

# Progress Study Report on the Implementation of UNSCR 2250 in Fiji

Young Fijians Partners in Peace and Security Development



# Acknowledgement

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Our sincere thanks also go to the supporting contributors and editors of this Report.

Aspire Network hopes the report will inform the Global Study on Youth, Peace and Security and will help ensure that young people's voices and priorities are adequately reflected in it. The Organisation hopes that this Report will also contribute to the better implementation of Resolution 2250 in Fiji.



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# Introduction

In December 2015, the United Nations Security Council unanimously adopted the groundbreaking and historic Resolution 2250 on Youth, Peace, and Security (YPS). The Resolution 2250, for the first time, recognized the important, constructive and positive contributions of youth in the maintenance and promotion of peace and security. It further affirms young people’s important role in the prevention and resolution of conflicts and stresses the importance of engaging young people as partners and leaders in peacebuilding. The resolution also urges the Member States to increase active and inclusive representation of young people in decision-making at all levels, as well as to institutions and mechanisms to prevent and resolve conflict and counter violent extremism.<sup>1</sup>

The Resolution 2250 further requests the UN Secretary-General “to carry out a Progress Study on the youth’s positive contribution to peace processes and conflict resolution, in order to recommend effective responses at local, national, regional and international levels”, and to present the results of the Study to Member States of the United Nations.<sup>2</sup> In August 2016, the United Nations Secretary-General Ban Ki-Moon appointed Mr. Graeme Simpson as Lead Author for the Progress Study on Youth, Peace, and Security, as well as 21 experts who will form an advisory group and work in close collaboration with him.

This Focus Group Discussion (FGD) Report is based on the finding of the two FGDs held in Fiji with over 18 participants. The primary objective of this Report is to contribute to the Global Study on Youth Peace and Security called by the Resolution 2250 and implementation of Resolution 2250 in Fiji.

The Report highlights the success, gaps, and opportunities related to the implementation of Resolution 2250 in Fiji through three pillars—partnership, prevention, and participation. These pillars are areas in which the Fijian Government, security forces, young people, civil society and religious organizations can work together to promote peace and stability. This Report also informs the policymakers and donors of the key strategic and programming considerations for supporting young people’s participation to peacebuilding in Fiji, Pacific and at the Global level.

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<sup>1</sup> Peacebuilders, U. N. (November 2016). *Guide to kick-starting UNSCR 2250*.

<sup>2</sup> Council, U. N. (2015, December 9). *www.un.org*. Retrieved September 15, 2017, from <https://www.un.org/press/en/2015/sc12149.doc.htm>

# Methodology & Limitation

An inclusive and participatory methodology was used for this Study. The main objective of the Study was to provide young people in Fiji who did not have access in participate in global-level policy-making and strategy-development process a chance to do so. This participatory approach is about reaching beyond the usual elite youth groups or individuals who have greater access.

The participatory nature of the Study reflects the value, importance and practice of consulting young people as a way to redress their marginalization. The two FGDs with young people were intended to ensure that the Progress Study fully reflects young people's perspectives. The young people during the FGDs decided themselves what was important to them and needed to be discussed. It was a very open dialogue process. Participants were informed what the purpose the FGD was and how the information will be used. All participants were assured that confidentially of the contributor and contribution will be maintained.

Similar focus group discussions with various "hard to reach" youth are being commissioned to peacebuilding organizations in 20 countries. These organizations offer unique access to young men and women who may otherwise not be included in global-level processes and studies, such as young former combatants, young forced migrants, young men and women in security institutions, young prisoners, rural and indigenous youth, out-of-school youth, etc.<sup>3</sup>

This study further discusses the implementation of Resolution 2250 in Fiji through the Fiji's National Security Strategy 2016 lens which advocates an inclusive and integrated strategic framework for safe, secure, prosperous, progressive, democratic and tolerant society in Fiji where the citizens can live in peace and harmony.

