



NEWSLETTER

Vanuatu Police Seize One of Nation's Largest Cocaine Shipments



The Ministry of Internal Affairs has confirmed a major drug bust after officers from the Vanuatu Police Force (VPF) and RVS Takuare intercepted a yacht carrying more than 450 kilograms of cocaine in Luganville. The operation is among the largest drug seizures ever recorded in Vanuatu.

Minister of Internal Affairs, Hon. Andrew Napuat, praised the rapid coordination of the enforcement teams, noting that the case underscores the increasing threat of transnational crime across the Pacific. He stressed the urgent need for strengthened border security and closer regional cooperation.





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450KG COCAINE SEIZED, CHINESE AND TURKISH CREW ARRESTED



The Government of Vanuatu, through the Ministry of Internal Affairs and its law enforcement agencies, reaffirmed its commitment to safeguarding the nation's people, communities, and borders. Ongoing efforts to enhance security operations and intelligent sharing will remain a priority to uphold national safety and stability.

Luganville Hosts Training on Risk-Informed Local Area Planning

The Department of Urban Affairs and Planning (DUAP), in partnership with the Asian Development Bank (ADB), delivered a one-day training in Luganville on "Preparing Risk-Informed Local Area Concept Plans". The session brought together planners and officers from local government councils, along with Department of Lands officers from Santo.





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The training concluded with participants receiving certificates in recognition of their involvement. This initiative forms part of DUAP's ongoing capacity-building efforts and supports the objectives of the National Urban Development Planning Framework (NUDPF).



Consultation on the National Urban Development Policy Framework and Capacity Development

The Ministry of Internal Affairs, in partnership with the Asian Development Bank (ADB), held stakeholder consultations on the National Urban Development Policy Framework (NUDPF) and Capacity Development on 8th September 2025 in Luganville, Santo. The Department of Urban Affairs and Planning (DUAP) is leading the development of the NUDPF to address current and emerging urban challenges across Vanuatu.





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The framework aims to guide long-term, coordinated urban development by improving land use planning, strengthening infrastructure investment, and supporting efficient resource allocation. Its draft vision promotes the development of resilient, inclusive, and sustainable urban centers that support economic growth, enhance community well-being, and reduce environmental and disaster risks.



During the workshop, stakeholders reviewed the draft National Urban Settlement Hierarchy and provided feedback on related policy recommendations. Participants also discussed the roles and responsibilities of key agencies, highlighting the need for stronger collaboration to ensure prosperous, livable, and sustainable urban settlements throughout Vanuatu.





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Vanuatu Police Force Announces First Major Promotions Under New Commissioner

The Commissioner of Police, together with the Chairman of the Police Service Commission officiated a significant round of promotions and appointments within the Vanuatu Police Force. Six senior officers were formally promoted, while nine others received acting appointments to critical leadership roles. The event marks the Commissioner's first official promotions since assuming office, signaling renewed focus on strengthening the force's leadership and operational capacity.



Vanuatu Police Force
September 2025 9:42 am



Vanuatu Police Force
09 September 2025 10:00 am

Promotions within the Police Force play a vital role in recognizing merit, boosting morale, and ensuring strong leadership across operational units. By elevating officers who have demonstrated commitment and professionalism, the organization continues to build a capable workforce that can effectively respond to national security needs and deliver quality policing services to communities across Vanuatu.





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Major Reform Ahead: Council Approves Overhaul of Police Act

After 45 years, the Council of Ministers has endorsed key policy papers advancing the proposal to repeal the Police Act [CAP 105]. This marks a major milestone in modernizing Vanuatu’s policing laws.

The Minister of Internal Affairs, Hon. Andrew Solomon Napuat met with the Vanuatu Police Force to review the proposed amendments. While the current Act has undergone several changes over the years, it no longer aligns with the realities and demands of modern policing.



