



# **Election FAQs: Solomon Islands**

*Joint Elections*

*April 17, 2024*

Asia-Pacific

International Foundation for Electoral Systems

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## Election Snapshot

- Election Day: April 17, 2024.
- Registered voters: 420,185 (Approximately 51 percent men and 49 percent women).
- Polling stations: Approximately 1,200.
- Seats: 50 seats in Parliament, 131 in seven provincial assemblies, and 12 on the Honiara City Council.<sup>1</sup>
- Candidates:
  - Parliament: 334, including 20 women.
  - Provincial assemblies and Honiara City Council: 912, including 45 women.
- Campaign expenditure and donation limits:
  - Parliament: 500,000 Solomon Islands dollars (SBD), or approximately \$58,000 (USD) per candidate.
  - Provincial assemblies and Honiara City Council: 50,000 SBD, or approximately \$5,800 per candidate.
  - Candidates may not accept donations from people who are not citizens of Solomon Islands or from companies with at least one shareholder who is not a citizen.
- Domestic and international observers: Domestic and international observers are permitted if they are accredited by the Solomon Islands Electoral Office (SIEO). The SIEO accredited at least 196 domestic and international observers.
- The “Joint Elections” will be Solomon Islands’ first nationwide synchronized elections for Parliament, provincial assemblies, and the Honiara City Council. The campaign period began on February 21 and will end on April 15. A one-day campaign blackout period will take place on April 16, the day before Election Day.

## When is Election Day?

On April 17, 2024, Solomon Islands will hold the country’s first nationwide Joint Elections for 50 seats in Parliament, 131 seats in seven provincial assemblies, and 12 seats on the Honiara City Council. Up to 420,185 registered voters will cast their ballots at approximately 1,200 polling stations throughout the country. The Solomon Islands Electoral Commission is aiming for a maximum of 600 voters per polling station.<sup>2</sup> Polls will be open from 7 a.m. to 4 p.m.<sup>3</sup>

## Why are these elections important?

The 2024 Joint Elections will be the first in which the country synchronizes the National General Election for Parliament with elections for provincial assemblies and the Honiara City Council. A Constitutional amendment delayed the election by several months and deferred the dissolution of Parliament until December 31, 2023. The government stated that a primary reason for the delay was to avoid coinciding with the Pacific Games in Honiara in November and December 2023.

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<sup>1</sup> Provincial Assembly elections for 42 seats in Choiseul and Western will not be synchronized in 2024, as they were last held in December 2022.

<sup>2</sup> [Final Voter List is Set for Public Viewing](#). (2024, February 6). Solomon Islands Government Portal.

<sup>3</sup> [Electoral \(Amendment\) Act 2023](#).

## Who are citizens voting for on Election Day?

Each voter may vote for a member of Parliament from his or her single-seat constituency and a candidate from his or her ward for a seat on the Provincial Assembly or Honiara City Council. Each seat in Parliament represents one of 50 single-seat constituencies. Similarly, each seat in the Provincial Assembly and on the Honiara City Council represents one ward. Each Provincial Assembly varies from 10 to 33 seats. The Honiara City Council has 12 seats.

Choiseul Province and Western Province will not hold Provincial Assembly elections this year, because they were last held in December 2022. An amendment to the Provincial Government Act mandates that these provinces will hold their next Provincial Assembly elections in 2028.<sup>4</sup> However, the two provinces will hold elections for Parliament as part of the 2024 Joint Elections.

On March 19, 2024, the Solomon Islands Electoral Commission announced the death of a candidate for the Duidui, South Guadalcanal, provincial ward. In accordance with electoral regulations, a new election date for that ward has been set for June 12, with a shortened nomination period from April 24 to April 30.

The 334 candidates for the Parliament election include 20 women (6 percent), and the 912 candidates registered for the Provincial Assembly and Honiara City Council elections include 45 women (5 percent).

## What is the electoral system?

Solomon Islands has a parliamentary system of government under a constitutional monarchy. The unicameral Parliament comprises 50 members from single-seat constituencies who are elected to four-year terms. Parliament elects a prime minister as the head of government. The British monarch is the head of state; he or she appoints a governor-general to a term of up to five years on the advice of Parliament.

