

Profiles

Bougainvillean political, administrative, and armed formations

Pre-conflict political formations

Hahalis Welfare Society

Established in 1960, the Hahalis Welfare Society was branded by the Australian administration and the local Catholic Church as a 'cargo cult'. When in 1956, the Australian Administration established Local Government Councils for Buka and introduced taxes to support it, the young leaders of the Hahalis Welfare Society rejected the Councils and the tax. The Society established a work collective supported by cash-cropping and, more notoriously, 'baby gardens', where young women were collectively encouraged to help build the Society's population. When the Administration failed to persuade society members to pay the tax, they sent in a detachment of police who were forced to retreat. Order was restored after 400 more police were flown in and the same number of protesters arrested. In the longer term these tensions with the Australian Administrators diminished and the Society continued to play an active role in Bougainville's politics. Their ideas began to resonate on Bougainville and a number of similar groups continued to emerge, perhaps the most significant being *Me'ekamui Onoring Pontoku* (often called the Fifty Toea Movement) led by Damien Dameng in Central Bougainville, which was to become an important group in the conflict from 1988. These emerging groups and societies are considered to be the earliest expressions of a nascent Bougainvillean nationalism and the direct precursors to later, more militant formations.

The Mungkas Association

Mungkas is the Telei word meaning 'black' or 'blackskin'. Also the name of the union-like grouping formed among BCL's Bougainvillean employees, the Association was formed in 1967 by Bougainvillean students at the National University in Port Moresby – the first Bougainvilleans to achieve a tertiary education. The association became an articulate voice for Bougainvillean separatism, both politically and culturally. These students later proved to be a virtual 'who's who' of Bougainvillean politics.

Napidakoe Navitu

Napidakoe is an anagram of the names of ethnic groups in the Kieta sub-district and Navitu means 'united people' or 'grouping' in the Nasioi language. The *Napidakoe Navitu* group developed in central Bougainville in April 1969 out of conflicts over the forced acquisition of land by the Australian Administration for mining. The organisation's initial objectives were focused on halting the emerging land problem around the mining area. Over time, the aims of the organisation became more radical and pan-Bougainvillean, emphasising traditional

BRA soldier stands over a toxic copper sulphate waterfall in Panguna mine

Source: Alex Smalles

culture and customs of Bougainville and advocating greater self-determination, including independence from Papua New Guinea. Estimates on their membership vary from 4-8,000, but the movement enjoyed pan-Bougainville support, with a membership that incorporated a wide range of language groups and generations. The group's leaders planned for the movement to shift beyond interest group advocacy and into a political movement that could act as a spring-board for secession. In 1970 they conducted an unofficial referendum on independence via their publication – *Bougainville News*. By the early '70s the group's secessionist demands were replaced by 'lesser' autonomist objectives, a process of change that may have reflected its integration into the wider autonomy movement.

Panguna Landowners Association (PLA) and the New Panguna Landowners Association (New PLA)

Established in 1979, the PLA's membership extended to all local landowners within Bougainville Copper Limited's (BCL) lease areas in central Bougainville. It was intended to act as both a forum and a mouthpiece for the landowners during negotiations with BCL. When BCL was slow to respond to their concerns, several members of the PLA looted Panguna supermarket in 1980. This direct action led to agreement on a coherent compensation programme, including a trust fund controlled by the PLA Board of Directors into which payments were made of portions of some forms of compensation, averaging one million kina a year and rising to two million in 1989 when the agreement was due for revision.

From the mid-1980s, divisions developed between the PLA leadership and its younger membership. Older Nasioi leaders dominating the PLA were perceived to be benefiting unfairly from existing financial arrangements with BCL and failing to address the damaging environmental, economic and social consequences of the mine. These generational divergences eventually caused a younger group to break away and the New PLA was formed on 21 August 1987. Francis Ona, an employee with BCL, was appointed Secretary and his cousin Perpetua Serero (who died two years later) as Chair. Ona had received limited schooling but trained as a professional surveyor. He was employed by BCL as a pit surveyor for ten years before transferring to become a haul-truck operator. The New PLA had significant sympathy from the leadership of Bougainville's provincial government, including Joseph Kabui (Premier of the Bougainville provincial government), but BCL chose to continue dealing with the PLA.

