

**Inquiry into the International Facilitation Notice  
Presentation by Hon Stephen Panga  
Premier of Guadalcanal Province**

---

Greetings.....

I would like to start by thanking the Foreign Relations Committee for giving me and my fellow provincial leaders a chance to be part of this process. My provincial government see this involvement as a crucial step in the way forward for our province.

The Guadalcanal Province has been greatly supported by the work of RAMSI. Firstly by coming here in 2003 and restoring law and order in our province, and then by continuing to help build our province back to what it once was. We see that our provincial government needs to have closer relationships with the RAMSI operation, not only in keeping law and order, but also in the capacity development of our Guadalcanal police, and in the reconciliation process.

We feel that RAMSI have built a sound relationship with our police force, however this needs to be strengthened. We see that more capacity development needs to be done to increase the skills of our Guadalcanal Police and we need more resources available to our police force, to be able to work on a regular basis in all communities.

The RAMSI posts around Guadalcanal are working well, and their presence is appreciated, although we do need to boost the presence of RAMSI and police across all communities. Therefore we need more RAMSI/police posts across the province. Many of our communities are in remote areas and this creates problems of logistics. We believe that all communities should have access to police to ensure that all our people feel the presence and have the peace of mind that any police force should bring.

RAMSI has been working closely with our communities and are building up a good relationship with the majority of our people. We see this relationship as vital in maintaining law and order and also in the reconciliation process. We urge RAMSI to focus on this

relationship and to further build the trust they require to work with our communities. To help build this trust RAMSI needs to further understand the customs and ways of our people of Guadalcanal. By working closer with the provincial government, I am sure that the understanding and knowledge required will be forthcoming.

RAMSI has built up a good relationship with the Guadalcanal Provincial Government and we would like to see that relationship deepen. My provincial government would like to have monthly meetings with RAMSI and the police in issues concerning our province, and to be consulted on special issues aside from the regular meetings. We believe that both the Guadalcanal Provincial Government, and RAMSI's underlying intentions for our Province are the same, however without regular communication and understanding there could be counter-productive actions taken. This is especially sensitive around the work of arresting and detaining people, and our reconciliation process. We believe that if we work closer together then we can achieve the best outcomes for all people.

My government would also like to have a better understanding of the roles and responsibilities of RAMSI in a wider context. We understand the role they play in Guadalcanal Province; however we would like to have more clarity around all areas that RAMSI are currently working in. There may be many areas that RAMSI are currently involved in that could also benefit our provincial government. Having awareness of these activities and resources and being able to access those resources whether it be in technical assistance or other available resources, could be of benefit both to our provincial government and in the work of RAMSI.

My government believe that RAMSI or a presence of an intervening police/army force is still required in the Guadalcanal Province. We would like to see our province standing on its own - in time, however at this point we still require their support. We are heading towards a federal state system and one of the first steps in achieving this is to reconcile our province and country. Until such time that this has been completed and a federal government system is running efficiently, we see that support will still be required.

I once again would like to thank the Foreign Relations Committee for inviting me here today and hope this will be the first of many consultations with the Guadalcanal Provincial Government. We encourage the Foreign Relations Committee to arrange more consultations not only with the provincial governments but the leaders of our communities, such as the church leaders and youth and women's group leaders.

Our doors remain open to RAMSI, and we invite them in to work with us so we can build stronger partnerships and ensure that we have ongoing peace and stability in our province which will help ensure the future growth of our province and the wellbeing of our people.