Provincial governments were envisioned in the Solomon Islands' 1978 Constitution but did not come into effect until the Provincial Government Act of 1997. Provincial assemblies and the Honiara City Council are composed of one member from each of their respective wards; each member is elected to a four-year term.<sup>5</sup>

Solomon Islands uses the first-past-the-post electoral system, meaning that a candidate needs only a plurality of votes to win a seat.

## What is the legal framework for conducting the elections?

The conduct of elections is stipulated by the Solomon Islands Constitution and defined in the Electoral Act, Provincial Government Act, Honiara City Act, and Provincial Assemblies and Honiara City Council Act.

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<sup>4</sup> [Provincial Government \(Amendment\) Act 2023.](#)

<sup>5</sup> [Provincial Government Bill 1997.](#)

The Joint Elections were initiated through amendments to the Constitution and relevant laws and the introduction of the Provincial Assemblies and Honiara City Council Electoral Act of 2023. The Joint Elections are also conducted under Provincial Assemblies and Honiara City Council Election Regulations enacted in 2024.

General elections for Parliament must be held within four months of the dissolution of the previous Parliament. The governor-general must issue a proclamation to hold elections in the Solomon Islands Gazette, and the election must be conducted no earlier than 56 days thereafter. The Constitution provides that the dissolution of Parliament must occur no more than four years after its first sitting.<sup>6</sup> On September 8, 2022, an amendment to the Constitution temporarily suspended this provision to extend the term of Parliament through December 31, 2023. After Parliament was dissolved, the Constitutional provision was restored.

Elections for Honiara City Council and the seven provincial assemblies participating in the 2024 Joint Elections must be held on a date fixed by their respective ministers acting on the advice of the Solomon Islands Electoral Commission, but no later than April 30, 2024. The dates must be published in the Solomon Islands Gazette.

The term of office for members of the provincial assemblies and the Honiara City Council is four years from the date of the first sitting of Parliament, unless those bodies are dissolved earlier.

## **Who is eligible to run as a candidate?**

Qualifications to run for and serve in Parliament, provincial assemblies, and the Honiara City Council include:

- Solomon Islands citizenship;
- Attaining at least 21 years of age; and
- Registration as an elector according to the requirements of the office for which an individual is running.

Some restrictions that bar candidacy include:

- Acknowledging allegiance, obedience or adherence to a foreign power or state;
- Contesting another seat for an election held at the same time;
- Certification as of “unsound mind” under any law in Solomon Islands;
- Being under a sentence of death imposed by any court in any part of the world, or a sentence exceeding a term of six months; and
- Disqualification under the laws applicable to the type of election being contested.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> [Solomon Islands 1978 \(rev. 2018\) Constitution; Electoral Act 2018.](#)

<sup>7</sup> Candidate eligibility and disqualification criteria are set out in the Constitution and relevant election laws.

## **Are there reserved seats for women? What is the gender balance within the candidate list?**

No seats are reserved for women. Twenty women have registered to contest the upcoming parliamentary elections. Four women served in the previous Parliament—a historic high in Solomon Islands. Two of those women declined to re-compete for their seats, and their husbands are replacing them as candidates. Forty-five women registered to contest Provincial Assembly and Honiara City Council elections. Since independence in 1978, only six women have won seats in Parliament, and 15 women have won seats in provincial assemblies.<sup>8</sup>

The Ministry of Women, Youth, Children, and Family Affairs committed to table legislation in the next session of Parliament that would establish “temporary special measures” to guarantee seats for women in provincial assemblies.<sup>9</sup>

## **What are the campaign expenditure and donation limits?**

The Electoral Act limits electoral campaign spending by candidates for Parliament to no more than 500,000 SBD (approximately \$58,000 USD). Provincial Assembly and Honiara City Council regulations limit electoral campaign spending by candidates running for those seats to 50,000 SBD (approximately \$5,800). Candidates may not accept donations from people who are not citizens of Solomon Islands or from companies with at least one shareholder who is not a citizen.<sup>10</sup>

No more than 90 days after the publication of results, each candidate must submit a statement of accounts to the Solomon Islands Electoral Commission listing all campaign-related expenses and funding sources.<sup>11</sup>

## **What is the election management body? What are its powers?**

The Solomon Islands Electoral Commission (SIEC) is responsible for administering elections. The Constitution and the Electoral Act empower the SIEC to:<sup>12</sup>

- Promote awareness of the Electoral Act;
- Conduct research related to the exercise of the SIEC’s powers;
- Supervise the registration of electors and the conduct of elections; and
- “Any other functions or powers specified in [the Electoral Act] or any other written law.”

