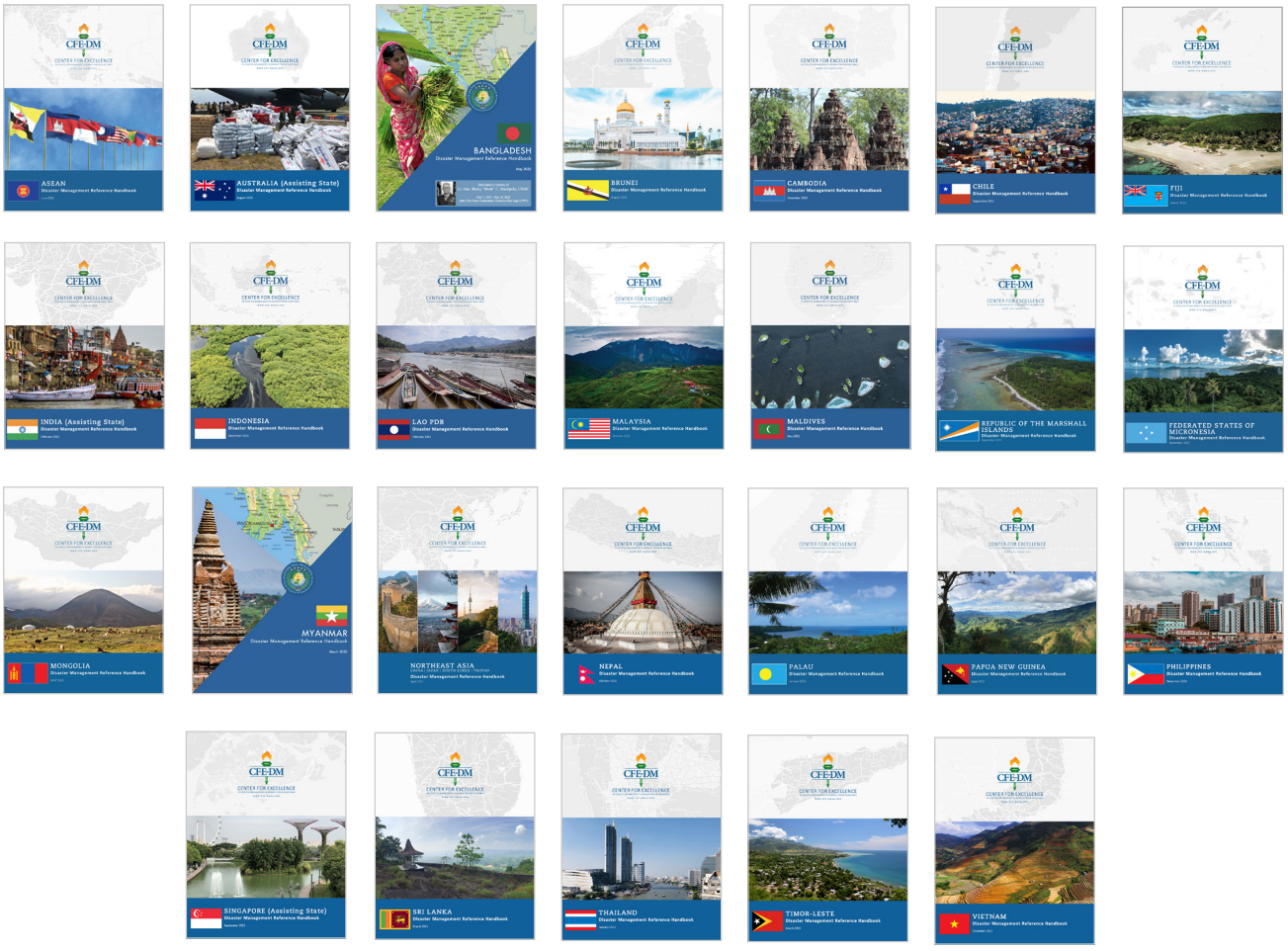
FIJI

Disaster Management Reference Handbook

March 2023

Disaster Management Reference Handbook Series

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Front Cover

Fiji Islands, Fiji by Max (imcolourblind) on Unsplash.com https://unsplash.com/photos/sqrD447aTGw

Disclaimer

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Letter from the Director

Fiji plays a key role in the Pacific not only as a hub for commerce but also as a host for international organizations that conduct programs and operations in Oceania. The country has proven to be and will remain a key location and partner for disaster management activities throughout the region.

Because of its exposure to various recurring hazards, Fiji has steadily built its disaster management capacity, and it has shown increasing ability to respond both at home and elsewhere, including in Australia, New Zealand, and Tonga. The country is also vocal in integrating disaster risk reduction with climate change mitigation and adaptation strategies, among which are campaigns to ensure developed countries recognize and help address the special vulnerability of small island states. It behooves international partners to recognize the importance of Fiji's – and other regional states' – stance on these issues and to build a multi-agency, multi-lateral approach that follows Oceania states' lead to help improve the resiliency of these states.

With the expanding presence of U.S. government agencies in Fiji, the Center for Excellence in Disaster Management and Humanitarian Assistance (CFE-DM) stands ready to support and grow programming in partnership with Fiji's government, military, and non-government actors. As Fiji's society as a whole has a stake in making information and public participation more equitable, the CFE-DM will continue to bolster U.S. Indo-Pacific Command (USINDOPACOM) programs that facilitate integration of Fiji's women, persons with disabilities, and other vulnerable communities into disaster risk reduction and climate change adaptation. Building on workshops and reconstruction activities, we hope to ensure that exercises such as the Cartwheel series offer opportunities to, as one Fiji participant said, "work together so we feel we are not alone and they also treat us as equal partners..."

As a contribution to this partnership, this Fiji Disaster Management Reference Handbook focuses on Fiji's disaster management framework and disaster risk reduction strategies. It also provides an overview of the country's government, geography, demographics, socio-cultural practices, and history of natural disasters. It is hoped that this handbook will serve as an initial source of information for individuals preparing for disaster management, response, and risk reduction activities or immediate deployment with Fiji partner responders in a crisis.

Sincerely,

Joseph D. Martin, SES
Director

About the Center for Excellence in Disaster Management & Humanitarian Assistance

Overview

The Center for Excellence in Disaster Management and Humanitarian Assistance (CFE-DM) is a United States (U.S.) Department of Defense (DoD) organization comprised of nearly 30 subject matter experts that provide academic research, civil-military coordination training, and operational insights to support decision making before, during, and after crises. The Center is designed to bridge understanding between humanitarians, civilian, and military responders. CFE-DM partners with a diverse group of governmental and nongovernmental actors, as well as academic institutions to increase collaborations and capabilities in humanitarian assistance and disaster response. While maintaining a global mandate, the Indo-Pacific region is our priority of effort and collaboration is the cornerstone of our operational practice. The Center is a direct reporting unit to U.S. Indo-Pacific Command (USINDOPACOM) and is located on Ford Island, Joint Base Pearl Harbor-Hickam, Hawaii.

Vision

The Joint Force, allies, and partners are fully prepared to conduct and support foreign humanitarian assistance.

Mission

CFE-DM builds crisis response capacity in U.S. and partner militaries, enhances coordination and collaboration with civilian and foreign partners, and strengthens those relationships to save lives and alleviate human suffering before, during, and after humanitarian crises.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Fiji is a regional leader in the Pacific. The capital, Suva, is not only a connecting transport hub but also the center of gravity for many international organizations that base their sub-regional headquarters there for programs and operations in Oceania. Fiji is an economic leader in the region although it still grapples with high poverty rates domestically. Disaster risk reduction (DRR) is an important part of poverty reduction, as Fiji frequently experiences tropical cyclones and flooding with significant impacts on lives, livelihoods, and the economy in general. Disasters repeatedly set back progress in housing, health, education, and development. Between 1980 and 2016, economic damages caused by disasters were estimated at approximately US$16.3 million annually. Cyclones, heavy rain, and flooding cause the most severe economic impacts to agriculture and tourism, with the tourism sector often experiencing cancellations and damaged assets. Disasters also periodically push people into poverty or keep them there. Loss of livelihoods during disasters is a severe issue in Fiji. The economic challenges brought by disasters and external shocks, including the Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic, are exacerbated by Fiji's remoteness and economic reliance on agricultural exports and international visitors.[1]

The legislative framework for the coordination of humanitarian affairs and the disaster management cycle (preparedness, response, and early recovery) is the National Disaster Management Act 1998. At the strategic level, the National Disaster Management Council is chaired by the Minister for Rural and Maritime Development and Disaster Management (MRMDDM). At the coordination level there are three sub-committees (Mitigation and Prevention, Preparedness, and Emergency) chaired by the Disaster Controller, who is the MRMDDM Permanent Secretary. At the operational level, the National Emergency Operations Centre (NEOC) is managed by the National Disaster Management Office (NDMO). Fiji's national cluster system for humanitarian coordination was most recently updated in October 2022. Its nine clusters are each led by a government ministry, and most are co-led by a United Nations (UN) agency, international non-governmental organization (NGO), or another government ministry. The national system is based on the global cluster system, which has been in place since 2005. The national cluster system is also supported by the Pacific Humanitarian Team's regional clusters.[2]

Fiji is acutely aware of being vulnerable to the risks posed by climate change. Fiji is particularly exposed to rising sea levels and climate-related disasters, including storms, floods, and landslides. Long-term warming is expected to range between 0.6°C and 2.6°C (1.08°F and 4.68°F) by the 2090s when compared with the 1986–2005 baseline. Climate change will bring statistically significant increases in the annual probability of heat waves in Fiji.[3] Sea level rise will cause a range of impacts in Fiji, including potential inundation, coastal erosion, saline intrusion, and exacerbated risks of storm surges and king tides. Coral reefs and associated fisheries are significantly threatened, and soil and water quality are likely to decline. The cost of climate change-related disasters is likely to rise as floods and cyclones are predicted to lead to asset losses up to 30% higher than current averages. Some estimates point to a need to spend FJ$9.3 billion (US$4.5 billion) over 10 years to reduce Fiji's climate vulnerability through a range of measures such as strengthening towns and cities and improving infrastructure, agriculture, and fisheries.[4]

Many disaster management practitioners in Oceania have stated that DRR is closely entwined with climate change adaptation (CCA) in the region. Approaches to preparedness and building societal resilience cannot be siloed into just disaster response or other narrow categories given the cross-cutting nature of the risks facing Fiji and the Pacific region.

COUNTRY OVERVIEW

Fiji is an island nation in the South Pacific that is comprised of more than 332 islands. Most of the country's roughly 900,000 people live on a handful of the largest islands, especially the main islands of Viti Levu, where the capital, Suva, is located, and Vanua Levu.[5] Fiji is exposed to various natural hazards and frequently experiences tropical cyclones and flooding. Fiji's vulnerability is exacerbated by climate change, which is bringing rising sea levels, more intense cyclones, and flooding, with a variety of secondary affects.

History

Austronesians are estimated to have first settled Fiji in 1220 BCE, based on archeological finds of red ceramic pottery and other artifacts related to the Lapita people. The Lapita are said to have originated from Southeast Asia and inhabited several other South Pacific islands. They sailed in large double-hulled canoes, bringing pigs, taro, and sweet potato. Sometime between 1000 and 500 BCE, Melanesians started to settle in Fiji and are said to be the closest ancestors of the present-day Fijian people.[6] Fijians traded and intermarried with Polynesians in Samoa and Tonga. It is believed that Tongans brought the first tabua, or whale tooth, which is used as a form of money in exchanges of land, as gifts of friendship, and during marriage proposals, and is passed down from one generation to the next.[7] By approximately 900 CE, Fiji was in the Tu'i Tongan Empire's sphere of influence, which started declining after 1200.

The name "Fiji" derived from British Captain James Cook mispronouncing the word. The Fijians had called their land "Viti," but the Tongans called it "Fisi," which influenced Cook's pronunciation.[8]

While European explorers first sighted Fiji in 1643, the islands remained relatively free of European contact until the early 1800s when European missionaries, whalers, traders, and deserters began to settle. Christianity gained ground in the 1840s and 1850s thanks to the rise of two Christian converts, chief Cakobau from the kingdom of Bau and Ma'afu from Tonga; these two chiefs controlled the western and eastern regions, respectively.[9] European muskets were an important factor in Bau dominating western Fiji.[10] Cakobau's conversion influenced most Fijians toward the Methodist church, and Roman Catholic and Anglican missionaries who arrived later did not have the same impact. In the late 1800s, more Europeans arrived in Fiji to establish plantations, for whaling, or to engage in a slave trade called "blackbirding." Blackbirding is relevant to large parts of the South Pacific and refers to islanders being coerced or kidnapped by Europeans and transported elsewhere in the region to labor as slaves, often on plantations. An estimated 22,000 to 27,000 people were forcibly taken to Fiji from Kiribati, Tuvalu, Vanuatu, Papua New Guinea, and the Solomon Islands between 1864 and 1911, and many more were taken to other areas across the Pacific.[11]

In 1874, Fiji became a British crown colony. Colonialism in Fiji was similar to the pattern seen in other British colonies, including the pacification of the countryside, the spread of plantation agriculture, and the introduction of indentured laborers from the Indian sub-continent.[12] Indian laborers were encouraged to become permanent settlers at the end of their contracts although land ownership was not accessible to them. After the indenture system ended in 1920, the Indian community's political and economic grievances led to strikes and challenged the commercial and political domination of the small European community. In World War I, Fijian units aided British forces. Fijian soldiers also fought alongside the Allies in World War II.

Fiji gained independence in 1974 after becoming a fully sovereign and independent nation within the Commonwealth on 10 October 1970. In April 1987, an ethnic Indian-dominated coalition won the general election in an upset

of the Alliance Party that had governed since independence. However, in May, Lieutenant-Colonel Sitiveni Rabuka seized power in a bloodless coup with the aim of making indigenous Fijians politically dominant. Opposed to the political groupings in the proposed new government, Rabuka staged a second coup in September and declared Fiji a republic on 10 October 1987. By December, Rabuka voluntarily handed over government leadership. Former Governor-General Ratu Sir Penaia Ganilau became President, Ratu Sir Kamisese Mara became Prime Minister, and Rabuka took a role as one of four military officers in the mostly civilian Cabinet. In 1990, a new constitution was promulgated with the express intent of concentrating power in the hands of indigenous Fijians. Rabuka became Prime Minister in 1992, and through the mid-1990s, politics focused on a Constitutional Revision Commission aimed at lessening the ethnic bias built into the constitution. Fijian nationalist groups opposed Rabuka and the commission, but the constitutional changes were approved and took effect in 1998.

In May 1999, Mahendra Chaudhry became Fiji's first Prime Minister of Indian ancestry, but his was an appointment strongly opposed by Fijian nationalists. Chaudhry was taken hostage and deposed in 2000 by an armed group led by bankrupt businessman George Speight, who was advocating to make indigenous Fijians politically dominant. Widespread looting and destruction of Indian-owned businesses in Suva were reported at this time. After coup leaders deadlocked, the army declared martial law, paving the way for the Great Council of Chiefs to appoint former vice president Ratu Josefa Iloilo as the President, a post in which he was reconfirmed in 2001. Laisenia Qarase of the nationalist Fiji United Party was also confirmed as Prime Minister that year. Qarase narrowly won reelection in May 2006 but was deposed in December by the Fiji military's Commander Voreque "Frank" Bainimarama who seized power and restored President Iloilo, who then named Bainimarama interim Prime Minister. Bainimarama stated an intention to hold elections but set no timetable. In 2012, Bainimarama announced plans for a fresh constitution ahead of the 2014 elections and stressed that it would include an independent judiciary and transparent governance. The new constitution received some international criticism for granting immunity to past coup participants. Elections in September 2014 were won by the FijiFirst party led by Bainimarama, who had resigned as head of the military in March that year. He was sworn in as Prime Minister after the elections, closing the "transitional" period that started with his 2006 coup.

In February 2016, two significant events highlighted the vulnerability of Fiji and the Pacific to climate change and extreme climate-related events. First, Fiji was hit by Tropical Cyclone Winston, the worst storm in the country's recorded history; it killed 42 people and displaced tens of thousands. Second, Fiji became the first country in the world to formally approve the UN climate deal after parliament ratified the Paris Agreement. The December 2022 general election was won by Sitiveni Rabuka, leader of the 1987 coup and head of the People's Alliance (PAP); he succeeded Bainimarama as Prime Minister.[13]

Culture and Demographics

The largest proportion of Fiji's population is iTaukei or indigenous people who are predominantly Christian. A significant minority of the citizenry are of Indian heritage, descendants of Indian laborers brought over during British colonial rule, and who are predominantly Hindu. English is widely spoken and is one of the three official languages, along with indigenous Fijian or iTaukei, and Fijian Hindi. Most of the population live on the main two islands of Viti Levu and Vanua Levu.

Ethnic Makeup

Indigenous Fijians, also called iTaukei, comprise the majority of Fiji's population.[14] The

country's population by ethnicity is as follows: 475,739 (56.82%) iTaukei, 313,801 (37.48%) Indo-Fijian, 4,704 (0.56%) Full/Part-Chinese, 2,953 (0.35%) European, 10,771 (1.29%) Part-European, 10,335 (1.23%) Rotuman, 6,659 (0.80%) Other Pacific Islanders, and 12,309 (1.47%) Others.[15] This ethnic composition is broadly summarized in Figure 1.[16]

Among Oceania's three ethno-geographic subregions — Polynesia, Melanesia, and Micronesia — indigenous Fijians are considered Melanesian. However, there has historically been a high degree of interaction with Polynesian peoples, and Fijian social and political organization is closer to systems seen in Polynesia. Trading and intermarriage occurred with Tongans and Samoans, leading to close relationships.[17]

Indo-Fijians are descended from the more than 60,000 indentured laborers who arrived in Fiji from various parts of India between 1879 and 1916 to work on the cane plantations. While other Pacific Islanders migrated during the same timeframe, most left again while Indian migrants remained, primarily on the two main islands of Viti Levu and Vanua Levu.

Rotumans are from the outlying island group of Rotuma, which was incorporated into Fiji under British authority. Rotumans are Polynesian and have a distinct language. Rotuma is located about 500 kilometers (km; 511 miles) north of the main Fiji island group, but increasing numbers of Rotumans are moving to Fiji's main islands seeking education and employment.[18]

In 2010, Fiji passed the iTaukei Affairs Amendment Decree, which uses "iTaukei" instead of "native" or "Fijian" when referring to the original, indigenous people of Fiji.[19] There were divided opinions on this move. Some iTaukei, including a former prime minister, argued that the term "Fijian" belonged to the indigenous people of Fiji.[20]

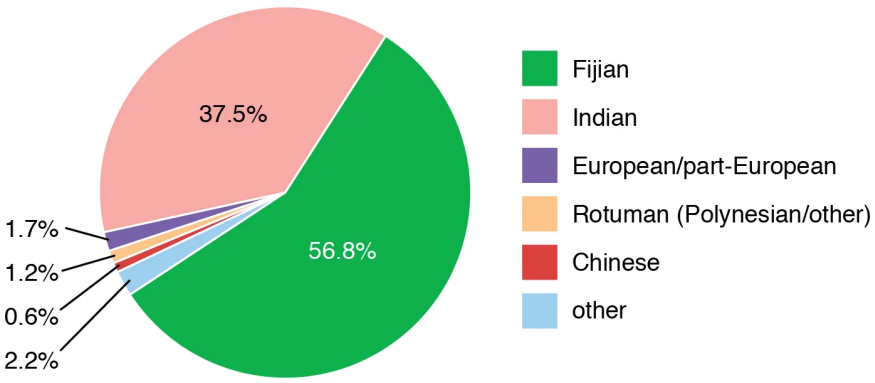


Figure 1: Ethnic Composition of Fiji (2007 Census)

Key Population Centers

Fiji's official population count was 884,887 as of the 2017 census.[21]

The proportion of Fiji's urban population has increased over the past several decades. Approximately 37.2% of the population lived in urban areas in 1976, a number that increased to 38.7% in 1986, 46.4% in 1996, 50.7% in 2007, and 55.9% in 2017. The growth from 1986 to 1996 and leading up to the 2017 count was partly due to the extension of urban boundaries, according to the 2017 Population and Housing Census.[22] Most of Fiji's population lives along the coast, either in Suva or in smaller urban centers. A large proportion live on the largest island, Viti Levu, which is where the capital is located.[23]

Suva is the capital and the largest city with an estimated population of 88,000 people, located in Rewa Province on the southeast coast of the island of Viti Levu. Suva is the main port of entry. The city contains the country's largest container and general maritime port as well as an international airport that links the country to the U.S., Australia, New Zealand, Asia, and several other Pacific Islands.[24] The greater Suva area is home to approximately one-third of Fiji's population. Suva is also an economic, educational, and diplomatic hub for the South Pacific region.[25]

Lautoka is Fiji's second biggest city with approximately 53,000 people, located on Viti Levu's west coast, in Ba Province. It is the country's second port of entry after Suva and the heart of the sugar cane growing region. Lautoka is nicknamed "Sugar City" and is the site of Lautoka Sugar Mill, the city's biggest employer.

Nadi is Fiji's third largest city with about 42,000 people. It is also located on the western side of Viti Levu. Nadi has a multi-ethnic population. In addition to the permanent residents, who are largely iTaukei and Indo-Fijian, the city has a significant transient population of tourists. Nadi is a significant religious center of Hinduism and Islam and hosts the Sri Siva Subramaniya temple, which is the biggest Hindu temple in the Southern Hemisphere.

Labasa is the fourth largest town or city, with an estimated 28,000 people. It is the largest town on the island of Vanua Levu and is in Macuata Province. Labasa is situated on a delta formed by the Labasa, Qawa, and Wailevu Rivers and is surrounded by sugar cane farms. Sugar cane processing is a significant industry in the town, but declining industry performance has led to people migrating to other areas.

Ba is the fifth largest Fijian town with some 15,000 people.[26] It is located on the banks of the Ba River on the island of Viti Levu. Sugar cane and tourism are large contributors to the town's industry.[27]

Language

Fiji has three official languages – i.e., the indigenous Fijian or iTaukei, English, and Fijian Hindi. They were given equal status as official languages by the 1997 constitution. Among the Fijian language's many dialects, Bauan Fijian is the most commonly used and comes from Bau (Mbau), an island that held political supremacy at the start of colonial rule. English was introduced by British merchants and explorers decades before British colonial rule. English is still widely used in government, business, and education. Fijian Hindi developed after the British brought Indian laborers to Fiji during Britain's colonial rule over both places. Indian laborers came from different parts of India and spoke different Hindi dialects; thus, Fijian Hindi reflects various influences, including from English, Fijian, and Arabic.[28] Most people speak at least two languages, including English and the language of their own ethnic community.[29]

According to the constitution, "conversational and contemporary iTaukei and Fiji Hindi languages shall be taught as compulsory subjects in all primary schools."[30] In January 2023, Prime Minister Sitiveni Rabuka approved the use of vernacular languages during Parliament sittings, a decision that reinforces the coalition Government's push to promote and preserve the vernacular diversity of Fiji.[31] Like many languages in Oceania,[32] Fijian was an oral language until the 19th century, when Christian missionaries arrived and devised a writing system to translate the Bible into the Fijian language for the purpose of religious conversion.[33]

Religion

Almost all iTaukei are Christian, primarily Methodist. About one-tenth of the population is Roman Catholic, and there is a small Assemblies of God community.[34] Most Indo-Fijians are Hindu, although approximately 20% are Muslim and 6% are Christian. The most famous Hindu temple in Fiji is the Krishna temple of the International Society for Krishna Consciousness (ISKCON); it is ISKCON's biggest temple outside of India. The Hindu community has at times been targeted for violence[35] following coups and at other times of community unrest.[36] Among the small community of Chinese ancestry, approximately 60% are Christian. The small community of European ancestry is predominantly Christian. The Fijian constitution mandates the separation of religion and state and protects freedom of religion, conscience, and belief.[37]

Prior to the 19th century, indigenous Fijians practiced various traditional religions based on divination and animism. A form of ancestor worship featured in traditional practices, such that a good warrior might have become a god of war after death, or a productive farmer might have become the god of plenty.[38] The first Christian missionaries arrived in 1830, and Christianity gradually became the main religion among the vast majority of indigenous Fijians, particularly after colonization by the British in 1874.[39]

Vulnerable Groups

Most countries have some groups that are more vulnerable in disasters and crises due to underlying structural inequities. Which groups are deemed vulnerable will depend on the society. The categories below are not comprehensive and are not mutually exclusive. Many vulnerabilities are cross-cutting.

Women

Violence against women is a significant concern as Fiji has rates among the highest in the world. A reported 72% of Fiji's women experience one or more types of violence, which include physical, emotional, and sexual violence, during their lifetime from their husbands or intimate partners.[40] Like many parts of the world, Fiji experienced a spike in violence against women shortly after the COVID-19 pandemic began with lockdowns that increased risk of violence for women. The Fiji Women's Crisis Centre toll-free national helpline recorded a 300% increase in domestic violence-related calls one month after curfews and lockdowns were announced; there were 527 calls in April 2020, compared with 87 calls in February and 187 in March.[41]

Addressing violence against women is also considered economically significant on two fronts, for women's economic empowerment and for the country's economic advancement. Intimate partner violence is estimated to cost 7% of Gross Domestic Product (GDP) annually, due to lower work performance, higher workplace turnover, health expenses, and absenteeism.[42] Empowering women to reach their full development potential and creating a gender-fair society are goals in Fiji's national development plans.[43] Women also face higher risks of violence following major disasters, as disasters often correlate with an increased incidence of gender-based and sexual violence. In the aftermath of cyclones in 2012, women in relief centers reportedly experienced violent sexual coercion by their husbands and suffered from overcrowding and lack of privacy. In the aftermath of Cyclone Winston in 2016, women also reportedly experienced the threat of violence at evacuation sites.[44]

Women can play a key role in disaster risk management, and strides are being made to better utilize and serve this demographic group. Women played a vital role in warning and helping prepare their communities for Tropical Cyclone Winston in 2016. Suva-based femLINKpacific, a women's media organization, runs the Women's Weather Watch program, which is an interoperable communication platform led by Fijian women. It is used to monitor climate-related disasters in communities[45] and sends weather reports and preparedness information by a bulk SMS (text message) system and other media to its network of 350 women across the country. Those women are critical in disseminating the news throughout their communities, which are often remotely located. They reach an audience that may otherwise miss the information and, critically, they provide feedback on local conditions and needs to a regular radio show broadcast from Suva.[46]

Children

Children were at higher risk of living in poverty compared with the total population in 2020 when the poverty rate for children up to 14 years old was 32.1%, almost eight percentage points higher than the overall poverty rate.[47] Demographic data reflects that poverty rates increase with household size, number of children in the household, and the ratio of dependents in the household. Children were correspondingly hit harder than the overall population with the economic hardships that followed the COVID-19 pandemic.[48] Analysis of the situation of children in Fiji has identified several challenge areas, which are often interrelated. These include climate change and disaster risks, an economy vulnerable to fluctuations in international markets, the impacts of poverty, data availability, and equity across class, gender, disability status, and other factors.[49] Children are also impacted by disasters beyond losing educational continuity and opportunities. Disaster impacts

have ripple effects on households who lose their main sources of income, such as crops or fishing equipment, and these losses may result in children dropping out of school. During flooding in 2012, economic losses forced families to keep children out of school to care for other children or to earn money by various means, including sex work in extreme cases.[50]

Various initiatives aim to improve the wellbeing and amplify the voices of youth. Fiji's first National Youth Climate Action Summit provided the opportunity for 200 youth to be consulted and to provide feedback on the Climate Change Bill 2021, which was enacted by Parliament.[51] In terms of increasing data availability, in 2021, the Bureau of Statistics launched the first Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey to provide reliable data to measure progress on the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG). This survey includes data on child mortality, health, nutrition, education, child protection, antenatal and post-natal care, family planning, and women's empowerment, as well as water, sanitation, and hygiene (WASH), drinking water quality, learning skills of children, and child functioning.[52] In August 2022, the Ministry of Education, Heritage, and Arts and partners convened the first national dialogue on transforming education; it aims to address pandemic-related learning losses and other areas of children's educational wellbeing.[53]

People Living in Poverty

The Fiji Bureau of Statistics in 2021 released a report on the 2019-2020 Household Income and Expenditure Survey, in which data reflected that 29.9% of the population lived below the national basic needs poverty line of FJ$2,179.39 (US$1,008) per adult per year.[54] The incidence of poverty in rural areas is twice the rate of poverty in urban areas. Poverty rates had not significantly declined in the preceding six year and worsened following the COVID-19 pandemic.[55]

The need for DRR is closely entwined with poverty reduction and economic development. Disasters have repeatedly set back Fiji's progress in housing, health, sanitation, education, and development. Extreme climate events that bring heavy rainfall and flooding, or conversely drought, frequently cause millions of dollars in economic damage. Between 1980 and 2016, economic damage caused by disasters has been estimated at approximately US$16.3 million annually. Cyclones, heavy rain, and flooding cause the most severe economic impacts on agriculture and tourism, with the tourism sector often experiencing cancellations and damaged assets. Poverty stricken people especially have a hard time recovering from natural disasters. Loss of livelihoods during disasters is a severe issue in Fiji. The economic challenges brought by disasters and external shocks are exacerbated by Fiji's remoteness and reliance on vulnerable agricultural exports and international visitors.[56]

In addition to a range of UN agencies and international NGOs, the Fiji Council of Social Services (FCOSS) is an umbrella body of almost 500 grassroots organizations working on poverty alleviation, relief, and development. FCOSS connects different groups and their projects together while also coordinating with the government.[57] Focus areas and activities include a rural women's initiative for development, microfinance, strengthening organizations' governance, elderly services through HelpAge, and a regional HIV/AIDS project.[58]

People Living with Disabilities

Approximately 13.7% of the population aged three years and above reported at least one functioning challenge (disability), according to the 2017 government census, which counted people with a disability for the first time.[59] People with disabilities and their families are disproportionately represented among people living in poverty. People with disabilities in Fiji experience barriers to health services compared to those without disabilities due to stigma, discrimination, and barriers in the built environment. Girls and boys with disabilities may be at risk of exclusion from education if remote or distance learning programs are not accessible or if those students do not have assistive devices to accommodate their learning needs. In the

wake of COVID-19 lockdowns, children with disabilities were less likely than others to return to school once schools reopened.[60]

The needs and critical inputs of persons living with disabilities are often overlooked in disaster response and management. The Fiji Disabled Peoples Federation (FDPF), which has roots in the late 1970s, established and activated the Emergency Operations Centre (EOC) in 2018 as part of their DRR unit, which is supported by the Australian Humanitarian Partnership. It strives to build capacities for persons with disabilities and advocates for inclusive DRR communications, prioritizing inclusion of women with disabilities. During a crisis, the EOC is activated, and email notifications are set up so that the EOC receives disaster information from the NDMO and meteorological services. It is staffed with personnel from various Organizations of Persons Disabilities (OPD), who share information with respective OPDs for further dissemination throughout communities. Each OPD uses the platforms and communication methods specific to them to best get the message out. For example, the Fiji Association for the Deaf utilizes video conferencing to inform their networks on their own platforms, while other forms of information dissemination include SMS/text, phone calls, emails, and radio and TV campaigns. OPD focal points play an important two-way role by also reporting back to the EOC on the status of persons with disabilities in their communities.[61]

LGBTQ+

While lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, and other sexual minority (LBGTQ+) rights have progressed in recent years, the community still faces significant challenges. Current laws prohibit certain forms of discrimination based on sexual orientation but do not allow for same-sex marriage.[62] Victims of violence who were targeted because of their sexual orientation or gender identity often fear community repercussions if they report attacks to police.[63] More than half of LGBTQ+ people reported having been verbally abused due to their sexual orientation and gender identity, and 84% of LGBTQ+ people report physical intimate partner violence, according to a report by the feminist collective DIVA for Equality Fiji.[64] Fiji's census does not enumerate people of diverse sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, and sex characteristics (SOGIESC).[65]

There are efforts to improve SOGIESC inclusion in DRR and humanitarian response. The Rainbow Pride Foundation focuses on LGBTQ+ rights across the board, including in areas linked to climate change and DRR. With support from the Australian Humanitarian Partnership, the Rainbow Pride Foundation has worked on SOGIESC sensitization training in communities with the NDMO and other partners, and it supported SOGIESC inclusion in a Community Based Disaster Risk Management (CBDRM) Manual. It has also worked with Kaleidoscope Diversity Trust in a Fiji-wide consultation with LGBTQ+ communities and stakeholders to develop a policy brief and roadmap on SOGIESC inclusion in climate action, DRR, and humanitarian response.[66]

Economics

Fiji is one of the most economically developed and fastest growing countries among Pacific Island countries, with tourism and sugar cane exports representing the largest growth sectors.[67] Fiji is also the regional hub for services and transportation within the Pacific, particularly flights and shipping. However, the economy faces challenges due to external shocks and disasters, and these challenges are exacerbated by the country's remoteness and fluctuations in international markets that influence agricultural exports and international visitors. Despite being a regional economic leader, Fiji still grapples with significant poverty, which is even higher in rural areas.[68]

Fiji's agriculture sector includes a considerable subsistence sub-sector, in which iTaukei predominantly participate, earning supplementary cash income from copra, cocoa, kava, taro (locally called dalo), pineapples, cassava (manioc), and bananas, or from fishing. Commercial agriculture is oriented significantly

toward garment manufacturing and sugar cane, which is largely produced by ethnically Indian farmers.[69]

The sugar cane industry contributes approximately 2.9% of GDP, generating approximately 16% of total exports with total foreign earnings of FJ$187 million (US$83.2 million) in 2009.[70] The government-owned Fiji Sugar Corporation, incorporated by a 1972 act of parliament, has a monopoly on milling sugar. Sugar production is concentrated on the western side of Viti Levu, with one sugar mill in Lautoka and one in Rarawai, and a third sugar mill on Vanua Levu in Labasa. The biggest market for Fiji's sugar exports is the European Union (EU), with which Fiji has preferential trade agreements.[71] The timber industry has developed since the 1960s, when systematic planting of pine forests began. The garment industry has grown in the last several decades and become a successful industry for Fiji. Nearly nine-tenths of all land is under indigenous Fijian ownership, since the alienation of native land was prohibited in 1874. Non-iTaukei farmers operate on leaseholds of up to 30 years under the Agricultural Landlord and Tenant Act.

Major imports include mineral products, machinery, chemicals, and textiles, with Singapore, Australia, New Zealand, and China being the main sources of imports. Major exports include petroleum products, sugar, fish, clothing, mineral water, and gold, with the main export destinations being Australia, the U.S., and New Zealand.

Tourism is the main activity in the services sector and is an important driver of the economy. Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, approximately 870,309 visitors spent FJ$2 billion (US$915 million) in Fiji across an estimated 1,200 businesses in 2018. The tourism sector employed approximately 119,000 Fijians, contributing more than 30% of Fiji's GDP.[72]

The COVID-19 pandemic was a major setback for many sectors of Fiji's economy, particularly tourism given global restrictions on international travel. The pandemic led to a 15.2% contraction of Fiji's economy in 2020 and a 4.1% economic decline in 2021. Economic growth was expected to rebound to 11.3% in 2022, supported largely by the reopening of international tourism and including positive spillover effects on other economic sectors. There were 636,312 visitor arrivals in 2022, just 7.1% of 2019 levels.[73]

Sectors contributing to the rebound include accommodation and food services; transport and storage; finance and insurance; wholesale and retail trade; and manufacturing and agriculture. Economic recovery is anticipated to broadly continue through 2023 and into 2024.[74]

Government

The Republic of Fiji (Matanitu ko Viti) is a parliamentary republic with a head of state and head of government. The seat of government is located in Suva, on the island of Viti Levu. The head of state is the President who is appointed by Parliament, which chooses between a candidate nominated by the Prime Minister and one nominated by the leader of the opposition. The head of government is the Prime Minister, who is the leader of the majority party in the national legislature.[75]

The legislative branch is the Parliament, elected by the people of Fiji. Parliament makes laws, represents the community in discussions, investigates issues of importance to the community, and scrutinizes the actions of government. The Parliament is a unicameral body, as mandated by the 2013 Constitution, which did away with the previous race-based House of Representatives and Senate and reduced the total number of parliamentary members to 50.[76] However, the Fiji Electoral Commission reviews the parliamentary composition at least one year before a general election and may increase or decrease the total number of members to maintain proportion with the population.[77] In 2022, the Parliament had 55 members, who can either belong to a political party, which most do, or be elected as independent members. Proceedings are chaired by an independent Speaker who is not a member of Parliament.[78]

The Judiciary is independent of Parliament and the Executive and is responsible for interpreting and enforcing the laws of Fiji. Judicial power and authority are exercised by the courts, including the Supreme Court, the Court of Appeal, the High Court, the Magistrates Court, and other courts and tribunals that may be created by law.[79] The legal system is a common law system based on the English model. The most recent Constitution was signed into law on 6 September 2013. Constitutional amendments are proposed as a bill by Parliament and supported by at least three-quarters of its members, followed by referral to the President and then to the Electoral Commission, which conducts a referendum. Passage requires approval by the President and at least three-quarters of registered voters.

The country is administratively divided into four divisions, Central Division, Northern Division, Eastern Division, and Western Division.[80] Each division is led by a commissioner, who plays a role in mainstreaming the Integrated Rural Development Framework and in coordinating government disaster operations at the divisional level.[81] The divisions are further subdivided into 14 provinces — Ba, Bua, Cakaudrove, Kadavu, Lau, Lomaiviti, Macuata, Nadroga and Navosa, Naitasiri, Namosi, Ra, Rewa, Serua, and Tailevu — and one dependency, Rotuma.[82] The 14 provincial councils are overseen by the Fijian Affairs Board.[83]

Environment

Fiji is a tropical island nation of more than 332 islands in the South Pacific. Located approximately 5,069 km (3,150 miles) southwest of Hawaii,[84] Fiji's closest neighbor is Vanuatu, another Melanesian island nation. Many of Fiji's volcanically formed islands feature mountains and small beaches. The mild, tropical climate has only slight seasonal variations. Fiji is vulnerable to hurricanes, particularly from November to January. Fiji has also been affected by extreme El Niño periods, which decrease precipitation.

Geography

Fiji is located in the South Pacific, about two-thirds of the way from Hawaii to New Zealand, at 18°S, 175°E. It has a total land area of 18,274 square (sq) km (7,056 sq miles).[85] The island nation comprises more than 332 volcanically formed islands, and approximately 150 of them are inhabited. The four largest islands are Viti Levu, Vanua Levu, Taveuni, and Kadavu,[86] as shown in Figure 2.[87] The countries closest to Fiji are the other Pacific Island nations of Vanuatu to the west and the Solomon Islands to the northwest.

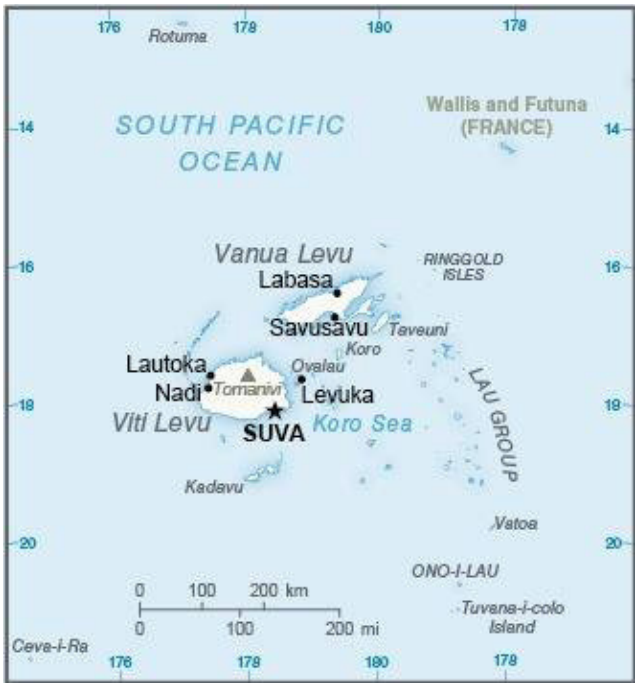


Figure 2: Map of Fiji

Most Fijian islands consist mainly of small beaches and mountains. The main island of Viti Levu is the largest and oldest island and is home to the majority of Fiji's population. Located on Viti Levu is Fiji's tallest mountain, Mount Tomanivi, an extinct volcano measuring 1,323 meters (m; 4,341 feet) high. Vanua Levu is Fiji's second largest island. Together, Viti Levu and Vanua Levu make up 87% of Fiji's total landmass.[88] Vanua Levu is home to Mount Manuka at 1,194 m (3,917 feet) high. The third largest island, Taveuni, hosts Mount Uluigalau at 1,241 m (4,071 feet) high. Kadavu, the fourth

largest island, is home to Mount Buke Levu, which measures 1,158 m (3,800 feet) high. On Gau, the fifth largest island, is located Mount Delaitho, which measures 738 m (2,421 feet) high. The sixth largest island, Ovalau, is home to Mount Delaiovalau, which is 626 m (2,053 feet) high. Mountain climbing is a popular activity among visitors.