Although this Study has reached its aim, there are some unavoidable limitations. Aspire Network received no funding to carry out this study. This study was done out of the goodwill of the Organisation in order to progress the implementation of Resolution 2250 in Fiji. Due to the funding limitation, the FGDs were based in the Central Division therefore to generalize the results for larger youth population; the study should have involved more participants at different divisions and levels.

Since the Report is exclusively on Resolution 2250 and young people its analysis is confined to the stated objectives. This report recognizes the important role women play in building peace and security in Fiji. However this Report briefly touches on women, peace & security because much detailed analysis and write ups have been done by women non-governmental organizations on it using Resolution 1325 and these analyses are easily available if the readers wish to read further on it.

Despite the limitations, this Report provides great inside to young Fiji's contributions, opinions, feelings and suggestions to peace and security in Fiji and opens up discussions and opportunities for further research on youth, peace and security in Fiji.

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<sup>3</sup> Simpson, G. (2017). Progress Study on Youth, Peace and Security: Guidance Note for Focus Group Discussions with Young People.

# Background of the Review

## Organisation

Aspire Network's mission is "Developing Young People to Develop the Future Generation through Democratic Innovations". The Organisation builds on the rich lived peace and security challenges and realities faced by the young people from all diversities across the Country and the Pacific Region at a time when a generation like ours has experienced both military and civil coups as well as continues political tensions that risk the stability of democracy within our countries and including multiple intersecting other forms of violence faced by young people.

Aspire Network's work has been using the Sustainable Development Goal 16, United Nations Security Council Resolution 2250 & Fiji's National Security Strategy 2016 to inform and transform the notions of security particularly to ensure development strategies are inclusive of young people's human security priorities. Through these three lenses Aspire Network aims to ensure that the participatory process of young people is recognized in any form of engagement which deals with youth, peace and security. As well as transform the notions of security particularly to ensure development strategies are inclusive of young people's human security priorities and that young people are provided with a mirror that they can use to improve and hold governance systems and processes accountable and remind leaders of the commitments to youth human rights and peace and security at national, regional and international level.

To date Aspire Network has created meaningful youth engagement spaces for constructive dialogue between the Fijian Government, security forces and young people related to youth, peace and security. Some of our success includes successfully hosting the 1<sup>st</sup> National Young Leaders Dialogue on Policing, Criminology & National Security. Successfully lobbying for 1st Fijian Women Parliament and being a partner NGO in hosting the Gender, Violence against Women and Human Rights Workshop for young women leaders. As well as reviving the Fijian Youth Parliament" after 10 years in Fiji and hosting the 1st National Security Young Leaders Dialogue with Military, Police & Ministry of National Security, Defense & Immigration". Aspire Network also hosted the 1st Transformational Young Leaders Camp" and was the partner NGO in hosting the Engaging Youth in Child Protection & Women's Empowerment to End Violence against Women and Girls National Workshop for young people. In addition to that Aspire Network hosted the "1st Young Leaders Dialogue on Constitution Review.

Aspire Network contributed to the development of the "Fiji National Security Strategy (NSS)" through consultative process held by the Ministry of Defense, National Security & Immigration. The Organisation also contributed to the 1st Asia Pacific Youth, Peace and Security Consultation held in Thailand as well as the 7th United Nations Alliance of Civilization (UNAOC) Global Forum held in Baku, Azerbaijan. Aspire Network a member of the Commonwealth Youth Peace Ambassadors Network (CYPAN) and the United Nation's Asia Peace Youth, Peace & Security Network

# Fiji's Progress in Implementing Resolution 2250 (2015)

Since the adoption of United Nations Security Council Resolution 2250 on Youth, Peace and Security (YPS) Fiji has implemented the Resolution 2250 through the following:

## Youth inclusive Development of Fiji's National Security Strategy 2016

In February 2015 Minister for Defense, National Security, and Immigration commissioned the National Security Strategy Review Committee to review Fiji's national security needs and to formulate Fiji's National Security Strategy 2016 and beyond. During the development stages of the public consultations, Aspire Network requested a meeting with the Chairman of the Review Committee and highlighted the importance of making the review process inclusive of ordinary young people across Fiji.