## **What is the election management body doing to strengthen its technology and procedures to resist vulnerabilities?**

The core electoral data management systems of the Solomon Islands Electoral Commission (SIEC) are segregated from external networks to protect them from external vulnerability.

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<sup>8</sup> IPU Parline. (n.d.). [Global data on national parliaments, Solomon Islands, National Parliament](#).

<sup>9</sup> RNZ. (2024, February 13). [“Proposal to guarantee additional seats for Solomon Islands women in politics.”](#)

<sup>10</sup> [Electoral Act 2018](#).

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*

## Who can vote in these elections?

Individuals can register to vote in elections if they are citizens of Solomon Islands who are at least 18 years of age.<sup>13</sup>

Voters may register to vote in only one constituency and ward where they reside. Among the factors that may prevent individuals from voting are:

- Serving certain criminal sentences;
- Being “adjudged to be of unsound mind”; and
- Being otherwise disqualified from voting under relevant elections laws.

A qualified voter may cast ballots for his or her electoral constituency in Parliament and ward in the Provincial Assembly or Honiara City Council.

## How many registered voters are there?

There are 420,185 registered voters. This is 60,493 more than in the 2019 National General Election. Among registered voters, approximately 51 percent are men and 49 percent are women.

## What provisions are in place that support the equal rights of women, persons with disabilities, and other marginalized groups?

The Electoral Act states that appropriate arrangements must be made “for electors with disabilities or other special needs to cast their votes, including by ensuring polling stations and polling booths are accessible.”<sup>14</sup>

In March 2023, the Solomon Islands Electoral Commission (SIEC) published its Gender Equality and Social Inclusion policy to demonstrate its commitment to improve the social inclusion of marginalized people in elections.<sup>15</sup> In the same month, SIEC staff participated in a disability rights training hosted by People with Disabilities Solomon Islands (PWDSI) and IFES. IFES also supported PWDSI to assess polling station accessibility. PWDSI submitted its findings and recommendations to the SIEC later in 2023.

## Is out-of-country voting allowed?

Out-of-country voting is not permitted for the Joint Elections. Voters must cast ballots in their designated constituencies and wards.<sup>16</sup>

## Who can observe during Election Day? How can they get accreditation?

Solomon Islands allows domestic and international election observers. Observers must apply to the Solomon Islands Electoral Office (SIEO) as groups or organizations; individual applications

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<sup>13</sup> [Solomon Islands 1978 \(rev. 2018\) Constitution](#), Section 55.

<sup>14</sup> [Electoral Act 2018](#).

<sup>15</sup> Solomon Islands Electoral Commission. (2022). [Gender Equality and Social Inclusion \(GESI\) Policy](#).

<sup>16</sup> RNZ. (2024, January 30). [“Solomon Islands Poll Date Set.”](#)

are not accepted. Once the SIEO accepts applications, it will accredit observers.<sup>17</sup> The SIEO extended the application deadline for the 2024 Joint Elections to March 31<sup>18</sup> and accredited at least 196 domestic and international observers.<sup>19</sup>

## Who is managing security on Election Day?

On March 18, 2024, the Solomon Islands Electoral Commission signed a memorandum of understanding with the Royal Solomon Island Police Force (RSIPF). Under the memorandum, the RSIPF will provide for the security of ballot boxes, electoral officials, and election operations.<sup>20</sup> The RSIPF is implementing public order management training across the country with support from the Australian Federal Police (AFP) under the RSIPF-AFP Policing Partnership Program.<sup>21</sup> The National Police College of the United Kingdom provided special training to the RSIPF in preparation for the Joint Elections.<sup>22</sup>

## Where are vote counting and tabulation held?

The Electoral Act and the Provincial Assembly and Honiara City Council Election regulations require the Solomon Islands Electoral Commission to fix a place, date, and time for the counting of votes for each constituency or ward.<sup>23</sup> Counting for Parliament, Provincial Assembly, and Honiara City Council elections will be conducted at counting centers co-located in provincial capitals.