Most of Fiji's islands were formed by volcanic events starting some 150 million years ago.[89] Fiji still has some volcanos with thermal activity while others have not erupted in hundreds of years. Koro is a cinder cone volcano measuring 522 m (1,713 feet) high and sitting between Vanua Levu and Viti Levu. Nabukelevu, located on the island of Kadavu, is a complex of lava domes; it last erupted in around 1660 and has its highest point measuring 805 m (2,641 feet). The island of Taveuni comprises a massive shield volcano with more than 100 cones with the summit at 1,241 m (4,071 feet). Taveuni's last known eruption occurred approximately 500 years ago. Today, the island's rich volcanic soil supports virgin rain forests and endemic flora.

Fiji has more than 15,540 sq km (6,000 sq miles) of coral reefs considered to be among the most beautiful in the world, according to the Coral Reef Alliance. The coral reefs attract international tourists to Fiji as well as scientists and conservationists who study the reef system's biodiversity and how to protect it. Fiji's coral reef system contains more than 298 species of hard coral, 1,198 species of reef fish, and 467 species of mollusks.[90]

Borders

As an island nation, Fiji does not share land borders with any other country.

Fiji has 1,129 km (702 miles) of coastline. Fiji does not recognize Tonga's 1972 claim to the Minerva Reefs and their surrounding waters. The Minerva Reefs are a group of two submerged atolls located in the waters surrounded by Fiji, Tonga, and Niue. The Minerva Reefs' 200-nautical mile (nm) exclusive economic zone (EEZ) includes valuable fishing grounds.[91] Tonga's sovereign claim stretches back more than four decades and was prompted by a private group of U.S.-based Libertarians laying claim to it in 1972 to try to create the Republic of Minerva. The South Pacific Forum, and Fiji at the time, recognized Tonga as the owner of the Minerva Reefs, but did not explicitly recognize Tonga's claimed sovereignty. The establishment of the 200 nm EEZ, as described in the 1982 United Nations Convention on the Law of the Seas (UNCLOS), laid the groundwork for Fiji in 2010 to claim the Minerva Reefs.[92] However, subsequent developments in international law have reduced the legal uncertainty of Tonga's claim.[93]

Climate

Fiji has a mild, tropical marine climate with slight seasonal variations. The wet summer season lasts from December through March, when daytime temperatures in Suva average 30-31°C (86-88°F). Humidity during summer is usually high, often reaching 90% or higher. The winter season is typically cooler and drier and occurs from May to October, when daytime temperatures in Suva average 26-27°C (79-81°F). During the coldest months of July to September when cool air sometimes arrives from the south, nighttime temperatures can drop to 14-15°C (57-59°F). Southeast trade winds blow steadily from March to October, with variable winds during the Southern Hemisphere summer.[94]

Fiji is in the hurricane zone, and tropical cyclones are common, typically occurring between November and January. Fiji is also affected by El Niño–Southern Oscillation (ENSO), a climate pattern that recurs across the tropical Pacific every two to seven years and brings variations in winds and sea surface temperatures between the warmer El Niño and cooler La Niña phases.[95] During the most intense El Niño years, such as in 1983 and 1998, Fiji experienced a noticeable decrease in precipitation.[96]

DISASTER OVERVIEW

The hazards that most threaten Fiji are storms, flooding, and drought. The country has nearly annual experiences with tropical cyclones that bring damaging winds and torrential rain. Over the longer-term, climate change will influence these hazards, increasing the risk to Fiji. More extreme if less frequent storms are expected to impact the country, and storm surges combined with higher sea levels mean greater coastal flooding and erosion.

Climate Change

Fiji, like many island nations in Oceania, is very vulnerable to the risks being brought on or exacerbated by climate change. Fiji has extremely high exposure to tropical cyclones and experiences the direct or indirect effects of cyclones on an annual basis. Cyclones frequently result in loss of life and cause significant economic damage, which has hindered economic growth. Fiji is also particularly exposed to rising sea levels, floods, and landslides.

Long-term warming is expected to range between 0.6°C and 2.6°C (1.08°F and 4.68°F) by the 2090s when compared with the 1986–2005 baseline. Warming in Fiji is expected to be below the global average, and the range of possible temperatures shows the uncertainty that underlies predictions based on the precise emissions pathway, but average temperatures will nonetheless rise. Figure 3 depicts projected average annual temperature in Fiji under Representative Concentration Pathways (RCP) 2.6 (the lowest emission pathway, blue) and RCP8.5 (the highest emission pathway, red), with shading representing the standard deviation of the model ensemble.[97] The RCPs are greenhouse gas (GHG) concentration trajectories adopted by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) as an analytical tool. Four pathways, RCPs, were used in the IPCC 5th Assessment Report (AR5) for climate modeling and research; all of the RCPs are possible depending on the volume of GHG emitted in the future.

Heat waves are projected to increase in frequency with climate change. Fiji already regularly experiences high maximum temperatures, with an average monthly maximum of around 28°C (82.4°F) and an average February (middle of summer) maximum of 29°C (84.2°F). All emission pathway models project statistically significant increases in the annual probability of Fiji experiencing a heat wave.[98]

Fiji is highly vulnerable to climate extremes, including drought and extreme rainfall, and increases in the frequency and intensity of such events could threaten livelihoods, infrastructure, and human wellbeing. The frequency of tropical cyclones affecting Fiji is projected to decrease, though to what extent is uncertain; however, the intensity (wind speed) of cyclones may increase. Key community and economic vulnerabilities include the country's subsistence agriculture sector, coastal and marine resources, including coral reefs, freshwater resources, and land management, as Fiji documented in 2020 in its Third National Communication (TNC) to

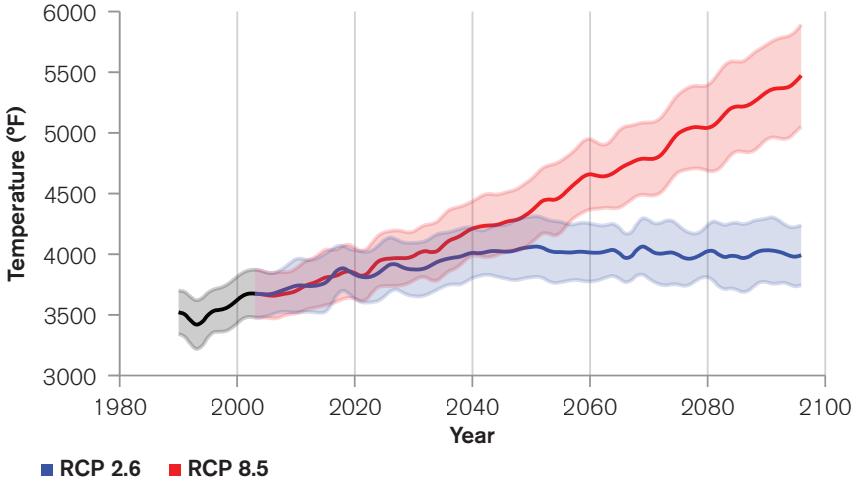


Figure 3: Fiji's Average Temperatures on Low (blue) and High (red) Emissions Pathways

the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC).[99]

Sea level rise will cause a range of impacts in Fiji, including potential inundation, coastal erosion, saline intrusion, and exacerbated risks of storm surges and king tides. Fiji's vulnerability to these hazards is heightened as the country has significant assets and infrastructure with high exposure to climate-related damage. Degradation of key natural resources is considered inevitable, as coral reefs and associated fisheries are significantly threatened and soil and water quality are likely to decline. As in many countries around the world, the impacts of climate change are likely to most affect Fiji's poor, marginalized, and remote communities. Due to the effects of climate change, the number of Fijians being pushed into poverty and hardship is projected to increase from 25,700 people per year to an estimated 32,400 per year by 2050. The growing cost of climate change-related disasters is likely to significantly rise as floods and cyclones are predicted to lead to asset losses up to 30% higher than current averages. It would cost an estimated FJ$9.3 billion (US$4.5 billion) over 10 years to reduce Fiji's climate vulnerability through a range of measures such as strengthening towns and cities, and improving infrastructure, agriculture, and fisheries.[100]

Fiji has ratified the Paris Climate Agreement and submitted its Updated Nationally Determined Contribution (2020), which emphasizes the need for external support to meet the high costs of climate change mitigation and adaptation. Fiji passed the Climate Change Act 2021,[101] which provides guidance on developing long term climate change measures and recognizes links between gender equality, social inclusion, and the SDGs.[102] Fiji is a member state of the Vulnerable Twenty (V20) Group of Ministers of Finance of the Climate Vulnerable Forum, which is a dedicated cooperation initiative that has grown to include 55 economies considered systemically vulnerable to climate change.[103]

Hazards

Fiji most experiences and is affected by storms, flooding, and drought. Figure 4 shows Fiji's natural hazards in terms of the number of people affected during the period 1980-2020. Figure 5 shows natural hazards by average annual occurrence during the same period.[104] By both metrics, storms, flooding, and drought rank as the top three natural hazards for Fiji in the past three decades.

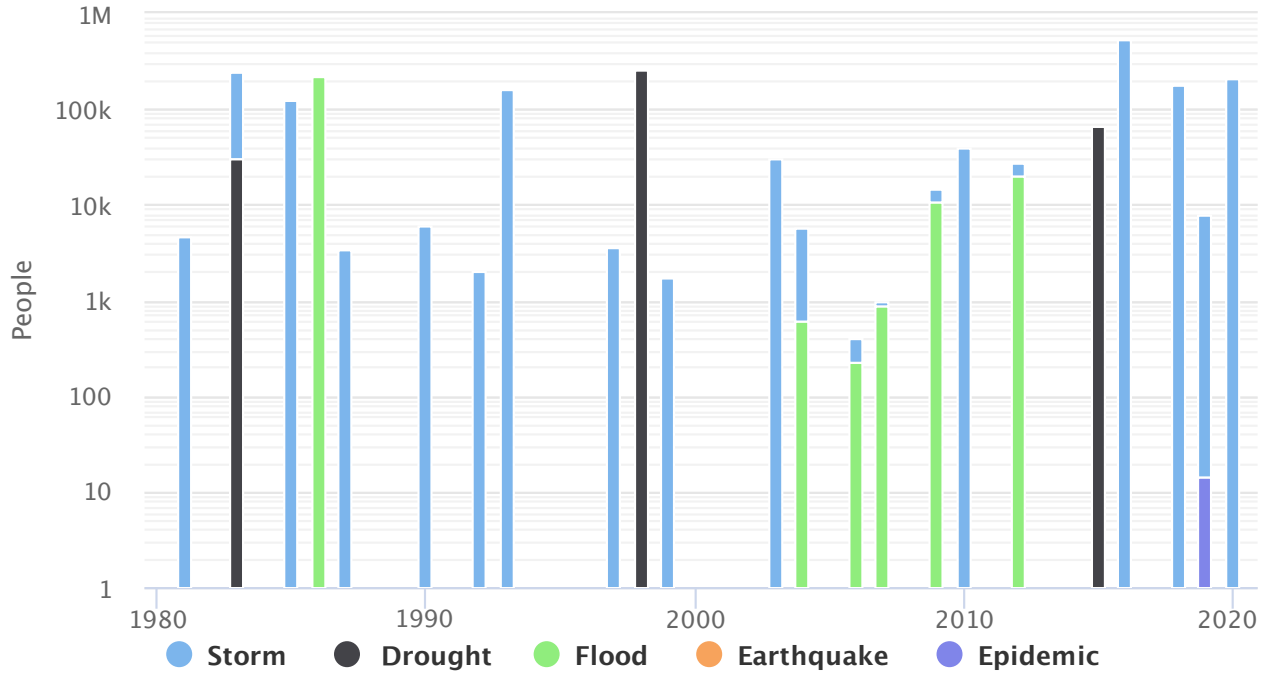


Figure 4: Number of People Affected by Fiji's Natural Hazards (1980-2020)

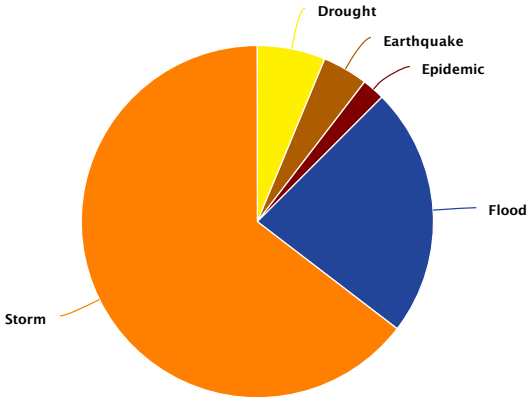


Figure 5: Average Annual Occurrence of Fiji's Natural Hazards (1980-2020)

Drought

Fiji has a significant exposure and a high degree of vulnerability to drought. An increase in drought frequency and intensity could significantly threaten human health and wellbeing, livelihoods, and infrastructure. Droughts usually occur during El Niño periods. Fiji may experience two primary types of drought – meteorological, which is usually associated with lack of precipitation, and hydrological, which is usually associated with lack of surface and subsurface water flow, potentially originating in river basins. Fiji currently faces an annual median probability of around 5% for severe meteorological drought. The future drought probability is projected to increase to around 10% under a wide range of climate change scenarios.[105] While the frequency of future droughts overall in Fiji is highly uncertain, research aimed at regional scales suggested very high increases in the frequency of severe droughts in Oceania.[106]

Flooding

Fiji has a high exposure to flooding, especially coastal flooding. With the country's very high exposure to tropical storms, Fiji is also exposed to their associated hazards, including storm surge and flooding. The accounting of floods by the Government of Fiji shows significant losses are caused by river or fluvial flooding (2.6% of GDP per year) and surface water or pluvial flooding (1.6% of GDP per year). However, the government also suggests flood risk is underreported due to a number of smaller scale flood events that are not reported. Historically, flooding is correlated with La Niña periods, and it is usually driven by heavy and prolonged precipitation caused by cyclones leading to flooding. Flooding is also driven by coastal dynamics, particularly storm surges associated with cyclones, but also by swells driven by deep depressions and high-pressure systems in the neighboring seas. Flooding is a key issue for water quality, as more than 20% of water resource assets – e.g., intake stations, boreholes, pumping stations, and water treatment plants – lack any waterproofing. Flooding also poses a risk to the energy infrastructure, with 16–18% of grid and transformer assets immediately vulnerable to a 1-in-5-year flood, and a further 18–20% with potential vulnerability to localized flooding.[107] Among more pessimistic projections is the scenario that devastating but rare flooding events currently occurring once every 250 years on average will occur every 5-25 years in Fiji by the end of the century.[108]

Storms/Tropical Cyclones

Fiji has a very high exposure to tropical storms, which exacerbate flooding risk. A large number of tropical cyclones (TC) pass through the Melanesia region of the Pacific. They also pose a major economic threat, costing Fiji approximately 5% of GDP annually. Known risks of climate change interacting with cyclone hazards include that sea level rise exacerbates the damage caused by cyclone-induced storm surges. While predicting future cyclone risk due to climate change is complex, global modelling indicates a general trend of reduced overall cyclone frequency but increased intensity and increased frequency of the most extreme cyclone events, with the general trend expected to extend to Fiji as well. Storms that have caused significant loss of life or economic and infrastructural damage in Fiji include TC Evan in 2012, TC Winston in 2016, and TC Josie in 2018.[109]

Others

Fiji less frequently experiences other hazards, including earthquakes, tsunamis, epidemics,

and landslides. Earthquakes and tsunamis have not frequently occurred with great human impact, but when they do occur, they can cause significant impacts on Fiji. In September 1953, the magnitude 6.8 Suva Earthquake occurred just off the southeast shore of Viti Levu and generated a tsunami that killed eight people and damaged infrastructure. During the period 1970-2016, ten earthquake events occurred in which five people were killed and two tsunamis occurred with no fatalities.[110] While high-impact tsunamis have not occurred often in Fiji's recent history, tsunami is ranked as the natural hazard posing the greatest risk for Fiji in terms of exposure by the INFORM Risk Index.[111] Landslide events are often associated with storms and excessive precipitation. The government identifies soil erosion and landslides during extreme climate events as a particular risk to key water infrastructure.[112] Fiji faces some epidemic risk, with COVID-19 being the most recent significant event. Fiji held off widespread local transmission of COVID-19 until mid-2021. As of 3 February 2023, there had been 68,848 confirmed cases with 883 deaths, and as of 19 January 2023 a total of 1,552,115 vaccine doses had been administered.[113] Fiji is also susceptible to mosquito-borne diseases. The country experienced large dengue epidemics in 1997-1998 with more than 24,000 cases[114] and in 2013-2014 with more than 15,000 cases.[115] A significant outbreak also occurred in 2018, with more than 4,000 dengue cases reported in Fiji.[116]

History of Natural Disasters

The following is a list of natural disasters in Fiji in the last ten years, starting with the most recent.

2022 January – TC Cody

On 10 January 2022, a tropical depression transformed into Category 1 TC Cody. Significant rain affected all of Fiji the week of 8-15 January and made most of the Western and Central Divisions water-logged and highly susceptible to flooding. The Western Division experienced extensive flooding, and some communities in the Central and Eastern Divisions were also affected, especially within the district of Wainibuka and the island of Ovalau.[117]

Due to the on-going COVID-19 pandemic, the Fiji Red Cross Society (FRCS) EOC, activated on 10 January, initially operating remotely with most communications conducted virtually. COVID-19 safety protocols were in place during the response, including restrictions on entering the physical EOC. Coordination with the Divisions was conducted over online Zoom meetings to prepare divisional managers to support FRCS branches and volunteers and to set up the FRCS Divisional EOCs. COVID-19 standard operating procedures (SOP) were in place in the evacuation centers.[118]

2021 April onward – COVID-19

Fiji held off significant local transmission of COVID-19 until mid-2021. As of 3 February 2023, there had been 68,848 confirmed cases with 883 deaths, and as of 19 January 2023, a total of 1,552,115 vaccine doses had been administered. The number of confirmed cases peaked at 7,268 reported for the week of 26 July 2021. Cases slowly tapered over the following few months, decreasing to 821 cases reported for the week of 20 September, 276 cases reported for the week of 18 October, and 29 cases reported for the week of 15 November 2021. Cases spiked again in December 2021 but peaked at 2,959 cases reported for the week of 3 January 2022 and tapered to less than 200 cases weekly in February.[119]

2021 January– TC Ana and TC Bina

On 30 January 2021, TC Ana made landfall as a Category 2 cyclone, just over a month after TC Yasa struck. TC Ana wreaked havoc across Vanua Levu and Viti Levu, where it heavily damaged crops, weakened house structures, and caused power failures. Heavy rainfall caused rivers to overflow their banks and extensive flooding of roads, villages, towns, and communities.

Very high seas and storm surges caused coastal inundation.[120] The worst impacted communities were in Macuata and Cakaudrove, which were still recovering from TC Yasa.

One day after TC Ana's arrival, on 31 January 2021, TC Bina emerged and brought more rain. The accumulated rainfall from TC Bina, TC Ana, and TC Yasa, which all struck in fewer than seven weeks, caused extensive flooding across all four Divisions and left people in urgent need of shelter, health services, WASH services, and livelihoods assistance. There was dire need for access to clean water, and the risk of leptospirosis, typhoid, dengue, and diarrhea was acute.[121]

A total of 14,755 evacuees in 422 evacuation centers were supported as part of early warning and response efforts. Later recovery efforts were hampered by the widespread community transmission of COVID-19, which started in mid-April 2021. The restrictions put in place by the Fiji Government to contain the spread of the COVID-19 virus effectively suspended the FRCS' TC Yasa/Ana operation from mid-April until mid-September. There was no ability to move personnel or logistics from Viti Levu to operational areas on Vanua Levu, which were the most affected by TC Yasa and TC Ana.

2020 December – TC Yasa

On 17 December 2020, TC Yasa made landfall as a Category 5 cyclone. It was the most destructive cyclone since TC Winston in 2016, and it caused extensive damage across Vanua Levu and affected an estimated 97,000 people. TC Yasa led to at least four fatalities, left one person missing, sent more than 23,000 people into 183 evacuation centers, and severely damaged entire villages.[122] It caused extensive damage in Bua and parts of Macuata and Cakaudrove provinces. The cyclone also caused damage in the Yasawa, Lomaiviti, and Lau groups of islands.[123]

2020 April-May – Leptospirosis, Typhoid, Dengue, and Diarrhea (LTDD)

On 28 April 2020, the Ministry of Health warned the public of a rise in leptospirosis, typhoid, dengue, and diarrhea (LTDD) diseases following TC Harold, which struck on 8 April.[124] On 25 May, the Minister of Health, Dr. Ifereimi Waqainabete, reported that seven people had died from leptospirosis to date that year, compared to ten people over the same period in 2019. He also stated that Fiji had recorded 791 cases of dengue fever between January and April 2020, with most cases centered in the northern and central parts of the country. The Minister said LTDD were climate-sensitive diseases with a spike in cases during wet weather, which was evident in Kadavu, Lau, and some coastal communities in the Western Division, as well as in the north and central parts of the country.[125] Leptospirosis can be transmitted by contact with contaminated water, especially if someone has cuts or wounds on their skin. Typhoid and diarrhea are, for the most part, food- and water-borne. Dengue is transmitted by mosquitoes.

2020 April – Flooding

On 28 April, Fiji authorities reportedly announced that flooding had caused road closures in parts of the country. That week, heavy rains fell on areas that had been badly hit by TC Harold, and they included Vanua Levu, Taveuni and nearby smaller islands in the Lau and Lomaiviti groups, the eastern and western parts and the interior of Viti Levu, and Kadavu.[126] On 29 April, the NDMO issued heavy rain and flash-flood warnings and said a strong wind and rough sea alert remained in force for Southern Lau, Southern Koro, and Kadavu. People were urged to evacuate.[127]

2020 April – TC Harold

On 8 April 2020, TC Harold arrived as a Category 4 cyclone that moved from the west in a southeasterly direction towards the southern part of Fiji waters. TC Harold brought heavy rain that

led to widespread flooding. An estimated 10,000 people were displaced, including 6,240 people who sheltered in the 250 evacuation centers that were opened across the country. The main islands of Viti Levu and Vanua Levu experienced landslides and flooded crossings. There was also significant damage on Kadavu, Vatulele, and the Southern Lau islands. These islands' remoteness, along with damaged communications and COVID-19 travel restrictions, made damage assessment challenging. On 9 April, a joint aerial assessment was conducted with the NDMO and FRCS, with the Royal New Zealand Air Force confirming significant damage to dwellings, WASH facilities, food, and livelihoods. The worst affected areas were Kadavu and Southern Lau.[128]

TC Harold was the second-strongest tropical cyclone to affect both Vanuatu and Fiji. The Government of Fiji estimated that the cost of damage caused by TC Harold was FJ$100 million (US$45.4 million), based on a detailed damage assessment conducted 13-28 April 2020. Damage to the agriculture sector alone cost an estimated FJ$27.8 million (US$12.6 million). The worst affected areas experienced 90% of crops destroyed, which mostly consisted of subsistence crops. Beyond Fiji, TC Harold also caused widespread destruction in the Solomon Islands, Vanuatu, and Tonga.[129]

2020 March – Landslides

On 20 March 2020, national authorities reported three people died and one person was injured in a landslide in Namosi province on Viti Levu. The NDMO said flooding had closed roads in low lying parts of Viti Levu.[130] The landslide and flooding was triggered by rain. A heavy rain and flash flood warning was in place for most of Fiji. By 23 March, road access was cut off by flood waters, isolating communities in Nausori Province and flooding damaged buildings in Navua Province.[131]

2019 November-2020 January – Measles

Fiji reported 28 cases of measles from 7 November 2019 to 6 January 2020, the date when the last locally transmitted case was reported. All cases were in the Central Division, with the most cases in the Serua/Namosi subdivision (12 cases) and Suva subdivision (9 cases).[132] On 11 December 2019, Fiji's Ministry of Health received 200,000 measles vaccines, funded by the Australian Government, to boost Fiji's measles response.[133] On 19 February, more than a month after the measles outbreak was declared over, the Ministry warned the public that a single travel-related case of measles had arrived in Nadi airport from the Philippines on 9 February. Fiji has an effective immunization program and measles is rare in the country; however, outbreaks in the region still pose a risk for Fiji.[134]

2019 December-2020 January – TC Sarai and TC Tino

On 24 December 2019, Fiji was hit by TC Sarai and on 18 January 2020 by TC Tino, both of which were Category 2 cyclones. They brought strong winds and heavy rain and caused landslides and flooding in low lying areas in parts of the Central, Western, and Northern Divisions. The main island of Viti Levu experienced road closures and power outages. The worst affected areas experienced destruction of crops and livestock. Housing was damaged in some areas, and the government activated four community evacuation centers. The National Disaster Management Council declared a state of alert for the country and EOCs were activated at national and sub-national (Divisional and district) levels.[135] Damage caused by TC Tino in Fiji's northernmost areas was estimated to have cost the government US$2.8 million.[136]

2019 April – Flooding

On 23 April 2019, two children reportedly drowned in flood waters in two separate incidents over the Easter weekend. In Tailevu, a 15-year-old boy drowned after being swept away while swimming. In Ovalau, a three-year-old boy died after slipping in a drain. The Fiji Meteorological Service had heavy rain and flood warnings in place.[137]

2019 January – TC Mona

On 7 January 2019, TC Mona approached approximately 177 km (110 miles) to the southeast of Ongea Ndriti Island, located in Fiji's Lau Islands group. It had passed east of Fiji's two main islands, Viti Levu and Vanua Levu. Although Fiji did not sustain a direct hit, gales extended toward the southern Lau group, and approximately 2,000 people sheltered in 40 evacuation centers.[138] A flood warning was in place for low lying areas, small streams, and areas adjacent to major rivers including in Vanua Levu, Taveuni, and the eastern half of Viti Levu, and 27 roads were closed around the country mainly due to flooding.[139]

2018-2019 – Dengue

On 3 September 2019, Fiji's Minister of Health stated there had been more than 2,500 cases of dengue fever in the country that year, with at least one person having died from the mosquito-borne disease.[140] In 2018, nine people in Fiji died from dengue, and there were 4,000 cases officially recorded.[141]

2018 April – TC Keni

On 10 April 2018, TC Keni passed to the west of Viti Levu as a Category 3 storm, bringing destructive winds, heavy rainfall, and flash flooding, particularly on the island of Kadavu. Nine people were confirmed dead, and more than 8,000 people were displaced.[142] Fiji's NDMO Director, Anare Leweniqila, stated that 804 houses were damaged on the island of Kadavu, 201 of which were destroyed.[143] Up to 2,031 people reportedly sheltered in 104 evacuation centers.[144] TC Keni compounded the devastation TC Josie had wrought the previous week, including significant flooding, particularly in the west and north of Viti Levu.

Northern Fiji suffered more than US$3 million in damage from TC Josie and TC Keni. The cyclones caused about US$1 million in damage to agriculture and US$700,000 in damage to roads and other infrastructure in Fiji's Northern Division, where two schools were damaged. The sugar industry was particularly hard hit with damage to farms and the Labasa sugar mill amounting to some US$1.2 million.[145]

2018 March-April – TC Josie

TC Josie formed on 31 March close to Fiji and strengthened as it moved southeast.[146] It continued to pass to Fiji's southwest on 1 April.[147] Parts of Fiji, including Kadavu, Matuku, and Ono-i-Lau, felt damaging gale force winds.[148] TC Josie led to six fatalities, primarily on Viti Levu, sent more than 2,300 people to seek shelter in 40 evacuation centers, and drove flooding that affected 3,000 people in the North, Western, and Central Divisions.[149]

2018 March-September – Meningococcal

On 20 March 2018, the Ministry of Health declared an outbreak of meningococcal C. The last confirmed case was reported in September. From 1 January to 25 November 2018, there were 85 cases reported, of which 36 were laboratory confirmed, 10 probable, and 39 suspected cases. There were six confirmed deaths, of which five were children under the age of five. The National Meningococcal Disease Taskforce coordinated the response to the outbreak, including strengthening surveillance, laboratory diagnostics, clinical management, public health interventions, and risk communications.[150]

2018 February – TC Gita

TC Gita affected several countries, including Fiji, Samoa, Tonga, and Vanuatu. It entered Fiji's territorial waters on 13 February 2018, passing the Southern Lau Group.[151] Residents on low-lying islands said several homes were flattened and crops were wiped out when the cyclone pounded their villages. Although Fiji was not directly hit, thousands of people on islands in the Lau Group faced wind gusts of up to 190 km (118 miles) per hour and lost communications.[152] No casualties or injuries were reported in Fiji, but three buildings were completely destroyed and four were partially damaged on Ono-I-Lau island.[153]

2016 December – Tropical Depression 04F, Flooding, and Landslides

As Tropical Depression 04F passed close to Fiji, it brought heavy rain that flooded roads, inundated sugar cane fields, and caused landslides. Across Fiji, 1,716 people sought refuge in 46 evacuation centers and another 1,817 were living in tents, said the NDMO Director, Akapusi Tuifagalele.[154] Many roads and fields were underwater nationwide, including the main road linking Suva to the international airport in Nadi. Rakiraki, in the north of the country's largest island, suffered major flooding. The worst-hit areas in western Fiji were still recovering from TC Winston, which had struck in February. Around 50,000 people faced water disruptions in the Central Division after the tropical depression triggered landslides, which damaged a main pipe transporting water from the Waimanu pumping station to the Tamavua Water Treatment Plant. The initial assessment of damages from the tropical depression totaled more than US$5.3 million.[155]

2016 April – TC Zena

As the country struggled to recover from the devastating TC Winston, TC Zena impacted Fiji on 7 April as a Category 1 tropical cyclone. Three people died, and essential services in Fiji's Western Division were damaged during flooding, which started before the arrival of TC Zena. More than 12,000 people, most of them in the Western Division, took shelter in 244 evacuation centers as a result of the flooding and the cyclone. The country's key vegetable growing area, the Sigatoka Valley, was badly flooded. Agricultural rehabilitation work in the Northern and Western Divisions after TC Winston was substantively set back or lost in the flooding. The Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) of the UN purchased emergency seed supplies abroad for delivery to Fiji.[156]

2016 February - TC Winston

TC Winston was the worst storm in Fiji's recorded history. Between 20 and 21 February 2016, TC Winston swept through the country as a Category 5 storm. It packed sustained winds of up to 230 km (143 miles) per hour with wind gusts of up to 325 km (202 miles) per hour. The cyclone was one of the most violent storms ever registered in the Southern Hemisphere and left a trail of destruction across Fiji. A total of 44 people were confirmed dead, and up to 32,200 houses were damaged or destroyed. Water supply, power, health and educational services, and infrastructure were significantly damaged, including 229 schools, health centers, and other public buildings. Farming and fishing communities were significantly impacted. More than 50,000 people took shelter in more than 1,000 evacuation centers.[157] TC Winston highlighted Fiji's extreme vulnerability to climate-related disasters. The cyclone affected nearly 62% of Fiji's population across all four Divisions[158] and caused losses estimated at US$1.38 billion (31% of GDP).[159] The Fiji NDMO led the response with all national government-led clusters activated and significant support from the international community, including foreign miliary assets. More than one year later, health practitioners suggested that high levels of depression in Fiji were linked to TC Winston. The World Health Organization (WHO) estimated in April 2017 that there were more than 30,000 people in the country still living with depression in the wake of the cyclone.[160]

2015-2016 – Drought

During 2015 and 2016, many communities in Fiji experienced the effects of an El Niño-induced drought, with farmers losing crops, water supplies drying out, and water trucking undertaken. A drought warning was in place, and the Government reported in September 2015 that at least 30,000 people were affected.[161] In December, it was reported that 150 water tanks would be installed in the most drought-affected areas in Fiji's Western Division.[162] The UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) reported on 8 January 2016 that 67,000 people in Fiji were reliant on water deliveries as a result of the drought in the Western, Eastern, and Northern Divisions.[163] This was part of a

regional drought brought on by El Niño that affected many Pacific Island countries and territories from 2015 through 2017.[164]

2015 March – TC Pam

On 14 March 2015, TC Pam passed Fiji approximately 900 km (559 miles) to the southwest of Nadi, and the storm brought heavy swells, winds, and rain with flash flooding risk. Although it did not directly hit Fiji, its proximity prompted 156 people to seek shelter in four evacuation centers and for the Northern Division to activate its EOC.[165] TC Pam struck Fiji's neighbor, Vanuatu, with devastating impacts.[166]

2014 December – Flooding and Landslides

Heavy rainfall in early December 2014 led to flooding and landslides. The flooding led to fatalities in two separate incidents, when individuals were swept away as they tried to cross flooded bridges and rivers.[167] A landslide in the Savura Hills affected up to 70,000 people as it washed away two water main trunk lines, and it majorly disrupted Fiji's Colonial War Memorial Hospital, which completely or partially closed cancer services, women's health, and dental and eye clinics due to the water supply problem.[168] Two evacuation centers were opened in the Central Division.[169] The heavy rain was unexpected. Despite occurring at the beginning of the wet season, El Niño had been waxing and waning, and it impacted countries' ability to predict weather patterns.[170]

2014 March – Flooding

Flooding in Fiji displaced at least 400 people to 11 evacuation centers, according to the NDMO director.[171] The high waters were exacerbated by TC Kofi passing to the southwest of Fiji on 2 March 2014.[172] Residents of two villages in the Naitasiri Province agreed to relocate after all 80 homes in one village, Sawani, were flooded along with half the village of Dalilasekau.[173] Flooding caused at least US$1.8 million in damage to crops and livestock.[174]

2013-2014 – Dengue

Fiji started experiencing a dengue outbreak in November 2013. There had been 25,300 clinically suspected dengue cases by the week of 16 May 2013, by which time cases had been in decline since late March. Over the course of the epidemic, the center of the spread had moved from Suva to the Western Division.[175] Australia had donated AU$750,000 (US$519,300) to the Fiji Government to purchase medical supplies and support a public health awareness campaign, and China donated US$50,000.[176]

2012 December – TC Evan

TC Evan struck Fiji on 16 and 17 December as a Category 4 cyclone. It had gained strength after striking Samoa and then the French Territory of Wallis and Futuna days earlier.[177] TC Evan was the biggest cyclone to hit Fiji in 20 years, with winds gusting over 230 km (143 miles) per hour. It brought flooding across the country, including the Navua and Rewa Rivers. At the peak of the emergency, nearly 14,000 people were accommodated in 242 evacuation centers in Northern, Western, Central, and Eastern Divisions.[178] The total cost of damage from TC Evan in Fiji was estimated at US$108 million, or about 2.6% of GDP. This cost included almost US$70 million in damage to physical assets and US$41 million identified as loss to short- and medium-term economic flows, with the figures coming from the country's first ever Post-Disaster Needs Assessment.[179]

2012 January – Flood

Flooding occurred 21 January through 12 February 2012 after a trough of low pressure brought heavy rain over western Fiji. At the height of the flooding event, a total of 64 evacuation centers were active, accommodating 4,561 people.[180]

Country Risks

Risk calculation takes into account exposure to hazards, vulnerability, and coping capacity. Addressing all of these elements is important in

reducing and mitigating disaster risk. Various indices emphasize structural or institutional risk while others emphasize hazards or losses (human and economic). Regardless of emphasis, disaster risk calculations use some form of the equation:

Disaster Risk = (Hazard × Vulnerability) / Capacity[181]

Taken from the UN Office for Disaster Risk Reduction (UNDRR) glossary, some definitions will help clarify this formula:

- Capacity - The combination of strengths, attributes, and resources available within an organization, community, or society to manage and reduce disaster risks and strengthen resilience.
- Disaster risk - The potential loss of life, injury, or destroyed or damaged assets, which could occur to a system, society, or a community in a specific period of time, determined probabilistically as a function of hazard, exposure, vulnerability, and capacity.
- Hazard - A process, phenomenon, or human activity that may cause loss of life, injury, or other health impacts, property damage, social and economic disruption, or environmental degradation.
- Vulnerability - The conditions determined by physical, social, economic, and environmental factors or processes, which increase the susceptibility of an individual, a community, assets, or systems to the impacts of hazards.[182]

In general, the goal of indexing risk is to inform decision makers and DRR and CCA practitioners of the level of risk to and underlying capacity of the target community. The various risk calculation models support proactive crisis management frameworks and are helpful for prioritizing allocation of resources and for coordinating actions focused on anticipating, mitigating, and preparing for humanitarian emergencies.

INFORM Risk Profile

INFORM is a collaboration of the Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) Reference Group on Risk, Early Warning, and Preparedness with the European Commission. It is a multi-stakeholder forum for developing shared, quantitative analysis relevant to humanitarian crises and disasters. The Joint Research Center of European Commission is the scientific lead. There are three operational dashboards: INFORM Risk, INFORM Severity, and INFORM Climate Change.

INFORM Risk is an open-source risk assessment for humanitarian crises and disasters. It can support decisions about prevention, preparedness, and response.[183] The index measures the risk of humanitarian crises and disasters in 191 countries. The INFORM model is based on the standard dimensions of risk: Hazards and Exposure, Vulnerability, and Lack of Coping Capacity. The first dimension measures the natural and human hazards that pose the risk. The second and third dimensions cover population factors that can mitigate against or exacerbate the risk. The Vulnerability dimension considers the strength of individuals and households relative to a crisis while the Lack of Coping Capacity dimension considers factors of institutional strength.[184]

The INFORM model is split into different levels to provide a quick overview of the underlying factors leading to humanitarian risk. INFORM gives each country a risk score of 1-10 (1 being the lowest and 10 the highest) for each of the dimensions, categories, and components of risk, as well as an overall risk score.[185] The higher the score the more at risk a country is to disasters. In the 2023 INFORM Risk Index, Fiji had an overall risk of 2.7/10, which INFORM categorizes as the "Low" risk class and ranks 127 out of 191 countries. The Hazards and Exposure dimension score takes into account a combination of both natural and human hazards, and Fiji rated 2.2/10. The Vulnerability dimension score was 3.4/10, and the Lack of Coping Capacity dimension score was 2.7/10.

Within the Hazards and Exposure dimension, tsunami, 8.0/10, was deemed the natural hazard with the highest risk exposure. Within the Vulnerability dimension, economic aid dependency measured as the highest socio-economic vulnerability at a 3.4/10 risk. In the Lack of Coping Capacity dimension, Governance was rated the highest institutional risk, rated at 4.5/10.[186] Figure 6 graphically depicts the INFORM Risk Index 2023 overall and category rankings for Fiji.[187]

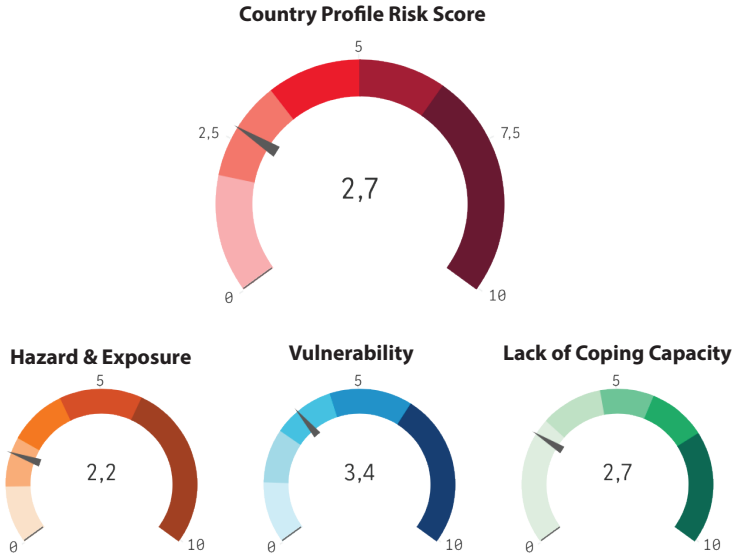


Figure 6: INFORM Risk Index, Fiji (2023)

World Risk Report

The WorldRiskReport by Bündnis Entwicklung Hilft, an alliance of German NGOs, strives to raise awareness of disaster risk among the global public and political decision-makers and to provide practitioners with data to promote faster orientation to complex situations – i.e., societies experiencing disasters. This effort stems from the perception that disaster risks are not solely determined by the occurrence, intensity, or duration of extreme events. Social factors, political conditions, and economic structures play an important role in turning these events into crises. Thus, this index is based on the assumption that every society can take precautions – e.g., effective disaster preparedness and management – to reduce the impact of extreme events and lower the risk of disasters.

The WorldRiskReport calculates the level of risk a country faces based on a formula of exposure to hazards and vulnerability. It provides an assessment of the risk that countries will confront disasters but does not indicate probabilities for the emergence of disasters, nor does it forecast the timing of future disasters. This index uses 100 indicators that include risk, hazard exposure, vulnerability, and coping capacity (as defined above), and adds two others:

- Susceptibility - The disposition to suffer damage in the event of extreme natural events. Susceptibility relates to structural characteristics and frameworks of societies.
- Adaptation - A long-term process that also includes structural changes and comprises measures and strategies that address and try to deal with future negative impacts of natural hazards and climate change. Analogous to "lack of coping capacity," the lack of adaptive capacities is included in the Index.

