

SOLOMON ISLANDS



INTRODUCTION

The UK established a protectorate over the Solomon Islands in the 1890s. Self-government came in 1976 and independence in 1978. From 2003 to 2017, the Australian-led multi-national Regional Assistance Mission to the Solomon Islands was generally effective in restoring law and order and rebuilding government institutions.

GOVERNMENT

Chief of State

King CHARLES III; represented by Governor General David VUNAGI

Head of Government

Prime Minister Manasseh SOGAVARE

Government Type

parliamentary democracy under a constitutional monarchy; a Commonwealth realm

Capital

Honiara

Legislature

unicameral National Parliament (50 seats)

Ambassador to US

Ambassador Jane Mugafalu Kabui WAETARA

US Ambassador

the US does not have an embassy in the Solomon Islands; the US Charge d'Affaires to Papua New Guinea Matthew BUNT is accredited to the Solomon Islands

GEOGRAPHY

Area

Total: 28,896 sq km
Land: 27,986 sq km
Water: 910 sq km

Climate

tropical monsoon; few temperature and weather extremes

Natural Resources

fish, forests, gold, bauxite, phosphates, lead, zinc, nickel

ECONOMY

Economic Overview

lower middle-income Pacific island economy; natural resource rich but environmentally fragile; key agrarian sector; growing Chinese economic relationship; infrastructure damage due to social unrest; metal mining operations

GDP (Purchasing Power Parity) \$1.703 billion (2021)

GDP per capita (Purchasing Power Parity) \$2,400 (2021)

Industries - fish (tuna), mining, timber

Agricultural products - oil palm fruit, sweet potatoes, coconuts, taro, yams, fruit, pulses, vegetables, cocoa, cassava

Exports \$413.7 million (2021 est.)

lumber, tuna, palm oil, coconut oil, gold (2021)

partners: China 59%, Italy 9%, India 6%, Netherlands 4%, Australia 3% (2021)

Imports \$619.5 million (2021 est.)

refined petroleum, scrap iron, fish, iron structures, poultry meats, rice (2021)

partners: China 36%, Singapore 13%, Australia 12%, Malaysia 10%, New Zealand 6% (2021)

PEOPLE & SOCIETY

Population

714,770 (2023 est.)

Population Growth

1.69% (2023 est.)

Ethnicity

Melanesian 95.3%, Polynesian 3.1%, Micronesian 1.2%, other 0.3% (2009 est.)

Language

Melanesian pidgin, English (official but spoken by only 1%-2% of the population), 120 indigenous languages

Religion

Protestant 73.4%, Roman Catholic 19.6%, other Christian 2.9%, other 4%, unspecified 0.1% (2009 est.)

Urbanization

urban population: 26% of total population (2023)

rate of urbanization: 3.57% annual rate of change (2020-25 est.)