

## Can the Pacific Island Countries Lead the Way on Merging the WPS Agenda and Climate Security?

By **Merita Tuari'i**

Te Puna Vai Mārama Cook Islands Centre for Research



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### Introduction

Highly exposed to climate change risks, Pacific Island Countries (PICs), are leading the way in merging the Women, Peace and Security (WPS) agenda with climate security. The recent Pacific Islands Forum held in December 2023 unveiled the region's most gender-inclusive implementation plan, recognising womens' intersectionality and role in peacebuilding. However, implementation faces major hurdles that have time-and-again kept action on WPS agenda in a state of suspension. For the WPS agenda and climate security to be mainstreamed successfully in the Pacific, core inequalities pervasive in the daily lives of women and girls in the region need to be urgently addressed.

The region is familiar with the WPS agenda, having developed the first regional WPS Action Plan in the Asia-Pacific. It is also deeply concerned with climate security, as a region that is mostly ocean, or a "Blue Continent" struck by sea level rise, high seas hazards, cyclones and other natural disasters.

This paper examines how PICs are mainstreaming the WPS agenda and climate security at regional and national levels. The region is incredibly diverse. Uplifting and mainstreaming gender equality and women's human rights remains a challenge

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across the region. Using the example of the Cook Islands, a large ocean state and one of only two countries in the Pacific classified as high income, we begin to see how core inequalities can keep these climate-vulnerable nations from meeting regional commitments on women and climate security.

## The Pacific Island Region: A Leader in Mainstreaming the WPS Agenda and Climate Security

The Pacific Islands Countries (PICs) are a diverse group of independent and self-governing small island developing states stretched out across the Pacific Ocean. The region spans over 40 million square kilometres of ocean, and only 500,000 square kilometres of land, from Palau in the North West Pacific to French Polynesia in the East.<sup>1</sup> Their total population combined is estimated at over 9 million people. The combination of populations packed in to small land areas, scattered across a large oceanscape increases Pacific peoples' exposure to climate change risks. Small economies, poor basic infrastructure, and high cost of travel leave few adaptation options.<sup>2</sup>

The island states make up the Pacific Islands Forum (PIF), the region's top political body. The PIF also includes Australia and New Zealand as full members, however these two developed countries are in reality more development partners to the region. The PIF make regional declarations and work with regional and multinational organisations to address development in the region.

The region is considered largely peaceful, although civil war has occurred in Papua New Guinea with the now Autonomous Region of Bougainville, civil unrest in the Solomon Islands (called "The Tensions"), coup in Fiji and rioting in Vanuatu and Tonga.<sup>3</sup> In both Papua New Guinea and the Solomon Islands unrest, women played a critical role in peace brokering and peace building.<sup>4</sup> In the Autonomous Region of Bougainville women hold custodial land rights and clans are matrilineal. The women of this region were actively involved in brokering peace and effective security during the civil war, and later in reconciliation.<sup>5</sup>

In part because of these experiences, the Pacific region developed the first regional WPS action plan in the Asia-Pacific, the Pacific Women, Peace and Security Regional Action Plan 2012-2015.<sup>6</sup> A key component of the document was its acknowledgment of the impacts climate change could have on Pacific women and girls' security. It recognised that climate change will exasperate humanitarian crises in some Pacific communities with the threat of sea level rise and the increased occurrence and severity of cyclones and drought, and how these and other impacts of climate change can potentially result in forced displacement, opening up vulnerabilities to sexual and gender-based violence.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Juswanto, Wawan and Zulfiqar Ali. *Economic Growth and Sustainable Development in the Pacific Island Countries*. (Tokyo: ADB Institute, 2016), Policy Brief, No. 2016-6, <https://www.adb.org/sites/default/files/publication/219266/adbi-pb2016-6.pdf>