In the 2022 WorldRiskReport, Fiji ranked 74th of 192 countries wherein the lower the rank, the greater risk the country faces. Fiji's total Index score was 6.54 (on a scale of 0-100 wherein the lower the number the less risk a country faces), putting it in the "high" risk class. The component scores were:

- Exposure: 2.79 (high)
- Vulnerability: 15.33 (low)
- Susceptibility: 17.05 (medium)
- Lack of Coping Capacity: 11.74 (medium)
- Lack of Adaptive Capacity: 18.01 (very low)

For comparison, Fiji's score is higher than the regional (Oceania) median of 4.15 but much lower than the sub-regional (Melanesia) median of 12.63. This arises from the fact that several sub-regions of Oceania are home to countries in the highest risk classes in the index while others, particularly Polynesia, are home to countries in the lowest risk class. In terms of Exposure, Fiji is above the median for Oceania

(1.23) but below that for Melanesia (7,71) as Fiji is exposed to extreme weather but less exposed to other hazards. In the Vulnerability dimension, the country is, again, above the median for Oceania (13.20) but below that for Melanesia (20.88) in a reflection that, although it is somewhat aid dependent, it has a relatively lower proportion of inherently vulnerable groups. Under Susceptibility, Fiji is well above the median for Oceania (9.85) and just slightly below that for Melanesia (18.44) due, to a great extent, to the country's high proportion of remote communities. In the Lack of Coping Capacity dimension, Fiji is also above the median for Oceania (10.90) but slightly below that for Melanesia (11.82) due to some governance challenges. Finally, on the Lack of Adaptive Capacity score, Fiji sits far below the medians for both Oceania (33.39) and Melanesia (43.74) in a reflection of the country's concentrated investment in capacity-building and regional or international partnerships.[188]

Global Climate Risk

The Global Climate Risk Index (CRI) developed by Germanwatch analyzes impacts of extreme weather in terms of both fatalities and economic loss. The index is based on the Munich Re (a re-insurance company) NatCatSERVICE databases, among the most complete databases in the world in these categories of loss. The CRI examines disaster impacts in both absolute terms (e.g., number of fatalities) and in comparative, relative terms that allow analysts to set events and their impacts alongside each other to assess how a given country or community used its strengths or struggled due to its weaknesses in the face of an extreme event. The countries ranking highest on the CRI experience either frequent smaller-scale weather events or rare but extraordinary events. In sum, the CRI allows DRR and disaster management practitioners to consider how exposures and vulnerabilities will be impacted by climate change. The two different CRI measures – most impacted countries in a single year and most impacted countries over 20 years – offer analysts an opportunity to tease apart the effects of rare but major events versus frequent, cumulative events.

The major events examined by the CRI are tropical cyclones (typhoons). The key takeaway is that countries with high exposure to such storms – either frequent small ones or rare massive ones – will be preparing for less predictable, potentially less frequent, but probably more powerful typhoons under climate change scenarios. The CRI cites various DRR and CCA efforts in countries exposed to hydrometeorological hazards, and it points to initiatives like the Pacific Catastrophe Risk Assessment and Financing Initiative (PCRAFI), a regional risk pool for disaster risk management (DRM) and financing solutions for Pacific Island countries. PCRAFI provides insurance against typhoons, earthquakes, and tsunamis in parallel to Pacific Resilience Program initiatives to bolster early warning and recovery capacity. Germanwatch also points to the CRI findings as a clear reason to improve global climate change financing programs to ensure that the most affected countries – many of which are also least developed states – do not experience worsening development outcomes because of disaster losses. The CRI cites outcomes from the COVID-19 pandemic as examples of how simultaneous or consecutive disasters can erode resiliency in the absence of international solidarity funding.

In the 2021 CRI, based on single-year (2019) data, Fiji ranks 75th as it did experience deadly and damaging storms that were, nonetheless, not the worst storms worldwide that year. In the 20-year data table, Fiji ranks 19th of 180 countries; it has experienced human and material losses in absolute terms over the period, earning it ranks of 92 and 80 in the average fatalities per year and average losses (in terms of GDP) per year respectively. At the same time, its average fatalities per 100,000 inhabitants and average losses per unit GDP over the period earn in ranks of 17 and 12, respectively. Thus, for its size, the country experiences regular, significant damage from extreme weather on an almost annual basis and can expect more extreme storms under climate change scenarios.[189]

ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE FOR DISASTER MANAGEMENT

The National Disaster Management Council (NDMC) is the overarching disaster management body with responsibility for ensuring policy coherence. The National Disaster Management Office (NDMO) is the chief implementing organization for disaster risk management and response. It is active in both coordinating response and formulating policy by advising the Cabinet, NDMC, and the National Disaster Controller (NDC). NDMO is under the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Rural and Maritime Development and Disaster Management (MRMDDM). However, since significant portions of emergency responses are handled locally, the Ministry of Local Government, Housing, and Community Development (MOLG) is a stakeholder that ensures that city and town councils can operate their EOC in coordination with national authorities.

Figure 7 represents the organizational structure of national disaster response, including the leads and co-leads for the national cluster system.[190]

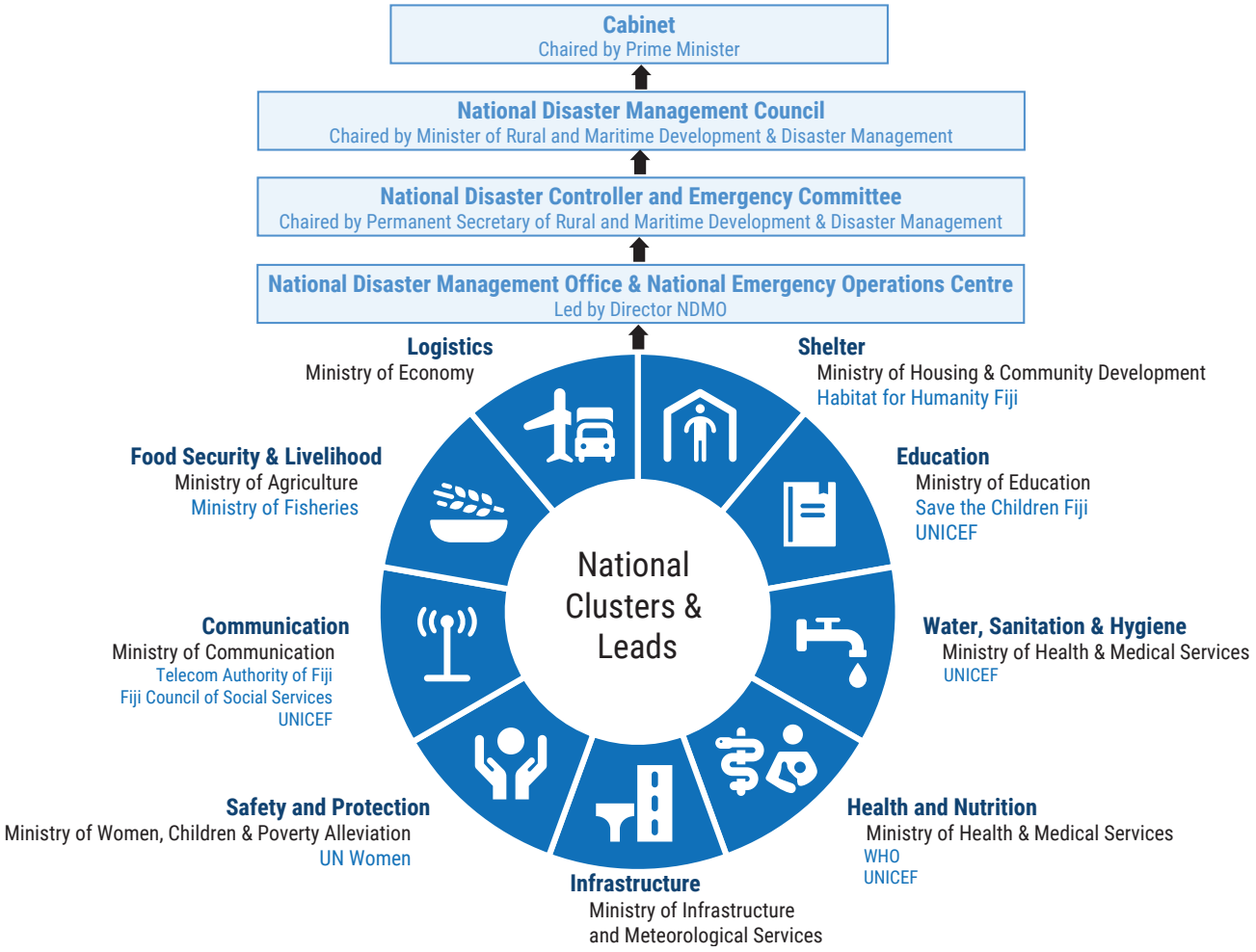


Figure 7: Fiji National Disaster Management Structure

Lead Government Agencies in Disaster Response

The chair of the NDMC serves as the Minister of MRMDDM. In addition, each cabinet ministry has a permanent secretary that takes responsibility for disaster management and implementation of disaster policies for their respective ministries' areas of responsibility. The permanent secretary of MRMDDM generally is the NDC. During a disaster, the NDC essentially takes command and issues instructions on response actions to be taken by the NDMO and the National Emergency Operation Centre (NEOC). NDMO has three sections: emergency planning and coordination; training, education, and awareness; and risk management and policy research. NDMO is the national focal point for coordination with government agencies, donors, and other stakeholders.[191]

In terms of recovery, overall responsibility rests with the MRMDDM; however, according to a post-disaster needs assessment after TC Winston (2016), the Fiji Government designated the Strategic Planning Office (SPO) within the Ministry of Finance, National Planning, and Statistics to coordinate and lead recovery efforts.[192]

Disaster Relief and Emergency Response

When a disaster is declared, NDMO gathers information on the event from the meteorological services or other interested agencies and manages communication among government agencies regarding the threat, conditions, and response actions. It is also responsible for communications with the mass media. When early warning mechanisms signal the potential for an extreme event, NDMO is responsible for communicating key messages, activation and operation of the NEOC, and supervising the operation of provincial and district EOCs. It is within the division-province-district-village structure where much work occurs although, in practice, these EOCs are frequently insufficiently resourced or manned to handle a full-scale disaster. The NEOC accommodates personnel from ministries and agencies relevant to the emergency so that communication and information sharing is centralized and streamlined.

In cases when an emergency overwhelms Fiji's own domestic capacity to respond, it coordinates any external humanitarian assistance via its national Cluster System. Launched for the first time during a cyclone response in 2012, the system's purpose is to offer NDMO a means to manage sectoral aid arrangements and actions.[193] The Fiji Cluster System is a government-led humanitarian coordination system and is comprised of:

- The Inter-Cluster led by the permanent secretary of MRMDDM
- Nine sectoral clusters led by the permanent secretaries of relevant ministries, and
- Supporting partners including FRCS, FCOSS, and Fiji Business Disaster Resilience Council (FBDRC).

The Inter-Cluster is the mechanism for humanitarian coordination and inter-operability among sectoral Clusters, including for sub-national humanitarian coordination with the local governments. The Inter-Cluster lead, NDMO, cluster leads and co-leads, and supporting partners make up the Inter-Cluster. UN OCHA plays an observer role within the national Cluster system.[194] For the designated leads and co-leads for the Fiji Cluster System, refer back to Figure 7.

For decades, it has been the government's position that NGOs are valuable contributors to all stages of the disaster management cycle, including preparedness, relief, and recovery. In order to be integrated into the official planning and execution process, including the Cluster system, NGOs must already have a presence in and relationship with their local (district or division) disaster management councils, and it will fall to these local councils to coordinate many NGOs within their regions. Many of the

local or national NGOs who might participate in a disaster response are already coordinated under the umbrella of FCOSS or have a partnership with FRCS.

International assistance must be requested by the Prime Minister on advice of the NDC and routed through the Ministry of Foreign Affairs either to a specific partner or in general, and any assistance delivered is to be coordinated by the NDC.[195]

Armed Forces Role in Disaster Relief

Fiji's military has both land and naval forces. The Republic of Fiji Military Forces (RFMF) have a land force command to assist in Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Response (HADR), among other commands including warfighting and security. The RFMF also has a maritime command tasked with maintaining HADR capabilities amongst other command responsibilities, including protection of Fiji's maritime sovereignty.[196]

The RFMF assists the NDMO with HADR tasks.[197] The RFMF is often on standby for rehabilitation efforts in flood affected areas once flood waters recede after heavy rain and cyclones. In January 2022, teams from RFMF were deployed to Fiji's Western Division to assist the Police and Government Ministries with evacuation of people from flood-affected areas.[198]

In addition to domestic operations, the RFMF has assisted Australia on rehabilitation projects in areas affected by 2019-2020 bushfires, and the majority of Fiji personnel deployed were engineering specialists.[199] RFMF engineers and medics also assisted Tonga by providing humanitarian relief alongside Australian troops in February 2022 after the Hunga Tonga-Hunga Ha'apai volcano eruption and tsunami; these troops were able to enter Tonga following a strict COVID-19 isolation period.[200] Finally, in February 2023, 10 RFMF personnel, along with four National Fire Authority crew and four NDMO officials, were deploying to New Zealand to assist in the recovery from Cyclone Gabrielle.[201]

Disaster Management Partners

In addition to government ministries and their agencies, national response capacity in Fiji includes an active network of humanitarian partners, including UN agencies, NGOs, and the Red Cross. The UN has a sub-regional office in Fiji. Additionally, the UN Resident Coordinator's Office in Fiji covers 11 Pacific Island countries and territories to coordinate UN agencies as they assist governments in development projects, respond to emergencies, and maintain security.[202] In support of the Fiji Government-led response efforts during a disaster, UN OCHA-supported assessments teams may deploy to affected areas to collect information on disaster impacts.[203]

UN agencies present in Fiji include: the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP), FAO, International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), International Labour Organization (ILO), International Monetary Fund (IMF), International Organization for Migration (IOM), International Trade Centre (ITC), Program on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS), United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), United Nations Department for Safety and Security (UNDSS), United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), UNDRR, UN OCHA, the United Nations Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (UNOHCHR), United Nations Volunteers (UNV), UN Women, World Food Programme (WFP), and WHO.[204]

Fiji's civil society groups and NGOs that are local DRR partners include:[205]

- Baptist Rehab Team Ba
- Being helping hands Fiji
- Caritas Fiji of the Catholic Church
- Ecumenical Centre for Research, Education, and Advocacy (ECREA)
- femLINKpacific
- Fiji Business Disaster Resilience Council (FBDRC)
- Fiji Council of Churches
- Fiji Council of Social Services (FCOSS)

- Fiji Disability Forum
- Fiji Disabled People Federation (FDPF)
- Fiji Media Watch
- Fiji Muslim League
- Fiji Red Cross Society (FRCS)
- Fiji Women's Crisis Centre
- Fiji Women's Rights Movement
- Katalyst Foundation
- Labasa Muslim Sports and Social Club
- Lifelight Fiji
- Live and Learn Fiji
- Medical Services Pacific
- Nasinu Junior Chamber
- National Sanatan Youth / DCOSS Nadroga
- Ola Fou
- Partners in Community Development Fiji (PCDF)
- Ramakrishna Mission
- Rotary Fiji
- Sai Prema Foundation
- Sathya Sai Service Organization of Fiji
- Save the Children, Fiji
- Shifting the Power Coalition
- Shree Lakshmi Narayan temple
- Shree Sanatan Dharam Pratinidhi Sabha
- Soqosoqo Vakamarama
- Then India Sanmarga Ikya
- Vodafone ATH Fiji Foundation
- Voice of Needy

The International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement

International Committee of the Red Cross

The International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) is an independent humanitarian organization, headquartered in Geneva, Switzerland. The ICRC bases its activities on the provisions of International Humanitarian Law (IHL), and it is neutral in politics, religion, and ideology. The ICRC assists with the protection of civilian victims of armed conflict and internal strife and their direct results. Within these roles, it may take any humanitarian initiative as a neutral and independent intermediary.[206]

In the Pacific, the ICRC regional delegation, based in Fiji, works together with Red Cross and Red Crescent National Societies to promote countries' ratification of IHL treaties, and it assists authorities in formulating the necessary measures to implement such treaties at the national level. The ICRC supports the efforts of the region's National Societies to be distinct humanitarian actors, and it provides training, expertise, and material support to help National Societies respond effectively to armed conflict and other situations of violence. The delegation in the Pacific coordinates all ICRC work in the 16 countries and territories it covers, including Fiji.[207]

International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies

The International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) is a humanitarian organization founded in 1919. It provides assistance and promotes humanitarian activities carried out by 192 National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies globally with a view to preventing and alleviating human suffering. The IFRC carries out relief operations to assist victims of disasters and combines this with development work to strengthen the capacities of its member National Societies.[208]

Among the IFRC's offices, clusters, and delegations, Fiji falls under the Country Cluster Delegation for Pacific Islands, based in Suva. The Suva Cluster comprises 10 National Societies from small Pacific Island and archipelago states. In its Country Plan, the Cluster emphasizes efforts to build climate change resiliency, and the office hosts the Pacific Climate Hub. Moreover, the delegation has partnerships with regional stakeholders – e.g., the Pacific Islands Forum and Pacific Community. The IFRC is a member of the Pacific Humanitarian Team and chairs the Pacific Shelter Cluster.[209]

Fiji Red Cross Society (FRCS)

The FRCS was formed in 1952 as a branch of the British Red Cross and was recognized in 1972 as a National Society. The National Office of the Society is located in Suva. There are sixteen branches, located in Rabi, Rotuma, Seaqaqa,

Savusavu, Bua, Taveuni, Labasa, Levuka, Rakiraki, Tavua, Ba, Lautoka, Nadi, Sigatoka, Suva, and Nalawa. The FRCS includes more than 300 volunteers.[210] It provide a yearly pre-cyclone briefing where the national society engages with its branches, the national government, and other humanitarian stakeholders. The FRCS maintains stockpiles in 36 locations throughout Fiji.[211] FRCS is the only National Society in the Pacific to have conducted a Branch Organizational Capacity Assessment (BOCA) analysis workshop, and it has the capacity of being a BOCA trainer and BOCA analysis lead, which it can offer as a service to other Pacific National Societies.[212]

U.S. Government Agencies in Fiji

The U.S. Embassy in Suva is home to various U.S. government agencies and offices that promote U.S. interests not only in Fiji but also in Kiribati, Nauru, Tonga, and Tuvalu, as well as providing U.S. citizen services covering France's Pacific territories. While a significant portion of the Embassy's work is dedicated to promoting trade and economic ties between the U.S. and Fiji, it also houses offices for security cooperation, development, and person-to-person exchanges. The Defense Attaché Office in Suva coordinates defense engagement and security cooperation activities across Fiji, Kiribati, Nauru, Papua New Guinea, Solomon Islands, Tonga, Tuvalu, and Vanuatu. The intent is to improve the capacity of Pacific Island countries' governments to respond to domestic and regional emergencies and disasters, deploy to peacekeeping operations, secure the maritime domain, and safeguard their citizens. Among those programs coordinated from the office are partnerships with Pacific Island countries on humanitarian assistance and coordination of U.S. Coast Guard training and search and rescue operations.

The Department of State's Bureau of Oceans and International Environmental and Scientific Affairs established 12 regional environment, science, technology, and health (ESTH) hubs, one of which is the Pacific ESTH Hub, at the U.S. Embassy in Suva. The office tracks ESTH developments in 21 Pacific Island countries and territories and works with governments, regional organizations, NGOs, and others to strengthen U.S. engagement with Pacific Island countries on policy and programming to respond to major ESTH challenges – i.e., climate change, conservation, pollution control, combating marine debris, and protecting against infectious diseases.[213]

Within the region, the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) partners with 12 countries to deliver humanitarian and development assistance. In September 2022, USAID announced the reopening of its mission for the Pacific in Fiji,[214] from which it will deliver initiatives such as funding regional projects that assist communities in accessing financing, building institutional capacity, and increasing adaptive capacities with regard to climate change. The Climate Ready project (2016-2022) supported climate finance and management capacity by working with stakeholders to draft and implement policies and improve the skills and systems within each country to better manage and monitor adaption projects. With the Pacific Community, USAID's Institutional Strengthening in Pacific Island Countries to Adapt to Climate Change project (ISACC, 2015-2022) amplified government capacity to manage climate finances and supported the scaling up of successful multi-sectoral projects to improve climate resilience.

Specifically in relation to Fiji's recent elections, USAID, through its partnership with the Pacific Community, supported the Fiji Election Office as well as civil society partners to conduct voter education and help ensure the election was accessible, including for persons with disabilities. USAID also supports local organizations that work to address violence against women.[215]

USAID's Bureau for Humanitarian Assistance (BHA) is the lead U.S. government agency responsible for delivering humanitarian assistance and disaster relief overseas. BHA supports capacity building and early recovery, risk reduction, and resilience interventions that enable partner countries to lessen the impacts of natural hazards and respond more effectively to

disasters. The three pillars of the approach are: 1) enhance early warning systems; 2) improve disaster preparedness; and 3) strengthen first responder capabilities. Since 2009, USAID/BHA has supported the U.S. National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) to deploy "chatty beetles," which are satellite terminals that facilitate text messaging in remote areas with limited connectivity, in order to disseminate hydro-meteorological alerts and other important emergency information. In Fiji, as in other participating countries, the messaging system connects emergency response authorities with remote communities.[216] Along with the reopening of USAID's mission in Fiji, announced in 2022, BHA will be present to partner on disaster response and DRR.[217]

USAID also supports initiatives to improve coordination among international humanitarian actors and capacity building for relief agencies and Fijian communities for disaster preparedness and response.[218]

USAID's contact information includes:[219]

USAID/Pacific Islands
Ryan Washburn - Mission Director
United States Agency for International Development
158 Princess Road
Suva, Fiji
Phone: 679-331-4466
Email: *infopacificislands@usaid.gov*

USAID Contact
Sarah Mentrup, Fiji Desk Officer
U.S. Agency for International Development
1300 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20523
Phone: 571-217-0270
Email: *smentrup@usaid.gov*

Laws, Policies, and Plans on Disaster Management

Fiji is undergoing policy and institutional reforms, which include updating legislation and policies; however, no adjustments have been finalized as of the date of this handbook's publication. According to the Government of Fiji's Post-Disaster Needs Assessment following Tropical Cyclone Winston (2016), areas in need of improvement were identified in the recovery process, the national cluster system, and other areas.[220] The National Disaster Risk Reduction Policy 2018-2030 is aligned to the Natural Disaster Management Act 1998, which governs various activities within the disaster management cycle.[221] There are national level, regional level, and global level frameworks, which contributed to the National Disaster Risk Reduction Policy; they are represented in Figure 8.[222]

National Disaster Risk Reduction Policy 2018-2030

The adoption of this policy reflected lessons learned and gaps identified after the devastating consequences of the February 2016 Category 5 TC Winston. The policy promotes good disaster risk governance and establishes priorities for future action, highlighting the importance of monitoring action and improved risk assessment.[223]

Natural Disaster Management Act, 1998

The purpose of the Act was to ensure that proper provisions were made by the Government and relevant agencies with regard to their functions in relation to natural disaster management. Under the Act, the responsibility for national disaster management rests with the National Disaster Controller, who assumes powers on the formal declaration of a natural disaster.[224]

National Disaster Management Plan, 1995

The National Disaster Management Plan provides guidance for the principal responsibilities of agencies, emergency operations, risk reduction and training, and informing the public regarding warnings and evacuation messaging. The 1995 Plan replaced the National Emergency Services Committee Precautionary Manual for Emergencies, dated

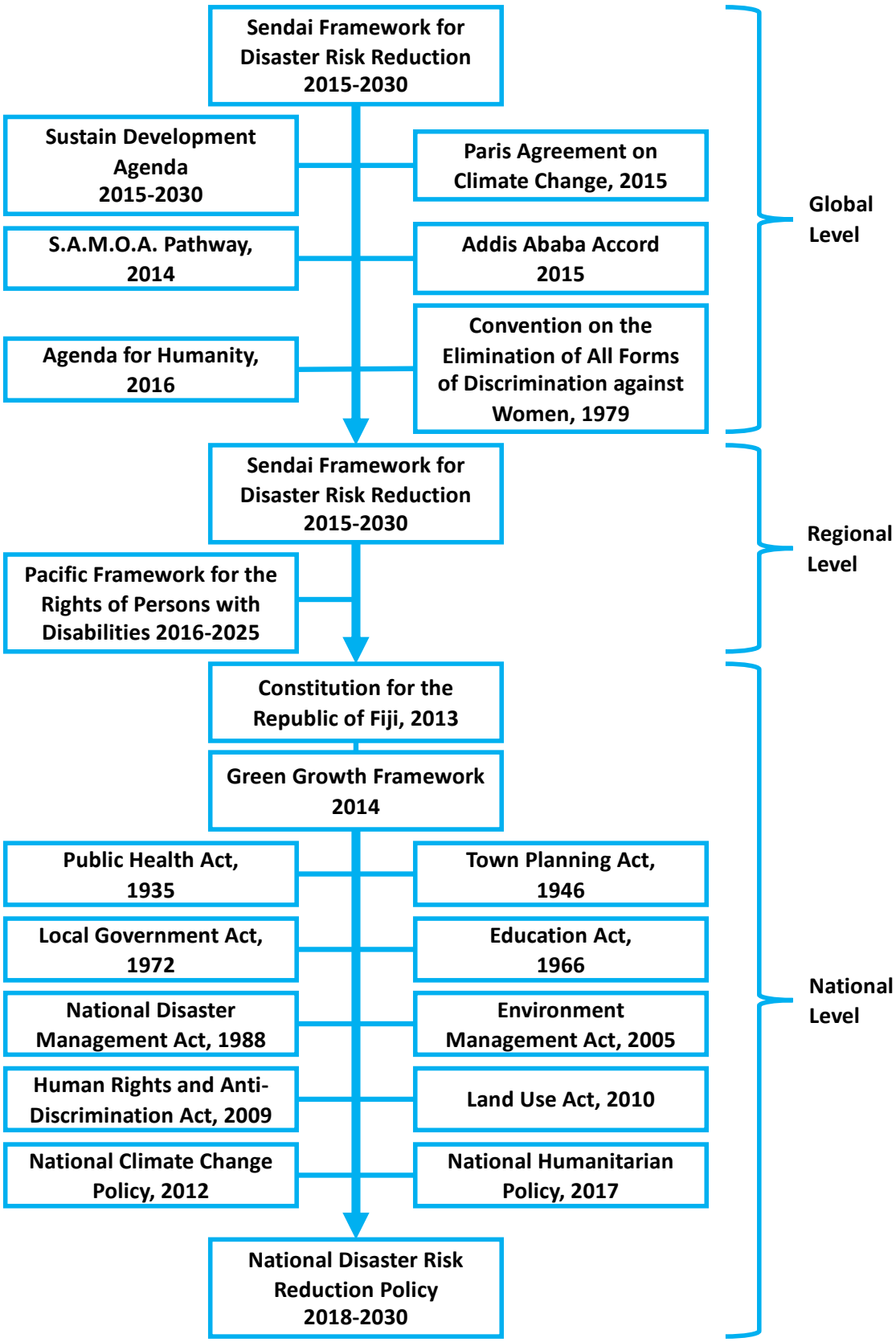


Figure 8: Background to Formation of National DRR Policy

September 1979, and replaced that Committee with the NDMC. The aim of the Plan is to outline arrangements for control and coordination of all disaster related activities in Fiji.[225]

Other Acts and Policies

In addition to the above, Table 1 shows a list of acts and policies related to DRR for relevant sectors.[226]

Sector	Legislation, Policies, and Plans
Agriculture	Agricultural Landlord and Tenant Act, 1966
	Agricultural Marketing Authority Act, 2004
	Millennium Ecosystem Assessment, 2005
	Disaster Risk Management Strategy for the Agriculture Sector, 2010
Communication	Posts and Telecommunication Act, 1989
	Television Act, 1992
	National ICT Policy, 2004
	Broadcast License Policy, 2006
	Telecommunication Act, 2008
	Reform of Information Technology and Computing Services Act, 2013
	Television (Cross-Carriage of Designated Events) Act, 2014
	Telecommunications Levy (1% of voice revenue goes to rural telecommunications infrastructure development), 2015
Defence	Republic of Fiji Military Forces Act, 1949
	Police Act, 1965
	National Fire Service Act, 1994
Disaster Management, Including Fiji Meteorological Service	National Disaster Management Plan, 1995
	Natural Disaster Management Act, 1998
	Draft Fiji Drought Response Plan, 2015
	Draft Tsunami Response Plan, 2016
	Draft National Humanitarian Policy, 2017
Education	Education Act, 1966
	Education in Emergencies and School Safety Policy, 2014
Energy	Electricity Act, 1966
	Fiji National Energy Policy, 2006
	Sustainable Energy for All (SE4AII) Rapid Assessment and Gap Analysis, 2013
	Draft National Energy Policy, 2014
Environment	National Environment Strategy, 1993
	Endangered and Protected Species Act, 2002
	Endangered and Protected Species Regulations, 2003
	Environment Management Act, 2005
	Fiji's Initial National Communication under the UNFCCC {INC}, 2005
	Environmental Management (EIA Process) Regulations, 2007
	National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan, 2007
	Biodiversity Act, 2008
	CDM Policy Guideline, 2010
	National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan Implementation Framework 2010-2014
	Integrated Coastal Management Framework of Fiji, 2011
	Draft Climate Change Adaptation Strategy, 2011
Foreign Affairs	Fiji International Event Act, 2014
	Diplomatic Missions and International Organisations Act, 2016

Table 1: Disaster Risk Reduction Legislation, Policies, and Plans

Sector	Legislation, Policies, and Plans
Forests	Forest Act, 1992
	Mangrove Management Plan for Fiji, Phase 1-1985 and Phase 2-1987
	Fiji Forest Policy Statement, 2007
	Regulation of Ownership (Fiji Forest Industries Limited) Act, 2011
	Fiji REDD-Plus Policy, 2011
	Draft Development Plan 2017-2026
Health	Public Health Act, 1935 (Cap. 111), 2002
	Public Hospital and Dispensaries Act, 1955
	Private Hospital Act, 1979
	Health and Safety at Work Act, 1996
	Fiji Food and Nutrition Policy, 2008
	Nursing Act, 2011
Infrastructure	Road Act, 1914
	Fiji water supply, 1985
	Land Transport Act, 1998
	Land Transport (Amendment) Act, 1999
	Fiji Water Authority Proclamation, 2007
	WSD Guidelines for Rural Water Supply Management Plan, 2008
	Maritime Safety Authority of Fiji Decree, 2009
	Rural Water Sanitation Policy, 2012
	Maritime Transport Act, 2013
	Fiji Roads Authority Act, 2012 (Amendment) Decree, 2014
	Staff Board Policy, 2014
	Revised Moll HR Manual, 2015
Land Management	iTaukei Lands Act, 1905
	Subdivision of Lands Act, 1937
	iTaukei Land Trust Act, 1940
	iTaukei Affairs Act, 1944
	State Land Act, 1945
	Land Conservation and Improvement Act, 1953
	iTaukei Development Fund Act, 1965
	Land Transfer Act, 1971
	Land Sale Act, 1974
	National Trust for Fiji (Ed. 1978)
	Agriculture Landlord and Tenant Act, 1966
	Land Development Act, 1961 (revised edition 1985)
	Land Conservation and Improvement (revised edition 1985)
	Native Land Trust (Amendment) Decree, 1988
	Natural Areas Protection Act, 1988
	Native Land Trust (Amendment) Act, 2002
	Native Lands (Amendment) Act, 2002
	iTaukei Trust Fund Act, 2004
	Real Estate Agents Act, 2006

Table 1: Disaster Risk Reduction Legislation, Policies, and Plans (cont.)

Disaster Management Communications

The scientific, institutional, and practical aspects of DRR require coordination and communication tools and mechanisms. These elements can range from government agencies that detect natural events – e.g., earthquakes, volcanic eruptions, and storm formation – to the telephones that members of the public carry and to which warnings can be sent. In addition, the websites and databases used by local, national, and international partners provide resources for historical comparison, information management, and digital work spaces for responders, donors, and even affected populations.

Early Warning Systems

Target G of the Sendai Framework aims to "substantially increase the availability of and access to multi-hazard early-warning systems (MHEWS) and disaster risk information and assessments" by 2030. Fiji has taken steps to establish comprehensive hazard warning systems.

As the country's primary hazards are hydro-meteorological, priority has been given to developing warning systems and processes for major storm events, including heavy rains, flash flooding, coastal flooding due to storm surge, and high winds. Due to the less immediate threat posed by seismic hazards, Fiji has worked on a regional and global level to ensure that its at-risk communities can be reached by tsunami warnings that originate with external entities. In late 2022, MRMDDM reported that it was working in cooperation with key stakeholders to ensure that residents were educated in how the early warning system (EWS) works to include how local information feeds into the system and what actions to take when a warning is received. NDMO (Instagram: @ndmo_fiji) conducted community-based DRR training in collaboration other government agencies and NGOs, including Fiji Council of Social Services (FCOSS), through the Community Based Disaster Risk Management Manual.[227]

Since 1995, Fiji Meteorological Service (FMS) has been designated Regional Specialised Meteorological Centre (RSMC) Nadi – Tropical Cyclone Centre by the World Meteorological Organization (WMO).[228] FMS (Twitter: @FJMETservice), under the Ministry of Infrastructure and Meteorological Services, provides early warnings for cyclones, rain, and droughts, and it disseminates the information through SMS/text, social media, and radio and TV networks. The FMS has also developed an EWS for flash floods to complement the existing systems of various islands.[229] From 2018, FMS worked with NDMO, WMO, the Hydrology Research Center, and other stakeholders to develop the Flash Flood Guidance System (FFGS), which will provide operational forecasters and NDMO with real-time informational guidance pertaining to small-scale flash flooding. The Fiji FFGS was funded by the Climate Risk Early Warning System Initiative and Environment and Climate Change Canada.[230] By early 2020, the FFGS was installed, and flood areas had been mapped even as FMS' Hydrology Unit continues to add new stations to monitor rainfall.[231]

As an implementing partner for Fiji's multi-hazard EWS, FMS works in concert with the NDMO to ensure that forecasts and warnings include impact-based forecasting to give warning recipients the "so what" of the information they receive. In its 2021-2024 Strategic Implementation Plan, FMS has a pilot project to integrate impact-based forecasting into its coastal inundation warnings and forecasts for all islands and all coasts. In addition, as of 2021, FMS became capable of delivering coastal inundation forecasting related to tropical cyclones for all areas under RSMC-Nadi's area of responsibility, which extends from the Equator to 25°S and from 160°E to 120°W, covering from Nauru through all of French Polynesia.[232] RSMC-Nadi is tasked with detection, naming, and monitoring all tropical cyclones originating in this region. Cyclones originating in the Coral Sea to the west of 160°E are named by the Tropical Cyclone Warning Centre in Brisbane (TCWC-Brisbane)

in Australia, but are included in the RSMC dataset if they move east of 160°E. Similarly, the RSMC dataset includes information on storms moving south of 25°S, which is monitored by the TCWC-Wellington in New Zealand.[233]

Tsunami early warnings are coordinated by the Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission (IOC) in the region, and Fiji has also adopted a Tsunami Response Plan to appropriately prepare for impending mass-scale inundation. There are 10 tsunami early warning sirens on the Suva peninsula, and they are tested monthly in coordination with the NDMO.[234] Fiji's Seismology Observatory Unit is located within the Ministry of Lands and Mineral Resources. The Seismology Unit is the country's official tsunami warning focal contact in contact with the IOC, Intergovernmental Coordination Group, and Pacific Tsunami Warning and Mitigation System,[235] especially with the Pacific Tsunami Warning Centre in Honolulu, Hawaii.[236] The Tsunami Response Plan vests the Seismology Unit with the responsibility of informing the Director NDMO of any potential threats; the Director will assess the situation and advise on activation of tsunamic warning sirens, which fall under NDMO in terms of operation, site selection, installation, and maintenance.[237]

To guarantee effective surveillance of epidemics, the country is a part of the Pacific Syndromic Surveillance System, which tracks the outbreak of infectious diseases in the South Pacific through 121 sentinel surveillance sites across 21 countries. An evaluation of the Ministry of Health and Medical Services' early warning, alert, and response system was carried out after it was used during the response to Cyclone Winston to control outbreaks of several diseases, and it was found to have had positive results; 325 alerts were generated, and three large-scale outbreaks requiring intervention were successfully managed.[238]

As part of the midterm review of the Sendai Framework, the UNDRR surveyed various stakeholders across the Asia-Pacific region to see how countries were faring in developing inclusive and accessible MHEWS by drawing on lessons from successes, including a number of women-led and disability-inclusive MHEWS. Two key systems include:

Fiji Women's Weather Watch (WWW) – Developed beginning in 2004 and named Women's Weather Watch in 2009, the system was built by FMS, femLINKpacific, the Shifting the Power Coalition, ActionAid Australia, Australia's Government Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade and Digicel; it involves two-way community radio, bulk SMS/text systems, social media, and local radio and media. The concept originated in a femLINKpacific series of interviews with women in remote communities who had been affected by flooding in northern Fiji. These interviews established that local women had been excluded from designing, planning, and implementing disaster relief and reduction efforts. In 2009, following Cyclone Mick, femLINKpacific again observed that women were excluded from relief efforts. WWW began with simple SMS messaging, with a focus on supporting community women leaders to understand and pass on the climate-related information and warnings. In 2017, WWW launched a bulk SMS system and began utilizing other media, including a podcast and a comic series called HEROWINS to disseminate messages and awareness. WWW centers on communication between communities and the WWW hub during emergencies and across disaster cycles. The program delivers training on technical climate and weather knowledge, technology use, advocacy and communication skills, and harnessing traditional and local knowledge. When a warning or other information is received from FMS, local and diverse women consult on how to translate the information into corresponding messages appropriate for the context and in the local language before then making those messages available in a digital message bank for quick access and use during disasters. During a disaster scenario, warnings are received from FMS and the corresponding WWW message is found in the message bank and sent through the network. WWW network members can send live updates

via SMS text messages back to the WWW hub in Suva.

Fiji Disabled People's Federation (FDPF) Emergency Operations Centre (EOC) – Founded in 2018 in partnership with the Australian Humanitarian Partnership, Shifting the Power Coalition, femLINKpacific, ActionAid Australia, and NDMO, the FDPF EOC is part of the FDPF DRR unit that aims to build DRR capacities for persons with disabilities and advocates for inclusive DRR communications. In consultation with NDMO and the National Council for Disability, FDPF is in the process of developing an SOP and provides training on disability inclusion. The EOC is activated during a crisis and aims to strengthen inclusive disaster response and ensure persons with disabilities are not left behind. Email notifications are set up so that the EOC receives disaster information from the NDMO and FMS. The staff or volunteers from each of FDPF's member organizations then follow communication guidelines to share this information with their own community using the platforms and communication methods specific to each of them. Each of those organizations determines the messages disseminated within their own community in terms of content and how they are disseminated. Then, those organizations' community focal points are then able to report back to the EOC on the status of persons with disabilities in their communities. Information is disseminated by SMS/text, phone calls, emails, video conferencing, and radio and TV campaigns. FDPF members undergo training in technical CCA and DRR knowledge, advocacy, and communication skills.[239]

Information Sharing

Understanding how to overcome the information challenges that civilian and military agencies experience during a typical disaster response mission is important. Sharing information is critical since no single responding entity, NGO, international governmental organization, assisting country government, or the host government can be the source of all the required information.[240] Collaboration, information sharing, and networking have been the backbone of successful disaster response and preparation. Disseminating information not only to those in-country and threatened by disaster, but also to those responding to assist in the emergency has been crucial to timely, efficient, and effective disaster response. There are many resources, stakeholders, and components to consider before, during, and after a natural disaster. This section will discuss country-specific, humanitarian, regional, government, and U.S. DoD information sources.

Fiji Information Sources

Fiji National Disaster Management Office (NDM0)

The NDMO collects and disseminates information regarding emergencies and responses. They have various outlets for warnings and other information.

Public advisory information, emergency contacts, and evacuation centers are also listed on the website. In October 2020, Fiji launched two new initiatives during its annual National Disaster Awareness Campaign. The first was the "Find my Evacuation Centre (EC)" mobile app, which helps identify nearby evacuation centers and send messages such as via SMS/text or Facebook. The second initiative was the release of posters, videos, and stories demonstrating disaster preparedness and its importance. For these projects, go to NDMO Fiji's public account: *https://chats.viber.com/ndmofiji*; or text "EC" to 132877; you will receive prompts to choose what you would like to know including 1) contacts of provincial administrators/district offices, and 2) evacuation centers.

Address: Nasilivata House, Ratu Mara Road, Samabula
Tel: 679-3319250
Email: *neocfiji@gmail.com*
Twitter and Facebook: @FijiNDMO
Instagram: *@ndmo_fiji*

Fiji Meteorological Service

The FMS is one of the country's major scientific agencies that reaches the public with regular weather and other hydro-meteorological information. On its website, it delivers radar images, satellite images, forecast models, rainfall watches, and 7-day wave forecasts. In addition, there is a tropical cyclone threat map, a forecast tracking map, and awareness videos.[241]

Korowai Road, NAP 0351
Nadi Airport
Tel: 6724888
Fax: 6720430
Email: *fmscustomer@met.gov.fj*
Web: *www.met.gov.fj*
Facebook: Fiji-Meteorological-Service
Twitter: @FJMETservice

Fiji Red Cross Society (FRCS)

FRCS, as an auxiliary to public authorities, delivers aid and assistance to people and communities in emergencies. It posts updates on operations and DRR activities via social media.

