

～ 日本海難防止協会シンガポール連絡事務所発SRO news ～  
(Ref No : 25-029)

1 クック諸島の前首相であり、前太平洋諸島フォーラム事務局長のヘンリー・プナ氏は、ホノルルを拠点に米国・アジア・太平洋諸島の関係強化を目的とする教育研究機関である東西センター（EWC）の太平洋諸島開発プログラム（PIDP）暫定ディレクターに任命された。

[原文](#)

(17<sup>th</sup> February 2026, Radio NZ)

[原文](#)

(18<sup>th</sup> February 2026, EWC)

2 2月11日、ソロモン諸島のマネレ首相は、同国は来年にも国連の後発開発途上国（LDC）を脱却する見込みであり、中国との自由貿易協定（FTA）締結に向けて取り組んでいると述べた。中国の無関税措置は既に両国間の貿易拡大に寄与しているが、FTA 締結によりこれを正式化し、水産・農林業などの主要分野にも拡大する可能性がある。

[原文](#)

(17<sup>th</sup> February 2026, The Island Sun)

3 2月13日、パラオから初の代表団が日本政府主催の「世界青年の船（SWY）」事業に参加するため出発した。本事業では、日本青年と世界各国の参加青年が約1ヶ月間、船上で共同生活をしながら、ディスカッションや文化交流等、様々な活動を行う。

[原文](#)

(17<sup>th</sup> February 2026, Island Times)

参考：[「世界青年の船」事業](#)（内閣府）

4 太平洋島嶼国で麻薬密輸が相次いでおり、当局者、専門家らは警戒を高めている。2月12日、仏領ポリネシア沖で新たに2.4トンのコカインが押収された。同国沖ではこの1か月で3件目のコカイン押収事件であり、今年の総押収量は11.5トン、総額24億ドル相当となる。1月にはフィジーでコカイン2.64トンが押収されており、2月にはマーシャル諸島で麻薬密輸に使用された疑いのある半潜水艇が見つかっている。

[原文](#)

(18<sup>th</sup> February 2026, Radio NZ)

[原文](#)

(18<sup>th</sup> February 2026, PACNEWS)

[原文](#)

(20<sup>th</sup> February 2026, The Marshall Islands Journal)

5 2月18日、サモアで3日間に渡り開催された太平洋科学アカデミーの初総会が閉幕した。総会には科学者、政府関係者、研究者、先住民の学者らが集結した。同アカデミーは2024年に設立され、太平洋地域等の利益のために、自然・社会科学、応用科学技術、人文科学、先住の知恵の研究と応用を推進し、促進することを目的としている。

[原文](#)

(19<sup>th</sup> February 2026, Radio NZ)

6 フィジーのバイニマラマ前首相とキリホ前警察長官は、反乱扇動の容疑で逮捕・起訴された。検察によると両名は2023年7月、スバのバイニマラマ氏邸宅で開催された会合において、フィジー軍高官らに、同軍司令官への反乱を促したとされている。

[原文](#)

(19<sup>th</sup> February 2026, Radio NZ)

7 フィジー議会で演説したランバラヴ大統領は、今年8月7日から2027年2月6日までのいずれかの時期に行われる総選挙に建設的に関与し、選挙後も含めて法の支配を尊重するよう呼びかけた。高等裁判所は2月2日、ランブカ首相による反汚職機関の長官の解任を違法とする判決を下し、同首相は直ちに控訴を表明したが、控訴が棄却された場合「辞任を検討する」と記者団に語っている。

[原文](#)

(4<sup>th</sup> February 2026, Radio NZ)

[原文](#)

(18<sup>th</sup> February 2026, RadioNZ)

8 フィジーでは、薬物注射による血液感染などでHIV感染者が急増している。フィジー保健省によると、2020年の新たな感染者は147人であったが、わずか4年後には1583人に急増し、2025年の上半期だけで1226人が報告されている。

[原文](#)

(17<sup>th</sup> February 2026, The Telegraph)

9 マネーロンダリング対策を推進する政府間組織である金融活動作業部会(FATF)は、パプアニューギニア政府の監督体制に戦略的欠陥があるとして、同国を「グレーリスト」に指定した。同政府は期限内に改善策を講じる必要があり、マラペ首相は、FATFの結論を受け入れ、支援を歓迎すると述べた。グレ

ーリストの下は「ブラックリスト」であり、北朝鮮、イラン、ミャンマーの 3 カ国のみが指定されている。

[原文](#)

(18<sup>th</sup> February 2026, Radio NZ)

10 現在、マーシャル諸島 (RMI) とミクロネシア連邦 (FSM) は、急激な人口減少に直面している。RMI の人口は、2021 年国勢調査によると 4 万 2418 人で、2011 年から 20% 減少した。FSM の人口は、2022 年の国勢調査の結果がまだ正式公表されておらず、米国政府のデータによると 2010 年から 2023 年にかけて 31% 減少しており、国際通貨基金 (IMF) のデータも同様の数値を示している。マーシャル諸島は、世界で初めてのユニバーサル・ベーシック・インカム (UBI) 制度を導入し、所得、雇用状況、資産に関わらず、国民一人当たり年間 4 回に分けて 800 ドルを支給することで人口減少の抑制に取り組んでいる。

