

-rpc/81-regional-resettlement-arrangement.html [accessed 16 Feb 2015]

*PNG Post-Courier*. Daily. Port Moresby. <http://www.postcourier.com.pg>

*PNG Post-Courier*. 2014. Polye Appointed New PNG Opposition Leader. 3 December. <http://pidp.eastwestcenter.org/pireport/2014/December/12-03-13.htm> [accessed 16 Feb 2015]

Radio Australia. 2013. Papua New Guinea Lawyer Paul Paraka Charged over \$30 Million in Fraudulent Payments. 24 October. <http://www.radioaustralia.net.au/international/2013-10-24/papua-new-guinea-lawyer-paul-paraka-charged-over-30-million-in-fraudulent-payments/1209478> [accessed 16 Feb 2015]

Walton, Grant. 2014. PNG Anti-Corruption Agencies Show Their Teeth. *DevPolicyBlog*, 4 April. <http://devpolicy.org/png-anti-corruption-agencies-show-their-teeth-20140404/> [accessed 21 March 2015]

Yalo, Nemo. 2014. Commentary: Actions of a Dictatorial Government. *The National*, 15 May.

## SOLOMON ISLANDS

Solomon Islands sailed through another turbulent and attention-grabbing year in 2014. Natural disasters struck the country, arson and looting marred efforts to national unity, and a new government was formed. Notable events on which this review focuses are those leading up to and following the national general election. Indeed, this was a critical general election for a variety of reasons. It was the first election after the Regional Assistance Mission to Solomon Islands (RAMSI) announced the commencement of its transition and gradual handover of policing control to the Royal Solo-

mon Islands Police Force (RSIPF). It was also an election after civil society organizations aired frustrations with a Parliament that had legitimated the channeling of state resources into the hands of legislators who were allegedly not very prudent in their decision making. Moreover, the election was the first to be conducted after new legislation on political parties' integrity was passed and implemented, and it offers an opportunity to assess the impacts and effectiveness of that legislation. The election also offers the chance to comment on political stability and gender equality ideals in the country. Finally, the review should enable us to assess what the future holds for the newly elected Democratic Coalition for Change (DCC) Government.

I highlighted in the conclusion to the 2013 Solomon Islands review that there was anxiety and uncertainty over what 2014 had in store for the country (Nanau 2014). Certain events made 2014 seem like business as usual. Throughout the year, tertiary students from regional universities and local institutions continued to suffer from delayed allowances and stipends. At the University of the South Pacific and other Fiji-based tertiary institutions, students continued to be distressed by serious delays in their monthly stipends throughout the year (*SSN* 2014e). The same can be said for those studying in Papua New Guinea's tertiary institutions as well as in the country's own local university, the Solomon Islands National University (*SSN* 2014d). These students' concerns highlight the fact that the government failed to work within budgetary provisions earmarked for

tertiary training. Part of the explanation may be attributed to political interference by members of Parliament and public officers in the selection and awarding of scholarships. It was recently reported that two officers of the National Training Unit (NTU) were suspended for giving awards to a group of students outside of the National Training Council's approved list (*SSN* 2015a).

Another set of practices that seemed to continue in 2014 was that of the looting and burning of businesses and private properties. In the aftermath of the devastating flash floods that struck Honiara and parts of north Guadalcanal in April 2014, 21 people died and 30 went unaccounted for; about 52,000 people were displaced and moved to shelters (*Business Advantage PNG* 2014; *SSN* 2014b). They were the first-ever flash floods that destroyed homes, businesses, and buildings along the Mataniko River. In response to this, humanitarian support came in both locally and internationally. The various embassies and international organizations such as the Australian and New Zealand governments, Fiji, Papua New Guinea, Red Cross International, and Solomon Islands communities residing abroad, especially student communities, responded in cash and kind. The Asian Development Bank (ADB), for instance, gave US\$200,000 toward the relief effort (*SSN* 2014b). Locally, church organizations, the Forum Solomon Islands International, the National Disaster Council, and individual families contributed to alleviate the hardships faced by citizens who lost their homes and/or members of their families. A controversial S1\$15 mil-

lion was distributed to members of Parliament to assist their constituents, despite the fact that only parts of the country were devastated and in dire need of rehabilitation (One Solomon Islands dollar [S1\$] was equivalent to approximately US\$.13 in 2014.). A Solomon Islander academic, Dr Tarcisius Tara Kabutaulaka, noted that "the Cabinet's recent approval to release a total of 15 million to the 50 MPs is fishy" (*SIBC Online* 2014c).