National Office / Divisional Center (Central): 22 Gorrie St., Suva, Fiji
Tel: 679-331-4133
Mobile: 679-999-2505

Divisional Red Cross Center (West)
1 Vomo St, Lautoka
Mobile: 679-992-0297

Divisional Red Cross Center (North)
Lot 24 Tuatua, Labasa
Mobile: 679-998-9538

Email: *info@redcross.com.fj*
Website: *https://fijiredcross.org*
Facebook: FijiRedCrossSociety
Twitter: @FijiRedCross
Instagram: fijiredcrosssociety

Humanitarian Information Sources

United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) Office of the Pacific Islands

OCHA's Office of the Pacific Islands mobilizes and coordinates humanitarian action in partnership with national and international actors. Its key objective is to support national efforts to protect the lives, livelihoods, and dignity of people in need. OCHA Office of the Pacific Islands personnel can provide support in information management, reporting, mapping, media and communications, assessments, humanitarian financing, and inter-cluster coordination. OCHA can deploy teams to assist in the coordination of incoming international relief at the earliest stages of an emergency. This OCHA office has supported projects to enhance disaster coordination structures and humanitarian response planning in Fiji, including as part of the development of humanitarian policy.

Web: *https://www.unocha.org/pacific*
For OCHA situation reports, click on "Subscribe" button on top of page.
Twitter: @UNOCHA_Pacific

Pacific Humanitarian Team

The Pacific Humanitarian Team (PHT) is a network of humanitarian organizations that work together to support Pacific Island countries (Cook Islands, the Federated States of Micronesia, Fiji, Kiribati, Nauru, Niue, Palau, the Republic of the Marshall Islands, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tokelau, Tonga, Tuvalu, and Vanuatu) in preparing for and responding to disasters. The PHT operates under the co-leadership of the UN Resident Coordinators in the Pacific, based in Fiji and Samoa, and includes UN agencies, the Red Cross/Red Crescent Movement, regional and bilateral organizations, national and international NGOs, faith-based and community-based organizations, and donor partners. OCHA is the Secretariat.[242]
Web: *http://pacifichumanitarian.info/*

ReliefWeb

ReliefWeb is a service of UN OCHA that consolidates information and analysis from organizations, countries, and disasters for the humanitarian community.

A subsection of ReliefWeb is ReliefWeb Response (RW Response), which replaced HumanitarianResponse.info in November 2022. RW Response aggregates operational content from other humanitarian action platforms to provide an authoritative source of information. The goal is to ensure that humanitarians can share, find, and re-use critical information quickly and efficiently.
Website: *https://reliefweb.int/*
RW Response: *https://response.reliefweb.int/*

PreventionWeb

PreventionWeb is provided by UNDRR to consolidate DRR information into an online, easy to understand platform.
Website: *https://www.preventionweb.net/english/*

International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC)

IFRC is the world's largest humanitarian organization, comprised of its 192 members, the National Societies, including the FRCS, a secretariat in Geneva, Switzerland, and over 60 delegations around the world. The IFRC carries out relief operations to assist victims of disasters and combines this with development work to strengthen the capacities of its member National Societies.[243] The IFRC's Suva Cluster comprises 11 National Societies in the North Pacific, including Fiji.
Web: *https://media.ifrc.org/ifrc* and *https://go.ifrc.org/*

International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC)

ICRC is an impartial, neutral, and independent organization whose exclusively humanitarian mission is to protect the lives and dignity of victims of armed conflict and other situations of violence and to provide them with assistance. It also works to prevent suffering by promoting and strengthening humanitarian law and universal humanitarian principles. ICRC, together with IFRC and the 192 Red Cross Red Crescent Societies, make up the Red Cross Red Crescent Movement.[244]
Website: *https://www.icrc.org/en*
Facebook: @ICRC
Twitter: @ICRC

Global Disaster Alert and Coordination System (GDACS)

GDACS is a cooperation framework between the United Nations, the European Commission, and disaster managers worldwide to improve alerts, information exchange, and coordination in the first phase after major sudden-onset disasters.
Website: *https://www.gdacs.org/alerts/*

Virtual OSOCC

The Virtual OSOCC is a real-time online coordination tool for disaster response professionals from urban search and rescue teams, national authorities, as well as regional and international organizations at a global level.
Website: *https://vosocc.unocha.org/*
The latest alerts can be found here: *http://www.gdacs.org/Alerts/default.aspx*
To subscribe: *http://www.gdacs.org/About/contactus.aspx*

ThinkHazard!

ThinkHazard! is a website that provides detailed information on a country. Information is provided on Fiji regarding hazards, country assessments, projects, early warning systems, and other resources.
Website: *http://thinkhazard.org*

Humanitarian Data Exchange (HDX)

HDX is an open platform for sharing data across crises and organizations. It launched in 2014 with the goal of centralizing humanitarian data for easy access and analysis. HDX is managed by OCHA's Center for Humanitarian Data in The Hague.
Website: *https://data.humdata.org/*

Regional Information Sources

Pacific Disaster Net

Pacific Disaster Net is an online platform for disaster risk management and climate change documents, reports, alerts, data, projects, and professionals for the Pacific region. The platform is an ongoing live service provided by the Pacific Community, UNDP, UNDRR, and IFRC. While climate change is broader than the traditional scope of HADR, many Pacific Island countries and territories approach DRR in tandem with CCA.
Web: *http://www.pacificdisaster.net/main*

U.S. Government Sources

U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID)

USAID is committed to responding to crises around the world to help people and places most in need. They aim to:

- Promote Global Health
- Support Global Stability
- Provide Humanitarian Assistance
- Catalyze Innovation and Partnership
- Empower Women and Girls

USAID produces a monthly newsletter, which is available digitally at *https://www.usaid.gov/news-information/newsletter*.

More information and updates from USAID are available via their blog, IMPACT, at https://blog.usaid.gov/ and on Facebook (USAID), Twitter (@usaid), and YouTube (usaidvideo).
Website: *https://www.usaid.gov/*

USAID Bureau for Humanitarian Assistance (BHA)

USAID/BHA is responsible for leading and coordinating the U.S. Government response to disasters overseas. BHA responds to an average of 75 disasters in 70 countries every year. BHA fulfils its mandate of saving lives, alleviating human suffering, and the reduction of the social and economic impact of disasters worldwide in partnership with USAID functional and regional bureaus and other U.S. government agencies. BHA works with the international population to assist countries prepare for, respond to, and recover from humanitarian crises.[245]

USAID/BHA products include situation reports and maps, which are available via email mailing lists as well as Reliefweb.int. Information products (Updates/Fact Sheets, etc.) are also available on USAID.gov (*https://www.usaid.gov/humanitarian-assistance*)

BHA also updates followers via social media on Facebook (USAIDSavesLives) and Twitter (@USAIDSavesLives).

For BHA updates on a disaster response, ask the BHA representative for the respective DoD Geographic Combatant Command to add you to the email list, if you have a U.S. government email address:

- *BHA.INDOPACOM@usaid.gov*
- *BHA.SOUTHCOM@usaid.gov*
- *BHA.NORTHCOM@usaid.gov*
- *BHA.AFRICOM@usaid.gov*
- *BHA.SOCOM@usaid.gov*
- *BHA.CENTCOM@usaid.gov*
- *BHA.EUCOM@usaid.gov*

Pacific Disaster Center (PDC Global)

Pacific Disaster Center (PDC) Global has trademarked an early warning and decision support system called DisasterAWARE®. DisasterAWARE® is primarily for disaster management practitioners and senior decision makers. It supports DRR and best practices throughout all phases of disaster management from early warning to multi-hazard monitoring. It has a collection of scientifically verified, geospatial, data and modeling tools to assess hazard risks and impacts. A restricted version of DisasterAWARE is the EMOPS (Emergency Operations) system, which is specifically for the disaster management community, including government agencies and humanitarian assistance organizations serving at local, state, federal, and regional levels.[246]

PDC Global also provides a public version, Disaster Alert, which offers open access to a world map documenting 18 hazard types.[247]

Disaster Alert also has a free, early-warning app to receive customizable maps based visual alerts of active hazards. The app offers a global notification system covering natural and man-made hazards. It is available on both iPhone and Android.[248]
Website: *https://www.pdc.org/* and *https://www.pdc.org/apps/disasteraware/*
Emergency Operations (EMOPS) system (request account): *https://emops.pdc.org/emops/*

All Partners Access Network (APAN)

APAN is the Unclassified Information Sharing Service for the U.S. DoD. APAN provides the DoD and mission partners community space and collaboration tools to leverage information to effectively plan, train, and respond to meet their business requirements and mission objectives. Importantly, APAN's technology team has been supporting HADR operations for over 15 years. [249] APAN has played an integral role in the success of disaster responses, such as the 2015 California Wildfire Response and the 2013 Typhoon Haiyan Response in which they provided organizations and militaries a centralized location to share information, increase situational awareness and decrease response time and duplicated efforts for best practices in HADR services.[250]
Website: *https://www.apan.org/*

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA)

One of NOAA's service centers is the U.S. Tsunami Warning System, including the Pacific Tsunami Warning Center (PTWC) in Honolulu, Hawaii, that feeds tsunami information and warnings to the U.S.'s Pacific partners, including Fiji.
Tsunami Warning Center: *https://www.tsunami.gov/*

Pacific Tsunami Warning Center

Twitter: NWS_PTWC
Facebook: UsNwsPacificTsunamiWarningCenter

Joint Typhoon Warning Center

The Joint Typhoon Warning Center provides advanced warning for U.S. Government agencies and organizations in relevant areas.
Website: *https://www.metoc.navy.mil/jtwc/jtwc.html*

Daniel K. Inouye Asia-Pacific Center for Security Studies (DKI-APCSS)

DKI-APCSS is a U.S. DoD institute that addresses regional and global security issues, inviting military and civilian representatives of the U.S. and Asia-Pacific nations to its program of executive education and workshops.
Website: *https://apcss.org/*

The Center for Excellence in Disaster Management and Humanitarian Assistance (CFE-DM)

The CFE-DM is a U.S. DoD organization that was established by the U.S. Congress in 1994 and is a direct reporting unit to U.S. Indo-Pacific Command. CFE-DM provides training and education to help U.S. and foreign military personnel navigate complex issues in disaster management and humanitarian assistance. They produce country focused disaster management reference handbooks, after action reports, best practices, and lessons learned for advancement in response coordination. CFE-DM also works to improve cross-coordination and reduce duplication of efforts and promote U.S. involvement in civil-military consultations and dialogues with relevant HADR parties. CFE-DM provides resources and updates at its website, as well as via their Facebook and Twitter accounts (@cfedmha).
Website: *https://www.cfe-dmha.org/*
Disaster Management Reference Handbooks are available for download at: *https://www.cfe-dmha.org/DMHA-Resources/Disaster-Management-Reference-Handbooks*

CFE-DM Disaster Information Reports are available for download at: *https://www.cfe-dmha.org/Publications/Reports*

INFRASTRUCTURE

Infrastructure is concentrated on the main islands of Viti Levu and Vanua Levu. Fiji has taken seriously its commitments to meeting the SDGs by building climate resiliency into infrastructure projects. The 5-year and 20-year National Development Plan (NDP) for 2017-2036 lays out targets for water and sanitation, energy, education, and modernizing transport networks, among other plans for key economic and social development. Some of the 5-year targets (for 2022) were missed or extended due to the impacts of COVID-19 on budgets, planning, and materials acquisition.

Transport

For on-island transport of people and cargo, roads are the primary method while ports are the primary means for moving cargo among the islands. Airports and fields are generally only useful for passenger transit as Nadi airport is the only facility with cargo handling equipment.

The Ministry of Commerce, Trade, Tourism, and Transport (MCTTT) is the overall authority for transport sector policies and strategies with a focus on environmentally sustainable transport system development. MCTTT's Department of Transport offers policy advice and the regulatory framework for investment in land and maritime transport. The Department of Government Shipping Services is MCTTT's branch that can provide quick response services during or after a natural disaster. Both Departments fall under MCTTT's Deputy Secretary for Transport.[251]

A board-governed corporate body, Fiji Roads Authority (FRA), is the central body responsible for all of Fiji's roads and bridges, and for 47 jetties throughout the country. Fiji Ports Corporation Limited ("Fiji Ports"), a government-owned corporation operating semi-autonomously under MCTTT, is responsible for the administration of the ports of Suva, Lautoka, Labasa/Malau, and Levuka; other ports remain under the Ministry's control. Fiji Airports Limited (FAL) is the government-owned company that operates 15 airports including the two international airports.

Airports

The Department of Civil Aviation and the Civil Aviation Authority of Fiji are the statutory bodies overseeing air transport sector policies, regulations, and safety. Wholly-government owned FAL reports to the central government's Attorney-General and ministers with portfolios for public enterprises and civil aviation. FAL owns and manages Nadi International Airport,[252] which handles 97% of international visitors to Fiji.[253] In addition, it manages, on behalf of the government, Nausori International Airport and 13 other domestic airports, scattered throughout the country;[254] they include Labasa, Savusavu, Taveuni, Rotuma, Koro, Gau, Bureta, Vanuabalavu, Lakeba, Ono-i-Lau, Cicia, Moala, and Kadavu. Moreover, FAL provides Air Traffic Management services within the Nadi Flight Information Region, which includes the sovereign air spaces of Tuvalu, New Caledonia, Kiribati, and Vanuatu.[255]

Fiji's air transport market is a significant contributor to GDP, and it is expected to grow to serve more than 1 million passengers by 2038. As of 2018, the top five busiest direct international routes were (in order of traffic volume) Australia, New Zealand, the U.S., Tonga, and Vanuatu, while the top five busiest international air cargo routes are (in order of traffic volume) New Zealand, Australia, the U.S., Hong Kong, and Singapore. Fiji's most frequent air connections are regional – i.e., with Australia and New Zealand – although flights linking Fiji to other Oceania countries make up a large share of air traffic. A reported 56% of passenger arrivals in Fiji come from Australia or New Zealand, and 29% come from elsewhere in Oceania.[256]

Nadi Airport underwent a terminal modernization and expansion that was completed in 2018. Based on growth estimates, the FAL master plan for Nadi (2018-2043)

expects further expansion. Meanwhile, Nausori underwent a runway extension project completed in 2021. Other airports to undergo construction or expansion in recent years include Rotuma (re-sealing runway) and upgrades at Labasa to allow night flights.[257]

Table 2 provides some details on Fiji's international and domestic airports.[258]

Seaports

There are five ports of entry: Suva, Lautoka, Levuka, Wairiki, and Malau. Approximately 95% of Fiji's imports and exports are handled through Suva and Lautoka.[259] Suva and Lautoka, both on Viti Levu, have the capability to handle bulk and container freight. While Suva handles most of the country's general cargo, Lautoka handles the bulk of sugar and timber exports and is the base for local cruise vessels serving offshore resorts. Several privately-owned terminals handle petroleum, gas, bulk sugar, molasses, and wood chips. The country's minor ports can provide only basic services and are often constrained by weather and tides.[260] Inter-island freight and passenger transport relies on small jetties, and domestic shipping tends to be reliable and safe although some smaller jetties may be in poor condition.[261]

Port of Suva
Latitude: 18° 8' South
Longitude: 178° 26' East

The port has five berth locations: Kings South, Kings Central, Kings North, Walu Bay, and Princess. The total length of berthing is 845 m (2,772 feet) with an alongside depth of 12 m (39.3 feet). The container terminal can store up to 100,000 twenty-foot equivalent units (TEU). The berths have an electricity supply, freshwater provisions, and stevedoring facilities.[262]

Airport	IATA/ICAO Code	Runway Length / Width	Surface	Elevation
Nadi International Airport	NAN / NFFN	1: 3,273 x 46 m (10,739 x 150 feet) 2: 2,136 x 46 m (7,007 x 150 feet) Helipad x 1	Asphalt	8 m / 26 feet
Nausori International Airport	SUV / NFNA	1: 1,868 x 30 m (6,129 x 100 feet) 2: 1,748 m (5,735 feet) Helipad x 1	Asphalt	5 m / 17 feet
Cicia	ICI / NFCI	762 x 25 m (2,500 x 82 feet)	Dirt / Grass	3 m / 13 feet
Gau	NGI / NFNG	754 x 19 m (2,473 x 62 feet)	Dirt / Grass	15 m / 50 feet
Kadavu (also "Vunisea" or "Namalata")	KDV / NFKD	915 x 25 m (3,001 x 82 feet)	Asphalt	2 m / 6 feet
Koro	KXF / NFNO	790 x 23 m (2,591 x 75 feet)	Sealed	109 m / 357 feet
Labasa	LBS / NFNL	1,073 x 30 m (3,521 x 98 feet)	Asphalt	13 m / 44 feet
Lakeba	LKB / NFNK	723 x 24 m (2,372 x 79 feet)	Sealed	85 m / 285 feet
Levuku (also "Bureta")	LEV / NFNB	640 x 30 m (2,099 x 98 feet)	Gravel	3 m / 11 feet
Malolo LaiLai	PTF / NFFO	640 x 20 m (2,099 x 66 feet)	Dirt	3 m / 10 feet
Mana Island	MNF / NFMA	330 x 30 m (1,082 x 98 feet)	Asphalt	n/a
Moala	MFJ / NFMO	579 x 30 m (1,899 x 98 feet)	Dirt / Grass	4 m / 13 feet
Ono-i-Lau	ONU / NFOL	800 x 35 m (2,624 x 115 feet)	Dirt / Grass	34 m / 111 feet
Rotuma	RTA / NFNR	1,494 x 45 m (4,901 x 147 feet)	Asphalt	13 m / 42 feet
Savusavu	SVU / NFNS	1,000 x 40 m (3,281 x 131 feet)	Asphalt	4 m / 14 feet
Taunovo "Pacific Harbour"	n/a	730 x 20 m (2,395 x 66 feet)	Asphalt	6 m /21 feet
Taveuni "Matei"	TVU / NFNM	910 x 40 m (2,985 x 131 feet)	Asphalt	6 m /20 feet
Vanuabalavu	VBV / NFVB	960 x 45 m (3,149 x 147 feet)	Dirt	0 m / 0 feet
Vatulele	VTF / NFVL	1,036 x 40 m (3,399 x 131 feet)	Dirt / Grass	28 m / 90 feet
Yasawa	YAS / NFSW	594 x 40 m (1,948 x 131 feet)	Dirt / Grass	3 m / 10 feet

Table 2: Codes and Runway Lengths for Fiji's Main Airports

Total land area: 6.6 hectares
Approach channel: 60 m (197 feet) depth and 450 m (1,476 feet) width
Maximum deadweight tonnage (DWT): 68,456 tons[263]
Berths:

- Kings South: 11 m (36 feet) depth
- Kings Central: 11 m (36 feet) depth
- Kings North: 11 m (36 feet) depth
- Walu Bay: 9 m (29.5 feet) depth
- Princess: 4 m (13 feet) depth
- Equipment – Gotwald Mobile Harbor Crane with lift of 15 TEUs per hour, forklifts, Omega Spreaders[264]

Port of Lautoka
Latitude: 18° 8' South
Longitude: 178° 26' East

The port handles over 1.2 million tons of cargo and more than 100 cargo ships annually. Vuda port is entirely within the Lautoka port. Vuda is a private facility that caters to oil and gas tankers weighing 18,000-24,000 DWT. It also consists of submarine pipeline berthing, and vessels anchor close to buoys at a depth of 12 m (39.3 feet).[265]
Total land area: 2 hectares
Approach channel maximum draft: 10.5 m (34.4 feet)
Berths:

- Queens West: 150 m (492 feet); 9.5 m (31 feet) max draft
- Queens North: 145 m (476 feet); 9.8 m (32 feet) max draft
- Queens East: 145 m (476 feet); 8.3 m (27 feet) max draft[266]
- Terminal Storage: 40,000 TEU[267]

Port of Malau
Latitude: 16° South
Longitude: 179° East

Malau, on Vanua Levu's northwestern coast, mostly handles molasses but does serve ships carrying general cargo. It is privately owned by the Fiji Sugar Corporation but comes under the jurisdiction of Fiji Ports under the Seaports Management Act. It has a deepwater anchorage and berthing facilities. It handles approximately 140,000 tons of cargo annually.[268]

Port of Wairiki
Latitude: 16° 56' South
Longitude: 178° 39' East[269]

Located on the southeastern side of Vanua Levu, Wairiki port caters to the logging industry and is managed by Tropik Woods Fiji Limited. As of mid-2022, it was still under construction but was expected to eventually become a designated port of entry.[270]
Maximum draft: 12 m (39.3 feet)[271]

Port of Levuka
Latitude: 17° 41' South
Longitude: 178° 50' East

Levuka is on Ovalau, 20 km (12.4 miles) east of Viti Levu. The historic port is primarily home to the island's fishing industry, handling empty cans and frozen or canned exports. It does have a policy of giving priority berthing to tankers and cargo ships. Over 100 ships and 30,000 tons of cargo pass through the port annually. The berths can accommodate vessels weighing up to 30,000 DWT.[272]

Port of Rotuma
Latitude: 12°S
Longitude: 177°E

Declared an official port of entry in 2012, the port – more than 465 km (289 miles) north of the main islands – functions as a hub for trade between Rotuma and parts of Fiji as well as between Fiji and Tuvalu or Kiribati.[273]

Roads

The 2013 Constitution included a provision for the right of every person to have reasonable access to transportation. In a country with a large rural population and few transportation alternatives, the road network is critical to

society and business.[274] Fiji's government has undertaken a massive road infrastructure improvement program and reformed road transport management. Since 2012, the FRA has taken overall management and oversight of the network, maintenance, and planning. The exception is that the Land Transport Authority is responsible for vehicle and driver licensing and registration.[275]

When Cyclones Yasa and Ana swept through Vanua Levu in December 2020 and January 2021, they severely damaged the island's roads. By mid-2021, the Transport Infrastructure Investment Sector Project (TIISP) – financed by the Asian Development Bank, World Bank, and Government of Fiji – had rehabilitated some roads under the leadership of FRA. Work under TIISP was on-going on roads on both main islands as of 2022.[276] A key project being considered by FRA is a cross-island highway for Viti Levu to both reduce transit times and provide connection to interior communities as well as building in a transport link that is less exposed to sea level rise or other coastal hazards. The project was in the study phase under the 2022-2023 budget.[277] In addition to rehabilitation and resilience, basic safety projects are pillars of the NDP with a short-term goal of ensuring street lighting throughout the country and better traffic control, including lights, at junctions on high-traffic roads.[278]

FRA reports that there are 1,707 km (1,060 miles) of sealed roads and 5,818 km (3,615 miles) of unsealed roads under its management.[279] Topography restricts the 7,500-km (4,660-mile) road network to main ring or spine roads with feeders. The upshot is that travelers and transporters have few route alternatives. The route with the heaviest traffic is the corridor linking the two main ports, Suva and Lautoka. Trucks moving containers between the ports and sugar cane transporters contribute to traffic problems in this area. Many large trucks do not obey weight limitations.

In main urban areas, municipal roads can be in poor conditions, and in some weather, they may be impassable. The Suva-Nadi-Lautoka corridor is predominantly two-lane bitumen pavement with small four lane divided sections in the cities. The speed limit outside cities is 80 km per hour (60 miles per hour).[280] Traffic in Fiji moves on the left-hand side of the road as in Britain and Japan.

Railways

In the final decades of the 19th century, the Colonial Sugar Refining Company built narrow gauge (610-762 mm; 2-2.5 feet) railways on the northern and northwestern coasts of both Viti Levu and Vanua Levu to serve the sugar plantations and mills.[281] Of the nearly 700 km (435 miles) of line that were laid and used for sugar, fewer than 600 km (373 miles) remain in operation.[282] They are entirely owned and operated by the Fiji Sugar Corporation. Although the government has sought ways to invest in passenger use of the lines, particularly during the off season (when cane is not being transported to mills), there has been limited progress.[283] For the most part, the lines are poorly maintained and served by small tram rail carts for bringing in the cane harvest; they are ill suited for heavier traffic.[284]

Waterways

The Rewa is Fiji's longest river. Rising in the north-central uplands of Viti Levu, it flows southeast to Laucala (Lauthala) Bay, near Suva. It is navigable for small vessels for 80 km (50 miles).[285] Viti Levu's other river systems, the Ba, Nadi, Navua, and Sigatoka, are found in fertile valleys, but they are minimally navigable, used by small tourist and local boats.

The main river on Vanua Levu is the Dreketi, the catchment of which spans 84,928 hectares. The Dreketi runs 65 km (40 miles) westward through central Vanua Levu. It is deep and empties through a 7-km (4.3-mile) wide estuary on the central part of the island's northwestern coast.[286]

Schools

The Ministry of Education, Heritage, and Arts (MEHA) is the top-level government entity

charged with overseeing and implementing educational legislation, policies, and programs by providing facilities, human resources, budget, administration, and management support. This mandate covers pre-school, primary and secondary education, and vocational education and training.[287] Although the central government does own 13 school buildings, the remainder are owned by communities (local governments) or faith-based organizations.[288] As of 2020, there were 176 secondary schools, 736 primary schools, and 870 early education centers. The sector employs more than 13,000 teachers who serve more than 240,000 students.[289]

A 2018 survey found that more than 99% of adult Fijians are literate with equal rates for males and females.[290] Although early education is conducted in children's first languages (Fijian, Hindi, or English), once students reach secondary school and especially in tertiary education, all classes are conducted in English. The period of basic education has, since 2010, run 12 years, and after 2014, all fees for public education at the primary and secondary levels have been abolished.[291] UNESCO reports that, as of 2020, some 98% of primary school age children were enrolled in school while some 89% of Fijian adolescents were enrolled in secondary school. While boys and girls enroll in primary school at nearly the same rates, a larger percentage of girls than boys go on to secondary school. Moreover, of the 53% of Fijians in tertiary education in 2019, 64% of eligible women and 43% of eligible men were enrolled.[292]

There are three universities and seven other higher education institutions.[293] Fiji National University (FNU), the University of the South Pacific (USP), and the University of Fiji are the major higher education institutions in the country. They are joined by various technical and teachers' institutes. FNU and USP do provide degree or certificate programs related to climate change science and disaster management.

- Fiji National University offers regular undergraduate and graduate studies in climate change, resilience, and mitigation, as well as post-graduate studies that relate to disaster management, particularly in the environmental health discipline;[294] in May 2022, FNU announced the founding, along with Australia's Monash University, of the Monash-FNU Pacific Island Countries (PIC) Climate Change Research Centre to support collaboration and provide research leading to policy advice on a range of climate change mitigation and adaptation issues.[295]
- University of the South Pacific supports scholarship on CCA and post-disaster recovery at the graduate level; the Climate and Disaster Risk Finance and Insurance research project brings USP scholars into partnership with the UN Capital Development Fund, UN University Institute for Environment and Human Security, and the University of West Indies to understand the risks associated with financing and insurance within grassroots communities.[296]

Disaster Risk Reduction in the Education Sector

The Natural Disaster Risk Reduction Policy 2018-2030 lays out several key actions for the education sector; they range from building safer schools and revitalizing traditional, disaster-resistant building practices for school facilities to implementing student-led hazard mapping exercises around schools and developing technical textbooks for students and practitioners at all levels to understand the complexities of DRR and CCA.

The country does already include an Education Cluster within its standard disaster response cluster system with MEHA as the lead and UNICEF and Save the Children as co-leads. Together, they work to ensure that children can access education in the wake of a disaster because of the importance of this continuity to helping children recover.[297] In addition, MEHA participates in global and regional planning and training efforts to ensure not only that they can assess damage and rehabilitate school buildings after disasters but that schools also can serve as shelters in times of emergency – particularly during cyclones that can drive people out of their

less well-built homes and into evacuation centers in better built schools.[298]

In 2016, Cyclone Winston affected 495 schools by inflicting damage on classrooms, staff housing, furnishings, educational resources, or other equipment. While the majority of schools reopened 5-10 days after the storm as debris was cleared and minor repairs made, some schools had to make do with tents for classrooms, and more than 800 students from three destroyed schools had to be reaccommodated in nearby schools.[299] In the succession of cyclones since that storm, schools have served to shelter people, and there is intensifying attention paid to their construction to ensure their structures can withstand increasingly intense storm activity linked to climate change.[300] Among the projects intending to provide both shelter and educational facilities was a July 2022 project to build new classrooms at Navonu Primary School in Vanua Levu; the construction project brought together U.S. and Fiji military personnel during exercise Pacific Partnership.[301] Photo 1 shows the U.S. Pacific Fleet Director for Humanitarian Assistance/Disaster Relief and Combined Operations as he toured the Navonu Primary School classrooms after their handover to MEHA.[302]

In the Education in Emergencies policy, MEHA lays out responsibilities and roles for education in times of emergency. Under this policy, the Permanent Secretary for Education (PSE) has the authority and responsibility to close schools and activate the Education Emergency Operation Center (EEOC) on the advice of the NDMO. PSE represents MEHA in the National Disaster Council. The Director of the MEHA Asset Management Office (AMU) takes charge of emergency operations and activates EOCs in affected education districts after the national EOC is activated. Under AMU Director supervision, district education officers, teachers, and School Disaster, Risk Management, and Response Committees (SDRMRC) conduct a rapid assessment within 72 hours of a disaster and complete a detailed assessment within 15 days after a disaster. The AMU Director represents MEHA in NDMO meetings, can convene Education Cluster meetings as needed, coordinates with other agencies, and compiles and submits to NDMO National Education SITREPs.[303]

As early as 2005, Fiji began integrating DRR into the education sector via the UN Centre for Regional Development's Reducing Vulnerability of School Children to Earthquakes project that



Photo 1: Navonu Classroom Built during Pacific Partnership 2022

involved school retrofitting, disaster education, community capacity building, and awareness raising. In Fiji, the project explicitly targeted students, teachers, and the broader community. With participation from the NDMO, the early project focused on 10 schools in the broader Suva area. In a February 2007 Disaster Education and School Safety conference, stakeholders reviewed DRR within the formal school curriculum and planned for further review and development. There was little evidence of systematic inclusion of DRR at that time, but a further review in 2012 found that DRR had been incorporated in the following ways:

- Health Science, primary classes 3-8 (sanitation, safety and first aid in emergencies, infectious disease prevention, and a "safety week" for class 3)
- Basic Science, primary classes 7-8 (thunderstorms and tropical cyclones, and rocks and soil, including earthquakes, volcanoes, and tsunamis)
- Social Science, primary class 8 (decision making skills, including risk management strategies, place, and environment)
- Geography, secondary class 6 (detecting and monitoring hazards, hazard mitigation, and prevention)
- Biology, secondary class 6 (human influences on ecosystems); and
- All primary and secondary grades (addressing DRR through essay writing and project work in English lessons).

During this process, the NDMO published the first Students' Handbook on Disaster Management that touched on the various regular hazards that impact Fiji – e.g., cyclones, floods, landslides, and fire – and provided activities to encourage younger children to discuss and engage with the challenges posed. Finally, the NDMO's booklet called for schools to conduct emergency drills three times each school term, and a complementary teachers' handbook sought to prepare teachers for implementation of these activities.[304]

In 2019, MEHA published its Education in Emergencies and School Safety Policy that laid out how schools should plan for continuing education in times of emergency and develop a comprehensive School Disaster Management Plan (SDMP). The SDMP encompasses planning, preparedness, response, and recovery, and each school undertakes risk reduction education to develop a culture of safety. At the apex of this process is MEHA, which not only oversees work related to facilities but also develops the methods and shape of teaching hazards, disasters, and problem solving, and infuses these methods into the curriculum, including via teacher training. MEHA AMU has the lead in coordinating with district education offices and schools; this coordination includes conducting training on assessments and on planning and conducting audits on school infrastructure and facilities to identify maintenance priorities. AMU is also the body tasked with coordinating and communicating procedures and policies. Although there is a role for District Officers, much of the work falls to School Heads who select and oversee the work of individual SDRMRCs. School Heads are ultimately responsible for their schools' evacuation and other disaster management plans, and they conduct drills and publish drill evaluations. Under the School Head, among other actions, the SDRMRC identifies evacuation centers and temporary learning centers. Students are an integral part of the SDMP as leaders and participants in drills and as observers of their school environments so that they can report problems or concerns.[305]

Communications

The NDP shows intense interest in ensuring that information and communications technology (ICT) is modernized and expanded to build upon Fiji's already entrenched status as a hub of business, transport, and regional coordination in the Pacific. Digital connectivity underlies much of the plan with a shorter, 5-year horizon for some of the basic infrastructural components, while a longer, 20-year horizon is set for ensuring that advances and creativity

in ICT promote economic productivity, support investment, and advance job creation. Among the goals of communications capacity expansion is to ensure that rural and remote communities can build socio-economic wealth without residents moving to urban areas;[306] such equitable expansion may help avoid worse urban congestion and may keep more people out of positions of precarity even as climate change-influenced hazards grow in densely populated but poorly planned urban areas.

Telephones

Fixed lines: 48,510 (2020)[307]
Mobile subscriptions: 1.31 million (2022)[308]

With the majority of the population resident on Viti Levu and Vanua Levu, most telecommunications infrastructure development has occurred on these islands. There are at least five submarine cable systems landing in Fiji and providing connectivity throughout the region and globally. The Savusavu submarine cable system to connect the two main islands was completed in 2018 as part of a program not only to boost capacity but also to provide a "storm-resistant" communications link to ensure connectivity in times of emergency. However, it must be noted that such a system may not be entirely "disaster-resistant" as evidenced by the disruption of Fiji-Tonga connectivity in the wake of the January 2022 Hunga Tonga-Hunga Ha'apai volcanic explosion, which damaged the submarine cable connecting the two countries.[309]

Formed under the Telecommunications Act of 2008, the Telecommunications Authority of Fiji is the top-level regulator for telephone, internet, and amateur radio operators in terms of both spectrum and equipment use and import. The focus is on sustaining the shift away from a monopoly and toward a competitive market.[310] The three main service providers are Digicel Fiji, Vodafone Fiji, and Telecom Fiji. Amalgamated Telecom Holdings, owned by the Fiji National Provident Fund, owns Vodafone and Telecom Fiji.[311] Telecom Fiji offers mobile and land-line services as well as fixed broadband. Vodafone offers mobile plans as well as various digital services (e.g., transport connectivity and mobile wallets). Digicel Pacific is a regional corporation, part of Jamaica-based Digicel; the Pacific branch delivers mobile services to multiple Pacific Island countries.

Mobile teledensity sits at about 144% in a reflection of the fact that many Fijians have more than one mobile line –one for business and one for personal use – and the number of mobile lines continues to grow.[312] Fiji's telecom service providers have invested heavily in latest generation infrastructure, and, as of 2020, LTE (4G) accounted for the largest share of subscriptions. Moreover, service providers are ensuring that their systems are 5G-ready.[313] As of 2022, more than 92% of mobile users had access to a broadband connection (3G, 4G, or 5G). Some 92% of handsets used in Fiji are Android devices versus less than 8% for Apple devices.[314]

Internet Access

Internet users: 688,000 (July 2022)[315]

Although Fiji's government reports that 95% of Fijians have access to the internet,[316] external sources estimate that three-quarters are internet users, and issues such as cost and access keep some residents beyond reach of the internet.[317] Nonetheless, the government is pressing ahead with digital government and financial services in the hopes that digitization and the steadily falling cost of mobile broadband will ensure that most Fiji residents have ready access to digital services such as unemployment insurance and bank accounts. There are initiatives to link rural communities as part of a program to bolster education and break down the existing digital divide between the outer islands and the main communities on Viti Levu and Vanua Levu.[318]

Nearly all of Fiji's internet users also have at least one social media account. Facebook has the largest audience share with about 60% of the population, or 80% of the internet user base. An estimated 63% of the country's internet users access the web via mobile device, and 34% use a desk-/laptop computer. The median mobile

download speed in 2022 was 21.3 Megabits per second (Mbps) while the median fixed-line download speed was 14.29 Mbps. Mobile speeds fell slightly year-on-year while fixed-line speeds increased slightly in 2022. Chrome vastly outpaces competing browsers with nearly 73% of market share.[319]

Mass Media

Fiji has a lively mass media sector with both private and state-owned outlets reaching national audiences. Legacy print media have made the jump to digital publishing. Pay television and internet news are widespread although radio remains a critical information lifeline to outer islands.

Despite the variety of voices that have traditionally been present across the national mass media, recent decades have been difficult in terms of both professional journalism and the business of the news. In 2009, during suspension of the constitution after the 2006 coup d'état, government censors were posted in various newsrooms, and several foreign journalists were deported for coverage related to court rulings on the coup.[320] The Media Industry Development Decree of 2010, which was amended in 2015[321] and subsequently passed into law in 2018,[322] bans reporting that is critical of government or harmful to public interests. However, public interests are ill defined in the law, and there is deep concern that the law has been used to silence government opposition and critics and has fed self-censorship due to the threat of fines and jail time.[323] As recently as 2019, the UN Human Rights Council advised Fiji to repeal or amend the Decree and two other pieces of legislation that had reportedly been used to stifle critical mass media.[324]

Radio is the key link integrating isolated communities with Fiji Broadcasting Corporation (FBC), the long-standing dominant station, although it has been joined by several private stations that reach broad audiences.[325] There are at least one dozen radio stations. FBC operates six stations with programming in Fijian, Hindi, and English. There are also several stations owned by Communication Fiji Limited alongside various local community stations.[326] In partnership with the Australian Broadcasting Corporation, FBC reporters participate in the Pacific Prepared program to produce radio content focused on disaster preparedness and journalistic capacity building within the context of climate change and disaster management. A 2021 initiative of Pacific Prepared saw mobile journalist kits ("mojo kits") delivered to FBC and privately-owned Mai TV to enable Fiji's journalists to be more flexible when covering natural disasters. The "mojo kits" are lightweight, simple to setup, and, as required, can perform live crosses from in-studio presenters to reporters in the field.[327]

The bulk of television programming watched in the country is commercial and produced overseas. The main local TV broadcasters are state-owned FBC and privately-owned Fiji Television and Digicel Fiji, the former of which owns a satellite pay TV service,[328] while the latter operates the Sky Fiji and Sky Pacific multi-channel pay TV services.[329] All television broadcasters have integrated online delivery alongside newer, wholly online TV producers like Mai TV. The two key legacy print outlets – Fiji Sun and Fiji Times – compete for both advertising revenue and audience with the Sun being more popular among pro-government groups and the Times taking stances more critical of the now-former Bainimarama regime. There is also some fragmentation among outlets due to linguistic diversity within the population. English-, Fijian-, and Hindi-language outlets cater to the specific interests of their respective communities.[330]

Post

Post Fiji is the national postal service provider, established originally by law in 1871 but eventually incorporated as its own entity under government oversight in 1996. There are 58 post offices throughout the islands. They provide all standard letter and parcel services and deliver directly to many thousands of residential and business addresses.[331] International parcel and document delivery services such as FedEx and DHL serve Fiji.

Utilities

The NDP called for safe water to reach 100% of urban areas by 2021 and outlying areas by 2030 with similar targets for 100% electricity access by 2021; an additional target for centralized sanitation services expects to reach 70% of the total population by the middle of the 21st century. Some impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic slowed the push to reach remote islands and settlements with some services by 2021, and the government responded by making some deadlines more open-ended. Across all NDP targets, building climate resiliency into infrastructure is a key aspect of projects. Among the plans are adaptation and conservation projects to address the impacts of rising sea levels and changing rainfall patterns.[332]

Power

The government is the major shareholder in Energy Fiji Limited (EFL, formerly the Fiji Electricity Authority) while Japan's Sevens Pacific holds a 44% share, and Fiji domestic accounts hold some 5%. EFL's 10-year Power Development Plan plots out investments in new generation, transmission, and distribution. In 2019, the Fijian Competition and Consumer Commission took over many of the power regulation functions, such as approval and licensure of providers, from EFL although the two bodies nominally cooperate during the on-going transition of authorities.[333]

Hydropower and imported oil account for nearly all of Fiji's electric power generation. EFL is the main generator and distributor of grid-based power on the islands of Viti Levu, Vanua Levu, and Ovalau.[334] Some major industrial players – e.g., Tropik Woods and Fiji Sugar – do maintain their own generation plants to power their operations.[335] As of 2018, approximately 4% of Fiji's population (more than 32,000 people) had yet to be directly connected to the electricity grid, and those remaining unconnected tended to live in remote areas or informal settlements. Plans and programs were on-going to ensure connection by 2024 although uptake of clean cooking fuels has proven to be a particularly sticky problem with an estimated one-half of the population still relying on "polluting" fuels for cooking purposes.

Total final energy consumption in 2018 was reported to be 549.6 kilotons of oil equivalent (ktoe), dominated by diesel, which delivered 279.9 ktoe (50.9%) both for power generation and transport. Analysis suggests that demand will rise to 610.5 ktoe in 2030 by which time transport is expected to be the dominant user at 407 ktoe (66.7%). Other sectors – residential, commercial, and industrial – are all expected to see rises in total use but also enjoy more benefit from energy efficiency and conversion to renewable sources.

