

Solomon Islands Cases, 1970-2012

Last Updated: 17 June 2019

torg	gname	onset	min	max
T2327	ISATABU FREEDOM MOVEMENT (IFM)		1998	2000
T2314	GUADALCANAL REVOLUTIONARY ARMY		1999	1999
T2315	GUADALCANAL LIBERATION FRONT (GLF)		1999	2002
T9018	MALAITA EAGLES		0	0

I. ISATABU FREEDOM MOVEMENT (IFM)

Torg ID: 2327

Min. Group Date: 1998

Max. Group Date: 2000

Onset: NA

Aliases: Isatabu Freedom Movement (Ifm), Isatabu Freedom Fighters, Isatabu Freedom Movement

Part 1. Bibliography

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<https://www.globalsecurity.org/military/world/para/solomons.htm>
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- Amnesty International, "Solomon Islands: A forgotten conflict," 7 September 2000, ASA 43/005/2000, available at: <https://www.refworld.org/docid/3b83b7027.html>
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- Child Soldiers International, *Child Soldiers Global Report 2001 - Solomon Islands*, 2001, available at: <https://www.refworld.org/docid/498805cf2.html> [accessed 28 June 2019]
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Part 2. Basic Coding

Aliases: Isatambu Freedom Fighters (IFF), Guadalcanal Revolutionary Army (GRA), Isatambu Freedom Movement, Guadalcanal Liberation Army

Group Formation: 1998

Group End: 2002 (last attack), 2003 (surrender to authorities)

Part 3. Narrative

Group Formation

The Isatabu Freedom Movement (IFM) fought against the Solomon Islands government in order to keep people from the Malaita Island out of the more prosperous island of Guadalcanal (Global Security n.d.). The IFM was created in 1998, shortly after ethnic tension between the two [different islander](#) groups turned into violence over the Malaita settler colonialism on Guadalcanal (Global Security n.d.; Fraenkal 2004, 44).

When it was formed, it was known as the Guadalcanal Revolutionary Army, or GRA (Global Security n.d.). It was also called the Guadalcanal Liberation Front (Child Soldiers International 2001; Cultural Survival Quarterly 2000). It was led by Harold Keke, Joseph Sangu, and George Gray (Fraenkal 2004, 139; Australian War Memorial 2003).

The group took control of areas surrounding Honiara (the capital of the Solomon Islands) in 1999 (Fraenkal 2004, 139). During this time, they also forced Malaitans out of villages on the Weather Coast through violence and fear (Fraenkal 2004, 54; Amnesty International 2004). Reports indicate that the IFM militants injured villagers who refused to leave their homes, and in the violence that occurred in March and April 1999, 19 civilians were killed by the militants (Amnesty International 2007, 19; Amnesty International 2004). Their first attack took place in the city of Weather Coast, when two men were fatally shot by Guadalcanal Revolutionary Army militants (GTD 2018).

Geography

The group was not transnational. Its two attacks were both in the city of Weather Coast in Guadalcanal (GTD 2018). The area around Weather Coast became associated with the IFM, as this was where many commanders lived (Fraenkal 2004, 47). The group was active in rural regions around Honiara, driving out Malaitan villagers (Global Security n.d.).

Organizational Structure

The GRA was led by three men, Harold Keke, his brother Joseph Sangu, and George Gray (Fraenkal 2004, 139). Keke had previously been shot by police and arrested during a raid to secure arms (Fraenkal 2004, 44). The group was mostly comprised of the indigenous Guadalcanalese people (Global Security n.d.). In June 1999 it is estimated that the group had 2,000 members, 100 of these, child soldiers. The group obtained its resources by robbing the Yandina Police Armoury, the Gold Ridge gold mine, the

Tambea Resort (allegedly), and other places (Fraenkal 2004, 44, 50, 53). It also got funding from corruption and demanding ransom (BBC 2005; GTD 2018). The group's most famous attack was the hijacking of a Solomon Airlines plane with one hostage, in which it demanded \$200,000 (BBC 2000; GTD 2018).

External Ties

Although there was no official connection between the IFM and the local government, the Guadalcanal Provincial Council, there was some speculation the two could be connected due to the similarity of their political aims. Specifically, some thought the IFM might be construed as the "armed wing" of the Council because it espoused many of the same goals of leaders such as Ezekiel Alebua (Fraenkal 2004, 44). It also has alleged ties to the Bougainville Revolutionary Army (BRA), which fought to secede from Papua New Guinea and to create an autonomous government in Bougainville (Committee to Protect Journalists 2003).

Group Outcome

The response to the IFM by the Royal Solomon Islands Police (RSIP) and Police Field Force (PFF) resulted in the deaths of thirteen IFM members by April 2000 (Fraenkal 2004, 44; Kabutaulaka 2001). Much of the RSIP force was comprised of Malaitans (Fraenkal 2004, 49). However, the government's response to finding a solution was described as extremely lax, as they did not acknowledge that the crisis was a result of ethnic tension (The Christian Science Monitor 2000; Kabutaulaka 2001).