Difficulties faced in the evacuation centers and the lack of clear messages coming from responsible authorities regarding rehabilitation and resettlement led to uneasiness among the displaced Honiara population. A number of them refused to leave the evacuation centers unless they were assured of where they would be resettled or what rehabilitation support they would receive. After weeks of confusion and frustration, looters and arsonists destroyed a shop and a football academy building in the eastern end of Honiara in the King George VI school area on 16 May 2014 (*ABC News* 2014a). The Solomon Islands Police Force, with the assistance of RAMSI, managed to quell the unrest after a night of standoffs and criminal activities. In the process, the national government was tight-lipped and failed miserably to communicate with its citizens, thus enabling mob activity (*SIBC Online* 2014d). The looting and the partial burning and break-in at the football academy contributed to the defeat of the country's under-19 soccer team that competed in Fiji a few days later. For a soccer-crazy country like Solomon Islands, this loss meant that both national pride and the hopes of

participating in the World Cup finals were shattered (*SSN*, 18 May 2014). These events and other negative developments seemed to continue unabated, as similar activities had occurred in 2013, making citizens anxious and uncertain about the country's future. The nationwide disapproval of the Darcy Lilo-led National Coalition for Reform and Advancement (NCRA) government just before the 2014 elections may be attributed to its lack of initiative in addressing these and other chronic national issues. Nevertheless, since there were also preparations for a national general election taking place that year, hopes were pinned on the opportunities that may come with the election into office of a new government.

By mid-March, the registration of voters was already underway. In an effort to close the loopholes in the national registered voters list and taking into consideration experiences of past elections, the Solomon Islands Electoral Commission introduced changes to the voter registration process. One of the major changes was the introduction of biometric voter registration. This was adapted from the voter registration process used in Fiji in its first democratic elections after the 2006 coup. The same Canadian company, Electoral Services International, that provided technical expertise to the 2014 Fiji elections also provided Solomon Islands with this new biometric voter registration process. This was a change from the previous practice in which voter registrars moved from village to village in each constituency to personally register eligible voters. Under the new system, voter registration centers

were established and eligible voters traveled to these registration booths to register their names, have their photos taken, and be issued voter identification cards (*SIEC* 2014). The hope was that on Election Day voters would use the identification cards to cast their ballots.

The new system proved to be very effective in removing ghost voters and people voting in more than one constituency. It was alleged that in the past, individuals could vote in a particular constituency in the morning and again in another constituency in the afternoon. There was no way of cross-checking and eliminating registered voters from double registration or, thus, double voting. The biometric registration removed a total of six thousand multiple registrations and ghost names from the list (*SSN* 2014a). Unfortunately, there were certain concerns with the new system. The first was the difficulty for voters, especially the disabled and elderly, in traveling to registration centers to be registered. The previous system was easier because registration officers actually moved from house to house to do the registration, thereby accommodating the elderly and disabled. The second and more serious concern was the practice wherein voters allegedly sold their identification (ID) cards to would-be candidates or sitting members of Parliament. For instance, there were allegations that certain individuals sold their voter ID cards to the member for Honiara for cash returns (*SSN* 2014c). The intention was that the candidate or member would keep the cards and on Election Day return the cards to the owner, who would then cast a ballot in favor

of the candidate who gave money. These allegations, however, were difficult to prove. Moreover, if it did happen, whether those whose cards were purchased actually voted for the “purchaser” is difficult to ascertain. Suffice it to say that the new biometric system improved the registration of voters and provided a better list of voters than in previous elections.