In early 1988, the New PLA presented an ultimatum to BCL demanding much higher levels of compensation, profit-sharing and consultations. BCL's refusal to negotiate their demands led the New PLA to set up roadblocks across mine access roads in May 1988. Their



continued campaign led the national government to commission the New Zealand firm Applied Geology Associates to carry out a study of the impacts of the mine. In October 1988, Ona and members of the New PLA allegedly kidnapped Ona's Uncle and PLA Director, Mathew Kove, demanding the abolition of the PLA and the re-negotiation of the Bougainville Mining Agreement.

**Bougainville militant groupings
Bougainville Revolutionary Army (BRA)**

The public meeting over the Applied Geology Associates report appears to have been a singular catalyst for individuals who were later to form the BRA. Ona declared that the New PLA had decided to close down the mine to protect Bougainvillian lives and welfare. Over the next week, young Bougainvillian men conducted raids and stole explosives, using them to topple a power line pylon and eventually forcing the temporary closure of the mine. A core group of 'militants' soon drew support from members of Damien Dameng's *Me'ekamui Onoring Pontoku* (Fifty Toea Movement) and various local 'raskols' (criminal groups). Dameng's movement, which disavowed all forms of government, provided sanctuary for Ona and his supporters. Briefly modelling themselves on 'Rambo' from the popular Sylvester Stallone films, the

escalation into a pan-Bougainvillean front was at least in part precipitated by the abusive behaviour of the 'riot squads'.

Violence escalated in January 1989 with further attacks on BCL property. The militants became known as the Bougainville Revolutionary Army (BRA). Several Bougainvilleans left the PNGDF and joined them, particularly Sam Kauona (a PNGDF trained munitions expert) who became its commander.

The BRA's populist ideology promoted independence from exploitative PNG/outside interference; a form of ethno-nationalism with virulent anti-foreigner or anti-'redskin' sentiment, and the notion of a 'traditional idyllic egalitarian society' or, '*gutpela sindaun bilong ol man*' ('a decent way of life for all'). This emphasis on 'traditional' culture expressed itself in a strong interest in supporting local chiefs, in conjunction with an opposition to the wealthy and educated.

Under the joint leadership of Francis Ona and Sam Kauna, the BRA became an effective paramilitary organisation. The structure of the BRA was loosely based on regional, company and unit commands, with each unit comprising an average of between 10 – 12 men. Women did not fight in the BRA, but many supported its activities. There were 14 BRA companies, organised on a local geographical basis. Regional commands were organised into southern, central, northern and coastal areas. In practice, the command and control structure was largely rhetorical. The small autonomous 'unit commands' might cooperate for particular purposes, but there was often tension and even open conflict over localised issues between units. The BRA leadership had only tenuous control over some rogue groups and almost no control over armed criminal gangs who sometimes called themselves 'BRA'. This contributed to anarchy in some areas after the March 1990 withdrawal of PNGDF and perpetration of serious human rights abuses by some BRA elements.

It is estimated that by 1997 the BRA numbered over 2,000 men, most being home guards and only a minority engaging in active combat. They were armed with 300 to 500 modern automatic weapons (mainly captured from the security forces) and perhaps two to three thousand reconditioned WWII and homemade weapons.

Throughout the 1990s the BRA leadership was involved in negotiations to secure a stable ceasefire. The late 1990s witnessed a power-shift within the BRA from militants such as Ona to moderates like Joseph Kabui, who was supported by Kauona; this new leadership built widespread support within the BRA. A self-proclaimed group of BRA 'hard-liners' of about six leaders and their supporters, mainly from central and southern

Bougainville, supported the process while remaining very sceptical about the potential for an equitable negotiated settlement. During negotiations they used the threat of Francis Ona to press their case, despite having previously accepted the *Lincoln Agreement*, though with grave reservations. Since the signing of the *Ceasefire Agreement* (1998), and the August 2001 *Peace Agreement*, members of the BRA have taken part in provincial governance.

Bougainville Interim Government (BIG)

Following the withdrawal of the PNGDF and provincial authorities in March 1990, the Bougainville Interim Government (BIG) was established in April, claiming to be the legitimate civil authority on the island. Francis Ona was appointed President and Joseph Kabui, who since mid-1987 had been Premier of the North Solomons Provincial Government, Chairman and Vice-President. Kabui's appointment was opposed by some BRA leaders, – who distrusted anyone with connections to the previous government; this became a damaging fault-line which prevailed well into the peace process beginning in mid-1997. BIG claimed broad popular support throughout the island, bringing together many who had not been active supporters of the BRA including former provincial government members, heads of the three main churches in Bougainville, traditional chiefs, women and youth. On 17 May 1990, BIG announced a unilateral declaration of Bougainville independence from PNG. The BIG established a limited form of administration and encouraged the development of a system of councils of chiefs to handle local governance.