The Ministry of Youth & Sports also played a vital role in mobilizing young people in Fiji during the NSS2016 review process. Through the various consultative processes held by the Review Committee around the Country, several young people were able to contribute their valuable experience and ideas in the development of Fiji's National Security Strategy 2016 (NSS2016). In 2016 the Fiji's National Security Strategy was officially launched by the Government. This document provides directions for Fiji's security sector development and institutional capability development.

## Improvement in Government, Police & Youth Organizations Working Relationship

The Ministry of Youth and Sports supports the implementation of Resolution 2250 by partnering with community youth groups working with at-risk youth. Ministry of Youth and Sports provides them with income generating and life skill training.

In 2015, Fiji hosted its first National Young Leaders Dialogue on Policing, Criminology & National Security. This was a collaborative project between Aspire Network and the Fiji Police Force aimed at improving the working relationship between the Police and young people. This Dialogue gave a unique opportunity for diverse community young people to network with senior police officers and discuss the development of future community partnership projects related to young people. The Dialogue also allowed young people to raise their concerns related to police services as well as explore innovative approaches to improving the Police services. Fiji Police Force is also working actively with youth at risk groups to prevent crime through its Community Program and Juvenile Justice Program.

Both the Ministry of Youth & Sports & the Fiji Police Force have shown support to partner in on projects with youth-led organizations. This is a positive sign to developing better programs to implement Resolution 2250 in Fiji in partnership.



# Focus Group Discussion Findings, Recommendations & Partnership Opportunities

## Exclusion Still Exists

Participants of the FGDs acknowledged that Ministry of Youth & Sports was making genuine attempts to reach out to unreached youth in Fiji. However many participants expressed concern that there was lack of face to face dialogue spaces for ordinary young people. They felt that most youth spaces in Fiji were very restrictive to elitist young people, friends of friend, who you know or prominent social groups. Participants pointed out that same young person are often seen in most youth forums. There are cases where one youth is seen attending same training two or five times.

Participants strongly felt that there is a need for the United Nation in the Pacific and Fiji Government to provide greater support to encourage meaningful youth dialogue on national, regional and international policies and laws. Deserving youth-led groups do not get consulted on National and Pacific youth action plans, policy and strategic plans. As Fiji young people, the participants felt left out at the national, regional and international level process. The only way they felt they could raise their voices was through Twitter and Facebook.

## Climate Change & Natural Disasters

The FGDs identified climate change and natural disaster as a major security challenge for Fiji's young generation in the upcoming years. Young people's survival is threatened because of it. The rising sea level is slowly claiming arable land in Fiji. The frequent strong cyclones and flooding is destroying our agricultural land, schools, businesses, homes, towns and cities, leading to a major food security and economic challenges for Fiji.

According to Fiji's National Security Strategy 2016, Fiji is vulnerable to natural disaster because the Country suffers from the effect of seasonal climate change. Fiji experienced the strongest Southern Hemisphere Tropical Cyclone Winston which killed 45 people and cost damage of estimated \$2.851 Billion. It further highlights that Fiji is situated along the path of Pacific Cyclone Belt and the earthquake zone. <sup>4</sup>

Participants point out that the frequency at which the nature disasters are impacting Fiji is becoming a major contributing factor for youth unemployment. The loss of income has a great impact on their education and family life. Creating family tensions and leading to family violence.

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<sup>4</sup> Ministry for Defence, National Security and Immigration. (2016). *Fiji's National Security Strategy*. Suva: Fiji Government.



## Indigenous Issues

The Focus Group acknowledged the efforts of the Government in improving quality of life for indigenous people, especially building of road access, access to clean drinking water and communication.

However, it should be noted that Indigenous FGD participant's youth felt threatened by the Government's proposed new reforms aimed at Indigenous people. They felt this could lead to loss of their ancestral land and indigenous identity. A very important point to note was that Indigenous FGD participants felt not consulted on these new reforms proposed by the Government, especially reforms targeted at setting village boundaries and the village by laws. During the FGDs discussions participants highlight that Ministry of iTaukei did hold consultations in Indigenous villages but mostly adults spoke, young people were mostly listeners. Several questions that were asked by villagers but the Ministry of iTaukei did not give clear responses.