<sup>2</sup> Utz, Robert (ed.). *Archipelagic Economies: Spatial Economic Development in the Pacific – Synthesis Report*. (New York: The World Bank, 2021), <https://openknowledge.worldbank.org/server/api/core/bitstreams/e6ad5929-f1e8-5c09-9760-ffed164417a6/content>

<sup>3</sup> "Bougainville: the conflict in focus", Conciliation Resources, accessed January 21, 2024, <https://www.c-r.org/programme/pacific/bougainville-conflict-focus>; "The Tensions", Regional Assistance Mission to the Solomon Islands (RAMSI), accessed January 21, 2024, <https://www.ramsi.org/the-tensions/>; Ride, Anouk, *Riots in the Pacific: Control and Change*, (Canberra, Australia: Australia Pacific Security College, November 21, 2022), Discussion Paper, [https://pacificsecurity.net/wp-content/uploads/2022/11/v3-Riots\\_Pacific\\_Final-Design-.pdf](https://pacificsecurity.net/wp-content/uploads/2022/11/v3-Riots_Pacific_Final-Design-.pdf)

<sup>4</sup> Bhagwan Rolls, Sharon and Heather Wrathall, "Women on the frontlines of Pacific peacebuilding", *Australian Outlook*, July 6, 2023, <https://www.internationalaffairs.org.au/australianoutlook/women-on-the-frontlines-of-pacific-peacebuilding/>

<sup>5</sup> Reddy, Peter, "Reconciliation in Bougainville: Civil War, peacekeeping and restorative justice", *Contemporary Justice Review* Vol. 11, No. 2, (2008): 117-130, <https://doi.org/10.1080/10282580802057744>

<sup>6</sup> UN Women, *Asia-Pacific Regional Symposium: National action plans on women, peace and security*. (Bangkok, Thailand: UN Women Asia and the Pacific Regional Office, 2016), p 76, <https://asiapacific.unwomen.org/sites/default/files/Field%20Office%20ESEAsia/Docs/Publications/2016/12/3-Un-Women-Nap-Report-Online.pdf>

<sup>7</sup> Pacific Islands Forum (PIF). *Pacific Regional Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security 2012-2015*, (Suva, Fiji: PIF, 2012), p 7, <https://www.peacewomen.org/peacewomen.org/rap-pacific>

Since then, the 2018 Boe Declaration of the PIF identified climate change as the top security threat to the Pacific.<sup>8</sup> This acknowledgement now permeates regional documents such as the 2050 Strategy for the Blue Pacific Continent.<sup>9</sup>

The recently released 2050 Strategy Implementation Plan addresses climate security and the role women have in peace and security in the Pacific. In its action statements for peace and security it calls on the region to ensure “the full, equal, effective and meaningful participation of women and girls in all their diversity<sup>10</sup> at every stage of peace processes, conflict prevention, conflict resolution and peacebuilding”.<sup>11</sup> The Revitalised Pacific Leaders Gender Equality Declaration also recognises climate change as a major security threat, disproportionately affecting women and girls “in all their diversity”. It commits leaders to the inclusion of women and girls in climate security and processes for peace and security. It further requests leaders to include women and girls in climate change action, including access to climate finance, disaster risk management, and the protection of persons affected by climate change-induced sea level rise.<sup>12</sup>

The 2023 Pacific Climate Security Assessment Guide, meant to operationalise the Boe Declaration, is explicit in the link between climate change impacts and increased insecurity for women, those dependent on them and other vulnerable groups.<sup>13</sup> The guide provides pathways to mainstream climate security and identifies and articulates the impacts climate change has on national and regional security landscapes.<sup>14</sup> It also highlights the absence of women in leadership positions, stating that only three of 18 PIF Member countries have women in disaster response management roles,<sup>15</sup> and that women in business and government sectors are disproportionately affected by climate change.<sup>16</sup> A high proportion of women in the Pacific work and own businesses in cultural industries and small-scale agriculture and fisheries. These industries are highly dependent on environment biodiversity and heavily impacted by natural hazards and disasters, further intensified by climate change.<sup>17</sup>