Apart from the biometric voter registration, another important development prior to the elections was the hurried passage of the Political Parties Integrity (PPI) Bill. The desire to see members of Parliament minimize frequent floor crossing and to discourage independent members switching allegiance in Parliament had been evident for quite a while. For instance, during the reign of the Derek Sikua-led Solomon Islands Alliance for Change government from 2007 to 2010, a similar proposal had been brought up for debate. A draft bill was then created, only to be sabotaged by a faction in Sikua’s own cabinet led by Gordon Darcy Lilo (Nanau 2010). Incidentally, when Lilo became prime minister, he pushed for the enactment of such legislation in the dying hours of his reign (SIBC Online 2014f). The bill went through Parliament and became law just before the national elections in 2014. Two prominent provisions of the PPI Act are the requirement for political parties to register in order to be officially recognized and for candidates to be members of a political party if they enter Parliament as independent members (National Parliament of Solomon Islands 2014).

The intentions of the PPI Act are noble, but the members of Parliament who passed it were not, thus making

it a total failure when implemented. It was originally a move to ensure that elections are credible, free, and fair. Solomon Islanders have long called for this and were excited when it was passed and executed (SSN, 21 May 2014). Over the years, the quality of members entering Parliament has been far from desirable, and a few in the house preceding the 2014 elections were not even contributing to parliamentary debates. In one of his final contributions to the National Parliament, then Leader of Opposition Dr Derek Sikua sarcastically made references to such members by saying that he had not heard some of them sneeze or cough through the microphones. Manasseh Sogavare, another member of the Opposition bench at the time, stressed the importance of amending the Electoral Act as a way to avoid vote buying (SSN, 22 May 2014). The PPI Act was subsequently passed and came into force just in time to be implemented in the 2014 national general elections. Unfortunately, the outcome of implementation left much to be desired. Most of those who debated and passed it chose not to abide by the provisions of the act.

The 2014 general election was seen as important in Solomon Islands for a variety of reasons. Apart from people’s frustration with a leadership that has legitimized the channeling of state resources to itself (ie, to members of Parliament) under the guise of “Rural Constituency Development Funds” (see Dawea 2013), there were also concerns with political stability and gender equality in Parliament. Indeed the historical volatility of Parliament necessitated the initial drafting of the PPI legislation. Moreover, with a bit

more structure to and formalization of political party establishments, each political party would accommodate the need for gender equality and the recruitment of a “better” lot of new politicians. Solomon Islanders and the international community felt that a free and fair election is important to attain the development aspirations of a developing country. The new voter registration system and PPI Act, at least to observers of Solomon Islands political development, have the potential to address the deficiencies witnessed in previous general elections. Likewise, the secretary-general of the Commonwealth, Kamallesh Sharma, stressed the importance of credible elections in shaping the type of society in which Solomon Islanders wish to live. He emphasized that “all concerned—the election management body, political party leaders and their supporters, security agencies, the media, civil society and the voters themselves should play their rightful roles on election day so that the process and results command the confidence and trust of all” (SIBC Online 2014g).

Although the voter registration system solved a lot of problems with the registered voters list, such as repeat registration, ghost names, or the removal of names of deceased persons, it had some issues. The alleged selling of voter identification cards was also a concern, as was the ultimate non-requirement of the use of ID cards on Election Day (Transparency Solomon Islands 2014). The biggest concern, though, is the actual implementation of the PPI Act that was rushed through Parliament just before the elections on 19 November. This was despite

the fact that the Opposition side of the house boycotted the committee stage of the bill, alleging that Speaker Allan Kemakeza was rushing through the clauses and shutting off questions from the group (SIBC Online 2014e). A profound disappointment stemmed from the fact that almost 80 percent of sitting members of Parliament who were responsible for the passage of the PPI failed to campaign under registered political parties but ran instead as independents. It is mind-boggling to think why more than half of the then members agreed to the critical role of the PPI as such an important piece of legislation but went on to covertly protest against their own law when implemented.