Land lease was another major concern raised by Indigenous participants during the FGDs. Indigenous participants felt they were not getting a fair deal. Participants pointed out that once their land was given out for lease as agricultural land and when these leases expired the land was not returned back in the same quality. Proper management of their land under lease was a great concern. They also felt the land lease deal was not fair. The land lease tenant made more money than land owner.

Fiji's National Security Strategy 2016 highlights that unless the uneducated and unemployed youths in these areas are educated, failed politicians, nationalists and community leaders can easily influence them for their own agendas. Many of our young people are still bound by cultural norms and traditions which embed the culture of silence in their lives. This enforced silence can sometimes be the very root of frustration and that eventually manifests itself in rebelliousness and disrespect for traditional leadership and associated structures.<sup>5</sup>

## Ethnic & Religious Hate Speech

The FGD Participants agreed that there was nothing wrong with citizens celebrating pride in their ethnic, religious and cultural identities. However, the participants strongly felt that hate speech on social media was widening the social distance between the different ethnicities and religious groups that call Fiji home. They discussed how hate speech on social media was adding fuel to the existing coup culture in Fiji.

While the FGD participants pointed out that hate speech on social media could result in another major political conflict in Fiji they were strongly against any laws that would restrict their freedom of expression. There was an agreement amongst participants that instead of creating social media restrictive laws the Government should educate young people about the responsible use of social media and how to live in a multiracial, multi-religious and multi-cultural society. Participants strongly felt there was a need to create safe spaces for face to face dialogue with young people in Fiji. The lack of face to face dialogue spaces was leading young people to take their frustrations out on social media resulting in insulting and threatening posts against each other's ethnicity and religion.

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<sup>5</sup> Ministry for Defence, National Security and Immigration. (2016). *Fiji's National Security Strategy*. Suva: Fiji Government.

The FGDs noted the commendable efforts of youth-led groups that work in their communities and at National level to address ethnic and religious conflict in Fiji even though they receive barely any support.

According to Fiji's National Security Strategy 2016 race, religion and vanua remains complex domestic security problem for Fiji. It highlights whilst most focus has been on ethnic differences, there are on-going vanua tensions and rivalries within i-Taukei communities. It states culture and identity is a key element of security in Fiji. It states the breakdown of traditional governance structures and modern state government systems, religious fundamentalism and extremism can lead to radicalization. <sup>6</sup>

## Youth Crimes

FGD participants expressed concern how over the years youth crime in Fiji has evolved from youth using illegal drugs, property crimes, arson to now violent youth crimes such as murder, forcible rape, robbery, and aggravated assault. As well as young people involved in cybercrimes.

Participants highlighted that there was a need to review existing community and institutional programs that deal with crime prevention and juvenile justice in Fiji. While income generating programs are very positive for youth crime prevention more targeted programs needed to be developed and research needed to be carried to tackle violent youth crimes.

According to Fiji's National Security Strategy 2016 despite many social intervention programs in Fiji, Fiji is still dogged by high crime levels in some communities. It further stresses the importance of developing strategic partners to address organized crime networks in Fiji involving trafficking illegal drugs, human trafficking as well as money laundering and cybercrime. <sup>7</sup>

## Financing of the Resolution 2250 Agenda

FGD participants identified lack of funding as a major obstacle for their survival. There is no funding at all available for the implementation of Resolution 2250 in Fiji. In fact there is barely any funding available for youth-led groups working in the area of peace and security. There is very weak implementation of Resolution 2250 in Fiji and the Pacific region. Our National leaders and including young people have never heard of Resolution 2250.

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<sup>6</sup> Ministry for Defence, National Security and Immigration. (2016). *Fiji's National Security Strategy*. Suva: Fiji Government.