As the PNGDF returned to various parts of Buka and Bougainville, beginning with Buka in September 1990, they did so with the support of local chiefs and BRA elements, and the areas of BIG influence were significantly reduced.

The BIG also involved a small group of prominent Bougainvillean activists based in Solomon Islands and Australia. Acting both autonomously and as a political wing, BIG sought to secure the BRA and BIG objectives through political means. Through its public office in the Solomons, it prioritised raising the international profile of the conflict. As BIG members developed their political skills, they were to play key intermediary roles with the international community. They were involved in every peace attempt that followed and helped to lay the foundations leading to the Lincoln ceasefire and the final agreement.

Me'ekamui Defence Force (MDF)

In the first half of 1998, differences within the BRA over tactics and continued engagement in the negotiations resulted in the formation of a separate paramilitary force called the Me'ekamui Defence Force (MDF), led by Francis Ona. Suspecting that the BIG and BRA leadership in the

peace process was diluting the BRA's independence objectives, Ona again declared Bougainville the Republic of *Me'ekamui* (*Me'ekamui* is Nasioi word for 'holy land') with himself as President. With significant support in central Bougainville and some elsewhere, Ona claimed that the formation of the MDF had the mandate of more than 700 chiefs and supporters.

If MDF had the capacity to wreck the negotiations process, they chose not to do so. Instead, since late 2000, contact between senior MDF and BRA personnel has increased, drawing the MDF into the peace negotiations including the Weapons Disposal talks. The decision of Damien Dameng to participate in the negotiations also brought in a number of MDF members, raising the possibility of a consolidation of the Bougainville factions. Since mid-2001 there has been a partial re-integration of MDF members into the peace process, although Francis Ona remains outside.

Bougainville Resistance Forces (BRF) / 'The Resistance'

Described by its chairman, Hilary Masiria, as an 'authorised unauthorised security force' the 'Buka Liberation Front' (BLF) was created as a resistance force in response to abuses and local conflicts within the BRA on Buka island in 1990. From September 1990, the PNGDF returned first to Buka and, during 1991 to 1993, to other parts of Bougainville. The BLF along with BRA elements formed the Bougainville Resistance Forces (BRF) with the support of the PNGDF. Sam Akoitai became the group's first Chairman, being replaced by Hilary Masiria when he entered PNG Parliament in 1997.

Cooperation between the PNGDF and Resistance Forces took the form of intelligence-sharing and logistical and military cooperation. Like the BRA, the BRF were organised on a local basis, comprising eight separate regional commands, each containing a number of units. The BRF became a substantial player in the Bougainville crisis, justifying a significant voice within the peace process. Their ideology was characterised by a strong commitment to Bougainville remaining a part of PNG. At their height, the BRF numbered 1,500. Armed by the PNGDF, most were 'home guards' and only a minority were involved in patrolling with the PNGDF.

Bougainville provincial governance

In July 1974, the first **Bougainville Interim Provincial Government (BIPG)** was formed as a result of negotiations between the Bougainville Special Political Committee, the Constitutional Planning Committee and the PNG government. Their primary issues of concern were the level of political autonomy for the province and the Panguna mine revenue. Negotiations with the national government collapsed in May 1975 and the BIPG issued a Unilateral Declaration of Independence of the Republic of North Solomons on 1 September, ahead of

Papua New Guinea's scheduled independence on 16 September. The national government then suspended the BIPG in October and withheld grant payments.

Negotiations between Bougainvilleans and Prime Minister Somare's government began in February 1976 and resulted in the Bougainvillean authorities agreeing to accept PNG sovereignty. On 7 August 1976 the *Bougainville Agreement* was signed, formalising the 'special relationship' between the province and the national government. The primary concern of the North Solomons delegation was to ensure that Bougainville possessed the powers and capacity (especially revenue) to steer an independent economic policy. **The North Solomons Provincial Government (NSPG)** was installed later in 1976.