The country reports that 9-12% of total final energy consumption was provided by renewables, and there is a policy of boosting this share to 14% by 2030. The greatest area of improvement is expected to be in renewables use in the formal electricity grid with a target of 71% of grid power slated to be renewable by 2030 when electricity demand is expected to top 1,400 Gigawatt-hours (GWh). Of households and businesses connected to the power grid, some 80% are connected to the main EFL grid while the remainder are based on solar home systems, village-based diesel generation, or mini-hydro. EFL's installed generation capacity in 2018 was 360.3 Megawatts (MW), of which 60% was renewable generation capacity. Actual 2030 EFL output is expected to be dominated by hydropower at 51.5% with other renewables - solar, wind, and biomass – increasing to nearly 20% from just 4.2% in 2018.

An International Renewable Energy Agency survey found that Fiji has 220 MW of exploitable grid-connected hydropower potential on the main islands. There may be up to 28 MW of power to be had using biomass waste, but solar power potential tops 52,000 GWh, according to the National Renewable Energy Laboratory. Finally, the country may have 38-70 MW of geothermal generation capacity.[336] As of mid-2022, four 5-MW solar farms were being constructed.[337] In October 2022, the U.S. Department of State Bureau of Energy Resources

joined the Secretariat of the Pacific Community (SPC) to host the first Clean Energy Workshop and Pacific Women in Energy Conference in Suva as part of the U.S. Department of State's Women in Energy Strategy. The participating U.S. Deputy Assistant Secretary of State said, "Women's leadership and participation throughout the energy sector has never been more crucial for success, because diverse voices spur innovation." The Assistant Secretary underscored that the Strategy will engage local energy officials, utilities, private companies, and educational and research bodies to commit to the institutional changes, policies, and practices that will increase women's access new energy sector business opportunities and jobs.[338]

Most of Fiji's power lines are above ground. In the NDP, a focus on climate resiliency will see EFL moving lines underground where feasible.[339]

Water and Sanitation

At the writing of the NDP in 2017, 78% of the population and a reported 98% of urban communities had access to a fully treated and reticulated water supply.[340] As a reticulated system, the Water Authority of Fiji (WAF) owns the pumping and water treatment system, pipework, reservoirs, and related equipment for the extraction, treatment, and delivery of water.[341] Meanwhile, 71% of the population had access to improved sanitation; a reported 25% of the population used sewerage facilities while the remainder of those with access used septic tanks or other on-site management methods. To bolster rural access to safe water, a rural water program was slated to deliver tanks while remote and maritime communities were slated to be targeted with projects to access groundwater or use diesel-powered desalination technology. Overall, the NDP targeted resource allocation to develop new treatment plants, reticulation systems, and reservoirs alongside an aggressive leak reduction strategy to improve both supply and efficiency. To reach a goal of 40% of the population connected to central sewerage by 2021, the NDP sought ways to increase treatment plant capacity for urban communities and to build small-scale plants for more remote areas.[342]

Since 2010, WAF has been responsible for both water and sewer connections with oversight from the central government. WAF maintains 4,932 km (3,064 miles) of pipes that deliver treated drinking water to residential and commercial customers across the islands.[343] In addition to standard piped water for urban and peri-urban residents, WAF has a rural water service that delivers 2,000 liters (528 gallons) of water per fortnight by truck to households not connected to the pipe network.[344]

A 2014 survey found that some 60% of residents of the Greater Suva Area were still using on-site sanitation systems such as septic tanks. Due to the prevailing shallow depth of soil, high rainfall, and lack of routine maintenance, overflows from septic tanks are common. Moreover, there are numerous informal settlements without adequate on-site sanitation, and in some cases, untreated wastewater is discharged directly to local creeks and waterways. Finally, assessments found that the Greater Suva Area could be expected to experience steadily rising population density that would strain even the existing wastewater system.[345]

HEALTH

Since the mid-20th century, Fiji has undergone an epidemiological transition wherein reductions in infectious diseases led to declining mortality and increased life expectancy but were followed by increased mortality from cardiovascular and other non-communicable diseases (NCD) in adults.

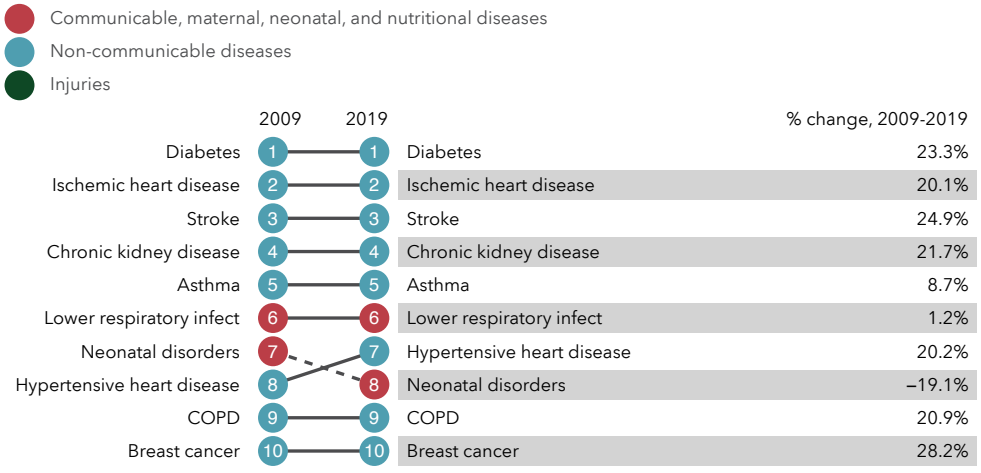
The average life expectancy in Fiji rose from 65.5 years in 1990 to 70.4 years in 2017,[346] and the country saw drops in both neonatal and under five mortality rates during the same period although maternal mortality rates remained higher than targeted at 44.4 per 100,000 live births (2014). Although NCDs are the cause in nearly 80% of deaths[347] and more than 14% of people experience some type of disability,[348] communicable diseases and climate change remain significant burdens.[349] Figure 9 shows the top 10 causes of death in Fiji as of 2019 as well as the percent change in those causes for the period 2009-2019.[350]

As the country confronts risks associated with climate shocks and climate change, it is striving to improve the resilience of its health system and to adapt healthcare teams and measures to respond directly to disasters.[351] In May 2019, the WHO certified Fiji's Emergency Medical Assistance Team (FEMAT) as the first such team in the Pacific Islands. Housed under the Ministry of Health and Verified as a Type 1 Fixed Emergency Medical Team, FEMAT can respond domestically and across the Pacific to provide initial emergency care for injuries and other acute health needs for up to 100 patients per day.[352]

Health Care System Structure

The Ministry of Health and Medical Services (MHMS) delivers services to the population via two "systems" – i.e., the primary, preventative system and the curative (hospital) services system.[353] Clinical services are mainly provided at the hospitals and some health centers, while preventive services are through specific preventive care programs, hospitals, health centers, and nursing stations.[354] For Fiji citizens, these services are delivered free or at minimal cost via over 200 facilities, to include two specialized hospitals, three divisional hospitals, 19 sub-divisional hospitals, 80 health centers, and 107 nursing stations.[355] As a supplement to these public services, various civil society organizations provide services in hard-to-reach areas; they particularly focus on mental health and NCD screening. Moreover, a private corporate medical services sector exists with over 100 general practitioners and four major insurance companies serving employers who offer their employees private health coverage.[356] The private sector consists mainly of outpatient services through general practitioners,

What causes the most deaths?



	% change, 2009-2019
Diabetes	23.3%
Ischemic heart disease	20.1%
Stroke	24.9%
Chronic kidney disease	21.7%
Asthma	8.7%
Lower respiratory infect	1.2%
Hypertensive heart disease	20.2%
Neonatal disorders	–19.1%
COPD	20.9%
Breast cancer	28.2%

Figure 9: Top 10 Causes of Total Number of Deaths (2019) and Percent Change (2009-2019)

inpatient services through two private hospitals, and the sale of medicine by retail pharmacies.[357]

Division Hospitals
- Central Division – Colonial War Memorial (CWM) Hospital in Suva
- Western Division – Lautoka Hospital
- Northern Division – Labasa Hospital[358]

Specialist Hospitals (both in Suva)
- Tamavua P.J. Twomey Hospital – tuberculosis (TB), leprosy, and medical rehabilitation
- St. Giles Hospital – mental health[359]

MHMS' National Health Emergency and Disaster Management Unit (NHED MU) stood up in 2012. It is led by the National Health Emergency Coordinator (NHEC) and housed in the MHMS Headquarters alongside a dedicated EOC.[360] Figure 10 shows the organizational structure for national health emergencies.[361] In addition to emergency response operations, NHED MU is responsible for preparedness and ensuring that health facilities are made as resilient as possible to disasters and that MHMS staff are capable of responding effectively. In normal times and times of emergency, NHED MU is tasked with providing technical and up-to-standard support to national authorities, UN agencies, and NGOs, defining emergency health policy, assisting in the establishment and maintenance of health and nutritional surveillance, producing health intelligence, and managing information for health advocacy. In the decade since its founding, the Unit has developed the "Get Ready, Disasters Happen Campaign," upgraded the EOC communications and electric power systems, participated in post-storm health facility rehabilitation and reconstruction, and activated emergency task forces in times of disease outbreak.[362]

MHMS is also involved in two humanitarian clusters established in 2012 to deliver services before, during, and after disasters. MHMS is the lead agency for the Health and Nutrition Cluster, which also integrates the WHO and UNICEF as co-leads and involves its 27 partners in meetings; these partners range from major NGOs (e.g., Help International and Save the Children) through foreign government agencies (e.g., the

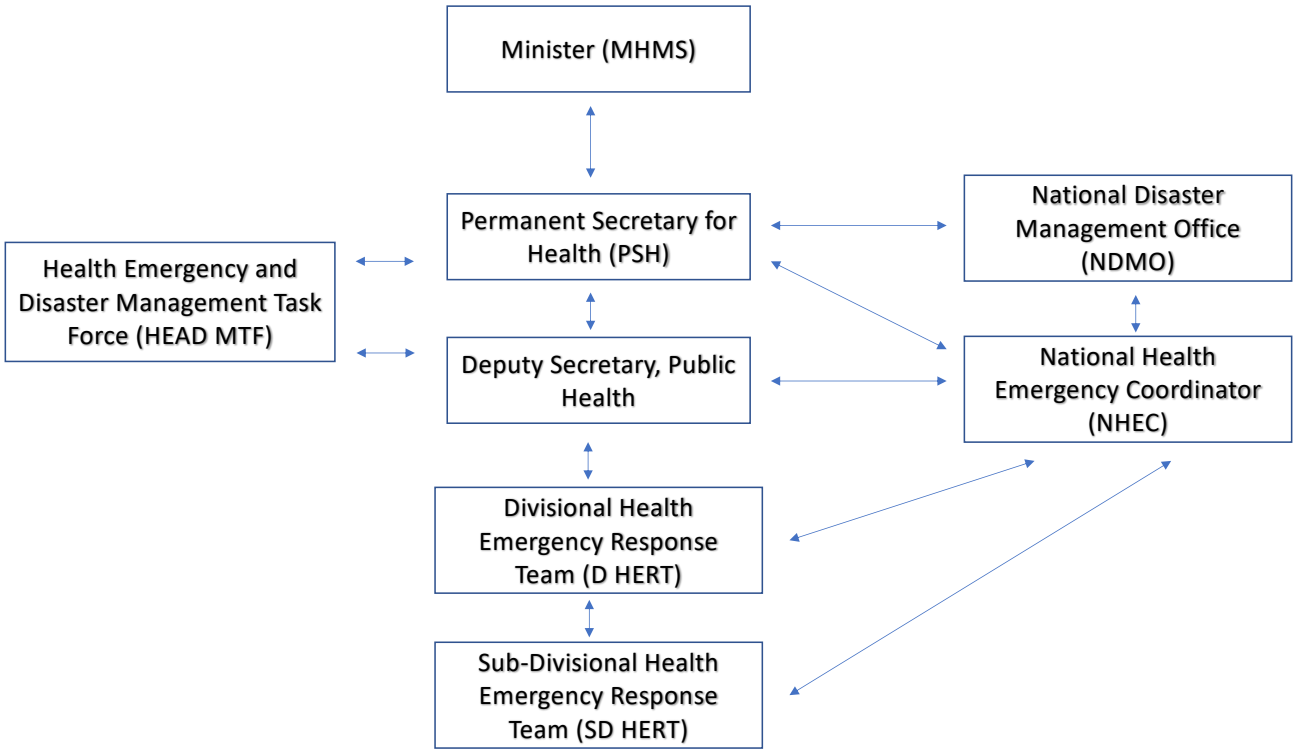


Figure 10: National Health Emergency and Disaster Management Structure

Australia Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade and the Embassy of the People's Republic of China in Fiji) and local universities, to major international organizations (e.g., IFRC and SPC).[363] MHMS also leads the WASH cluster with UNICEF as the co-lead and with partners like CARE International, the Fiji Disabled Peoples Federation, Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA), USAID, and the New Zealand Defence Force, among many others.[364]

Health Strategies and Surveillance

The NDP (2017-2036) promises more investment in divisional hospitals to expand capacity and capabilities, and it expects to begin construction of new sub-divisional hospitals and health centers to expand the range of services available outside major population centers. Along with this policy, government will need to hire and train additional full-time doctors and staff to ensure that every facility has appropriate personnel. Moreover, any expansion of the physical presence will necessitate improvement of the supply chain for equipment and medications.[365] Any progress toward NDP goals was shown to have been insufficient during the 2021 peak of the COVID-19 pandemic that saw the main hospital, CWM, run short of testing and treatment supplies even as its own staff buckled under the pressure and many became sick themselves.[366] A resumption of hiring and training of doctors, nurses, and midwives will be required to shore up the system in order to fulfill NDP promises.

In its own Strategic Plan 2020-2025, MHMS foresees sustained decentralization of health services and the boosting of use of multi-disciplinary outreach teams to work with community health workers in underserved communities. Among the key informational and outreach activities is implementation of the WHO Package of Essential NCD (PEN) Interventions within primary and outpatient settings in order to enable early detection of chronic ailments – e.g., cardiovascular diseases, diabetes, and cancers – to prevent life-threatening complications. The 2020-2025 strategic priorities are:

- Strategic Priority 1: Reform public health services to provide a population-based approach for diseases and the climate crisis
  - Reduce communicable and non-communicable disease prevalence, especially for vulnerable groups
  - Improve the physical and mental well-being of all citizens with particular emphasis on women, children, and young people through prevention measures
  - Safeguard against environmental threats and public health emergencies
  - Strengthen population-wide resilience to the climate crisis
- Strategic Priority 2: Increase access to quality, safe, and patient-focused clinical services
  - Improve patient health outcomes, with a particular focus on services for women, children, young people, and vulnerable groups
  - Strengthen and decentralize effective clinical services, including rehabilitation, to meet the needs of the population
  - Continuously improve patient safety and the quality and value of services
- Strategic Priority 3: Drive efficient and effective management of the health system
  - Cultivate a competent and capable workforce where the contribution of every staff member is recognized and valued
  - Improve the efficiency of supply chain management and procurement systems and maintenance of equipment
  - Implement more efficient financial processes, while reducing the financial hardship of the most vulnerable
  - Ensure infrastructure is maintained to match service needs
  - Harness digital technologies to facilitate better health care for our patients
  - Continue to strengthen planning and governance throughout the MHMS
  - Widen our collaboration with partners

for a more efficient, innovative, and higher-quality health system[367]

WHO's most recent Country Cooperation Strategy ran 2018-2022, overlapping the Fiji MHMS' own Strategic Plans for 2015-2020 and 2020-2025. With its Representative Office in the South Pacific located in Suva, WHO tries to work with various Fiji partners on public health, research, awareness raising, and resource mobilization.[368] WHO's strategic activities for the period ending in 2022 included:

1. To achieve the priorities set in the WHO Global Health Sector Strategies on sexually transmitted infections, human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) and hepatitis, to reduce TB, and to control multidrug-resistant TB
   - 1.1 Implement the Regional Framework for Action on Implementation of the End TB Strategy in the Western Pacific 2016–2020 and ensure programmatic management of drug-resistant TB
   - 1.2 Engage leaders and program beneficiaries in the HIV response through identification of local champions and involvement of people living with HIV and key populations at higher risk in all stages of the program, service delivery cycle, and monitoring and evaluation
   - 1.3 Achieve or maintain the elimination or eradication of neglected tropical diseases

2. To ensure that Fiji has achieved national indicators for all NCDs and for nutrition, in line with global targets
   - 2.1 Ensure that excise tax accounts for 70% of the tobacco retail price as the recommended minimum, while increasing taxes on alcohol and targeted foods such as sugar-sweetened beverages
   - 2.2 Increase the use of policy approaches to control alcohol abuse, such as controlling advertising and regulating availability, along with appropriate awareness-raising programs
   - 2.3 Monitor the status of NCDs through surveys such as the STEPwise Approach to NCD Risk Factor Surveillance and the Global School-based Student Health Survey
   - 2.4 Strengthen NCD management in primary health care, using all PEN protocols, including monitoring of impact
   - 2.5 Increase efforts to improve diets through education and policy development, including controlling advertising to children and advertising of breast-milk substitutes, adopting settings-based policies, and implementing the Salt, Sugar, and Fat Reduction Strategy
   - 2.6 Enhance food safety controls through legislative strengthening, capacity-building, and improved monitoring and enforcement including for assessing food contamination

3. To decrease the service provision gap for mental health, disability, and rehabilitation and to prevent and respond to violence and injuries
   - 3.1 Increase national capacity for recovery-oriented community-based mental health and social support services
   - 3.2 Promote mental health and the prevention of mental disorders, alcohol harm, and suicide, reduce stigma and discrimination, and uphold human rights across the lifespan
   - 3.3 Develop national policies and action plans related to disability and violence and injury prevention
   - 3.4 Strengthen community-based rehabilitation as a development approach to improving access to services for people with disability
   - 3.5 Ensure the collection of relevant data as required under global reporting requirements in order to inform program and policy decisions

4. To build a robust health system, which

ensures universal health coverage and resilience to climate change

- 4.1 Review and strengthen role delineation, and system and performance review across the health system, including sharing of best practices
- 4.2 Review and plan national health plans, including through the use of national health accounts
- 4.3 Develop generic standards, competencies, and scope of practice for benchmarking of nursing specialization and medical internship, and support ongoing access to continuing career development, including through Pacific Open Learning Health Network
- 4.4 Assist with improvements in health information systems in line with national indicators and the Healthy Islands Monitoring Framework, including improvements in the quality of data
- 4.5 Strengthen governance and policies
- 4.6 Develop and maintain climate change resilience, an adaptation plan, and an early warning system

5. To improve access to essential medicines and health technologies, including traditional and complementary medicines, and to contain antimicrobial resistance
   - 5.1 Develop and review policies for medicines and health technologies including traditional medicines
   - 5.2 Strengthen procurement and supply of medicines and health technologies through assessment of inventory management systems, supply chain management training, and effective collaboration and information sharing with key programs and stakeholders
   - 5.3 Improve the ability to detect and deal with substandard products through a regional quality assurance mechanism and strengthened pharmacovigilance system, allied with capacity-building
   - 5.4 Ensure the implementation and monitoring of the multisectoral national action plan on antimicrobial resistance, with sufficient resource mobilization for full implementation

6. To ensure that Fiji is able to detect, assess, and respond to its common epidemic-prone diseases, and have in place arrangements with regional response partners for early technical assistance and surge capacity in the event of a transnational threat or disaster
   - 6.1 Develop and adapt technical guidelines and other knowledge products for the prevention and control of biological hazards and contribute to the Pacific Syndromic Surveillance System
   - 6.2 Ensure annual reporting on the implementation of International Health Regulations of 2005
   - 6.3 Improve the capacity of the national public health laboratory to conduct core public health tests and manage shipments to international reference laboratories for timely diagnosis and quality assurance
   - 6.4 Strengthen implementation of the Pandemic Influenza Preparedness Framework and support post-disaster early warning, alert, and response systems
   - 6.5 Adapt and implement the Western Pacific Regional Framework for Action for Disaster Risk Management for Health, including enhanced capacity in humanitarian coordination and response within national health authorities
   - 6.6 Invigorate outbreak alert and emergency response exercises for communicable disease events

7. To achieve improvements in maternal, newborn, child, and adolescent health through a life-course approach and by strengthening the continuum of care, including a focus on achieving global and regional immunization goals

7.1 Sustain high immunization coverage, ensure continuing poliomyelitis-free status, and achieve and sustain measles and rubella elimination
7.2 Improve prevention and management of rheumatic heart disease in line with the national strategy
7.3 Deliver school health programs and health promotion in all schools
7.4 Eliminate mother-to-child transmission of HIV
7.5 Expand the coverage of the Mother Safe Hospital Initiative[369]

The 2021 Global Health Security Index reports that Fiji conducts ongoing event-based surveillance and analysis for infectious disease, but it is unclear how frequently the findings are reported or analyzed. The country's National Health Emergencies and Disaster Management Plan (HEADMAP, 2013) is an overarching national public health emergency response plan, which addresses planning for multiple communicable diseases with epidemic or pandemic potential. HEADMAP outlines MHMS roles in an epidemic/pandemic or other crisis,[370] and it provides standard operating procedures and specific guidance for several key hazards.[371] In a crisis that either involves a health emergency or is related to a natural disaster that produces mass casualties, MHMS activates and uses its EOC to oversee a surge response and, in extreme circumstances, to assume direct control function over the health emergency response.[372]

In its 2016 Communicable Disease Surveillance and Outbreak Response Guidelines, MHMS laid out the general basis for surveillance of and response to infectious diseases; it includes sections on surveillance, notification, and response systems and on resource allocation and mobilization once an outbreak has been declared. The country has several notification systems that differ in terms of disease or syndrome monitored and their reporting pathways; these systems include but are not limited to the National Notifiable Disease Surveillance System (NNDSS); Influenza Surveillance; Tuberculosis Surveillance; Syndromic Surveillance, including the Early Warning Alert and Response System; Laboratory-based Disease Surveillance for leptospirosis, typhoid, and dengue fever; and the Public Health Information System. The primary system is the NNDSS, which monitors a comprehensive list of diseases and syndromes from acute flaccid paralysis and anthrax through chicken pox and tetanus. Medical officers are required to notify all diseases and conditions listed on the NNDSS through their medical supervisory channels who then report to the Fiji Centre for Communicable Disease Control (FCCDC), which, then, reports to both national government leaders and international partners such as the WHO or U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). Other health professionals - e.g., nurses, nurse practitioners, and environmental health officers – are also expected to be aware of the list of diseases in the NNDSS schedule and to report any suspected or confirmed cases to a medical officer as soon as possible.[373]

Although HEADMAP does not specify public health responses for most infectious diseases, that Plan, along with other national response frameworks, fed the development of Fiji's COVID-19 Preparedness and Response Plan with advice and guidance based on three scenarios: 1) during detection of initial cases when the imported source and exposure groups are known, the country will implement restrictions on border control and mass gatherings, and advise social distancing; 2) when small clusters of cases with a known source are detected, greater isolation capacity will be mobilized; and 3) when there are large clusters with no confirmed source, public health measures will be put in place to enforce social distancing such as travel restrictions, school closures, and minimizing social and cultural activities.[374]

Communicable Diseases

Fiji is burdened with the following communicable and water- or vector-borne diseases: dengue, leptospirosis, and typhoid. There is high concern that other diseases could

spread as climate change ensures that the habitat range of vectors expands to incorporate Fiji.

MHMS' Communicable Disease program has the following responsibilities:

- Set up an effective surveillance system for controlling communicable diseases
- Provide quality public health
- Promote and protect the health of the people of Fiji with regard to defined communicable diseases
- Deliver laboratory services for diagnosis, confirmation, and surveillance
- Develop, support, and sustain communication networks between other government departments and stakeholders on advice and training on communicable diseases
- Support communicable disease quality assurance programs
- Provide advisory services to national authorities on communicable diseases
- Conduct relevant research
- Collaborate in relevant programs and projects that are mutually beneficial
- Provide specialist advice on clinical management; and
- Provide quality public health services for designated infectious diseases under WHO's Pacific Public Health Surveillance Network.[375]

Fiji has taken a two-pronged approach to lessening the burden of communicable diseases: 1) boosting the capability of the health system to deal with infectious diseases, and 2) using community health promotion and messaging. Despite significant progress, Cyclone Winston in 2016 badly impacted the health system, leading to backsliding in some treatment realms, particularly related to TB. The most common communicable diseases are acute respiratory infections, as reported through the NNDSS. TB infections rose steadily after the year 2000, and 50-70 new cases of HIV were reported annually between 2010 and 2016 to bring the total cumulative number of HIV cases to 747 in 2017. The country has struggled with some major outbreaks such as dengue (2013-2014), meningococcal C (2018), and measles (2019).[376]

COVID-19

From 3 January 2020 to 11 January 2023, Fiji reported 68,771 confirmed cases of COVID-19 and 883 COVID-related deaths to WHO. As of 3 November 2022, more than 1.5 million COVID-19 vaccine doses had been administered.[377] The shape of the epidemic curve in Fiji is illustrated by Figure 11;[378] it displays that by March 2021, Fiji had recorded only 70 total cases, but by July that year, the country was averaging more than 900 new cases each day[379] after more than two months of battling the wave of infections and hospitalizations delivered by the arrival of the Delta variant of the virus. Border closures and quarantines implemented at the beginning of the pandemic kept the disease at bay for a year, but a series of family and workplace infection clusters exploded such that, in late April 2021, Suva entered a 14-day restricted movement period.[380] The country halted all international passenger air traffic. Schools were closed, and people were confined to restricted zones with only essential services and places like supermarkets remaining open. In the first week of May 2021, the country's health system took a significant hit as it had to close the Lautoka hospital and quarantine 400 patients, doctors, nurses, and other medical staff after a doctor who had been treating a COVID-positive patient also tested positive.[381]

In the midst of the massive wave of infections, in May 2021, the country became the first in the region to receive the AstraZeneca vaccine via the COVAX Facility for pooled procurement and equitable distribution of COVID-19 vaccines,[382] and in July the government announced a "no jab, no job" policy that would make full vaccination against COVID-19 a condition of employment from 1 August 2021. At that point, an estimated 75% of the population had already gotten a first dose of vaccine.[383] However, the head of the COVID-19 Vaccine Task Force said that vaccine uptake among citizens over the age of 60 years was particularly low. In addition to vaccine doses via COVAX, the country received donations of

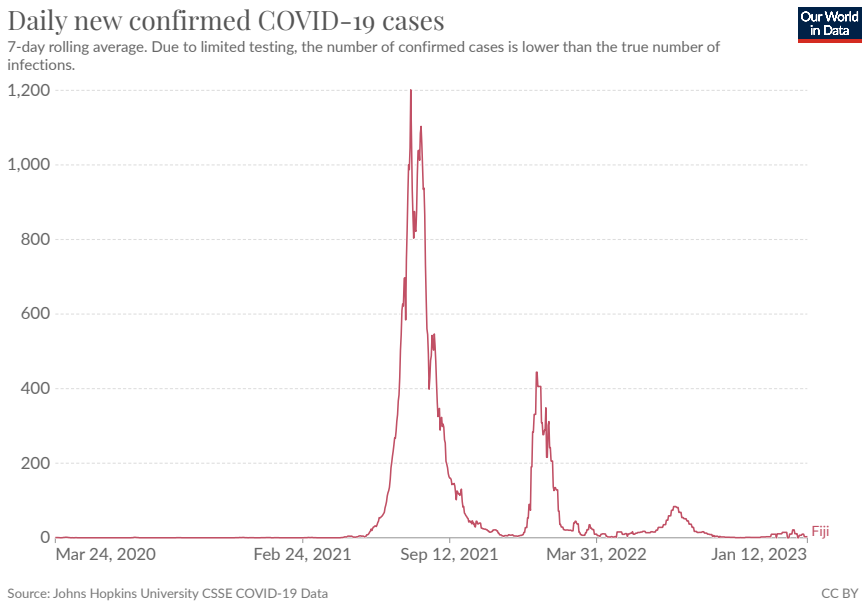


Figure 11: Daily New Confirmed COVID-19 Cases in Fiji, as of 12 January 2023

the AstraZeneca vaccine from Australia and the Moderna vaccine from the U.S. with additional vaccine doses and other supplies delivered by India, Japan, and New Zealand.[384]

As infection rates dropped dramatically in late 2021, the government re-opened its borders in December to allow visitors who were fully vaccinated and who provided negative pre-departure and on-arrival tests. By May 2022, as one of the world's most highly vaccinated communities, Fiji continued to open, dropping the requirement for a pre-departure negative test.[385] Then, on 5 September 2022, after experiencing significantly lower death tolls from the disease than during the Delta wave, Fiji re-opened to international travelers without requiring a test on arrival although travelers were still required to be fully vaccinated and have travel insurance that includes COVID-19 coverage.[386]

A Coronavirus Task Force was appointed early in the pandemic (January 2020) and oversaw the initial MHMS preparedness response; it then transitioned into a policy advisory body for the MHMS Permanent Secretary. It was augmented in March 2020 by a COVID-19 Incident Management Team (IMT) that established four core public health tenets:

- Protect the most vulnerable Fijians
- Prevent health systems from being overwhelmed
- Ensure continuity of all other public health programming; and
- Ensure health facilities do not become sites of amplification and transmission of the virus.

The IMT would then become the implementing and operational arm of MHMS. IMT operated on the basis of an incident management system and integrated experts as well as liaison personnel from various government line ministries and partners, particularly WHO. Within the Preparedness and Response Plan (August 2020), the FCCDC Molecular Laboratory would be the central hub for diagnostic testing. The Plan included the explicit goal of ensuring that economic and social impacts of the pandemic were taken into account when implementing and evaluating health measures.[387]

Dengue

Fiji has experienced dengue outbreaks of varying size for 50 years. Large epidemics of more than 10,000 cases of different serotypes occurred in 1997–1998 and 2013–2014, with smaller, sporadic outbreaks of a few hundred cases at other times. In 2018, more than 4,000 cases were reported,[388] and during the peak season in 2022, nearly 2,000 confirmed cases were reported.[389] In Fiji, summer is the period with the highest risk of dengue spread.

Dengue is spread by Aedes aegypti mosquitoes that carry the dengue virus. The mosquito contracts the virus when it bites an infected person, and it is then capable of transmitting the infection for the rest of its life every time it bites. The mosquito that spreads dengue lives in urban

areas and in containers where stagnant water collects (tires, water drums, etc.). The best way to avoid dengue is to avoid mosquito bites and to destroy mosquito breeding habitats by clearing gutters, removing old tires, ensuring any outside containers that are not covered are turned upside down, covering water storage drums, and cutting long grass.

Dengue causes flu-like symptoms that generally last 2-7 days. It usually occurs after an incubation period of 4-10 days after the bite of the infected mosquito. High fever (40°C/104°F) is usually accompanied by nausea, vomiting, loss of appetite, headache, eye pain, muscle or joint pains, and rash; less common symptoms include swollen glands, diarrhea, and general malaise. The diseases can develop into a severe form, usually 3-7 days after the first sign of illness. Although the infected person's temperature may fall, signs of severe dengue may include abdominal pain, persistent vomiting, vomiting blood, rapid breathing, and fatigue or restlessness. Severe dengue can be fatal, but most people will recover after an illness of 2-7 days followed by weeks of lingering fatigue.

People who think they have been infected should seek medical attention immediately as early diagnosis and management of symptoms is critical to reduce the risk of complications and avoid further spread. Otherwise, rest and fluid intake are the main treatments. With proper medical care and early recognition, case-fatality rates are very low.[390]

The World Mosquito Program is a partner in addressing Fiji's battle against dengue. Since mid-2018, in collaboration with local communities and government, it has implemented the Wolbachia method across the main Lami-Suva-Nakasi Corridor with additional programs in Nadi and Lautoka. The approach involves releasing mosquitoes that carry Wolbachia, which are bacteria that reduce the Aedes aegypti mosquito's ability to transmit viruses to people. Mosquitoes carrying Wolbachia are released to breed with wild mosquitoes and pass Wolbachia to their offspring.[391]

Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV) / Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome (AIDS)

As of 2021, Fiji was one of the five countries experiencing swiftly rising HIV infections in the Asia-Pacific region and one of 38 such countries globally. The national total of people living with HIV in Fiji in 2021 was 804 people.[392] In May 2022, MHMS reported that it had recorded 151 new infections for the first six months of the year, a statistic that marked the highest number of new infections since 1989. During the same six months, 26 AIDS-related deaths were recorded. At the time of this update, MHMS underscored that there had been a cumulative number of 1,417 cases of HIV reported in Fiji from 1989 onward. A growing proportion of Fiji's newly infected people are men (52% male, 47% female, and 1% transgender), and unprotected sex is the most common means of transmission.[393] An estimated 45% of Fiji's HIV patients, or more than 600 people, are on anti-retroviral treatment. Among the key challenges confronting Fiji's public health clinicians is that only 25% of female sex workers and 42% of men who have sex with men – both key target communities – have access to HIV testing.[394]

Leptospirosis

Leptospirosis is a bacterial disease. In humans, it can cause a wide range of symptoms, and left untreated, it can lead to kidney damage, meningitis, liver failure, respiratory distress, and even death. Symptoms include high fever, headache, chills, muscle aches, vomiting, jaundice, red eyes, abdominal pain, diarrhea, and rash. However, some infected persons may have no symptoms at all. The time between exposure and presentation is between two days and four weeks. Illness usually begins abruptly with fever and other symptoms. Leptospirosis may occur in two phases: 1) after a period of fever, chills, headache, muscle aches, vomiting, or diarrhea, the patient may recover for a time but become ill again; and 2) a second, more severe phase could involve kidney or liver failure or meningitis. The illness lasts from a few days to three weeks or longer. Without proper treatment, recovery may

take several months. Leptospirosis is treated with antibiotics, such as doxycycline or penicillin, which should be given early in the course of the disease. Intravenous antibiotics may be required for persons with more severe symptoms.

The bacteria spreads through the urine of various infected wild and domestic animals in water or soil, and it can survive there for weeks or months. Humans become infected through contact with urine (or other body fluids, except saliva) from infected animals or from contact with water, soil, or food contaminated with the urine of infected animals. The bacteria can enter the body through skin or mucous membranes (eyes, nose, or mouth), especially if the skin is broken from a cut or scratch. Outbreaks of leptospirosis are usually caused by exposure to contaminated water, such as floodwaters. Leptospirosis is common in Fiji, and reported cases tend to see an uptick in summer due to higher rainfall and, therefore, greater exposure to contaminated water. Agricultural and fisheries workers, miners, and military personnel are at somewhat higher risk of exposure, but infection has been linked to swimming, wading, kayaking, and rafting in fresh water and, as such, it is a hazard for campers or those who participate in outdoor sports.[395]

Measles

Measles is a highly infectious, airborne viral disease that spreads through an infected person breathing, coughing, and sneezing, and an uninfected or un-immunized person breathing in droplets in the air. Measles virus can remain in the air for up to two hours after an infected person leaves an area. Symptoms include fever and a rash with any of the following: runny nose, sneezing, cough, red/watery eyes, and white spots inside the mouth (Koplik spots). The rash starts after the other symptoms and spreads from the hairline and behind the ears to all over the body. The rash is red, flat, or slightly raised, and does not blister. It is typically not itchy. Most people recover from a measles infection in 8-10 days with rest and proper nourishment and hydration. However, some people develop serious complications, and some may die. Children under the age of five, pregnant women, adults 19-39 years of age, and those with compromised immune systems are most at risk of complications. There is no specific treatment for measles except for those that develop complications who will need admission to hospital and specialized treatment.

Measles spreads easily through families, workplaces, childcare centers, and schools. However, a safe and effective vaccine exists. Fiji's MHMS provides measles vaccine free to children.[396] Even with relatively high, population-wide vaccination rates, in late 2019, Fiji was among the Pacific Island countries that experienced an outbreak, which was officially declared on 7 November; a state of emergency was not declared. On 23 December 2019, the country had reported 24 cases and no deaths; all cases were in people under 40 years of age in the country's Central Division. The outbreak was considered contained after an emergency immunization campaign brought nationwide vaccination rates up above 95%.[397]

Meningococcal C

Fiji has experienced an increase in cases of meningococcal serotype C disease in recent years. On 20 March 2018, MHMS declared a National Meningococcal Disease Outbreak for Meningococcal C.[398] Eighty-five cases were reported from 1 January to 25 November; 36 were laboratory confirmed, 10 were probable, and 39 were suspected cases. A national vaccination campaign ended in late October, and the last confirmed cases were reported in September. In December 2018, the outbreak was declared over.[399]

Meningococcal disease is a life-threating disease caused by the bacteria Neisseria meningitidis. It can cause inflammation of the lining of the brain (meningitis) or infect the blood (meningococcemia), or both. These conditions can be deadly if not treated immediately with antibiotics. Most people who get the disease and are treated appropriately will recover fully; however, 10-15% will still die,

and 20% will have permanent disabilities. A person may start to feel sick within 3-7 days after coming in contact with the bacteria. Symptoms of meningococcal disease, especially for older children and adults, include sudden fever, vomiting, headache, and stiff neck or backache. Other symptoms may include nausea, eyes sensitive to light, confusion, or rash.

Meningococcal disease is spread from person to person. The bacteria are not easily transmitted but are spread via transfer of saliva, for example when a person with the bacteria coughs or deep kisses an uninfected person. It can even spread if a person shares drinks from the same glass. Anyone can get meningococcal disease. Children 1-19 years of age are the most at risk, and there is an increased risk in boarding schools and people living within the same house. Meningococcal disease can be prevented by practicing proper hygiene and immunization. MHMS aims to vaccinate all children ages 1-19 years.[400]

Tuberculosis (TB)

TB is a potentially serious infectious disease that mainly affects the lungs. The bacteria that cause TB are spread from person to person through tiny droplets released into the air via coughs and sneezes. Infection can be either latent or active; people infected with latent or inactive TB show no symptoms and are not infectious, but latent TB can turn into active TB, which causes symptoms and can be transmitted. Treatment for both active and latent TB is necessary. Most people with active TB who have had appropriate drug treatment for at least two weeks are no longer contagious. In countries where TB is common, infants often are vaccinated with bacille Calmette-Guerin vaccine. The vaccine is not recommended for general use elsewhere because it is not very effective in adults.

Signs and symptoms of active TB include coughing for three or more weeks. coughing up blood or mucus, chest pain, or pain with breathing or coughing, unintentional weight loss, fatigue, fever, night sweats, chills, and loss of appetite. In addition to the lungs, TB can also affect other parts of the body, including the kidneys, spine, or brain. When TB occurs outside the lungs, signs and symptoms vary according to the organs involved. For example, tuberculosis of the spine might cause back pain, and tuberculosis in the kidneys might result in blood in the urine.

Without treatment, TB can be fatal. Complications include joint damage, meningitis, liver and kidney problems, and heart disorders.[401]

TB remains endemic in Fiji with an estimated incidence in 2019 of 66 per 100,000 people (590 cases) and in 2020 of 48 per 100,000 (431 cases). MHMS reported in 2021 that only 342 lab-confirmed cases were identified, but the Ministry attributed the drop to the influences of the COVID-19 pandemic on service accessibility.[402] Directly observed therapy short course has been the standard of TB care in Fiji since 1997, with most patients being hospitalized at the start of the treatment but later receiving community-based treatment, a factor thought to have led to minimal multidrug-resistant TB in the country. The country targets an 80% reduction in TB incidence and 90% reduction in TB mortality by 2030, in line with the SDGs.[403] The P.J Twomey Hospital in Tamavua opened in 1950 to deliver the country's detection and treatment programs. In March 2022, MHMS opened a refurbished Multi-Drug Resistant Tuberculosis Isolation Ward at the hospital.[404]

Typhoid

Typhoid Fever is a gastrointestinal infection caused by Salmonella enterica typhi bacteria. It is transmitted from person to person when an infected individual with poor hand or body hygiene passes the infection to another person when handling food and water. The bacteria multiply in the intestinal tract and can spread to the bloodstream. Symptoms generally appear 1-3 weeks after exposure. The illness is characterized by extreme fatigue and increasing fever. Other symptoms include headache, lack of appetite, malaise, and an enlarged liver. Sometimes patients have diarrhea, constipation, or a rash on their trunk. Severe symptoms may appear 2-3 weeks after onset of the illness and may include

intestinal hemorrhage or perforation. Some people who recover continue to be carriers of the bacteria and can potentially infect others. Treatment includes antibiotics and supportive care of symptoms.