## When will official results be announced?

In constituencies or wards where only one candidate stands for election, the returning officer must declare that candidate the winner on Election Day and notify the Solomon Islands Electoral Commission (SIEC) in writing. In each contested constituency and ward, returning officers must announce the winner once counting is complete and then notify the SIEC in writing. The SIEC must forward a copy of each written notice to the governor-general and the clerk of Parliament and publish the notice in the Solomon Islands Gazette.<sup>24</sup>

## How will post-election disputes be adjudicated?

Election petitions to dispute a result must be filed within 30 days from the time the result is published in the Solomon Islands Gazette. The High Court will hear election petitions and may order the returning officer of the relevant constituency or ward to produce invalid, used, or counted ballots along with any tendered ballot papers and the tendered vote list.

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<sup>17</sup> [Solomon Islands Electoral Commission Facebook page](#).

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid*.

<sup>19</sup> Sunday Isles. (2024, April 2). "[More Than Hundred Observers to Oversee Elections](#)."

<sup>20</sup> Solomon Islands Government. (2024, March 19). [Electoral Commission Signs MOU with RSIPF](#).

<sup>21</sup> Kekea, G. (2024, March 5). "[Political Parties Unveil Manifestos as Election Fever Grips Solomon Islands](#)." *Tavuli News*.

<sup>22</sup> *Solomon Times Online*. (2024, March 21). "[Police Officers Compete Training Ahead of Elections](#)." [SolomonTimes.com](#).

<sup>23</sup> [Electoral Act 2018](#); Provincial Assemblies and Honiara City Council Election Regulations.

<sup>24</sup> [Electoral Act 2018](#).



The High Court may declare the election of a candidate void for some of the following reasons:<sup>25</sup>

- The court finds the candidate was not qualified at the time of the election;
- The court finds a corrupt or illegal practice was committed in connection with the candidate or the candidate's agent.

The High Court may dismiss petitions that it judges frivolous, or if there are insufficient grounds to warrant a hearing. The High Court has 12 months from the time of filing to decide a petition, and its decision is final. The High Court must give a certificate of its decision to the Solomon Islands Electoral Commission, governor-general, and speaker of Parliament.<sup>26</sup>

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<sup>25</sup> [Electoral Act 2018](#); Provincial Assemblies and Honiara City Council Election Regulations.

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*

## Resources

- [Electoral Act 2018](#)
- [Electoral \(Amendment\) Act 2023](#)
- [Honiara City \(Amendment\) Act 2023](#)
- [Provincial Assemblies and Honiara City Council Act 2023](#)
- [Provincial Government Act 1997](#)
- [Provincial Government \(Amendment\) Act 2023](#)
- [Solomon Islands Election Commission Facebook](#)
- [Solomon Islands Constitution](#)

## About IFES in the Pacific Islands

Since 2001, IFES has been a committed stakeholder, providing partners in the region with global expertise and knowledge on international best practices focused on good governance. Across the Pacific region, including in Solomon Islands, IFES works with election management bodies, including the Solomon Islands Election Commission and local civil society organizations (CSOs) to strengthen electoral capacity and ensure elections are more inclusive for all citizens.

The Pacific Islands encompasses a diverse political and electoral landscape where each country faces unique challenges and opportunities. To address these issues, IFES partners with election management bodies to strengthen electoral integrity, planning and operations and to promote best practices for the inclusive participation of marginalized people. IFES partners with local CSOs to help them increase political participation; promote the inclusion of women, youth, and persons with disabilities; raise voter awareness; and combat mis- and disinformation. In its region-wide efforts to make lasting improvements to democratic processes, IFES provides technical expertise focused on good governance and anti-corruption. Current IFES programming covers 12 Pacific Islands countries: the Federated States of Micronesia, Fiji, Kiribati, Nauru, Palau, Papua New Guinea, the Republic of the Marshall Islands, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tonga, Tuvalu, and Vanuatu.

## Disclosure

These FAQs reflect decisions made by the Solomon Islands Electoral Commission as of April 9, 2024, to the best of our knowledge. This document does not represent any International Foundation for Electoral Systems policy or technical recommendations.

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