## Major Barriers to Mainstreaming

Despite the high-level progress, basic inequities, compounded by lack of resourcing and action, remain barriers to mainstreaming climate security and the WPS Agenda in the Pacific. Gender inequality and social norms that discriminate against women are prominent across the Pacific. Rates of domestic violence (DV) and violence against women (VAW) are some of the highest in the world, with some PICs at between 60-70% of ever partnered<sup>18</sup> women experiencing intimate

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<sup>8</sup> PIF. *Boe Declaration on Regional Security*. (PIF, 2018), <https://www.forumsec.org/2018/09/05/boe-declaration-on-regional-security/>

<sup>9</sup> PIF, *The 2050 Strategy for the Blue Pacific Continent*. (PIF, 2022), p 6. <https://www.forumsec.org/2050strategy/>

<sup>10</sup> The statement “Women and girls in all their diversity” in the 2050 Strategy Implementation Plan and Revitalised Pacific Leaders Gender Equality Declaration

is taken from the 14<sup>th</sup> Triennial Conference of Pacific Women and 7<sup>th</sup> Meeting of Pacific Ministers for Women, where it was defined as “all groups and age groups of Pacific women, including indigenous women, elderly women, girls, women living with disabilities, lesbian and bisexual women, urban poor women, women in rural and maritime areas, and women on the climate frontline”. The Outcomes and Recommendations document from the Conference that includes the definition can be found at <https://www.spc.int/sites/default/files/document/14th%20Triennial%20Conference%20Outcome%20-%20Women%20Eng.pdf>

<sup>11</sup> PIF. *Statement on Revitalised Plan 2023-2030*. (PIF, 2023), <https://www.forumsec.org/publications/revitalised-pacific-leaders-gender-equality-declaration>

<sup>12</sup> PIF. *Revitalised Pacific Leaders Gender Equality Declaration*. (PIF, 2023), <https://forumsec.org/publications/revitalised-pacific-leaders-gender-equality-declaration>

<sup>13</sup> PIF. *Pacific Climate Security Assessment Guide*. (PIF, 2023), p 21, [https://weatheringrisk.org/sites/default/files/document/Pacific\\_Climate\\_Security\\_Assessment\\_Guide\\_webversion.pdf](https://weatheringrisk.org/sites/default/files/document/Pacific_Climate_Security_Assessment_Guide_webversion.pdf)

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid* p 11.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid* p 23.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid* p 17.

<sup>17</sup> Pacific Community (SPC), *Women’s Economic Empowerment in the Pacific*, (Noumea, New Caledonia: 2017), <https://www.spc.int/sites/default/files/wordpresscontent/wp-content/uploads/2017/09/Overview-Pacific-Womens-Economic-Empowerment-SPC2.pdf>

<sup>18</sup> “Ever-partnered” is defined as “women in a given population who have ever experienced physical and/or sexual violence by an intimate partner”, reference found in “Proportion of ever-partnered women and girls aged 15-49 years subjected to physical and/or sexual violence by a current or former intimate partner in the previous 12 months”, The Global Health Observatory, World Health Organisation, accessed April 22, 2024, <https://www.who.int/data/gho/data/indicators/indicator-details/GHO/proportion-of-ever-partnered-women-and-girls-aged-15-49-years-subjected-to-physical-and-or-sexual-violence-by-a-current-or-former-intimate-partner-in-the-previous-12-months>







other factors such as economic status, local culture, health status, age and location.<sup>41</sup> There is also a need for more baseline research on women's intersectionality and its link with climate change and conflict in the region. A review of scholarship on climate change and security in the Pacific found that very little consider gender, and those that do were identified as "adding women", rather than any critical analyses of the ways gender and intersectionality are impacted by climate change.<sup>42</sup>

## Women and Climate Security in the Cook Islands

The Cook Islands, located in the South Pacific between Samoa and French Polynesia, is a "large ocean state".<sup>43</sup> Its exclusive economic zone is 550,000 times larger than its total land mass, which is scattered throughout that zone as atoll, semi-atoll and raised coral islands. The main island of Rarotonga, the political and economic centre of the country, is the only mountainous island. Unsurprisingly, the country is highly vulnerable to climate impacts, such as drought, sea level rise, increasingly intense cyclones and water salinisation.<sup>44</sup> It has also seen few conflicts in modern times.

