

# Solomon Islands

The Solomon Islands is a constitutional monarchy as a member of the Commonwealth with a parliamentary system of government.

Constitution and government	Education and children's rights	Family, community, society, religious courts and tribunals	Freedom of expression advocacy of humanist values
<u>Preferential treatment is given to a religion or religion in general</u>	<u>There is state funding of at least some religious schools</u>	<u>Religious groups control some public or social services</u>	
	<u>State-funded schools offer religious or ideological instruction with no secular or humanist alternative, but it is optional</u>		
			<u>Insufficient information or detail not included in this report</u>

Legend

## Constitution and government

The constitution and other laws and policies protect freedom of religion or belief, freedom of expression, and freedom of assembly and association. These rights are generally respected in practice.

In general the government does not subsidize religious groups. However, religious groups operate several schools and health services.

## Education and children's rights

### Government Subsidy

The government subsidizes schools administered by the Catholic Church, the Anglican Church of Melanesia, the United Church, the South Seas Evangelical Church, and the Seventh-day Adventist Church.

### Curriculum

The public school curriculum includes an hour of daily religious instruction, the content of which is agreed upon by the five Christian churches of the Solomon Islands Christian Association. Students whose parents do not want them to attend the class are excused.

Government-subsidized church schools must align their curricula with governmental criteria. Non-Christian religious instruction may be taught in the schools for practitioners of other religions, upon

request. We have no information on the possibility of secular philosophical alternatives.

## **Family, community and society**

### **Violence against women**

While crime on the Solomon Islands is low by global standards domestic violence against women and girls is relatively high. Quinton Devlin has reported that studies show two out of every three women have experienced “physical or sexual violence from a partner” and that “the first sexual experience for more than one in three Solomons’ women was forced or coerced”.

<[radionz.co.nz/international/pacific-news/318867/ramsi-chief-in-solomons-speaks-out-on-gender-violence](http://radionz.co.nz/international/pacific-news/318867/ramsi-chief-in-solomons-speaks-out-on-gender-violence)>

This issue has also come to the attention of the US Delegation to the UNHRC who noted that not only do women “continue to face discrimination across all sectors of society” but also that “local children and foreign women are often subjected to various forms of human trafficking, including forced prostitution and domestic servitude”. At the UPR 24th Session the US Delegation has recommended that Solomon Islands; “criminalize all forms of human trafficking”, “encourage and support women’s active involvement in economic and political life” and “enhance the protection of children from abuse, including prostitution, child pornography, and forced marriages”

<[humanrights.gov/dyn/2016/01/upr-24th-session—intervention-for-solomon-islands/](http://humanrights.gov/dyn/2016/01/upr-24th-session—intervention-for-solomon-islands/)>

<[geneva.usmission.gov/2016/01/25/upr-solomon-islands-2/](http://geneva.usmission.gov/2016/01/25/upr-solomon-islands-2/)>

### **Church attack**

In August 2015 a Seventh-day Adventist Church was burnt down on Anuta Island and the congregation there was asked to leave the island by the end of the month. There was no reported threat of violence and this doesn’t appear to be indicative of tensions throughout the country, it does however highlight the precedence given by the locals to the hierarchy of government. The church was built with permission from the government of Solomon Islands but not with permission from Anuta Island. Putanakupenu Arikifaka from the island is reported to have said that “the island’s system of governance was higher than the government of the Solomon Island”. While this may be an isolated incident it seems to somewhat undermine the protections offered by the constitution.

<[adventistreview.org/church-news/story3247-pacific-islanders-destroy-church-and-tell-adventists-to-leave](http://adventistreview.org/church-news/story3247-pacific-islanders-destroy-church-and-tell-adventists-to-leave)>