<sup>7</sup> Ministry for Defence, National Security and Immigration. (2016). *Fiji's National Security Strategy*. Suva: Fiji Government.

## External Security Challenges

FDG participants pointed out that Fiji has a strong influence in the Pacific region and it hosts the biggest regional universities for Pacific Island Countries. It is the hub of the South Pacific Islands and host to many important meeting that determine the future off all young people in the Pacific. It is also the host Country to many regional organisations.

Participants highlighted that Fiji's young people had a regional responsibility to support other Pacific Island young people. As Pacific family we cannot turn a blind eye to the problems that these Pacific Island young people are facing. Many Fiji young people are getting involved in offshore conflict because of Fiji's regional position. Furthermore, participants stressed we share the same ocean and we can overlook if another Pacific country is threaten by nuclear bombs. The radiation in the Pacific Ocean will impact our fish stock and our economy.

According to Fiji's National Security Strategy 2016, Fiji is integrally involved in regional and international efforts to promote and maintain peace and security. Fiji faces external security challenges which also have the potential to threaten national security. Fiji plays an active role in the development and implementation of regional and international security initiatives in order to secure Fiji's borders protect its sovereignty and its maritime jurisdiction and protect its nationals. As the hub of Pacific, Fiji's National Security Strategy 2016 states that Fiji external security challenges includes transnational crimes, cybercrime and security, climate change conflict, and illegal drug trafficking.

## Recommendation & Partnership Opportunities

- Ministry of Youth and Sports to carry out a mapping exercise of capable youth-led groups that offer services to young people. This will be a great way for the Ministry to support the growth of youth-led organizations and in return, the youth-led organizations help support the Ministry of Youth & Sports in achieving its organizational goals. Youth-led groups working more closely with the Ministry will help in better development of youth-focused program and projects.
- A youth-friendly, security sector governance working committee to be established within the Ministry of Defense, National Security and Immigration to oversee the implementation of Resolution 2250 in Fiji and development of a National Action Plan on Youth, Peace and Security.

- Ministry of Defense, National Security, and Immigration, Ministry of Youth & Sport together with relevant United Nations bodies to support Aspire Network in the mapping youth-led groups in different crime zones who are working on peace and security. There is a need to understanding how they are organized; working in both registered and unregistered structure and explore in what ways they influence their communities and how can the Government, non-governmental organizations, and the Fiji Police Force build their capacity and support them in addressing youth crimes in their communities.
- An annual Climate Change & National Disaster Forum for young people would be a great idea to share intergenerational knowledge and innovative ideas with the Government.
- Ministry of iTaukei to create safe spaces and develop new tools to improve participation of iTaukei youth on Indigenous issues that concern them. An environment must be created were Indigenous young people feel free and safe to ask any questions concerning their rights, land and the laws.
- Fiji Human Rights and Anti-Discrimination Commission in partnership with relevant United Nations bodies to create a framework where they can work closely with youth-led groups in Fiji to address the growing problem of hate speech in Fiji.
- Ministry of Foreign Affairs to provide annual diplomacy training for young people who represent Fiji at international platforms. Training like this will help young leaders better understand Fiji's National Security and diplomatic engagements.
- The way forward to making young people understand the dangers of hate speech is promoting responsible use of social media amongst them. Fiji Human Rights and Anti-Discrimination Commission in partnership with relevant United Nations bodies and youth-led organizations to carry out awareness training on the following amongst young people in Fiji:
  - 2013 Fiji Constitution
  - Resolution 52 of its 37th General Conference in November 2013 which focuses on Internet-related issues including access to information and knowledge, freedom of expression, privacy and ethical dimensions of the information society.
  - The International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) states that any advocacy of national, racial or religious hatred that constitutes incitement to discrimination, hostility or violence shall be prohibited by law. The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (ICERD) prohibits all incitement of racism
- United Nations to dedicate specific funds to support the efforts of youth-led groups working to improve the participation of youth to conflict prevention and peacebuilding. Support the efforts of Youth organizations involved to localizing UNSCR 2250.