

Democracy, Governance and Self-Determination in the Pacific

A roundtable with Lopeti Senituli
Diplomacy Training Program
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Nuclear Free & Independent Pacific Movement

- Nuclear Free Pacific Conference 1975 – Suva, Fiji
- Nuclear Free Pacific Conference 1978- Pohnpei, Northern Marianna's/FSM
- Nuclear Free Pacific Conference 1980 – Honolulu, Hawaii
- Nuclear Free & Independent Pacific Conference 1983 – Port Vila, Vanuatu
- NFIP Conference 1987 – Manila. Philippines
- NFIP Conference 1990 – Auckland, Aotearoa/New Zealand
- NFIP Conference 1995 – Suva, Fiji
- NFIP Conference 1999 – Arue, Te Ao Maohi/French Polynesia
- NFIP Conference 2003 – Nuku'alofa, Tonga

Nuclear Free Pacific Conference 1980

- Pivotal Decision to change name from Nuclear Free Pacific Conference to Nuclear Free and Independent Pacific Conference.
- That recognition of the right of Self-Determination of the Indigenous Peoples/First Nations Peoples of the Pacific was integral to the struggle for a Nuclear Free Pacific
- 1900s –Australia 1901, Aotearoa/New Zealand 1907
- 1960s – Samoa 1962, Cook Is 1965, Nauru 1968
- 1970s – Fiji 1970, Tonga 1970, Niue 1974, PNG 1975, East Timor 1975 (from Portugal) Solomon Islands 1978, Tuvalu 1978, Kiribati 1979,
- 1980s – Vanuatu 1980, FSM 1986, Marshall Islands 1986
- 1990s - Palau 1994
- 2000s – Timor Leste 2002 (from Indonesia)

Colonies/Non-Self-Governing Territories

- On List of UN Special Committee on Decolonisation or C24
 - American Samoa since 1946
 - French Polynesia since 2013 (was on list in 1946 but removed by France in 1947)
 - Guam since 1946
 - New Caledonia since 1986 (was on list in 1946 but removed by France in 1947)
 - Pitcairn since 1946
 - Tokelau since 1946
- Colonies that are not on any List
 - West Papua
 - Bougainville
 - Uvea mo Futuna (Wallis & Futuna)

Indigenous Peoples Struggle for Self Determination in Countries Where They are a Minority

- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islands People –Australia
- Maori in Aotearoa/ New Zealand
- Kanaka Maoli in Hawaii
- Ainu in Japan
- First Nations People in Canada
- First Nations People in America
- List is Incomplete

West Papua (1)

- Under Article XVIII(d) of the New York Agreement (1962)- the “self-determination unit” would include, ‘all adults, male and female, not foreign nationals ... who are resident at the time of the signing of the present Agreement and at the time of the act of self-determination, including those residents who departed after 1945 and who return to the territory to resume residence after the termination of Netherlands administration’.
- The Indonesian government decided unilaterally to conduct an Indonesian style consultation process called “musyawarah” through which a grand total of only 1022 councillors divided into 8 regional councils were asked to cast their vote through a show of hands.
- According to credible reports most, if not all, of the councillors were either bribed, threatened or otherwise intimidated by the Indonesian military or officials and when their votes were tallied, not unsurprisingly all 1,022 had voted that West Papua be integrated into Indonesia

West Papua (2)

- The three options stipulated under Principle VI of Resolution 1541 (XV) were not presented. The only two options that were offered to the 1022 councilors in the (so called) Act of Free Choice were:
 - “Whether they wish to remain with Indonesia?”; or
 - “Whether they wish to sever their ties with Indonesia”.
- West Papua Council of Churches wrote to the Melanesian Spearhead Group in May 2021 expressing its support for the upgrading of the membership status of the United Liberation Movement for West Papua (ULMWP) to Full Membership, saying
 - “Time after time, as Pastors, we have had to bury our people who have been shot dead by Herod's troops. Our tears have run dry. The dignity and self-worth of the people created at God's Hand have been trampled on for too long. We are likened to animals”

Bougainville (1)

- The December 2019 referendum, 97.7% of the voters in Bougainville voted for independence from Papua New Guinea over the second option, which was remaining, but with greater autonomy from PNG.
- Bougainville referendum is not binding on the PNG government.
- The Bougainville Peace Agreement (August 2001) provides:
 - in paragraph 2(5) that, ‘The outcome of the referendum will be subject to ratification (final decision-making authority) of the National Parliament’ and
 - in paragraph 314(b) that ‘The constitutional amendments and any Organic Law required to implement the agreed referendum arrangements will be introduced into the National Parliament together, and drafted to take effect at the same time.

Bougainville (2)

- The first consultation between PNG and the Autonomous Bougainville Government (ABG) was held in June 2021 almost 18 months after the referendum.
- ABG President, Ishmael Toroama tabled a timeline of steps towards achieving independence in 2025. The timeline set the end of 2022 for achieving the transfer of all powers as yet to be transferred ABG from PNG under the autonomy arrangements, and the setting up of a constituent assembly under self-government by the end of 2024.
- PNG's Prime Minister James Marape is reported to be open-minded on President Toroama's timeline, but he expressed concerns, 'that Bougainville independence could provide a precedent for other parts of PNG to secede ...'

Tonga (1)

- Letter from Secretary to Privy Council to Secretary to Cabinet
 - “I have the honour to inform you that His Majesty in Council’s Decision PC17/2024, *approved by circulation* of 2 Feb 2024 was ... pleased by and with the advice of the Privy Council to “withdraw his confidence and consent to the appointment of Hon Hu’avameiliku (Prime Minister Siaosi Sovaleni) as the Minister of His Majesty’s Armed Forces” and “to withdraw his confidence and consent to the appointment Hon Fekitamoeloa Katoa Utoikamanu as Minister for Foreign Affairs and Minister for Tourism.”
- Statement from Acting Prime Minister Samiu K Vaipulu (6 Feb)
 - the decision of the King in Council was contrary to clause 51(3)(a) of the Constitution which states that a Minister shall retain his/her position as Minister until his/her appointment is revoked by the King on the recommendation of the Prime Minister.
 - The statement went on to say, “the Prime Minister who is currently overseas, has reiterated his confidence in the Minister of Foreign Affairs and Tourism, Hon Fekitaloa Katoa ‘Utoikamanu”.
- The King’s decision is not a revocation of the appointments of the two Ministers.

Tonga (2)

- In 2018 the King revoked a Minister's appointment on the recommendation of the late Prime Minister, Samuela 'Akilisi Pohiva.
- Hon Akosita Lavulavu, who as Minister for Internal Affairs, had been jointly charged with her husband 'Etuete Lavulavu in March 2018 with forgery and obtaining credit by false pretences.
- The late Prime Minister had asked the Minister to voluntarily resign from Cabinet and await the outcome of the trial and she refused so he recommended to the King that her appointment be revoked.

Tonga (3)

- In August 2017 His Majesty dismissed an incumbent Prime Minister when he dissolved Parliament and called for new elections as he is constitutionally empowered to do, and to do without publicly disclosing the reason/s.
- In the middle of 2019, His Majesty caused the dismissal of the Secretary of Foreign Affairs, Mahe'uli'uli Tupouniua Jr, for not towing the line in relation to his appointment of the country's current Ambassador to the United Arab Emirates, Hon 'Akau'ola.
- It is possible that the 2 Ministers had not complied with the King's wishes in matters relating to Defence and Foreign Affairs.
- The ball is the King's court, and His Majesty may dissolve Parliament as he did in 2017.

MALO 'AUPITO!