In June 1999, Prime Minister Bartholomew Ulufa'alu and the premiers of Guadalcanal and Malaita signed the Honiara Peace Accords, in which the government agreed to the disarmament of and eventual end to the IFM (Fraenkal 2004, 70). Then in 2000, Australia and New Zealand helped to put a ceasefire into place between the IFM and the opposing Malaita Eagle Force, which sought to help displaced Malaitans (Kabutaulaka 2001; McGovern, Choulai 2005). The Townsville Peace Agreement (TPA) was then signed by the Guadalcanal and Malaita governments, as well as the national Solomon Islands government (McGovern, Choulai 2005). The TPA called for the establishment of the Peace Monitoring Council and the International Peace Monitoring Team (made up of Australian police and civilians), both of which would oversee the process to restore peace on the island (McGovern, Choulai 2005). In addition to these, the Australian government also created the Regional Assistance Mission to Solomon Islands (RAMSI), also with the purpose of restoring peace (McGovern, Choulai 2005).

The group's last recorded attack occurred in August 2002, with the fatal shooting of the Minister of Sport and Women's Affairs, Reverend Augustine Geve (ibid). Harold Keke claimed responsibility and then surrendered in August 2003.

Notes for Iris:

-origin story: there were originally ethnic tensions between the Malaita and the Guadalcanalese/Isatabu (indigenous to the island). Main prompt is settler colonialism (interesting parallel to Bangladesh Chittagong)

-the Malaita were already in charge of the local government/police force so resorting to violence was one of the only options the group thought they had available to resolve the issues

-the national government's response was very poor. The PM was Malaita, but the capital was in Guadalcanal. The police force was also Malaita.

-the Townsville Peace Agreement was an effective framework, but it required international intervention to enforce and stop the violence

II. GUADALCANAL REVOLUTIONARY ARMY

Torg ID: 2314

Min. Group Date: 1999

Max. Group Date: 1999

Onset: NA

Aliases: Guadalcanal Liberation Army, Guadalcanal Revolutionary Army

Part 1. Bibliography

- GTD Perpetrator 20184. Global Terrorism Database. Study for Terrorism and Responses to Terrorism. Last modified July 2018.
<https://www.start.umd.edu/gtd/search/Results.aspx?perpetrator=20184>
- "Malaita Eagles Force/Isatabu Freedom Movement." Global Security. N.d.
<https://www.globalsecurity.org/military/world/para/solomons.htm>

Part 2. Basic Coding

Aliases: This is an alias for the Isatabu Freedom Movement (Global Security n.d.).

Group Formation: This is an alias for the Isatabu Freedom Movement (Global Security n.d.).

Group End: This is an alias for the Isatabu Freedom Movement (Global Security n.d.).

Part 3. Narrative

Group Formation

This is an alias for the Isatabu Freedom Movement (Global Security n.d.).

Geography

This is an alias for the Isatabu Freedom Movement (Global Security n.d.).

Organizational Structure

This is an alias for the Isatabu Freedom Movement (Global Security n.d.).

External Ties

This is an alias for the Isatabu Freedom Movement (Global Security n.d.).

Group Outcome

This is an alias for the Isatabu Freedom Movement (Global Security n.d.).

III. GUADALCANAL LIBERATION FRONT (GLF)

Torg ID: 2315

Min. Group Date: 1999

Max. Group Date: 2002

Onset: NA

Aliases: Guadalcanal Liberation Front (Glf), Guadalcanal Liberation Front

Part 1. Bibliography

- GTD Perpetrator 20185. Global Terrorism Database. Study for Terrorism and Responses to Terrorism. Last modified July 2018.
<https://www.start.umd.edu/gtd/search/Results.aspx?perpetrator=20185>
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- Child Soldiers International, *Child Soldiers Global Report 2001 - Solomon Islands*, 2001, available at: <https://www.refworld.org/docid/498805cf2.html> [accessed 28 June 2019]
- Jun, Catherine. "Unrest in the Solomons." *Cultural Survival Quarterly*, March 2000. Accessed June 28, 2019. <https://www.culturalsurvival.org/publications/cultural-survival-quarterly/unrest-solomons>

[faction or independent from IFB?]

Part 2. Basic Coding

Aliases: This should be considered an alias of IFM because Harold Keke was the leader of the group (BBC 2005; Australian War Memorial 2003), the group formed in 1999 (BBC 2005), and the group operated in the region in and around Weather Coast (BBC 2005; Australian War Memorial 2003; Child Soldiers International 2001; Cultural Survival Quarterly 2000).

Group Formation: This should be considered an alias of IFM because Harold Keke was the leader of the group (BBC 2005; Australian War Memorial 2003), the group formed in 1999 (BBC 2005), and the group operated in the region in and around Weather Coast (BBC 2005; Australian War Memorial 2003; Child Soldiers International 2001; Cultural Survival Quarterly 2000).

Group End: This should be considered an alias of IFM because Harold Keke was the leader of the group (BBC 2005; Australian War Memorial 2003), the group formed in 1999 (BBC 2005), and the group operated in the region in and around Weather Coast (BBC 2005; Australian War Memorial 2003; Child Soldiers International 2001; Cultural Survival Quarterly 2000).