The Cook Islands security policy framework is focused on human security, and threats from climate change are central to national security efforts. The Cook Islands National Security Policy (NSP) frames the threat of climate change as existential.<sup>45</sup> Its action plan states:

- strengthen mitigation and adaptation activities to enable the Cook Islands to respond effectively to current and future security challenges of climate change
- protect sovereign rights over maritime areas under international law, particularly from the threat of sea level rise
- strengthen resilience to the effects of natural disasters through professional assessments and effective protection, response and recovery measures.<sup>46</sup>

Nowhere does it mention women and girls' particular needs in climate disaster and their role as frontline responders to climate change impacts. In the Pacific, rising sea levels and more frequent natural disasters are impacting areas traditionally allocated as women's spaces, such as fresh water sources or homes and food gardens, or lands traditionally owned by women.<sup>47</sup> There are also social and economic barriers to women migrating from their islands when homes are no longer liveable, such as roles in caregiving and subsistence living. Women are forced to adapt to the changing climate, especially for food security and caring for families.<sup>48</sup> In Pukapuka, an atoll island in the northern Cook Islands, the taro root vegetable is a food crop grown only by women. Rising sea-levels due to climate change have caused saltwater intrusion in to taro plantations, women have had to move crops to smaller spaces elsewhere or invest in

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<sup>41</sup> Lamprell, Gina and Jefferey Braithwaite. "Mainstreaming gender and promoting intersectionality in Papua New Guinea's health policy: a triangulated analysis applying data-mining and content analytic techniques." *International Journal for Equity in Health*, Vol. 16, No. 65 (2017).

<https://link.springer.com/article/10.1186/s12939-017-0555-5>

<sup>42</sup> Howard, Elise. "Linking gender, climate change and security in the Pacific Islands Region: A systematic review". *Ambio*, 52:518-533 (2023).

<https://doi.org/10.1007/s13280-022-01813-0>

<sup>43</sup> Cook Islands Government. *Statement of Strategic Intentions 2019-2024*. (Cook Islands Government, 2019)

[https://www.cookislands.gov.ck/images/MFEM\\_Documents/CEO\\_Docs-from23Aug16/Press\\_release\\_Other\\_Agencies\\_/MFAI\\_SoSI\\_FINAL\\_06.08.19.pdf](https://www.cookislands.gov.ck/images/MFEM_Documents/CEO_Docs-from23Aug16/Press_release_Other_Agencies_/MFAI_SoSI_FINAL_06.08.19.pdf)

<sup>44</sup> Government of the Cook Islands. *Third National Communication under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change*, (Cook Islands Government, 2019). <https://unfccc.int/sites/default/files/resource/TNC%20FINAL.%20online.pdf>

<sup>45</sup> Cook Islands Government. *Cook Islands National Security Policy 2023-2026*, p. 31.

<sup>46</sup> *Ibid* p 32.

<sup>47</sup> Pascoe, Sophie, "Sailing the waves on our own: Climate change migration, self-determination and the Carteret Islands", *QUT Law Review*, 15, no 2 (2015): 72-85, <https://heinonline.org/HOL/P?h=hein.journals/qutlj15&i=250> ; Singh, Priyatma, Tammy Tabe, Tess Martin. "The role of women in community resilience to climate change: A case study of an Indigenous Fijian community". In *Women's Studies International Forum* 90, (2022).

