

## **SINCW submission to the National Parliament's Standing Committee on Foreign Relations.**

### **Acknowledging positive results:**

RAMSI equates Regional Assistance Mission to Solomon Islands (RAMSI):

As the words imply a regional body with a mission to help people of Solomon Islands. This word mission I will try to understand it with what I understand it to be , example my church has a mission to reach out with the gospel of Jesus Christ which is about love to a dying people. It is to rescue people from the world and its wickedness and problems.

When RAMSI arrived here in 2003 life for women became much safer. Freedom to move around without being afraid came back. Women feel that there is protection that they can rely on. Schools were re-opened, stores were re-opened and people were able to return to work trusting that it is safe. RAMSI's mission number one had some immediate results, and some medium term results.

### **Long Term sustainability of law and order:**

For long term the questions are still to have answers –

- Is the RSIPF trained well enough to carry out policing neutrally, effectively and efficiently?
- Is the RSIPF ready to take over policing without relying on RAMSI?
- If not yet, why?
- Has RAMSI carried out training of officers that can cover policing in the whole country?
- Are women going to form half of the force if no why not?

### **Concerns by women:**

There is lack of total discipline in officers, they chew betel-nut when in uniform, they smoke when in uniform, they storey-tell and stand around chatting with public while in uniform, very different from building public confidence if that is what they call their behaviour with the public, when they do such things they create carelessness in the public eye and not really concentrating on the job. Public will not have confidence in police with such behaviour.

Under age young girls are entering places like the top ten club, the Aloha Club without any restraint by police officers, instead it is the police that allow them entry for their own good pleasure (i.e. the police). Instead of escorting these young under-aged girls back to

where they should go to their parents, or guardians in town, they just watch them break the law.

Women are still victims of abuse by men and are not being apprehended by police.

Police in the provinces are not even trying to deal with foreign companies practising illicit sex with very young girls. They cannot know these things are happening because they sit down and do absolutely nothing in many of the provincial police posts.

There may not be huge conflicts as in the period from 1998 to 2002, but all over the country there are daily conflicts in the villages, in the homes; in the social gatherings; in the families; amongst women over 02's; in men over 02's and these are conflicts that can flare up once not addressed. And who is to address such? As a member of the national peace council which got thrown out to bring in the non-active peace & integrity council I find that the strategy plan that was set by this council was the only strategy that could sustain real lasting peace in this country through its strategic connections to people on the ground very day. Even if RAMSI leaves NPC can still continue the work of conflict resolution until the whole country is covered. As a woman representative in that council I found that all kinds of conflict came through which were successfully dealt with and which made the conflicting parties able to go out in one door rather than from two doors. That is the measure of true reconciliation.

Women are very active peace builders but when it comes to established organizations women are the ones that are left out in participating or if they are involved it is always one odd figure in the room and then people wonder why are conflicts escalating?

**Governance:**

When RAMSI arrived in 2003 almost all government offices were empty of staff at work. Many officers remain in their villages. Even social and essential services such as schools, hospitals and clinics were mal-functioning. Many women especially could not turn up to work even though RAMSI was here, especially those who experienced threats to their lives and their families. Those people who were strong and careless used the opportunity to take advantage of the situation, to use criminal ways to take money from Treasury by force. Treasury officers were held up at gun point to pay out public funds to criminals; while every other public servant suffered and struggled to survive. Corruption was rife, there was no proper systems to secure public funds, leaders and people alike used corruption as a way to gain, but such activities were un-checked and so continued without

any restraint. Even elections that were held in 2001 were full of criminal activities such as threats to candidates and voters alike. As a woman who contested the 2001 elections I had threats from ex-militants, using the name of people like Harold Keke against me. And other militants who supported other candidates used similar threats. I had to be brave to stand against such behaviour during the 2001 elections. RAMSI's mission to curb this uncontrolled scene was also successful. Painfully and slowly the environment in government offices and buildings became normal and public servants returned to full duties and government became functional again. Short term the government became active again with law and order back in the offices.

**Governance in  
Medium Term:  
Machinery of  
Government:**

RAMSI also has the mission to help Solomon Islands in the areas of good governance or even just governing. There are three tiers in our system –

- Parliament- the political arm which is the Legislature, here laws are made and unmade;
- Executive- the Cabinet headed by the Prime Minister with twenty-two Ministries headed by Ministers – this is where government work is carried out for people in Solomon Islands;
- Judiciary- the legal and policing in the country.

**Parliament:**

Women believe and will continue to believe that a country without women in their Parliament is still an uncivilized country. How can 50% Of the population in Solomon Islands not be represented in such an Important high institution in the land. Many issues can be addressed effectively by women if they are in parliament. Many issues especially affecting women and young girls cannot be effectively or positively addressed by male leaders, for it is not possible for them to understand many such issues. SINCW is not witnessing any form of assistance from RAMSI to assist the women's umbrella organization to address this important area that they have struggling so long to achieve by getting women into parliament. Women in leadership is most crucial to Solomon Islands achieving good governance.

**Executive:**

SINCW on behalf of women understand that RAMSI is holding line posts in Ministries; this is both good but also not good if there are timeline on how long RAMSI personnel can hold this posts and if they go will

Solomon Islands be able to continue the work. SINCW still does not understand why MOG should also be doing women in leadership and going out to the Provinces and creating women's groups outside of already existing groups and creating confusion in some rural areas.

## **Provincial**

**Government:**RAMSI must be aware that Provinces are the worst when it comes to Good governance. Provinces do not have the right environment In which they can perform to achieve the best results to look after The people in their Provinces. If RAMSI is to do justice then RAMSI must Be seen as helping to improve the working environment in the Provinces.

## **What would SINCW want to see:**

- (1) RAMSI to help Solomon Islanders build confidence in themselves by being mentors in fields where local counter-parts are available;
- (2) RAMSI and SIG to put their heads together to find solutions to create opportunities for young Solomon Islanders to be more involved in economic building; through schemes such bringing into Solomon Islands skilled trainers to train young people to become artisans, mechanics, plumbers, outboard motor mechanics, road works, skills to harvest our own forest resources, marine resources, how to use our timber for secondary products, cooks, storekeepers, chefs, tourists attendants and so forth;
- (3) SIG and RAMSI to work together to spread equal opportunities to all the Provinces to stop TOL's in Honiara and the internal migration to Honiara. Honiara is advancing over the rest of the country and its not fare to the rest of the countries populations.
- (4) RAMSI and SIG to help the villages (rural) people to improve In their living standards through having right economy policy pointers
- (5) There are certain documents that RAMSI should check to ensure what they are doing is what this country wants, eg. The PCDA, the one carried out by UNIFEM on gender analysis