



Strategika Group
ASIA PACIFIC
Geo-Political Risk & Security Analysis

Security and vulnerability in the Pacific Islands: the risk posed by transnational crime

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Global Transnational Crime Landscape

- UN Secretary-General's "A More Secure World: High-level Panel on Threats, Challenges and Change" (2004) listed transnational organised crime one of six key global security challenges (including continued poverty and environmental degradation, terrorism, civil war, conflict between states, proliferation of weapons of mass destruction (WMDs))
- Global value of transnational crime USD \$1 trillion per year
- SE Asia over USD \$100 billion per year and rising
- Australian and NZ data provides useful indicators
- Data not available in the Pacific
- Crystal Road is now the Crystal Highway(s)



Methamphetamine trafficking routes transiting in or destined to the PICTs as perceived by the PIFS Member States, 2012 – 2015

Source: UNODC

Transnational Organised Crime in the Pacific: Not New And Evolving Fast

- Pacific as transit point with local spill-over consequences and increasingly site for manufacturing and distribution
- Transnational crime impacts the security-development nexus
- Is the regional security architecture sufficiently robust and adaptive to meet these challenges?
- Prescient lessons from Timor-Leste

Factors Enabling a Permissive Environment in the Pacific

- Porous borders (PNG-Indonesia; Philippines-PNG; PNG-Australia; Bougainville-Solomons)
- Sophisticated smuggling networks (Drugs, people, resources, weapons)
- Protracted conflicts
- Social injustice, inequitable development, poverty
- Weak rule of law
- Lack of capacity of law enforcement and intelligence agencies
- Ad hoc and inconsistent collaboration between security agencies and institutions
- Compromised individuals and institutions

Characteristics of Pacific Islands region

- › Geographical isolation
- › Political instability
- › Poverty
- › Socioeconomic factors
- › Cultural diversity
- › Weak law enforcement capacity

Exacerbated by corruption

Facilitated by corruption

Transnational crime response

- › Drug transshipment
- › Wildlife trafficking
- › Money laundering
- › Identity crime
- › Electronic crime

Lessons from Timor-Leste

- Weakening and breakdown of traditional power structures with flow on effect to community stability and resilience
- Impact on physical and mental health particularly amongst urban youth; specific implications for young women and girls (rise in prostitution, domestic violence)
- Corruption of security sector agencies – law enforcement, customs, military
- The speed with which transnational criminal actors become entrenched in targeted states

Preliminary Findings

- The sophistication, number and tactics of transnational organised crime groups are constantly evolving.
- Transnational crime is situated at the nexus between security and development and has a direct impact on resilience and fragility.
- The lack of comprehensive data on transnational crime and its impact on states and societies in the region is impeding responses
- Law enforcement agencies and state actors alone cannot tackle transnational crime and its impact – the church, civil society organisations all have a critical role
- Do not underestimate the speed with which it could become an entrenched and potentially intractable problem in the region

QUESTIONS?

THANK YOU