<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.wsif.2021.102550>

<sup>48</sup> Clissold, Rachel, Ross Westoby, Karen E. McNamara. "Women as recovery enablers in the face of disasters in Vanuatu", *Geoforum*, (2019), <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.geoforum> ; Milan, Andrea, Robert Oakes and Jillian Campbell, *Tuvalu: Climate change and migration – Relationships between household vulnerability, human mobility and climate change*, Report No. 18. (Bonn: United Nations University Institute for Environment and Human Security, November, 2016), [http://collections.unu.edu/eserv/unu:5856/Online\\_No\\_18\\_Tuvalu\\_Report\\_161207\\_.pdf](http://collections.unu.edu/eserv/unu:5856/Online_No_18_Tuvalu_Report_161207_.pdf)

saltwater-adapting varieties.<sup>49</sup> The NSP does identify domestic violence as a human security threat, under “Personal Security”. However its plan to address this threat is weak, suggesting only to “address personal security challenges arising from domestic violence.”<sup>50</sup> It makes no mention of the disproportionate harm domestic violence has on women and girls, nor how this is exasperated in times of natural disaster, which set to increase or intensify due to climate change. As with the rest of the region, high-level statements are made on the Cook Islands government’s commitment to gender equality and ending violence against women,<sup>51</sup> however there is a lack of implementation and budgetary support to policies and departments that are essential for gender mainstreaming. The Gender and Development Division of the Cook Islands Ministry of Internal Affairs, who had two staff and their own office within the Ministry, was demoted to a single full-time position under a Director responsible for all social issues, including disability and youth.<sup>52</sup> This position remains unfilled. In 2023, the Cook Islands government approved an application to use an Australia non-ODA fund to provide budget support to the only women’s counselling centre in the Cook Islands, along with other civil society organisations committed to gender equality.<sup>53</sup> This has ensured their continuity in addressing gender-based violence, particularly on the main island of Rarotonga, however this is only for a limited term.

Traditional knowledge in the Pacific is increasingly being recognised as an important factor in resilience to natural disasters and climate change adaptation.<sup>54</sup> Gendered divisions of labour have also produced gendered knowledge and innovation in relation to a changing climate. For example, women in Vanuatu typically work home gardens and small crops, and have adapted their farming practices and routines to support future recovery after cyclones.<sup>55</sup> Gendered social and ecological knowledge is also an important factor in early warning and preparation for natural disasters.<sup>56</sup> Communities on the different islands of the Cook Islands hold knowledge of early warning signs for storms, cyclones, or cyclone seasons, such as behaviours of certain species of fish, cloud formations, sea bird behaviour and unseasonal fruiting of different trees.<sup>57</sup> The Cook Islands Second Joint National Action Plan 2016-2020 recognised women as frontline responders of climate change impacts. Its outputs included increasing the number of women in climate change and disaster risk management decision-making roles, mainstreaming women and other vulnerable groups in disaster management plans, and recording gendered traditional knowledge on early warning systems.<sup>58</sup> However, the policy was not budgeted and lead agencies in the climate change and disaster risk management space passed over responsibility for it, subsequently it was never renewed.

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<sup>49</sup> Cook Islands Government. *Pukapuka and Nassau Community Sustainable Development Plan 2016-2020*, (Avarua, Cook Islands: Cook Islands Government, 2016), p 5; Rongo, Teina, Celine Dyer, Mitchell Tutangata. *Rauti Para Pukapuka*, (2015).

[http://collections.unu.edu/eserv/unu:5856/Online\\_No\\_18\\_Tuvalu\\_Report\\_161207\\_.pdf](http://collections.unu.edu/eserv/unu:5856/Online_No_18_Tuvalu_Report_161207_.pdf)

<sup>50</sup> Cook Islands Government. *Cook Islands National Security Policy 2023-2026*, p 40.