Prevention relies on frequent and thorough handwashing and on generally good hygiene. However, there are two types of vaccines – i.e., inactivated injectable vaccine (lasting 2-3 years) and live attenuated oral vaccine (lasting 5-7 years). Although vaccines do not provide 100% protection, they can reduce the severity of the illness.[405]

Typhoid is endemic in Fiji, and in 2012, MHMS launched a typhoid task force to address rising infections. During a 2012-2016 period of study, the task force and its research partners found that the country experiences waves of infection by various strains of the bacteria after the arrival of high intensity cyclones that disrupt clean water access.[406] In addition, when infrastructure is damaged by high winds or destructive seas, flood waters can quickly spread the bacteria.[407] In particularly wet years, the country can record hundreds of cases of typhoid as in the first half of 2022 when it reported 110 cases and five deaths in just 6 months after unusually wet weather.[408]

Non-Communicable Diseases

Broadly, Fiji's health sector has evolved to treat NCDs as associated with lifestyle factors and as inter-related rather than fully discreet ailments.[409] This shift to "wellness" is especially poignant in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic; as of September 2022, fully 70% of Fijians who had COVID-19 when they died were also living with an NCD.[410]

For over a decade, NCDs have been responsible for more than 70% of premature deaths, with the most recent estimate being 78% (2017). The majority of these deaths were recorded in groups aged 45-59 years. Cardiovascular diseases, cancers, diabetes, and chronic respiratory diseases are the main contributors and are often linked to other health problems. Indeed, as of 2017, an estimated one in seven people were living with a disability, and NCD-related disability is increasing, especially related to amputations and stroke. As breast cancer and cervical cancer are the leading cancers in women and girls in Fiji, the country has begun to roll out the WHO PEN program in an effort to combat the trend of breast cancer patients seeking health advice too late. Additionally, mental health is an area where supplementary support is needed throughout the health system for children, adolescents, and adults. As an indication of the burden, suicide rates in adults increased from 29 people in 2015 to 61 people in 2017 across all age groups.[411]

The NDP (2017-2036) integrates NCD prevention in various areas of socio-economic development, and government has implemented some policies – taxation on sugar-sweetened beverages and targets for reduction of salt in packaged foods. However, many targets have been voluntary, and the food and beverage industry, which is perceived as a key stakeholder in preventing diet- and lifestyle-related NCDs, has been reportedly absent from many government and public health efforts. Moreover, many of the long-term development plans related to NCDs are not funded by the central government's budget but are left to individual cabinet departments to fund or seek external partner funding.[412] Another significant complication is that climate change is already impacting the productivity of local whole food sources, particularly fish stocks, which have already fallen and upon which many communities rely for their protein. Thus, extreme weather and climate change drive consumption of processed, imported foods, which, in turn, contribute to carbon emissions, driving further changes in local food production environments.[413]

Training for Health Professionals

MHMS struggles to maintain the health workforce. Among the key issues is migration of the health workforce in various ways, including

emigration, movement from rural to urban areas, and shifts from clinical to non-clinical work.[414] In addition, in its 2020-2025 strategic plan, the Ministry underscored that much of the workforce was either nearing retirement or still at entry level. Among other initiatives, MHMS was promoting a post-Baccalaureate scheme whereby medical professionals can be working in the field and still undertake graduate studies in public health using a remote program.[415] Studies in the past two decades have pointed out that six of Fiji's 15 provinces fall short of the recommended threshold of 2.3 health workers per 1,000 people; in fact, the most recent substantive study found that there were only 0.4 doctors and 2.2 nurses and midwives per 1,000 people in Fiji. There are nine provinces that have fewer than 10 doctors in post, and the vast majority of doctors work in Rewa, Macuata, and Ba, a reflection of the location of Fiji's major hospitals.[416]

FNU's College of Medicine, Nursing, and Health Sciences (CMNHS) combined the former Fiji School of Medicine and Fiji School of Nursing. CMNHS maintains degree programs[417] such as the Bachelor of Medicine and Bachelor of Surgery (MBBS) along with other programs in medical sciences, health sciences, dentistry, nursing, and public health.[418] The University of Fiji launched its MBBS in 2008 via its Umanand Prasad School of Medicine, which trains doctors with a 6-year degree course and one year of rotations.[419] The main teaching hospital is Lautoka.[420] In partnership with Australia's James Cook University, FNU also confers a Masters in Emergency Medicine and a Postgraduate Diploma in Family Medicine as part of a program to help Fiji's doctors who are already practicing develop their skills in key areas of need for the country.[421]

Community health workers have been a key link in the MHMS system since the 1970s, and their numbers peaked in the 1990s at approximately 2,000[422] before dropping in the early 2000s to only approximately 1,500.[423] Despite a 2012 policy review that sought to revitalize the community health worker program, numbers stood at approximately 1,600 as of 2022, and one community health worker coordinator has suggested that the low remuneration offered (FJ$200 / US$92 per month) to these workers may be undermining their effectiveness and willingness to participate in the program.[424] They provide services within their own communities mostly by promoting health care seeking and delivering information on health. Major topics in which these community workers are trained are motherhood, child health, and wellness. Under MHMS' community health worker policy, primary health officers deliver training to persons selected by their communities' leaders for this role.[425] A 2016 survey of community health workers found that a preponderance of these workers are women above the age of 30 and who have only a secondary school education; more than 85% of respondents were recruited by their communities. In addition, more than 90% of respondents replied that the majority of the people they serve are iTaukei, and about half of these workers also reported to a zone nurse while the other half reported to their village chief.[426] In addition to delivering health and wellness information to their communities, community health workers ideally serve as a means for district nurses and MHMS to get notification of an outbreak or other emergent situation in a remote district where there is no major health system presence.[427]

WOMEN, PEACE, AND SECURITY

The Women, Peace, and Security (WPS) agenda encompasses efforts to increase women's meaningful participation in the promotion of peace and security through conflict prevention and resolution, peace negotiation, peacebuilding, peacekeeping, humanitarian response, relief aid, and economic recovery and development. The WPS agenda gained global visibility with United Nations Security Council Resolution (UNSCR) 1325, which was adopted in October 2000 and affirmed the important role women play in many aspects of promoting and maintaining peace and security. The WPS agenda has since expanded with the adoption of additional related UNSCRs: 1820 (2009); 1888 (2009); 1889 (2010); 1960 (2011); 2106 (2013); 2122 (2013); 2242 (2015), 2467 (2019), and 2493 (2019). These resolutions together address various issues of gender and security, including the need to stop gender-based violence and to promote women's roles in conflict resolution, recovery, and peacebuilding. The WPS agenda has also broadened to include applying a gendered perspective to humanitarian assistance, disaster management, DRR, and climate security for more equitable participation to address humanitarian needs and benefit the entirety of a society over the longer term.

Fiji does not have a National Action Plan (NAP) to implement the WPS agenda; it began consultations to write the first WPS NAP in September 2022. At the opening of a week-long consultation workshop to create the NAP, Minister for Women and Children, Rosy Akbar said, "In this WPS National Action Plan with its equal inclusion and consideration of women, a gender perspective is mainstreamed across the entire Fiji Government through our plans, policies, activities, and investments. The National Action Plan is a roadmap to an inclusive approach to government and incorporates the voices of both civil society and government agencies, working together to ensure a whole of society view to human security."[428] The workshop was facilitated by the USINDOPACOM Office of Women, Peace, and Security at the request of Fiji's Ministries of Defense and of Women with the goal of establishing a Fiji WPS NAP that employs a systematic, collaborative, and inclusive approach.[429] Among the civil society organizations represented at the workshop was femLINKpacific, whose coordinator, Fane Lomani, is seen addressing workshop participants in Photo 2.[430]



Photo 2: femLINKpacific Coordinator, Fane Lomani, Addresses WPS Workshop Attendees

Surveys of Fiji's legal frameworks and disaster management planning and policies have found that the country expresses a commitment to addressing gender equality and prohibiting discrimination. The Constitution (2013) integrates these concepts, and it is accompanied by the National Gender Policy (2014) and Women's Plan of Action. While the Climate Change Act (2021), National Climate Change Policy 2018–2030 (NCCP), and National Disaster Risk Reduction Policy 2018–2030 (NDRRP) do integrate gendered perspectives, the Disaster Risk Management (DRM) Law (1998) does not. A National Disaster Risk Reduction Management (NDRRM) Bill in development as of latter 2022 presents an opportunity for change, but the

only reference to gender and women in the NDRRM Bill (draft) appears to be in the context of women's participation and the representation of vulnerable groups in decentralized disaster committees.[431]

The NDRRP 2018-2030 recognizes gender violence and discrimination as underlying factors that exacerbate the risk of a hazard becoming a disaster. Concurrently, the policy recognizes that the burdens of immediate emergency response often fall heavily on women as the caregivers of a community. At the same time, it points at a lack of community involvement in DRR decision-making and, more specifically, at a lack of women's involvement, as an impediment to national DRR planning and implementation.[432] Despite a lack of women's voices in leadership in Fiji's DRR and CCA planning and implementing processes, women already play a daily, local role through their traditional activities. Fiji's iTaukei women have knowledge they have inherited and that they have lived because of their close interaction with and responsibility for natural resources. For instance, as part of their daily routines, women are responsible for water collection and storage to ensure availability of safe drinking water for the family, and the accumulated knowledge and skills this brings means they will not only notice climate change-related shifts but will also have unique mechanisms for conserving water, an activity of utmost importance during disasters.[433] A systematic effort to integrate women's or traditional knowledge and international scholarly knowledge regarding hazards and climate change would be expected to improve Fiji's outcomes in the face of climate change-influenced hazards.

In general, women in Fiji experience more socio-economic impacts from disasters than do the country's men. For example, in the post-disaster needs assessment after Tropical Cyclone Winston (2016), two issues stood out: 1) increases in gender-based violence in temporary shelters and affected communities, and 2) greater impoverishment of women during recovery and reconstruction. There are socio-economic and -cultural foundations to this experience that most often manifest as women having lower incomes than men either because the jobs women have are lower paid or because women's jobs are in the informal or micro-agricultural sectors. For example, rural women generally earn 25% less than rural men; this disparity could rest on either the types of products being delivered or on women's access to pricing information to inform the prices they ask for their goods. Disasters undermine basic livelihoods sectors by, among other impacts, damaging crops, killing livestock, or displacing people from their productive lands, and, thus, the impacts of climate change and slow-onset climatic shifts will also disproportionately affect women in highly exposed livelihoods sectors who do not have insurance, adequate finance, or voices in adaptation planning.

Outside the agricultural sector, women's employment tends to lag far behind men. Based on the findings of a 2018 survey of employment statistics, even in professions, women make up only 34% of the 9,860 jobs involving decision-making and leadership – i.e., legislators, senior officials, and managerial positions. An additional 2017 survey revealed that although 62% of teachers were women, the proportions at senior levels were reversed with 74% of head teachers and 83% of school principals being men.[434] In its Women, Business, and the Law index for 2022, the World Bank asked 35 questions focused on the life of a working woman. For Fiji, the data represent the laws and regulations applicable to women in Suva, and results from outlying areas may differ. Fiji's 82.5 total score (on a scale of 0-100 where zero means a lack of protections or opportunities and 100 means full freedoms or opportunities) is somewhat higher than the average for East Asia and the Pacific (71.9). Indeed, the World Bank gave Fiji perfect scores on elements such as constraints on freedom of movement, laws affecting women's decisions to work, constraints related to marriage, and gender differences in property and inheritance. It must be recalled that this assessment is based on laws and regulations, not on their application or lack thereof. The index does underscore that

the country has room for improvement on laws affecting women's pay and women's work after having children, constraints on women starting and running a business, and laws affecting the size of a woman's pension. One of the lowest scores for Fiji is on the indicator measuring laws affecting women's pay as there are limits on women working in certain sectors that are more highly remunerated than jobs where women predominate.[435]

In other international indices of women's equality or the gender gap, there appears to be a consensus that Fiji has made important reforms and achieved progress in key underlying elements related to service provision such as education and health while elements with cultural underpinnings such as violence against women and promotions to positions of authority in society are more stubborn.

The Georgetown Institute for Women, Peace, and Security global WPS Index for 2021/2022 ranked Fiji 80th of 170 countries with a total index score of 0.734; Fiji occupies the position of average score for East Asia and the Pacific and scores just slightly above the average for all 170 countries (0.721). The index captures and quantifies three dimensions: women's inclusion (economic, social, and political), justice (formal laws and informal discrimination), and security (at the individual, community, and societal levels) through 11 indicators. The index score is based on a 0.0 – 1.0 range wherein 0.0 is total inequality while 1.0 signals equality; each indicator may represent years (for example, of education) or percentages (for example, of women in employment, a statistic for which Fiji ranks worst in the region). Fiji's score is based on the following data:

- Inclusion
  - Education: 11.0 years
  - Financial: 67.0%
  - Employment: 39.6%
  - Mobile Phone Use: 87.6%
  - Parliamentary Representation: 21.6% (pre-2022 election)
- Justice
  - Absence of Legal Discrimination: 82.5%
  - Son Bias: 1.06 (male : female ratio at birth)
  - Discriminatory Norms: 19.8%
- Security
  - Intimate Partner Violence: 23%
  - Perception of Community Safety: 72.4%
  - Organized Violence: 0.0 (battle deaths per 100,000 people)[436]

The World Economic Forum Global Gender Gap Index benchmarks the current state and evolution of gender parity across four dimensions – i.e., Economic Participation and Opportunity, Educational Attainment, Health and Survival, and Political Empowerment. It measures scores on a 0-100 scale, and scores can be interpreted as the distance covered towards parity or the percentage of the "gender gap" that has been closed. In the 2022 index, Fiji ranked 107th of 146 countries assessed, and it netted a score of 0.676 (67.6% of the gap closed) and showed a 0.002 improvement over the 2021 report. With a regional (East Asia and the Pacific) average of 69% of the gap closed, Fiji stands in relative parity with its neighbors. In the sub-indices, Fiji ranks 118th in Economic Participation and Opportunity with a 0.586 (58.6% of the gap closed) whereas it ranks 44th with a 0.997 (99.7% of the gap closed) in Educational Attainment and 69th with a 0.972 (97.2% of the gap closed) in Health and Survival. Although Fiji ranks 97th in Political Empowerment, it netted only a 0.150 (15% of the gap closed) score. In addition to sitting at about the average for the region in total score, Fiji is slightly above regional average (95.4%) in Educational Attainment, and slightly below regional average (95.2%) in Health and Survival. It is well below regional average (72.2%) in Economic Participation and Opportunity. The entire region netted an average score of 13.3% in Political Empowerment, making Fiji not an outlier in its lack of progress in closing the gender gap on this element.

While indicators underscore that Fiji has reached parity (100% of the gender gap closed) in overall literacy and secondary and tertiary education enrollment and overshot parity

(women now have better outcomes than men) in healthy life expectancy, the country has never had a female head of state and nets only 0.244 and 0.300 for women in parliament (19.6% of seats) or female cabinet ministers (23% of posts) respectively, and both of these indicators were measured before the 2022 elections.[437] The statistics underlying these rankings include the small number of women Members of Parliament (MP), high rates of domestic abuse and teenage pregnancy, and low levels of formal workforce participation.

General elections in December 2022 saw the formation of a government headed by a new Prime Minister for the first time since 2006. After many years of silence, women's rights leaders are expressing optimism that the coalition government headed by Sitiveni Rabuka will open space for civil liberties, and they emphasize the nexus between democracy and women's rights. Shamima Ali, a leader of the Fiji Women's Crisis Centre and veteran observer, described the 16 previous years as having militarized Fiji's society and as having been especially damaging to women as a culture of misogyny and disenfranchisement of iTaukei festered. Among the laws enacted by the outgoing government was one restricting the franchise to people's whose names matched those on their birth certificates, all but ensuring that many women – who take their husbands' family names at marriage and had not taken the time to do additional paperwork – were turned away from the polls.[438]

The 2022 polls also brought six females into Parliament, which seats 55 MPs; four of the female MPs are veterans of the body and two are freshmen. These six victors came from 56 female candidates (of 343 total) who ran for seats. Along with the lowest rate of female candidacy in a decade, female representation in Parliament now stands at 10.9%, a decrease from the preceding session when female MPs numbered 11 in a 51-seat body.[439] Ahead of the 2022 polls, the Fiji Young Women's Forum published the My Guide to Voting Booklet with the support of the Pacific Community and USAID. Prepared after dialogues with women ages 18-35 years in each of Western, Northern, and Central Divisions, the booklet aimed at empowering diverse young women to think critically about their right to vote and their role in Fiji's democratic process.[440]

Although participation and activism by younger women could change Fiji's experiences over time, with minimal female political leadership, the ability to move sex and gender equality in positive directions appears stalled. As of December 2020, only 28.7% of indicators needed to monitor the SDGs from a gender perspective were available, with gaps in data on the labor market, such as the gender pay gap, ICT skills, and women in local governments. Closing gender data gaps is essential for achieving gender-related SDG commitments in Fiji.[441]

In 2018, 23.2% of women ages 15-49 years reported that they had been subject to physical or sexual violence by a current or former intimate partner in the previous 12 months.[442] In a 2011 survey, the local advocacy and help group, Fiji Women's Crisis Centre, found that 64% of women had ever experienced physical or sexual violence at the hands of an intimate partners, and more than 69% were subject to controlling behavior by a spouse or partner. Although the 2018 numbers do show a drop in annual abuse incidence, there was broad expectation that that COVID-19 restrictions on movement and work will have worsened violence.[443] In its 2021 Country Office Annual Report, UNICEF reported that Fiji remains a country where violence is common in disciplining children and in domestic partnerships (used or experienced by 80% of survey respondents),[444] and in the first six months of 2022, the Fiji Women's Crisis Centre reported nearly 800 cases of domestic abuse and 12 rapes in addition to more than 50 cases of child sexual, physical, or emotional abuse during the same period.[445] Beyond violence, additional drags on female participation in the labor force include high rates of child marriage; the percentage of girls 15-19 years of age who are married or in a union is 4% in Fiji while teenage pregnancy among girls 15-19 years of age is also 4%.[446] Women and girls aged 15 years and

older spend 16.7% of their time on unpaid care and domestic work, compared to 4.9% spent by men.[447]

Fiji's struggles to integrate women into formal planning and policy development and its effort to address entrenched social attitudes can pay dividends as illustrated by advances in female soldiers' participation in Fiji contingents on UN peacekeeping missions.

Fiji has participated in UN peacekeeping since 1978, and it has made a concerted effort to include women soldiers, police, and experts in deployments.[448] The UN recognizes that increasing women's participation in peacekeeping is critical for overall mission success as female peacekeepers can provide unique capabilities in gathering intelligence, identifying hot spots for patrolling, and providing relief and rehabilitation services to survivors of violence because UN peacekeepers rely heavily on engaging with the community and women peacekeepers are more likely to gain community trust. Moreover, their presence in mission areas may be an opportunity to model more equitable gender relations for local communities. In 2018, after attending various UN-run peacekeeper trainings, Fiji Army Captain Anaseini Navua Vuniwaqa told UN Women, "When someone has been violated by a man, they would not open up to a man. It's about common sense… Female military observers are needed in these areas because they can relate, and especially when they're not armed. When they come in and they're not armed and they're seen as female, the victims tend to gravitate towards them." Finally, Captain Vuniwaqa underscored that Fijian troops who learn gender-based assessment and gender-oriented operational techniques can bring them home to bolster training for their own colleagues.[449]

In the past five years, Fiji has sent female leaders on UN missions. Unaisi Bolatolu-Vuniwaqa was appointed Police Commissioner of UNMISS (the UN Mission in South Sudan) in May 2018, marking the first time a woman has served in such a role.[450] Photo 3 shows Commissioner Bolatolu-Vuniwaqa as she inspected an honor guard during her last day leading UNMISS Police.[451] A Fiji lieutenant colonel, Siliva Raradoka Druavesi Vananalagi, was serving as the Chief Observer Group Golan (UNTSO) in late 2020. Fiji has a target of 7% of troops deployed to UN missions being women, and it generally meets those goals in terms of soldiers and police but not in terms of experts or staff officers. For military contingents, women's representation has hit 10% in some missions.[452]

Beyond the government realms, women's civil society activity is strong and diverse. The We Rise Coalition of three women's rights organizations - Diverse Voices and Action for Equality, femLINKpacific, and the Fiji Women's Rights Movement – are key actors in promoting female leadership and in strengthening women's safety and security. Among actions, femLINKpacific's Women's Weather Watch program connects women in rural and remote



Photo 3: UNMISS Police Commissioner from Fiji Reviews Honor Guard

communities with the information to prepare for and respond to natural disasters. As well as this emergency communications work, femLINKpacific supports women to take on leadership roles in long-term post-disaster recovery.[453] Soqosoqo Vaka Marama is the oldest women's group in Fiji.[454] Among its activities to implement CCA and DRR with a view to building community resilience is the UNDP-Global Environment Facility (GEF) Totoya Island food security project that promoted sustainable agricultural practices to include kitchen gardens alongside development of processing capabilities like drying cassava and breadfruit or pressing coconut oil. In this atmosphere where many of Totoya's men have left for the mainland for wage labor, women in the community have become the primary producers of food.[455]

Finally, as relates to application of the Convention of the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), women are active in formal and informal advocacy. Adopted in the UN in 1979, CEDAW addresses the socio-economic and political rights and wellbeing of women in order to provide civil society organizations a basis from which to advocate with their own states for women's rights. Fiji ratified CEDAW in 1995 and submitted a parallel report in 2017 through the Fiji NGO Coalition on CEDAW. Ratification drove legislative changes such as a new Family Law Act (2003) and the Domestic Violence Act (2009). Moreover, within the Pacific, CEDAW underpins frameworks such as the 2012 Pacific Leaders' Gender Equality Declaration and the Pacific Platform for Action (2018-2030), to which Fiji is a party.[456]

In the CEDAW Committee's fifth periodic report on Fiji's application of CEDAW in 2018, the Committee noted various areas of progress but also expressed concerns. Among the latter were an observation that neither Fiji's legal professionals nor general public demonstrated a robust grasp of either the Convention's existence nor what women's equality actually means.[457] As part of a response by key women's rights groups in the country, in July 2022, a public forum was organized to try to build public familiarity with CEDAW provisions and what it means for national and local leaders. Groups involved in organizing the forum were Fiji Women's Crisis Centre, Fiji Women's Rights Movement, femLINKpacific, DIVA for Equality FIJI, Rainbow Pride Foundation 4 LGBTQ Rights and Equality in Fiji, Shifting the Power Coalition, and the University of the South Pacific. More than 100 Pacific women representing all walks of life attended, and while many women living in rural or remote areas travelled to Suva, the event was also streamed online for virtual attendees.[458] Additional concerns in the CEDAW Committee review centered on structural issues such as lack of definitions within legislation that can impact women's access to justice and that civil society organizations wishing to work on women's issues are required to apply to the Fiji Women's Association, a government-managed body. The next (sixth) periodic review for Fiji's progress on CEDAW is set for early- to mid-2023.[459]

CONCLUSION

Fiji regularly experiences natural hazards of geological and hydro-meteorological origin. Based on historical trends, on average, the people of Fiji experience 3-4 major disaster events over their lifetimes.[460] Tropical cyclones, droughts, floods, and severe storms significantly affect people and property. The average asset losses due to tropical cyclones and floods combined are estimated at more than FJ$500 million (US$230.25 million) per year, representing more than 5% of Fiji's GDP, [461] and these losses push thousands of people into poverty every year.

The ongoing impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic were felt widely across Fiji's society and economy, which experienced the most severe economic contraction in its history after tourism, which previously accounted for around 38% of the Fiji economy, was impacted by border closures. As a result, Fiji was forecast to experience a large contraction in GDP, which would compound losses suffered when Cyclones Harold, Yasa, and Ana hit Fiji in 2020 and 2021 and caused loss of life and significant damage to local infrastructure and productive sectors.[462]

Although Fiji already has a comprehensive and well-practiced disaster management policy and mechanism, it is undergoing policy and institutional reforms, which include updating legislation. According to the Government's Post-Disaster Needs Assessment following Tropical Cyclone Winston (2016), areas in need of improvement were identified in the recovery process, the national cluster system, and other areas.[463] The National Disaster Risk Reduction Policy 2018-2030 is aligned to the Natural Disaster Management Act 1998, which governs various activities within the disaster management cycle.[464] Under the current system, the NDMC is the overarching disaster management body with responsibility for ensuring policy coherence, and the NDMO is the chief implementing organization. However, since significant portions of emergency responses are handled locally, city and town councils operate their own EOCs in coordination with national authorities. When a disaster is declared, NDMO gathers information on the event from the meteorological services or other interested agencies, manages communication among government agencies, and is responsible for activation and operation of the NEOC. In cases when an emergency overwhelms Fiji's own capacity to respond, NDMO coordinates external humanitarian assistance via the national Cluster System.[465]

Due to the potential for sea level rise, devastating cyclones, and storm surge, coastal infrastructure is at high risk now and in the future. Fiji has taken seriously its commitments to meeting the SDGs by building climate resiliency into infrastructure projects and into its 5-year and 20-year NDP for 2017-2036. Moreover, as the country confronts risks associated with climate shocks and climate change, it is striving to improve the resilience of its health system and to adapt health teams and measures to respond directly to disasters.[466] In May 2019, WHO certified Fiji's Emergency Medical Assistance Team (FEMAT) as the first such team in the Pacific Islands.[467]

Beyond the legal and financial underpinnings of the Fiji's DRR and CCA policies and projects, Fiji's society as a whole has a stake in making climate change information and public participation more equitable and common. Surveys of Fiji's legal frameworks and disaster management planning and policies find that the country shows a commitment to addressing gender equality and prohibiting discrimination. Women's participation and the representation of vulnerable groups in decentralized disaster committees is, however, the most frequent formal integration of women – or other vulnerable people.[468] A systematic effort to integrate women's or traditional knowledge and international scholarly knowledge regarding hazards and climate change would be expected to improve Fiji's outcomes in the face of climate change-influenced hazards.

APPENDICES

DoD DMHA Engagements in the Past Five Years (FY 2018-2023)

The list below describes the DMHA Engagements that the U.S. DoD has had with Fiji in the last five years.

WPS National Action Plan Orientation Workshop, September 2022

USINDOPACOM facilitated Fiji's first-ever WPS NAP Orientation Workshop 16-23 September 2022. Based on UNSCR 1325 to address the disproportionate impact of conflict on women and girls, the WPS framework affirms that nations should strive toward implementing women's peacebuilding participation in meaningful, equitable ways. Coordinated by U.S. Army Pacific (USARPAC) and directed by Dr. Delaina Sawyers, USINDOPACOM's leading gender analyst, the workshop aimed to help pave the way toward a "whole-of-society" approach to strengthening good governance by applying the guiding principles of UNSCR 1325 and the U.S. DoD Strategic Framework and Implementation Plan. In Fiji, multiple agencies work to incorporate WPS concepts into day-to-day operations of local government. The 8-day workshop consisted of two phases: 1) establishing a charter for a coordinating committee consisting of Fiji government and civil society organizations to guide processes for policy approval and implementation; and 2) developing an NAP outline by expanding discussions to local civil society organizations to gain insight into the best applications for gender perspectives in Fiji government programs. Fane Lomani, a coordinator for a feminist media organization, femLINKpacific, said, "It's been a long time since we've had this space to participate with government officials... When it comes to changes in policy, I believe women need to be at the table to have their voices heard. When women are there, women are the agent of change." Around 40 U.S., international, and local representatives convened to help create Fiji's WPS NAP outline. Speakers representing the group briefed the strategy to senior officials. Fiji's Permanent Secretary for Defence, National Security, and Policing, Manasa Esuma, called the process "a critical stepping-stone towards bringing awareness and recognizing the critical role that women play, not only in the community but in our society as a whole."[469]

Exercise Cartwheel, September 2022

Exercise Cartwheel 2022 kicked off on 12 September at Black Rock Camp, Fiji. The Exercise is a multinational training event involving Australia, Fiji, New Zealand, the United Kingdom (UK), and the U.S. This iteration ran 12-23 September, all within Fiji.[470] The exercise aimed at building "expeditionary readiness and interoperability," according to the U.S. Embassy in Suva. Approximately 270 troops from the five participating countries took part in drills conducted in both jungle and urban environments.[471] Major Atonia Nagauna of the Fiji Infantry regiment, Third Battalion, told reporters that Pacific nations face challenges that require collective action. "When I talk about threats, I talk about natural disasters, I talk about illegal fishing, I talk about other traditional non-state actors which try and destabilise this part of the world. We work together so we feel we are not alone and they also treat us as equal partners in this."[472] U.S. Soldiers assigned to 3rd Infantry Brigade Combat Team, 25th Infantry Division, supported by Army Reserve 797th Engineers, 402nd Forward Resuscitative Surgical Team, and 343rd Mobile Public Affairs Detachment, partnered with Republic of Fiji Military Forces (RFMF) as well as Australian, New Zealand, and British soldiers during the 11-day exercise. They trained on urban, rappelling, and jungle operations with opportunities for unit ministry teams, medical teams, and engineers to trade best practices simultaneously.[473]

SEACAT, August 2022

The 21st annual Southeast Asia Cooperation and Training (SEACAT) exercise concluded on 26 August 2022 following 10 days of in-person and at-sea engagements that enhanced collaboration among 21 Indo-Pacific partners and focused on shared maritime security challenges of the region. SEACAT is a multilateral exercise designed to enhance cooperation among Southeast Asian countries and provide mutual support and a common goal to address crises, contingencies, and illegal activities in the maritime domain. Fiji was among the 21 partner nations that participated; others included Australia, Bangladesh, Brunei, Canada, France, Germany, Indonesia, Japan, Malaysia, Maldives, New Zealand, Peru, Philippines, Republic of Korea, Singapore, Sri Lanka, Thailand, the UK, U.S., and Vietnam. Ashore, SEACAT included a Maritime Domain Awareness seminar. The sea phase included boarding operations by multiple nations while a command post exercise at Singapore's Information Fusion Center served as a centralized hub for information sharing.[474]

Garuda Canti Dharma 2022, July 2022

The Indonesian National Armed Forces, USINDOPACOM, and service members from partner nations, including Fiji, participated in Exercise Garuda Canti Dharma 2022 at Pusat Misi Pemeliharaan Perdamaian, the Indonesian Peacekeeping Training Center, 18-31 July. The multinational exercise is the largest annual international peacekeeping field training exercise in the world designed to promote global peace and security. Approximately 70 U.S. and 420 Indonesian personnel took part alongside approximately 350 personnel from other nations. The exercise consisted of a UN peacekeeping operations staff training event, a field training event, and a critical enabler capability enhancement event at the training center, all of which focused on UN and international peacekeeping and stability operations. The Indonesian National Armed Forces, as host and co-sponsor, invited military personnel from Argentina, Australia, Bangladesh, Canada, Fiji, Japan, Malaysia, Nepal, New Zealand, Philippines, South Africa, South Korea, Sri Lanka, Thailand, and Vietnam to participate.[475]

Pacific Partnership, May-June 2022

Engineers assigned to U.S. Naval Mobile Construction Battalion 3 and members of the RFMF built a 2-room classroom for the Navonu Primary School on Vanua Levu as part of Pacific Partnership 2022 (PP22). Pacific Partnership is the largest annual multinational HADR preparedness mission conducted in the Indo-Pacific Region. The PP22 mission team worked with host nation counterparts and regional partners to provide tailored medical, dental, and veterinary care, to conduct bilateral engineering civic actions, and to exchange information related to disaster response processes and procedures. In Fiji, the school's leadership joined a combined team of engineers from the U.S. Navy and RFMF to break ground on the new classrooms on 26 May. Lt. Inia Celua, of the RFMF Engineer Regiment, suggested that the Navonu project increased interoperability between his team and the U.S. Navy Seabees because understanding each other's techniques and how to use a variety of materials benefit both nations, particularly if called upon in the event of a natural disaster or humanitarian relief effort.[476]

Cyclone Yasa Response, December-January 2021

The U.S. Army Satellite Operations Brigade's Regional Satellite Support Center-Pacific supported disaster response efforts after Cyclone Yasa battered Vanua Levu on 17 December 2020. A team from the Center assisted with wideband satellite communications for the mission by processing satellite access requests, two of which went to the Australian Defense Force and two to the New Zealand Defense Force. Iwalani Gutierrez, Center director, said, "Knowing that what we do matters helps the team get through the long days of 12-hour shifts in our 24/7 operations. This Fiji relief effort happened during the holidays, and my team can be relied upon to stand watch ready to respond to any contingency

in support of our customers." The cyclone killed four people, affected an estimated 93,000 people, and caused about US$1.4 billion in damage to health facilities, homes, schools, agriculture, and infrastructure.[477]

FOCUS IN, August 2019

A group of 40 civilian and military experts in HADR gathered 24-26 July 2019 for the third FOCUS IN event hosted by the CFE-DM at Ford Island, Honolulu, Hawaii. The 3-day event encouraged dialogue among senior military leaders and experts from international organizations and academic institutions to improve civil-military coordination in an operational environment. The 2019 theme focused on information sharing and regional coordination in the Indo-Pacific, with a particular focus on the region's top-five likely "mega-disasters" that could result in the greatest loss of life. "I encouraged the participants to be open with their issues and ideas on how to better serve each other in disaster responses," said Joseph Martin, CFE-DM Director. The first two days consisted of HADR subject matter experts, such as the UN OCHA Civil-Military Affairs Advisor, Silke Banuelos-Kuang, and Janggam Adhityawarma of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) Coordinating Centre for Humanitarian Assistance on disaster management (AHA Centre). FOCUS IN provided members of the Pacific Resilience Partnership Task Force, like Dr. Jimaima Lako from Fiji National University, the unique opportunity to brief and discuss issues with high-ranking military personnel. "I am here to represent the vulnerable communities in the Pacific letting the attendees here know that we have a structure in place they need to be aware of, a mechanism for disasters," said Dr. Lako. "So when the military provides assistance they know to go through the right channel of communication. That way the assistance that is provided is meaningful and effective." Dr. Lako was also able to discuss with fellow participants what was effective and what was not during the response to the 2016 Tropical Cyclone Winston, which she experienced firsthand in Fiji. On the last day of the event, participants took part in a Senior Leader Seminar to discuss ideas and concerns covered over the two days with the Chief of Staff of Headquarters, USINDOPACOM, along with general and flag officers representing each branch of the military serving in the Pacific. Experts from the following organizations brought their experiences and knowledge to share among each other: ICRC, IFRC, UN OCHA, Pacific Resilience Partnership (Suva, Fiji), Australian Civil-Military Centre, Daniel K. Inouye Asia Pacific Center for Security Studies; AHA Centre (Jakarta), Changi Regional HADR Coordination Center (Singapore), Office of the U.S. Secretary of Defense (Policy), USAID, RedR—an Australia-Based international NGO, World Food Programme, Pacific Disaster Center, University of Hawaii, National Geospatial-Intelligence Agency, and the New Zealand Consulate-General.[478]

Exercise Cartwheel, July-August 2019

A series of bilateral military-to-military exercises, collectively named Exercise Cartwheel 2019, ran 29 July – 12 August; it was a part of the larger Pacific Pathways series of events. The USARPAC-sponsored exercise centered around infantry training events, civic action in local schools, and humanitarian programs[479] in the towns of Labasa and Savusavu on Vanua Levu. Three U.S. platoons from 1st Battalion, 27th Infantry Regiment (Wolfhounds), 2nd Brigade, Infantry Brigade Combat Team, 25th Infantry Division, and three sister platoons with Fiji's 3rd Battalion, Fiji Infantry Regiment, rotated over the 2-week execution between three very different kinds of infantry tactic training, including jungle tactics.[480] A key part of the Exercise was a coastal and reef revitalization project near Nadi. Both the RFMF and USINDOPACOM incorporate addressing climate change within their strategies. Shown in Photo 4, the planting of palms, dilo trees, and mangroves was an effort to strengthen the coastline with root systems that prevent silt from pummeling the nearby barrier reef.[481] Another aspect of Exercise Cartwheel

2019 was a series of visits by U.S. Army civil affairs soldiers to eight primary schools. The 351st Civil Affairs Command conducted group presentations on the importance of proper hand washing techniques and healthy eating habits, and they made donations of classroom materials.[482] The overarching task of the Exercise was to strengthen the RFMF's and U.S. Army's capacity as regional leaders and increase security cooperation for a free and open Indo-Pacific. The exercise's name pays homage to the World War II Operation Cartwheel (1943-1944) and is part of Pacific Pathways, an annual USARPAC operation that demonstrates U.S. Army commitment to Fiji.[483] The 2019 exercise was the first military-to-military exercise between the RFMF and the U.S. Army.[484]



Photo 4: Fiji and U.S. Personnel Conduct Coastal Revitalization during Exercise Cartwheel 2019

Khaan Quest, June 2019

Fiji soldiers joined troops from around the world in Exercise Khaan Quest 2019, co-hosted by the Mongolian Armed Forces and USINDOPACOM at the Five Hills Training Area, Mongolia, 14-28 June. Khaan Quest is a multinational exercise co-sponsored by USINDOPACOM and hosted annually by the Mongolian Armed Forces; it is part of a series of exercises designed to promote regional peace and security. Khaan Quest 2019 consisted of a UN peacekeeping operations command-post exercise, a company training event, a staff training event, a field training event, and a critical enabler capability enhancement event at the Five Hills Training Area, all of which focused on UN and international peacekeeping and stability operations. During the exercise, Mongolian, U.S., and multinational forces worked to enhance interoperability and mission effectiveness in common tactics, techniques, and procedures in accordance with UN doctrine for peacekeeping operations. Approximately 220 U.S. personnel and 900 Mongolian personnel participated alongside approximately 750 personnel from various other nations, including Australia, Bangladesh, Benin, Cambodia, Canada, China, Croatia, El Salvador, Fiji, Indonesia, Israel, Japan, Jordan, Malaysia, Moldova, Nepal, New Zealand, Peru, Philippines, Qatar, Rwanda, Singapore, South Korea, Sri Lanka, Togo, United Kingdom, Uruguay, Vietnam, and Zambia.[485]

Expansion of Fiji-Nevada National Guard Partnership, February 2019

In Suva, on 28 February 2019, the Nevada National Guard and the Republic of Fiji signed a Memorandum of Understanding to enter the island country into the Nevada National Guard's State's Partnership Program (SPP). This new partnership was formally announced by the U.S. Assistant Secretary of Defense for Asian and Pacific Security Affairs in December 2018, and it expands Nevada's partnerships, which already include Tonga. Fiji was the 76th country to join the SPP, and its joining reflected the U.S. military commitment to the Oceania region.[486] The RFMF Commander, Rear Admiral Viliame Naupoto, said some areas of focus for the partnership are peacekeeping operations, disaster preparedness, and security and medical readiness.[487] The partnership will see the Nevada Guard work closely to support Fiji's military forces and Ministry of Defense to further mutual interests throughout the Indo-Pacific. The SPP works with the U.S. Embassy in Suva, one of two U.S. Embassies working in the handful of small island nations in the Pacific; the other embassy is in Papua New Guinea.[488]

International/Foreign Relations

Between 2006 and 2014, major international

players reduced engagement with Fiji due to coup leaders' role in government. After 2014 elections, Australia, New Zealand, the U.S., and others resumed and deepened engagement with Suva, to include the U.S. reinstating security assistance and financing assistance to Fiji's government. Subsequent elections in 2018 and 2022 have been troubled but not to the point of driving external partners away again.

Fiji places great value on participation in regional and international organizations. It was a founding member of the Pacific Islands Forum (PIF) and served as the organization's chair in 2022.[489] However, this centrality has not always prevailed as Fiji was suspended from the PIF from 2009 until 2014 and Fiji's then-PM Bainimarama boycotted the Forum meetings, ostensibly over Australian and New Zealand influence over the PIF, until 2019 when he finally relented and joined the Leaders' Meeting in Tuvalu.[490] During its suspension from PIF, the Bainimarama government instituted a "Look North" policy that brought it closer to China but was also viewed regionally as a "look anywhere but Australia and New Zealand" policy in a reflection of Fiji's – and other smaller PIF member-states' – discomfort with the perceived continued dominance of former colonial powers and major donors, Australia and New Zealand. This split still colors some PIF meetings and disrupts some consensus-making amidst the specter of China's growing influence. Nonetheless, PIF insists that it is uninterested in being a pawn in "Great Power Competition." Indeed, PIF members increasingly point to their own priorities such as the "Blue Pacific Continent" construct as something they want external players to support rather than those extra-regional stakeholders seeking to curry favor with individual PIF members.[491]

In addition to the emphasis Fiji places on its role within the Pacific, Fiji has wielded some influence at the UN in New York due to its substantial footprint in peacekeeping. Fiji has participated in UN peacekeeping missions since 1978 when the country first deployed peacekeepers to Lebanon, and, as of 2020, Fiji had participated in 26 missions with a peak of over 800 peacekeepers and police deployed in the late 1990s and early 2000s. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs has made plain that it views this participation as an opportunity for Fiji both to play a leadership role in the broader world and to have a seat at the table in terms of international security issues. Practical benefits for Fiji include reimbursement of costs and access to real-world training that troops might not otherwise have. Indeed, beyond the international clout gained by Fiji from participation in missions, preparation of Fiji's forces for peacekeeping missions allows the country to build security cooperation relationships with countries offering training and resources to potential peacekeepers.

Countries engaged in providing peacekeeping support to Fiji have included Australia, China, Indonesia, Malaysia, New Zealand, Russia, the UK, and the U.S. Fiji personnel have also travelled for specific peacekeeping training courses and to attend defense colleges. Australia and New Zealand worked closely with Fiji to develop Blackrock Peacekeeping and Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief Camp. The U.S. has worked with Fiji to stand up a Formed Police Unit for peacekeeping missions, and Fiji works with the Nevada National Guard as part of the U.S. National Guard's SPP. China has provided peacekeeping support to Fiji by delivering funding for training and equipment and hosting officers undertaking courses in China. Similarly, Russia has provided arms and equipment to support Fiji in its peacekeeping deployments.[492]

Fiji-U.S.