A total of 443 candidates contested the elections, a drop from 509 candidates registered in the 2010 elections. Given the record of members of Parliament who legitimated the allocation of various funds to themselves instead of through the normal processes of government administration, it was hoped that many of the old members would be voted out. Unfortunately, this was not the case. Although the PPI Act increased the number of candidates affiliated with political parties to 45 percent from 22 percent of candidates in 2010, sitting members had an upper hand. Indeed, 78 percent of the sitting members retained their seats, a percentage higher than the postindependence average of 54 percent (Wood 2014a, 2). Part of the explanation for this is the discretionary funding available to members of Parliament. For instance, in 2012 each member of Parliament was allocated S1\$2 million per year to deliver constituency development projects at the

member's discretion (Haque 2012, 4). It should be noted that since 2013, each constituency has been allocated SI\$5,998,000 (under the 2013 development budget); these funds cannot be expended for any development activity, even if it is administered by government ministries, unless the constituency's member of Parliament affixes his or her signature to support it.

The push for gender equality under the PPI, and efforts by those championing the cause, fell flat on its face. Political parties did not seriously consider the critical role women play in national political leadership. It was expected that with the formalization of political parties through legal requirements to register them for contest, more women candidates would secure seats through the electoral process. Unfortunately, this did not happen, as only one out of the twenty-six women candidates secured a seat. Even so, Freda Soria Comua still has an election petition hanging over her head by former member of Parliament and Foreign Affairs Minister Clay Forau Soalaoi, whom she unseated. The first national female member, Hilda Kari, contested the Central Honiara seat but secured fewer votes than the other candidates in that constituency. The only other woman, Vika Lusibaea, who was a member for North Malaita in the previous house, did not contest her constituency because her husband, Jimmy Lusibaea, who was previously disqualified from Parliament, was eligible to contest the 2014 elections. She nevertheless contested the East Honiara seat but was also badly defeated. Similar results were noted in the 2010 elec-

tions where all female candidates who contested in twenty-one constituencies then received only 4 percent of the votes (McMurray 2012, 2).

Terence Wood explained that the critical factors that contributed to the difficulty of women winning seats include the different standards of behavior that women are held to, lack of money to support their election efforts, and lack of support from influential brokers or local male figures (2014b, 1). A recent report by Karlyn T Roughan and Lisa Wini highlights three reasons why women did not normally get more votes, including people not knowing the candidates or their backgrounds well enough, not hearing their campaigns, and feeling that the women candidates were not qualified enough to be elected (2015, 15–18). High Court Justice Stephen Pallaras also felt that women's organizations ought to "unite in strength and fight for the women of this country" (SIBC Online 2014h). The history of Solomon Islands elections and gender equality efforts show that there is little hope for this happening under the current electoral system, even with a united front by women's organizations. A more realistic call would be to work toward a new electoral system that would advance the equal representation of all Solomon Islanders, including minority groups and women.

The national general elections generated mixed expectations and outcomes. There was uncertainty as to how peaceful the elections would be because of previous experiences in 2006 after the Snyder Rini-led government was sworn in. As a contingency plan, about ninety-six participating



police officers, including riot police from Australia, New Zealand, Cook Islands, Vanuatu, Papua New Guinea, Tonga, and Tuvalu were brought in to support the force (SIBC Online 2014a). The election was nevertheless peaceful except for minor incidents. A group of Commonwealth election observers headed by former PNG Prime Minister Sir Mekere Morauta confirmed the peaceful conclusion of the election (SIBC Online 2014b). Despite the high retention rate of sitting members, some longtime, prominent politicians, including former Prime Minister Gordon Darcy Lilo, were booted out. Lilo was dethroned by a teacher and newcomer, Jimson Tanangada, by more than two hundred votes (ABC News 2014b). The others were Job Dudley Tausinga, a long-serving member of Parliament, and former Foreign Affairs Minister Clay Forau, who was ousted by Freda Soria Comua by twenty-two votes (SSN, 27 Nov 2014).