The NSPG had a significant impact on leadership and authority structures in Bougainville, abolishing the Council of Chiefs system and replacing it with fully elected community governments. However, attempts to reign in growing anti-central government sentiment across Bougainville failed. When PNG forces evacuated in March 1990, the BRA took power and Francis Ona established the Bougainville Interim Government (BIG). The NSPG ceased to operate and was formally suspended by the national government in August 1990. From mid-1990, a provincial administration in exile was established in the neighbouring province of Rabaul under an Administrator representing the national government, and provincial administrative services were gradually re-established in Buka and Bougainville as the PNGDF returned. From 1991, indirectly elected 'interim legal authorities' were established in areas of Buka and Bougainville under PNG 'control'.

Following the signing of the *Mirigini Charter* in November 1994, the **Bougainville Transitional Government (BTG)** was formally established on 10 April 1995 under the revised Bougainville Constitution and to replace the NSPG. It emerged with considerable community support in some areas as well as backing from the Interim Legal Authorities, the BRF and the Provincial Council of Women despite opposition from the BIG. Theodore Miriung was elected Premier and worked to establish a Council of Elders system, which operated at village level.

In contrast to the BRA/BIG, the BTG pursued a political goal of securing 'highest possible autonomy' for Bougainville, and negotiated with Prime Minister Chan concerning that and related issues from mid-1995 to mid-1996. It produced a *Peace Plan* in February 1996. On 12 October 1996, Premier Theodore Miriung was assassinated by PNG Defence and Resistance forces. Following his murder, the BTG remained involved in the negotiations and continued to contribute to pan-Bougainvillean dialogue until its dissolution in January 1999. Along with the other main Bougainvillean factions,

it was a signatory to the *Lincoln Agreement* of 1998, which envisaged the establishment of an elected **Bougainville Reconciliation Government (BRG)** by the end of 1998. By late 1998 it was generally agreed that the BRG would be set up under amendments to the constitutional law under which the BTG had been operating. However in late 1998 matters were complicated by the failure in the national Parliament of proposed constitutional legislation to get past its second reading. This opened the way for the establishment of a provincial government for Bougainville of the same status as those in all other 18 provinces in Papua New Guinea, with John Momis as Governor, under a new *Organic Law on Provincial Government* and Local-level Governments, which came into effect in Bougainville from 1 January 1999. This was opposed by BIG, BTG and BRA, and in order to avert confrontation in the negotiations, the national government agreed to the provision of special arrangements for Bougainville. The planned new provincial government was suspended and arrangements agreed for a modified form of the BRG to be established in two phases – the first being the **Bougainville Constituent Assembly (BCA)** in January 1999 and the second being the election of the **Bougainville People's Congress (BPC)** in May 1999. The BCA, with BIG Chairman Joseph Kabui and BTG Premier Gerard Sinato elected as Co-Chairmen, comprised nominated representatives of all factions and interest groups within Bougainville, operating while preparations were made for the establishment of the BPC. The BPC had 69 constituencies with representatives predominantly elected through popular vote as well as about 40 nominated members. Joseph Kabui was elected BPC President. However, while the BPC was a broadly representative body, its legal validity was contested. In late November 1999, Momis and his supporters (including the Leitana Council of Elders and Bougainville Resistance Forces leaders) succeeded in an appeal in a legal challenge against the decision to suspend the provincial government. Momis was subsequently sworn in as Governor of Bougainville and head of a new **Bougainville Interim Provincial Government (BIPG)**. The BIPG possesses legal powers identical to those of the other 18 provincial governments in PNG. It comprises 36 members, appointed from a wide range of Bougainvillean groups and is a forum for debate and expression of the positions of various groups within Bougainville. Even before the court decision that resulted in Momis becoming Governor, there had been a rapprochement between Momis and Kabui and their respective supporters, and this opened the way to negotiations for the *Greenhouse Memorandum* of December 1999, under which the BIPG operates in consultation with the BPC. The BPC includes a Congressional Executive Council (CEC), a 31-member executive body. The CEC's first meeting sought to establish Bougainville's negotiating position vis a vis the future political status of Bougainville, accepted by the BIPG. Under the terms of the 2001

Bougainville Agreement, the Bougainville Autonomous Government will supersede both bodies.