[原文](#)

(13<sup>th</sup> February 2026, Island Times)

[原文](#)

(20<sup>th</sup> February 2026, The Marshall Islands Journal)

[原文](#)

(24<sup>th</sup> February 2026, Island Times)

## Record hauls signal exploding regional pipeline



### GIFF JOHNSON

The multiple drug busts and discovery of “narco boats” washed into Pacific Islands demonstrates that the Pacific — and in particular the South Pacific — is a highway for drug distribution to Australia and New Zealand.

From the beginning of January through February 12, law enforcement officials have confiscated over 14 tons of cocaine captured on the high seas or on vessels in ports, while an additional nearly half a ton (1,000 pounds) was confiscated from a container in port, wrote New Zealand journalist Michael Field in a story carried on The Pacific Newsroom page on Facebook last weekend.

He said the estimated value of the multiple drug busts amounted to \$2.4 billion.

Field discussed emerging patterns and put together a preliminary list of drug busts and narco boat seizures, including one at Arno Atoll in 2026. “A cocaine logistics corridor is consolidating across the South Pacific,” Fields said.

Fields wrote: “Originating in Colombia and Peru, multi-ton shipments are increasingly being pushed toward Australia and New Zealand, bypassing heavily patrolled Caribbean and Central American routes. The emerging pattern suggests:

- Use of fishing vessels, cargo ships and semi-submersibles (known as “narco-subs”)
- Offshore transfers along eastern Pacific maritime lanes
- Offloading and repackaging points in loosely monitored island jurisdictions
- Fiji appears to have functioned as a staging or redistribution node in early 2026.”

He points to the development of many abandoned narco-submersibles being discovered around the region.

“No regional authority maintains a public register

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# Multiple seizures in the drug delivery corridor

## From page 1

of abandoned narco-sub or low-profile vessels found in Pacific waters," he said. "Reporting indicates a growing number of discoveries."

This includes narco subs found washed up in the Solomon Islands in 2024 and 2025, including:

- Ontong Java Atoll – Semi-submersible found empty, engines removed; later converted for local use.
- Ramos Island – Vessel discovered by member of parliament during fishing trip; empty, engines missing.
- Malaita Province – Drifted ashore; no cargo or crew.

"All three appear to have been abandoned after offload," Fields said.

He noted that a semi-submersible drifted ashore at Arno Atoll earlier this month. Engines attached; no crew or cargo.

Fields pointed out that there hasn't been a confirmed multi-ton seizure of cocaine in Tonga to date, though vessel sightings have been reported.

Fields included a 2026 "Running Sheet" of drug busts in the Pacific since January:

- **January 15**, Tavua, Fiji: Seizure of 2.64 tons of cocaine with an estimated value of \$550 million. Police believe the drugs were delivered by semi-submersible vessel although no delivery craft was located.

- **January 16**, high seas, East of French Polynesia: Seizure of 4.87 tons of cocaine. Drug smuggling vessel: MV Raider, Togo-flagged cargo ship. Drugs destroyed at sea. Vessel and crew released. French authorities assessed the shipment was bound for Australia or New Zealand.

- **February 2**, high seas, East of French Polynesia: Seizure of 4.24 tons of cocaine. Operation: Joint action involving French forces and New Zealand Customs. Drug cargo destroyed. Unnamed vessel and crew released.

- **February 5**, Port of Papeete, French Polynesia: Seizure of 473.5kg (1,043 pounds) of cocaine. Method: Concealed

inside a container bound for Australia. Origin: United States. Transited Caribbean before arrival in Papeete. Unlike the offshore seizures, this was a conventional container interception.

- **February 12**, high seas, East of French Polynesia: Seizure of 2.4 tons of cocaine. Vessel: Unnamed foreign-flagged ship. Drugs destroyed. Unnamed vessel and crew released after flag state declined to cede jurisdiction.

The January 16, February 2 and February 12 drug busts on the high seas east of French Polynesia confirmed the drug delivery corridor in the South Pacific as authorities confiscated multiple multi-ton maritime drug shipments in the same corridor within weeks of each other.

*\*The drug-running speed boat pictured on page 1 washed into Arno Atoll earlier this month. Known by law enforcement as a "narco boat," the vessel sports four big outboard engines for high speed transport of drugs in the submarine-like enclosed hull. RMI law enforcement authorities said they are looking into the matter.*

# Pacific people on the move

**'FSM and RMI can make it more attractive for their citizens to stay at home'**

The urge to survive is a powerful one, for both an individual and a country. Nauru, whose population was decimated by infectious disease as a result of colonialism, still celebrates Angam Day on 26 October every year. This was the day in 1932 when the birth of a baby brought Nauru's population up to 1,500, a minimum number thought necessary at the time to guarantee the future survival of the Nauruan people.