Whatever one thinks or says, the reality is that Solomon Islands voted in fifty members of Parliament in the 2014 general election from the twelve registered political parties and independent candidates. Out of these elected members, 66 percent contested as independent candidates, while only 34 percent came from six registered political parties. The other six registered political parties failed to secure a single seat in the house. The results made a mockery of the recently enacted PPI Act aimed at strengthening political parties. What transpired from the results is the incredibly powerful role played by independent members of Parliament in government formation and disintegra-

tion in Solomon Islands politics (see Nanau 2010). Two camps emerged and engaged in horse-trading in the lead-up to the nomination and election of Prime Minister Manasseh Sogavare. It should be noted that Sogavare was elected as an independent member and had to join a registered political party prior to his election as prime minister because of the provisions of the PPI Act, supported by a High Court decision in mid-November 2014 (Radio New Zealand 2014).

The election of Prime Minister Sogavare and his DCC government was welcomed by many Solomon Islanders. Three former prime ministers are also in his cabinet: Derek Sikua, Snyder Rini, and Danny Philip. Sogavare also toned down his previous anti-Australian stance to one that is more conciliatory and engaging. The DCC government came into power with the baggage left by the previous Lilo-led NCRA government. One lingering problem was the six-month standoff between Solomon Islands Airlines and Fiji Airways (Fiji Times Online 2014). The DCC government took swift action to restore relations with Fiji by giving Fiji Airways the additional flight they requested into the country. This was despite the frustration expressed by many Solomon Islands observers and airline personnel about the skewed nature of the deal, whereby Fiji Airways got what it wanted but Solomon Islands Airlines got nothing (see ABC News 2015; SSN 2015b). In addition to this rushed decision in the airlines saga, Prime Minister Sogavare went ahead and made political appointments starting with his special secretary and thirty-nine others. The debate on these appointments and their

suitability in their positions dragged on into the beginning of 2015 (SIBC Online 2015), but the DCC maintained that the list of political appointees leaked by the social media was not official. However, they failed to submit a formal list of names of these appointees even after three months in office.

The DCC government also released its policy statements in late January (OPMC 2015), a move that was both welcomed and snubbed. Most of the policies listed and projects identified have been indicated in many previous government policies. Skeptics would like to see how different the DCC government will be in addressing these development issues. The DCC policy strategy to undertake serious fundamental reforms would hopefully result in national unity, stability, and development. The challenge now is to find the money to deliver services and ensure that some projects in this “development wish list” become realities. As 2015 progresses, the role of the thirty-nine political appointees (called “consultants”) is still not clear, and the national Opposition is again at the government’s throat, observing every move and decision made. Fighting corruption is said to be the focus of the DCC government, a very welcome move in a country like Solomon Islands. Whatever happened in the government, the responsibility of the Solomon Islands voter has been fulfilled with the election of representatives to Parliament. They can only hope that some of the Rural Constituency Development Fund revealed earlier and development projects and services listed in the DCC policy and plan reach them in the next four

years. The way ahead is in no way more clear than what it was in 2014. Solomon Islanders can only hope that the “change” indicated in the name of the current DCC government actually generates positive livelihoods for them and their children.