The government of Papua New Guinea (The national government)

Prime Ministers of Papua New Guinea

Sep 1975 – Mar 1980	The Rt Hon. Michael Somare
Mar 1980 – Aug 1982	The Rt Hon. Julius Chan
Aug 1982 – Nov 1985	The Rt Hon. Michael Somare
Nov 1985 – Jul 1987	The Rt Hon. Paias Wingti
Jul 1988 – Jul 1992	The Rt Hon. Rabbie Namaliu
Jul 1992 – Aug 1994	The Rt Hon. Paias Wingti
Aug 1994 – Mar 1997	The Rt Hon. Julius Chan
Mar 1997 – Jun 1997	The Rt Hon. John Giheno (acting)
Jun 1997 – Jul 1997	The Rt Hon. Julius Chan
Jul 1997 – Jul 1999	The Rt Hon. Bill Skate
Jul 1999 – present	The Rt Hon. Mekere Morauta

National government

Papua New Guinea is a constitutional monarchy with parliamentary democracy. A Governor General, who is elected by parliament and performs ceremonial functions, represents the British monarch. On the basis of majority support in the National Parliament, the Governor General appoints the Prime Minister for up to five years and the National Executive Council (cabinet) on the recommendation of the Prime Minister. The National Parliament contains 109 seats and members are elected by popular vote to serve five-year terms. The major political parties are currently the People's Progress Party (PPP); Pangu Pati; People's Democratic Movement (PDM); People's National Congress (PNC); National Alliance (NA); Advance Papua New Guinea and Melanesian Alliance (MA) but numerous, diverse and changing parties and allegiances characterise PNG politics. Members of Parliament (MPs) are elected from 19 provinces and the National Capital District of Port Moresby. Since 1995, regional MPs become provincial governors, while retaining their national seats in parliament.

Bougainville Affairs

In early negotiations with the Bougainvilleans, the PNG Prime Minister represented the national government or appointed a representative from his office to negotiate on behalf of the government. This practice was changed when Prime Minister Bill Skate appointed a Special State Negotiator (SSN), a role later supported by the creation of the Bougainville Affairs Office. The SSN was the Rt. Hon.

Sir John Kaputin, who represented the government in all major negotiations from *Lincoln* until the change of government in July 1999. Further responsibilities of the SSN were developed through the *Matakana and Okataina Understandings*, with the SSN mandated to prepare a package of proposals on the powers, functions, structure and status of Bougainville's government, 'geared to Bougainville's needs.'

The Bougainville Peace and Restoration Office (BPRO) was created in 1999 and is headed by the Minister for Bougainville Affairs, who sits on the National Executive Council and is separate from the SSN's position. The BPRO replaced the Office of Bougainville Affairs, which itself replaced the Department of Bougainville Affairs. The Minister for Bougainville Affairs in 2002 is the Hon. Sir Moi Avei.

Papua New Guinea security forces

Royal PNG Constabulary Mobile Riot Squads

In December 1988, in response to the New PLA's sabotage campaign, the PNG Government deployed riot police, known as the Mobile Riot Squad of the Royal Papua New Guinea Constabulary, into Bougainville. With a history of violent tactics in the highlands of mainland PNG, the riot squads were expected to force the handover of militant landowners and ensure the resumption of mining operations. Frustrated with their failure to quell the acts of sabotage, in January 1989 the mobile riot squads began burning entire villages and beating up suspected Ona sympathisers. The cycle of violence escalated quickly. By March, mobile squads were attacking Bougainvilleans indiscriminately and there were reports of torture and extra-judicial killings. Being mostly mainlanders, their violent intervention brought many Bougainvillean groupings, many not directly involved in the land dispute, into common cause.

The Papua New Guinea Defence Force (PNGDF)

One of the most consistently important actors in the conflict, the Papua New Guinea Defence Force (PNGDF) influenced the course of the Bougainville secessionist movement in the late 1980s and became a pivotal political actor within the events leading towards the resumption of negotiations in early 1997.

The PNGDF came into being in 1975, with the independence of PNG and the enactment of the *National Constitution*. The force was derived from the Australian-led Pacific Islands Regiment that had existed since World War II. Its mission was challenged by the needs and capacities of the newly independent PNG, where the forces' most important task was the maintenance of domestic order rather than defence against external threats. The PNGDF has historically had an uneasy relationship with PNG's civil authorities.

On Bougainville, the arrival of the PNGDF in March 1989 was initially welcomed by many Bougainvilleans who expected them to be far more disciplined than the Riot Squads. They described their counter insurgency operations as 'finding the salt in the sand'. However, the early casualties suffered by the Defence Forces and what was described as a 'culture of payback' quickly led to extra-judicial executions, the ransacking of villages and other violent activities. During the decade of violent conflict, there were several major (and largely unsuccessful) deployments (Operations 'Footloose' ('90), 'Dynamo' ('93), 'High Speed I' ('94) and 'High Speed II' ('96)), but the PNGDF never asserted complete control over Bougainville. In the early years of the conflict, acts of apparently ill-disciplined violence on the part of the PNGDF effectively undermined several high-profile attempts to reach a political settlement with the BRA.