Part 3. Narrative

Group Formation

This should be considered an alias of IFM because Harold Keke was the leader of the group (BBC 2005; Australian War Memorial 2003), the group formed in 1999 (BBC 2005), and the group operated in the region in and around Weather Coast (BBC 2005;

Australian War Memorial 2003; Child Soldiers International 2001; Cultural Survival Quarterly 2000).

Geography

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Organizational Structure

This should be considered an alias of IFM because Harold Keke was the leader of the group (BBC 2005; Australian War Memorial 2003), the group formed in 1999 (BBC 2005), and the group operated in the region in and around Weather Coast (BBC 2005; Australian War Memorial 2003; Child Soldiers International 2001; Cultural Survival Quarterly 2000).

External Ties

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Group Outcome

This should be considered an alias of IFM because Harold Keke was the leader of the group (BBC 2005; Australian War Memorial 2003), the group formed in 1999 (BBC 2005), and the group operated in the region in and around Weather Coast (BBC 2005; Australian War Memorial 2003; Child Soldiers International 2001; Cultural Survival Quarterly 2000).

- IV. MALAITA EAGLES
Torg ID: 9018
Min. Group Date: 0

Max. Group Date: 0

Onset: NA

Aliases: None

Part 1. Bibliography

- "Malaita Eagles Force/Isatabu Freedom Movement." Global Security. N.d.
<https://www.globalsecurity.org/military/world/para/solomons.htm>
- Amnesty International, Solomon Islands: A forgotten conflict, 7 September 2000, ASA 43/005/2000, available at: <https://www.refworld.org/docid/3b83b7027.html>
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- Kieren McGovern and Bernard Choulai. "Case Study of Solomon Islands Peace and Conflict-Related Development Analysis." Human Development Report 2005. UNDP. http://hdr.undp.org/sites/default/files/hdr2005_mcgovern_and_choulai_33.pdf
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https://www.refworld.org/cases.AUS_RRT.50a4cb5b13e0.html
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Part 2. Basic Coding

Aliases: Malaita Eagles Force, MEF, Joint Paramilitary Police-Malaita Eagle Force

Group Formation: 2000

Group End: 2000

Part 3. Narrative

Group Formation

The group was formed in 2000 in response to the IMF forcing Malaitans out of their homes (Amnesty International 2000). The Malaita Eagles wanted the government to pay Malaitans for property damage and the killings (ibid). Their first attack was a shooting conducted in April 2000 that killed one man and injured one child and an adult (ibid). The incident was not investigated by police (ibid). Later in June 2000, MEF militants and some Malaitan police officers seized parts of Honiara and took Prime Minister Bartholomew Ulufa'alu hostage, calling for his resignation (Global Security n.d.; Amnesty International 2000). A week after the attack, the Prime Minister resigned (Global Security n.d.).

Geography

The group is not transnational. The group's attacks occurred Honiara, and another town called Visale (Amnesty International 2000). They attacked hospitals and clinics to find injured Guadalcanal militants and kill them (ibid). The MEF central base was located in former government office Honiara, and they had camps on the outskirts of Honiara; one such camp was located near Tasahe Ridge (ibid).

Organizational Structure

It the MEF spokesperson and leader was Andrew Nori, a lawyer in Honiara (The Christian Science Monitor 2000; The Guardian 2000; BBC 2000). The group was comprised of Malaitans and many of them were police officers (Amnesty International 2000). The group recruited many of its members from the Police Field Force (PFF) and Rapid Response Unit (RRU), and they helped in taking the Prime Minister hostage in June 2000 (Amnesty International 2000). Its source of funding is unclear.

External Ties

The group was formed in 2000 in response to the IMF forcing Malaitans out of their homes (Amnesty International 2000). The MEF does not have any ties to organizations outside of the Solomon Islands, however; the group did recruit many of its members from the Police Field Force (PFF) and Rapid Response Unit (RRU), and they helped in taking the Prime Minister hostage in June 2000 (Amnesty International 2000).

Group Outcome

The group is no longer active (Global Security n.d.). The group stopped using violence in 2000, after the Townsville Peace Agreements, or TPA (ibid). The TPA, which both the

IFM and MEF signed, called for an end to the violence by reunifying the divided police forces and disarming the militant groups (ibid). The International Peace Monitoring Team (IPMT) which was sent through an agreement among New Zealand, Australia, and the Solomon Islands sought to help with the transition to peace (ibid). After the IPMT left, the Regional Assistance Mission to Solomon Islands (RAMSI) arrived onto the islands in 2003, with the intent of finishing disarmament (McGovern, Choulai 2005; Global Security n.d.).

Notes for Iris:

- the MEF thought the PM wasn't doing enough to put down the rebellion by the IFM. The IFM was super violent!
- the MEF opposed BOTH the IFM and the central government.
- The MEF eventually got involved in negotiations including the Peace Accords mentioned in the IFM profile.