GORDON LEUA NANAU

## References

- ABC News, Australian Broadcasting Corporation News. 2014a. Police Out in Force to Prevent Fresh Riots in Solomons Capital. 19 May. <http://www.abc.net.au/news/2014-05-17/an-solomon-riots/5460094> [accessed 17 Feb 2015]
- . 2014b. Solomon Islands Election: Caretaker PM Gordon Darcy Lilo Ousted in Shock Result. 21 November. <http://www.abc.net.au/news/2014-11-21/solomon-islands-election3a-caretaker-pm-lilo-ousted-in-shock-r/5908660> [accessed 18 Feb 2015]
- . 2015. Disappointment Fiji-Solomon Islands Flight Stoush Not Fully Rectified. 15 January. <http://www.radioaustralia.net.au/international/radio/program/pacific-beat/disappointment-fijisolomon-islands-flight-stoush-not-fully-rectified/1406623> [accessed 18 Feb 2015]
- Business Advantage PNG. 2014. Solomon Islands Businesses Counting the Cost of Devastating Flood. 9 April. <http://www.businessadvantagepng.com/si-business-counting-cost-devastating-flood> [accessed 17 Feb 2015]
- Dawea, Elliot. 2013. Solomons Constituency Development Fund Bill Passed. *Solomon Star*, 29 March. Available online via Pacific Islands Report <http://pidp.eastwestcenter.org/pireport/2013/March/03-29-03.htm> [accessed 2 March 2015]
- Fiji Times Online. 2014. Aviation Deal Fallout. 29 July. <http://www.fijitimes.com/>



- story.aspx?id=275705 [accessed 18 Feb 2015]
- Haque, Tobias A. 2012. *The Influence of Culture on Economic Development in the Solomon Islands*. State, Society, and Governance in Melanesia (SSGM) Discussion Paper 2012/1. Canberra: The Australian National University.
- McMurray, Christine. 2012. *National Elections and Women Candidates in Solomon Islands: Results from the People's Survey*. Canberra: Centre for Democratic Institutions.
- Nanau, Gordon Leua. 2010. How Political Parties Do and Do Not Contribute to Democratic Governance in the Solomon Islands. In *Political Parties and Democracy*, vol 4: *Africa and Oceania*, edited by Kay Lawson, Luc Sindjoun, and Marian J Simms, 201–224. Santa Barbara, CA: Praeger.
- . 2014. Melanesia in Review: Issues and Events, 2013: Solomon Islands. *The Contemporary Pacific* 26:516–524.
- National Parliament of Solomon Islands. 2014. Political Parties Integrity Act 2014 (No 9 of 2014). Honiara: National Parliament.
- OPMC, Office of the Prime Minister and Cabinet. 2015. *Democratic Coalition for Change Government: Policy Strategy and Translation*. Honiara: Prime Minister's Office.
- Radio New Zealand. 2014. Solomons Court Rules against Unregistered Political Parties. 14 November. <http://www.radionz.co.nz/international/pacific-news/259393/solomons-court-rules-against-unregistered-political-parties> [accessed 8 Feb 2015]
- Roughan, Karlyn T, and Lisa Wini. 2015. *Report on Voter Behaviour Towards Women Candidates Before and After the 2014 SI National General Election*. 27 January. Honiara: National Parliament of Solomon Islands. [http://www.parliament.gov.sb/files/whatsnew/Voter\\_Behaviour\\_Report\\_.pdf](http://www.parliament.gov.sb/files/whatsnew/Voter_Behaviour_Report_.pdf) [accessed 26 Feb 2015]
- SIBC Online, Solomon Islands Broadcasting Corporation Online. 2014a. Additional PPF Officers Arrived Ahead of Next Week's Elections. 12 November. <http://www.sibconline.com.sb/additional-p-pf-officers-arrived-ahead-of-next-weeks-elections/> [accessed 8 Feb 2015]
- . 2014b. Election Observers Will Be Independent, Impartial: Sir Mekere. 15 November. <http://www.sibconline.com.sb/election-observers-will-be-independent-impartial-sir-mekere/> [accessed 8 Feb 2015]
- . 2014c. Local Academic Warned against Politicising Disaster. 7 April. <http://www.sibconline.com.sb/local-academic-warned-against-politicizing-disaster/> [accessed 17 Feb 2015]
- . 2014d. Mob Claiming to Represent Flood Victims Over React. 17 May. <http://www.sibconline.com.sb/mob-claiming-to-represent-flood-victims-react/> [accessed 17 Feb 2015]
- . 2014e. Opposition Says It Is Boycotting Parties Integrity Bill. 28 May.
- . 2014f. Political Parties Integrity Bill Passed Second Reading. 21 May. <http://www.sibconline.com.sb/political-parties-integrity-bill-passed-second-reading/> [accessed 18 Feb 2015]
- . 2014g. Solomon Islanders Have Right to Take Part in Free and Fair Election. 14 November. <http://www.sibconline.com.sb/solomon-islanders-have-right-to-take-part-in-free-fair-election/> [accessed 8 Feb 2015]
- . 2014h. Women Organisations Combine to Be Effective: Pallaras. 15 November. <http://www.sibconline.com.sb/women-organisations-combine-to-be-effective-pallaras/> [accessed 8 Feb 2015]
- . 2015. Opposition Worries over Rence Sore's Appointment as S.S.P.M.