Following the all-time low of the 'Kangu beach massacre' in September 1996, when the BRA in cooperation with local BRF units attacked and killed 12 members of the PNGDF, a turning point in relations between the PNGDF and Bougainvillean groups came in March 1997 when they voiced similar opposition to Chan's decision to bring in Sandline. The actions of General Jerry Singirok and much of the PNGDF, purportedly in the interests of human rights and democratic accountability, helped shift the perception of the PNGDF for many Bougainvilleans and contributed to the opening of space for dialogue and politics. PNGDF representatives participated in negotiations with the armed Bougainvillean groups at the Burnham II talks.

Since the signing of the *Lincoln Agreement* and the subsequent commitment to peace, the PNGDF has continued a phased withdrawal from Bougainville. The issue of reform, modernisation and resourcing of PNG's security forces remains a core political issue.

International involvement

Government of Australia

As former colonial rulers of the territories of Papua and New Guinea, and supporters of the Panguna mining operation, Australia has had a complex, dynamic and at times controversial relationship with the people of Papua New Guinea in general and with Bougainvilleans in particular.

The legacy of this historical involvement, and notably Bougainvillean resentment over Australia's role in imposing the mine on Bougainville during the colonial period, was a significant factor in limiting early Australian efforts at mediating in the Bougainville crisis. As a sponsor of PNG independence, Australia was committed to substantial aid and defence cooperation programmes, focusing on supporting the building of national

institutions. The Australian government therefore rejected both the declarations of independence of 1975 and 1990, fearing the consequences of secession could lead to a further break-up of PNG, with implications for regional security. Their decision in 1989 to supply the PNG government with four Iroquois helicopters, subsequently employed in combat by the PNGDF, fomented widespread mistrust among Bougainvillean groups about Australian intentions.

It was not until 1994 that Australia played a more active role in peace initiatives. A parliamentary delegation visited Bougainville, made it clear that a military solution was not possible, and assisted in giving Bougainvilleans a means of dialogue with the outside world. Australia funded, trained, deployed and commanded the South Pacific Peace-Keeping Force, at a cost of A\$5 million, for the Arawa conference. It subsequently facilitated the Cairns peace talks in September and December 1995. In late 1996, officials began to talk with PNG government officials about possible support for a peace process, followed by assistance in the delivery of humanitarian relief to Bougainville on behalf of the PNG government. Subsequent Australian opposition to Sandline in 1997 was a critical factor in influencing the PNG government's shift towards a peaceful policy for resolving the conflict.

Australia provided finance and personnel for the New Zealand-led Truce Monitoring Group and later led the Peace Monitoring Group, contributing 250 of the 300 members in the initial phase. Foreign Minister Alexander Downer played a critical role in the political negotiations of 2000, proposing a formula on a deferred referendum that was ultimately accepted by both sides.

PNG is currently the largest recipient of Australian aid (at approximately A\$300 million per year). In addition to large-scale development programmes for Bougainville, AusAid has financed travel to a series of peace negotiations, including Cairns, Canberra and Townsville. It has seconded expert advisers to the parties. As such Australian personnel and money have at times been critical in ensuring the continuation of the peace process.

Government of New Zealand

Successive governments of New Zealand have played pivotal roles in the peace process. Their diplomatic, military and economic interventions were characterised by a willingness to engage in dialogue with all parties, a commitment to a political approach to resolving the conflict, relative neutrality and cross-cultural sensitivities.

New Zealand supported a peaceful settlement from as early as 1989, but it was in July 1990 that it offered the facilities of three naval ships to support peace talks. The first of these took place on the HMNZS *Endeavour* and resulted in the signing of *The Endeavour Accord*.

The following year, the national government and BRA and BIG representatives met on the New Zealand ship MV Kris and again in 1992 using the MV Huris.

In 1994, New Zealand took part in the Australian-led South Pacific Peacekeeping Force (SPPKF) for the Arawa peace conference. With a seat on the Security Council at the time, NZ was instrumental in securing the UN's support for these operations.