<sup>51</sup> Cook Islands Government, *National Policy on Gender Equality and Women’s Empowerment and Action Plan 2019-2024*, (Government of the Cook Islands, 2019), <https://www.intaff.gov.ck/wp-content/uploads/2020/07/NPGEWE-Policy-booklet-4.pdf>

<sup>52</sup> Te Puna Vai Mārama Cook Islands Centre for Research (TPVM). *In-depth gender assessment for the Enhancing Climate Information and Knowledge Services for Resilience in Five Island Countries of the Pacific Ocean project, Cook Islands*, (Rarotonga, Cook Islands: TPVM, 2023), [https://assets-global.website-files.com/62899fab8c4f04ca82dc8347/656a45065c08b08c6164431d\\_23121\\_Gender\\_Assessment\\_Climate\\_CookIslands\\_%20Final.pdf](https://assets-global.website-files.com/62899fab8c4f04ca82dc8347/656a45065c08b08c6164431d_23121_Gender_Assessment_Climate_CookIslands_%20Final.pdf)

<sup>53</sup> “Australia’s partnership with Cook Islands”, Australian Government, accessed February 27, 2024. <https://www.dfat.gov.au/geo/cook-islands/australias-partnership-cook-islands>

<sup>54</sup> Crichton, Richard Nathan, Miguel Esteban and Motoharu Onuki. “Understanding the preferences of rural communities for adaptation to 21<sup>st</sup>-century sea-level rise: A case study from the Samoan islands”, *Climate Risk Management* 30, (2020), <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.crm.2020.100254> ; Hay, John E., *Pacific Adaptation to Climate Change: Past Approaches and Considerations for the Future*, (2011), <https://www.dcceew.gov.au/climate-change/policy/adaptation/publications/pacific-adaptation-climate-change>

<sup>55</sup> Clissold et al, “Women as recovery enablers”, 5-6.

<sup>56</sup> Asia Pacific Forum on Women, Law and Development, *Climate Change and Natural Disasters Affecting Women, Peace and Security*, (March 13, 2015), p 6, <https://apwld.org/climate-change-and-natural-disasters-affecting-women-peace-and-security/> ; Dewi, Gusti Ayu Fransiska, *Midterm Review of the Sendai Framework Thematic Study: Diverse Knowledge Systems*, (December 30, 2022), p 20, <https://sendaiframework-mtr.undrr.org/publication/thematic-study-diverse-knowledge-system>

<sup>57</sup> Carlson, Charles, *The Revival and Integration of Traditional Knowledge and Practices for Cyclones into Government of the Cook Islands Policies and Planning*, <https://openrepository.aut.ac.nz/server/api/core/bitstreams/3ed02d1c-d610-4e23-83f7-f587a10a0337/content>

<sup>58</sup> Cook Islands Government, *Are we resilient? The Cook Islands Second Joint National Action Plan 2016-2020*. (Cook Islands Government, 2016), <https://policy.asiapacificenergy.org/sites/default/files/The%20Cook%20Islands%202nd%20Joint%20National%20Action%20Plan%202016-2020.pdf>

Emergency, security and disaster management leadership in the Cook Islands is predominantly male.<sup>59</sup> Disaster risk management in the outer islands is the responsibility of Island Governments, who are assisted by the Red Cross. Only 8% of Island Government leadership is female.<sup>60</sup> On the main island of Rarotonga, emergency management is further decentralised to the village community level. 'Puna', or emergency co-ordination teams, are made up of traditional and community leaders, seconded public service workers and volunteers. Puna are described to have equal representation of women and men, and is volunteer work that is in the process of becoming formalised.<sup>61</sup> Most of the Puna chairpersons are men, while Puna Disaster Risk Management Co-ordinators (DRMCs) and secretaries are women.<sup>62</sup> If the Puna system is formalised and funded by the government, it is an opportunity for women in DRMC roles to be properly compensated for their work. As the Cook Islands is one of only two PICs considered to be high income, remuneration should be adequate. However, like other PICs, patriarchal systems and beliefs are pervasive in Cook Islands society.<sup>63</sup> It remains to be seen whether Puna leadership will have equal representation. Without this, it runs the risk of womens' and girls' particular needs in disaster recovery and relief not being met.