4 January. <http://www.sibconline.com.sb/opposition-worried-over-renewance-sores-appointment-as-s-s-p-m/> [accessed 18 Feb 2015]

SIEC, Solomon Islands Electoral Commission. 2014. *Biometric Voter Registration*. Vavaya, Honiara: SIEC.

SSN, *Solomon Star News*. 2014a. 6,000 Fraudulent Voters Detected. 19 June. <http://www.solomonstarnews.com/news/national/2540-6-000-fraudulent-voters-detected> [accessed 18 Feb 2015]

———. 2014b. ADB Gives US\$200k for Relief Effort. 18 April. <http://www.solomonstarnews.com/news/business/576-adb-gives-us-200k-for-relief-effort> [accessed 17 Feb 2015]

———. 2014c. Call to Ban Card Buying. 27 May. <http://www.solomonstarnews.com/news/national/2081-call-to-ban-card-buying> [accessed 18 Feb 2015]

———. 2014d. Students Plan Boycott. 14 July. <http://www.solomonstarnews.com/news/national/2882-students-plan-boycott> [accessed 17 Feb 2015]

———. 2014e. Students Renew Allowances Call. 14 August. <http://www.solomonstarnews.com/news/national/3470-students-renew-allowances-call> [accessed 17 Feb 2015]

———. 2015a. Award Fraud Uncovered; Two NTU Officers Suspended. 22 January. <http://www.solomonstarnews.com/news/national/5692-award-fraud-uncovered-two-ntu-officers-suspended> [accessed 17 Feb 2015]

———. 2015b. Core Issue of Air Dispute Not Solved, Says Solomon Airlines. 16 January. <http://www.solomonstarnews.com/news/5590-core-issue-of-air-dispute-not-solved-says-solomon-airlines> [accessed 18 Feb 2015]

Transparency Solomon Islands. 2014. Transparency Solomon Islands. Facebook post, 15 May. <https://www.facebook.com/>

TransparencySI/posts/304333706390633 [accessed 18 Feb 2015]

Wood, Terence. 2014a. The 2014 Elections in Solomon Islands: Did Anything Change? Will Anything Change? DevPolicyBlog, Development Policy Centre, The Australian National University, 22 January. <http://devpolicy.org/the-2014-elections-in-solomon-islands-did-anything-change-will-anything-change-20150122/> [accessed 8 Feb 2014]

———. 2014b. *Why Can't Women Win? Impediments to Women's Electoral Success in the Solomon Islands*. Centre for Democratic Institutions (CDI) Discussion Paper 2014/1. Canberra: The Australian National University.

## TIMOR-LESTE

For Timor-Leste, 2014 began with looming political uncertainty. In November 2013, Prime Minister José Alexandre “Xanana” Gusmão announced that he intended to resign from office in the coming year, with September floated as a possible date, ostensibly in order to promote generational renewal of national leadership. According to some accounts, Gusmão’s plan was to establish a small council of senior advisors (of which he would be a member) drawn from across the political spectrum that would provide direction to his hand-selected replacement and new government. But September 2014 passed with Gusmão still in office and continuing to trumpet the benefits of major development projects while dismissing criticism of corruption within his government and passage of new restrictions curtailing basic rights. After a flurry of new rumors in early