Two Pacific countries currently facing a declining population are the Federated States of Micronesia and the Republic of the Marshall Islands.

RMI's population fell from 53,158 in the 2011 census to 42,418 in the 2021 census, a decline of 20 percent. According to the SPC, its current population is estimated to be 36,914.

The situation with FSM is more complex. According to official statistics, its population continues to grow, reaching 105,381 in 2024, up from 104,832 in 2021 and 102,843 in 2010. However, authoritative sources, including the IMF and the United States government, note that in fact FSM's population has fallen. A census was conducted in 2022, but the results have not yet been officially released; the government's figures rely on extrapolating earlier trends which are now out of date.

Veteran analyst and commentator Francis Hezel wrote in 2024: Over the past decade, Federated States of Micronesia has lost a large chunk of its population, according to a 2022 census that still has not been formally released. Its population plummeted from 102,000 to 71,000 over the previous 10 years (2012-2022), thus marking a loss of 30 percent of its population.

The US government reports a 31 percent decline in FSM population between 2010 and 2023, and the IMF reports a similar figure. A recent academic study of FSM reports a 25 percent reduction.

The fear that some Pacific island countries could eventually be almost or completely abandoned goes back at least to the ANU professor of geography, Gerard Ward, whose 1989 article predicted this fate for several of them.

So far, however, the experience of the Pacific is that population declines are temporary and are followed by periods of population stabilization or growth.

Nauru's population recovered from the lows of almost a century ago to reach 12,000 today, though it did suffer a minor



**United Airlines planes carry emigrating citizens of FSM and the RMI to the US numerous times a week while fisheries vessels are key components of the nations' dependency on foreign dollars from, for example, fishing licenses.**



**Report by the Devpolicy Blog which "offers top-tier analysis, research, and policy commentary on aid and development, with a global perspective and emphasis on Australia, the Pacific, and Papua New Guinea."**  
<https://devpolicy.org/depopulation-in-fsm-and-rmi/>

decline in population in the early 2000s when its economy struggled.

Palau, like FSM and RMI, has a "compact state" relationship with the United States. It experienced a population decline from 20,000 in the early 2000s to 18,000 in recent years, but its population too seems to have stabilized.

Niue and Cook Islands are also relevant examples as they have similarly open-ended migration rights to New Zealand that Palau, FSM and RMI have with the United States. Niue and the Cook Islands both had higher populations in the past. Today, they are both high-income states with stable populations.

Niue's population fell from a peak of 5,200 in the late 1960s to just 1,900 in the early 2000s, but has stabilized at that level since.

Cook Islands had a population of about 20,000 in the early 1970s. It fell to around 15,000 during its economic crisis in the mid-1990s, but has since recov-

ered and stabilized at around 17,000.

All three of Cook Islands, Niue and Palau have achieved high-income status, with incomes per person well in excess of the World Bank's US\$14,000 threshold. Good jobs back home both deter outward migration and attract migrants from other countries, thus helping to stabilise the population.

Both FSM and RMI are heavily dependent on foreign rents, specifically revenue from aid and fishing licenses. A smaller population means higher rents per person and, therefore, a higher income per person.

Some of this positive feedback from migration to per person income may already be apparent in these two countries. RMI's national income (measured in terms of GNDI) grew rapidly in the 2010s: at an average per-person rate of 5.1 percent between 2010 and 2019. Using the official population numbers, FSM's national income per person grew

more slowly, at an average rate of 2.5 percent. But if we use what appear to be the actual population numbers for FSM, its per-person income growth is about three percentage points higher, and so at least as high as RMI's.

However, it is far from guaranteed that a declining population will boost per-person income enough to lead to population stabilization. Both FSM and RMI are upper-middle rather than high-income economies. Neither has been successful at attracting much in-migration (unlike high-income and tourism-reliant Palau — according to its 2020 census, in a labor force of 14,000, 5,300 workers

are overseas-born).

From a policy perspective, neither FSM nor RMI will want to surrender its migration rights. Indeed, with the crack-down on migration in the US, American demand for compact-state labor is only going to increase.

What both countries can do is make it more attractive for their citizens to stay at home. The recent introduction by RMI of a universal income payment (funded by the grants provided to it by the US as part of the compact state arrangement) should be understood in this context. Since late last year, all RMI residents, including children, are entitled to an annual payment of US\$800 per person.

Though not generous enough to make this a universal basic income payment, it is a bold move. RMI has been scolded by the IMF for not targeting this payment at the poor, but that misses the point. The country wants all residents to stay, and especially the more skilled and higher earning.

In summary, the population declines that FSM and RMI are experiencing, while dramatic, need not be bad news. Three other Pacific island countries that have experienced recent, significant population declines — Niue, Cook Islands and Palau — have all since seen their populations stabilise and have either retained or achieved high-income status. Whether, when and at what level population stabilizes in FSM and RMI remains to be seen.