## Conclusion

Gender and climate security is prevalent in high-level discussions and policy frameworks of the Pacific region. The highest political body in the region has made the commitment to including women and girls in climate security and processes for peace and security in the 2050 Strategy Implementation Plan and Revitalised Pacific Leaders Gender Equality Declaration. However, the ongoing realities women face at the country level, such as high rates of domestic violence, low participation in governance and lack of political will to mainstream the WPS agenda, gender and women's human rights will continue to undermine those policies. If women at the community level, who are on the frontlines of climate change and active agents in peacebuilding, continue to live day to day without safety and security and are unable to participate in decision-making, this seriously disrupts any regional, high-level attempt to mainstream climate security and the WPS agenda. There is still much more work left for all involved in the region to ensure its women and girls, in all of their diversity, are active participants in climate adaptation and security.

As provided in the example of the Cook Islands, the government is unwilling to commit resources to implementing promises on gender equality and ending violence against women. The country's national security policy is weak, mechanisms for mainstreaming gender are dismissed and demoted, and leadership in disaster management remains male-dominated. However, if the 'Puna' system for disaster management is formalised, this will be a big step in ensuring women are supported in their role as important responders to climate impacts. Small steps such as this, as long as women are involved in the processes, are important to realising the WPS agenda and its role in climate security in the Pacific.

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<sup>59</sup> The Cook Islands Security Council is made up of Cabinet Ministers, only one of whom is female. The National Security Committee includes the Police Commissioner, the Solicitor-General, the Director of National Security, the Principal Immigration Officer and the Comptroller of Customs, only the Principal Immigration Officer is female. The National Disaster Risk Management Council consists of the Prime Minister, Secretary of Finance, Secretary of Infrastructure, Police Commissioner, Director of Emergency Management Cook Islands, Director of Island Administration, Public Service Commissioner, and the Director of the Cook Islands Meteorological Service, currently, only the Secretary of Infrastructure is female.

<sup>60</sup> "Public Sector Demographics", Cook Islands Government, last modified January 1, 2024, <https://www.psc.gov.ck/public-sector-demographics>

<sup>61</sup> Lydia Sijp, key informant interview, April 18, 2023.

<sup>62</sup> Stephano Rampling-Tou, personal communication, April 23, 2024.

<sup>63</sup> SPC. *Stocktake of the gender mainstreaming capacity of Pacific Islands governments: Cook Islands*, (SPC, 2012), p 8, <https://intaff.gov.ck/wp-content/uploads/2014/07/cook-islands-gender-stocktake.pdf>



## About the Author

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**Merita Tuari'i** is Senior Research Fellow at Te Puna Vai Mārama - Cook Islands Centre for Research (TPVM), based in Rarotonga. She has previously worked in government and non-government roles in the Cook Islands, including for the Office of the Prime Minister where she conducted gender analysis on Cabinet Paper submissions and policy development training for Climate Change Focal Points. She is currently conducting research in gender and oceans governance, and environmental protection for turtles in turtle tourism in the Cook Islands. Her research interests are gender and disaster resilience and gender and governance.

## About the Centre for Non-Traditional Security Studies

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The **S. Rajaratnam School of International Studies (RSIS)** is a think tank and professional graduate school of international affairs at the Nanyang Technological University, Singapore. An autonomous school, RSIS' mission is to be a leading research and graduate teaching institution in strategic and international affairs in the Asia Pacific. With the core functions of research, graduate education, and networking, it produces cutting-edge research on Asia Pacific Security, Multilateralism and Regionalism, Conflict Studies, Non-Traditional Security, Cybersecurity, Maritime Security, and Terrorism Studies.



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