Since 1971, Fiji and the U.S. have maintained generally good relations with a record of cooperation on international peacekeeping operations, regional security, environmental issues, and economic development. Although ties were strained between 2006 and 2014, U.S. security and financial assistance to Fiji resumed after 2014 elections.[493] Nominal diplomatic relations had continued during the "coup" years, but a lack of forthcoming aid and funding from

the U.S. and others saw Fiji's then-leader, Frank Bainimarama, institute a "Look North" policy that emphasized closer ties with China, Beijing duly boosted its aid to Fiji from just US$1 million in 2006 to US$167 million in 2007 alone, and China sent police trainers to deliver training and education for Fiji police. In the post-2014 world, Fiji's traditional backers slowly returned, but other global demands meant that Fiji was not a priority until 2022. Into that year's election contest, an element of U.S.-China great power competition was injected although that may have been more a manufactured campaign issue than a reality. The concern was that Fiji's – or any other country's – years "in the wilderness" after a coup or disputed election would drive the country's leaders into China's arms.

As Fiji's December 2022 elections loomed, the U.S. Secretary of State visited in February, and Vice-President Harris addressed the PIF in July, when she announced U.S. plans to broaden its diplomatic and financial presence in the region. In September, the U.S. Pacific Partnership Strategy outlined this diplomatic and resource push. Fiji already hosted one of only six U.S. Embassies in the Pacific region and, as part of the project to push back on Chinese forays into more muscular diplomacy in the region, the U.S. would implement more visible and active engagement. The Pacific Partnership Strategy emphasizes supporting good governance and human rights to make the region more peaceful and prosperous and to help stem China's influence. It underscores that while the United States has an interest in countering China in the Pacific Islands, the best way to do so may be by focusing on the needs of the countries themselves.[494]

The U.S. Department of State's Bureau for Oceans and International Environmental and Scientific Affairs (OES) funds several grants and interagency agreements that provide support for disaster early warning systems and national adaptation planning in Fiji. This support includes foundational backing for the Local2030 Islands Network, of which Fiji is a founding member, to launch communities of practice and technical assistance for island-led solutions to sustainable development challenges. OES also supports the work of a U.S. Forest Service (USFS) Climate Fellow embedded at Fiji's Ministry of Forestry to enhance management, conservation, and restoration focused on natural climate solutions. OES also funds the USFS-administered Pacific Islands Forest Restoration Initiative, which has provided small grants and technical assistance to partner organizations in Fiji and other Pacific Islands to restore mangrove and terrestrial forests as a means of increasing carbon sequestration and reducing greenhouse gas emissions.

USAID funds regional projects that assist communities in addressing climate change through accessing financing, building institutional capacity, and increasing adaptive capacities. The Climate Ready project (2016-2022) supported climate finance and management capacity by working with government partners and stakeholders to draft and implement policies to achieve adaptation goals, access larger amounts of financing from international adaptation funds, and improve skills and systems to better manage and monitor adaptation projects. With the SPC, USAID's Institutional Strengthening in Pacific Island Countries to Adapt to Climate Change project (2015-2022) amplified government capacity to manage climate finances more successfully and supported the scale up of successful multi-sectoral projects to improve climate resilience. USAID, through its partnership with the SPC, supported the Fiji Election Office and civil society to conduct voter education and help ensure the 2022 election was accessible, including for persons living with disabilities. USAID is also supporting the work of local organizations to help address violence against women who enter politics and to confront disinformation.

Fiji receives U.S. Foreign Military Financing to equip its military and participates in the International Military Education and Training program, which sends Fiji military officers and senior enlisted personnel to professional military education and leadership development courses in the U.S. In 2019, Fiji signed an expanded maritime law enforcement agreement

with the U.S. to improve regional security and combat illicit transnational maritime activity, including the prevention of the trafficking of illicit narcotics or weapons of mass destruction. The maritime law enforcement agreement includes provisions for protecting living marine resources and preventing illegal, unreported, and unregulated (IUU) fishing or illegal entry into or out of Fiji. The "shiprider" provision of the maritime law enforcement agreement permits Fiji shipriders to embark on U.S. surface and air assets, further enhancing U.S. authority to efficiently and effectively authorize its assets to conduct a variety of law enforcement operations.

The U.S. has been among Fiji's principal trading partners. The main products imported to the U.S. from Fiji include bottled water, tuna, and sugar. U.S. exports to Fiji are mainly machinery, transport equipment, and food. Fiji is a party to the South Pacific Tuna Treaty, which provides access for U.S. vessels to fish in waters under the jurisdiction of Pacific Island parties in exchange for a license fee from the U.S. industry. Under a separate Economic Assistance Agreement associated with the Treaty, the U.S. government currently provides US$21 million per year to Pacific Island Parties.[495] In May 2022, Fiji joined the U.S.-led Indo-Pacific Economic Framework (IPEF), which is intended to advance resilience, sustainability, inclusiveness, economic growth, fairness, and competitiveness to contribute to cooperation, stability, prosperity, development, and peace within the region. Future IPEF pillars will include trade, supply chains, clean energy, and taxation.[496]

Fiji-Australia

Fiji and Australia established formal diplomatic relations in 1970. The relationship is currently underpinned by the Fiji-Australia Vuvale (Family) Partnership, signed in 2019. The Partnership is comprehensive and builds security, economic, and people-to-people links and commits Australia and Fiji to strengthening bilateral political cooperation. Australia is one of Fiji's major trading partners and a source of foreign investment for Fiji. Australian investments in Fiji are focused on tourism, the financial sector, and manufacturing. Major Australian exports to Fiji include wheat, liquified propane and butane, meat, and paper, and major Fiji exports to Australia include gold, textiles, and cereals.[497]

A key aspect of the Vuvale Partnership commits Australia and Fiji to enter a peacekeeping partnership with support for joint Australian Defence Force–RFMF deployments on peacekeeping missions and training activities.[498] Australia and Fiji signed a Status of Forces Agreement (SOFA) in October 2022. It is viewed as a clear effort to maintain Australia's presence in Fiji and the region and allows Australian and Fiji military forces to be stationed in the other country, wear uniforms freely and enjoy easier customs and immigrations processes. Among the key provisions are that the SOFA provides for the stationing of Australian armed forces at Fiji's Blackrock, which was upgraded with AU$22.9 million (US$15.26 million) in funding and reopened in March 2022 as the Blackrock Peacekeeping and Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief Camp, which includes both a humanitarian relief supply stockpile and UN-standard medical and training facilities.[499]

Additional Vuvale projects include upgrading the Republic of Fiji Navy's Stanley Brown Wharf, which will house Fiji's two Guardian-class Patrol Boats, and construction of a Maritime Essential Services Centre (MESC) in Suva.[500] The wharf is among the facets of Australia's Pacific Maritime Security Program (PMSP) to boost capability, infrastructure, sustainment, training, and coordination to increase regional maritime security for Pacific Island nations and Timor-Leste. Fiji is among the countries that have already received from Australia Guardian-class Patrol Boats with which to participate in intelligence-driven maritime patrols.[501] Expected to be complete in 2024, MESC will be home to the Republic of Fiji Navy Headquarters, the Rescue Coordination Centre, Suva Radio Coastal Radio Station, and Fiji Hydrographic Office. It will serve as a multipurpose building designed to enhance Fiji's maritime capabilities and provide

added protection for local fishing industries, enhance natural disaster assistance and rescue capabilities, and enhance Suva Radio service.[502]

Fiji-China

The relationship between China and Fiji dates to 1975 when China began to deliver various types of aid to the newly independent Fiji, and the multi-faceted relationship has continued uninterrupted. In the past five years, China has become the second largest donor to Pacific Island countries, and Fiji is the recipient of the greatest portion of Chinese aid at US$291 million (2018), or about 4% of GDP. Although the amount of aid rose much more slowly between 2007 and 2018, until 2014, it continued to plug gaps left by the sanctions levied against Fiji by traditional donors after the 2006 coup. By 2020, many Chinese firms and state-owned enterprises had operations in Fiji in the mining, logging, and fisheries sectors, and along with Chinese business have come more Chinese citizens moving to Fiji and adding to the people-to-people and cultural links between the countries. Fiji, like many small, developing states, has taken concessional loans from China for various projects, and there is some concern that Fiji will suffer future troubles related to an inability to repay these loans in case of an economic shock.[503]

Data shows that China is the world's second largest military spender, and it has increased its spending, in real terms, every year since 1995. Over the past two decades, Beijing is known to have provided military aid to all four of the Pacific Island countries that maintain a standing military: Fiji, Papua New Guinea, Tonga, and Vanuatu. Fiji was the first of these to establish diplomatic relations with China in 1975 and has one of the closest military relationships with Beijing in the region. Since 2000, China has regularly supported Fiji's military with vehicles, uniforms, and personnel training. In 2018, China pledged a grant of US$4.3 million to Fiji's armed forces, equivalent to 6% of Fiji's military expenditure that year. Also in 2018, the Chinese armed forces gifted a hydrographic and surveillance vessel to Fiji's navy, and in April 2022 donated another 47 specialized military vehicles.[504]

Fiji-India

Fiji and India have had ties since the colonial era after Indian indentured laborers were brought by the British to Fiji to work sugarcane plantations starting in 1879. The approximately 60,000 Indian laborers were eventually joined in the early 20th century by traders and other Indians such that, by the 21st century, more than one-third of Fiji's population was of Indian descent. In addition to underlying cultural links, the two countries maintained direct high-level diplomatic ties both before and after Fiji's independence from Britain in 1970.[505] Nonetheless, ties suffered a setback in 1987 when then-Colonel Sitiveni Rabuka launched a coup to "restore native Fijian primacy" in the wake of the election of an Indo-Fijian government. While direct ties and ministerial visits went on, no Indian Prime Minister (PM) visited until Narendra Modi visited Fiji within six months of assumption of office in his first term as PM in 2014. To a certain extent, Modi was alert to competition from China as Fiji's then-PM Bainimarama had instituted a "Look North" policy of courting Beijing during the years of absence of support from traditional partners due to post-coup restrictions. Modi publicly offered to expand defense and security cooperation, including assistance in training and capacity building.

In Rabuka's second time in power, after 2022 elections, there is significantly less concern in New Delhi that he could repeat his anti-Indo-Fijian policies. Rather, India shares some other stakeholders' concerns that a China-backed or Sinophilic bloc within Fiji will engineer Rabuka's downfall. Fiji is important for China because it has a staunch "One China" policy and is a leader among the community of nations in its region because of its size and its diverse strengths. Such sway will be important to Beijing as several of Fiji's neighbors in the region retain recognition of Taiwan. While now former PM Bainimarama is said to have refused a security pact similar to

the one China and the Solomon Islands entered into in 2022, India appears unwilling to rest on its laurels and leave Fiji to Chinese courtship and, therefore, appears set to continue to build multi-faceted ties.[506]

In the first two decades of the 21st century, India and Fiji built cooperation in health, tourism, technology, and trade. India invested in improvements in Fiji's health sector, electoral processes, and poverty eradication even as New Delhi maintained an advocacy role for the Indo-Fijian community. There are even cases where the two countries have contributed to disaster relief missions with India delivering assistance to Fiji after several cyclones and Fiji sending cash for relief in India after the 2005 Kashmir earthquake.[507] PM Modi extended India's "Act East" policy to include the Pacific, an extension that led to the creation of the Forum for India-Pacific Islands Cooperation, a multilateral group involving India and the 14 Pacific Island states. The forum was initially held in Suva in 2014. The conference morphed into the India-Pacific Island Sustainable Development Conference and was held again in May 2017 in Suva. The forum's new focus was ostensibly on climate change issues, a choice that coincided with Fiji's presidency of the UN Climate Conference (COP23) in Bonn, Germany, in November 2017.

Despite New Delhi's clear effort to show itself to be a responsible stakeholder on issues of great import to the Pacific Islands, India is also trying to develop a more muscular diplomatic posture even as it increases military projection capacity via growing naval capabilities. India periodically launches naval patrols through the South China Sea into the Western Pacific, and it has deepened security ties strategically to temper increased Chinese activity in the Indian Ocean. While this power projection has yet to make significant forays farther into the Pacific, Indian naval vessels have visited Fiji, and the two countries signed a defense agreement in May 2017; it this agreement, India pledged to help improve Fiji's naval facilities. The mutual benefits to be derived from this growing partnership include the potential to raise Fiji's regional status even further as India could cultivate support among Pacific Island states that hold 14 votes within the UN and other international forums, votes that could be important to India as it seeks to take its place among the other major powers.[508]

During the Indian PM's discussions with the leaders of the Pacific Small Island Developing States (PSIDS) at the UN in New York in September 2019, Modi announced US$1 million for each country for Climate Disaster Risk Insurance Projects. In 2020, the Government of India approved funding of US$850,000 for Fiji's "Developing Climate Disaster Risk Financing Framework and Parametric Insurance" project with the assistance provided through the India-UN Development Partnership Fund. In August 2021, the UN Capital Development Fund Pacific Team officially launched the project, which aims to alleviate economic damage caused by climate and extreme weather events through financing instruments. The initiative, led by the Climate Change and International Cooperation Division of the Fiji Ministry of Economy, is being jointly implemented by UN Capital Development Fund, UNDP, and the United Nations University-managed Munich Climate Insurance initiative.[509]

Fiji-Japan

Fiji and Japan launched formal diplomatic relations in 1970.[510] Since then, the Japanese government and Fiji have engaged bilaterally on various subjects like tourism, trade, education, health, security, and disaster management.[511] Their major multilateral venue is the Japan-Pacific Islands Leaders Meeting (PALM), which Japan launched in 1997[512] to build an avenue for influencing regional economic, diplomatic, and security directions.[513] However, as with Fiji's ties to other major powers, ties with Japan were disrupted between 2006 and 2014 due to Japan's desire to avoid direct contact with Fiji's coup leader and Prime Minister. During that period, Japan invited lower-level Fijian representatives to PALM events. By the time PALM6 rolled around in 2012, however, Japan was increasingly concerned that Fiji's isolation was offering China and, to a lesser extent, Indonesia and India, to

gain an edge over Japan in relations with Fiji if not the broader Pacific. Although it did not invite PM Bainimarama to PALM6,[514] by PALM7 in 2015, Fiji's PM was again in attendance alongside other Pacific Island leaders, and he made headlines in Fiji for advocating that Japan deal more "openly" and "directly" with Fiji[515] in what some observers noted interpreted as a warning for Tokyo to not cling to 20th century power structures that allowed Australia and the U.S. to have a veto over ties built by either Japan or its Pacific partners. By this time, Fiji had held elections that were internationally recognized as a transition back to democracy.[516] More recently, in the wake of China's security agreement with the Solomon Islands in 2022, Japanese high-level visits to Fiji integrated more expressions of commitment to a "free and open Indo-Pacific," for example in May 2022 when the two countries' foreign ministers publicly aired concerns over China's military and economic clout.[517]

In addition to standard economic and diplomatic ties, Japan has delivered emergency assistance and development funding to Fiji. In 2020, Japan delivered assistance to Fiji during the COVID-19 pandemic. These deliveries included Personal Protective Equipment, life-saving medical equipment, and contributions to the COVAX Facility, which allowed Fiji to roll out a successful vaccination campaign. In addition, JICA runs development and technical support projects in Fiji that focus on institutional and infrastructural resiliency. Among recent projects are activities supporting development of wastewater master plans, mainstreaming DRR, introducing hybrid power generation, sound fisheries management, and to prevent NCDs.[518] Most recently, in October 2022, the JICA President visited Fiji and reflected on the need for cooperation on climate change adaptation and mitigation.[519]

Fiji – New Zealand

In the wake of Fiji's 2006 coup, New Zealand, like many key players, withdrew its top diplomats from Fiji in 2009 and only began to resume relations in 2012 after Fiji's government began moving toward elections.[520] New Zealand resumed full bilateral relations with Fiji after 2014, and growth in trade, tourism, defense, and development cooperation have marked the ties ever since. The two countries are major trading partners in both goods and services,[521] and two-way trade topped NZ$1 billion (US$639 million) in 2020. Ties between the two countries date much farther back than the formal launch of a permanent New Zealand diplomatic presence in Fiji in 1970. They share a Pacific cultural identity and historical connections as well as strong people-to-people ties with approximately 25,000 Fijians (of all ethnic backgrounds) residing in New Zealand and some 200,000 New Zealanders visiting Fiji annually.[522]

New Zealand's "Pacific Reset" policy of 2018 was an effort to revive and renew the country's strategies with regard to the Pacific region. Although a whole-of-government approach was elaborated, the diplomatic and military aspects of the Reset became the most active and obvious areas. A new diplomatic post in Fiji was among the 10 such posts created to implement the Reset regionally. Moreover, fresh partnerships were built to help Fiji's police combat trans-national crime and to support Fiji's defense policy development. Nonetheless, not everyone greeted the Reset as benign or even desired. Many criticized New Zealand for only taking note of the region once China had begun challenging traditional global players in the region. In addition, an undercurrent of resentment toward New Zealand – and Australia – lingers as many have viewed New Zealand as maintaining a donor-recipient relationship with the very countries it now calls "partner." Nonetheless, New Zealand's location and large Pacific Islander community are drivers of its strategies regarding the region and will continue to shape its interactions with these partners.[523]

Among the key sectors in which New Zealand is contributing money, time, and expertise is climate change. In February 2020, New Zealand was the first country to make a financial contribution to Fiji's Climate Relocation and Displaced People's Trust Fund that helps resettle

people and communities forced to move by rising seas and extreme weather. The US$2 million donation was part of a larger package of funding from New Zealand intended to bolster Fiji's ability to plan for and adapt to climate change.[524] In March 2022, during the New Zealand Foreign Minister's visit to Fiji, the two countries signed the Duavata Partnership: Aotearoa Whenua Manapori o Whiti Tauaki Mahitahi to map out the contours of future strategic cooperation on democracy, economic resilience, security, social wellbeing, climate change, and disaster resilience.[525]

Participation in International Organizations

Fiji is a member of, participates in, or cooperates with the following international organizations and agreement frameworks either as a government or via a national NGO or other entity:

African, Caribbean, and Pacific Group of States (ACP), Alliance of Small Island States (AOSIS), Asian Development Bank (ADB), Colombo Plan, Commonwealth, Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), Group of 77 (G-77), International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (IBRD), International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO), Institute of Catastrophe Risk Management (ICRM), International Criminal Court (ICC), International Development Association (IDA), International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC), International Finance Corporation (IFC), International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), International Hydrographic Organization (IHO), International Labour Organization (ILO), International Maritime Organization (IMO), International Monetary Fund (IMF), INTERPOL - International Criminal Police Organisation, International Olympic Committee (IOC), International Organization for Migration of the UN (IOM), International Organization for Standardization (ISO), International Telecommunications Satellite Organization (ITSO), International Telecommunications Union (ITU), International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC-NGOs), Multilateral Investment Guarantee Agency (MIGA), Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW), Permanent Court of Arbitration (PCA), Pacific Community (SPC), Pacific Islands Forum (PIF), South Pacific Regional Trade and Economic Co-operation Agreement (Sparteca - suspended), United Nations (UN), United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO), Universal Postal Union (UPU), World Customs Organization (WCO), World Federation of Trade Unions (WFTU NGOs), World Health Organization (WHO), World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO), World Meteorological Organization (WMO), World Tourism Organization (UNWTO), World Trade Organization (WTO)

UN peacekeeping missions to which Fiji is contributing personnel, as of September 2022:[526]

- United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq (UNAMI) – 168 troops
- United Nations Disengagement Observer Force (UNDOF – Golan) – 144 troops, 6 officers
- United Nations Integrated Transition Assistance Mission in Sudan (UNITAMS) – 1 police officer
- United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL) – 1 officer
- United Nations Interim Security Force for Abyei (UNISFA) – 1 police officer
- United Nations Mission in the Republic of South Sudan (UNMISS) – 2 experts, 19 police, 1 officer
- United Nations Mission to Support the Hudaydah Agreement (UNMHA) – 1 expert
- United Nations Truce Supervision Organization (UNTSO – Middle East) – 2 experts

Force Protection/Pre-Deployment Information

The following information is provided for pre-deployment planning and preparations. Visit *www.travel.state.gov* prior to deployments for further up-to-date information.[527] DoD personnel must review the Foreign Clearance Guide (FCG) for travel to Fiji (www.fcg.pentagon.mil). All official travel and personal travel for active-duty personnel must be submitted through an APACS request. Contact information for the Defense Attaché Office can be found in the FCG if you have additional questions.

Passport/Visa

To enter Fiji, travelers need:

- A passport valid for at least six months after scheduled departure date from Fiji
- Proof of sufficient funds for the entire stay in Fiji
- Onward or return ticket

U.S. travelers do not need a visa if they are tourists staying less than four months.

Some HIV/AIDS entry restrictions exist for visitors to and foreign residents of Fiji. There are no restrictions to long-term or short-term visits, and no HIV tests are required for a visit shorter than four months. A medical clearance is required for those seeking a work permit in Fiji. Once medical clearance is obtained, the work permit committee will decide on a case-by-case basis whether or not to approve the permit. This information should be verified with the Embassy of the Republic of Fiji before travel.

Safety and Security

Crime: Remain cautious and alert in public places. Urban areas experience a higher incidence of crime than rural areas. Most crime is opportunistic. People who are not familiar with an area should ask hotel staff about areas to avoid.

Protect valuables and be aware that theft from hotel rooms, purse snatching, and pick pocketing are the most common crimes against tourists. Several assaults and robberies have occurred in the bar and nightclub district of downtown Suva as well as on Victoria Parade. Consider taking door-to-door transportation. Be attentive to personal safety and be cautious about sharing too much personal information about origin and place of stay.

Reports of sexual assault against female tourists have increased. Women should not walk alone after dark and should always be sure to avoid isolated and deserted areas.

Since some crime takes place in taxis, do not allow taxis to pick up other passengers while en route. Similarly, do not enter a taxi already carrying other passengers.

Although demonstrations are not common in Fiji, avoid marches and large crowds, remembering that even peaceful demonstrations can turn violent unexpectedly.

Victims of Crime: U.S. citizen victims of sexual assault are encouraged to contact the U.S. Embassy for assistance at 679-331-4466, or after hours at 679-772-8049.

Report crimes to the local police at 911 and contact the U.S. Embassy at 679-331-4466, or after hours at 679-772-8049. Remember that local authorities are responsible for investigating and prosecuting crime.

The U.S. Embassy can:

- Help find appropriate medical care
- Assist in reporting a crime to the police
- Contact relatives or friends with written consent
- Provide general information regarding the victim's role during the local investigation and following its conclusion
- Provide a list of local attorneys
- Provide our information on victim's compensation programs in the U.S.
- Provide an emergency loan for repatriation to the United States and/or limited medical support in cases of destitution
- Help find accommodation and arrange flights home
- Replace a stolen or lost passport

Tourism: The tourism industry is unevenly regulated, and safety inspections for equipment and facilities do not commonly occur. Hazardous areas/activities are not always identified with appropriate signage, and staff may not be trained or certified either by the host government or by recognized authorities in the field. In the event of an injury, appropriate medical treatment is typically available only in/near major cities. First responders are generally unable to access areas outside of major cities and to provide urgent medical treatment. U.S. citizens are encouraged to purchase medical evacuation insurance.

Emergency Contact Information

U.S. Embassy Suva
158 Princes Rd, Tamavua
Suva, Fiji Islands
Tel: 679-331-4466
Emergency: 679-772-8049
Fax: 679-330-2267
Email: SuvaACS@state.gov
Web: *https://fj.usembassy.gov/*

Currency Information

Fiji uses the Fijian Dollar (FJD or FJ$)
FJ$1.00 = US$0.46 or FJ$2.18 = US$1.00 (as of 13 December 2022)

Travel Health Information

The CDC provides guidance that all travelers to Fiji should be up to date on routine vaccinations. The following are additional recommendations for travel to Fiji. The information in Tables 3 and 4 is taken directly from the CDC website under the Travelers Health Section (*https://wwwnc.cdc.gov/travel/destinations/list/*).[528]

Routine Vaccines	All travelers should be up to date on all routine vaccines before every trip. Some of these vaccines include: • Chickenpox (Varicella) • Diphtheria-Tetanus-Pertussis • Flu (influenza) • Measles-Mumps-Rubella (MMR) • Polio • Shingles
COVID-19	All eligible travelers should be up to date with COVID-19 vaccines.
Hepatitis A	Recommended for unvaccinated travelers one year old or older going to Fiji. Infants 6-11 months old should also be vaccinated against Hepatitis A. The dose does not count toward the routine 2-dose series. Travelers allergic to a vaccine component or who are younger than 6 months should receive a single dose of immune globulin, which provides effective protection for up to 2 months depending on dosage given. Unvaccinated travelers who are over 40 years old, immunocompromised, or have chronic medical conditions and who are planning to depart to a risk area in less than 2 weeks should get the initial dose of vaccine and at the same appointment receive immune globulin.
Hepatitis B	Recommended for unvaccinated travelers younger than 60 years old traveling to Fiji. Unvaccinated travelers 60 years and older may get vaccinated before traveling to Fiji.
Measles	Infants 6-11 months old traveling internationally should get 1 dose of measles-mumps-rubella (MMR) vaccine before travel. This dose does not count as part of the routine childhood vaccination series.
Typhoid	Recommended for most travelers, especially those staying with friends or relatives or visiting smaller cities or rural areas.
Yellow Fever	Required if traveling from a country with risk of Yellow Fever virus transmission and ≥1 year of age, including transit >12 hours in an airport located in a country with risk of YF virus transmission.

Table 3: CDC Travel Health Information for Vaccine-Preventable Diseases in Fiji

Dengue	Transmitted by the bite of infected mosquitos. Avoid bug bites.
Hantavirus	All eligible travelers should be up to date with COVID-19 vaccines.
Leptospirosis	Contracted by touching urine or other body fluids from an animal infected with leptospirosis, by swimming or wading in urine-contaminated fresh water or contact with urine-contaminated mud, or by drinking water or eating food contaminated with animal urine. Avoid contaminated water and soil.
Tuberculosis	TB is transmitted by inhaling TB bacteria that is in the air from an infected and contagious person coughing, speaking, or singing. Avoid sick people.
Zika	Transmitted by the bite of an infected mosquito or by an infected pregnant woman to her unborn baby. Avoid bug bites.

Table 4: CDC Travel Health Information for Non-Vaccine-Preventable Diseases in Fiji

Health Alerts for Fiji: At the time of writing this handbook (December 2022), there are no health risk alerts.

The following actions you can take to stay healthy and safe on your trip include:

Eat and Drink Safely

Unclean food and water can cause travelers' diarrhea and other diseases. Reduce your risk by sticking to safe food and water habits.

Eat
- Food that is cooked and served hot
- Hard-cooked eggs
- Fruits and vegetables, you have washed in clean water or peeled yourself
- Pasteurized dairy products

Don't Eat
- Food served at room temperature
- Food from street vendors
- Raw or soft-cooked (runny) eggs
- Raw or undercooked (rare) meat or fish
- Unwashed or unpeeled raw fruits and vegetables
- Unpasteurized dairy products
- "Bushmeat" (monkeys, bats, or other wild game)

Drink
- Bottled water that is sealed
- Water that has been disinfected
- Ice made with bottled or disinfected water
- Carbonated drinks
- Hot coffee or tea
- Pasteurized milk

Don't Drink
- Tap or well water
- Ice made with tap or well water
- Drinks made with tap or well water (such as reconstituted juice)
- Unpasteurized milk

Take Medicine

Talk with your doctor about taking prescription or over-the-counter drugs with you on your trip in case you get sick.

Prevent Bug Bites

Bugs (like mosquitoes, ticks, and fleas) can spread a number of diseases in Fiji. Many of these diseases cannot be prevented with a vaccine or medicine. You can reduce your risk by taking steps to prevent bug bites.

To prevent bug bites:
- Cover exposed skin by wearing long-sleeved shirts, long pants, and hats.
- Use an appropriate insect repellent (see below).
- Use permethrin-treated clothing and gear (such as boots, pants, socks, and tents). Do not use permethrin directly on skin.
- Stay and sleep in air-conditioned or screened rooms.
- Use a bed net if the area where you are sleeping is exposed to the outdoors.

For protection against ticks and mosquitoes:

Use a repellent that contains 20% or more DEET for protection that lasts up to several hours.

For protection against mosquitoes only:

Products with one of the following active ingredients can also help prevent mosquito bites. Higher percentages of active ingredient provide longer protection.

- DEET
- Picaridin (also known as KBR 3023, Bayrepel, and Icaridin)
- Oil of lemon eucalyptus (OLE) or para-Menthane-3,8-diol (PMD)
- IR3535
- 2-undecanone

If you are bitten by bugs:

- Avoid scratching bug bites and apply hydrocortisone cream or calamine lotion to reduce the itching.
- Check your entire body for ticks after outdoor activity. Be sure to remove ticks properly.

Safety and Security

Note that conditions can change rapidly in a country at any time. To receive updated Travel Advisories and Alerts for the countries you choose, sign up at step.state.gov.

Sendai Framework

The Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030 is the global blueprint and fifteen-year plan to build the world's resilience to natural disasters. The Framework aims to achieve the substantial reduction of disaster risk and losses in lives, livelihoods, and health and in the economic, physical, social, cultural, and environmental assets of persons, businesses, communities, and countries by 2030. It was adopted at the Third United Nations World Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction in Sendai, Japan, in 2015.[529] The Sendai Framework is the successor instrument to the Hyogo Framework for Action 2005-2015: Building the Resilience of Nations and Communities to Disasters.[530]

The Sendai Framework outlines seven clear targets and four priorities for action to prevent new and reduce existing disaster risks:

The Seven Global Targets include:

- Substantially reduce global disaster mortality by 2030, aiming to lower average per 100,000 global mortality rates in the decade 2020-2030 compared to the period 2005-2015
- Substantially reduce the number of affected people globally by 2030, aiming to lower average global figure per 100,000 in the decade 2020 -2030 compared to the period 2005-2015
- Reduce direct disaster economic loss in relation to global GDP by 2030
- Substantially reduce disaster damage to critical infrastructure and disruption of basic services, among them health and educational facilities, including through developing their resilience by 2030
- Substantially increase the number of countries with national and local DRR strategies by 2020
- Substantially enhance international cooperation to developing countries through adequate and sustainable support to complement their national actions for implementation of this Framework by 2030
- Substantially increase the availability of and access to multi-hazard early warning systems and disaster risk information and assessments to the people by 2030[531]

The Four Priorities of Action include:

- Understanding disaster risk
- Strengthening disaster risk governance to manage disaster risk
- Investing in disaster reduction for resilience
- Enhancing disaster preparedness for effective response and to "Build Back Better" in recovery, rehabilitation, and reconstruction

In a 2019 assessment of Fiji's progress toward the Sendai Framework priorities, the World Bank pointed to the following actions and projects to illustrate the country's commitment and participation.

Priority 1. Understanding Disaster Risk - Fiji has invested in comprehensive studies to thoroughly understand the impacts of climate change and disasters. One of these is the Climate Vulnerability Assessment of 2018, intended to be used to guide various development policies and frameworks until 2036; it identifies detailed cross cutting issues affecting sectors and well-being of the population. Fiji also developed a National Notifiable Disease Surveillance System and the Fiji Syndrome Surveillance System, which tracks epidemics such as dengue. The mechanisms and the information these systems contain can be used by health workers to report incidents to district levels to help in the mapping out of the extent of epidemics. Fiji has also established a centralized geospatial platform, "GeoNode," for managing risk information with the support of United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (UNESCAP); it is an open mapping tool and platform for sharing data for the purposes of DRR and sustainable development. It is managed by the NDMO, and contains documents, data, and maps related to disaster risk, climate, topography of the islands, demographic details, and farming. However, the service is not regularly updated, and the availability of disaster-related data is inconsistent.

Priority 2. Strengthening Disaster Risk Governance to Manage Disaster Risk - The Natural Disaster Management Act of 1998 is the instrument institutionalizing disaster management related to disaster response and management. It is also the foundation for the Fiji National Disaster Management Plan, which outlines roles and responsibilities of government agencies and other stakeholders involved in disaster management activities. The government also revised the Disaster Management Act of 1998 and the Disaster Management Plan of 1995 in 2018 to ensure that lessons learned from Cyclone Winston were incorporated into the legislative frameworks and disaster governance. With the support of the IFRC, the documents were updated according to selected priority areas, including the role of climate change in disasters and with an enhanced focus on the needs of vulnerable groups. The new National Disaster Risk Reduction Policy for 2018-2030 has been implemented to strengthen risk governance and identify priorities for future action by learning from the past. The intention is to mainstream sustainable development and risk reduction into all policies, plans and practice, even at the community level. Different ministries have their own sectoral disaster management plans; this includes the Ministry of Rural and Maritime Development and Disaster Management, which is mandated to coordinate and manage the rural development and to carry out the disaster management strategy.

The National Disaster Management Council manages and coordinates agencies under the guidance of the National Disaster Controller and Permanent Secretary of the Ministry. The main focus of the ministry is to enhance self-help, to promote equal opportunities, to improve rural housing and public sector, and to alleviate national poverty. For climate change concerns, the NAP of the Republic of Fiji was developed based on the National Climate Change Policy (2018) as a response to national needs and international commitments to combat climate change, where strategic guidance has been devised to guarantee risk-informed climate resilient development in the future. The plan contains 160 urgent sectoral adaptation measures for action up through 2022. The Low Emission Development Strategy for 2018-2025 was developed as a living document to further assess the needs and limitations for mitigation actions across relevant sectors, and it defines pathways to guarantee future low emission development to reach zero carbon emissions by 2050. The Climate Change and International Cooperation Division of the Ministry of Economy is the main entity coordinating and facilitating the implementation of the NAP under the supervision of the National Climate Change Coordination Committee.

At the sub-national levels, the Local Government Act provides a mechanism for coordinating the activities at the sub-national level under the direction of the ministry of Local Government, Urban Development, Housing, and Environment. However, the efforts to implement DRR and CCA at the local levels are not harmonized with the central government's approach, and the lack of budget, human resources, and technical capacity further obstruct the effective localization of disaster and climate action initiatives. In terms of enhancing equality, women's participation is also still lacking in the official governance of Fiji. The number of women in the parliament in 2016 was still well below the global average with 14%, despite efforts to increase the representation of women through various means. Among these, Fiji's first "Women Parliament" was organized for three days, inviting 50 women from across the country and from remote areas to participate in the decision making, and concerns were voiced about the lack of women representation in the current official infrastructure. However, Fiji's political landscape is still male-dominated, and gendered social norms create perception of men as better leaders than women; thus, there is more work to be done to include women in decision-making.

Priority 3. Investing in Disaster Risk Reduction for Resilience - Despite the Public Finance Management (PFM) in Fiji being generally well tied to legislative frameworks,

and while the compliance to them is reportedly high, there are issues in terms of accountability and projection-based budgeting in disaster and climate finance in Fiji. All public expenditures flow through a system of PFM modules of planning, allocation of resources, execution, as well as monitoring and reporting. However, a robust PFM system targeted for climate change and disaster risk management is missing. Improved PFM could be beneficial to raise the confidence of development partners, to better manage and track public expenditures, to increase funding efficiency, and to improve the overall access to climate finance. The level of spending on climate change and disaster risk management is not measured by the entities involved in climate change and DRM (including Departments of Environment, Agriculture, Fisheries, Forests, Energy, and Meteorological Services), because no data is disaggregated to differentiate the activities related to risk management. Lack of adequate measurement and tracking (availability of comprehensive PFM modules) hampers estimating the needs for policy improvements and obstructs the evaluation for future project needs as there is no reliable way to measure disaster and climate finances to guide prioritization. However, addressing this gap is currently being supported by a project conducted by the UNDP country office. Most recent estimates place adaptation expenditure at US$98 million in 2014, US$64 million for disaster risk reduction, which illustrates a slight decrease since 2012. Fiji is most likely to face significant challenges to fund all disaster and climate-related activities in the future; according to the estimates by the World Bank, the coastal protection spending by 2040 costs of increasing sea walls and other protection measures could go up by US$86 to US$329 million per year or about 1-3% of the projected GDP.

Priority 4. Enhancing disaster preparedness for effective response to "Build Back Better" in recovery, rehabilitation, and reconstruction - Fiji has taken steps to establish comprehensive hazard warning systems. For flood monitoring and early warning, the Fiji Meteorological Service (FMS) under the Ministry of Disaster Management and Meteorological Services provides early warnings for cyclones, rain, and droughts, and disseminates the information through SMS/text, social media, and radio and TV networks. The FMS has also developed an early warning system for flash floods, which will complement the existing systems at various islands. Tsunami early warnings are being coordinated by the Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission, and Fiji has also adopted their own Tsunami Response Plan to appropriately prepare for impending mass-scale inundation. There are 10 tsunami early warning sirens on the Suva peninsula, and they are tested monthly in coordination with the NDMO. However, to address the gaps within the existing systems, a suggestion has been made to combine and streamline existing early warning system across the Pacific nations to create a cost-effective and sustainable hazard monitoring umbrella through joint efforts.

To guarantee effective surveillance of epidemics, the country is a part of the Pacific Syndromic Surveillance System, which tracks the outbreak of infectious diseases in the South Pacific through 121 sentinel surveillance sites placed in 21 countries. The evaluation of the early warning, alert, and response system, utilized by the MHMS with the support of WHO in the response to Cyclone Winston to control outbreaks of several epidemics gave positive results. No outbreaks were left undetected, and the system performed well during the response period with 325 alerts generated and three large-scale outbreaks requiring intervention successfully managed.

For disaster response, a mechanism consisting of various committees, offices, and entities, governed by strong institutional arrangements, has been developed. During an emergency, the Emergency Committee will convene daily to review emergency operations and take relevant operational decision. Preparedness activities are guided by the Preparedness Committee, which is responsible for raising community awareness

and public sector preparedness activities. However, poor coordination and scarce resources have hampered disaster risk response in the past, and overlapping responsibilities between managing agencies continue create confusion in the absence of an overarching mechanism or an entity to harmonize relevant efforts of numerous ministries. Building Back Better initiatives have been identified as crucial for developing resilience; it has been estimated that stronger reconstruction could reduce overall disaster-related well-being losses by more than 40%. In the aftermath of Cyclone Winston, commitments were made to build back stronger, for example by providing the Help for Homes program to provide grants, materials, and training to assist people in reconstruction efforts. However, it has been established that the response to Cyclone Winston did not affect institutional arrangements or longer-term disaster governance due to conflicts between institutional approaches between different levels of government, and because humanitarian response has mainly focused on infrastructure rehabilitation by prioritizing housing and other severe physical damage at the expense of "soft" approaches. Lack of risk integration and "building back better" approaches and understanding of how shared experience from humanitarian response could be used to inform development is lacking, and the current development approaches, by and large, are not aligned with the international development landscape, especially at the sub-national level.[532]

Figure 12 shows the Sendai DRR Framework.[533]

Chart of the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction
2015-2030

Scope and Purpose
The present framework will apply to the risk of small-scale and large-scale, frequent and infrequent, sudden and slow-onset disasters, caused by natural or manmade hazards as well as related environmental, technological, and biological hazards and risks. It aims to guide the multi-hazard management of disaster risk in development at all levels as well as within and across all sectors
Expected Outcome
The substantial reduction of disaster risk and losses in lives, livelihoods, and health and in the economic, physical, social, cultural, and environmental assets of persons, businesses, communities, and countries
Goal
Prevent new and reduce existing disaster risk through the implementation of integrated and inclusive economic, structural, legal, social, health, cultural, educational, environmental, technological, political, and institutional measures that prevent and reduce hazard exposure and vulnerability to disaster, increase preparedness for response and recovery, and thus strengthen resilience

Targets						
Substantially reduce global disaster mortality by 2030, aiming to lower average per 100,000 global mortality during 2020-2030 compared to 2005-2015	Substantially reduce the number of affected people globally by 2030, aiming to lower the average global figure per 100,000 during 2020-2030 compared to 2005-2015	Reduce direct disaster economic loss in relation to global GDP by 2030	Substantially reduce disaster damage to critical infrastructure and disruption of basic services, among them health and educational facilities, including through developing their resilience by 2030	Substantially increase the number of countries with national and local disaster risk reduction strategies by 2020	Substantially enhance international cooperation to developing countries through adequate and sustainable support to complement their national actions for implementation of this framework by 2030	Substantially increase the availability of and access to multi-hazard early warning systems and disaster risk information and assessments to people by 2030

Priorities for Action			
There is a need for focused action within and across sectors by States at local, national, regional, and global levels in the following four priority areas.			
Priority 1 Understanding disaster risk	**Priority 2** Strengthening disaster risk governance to manage disaster risk	**Priority 3** Investing in disaster risk reduction for resilience	**Priority 4** Enhancing disaster preparedness for effective response, and to "Build Back Better" in recovery, rehabilitation, and reconstruction
Disaster risk management needs to be based on an understanding of disaster risk in all its dimensions of vulnerability, capacity, exposure of persons and assets, hazard characteristics, and the environment	Disaster risk governance at the national, regional, and global levels is vital to the management of disaster risk reduction in all sectors and ensuring the coherence of national and local frameworks of laws, regulations, and public policies that, by defining roles and responsibilities, guide, encourage, and incentivize the public and private sectors to take action and address disaster risk	Public and private investment in disaster risk prevention and reduction through structural is non-structural measures are essential to enhance the economic, social, health, and cultural resilience of persons, communities, countries, and their assets, as well as the environment. These can be drivers of innovation, growth, and job creation. Such measures are cost-effective and instrumental to save lives, prevent and reduce losses, and ensure effective recovery and rehabilitation	Experience indicates that disaster preparedness needs to be strengthened for more effective response and to ensure capacities are in place for effective recovery. Disasters have also demonstrated that the recovery, rehabilitation, and reconstruction phase, which needs to be prepared ahead of the disaster, is an opportunity to "Build Back Better" through integrating disaster risk reduction measures. Women and persons with disabilities should publicly lead and promote gender-equitable and universally accessible approaches during the response and reconstruction phases

Figure 12: UN Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030

Country Profile

The information in the Country Profile section is sourced directly from the CIA World Factbook for Fiji. Additional numbers on country comparison to the world can be found by going directly to the CIA website (https:/www.cia.gov). It discusses topics including geography, people and society, government, economy, energy, communications, military and security, transportation, terrorism, and transnational issues.[534]

Background

Austronesians settled Fiji around 1000 B.C., followed by successive waves of Melanesians starting around the first century A.D. Fijians traded with Polynesian groups in Samoa and Tonga, and by about 900, much of Fiji was in the Tu'i Tongan Empire's sphere of influence. The Tongan influence declined significantly by 1200, while Melanesian seafarers continued to periodically arrive in Fiji, further mixing Melanesian and Polynesian cultural traditions. Dutch explorer Abel TASMAN was the first European to spot Fiji in 1643, followed by British explorer James COOK in 1774. Captain William BLIGH plotted the islands in 1789. In the 1800s, merchants, traders, and whalers frequented the islands and the first missionaries arrived in 1835. Rival kings and chiefs competed for power, at times aided by Europeans and their weapons, and in 1865, Seru Epenisa CAKOBAU united many groups into the Confederacy of Independent Kingdoms of Viti. The arrangement proved weak and in 1871 CAKOBAU formed the Kingdom of Fiji in an attempt to centralize power. Fearing a hostile takeover by a foreign power as the kingdom's economy began to falter, CAKOBAU ceded Fiji to the UK in 1874.