New Zealand was largely responsible for the Burnham talks in 1997 (see 'From Burnham to Buin', this volume). Concerned about the humanitarian disaster and the possible impact of the conflict on regional stability, Foreign Minister Don McKinnon felt that the region needed to do more to help. Burnham I set the scene for the establishment of the *Burnham Truce* and the Truce Monitoring Group. It also led to an agreement which secured the release of the five PNGDF Kangu Beach hostages to New Zealand diplomat John Hayes.

Following the signing of the *Lincoln Agreement*, New Zealand played a significant role in seeing the process through, maintaining close cooperation with the national government, the Bougainvillean parties and the other diplomatic missions in PNG.

New Zealand has also provided funding to support the peace process through its aid programme (NZODA), financing community-based social and economic development work, including an important community policing project. While New Zealand's involvement has greatly reduced since Lincoln, it is likely to continue to play a core role in safeguarding the peace.

The Government of Solomon Islands

Lying to the south and east of Bougainville, Solomon Islands (SI) is in some respects physically and culturally closer to Bougainville than Bougainville is to mainland PNG. Important communal, family and clan ties link many Bougainvilleans to the Western Solomons, especially to the Shortland Islands, which is only ten kilometres away from Bougainville.

During the crisis, the belief in Port Moresby that BRA combatants were using the Shortland Islands to obtain weapons and ammunitions resulted in the decision in October 1989 to ban the movement of people between Bougainville and Solomon Islands. During the blockade, however, the western islands of the Solomon group became an important refuge for displaced Bougainvilleans. The unfolding humanitarian crisis led Prime Minister Mamaloni to make efforts to facilitate PNG – Bougainville dialogue. In 1991, the Solomon government sent two ministers to discuss their plans to facilitate talks in Honiara. Both sides responded positively to this offer, and arrangements were quickly put in place. These talks resulted in the *Honiara Declaration* of January 1991.



However, the SI government decision in 1992 to allow BIG to establish an office in Honiara – and thereby sustain communications between Bougainville and the outside world led to a great deal of pressure from PNG. Relations between the two Melanesian neighbours reached their lowest level with persistent PNGDF cross-border raids, one of which, in 1992, killed two Solomons civilians, leading to formal complaints to the UN.

Improvements followed. The 'Tambora Officials Talks' and 'Honiara Talks' in 1993 and 1994 were held in Solomon Islands, and a former Solomon Islands Governor General chaired the five days of the Arawa Peace Conference of October 1994. In 1997, following the outcome of Burnham I and the changes of government in PNG and SI, Rev. Leslie Boseto, the SI Minister for Home Affairs was involved in Burnham II.

More recently, serious internal conflict in Solomon Islands has somewhat reversed the roles, with the Malaita Eagle Forces seizing control of Honiara in June 2000 and SI narrowly escaping civil war.

South Pacific neighbours

PNG's South Pacific neighbours were not prepared to intervene in the early days of the Bougainville crisis. Fiji had just experienced two divisive coups in 1987 and the lobbying efforts of the BIG delegations to the annual Summits of the Fiji-based South Pacific Forum initially bore little fruit.

All this changed following the signing of the *Tambora Accord* (August 1994) and the *Commitment for Peace on Bougainville* (September 1994) when Fiji, Vanuatu and Tonga were first brought into a peacekeeping role. These agreements called for the creation of a South Pacific Peacekeeping Force (SPPKF) to provide security for the Arawa Peace Conference. The SPPKF was originally envisaged as a Fijian-led force of 200 troops with the Australian Defence Forces (ADF) providing command and control, air transport and logistical support. The three Pacific nations were at first reluctant to accept overall Australian command and instead called for the involvement of the UN. When the SPPKF ultimately received formal UN endorsement, Fiji, Vanuatu and Tonga provided personnel and Tongan and Fijian officers held the senior posts on the ground.

Support for further regional peacekeeping efforts was consolidated by the parties to the *Burnham Declaration* of 1997. The Governments of Fiji and Vanuatu agreed to provide a small number of personnel for the Truce Monitoring Group and Peace Monitoring Group, with Fiji allocating 10 personnel and Vanuatu offering 8-10. In 2000 Fiji and Vanuatu provided 10 and 13 members respectively out of a total force of 312, reducing these commitments to six each in 2001. The Fiji and Vanuatu diplomatic missions in Port Moresby also played a coordinated role in supporting the peace process with Australia and New Zealand. Both governments continue to play a role in the PMG and weapons disposal process.