The first British governor set up a plantation-style economy and brought in more than 60,000 Indians as indentured laborers, most of whom chose to stay in Fiji rather than return to India when their contracts expired. In the early 1900s, society was divided along ethnic lines, with iTaukei (indigenous Fijians), Europeans, and Indo-Fijians living in separate areas and maintaining their own languages and traditions. iTaukei fears of an Indo-Fijian takeover of government delayed independence through the 1960s; Fiji achieved independence in 1970 with agreements in place to allocate parliamentary seats by ethnic groups. Long-serving Prime Minister Kamisese MARA largely balanced these ethnic divisions, but concerns about growing Indo-Fijian political influence led to two coups in 1987. A new constitution in 1990 cemented iTaukei control of politics, leading thousands of Indo-Fijians to leave. A reformed constitution in 1997 was more equitable and led to the election of an Indo-Fijian prime minister in 1999, who was ousted in a coup the following year. In 2005, the new prime minister put forward a bill that would grant pardons to the coup perpetrators, leading Commodore Josaia BAINIMARAMA to launch a coup in 2006. BAINIMARAMA appointed himself prime minister in 2007 and continues to hold the position after elections in 2014 and 2018 that international observers deemed credible.

With well-developed infrastructure, Fiji has become a hub for the Pacific, hosting the secretariat for the Pacific Islands Forum and the main campus of the University of the South Pacific. In addition, Fiji is a center for Pacific tourism, and Nadi International Airport is by far the busiest airport in a Pacific Island country.

Geography

Location

Oceania, island group in the South Pacific Ocean, about two-thirds of the way from Hawaii to New Zealand

Geographic coordinates

18 00 S, 175 00 E

Area
total: 18,274 sq km
land: 18,274 sq km
water: 0 sq km
country comparison to the world: 156

Area - comparative
slightly smaller than New Jersey

Land boundaries
total: 0 km

Coastline
1,129 km

Maritime claims
territorial sea: 12 nm
contiguous zone: 24 nm
exclusive economic zone: 200 nm
continental shelf: 200-m depth or to the depth of exploitation
measured from claimed archipelagic straight baselines

Climate
tropical marine; only slight seasonal temperature variation

Terrain
mostly mountains of volcanic origin

Elevation
highest point: Tomanivi 1,324 m
lowest point: Pacific Ocean 0 m

Natural resources
timber, fish, gold, copper, offshore oil potential, hydropower

Land use
agricultural land: 23.3% (2018 est.)
arable land: 9% (2018 est.)
permanent crops: 4.7% (2018 est.)
permanent pasture: 9.6% (2018 est.)
forest: 55.7% (2018 est.)
other: 21% (2018 est.)

Irrigated land
40 sq km (2012)

Population distribution
approximately 70% of the population lives on the island of Viti Levu; roughly half of the population lives in urban areas

Natural hazards
cyclonic storms can occur from November to January

Geography - note
consists of 332 islands, approximately 110 of which are inhabited, and more than 500 islets

People and Society

Population
943,737 (2022 est.)
country comparison to the world: 163

Nationality
noun: Fijian(s)
adjective: Fijian

Ethnic groups
iTaukei 56.8% (predominantly Melanesian with a Polynesian admixture), Indo-Fijian 37.5%, Rotuman 1.2%, other 4.5% (European, part European, other Pacific Islanders, Chinese) (2007 est.)
note: a 2010 law replaces 'Fijian' with 'iTaukei' when referring to the original and native settlers of Fiji

Languages
English (official), iTaukei (official), Fiji Hindi (official)

Religions
Protestant 45% (Methodist 34.6%, Assembly of God 5.7%, Seventh Day Adventist 3.9%, and Anglican 0.8%), Hindu 27.9%, other Christian 10.4%, Roman Catholic 9.1%, Muslim 6.3%, Sikh 0.3%, other 0.3%, none 0.8% (2007 est.)

Age structure
0-14 years: 26.86% (male 128,499/female 122,873)
15-24 years: 15.51% (male 73,993/female 71,139)
25-54 years: 41.05% (male 196,932/female 187,270)
55-64 years: 9.25% (male 43,813/female 42,763)
65 years and over: 7.34% (male 31,556/female 37,136) (2020 est.)
Figure 13 is the 2022 population pyramid for Fiji.[535]

Dependency ratios
total dependency ratio: 53
youth dependency ratio: 44.2
elderly dependency ratio: 8.7
potential support ratio: 11.4 (2021 est.)

Median age
total: 29.9 years
male: 29.7 years
female: 30.1 years (2020 est.)
country comparison to the world: 125

Population growth rate
0.44% (2022 est.)
country comparison to the world: 159

Birth rate
16.56 births/1,000 population (2022 est.)
country comparison to the world: 96

Death rate
6.37 deaths/1,000 population (2022 est.)
country comparison to the world: 141

Net migration rate
-5.84 migrant(s)/1,000 population (2022 est.)
country comparison to the world: 208

Population distribution
approximately 70% of the population lives on the island of Viti Levu; roughly half of the population lives in urban areas

Urbanization
urban population: 58.2% of total population (2022)
rate of urbanization: 1.37% annual rate of change (2020-25 est.)
total population growth rate v. urban population growth rate, 2000-2030

Major urban areas - population
178,000 SUVA (capital) (2018)

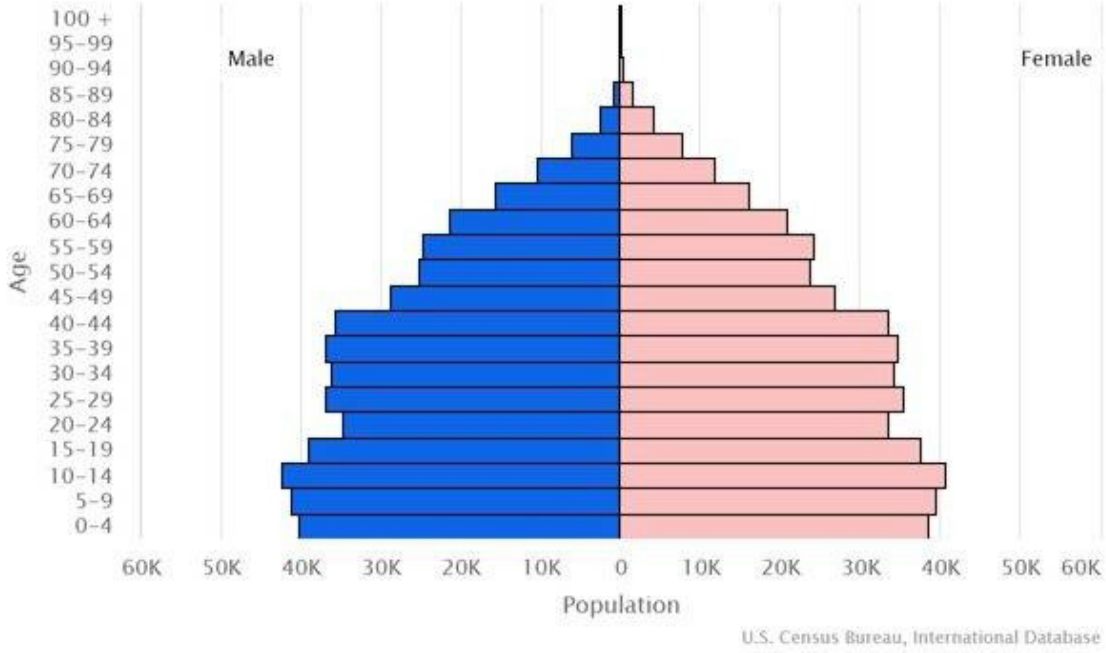


Figure 13: Population Pyramid, Fiji (2022)

Sex ratio
at birth: 1.05 male(s)/female
0-14 years: 1.04 male(s)/female
15-24 years: 1.04 male(s)/female
25-54 years: 1.06 male(s)/female
55-64 years: 1.02 male(s)/female
65 years and over: 0.6 male(s)/female
total population: 1.03 male(s)/female (2022 est.)

Maternal mortality ratio
34 deaths/100,000 live births (2017 est.)
country comparison to the world: 107

Infant mortality rate
total: 10.06 deaths/1,000 live births
male: 11.59 deaths/1,000 live births
female: 8.45 deaths/1,000 live births (2022 est.)
country comparison to the world: 138

Life expectancy at birth
total population: 74.27 years
male: 71.6 years
female: 77.07 years (2022 est.)
country comparison to the world: 140

Total fertility rate
2.26 children born/woman (2022 est.)
country comparison to the world: 80

Contraceptive prevalence rate
35.5% (2021)

Drinking water source
improved: urban: 98.2% of population
rural: 89.1% of population
total: 94.3% of population
unimproved: urban: 1.8% of population
rural: 10.9% of population
total: 5.7% of population (2020 est.)

Current health expenditure
3.8% of GDP (2019)

Physicians density
0.86 physicians/1,000 population (2015)

Hospital bed density
2 beds/1,000 population (2016)

Sanitation facility access
improved: urban: 100% of population
rural: 100% of population
total: 100% of population
unimproved: urban: 0% of population
rural: 0% of population
total: 0% of population (2020 est.)

HIV/AIDS - adult prevalence rate
0.2% (2021 est.)
country comparison to the world: 89

Major infectious diseases
degree of risk: high (2020)
food or waterborne diseases: bacterial diarrhea
vectorborne diseases: malaria

Obesity - adult prevalence rate
30.2% (2016)
country comparison to the world: 24

Alcohol consumption per capita
total: 2.71 liters of pure alcohol (2019 est.)
beer: 1.64 liters of pure alcohol (2019 est.)
wine: 0.29 liters of pure alcohol (2019 est.)
spirits: 0.79 liters of pure alcohol (2019 est.)
other alcohols: 0 liters of pure alcohol (2019 est.)
country comparison to the world: 120

Tobacco use
total: 23.1% (2020 est.)
male: 35.6% (2020 est.)
female: 10.5% (2020 est.)
country comparison to the world: 64

Children under the age of 5 years underweight
NA

Education expenditures
5.1% of GDP (2019 est.)
country comparison to the world: 60

Literacy
total population: 99.1%
male: 99.1%
female: 99.1% (2018)

Youth unemployment rate (ages 15-24)
total: 15.4%
male: 11.9%
female: 22.4% (2016 est.)

Environment

Environment - current issues
the widespread practice of waste incineration is a major contributor to air pollution in the country, as are vehicle emissions in urban areas; deforestation and soil erosion are significant problems; a contributory factor to erosion is clearing of land by bush burning, a widespread practice that threatens biodiversity

Environment - international agreements
party to: Biodiversity, Climate Change, Climate Change-Kyoto Protocol, Climate Change-Paris Agreement, Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban, Desertification, Endangered Species, Law of the Sea, Marine Life Conservation, Nuclear Test Ban, Ozone Layer Protection, Ship Pollution, Tropical Timber 2006, Wetlands

Air pollutants
particulate matter emissions: 10.19 micrograms per cubic meter (2016 est.)
carbon dioxide emissions: 2.05 megatons (2016 est.)
methane emissions: 0.95 megatons (2020 est.)

Climate
tropical marine; only slight seasonal temperature variation

Land use
agricultural land: 23.3% (2018 est.)
arable land: 9% (2018 est.)
permanent crops: 4.7% (2018 est.)
permanent pasture: 9.6% (2018 est.)
forest: 55.7% (2018 est.)
other: 21% (2018 est.)

Urbanization
urban population: 58.2% of total population (2022)
rate of urbanization: 1.37% annual rate of change (2020-25 est.)
total population growth rate v. urban population growth rate, 2000-2030

Revenue from forest resources
forest revenues: 0.59% of GDP (2018 est.)
country comparison to the world: 63

Revenue from coal
coal revenues: 0% of GDP (2018 est.)
country comparison to the world: 97

Major infectious diseases
degree of risk: high (2020)
food or waterborne diseases: bacterial diarrhea
vectorborne diseases: malaria

Waste and recycling
municipal solid waste generated annually: 189,390 tons (2011 est.)
municipal solid waste recycled annually: 10,322 tons (2013 est.)
percent of municipal solid waste recycled: 5.5% (2013 est.)

Total water withdrawal
municipal: 25.3 million cubic meters (2017 est.)
industrial: 9.6 million cubic meters (2017 est.)
agricultural: 50 million cubic meters (2017 est.)

Total renewable water resources
28.55 billion cubic meters (2017 est.)

Government

Country name
conventional long form: Republic of Fiji
conventional short form: Fiji
local long form: Republic of Fiji (English)/ Matanitu ko Viti (Fijian)
local short form: Fiji (English)/ Viti (Fijian)
etymology: the Fijians called their home Viti, but the neighboring Tongans called it Fisi, and in the

Anglicized spelling of the Tongan pronunciation - promulgated by explorer Captain James COOK - the designation became Fiji

Government type
parliamentary republic

Capital
name: Suva (on Viti Levu)
geographic coordinates: 18 08 S, 178 25 E
time difference: UTC+12 (17 hours ahead of Washington, DC, during Standard Time)
etymology: the name means "little hill" in the native Fijian (iTaukei) language and refers to a mound where a temple once stood

Administrative divisions
14 provinces and 1 dependency*; Ba, Bua, Cakaudrove, Kadavu, Lau, Lomaiviti, Macuata, Nadroga and Navosa, Naitasiri, Namosi, Ra, Rewa, Rotuma*, Serua, Tailevu

Independence
10 October 1970 (from the UK)

National holiday
Fiji (Independence) Day, 10 October (1970)

Constitution
history: several previous; latest signed into law 6 September 2013
amendments: proposed as a bill by Parliament and supported by at least three quarters of its members, followed by referral to the president and then to the Electoral Commission, which conducts a referendum; passage requires approval by at least three-quarters of registered voters and assent by the president

Legal system
common law system based on the English model

International law organization participation
has not submitted an ICJ jurisdiction declaration; accepts ICCt jurisdiction

Citizenship
citizenship by birth: no
citizenship by descent only: at least one parent must be a citizen of Fiji
dual citizenship recognized: yes
residency requirement for naturalization: at least 5 years residency out of the 10 years preceding application

Suffrage
18 years of age; universal

Executive branch
chief of state: President Ratu Wiliame KATONIVERE (since 12 November 2021)
head of government: Prime Minister Voreqe "Frank" BAINIMARAMA (since 22 September 2014)
cabinet: Cabinet appointed by the prime minister from among members of Parliament and is responsible to Parliament
elections/appointments: president elected by Parliament for a 3-year term (eligible for a second term); election last held on 22 October 2021 (next to be held in 2024); prime minister endorsed by the president
election results: Ratu Wiliame KATONIVERE elected president with 28 votes against 23 votes for Teimumu KEPA

Legislative branch
description: unicameral Parliament (51 seats; members directly elected in a nationwide, multi-seat constituency by open-list proportional representation vote to serve 4-year terms)
elections: last held on 14 November 2018 (next to be held in 2022)
election results: percent of vote by party - FijiFirst 50%, SODELPA 39.6%, NFP 7.4%; seats by party - FijiFirst 27, SODELPA 21, NFP 3; composition - men 41, women 10, percent of women 19.6%

Judicial branch
highest court(s): Supreme Court (consists of the chief justice, all justices of the Court of Appeal, and judges appointed specifically as Supreme Court judges); Court of Appeal (consists of the

court president, all puisne judges of the High Court, and judges specifically appointed to the Court of Appeal); High Court (chaired by the chief justice and includes a minimum of 10 puisne judges; High Court organized into civil, criminal, family, employment, and tax divisions) judge selection and term of office: chief justice appointed by the president of Fiji on the advice of the prime minister following consultation with the parliamentary leader of the opposition; judges of the Supreme Court, the president of the Court of Appeal, the justices of the Court of Appeal, and puisne judges of the High Court appointed by the president of Fiji upon the nomination of the Judicial Service Commission after consulting with the cabinet minister and the committee of the House of Representatives responsible for the administration of justice; the chief justice, Supreme Court judges and justices of Appeal generally required to retire at age 70, but this requirement may be waived for one or more sessions of the court; puisne judges appointed for not less than 4 years nor more than 7 years, with mandatory retirement at age 65
subordinate courts: Magistrates' Court (organized into civil, criminal, juvenile, and small claims divisions)

Political parties and leaders
FijiFirst [Veroqe "Frank" BAINIMARAMA]
Fiji Labor Party or FLP [Mahendra CHAUDHRY]
Freedom Alliance [Jagath KARUNARATNE] (formerly Fiji United Freedom Party or FUFP)
National Federation Party or NFP [Biman PRASAD] (primarily Indian)
Peoples Democratic Party or PDP [Lynda TABUYA]
Social Democratic Liberal Party or SODELPA [Viliame Rogoibulu GAVOKA]
Unity Fiji [Savenaca NARUBE]

International organization participation
ACP, ADB, AOSIS, C, CP, FAO, G-77, IAEA, IBRD, ICAO, ICCt, ICRM, IDA, IFAD, IFC, IFRCS, IHO, ILO, IMF, IMO, Interpol, IOC, IOM, ISO, ITSO, ITU, ITUC (NGOs), MIGA, OPCW, PCA, PIF, Sparteca (suspended), SPC, UN, UNCTAD, UNDOF, UNESCO, UNIDO, UNISFA, UNMISS, UNWTO, UPU, WCO, WFTU (NGOs), WHO, WIPO, WMO, WTO

Diplomatic representation in the US
chief of mission: Ambassador (vacant); Charge d'Affaires Akuila VUIRA
chancery: 1707 L Street NW, Suite 200, Washington, DC 20036
Tel: 1-202-466-8320
Fax: 1-202-466-8325
Email: info@FijiEmbassyDC.com
Website: *https://www.fijiembassydc.com/*

Diplomatic representation from the US
chief of mission: Ambassador (vacant); Charge d'Affaires Tony GREUBEL (since 20 January 2021); note - also accredited to Kiribati, Nauru, Tonga, and Tuvalu
embassy: 158 Princes Road, Tamavua, Suva
mailing address: 4290 Suva Place, Washington DC 20521-4290
Tel: 679-331-4466
Fax: 679-330-2267
Email: SuvaACS@state.gov
Website: *https://fj.usembassy.gov/*

Flag description
light blue with the flag of the UK in the upper hoist-side quadrant and the Fijian shield centered on the outer half of the flag; the blue symbolizes the Pacific Ocean and the Union Jack reflects the links with Great Britain; the shield - taken from Fiji's coat of arms - depicts a yellow lion, holding a coconut pod between its paws, above a white field quartered by the cross of Saint George; the four quarters depict stalks of sugarcane, a palm tree, a banana bunch, and a white dove of peace

National symbol(s)
Fijian canoe; national color: light blue

National anthem
name: "God Bless Fiji"
lyrics/music: Michael Francis Alexander PRESCOTT/C. Austin MILES (adapted by

Michael Francis Alexander PRESCOTT)
note: adopted 1970; known in Fijian as "Meda Dau Doka" (Let Us Show Pride); adapted from the hymn, "Dwelling in Beulah Land," the anthem's English lyrics are generally sung, although they differ in meaning from the official Fijian lyrics

National heritage
total World Heritage Sites: 1 (cultural)
selected World Heritage Site locales: Levuka Historical Port Town

Economy

Economic overview
Fiji, endowed with forest, mineral, and fish resources, is one of the most developed and connected of the Pacific Island economies. Earnings from the tourism industry, with an estimated 842,884 tourists visiting in 2017, and remittances from Fijian's working abroad are the country's largest foreign exchange earners. Bottled water exports to the US is Fiji's largest domestic export. Fiji's sugar sector remains a significant industry and a major export, but crops and one of the sugar mills suffered damage during Cyclone Winston in 2016. Fiji's trade imbalance continues to widen with increased imports and sluggish performance of domestic exports.

The return to parliamentary democracy and successful elections in September 2014 improved investor confidence, but increasing bureaucratic regulation, new taxes, and lack of consultation with relevant stakeholders brought four consecutive years of decline for Fiji on the World Bank Ease of Doing Business index. Private sector investment in 2017 approached 20% of GDP, compared to 13% in 2013.

Real GDP (purchasing power parity)
$9.86 billion (2020 est.)
$12.18 billion (2019 est.)
$12.23 billion (2018 est.)
note: data are in 2017 dollars
country comparison to the world: 160

Real GDP growth rate
3% (2017 est.)
0.7% (2016 est.)
3.8% (2015 est.)
country comparison to the world: 98

Real GDP per capita
$11,000 (2020 est.)
$13,700 (2019 est.)
$13,800 (2018 est.)
note: data are in 2017 dollars
country comparison to the world: 135

GDP (official exchange rate)
$4.891 billion (2017 est.)
Inflation rate (consumer prices)
3.4% (2017 est.)
3.9% (2016 est.)
country comparison to the world: 151

Credit ratings
Moody's rating: Ba3 (2017)
Standard & Poor's rating: BB- (2019)
note: The year refers to the year in which the current credit rating was first obtained.

GDP - composition, by sector of origin
agriculture: 13.5% (2017 est.)
industry: 17.4% (2017 est.)
services: 69.1% (2017 est.)

GDP - composition, by end use
household consumption: 81.3% (2017 est.)
government consumption: 24.4% (2017 est.)
investment in fixed capital: 16.9% (2017 est.)
investment in inventories: 0% (2017 est.)
exports of goods and services: 29% (2017 est.)
imports of goods and services: -51.6% (2017 est.)

Agricultural products
sugar cane, cassava, taro, poultry, vegetables, coconuts, eggs, milk, ginger, sweet potatoes

Industries
tourism, sugar processing, clothing, copra, gold, silver, lumber

Industrial production growth rate
2.8% (2017 est.)
country comparison to the world: 108

Labor force
353,100 (2017 est.)
country comparison to the world: 161

Labor force - by occupation
agriculture: 44.2%
industry: 14.3%
services: 41.6% (2011)

Unemployment rate
4.5% (2017 est.)
5.5% (2016 est.)
country comparison to the world: 67

Youth unemployment rate (ages 15-24)
total: 15.4%
male: 11.9%
female: 22.4% (2016 est.)
country comparison to the world: 104

Population below poverty line
29.9% (2019 est.)

Gini Index coefficient - distribution of family income
36.7 (2013 est.)
country comparison to the world: 87

Household income or consumption by percentage share
lowest 10%: 2.6%
highest 10%: 34.9% (2009 est.)

Budget
revenues: 1.454 billion (2017 est.)
expenditures: 1.648 billion (2017 est.)
Budget surplus (+) or deficit (-)
-4% (of GDP) (2017 est.)
country comparison to the world: 157

Public debt
48.9% of GDP (2017 est.)
47.5% of GDP (2016 est.)
country comparison to the world: 106

Taxes and other revenues
29.7% (of GDP) (2017 est.)
country comparison to the world: 80

Fiscal year
calendar year

Current account balance
-$277 million (2017 est.)
-$131 million (2016 est.)
country comparison to the world: 104

Exports
$1.23 billion (2020 est.)
$2.64 billion (2019 est.)
$2.67 billion (2018 est.)
note: data are in current year dollars
country comparison to the world: 170

Exports - partners
United States 29%, Australia 14%, New Zealand 7%, Japan 6%, Tonga 6% (2019)

Exports - commodities
water, refined petroleum, fish, raw sugar, gold (2019)

Imports
$1.97 billion (2020 est.)
$3.21 billion (2019 est.)
$3.1 billion (2018 est.)
note: data are in current year dollars
country comparison to the world: 173

Imports - partners
Singapore 18%, Australia 13%, China 13.8%, New Zealand 11%, France 11%, South Korea 8% (2017)

Imports - commodities
refined petroleum, aircraft, cars, wheat, broadcasting equipment (2019)

Reserves of foreign exchange and gold
$1.116 billion (31 December 2017 est.)
$908.6 million (31 December 2016 est.)
country comparison to the world: 130

Debt - external
$1.022 billion (31 December 2017 est.)
$696.4 million (31 December 2016 est.)
country comparison to the world: 165

Exchange rates
Fijian dollars (FJD) per US dollar -
2.05955 (2020 est.)
2.17345 (2019 est.)
2.1104 (2018 est.)
2.0976 (2014 est.)
1.8874 (2013 est.)

Energy

Electricity access
electrification - total population: 99.6% (2018)
electrification - urban areas: 100% (2018)
electrification - rural areas: 99.2% (2018)

Electricity
installed generating capacity: 393,000 kW (2020 est.)
consumption: 1,022,955,000 kWh (2019 est.)
exports: 0 kWh (2020 est.)
imports: 0 kWh (2020 est.)
transmission/distribution losses: 90 million kWh (2019 est.)

Electricity generation sources
fossil fuels: 41.9% of total installed capacity (2020 est.)
nuclear: 0% of total installed capacity (2020 est.)
solar: 1.6% of total installed capacity (2020 est.)
wind: 0.3% of total installed capacity (2020 est.)
hydroelectricity: 50.2% of total installed capacity (2020 est.)
tide and wave: 0% of total installed capacity (2020 est.)
geothermal: 0% of total installed capacity (2020 est.)
biomass and waste: 6% of total installed capacity (2020 est.)

Coal
production: 0 metric tons (2020 est.)
consumption: 0 metric tons (2020 est.)
exports: 0 metric tons (2020 est.)
imports: 0 metric tons (2020 est.)
proven reserves: 0 metric tons (2019 est.)

Petroleum
total petroleum production: 0 bbl/day (2021 est.)
refined petroleum consumption: 11,500 bbl/day (2019 est.)
crude oil and lease condensate exports: 0 bbl/day (2018 est.)
crude oil and lease condensate imports: 0 bbl/day (2018 est.)
crude oil estimated reserves: 0 barrels (2021 est.)

Refined petroleum products - production
0 bbl/day (2015 est.)
country comparison to the world: 146

Refined petroleum products - exports
0 bbl/day (2015 est.)
country comparison to the world: 156

Refined petroleum products - imports
17,460 bbl/day (2015 est.)
country comparison to the world: 131

Natural gas
production: 0 cubic meters (2021 est.)
consumption: 0 cubic meters (2021 est.)
exports: 0 cubic meters (2021 est.)
imports: 0 cubic meters (2021 est.)
proven reserves: 0 cubic meters (2021 est.)

Carbon dioxide emissions
1.691 million metric tonnes of CO2 (2019 est.)
from coal and metallurgical coke: 0 metric tonnes of CO2 (2019 est.)
from petroleum and other liquids: 1.691 million metric tonnes of CO2 (2019 est.)
from consumed natural gas: 0 metric tonnes of CO2 (2019 est.)
country comparison to the world: 164

Energy consumption per capita
32.901 million Btu/person (2019 est.)
country comparison to the world: 118

Communications

Telephones - fixed lines
total subscriptions: 48,510 (2020 est.)
subscriptions per 100 inhabitants: 5 (2020 est.)
country comparison to the world: 157

Telephones - mobile cellular
total subscriptions: 991,500 (2020 est.)
subscriptions per 100 inhabitants: 111 (2020 est.)
country comparison to the world: 162

Telecommunication systems
general assessment: Fiji is the leading market to watch in terms of both LTE and 5G development in the region; the market boasts relatively sophisticated, advanced digital infrastructure, with telcos' heavy investment resulting in the country having the highest mobile and internet subscriptions in the Pacific Islands region; LTE, LTE-A, and fiber technologies have received the most investment by the Fijian mobile operators, LTE now accounts for the largest share of connections in the mobile segment; concentrating on the more highly populated areas, the operators are preparing for the next growth area of high-speed data; they also have 5G in mind, and are preparing their networks to be 5G-ready, anticipating an easier migration to the technology based on the relatively high LTE subscription rate; Fiji presents a challenging geographic environment for infrastructure development due to its population being spread across more than 100 islands; the majority of Fijians live on the two main islands of Viti Levu and Vanua Levu; in July 2018, the two islands were linked by the Savusavu submarine cable system, which provides a more secure link in times of emergency weather events such as the regular tropical cyclones that often cause massive destruction to the area, including destroying essential infrastructure such as electricity and telecommunications equipment; notably, the December 2021 eruption of the Hunga Tonga–Hunga Ha'apai submarine volcano in Tonga damaged the Tonga Cable which connects Fiji, and Tonga blocking the latter off from internet services; cable theft and damage of critical communications infrastructure has also become a concern in Fiji, prompting authorities to establish a joint task force to tackle the issue (2022)

international: country code - 679; landing points for the ICN1, SCCN, Southern Cross NEXT, Tonga Cable and Tui-Samoa submarine cable links to US, NZ, Australia and Pacific islands of Fiji, Vanuatu, Kiribati, Samoa, Tokelau, Tonga, Fallis & Futuna, and American Samoa; satellite earth stations - 2 Inmarsat (Pacific Ocean) (2019)

Broadcast media
Fiji TV, a publicly traded company, operates a free-to-air channel; Digicel Fiji operates the Sky Fiji and Sky Pacific multi-channel pay-TV services; state-owned commercial company, Fiji Broadcasting Corporation, Ltd, operates 6 radio stations - 2 public broadcasters and 4 commercial broadcasters with multiple repeaters; 5 radio stations with repeaters operated by Communications Fiji, Ltd; transmissions of multiple international broadcasters are available

Internet country code
.fj

Internet users
total: 444,978 (2019 est.)
percent of population: 50% (2019 est.)
country comparison to the world: 161

Broadband - fixed subscriptions
total: 23,062 (2020 est.)
subscriptions per 100 inhabitants: 3 (2020 est.)
country comparison to the world: 162

Transportation

National air transport system
number of registered air carriers: 2 (2020)
inventory of registered aircraft operated by air carriers: 16
annual passenger traffic on registered air carriers: 1,670,216 (2018)
annual freight traffic on registered air carriers: 106.83 million (2018) mt-km

Civil aircraft registration country code prefix
DQ

Airports
total: 28 (2021)
country comparison to the world: 120

Airports - with paved runways
total: 4
over 3,047 m: 1
1,524 to 2,437 m: 1
914 to 1,523 m: 2 (2021)

Airports - with unpaved runways
total: 24
914 to 1,523 m: 5
under 914 m: 19 (2021)

Railways
total: 597 km (2008); all is narrow gauge (0.600-m gauge) and belongs to the government-owned Fiji Sugar Corporation; used to haul sugarcane during the harvest season, which runs from May to December
country comparison to the world: 109

Roadways
total: 3,440 km (2011)
paved: 1,686 km (2011)
unpaved: 1,754 km (2011)
country comparison to the world: 159

Waterways
203 km (2012) (122 km are navigable by motorized craft and 200-metric-ton barges)
country comparison to the world: 107

Merchant marine
total: 73
by type: general cargo 20, oil tanker 4, other 49 (2021)
country comparison to the world: 100

Ports and terminals
major seaport(s): Lautoka, Levuka, Suva

Military and Security

Military and security forces
Republic of Fiji Military Force (RFMF): Land Force Command, Maritime Command; Fiji Police Force (2022)
note: the RFMF is subordinate to the president as the commander-in-chief, while the Fiji Police Force reports to the Ministry of Defense, National Security, and Policing

Military expenditures
1.5% of GDP (2021 est.)
1.4% of GDP (2020 est.)
1.6% of GDP (2019 est.) (approximately $160 million)
1.6% of GDP (2018 est.) (approximately $160 million)
1.5% of GDP (2017 est.) (approximately $150 million)
country comparison to the world: 89

Military and security service personnel strengths
approximately 4,000 active personnel (2022)

Military equipment inventories and acquisitions
the RFMF is lightly armed and equipped; Australia has provided patrol boats and a few armored personnel carriers; it also provides logistical support for RFMF regional or UN operations; in recent years, China has provided construction equipment and military vehicles (2021)

Military service age and obligation
18-25 years of age for voluntary military service; mandatory retirement at age 55 (2022)

Military deployments
170 Egypt (MFO); 165 Iraq (UNAMI); 150 Golan Heights (UNDOF) (2022)

Military - notes
the RFMF was established in 1920; it has a history of intervening in the country's politics since the late 1980s, including coups in 1987 and 2006, and a mutiny in 2000
Fiji has a "shiprider" agreement with the US, which allows local maritime law enforcement officers to embark on US Coast Guard (USCG) and US Navy (USN) vessels, including to board and search vessels suspected of violating laws or regulations within Fiji's designated exclusive economic zone (EEZ) or on the high seas; "shiprider" agreements also enable USCG personnel and USN vessels with embarked USCG law enforcement personnel to work with host nations to protect critical regional resources (2022)

Transnational Issues

Disputes - international
Fiji-Tonga: Fiji does not recognize Tonga's 1972 claim to the Minerva Reefs and their surrounding waters; the Minerva Reefs' 200-mile exclusive economic zone includes valuable fishing grounds
Acronyms and Abbreviations

Acronyms and Abbreviations

°	degree(s) of Latitude/Longitude (N, S, E, and W) or of temperature (C or F)
$	dollar(s) – Australian, Fijian, New Zealand, or U.S.
AIDS	Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome
AMU	Asset Management Office
BCE	Before Common Era (formerly BC)
BHA	Bureau for Humanitarian Assistance (of USAID)
BOCA	Branch Organizational Capacity Assessment
CBDRM	Community Based Disaster Risk Management
CCA	climate change adaptation
CE	Common Era (formerly AD)
CEDAW	Convention of the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women
CDC	U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
CFE-DM	Center for Excellence in Disaster Management and Humanitarian Assistance
CMNHS	College of Medicine, Nursing and Health Sciences
COVID-19	Coronavirus Disease 2019
CRI	Climate Risk Index
CWM	Colonial War Memorial (Hospital)
DMHA	Disaster Management and Humanitarian Assistance
DoD	Department of Defense (of the U.S.)
DRM	Disaster Risk Management
DRR	disaster risk reduction
DWT	deadweight tonnage
EEOC	Education Emergency Operation Center
EEZ	Exclusive Economic Zone
EOC	Emergency Operation Center
EFL	Energy Fiji Limited
ESTH	environment, science, technology, and health
EU	European Union
EWS	early warning system
FAL	Fiji Airports Limited
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization (of the UN)
FBC	Fiji Broadcasting Corporation
FCCDC	Fiji Centre for Communicable Disease Control
FCOSS	Fiji Council of Social Services
FDPF	Fiji Disabled People's Federation
FEMAT	Fiji Emergency Medical Assistance Team
FFGS	Flash Flood Guidance System
FMS	Fiji Meteorological Service

FNU	Fiji National University
FRA	Fiji Roads Authority
FRCS	Fiji Red Cross Society
GBV	gender-based violence
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GEF	Global Environment Facility
GHG	greenhouse gas
GSA	Greater Suva Area
GWh	Gigawatt-hour
HADR	humanitarian assistance and disaster relief
HEADMAP	National Health Emergencies and Disaster Management Plan
HIV	human immunodeficiency virus
IASC	Inter-Agency Standing Committee
ICRC	International Committee of the Red Cross
ICT	information and communications technology
IFRC	International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies
IHL	International Humanitarian Law
IMT	Incident Management Team
IOC	Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission
IPCC	Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change
IPEF	Indo-Pacific Economic Framework
ISKCON	International Society for Krishna Consciousness
IUU	illegal, unreported, and unregulated fishing
JICA	Japan International Cooperation Agency
km	kilometer(s)
ktoe	kilotons of oil equivalent
LGBTQ+	lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans-, queer, and other sexual minority
LTDD	Leptospirosis, Typhoid, Dengue, and Diarrhea
m	meter(s)
MBBS	Bachelor of Medicine and Bachelor of Surgery
Mbps	Megabits per second
MCTTT	Ministry of Commerce, Trade, Tourism, and Transport
MEHA	Ministry of Education, Heritage, and Arts
MESC	Maritime Essential Services Centre
MHEWS	multi-hazard early-warning system
MHMS	Ministry of Health and Medical Services
mm	millimeter(s)
MOLG	Ministry of Local Government, Housing, and Community Development
MP	Members of Parliament
MRMDDM	Minister for Rural and Maritime Development and Disaster Management

MW	Megawatt
NAP	National Action Plan
NCCP	National Climate Change Policy
NCD	non-communicable disease
NDC	National Disaster Controller
NDMC	National Disaster Management Council
NDMO	National Disaster Management Office
NDP	National Development Plan
NDRRM	National Disaster Risk Reduction Management
NDRRP	National Disaster Risk Reduction Policy
NEOC	National Emergency Operations Centre
NGO	non-government organization
NHEC	National Health Emergency Coordinator
NHED MU	National Health Emergency and Disaster Management Unit
nm	nautical mile(s)
NNDSS	National Notifiable Disease Surveillance System
NOAA	National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
OCHA	Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (of the UN)
OES	U.S. Department of State's Bureau for Oceans and International Environmental and Scientific Affairs
OPD	Organization of Persons Disabilities
PALM	Japan-Pacific Islands Leaders Meeting
PCRAFI	Pacific Catastrophe Risk Assessment and Financing Initiative
PEN	WHO Package of Essential NCD Interventions
PFM	Public Finance Management
PHT	Pacific Humanitarian Team
PIC / PICT	Pacific Island Countries (and Territories)
PIF	Pacific Islands Forum
PM	Prime Minister
PMSP	Pacific Maritime Security Program
PP--	(Exercise) Pacific Partnership 20--
PSE	Permanent Secretary for Education
PSIDS	Pacific Small Island Developing States
RCP	Representative Concentration Pathway
RFMF	Republic of Fiji Military Forces
RSMC	Regional Specialised Meteorological Centre
SDG	Sustainable Development Goal(s)
SDMP	School Disaster Management Plan
SDRMRC	School Disaster, Risk Management, and Response Committee
SEACAT	Southeast Asia Cooperation and Training
SITREP	Situation Report

SMS	short message service (text)
SOFA	Status of Forces Agreement
SOGIESC	sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, and sex characteristics
SPC	Pacific Community (Secretariat of the)
SPP	State's Partnership Program (of the U.S. National Guard)
sq	square (kilometers or miles)
TB	tuberculosis
TC	Tropical Cyclone
TCWC	Tropical Cyclone Warning Centre
TEU	twenty-foot equivalent unit
TIISP	Transport Infrastructure Investment Sector Project
U.S.	United States
UK	United Kingdom
UN	United Nations
UNAMI	United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq
UNCLOS	United Nations Convention on the Law of the Seas
UNDOF	United Nations Disengagement Observer Force
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNDRR	United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction
UNESCAP	United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization
UNFCCC	United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UNIFIL	United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon
UNISFA	United Nations Interim Security Force for Abyei
UNITAMS	United Nations Integrated Transition Assistance Mission in Sudan
UNMHA	United Nations Mission to Support the Hudaydah Agreement
UNMISS	United Nations Mission in South Sudan
UNSCR	United Nations Security Council Resolution
UNTSO	United Nations Truce Supervision Organization
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
USARPAC	United States Army Pacific Command
USFS	U.S. Forest Service
USINDOPACOM	United States Indo-Pacific Command (of the DoD)
USP	University of the South Pacific
WAF	Water Authority (of Fiji)
WASH	water, sanitation, and hygiene
WHO	World Health Organization
WMO	World Meteorological Organization
WPS	Women, Peace, and Security
WWW	Women's Weather Watch

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