Many responsibilities now carried out by the Police—such as responding to transactional crime, cybercrime, and emerging security threats—are not reflected in the existing legislation. The updated Act aims to address these gaps and ensure that VPF operates under a legal framework that meets today’s policing challenges.





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South West Bay Celebrates Historic Graduation of 36 Community Safety Team.

A large crowd gathered yesterday in Wintua Village, South West Bay, to witness the graduation of the area's new Community Safety Team (CST), reflecting strong community commitment to working alongside Police to address crime and restore order in local villages.



The ceremony marked a historic achievement for the area, with 36 CST members successfully completing a nine-day training program. Representatives came from 18 different villages, supported by 42 chiefs who also underwent a four-day leadership and safety training before receiving their certificates during the graduation.

The Vanuatu Police Force acknowledged the support of the New Zealand Government, whose partnership through the New Zealand Police continues to strengthen crime prevention efforts and help communities establish active CST groups. Today, Community Safety Teams are operating across many area councils in Vanuatu, contributing to safer homes, stronger communities, and more peaceful islands.





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13 VMF Officers Complete Off-Road Motorcycle Training Delivered by Chinese Police



Thirteen Vanuatu Mobile Force (VMF) officers completed a three-day off-road motorcycle training program conducted by Chinese Police. The training began on Tuesday, 9 September, and concluded today, 11 September 2025, at the VMF Camp.

All participating VMF officers received certificates of completion after successfully meeting the training requirements. The program focused on enhancing their capability to operate safely and effectively in challenging terrain.





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Acting DCPMS Astrophile Mwele thanked the Chinese Police for their ongoing partnership and support, noting that such training programs play an important role in upgrading the skills and readiness of Vanuatu Police Force officers.

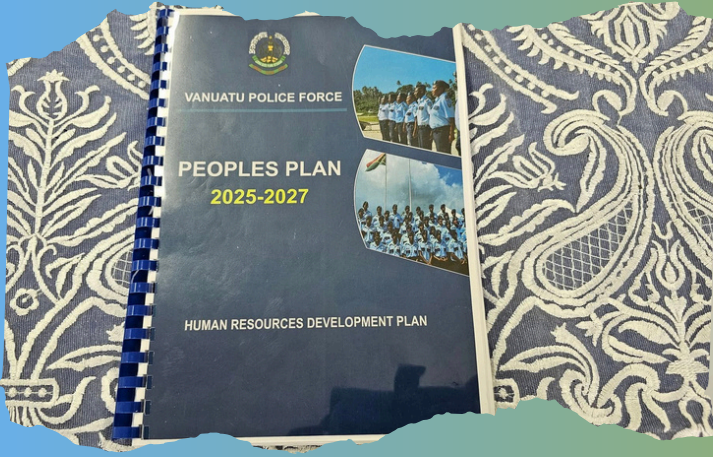
Vanuatu Launches First-Ever VPF Peoples Plan to Strengthen Policing

Today marks the historic launch of the first-ever Vanuatu Police Force (VPF) Peoples Plan, reinforcing the nation's commitment to a professional, accountable, and community-focused police service. The plan sends a clear message that Vanuatu is committed to strengthening VPF through its people.





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The Peoples Plan places human resources at the heart of policing, outlining fair recruitment, training, promotions, succession planning, and welfare systems. Commissioner of Police Bongran K. Numpuhoi VANGANWAS described it as a “pathway journey to build a fearless service and prepare future leaders within VPF.”

The launch, officiated by the Minister of Internal Affairs Hon. Andrew Napuat in the presence of the Chairman, Commissioner, and VPF executives, was hailed as a landmark initiative. The Minister urged all VPF members and citizens to work together to build a safe, strong, and united Vanuatu.

Vanuatu Launches First-Ever VPF Peoples Plan to Strengthen Policing





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From 4 to 22 August 2025, the Department of Labour & Employment Services in Port Vila led a joint inspection operation with labour officers in Santo and Malekula.

The inspections aimed to ensure compliance with labour laws, promote fair working conditions, and protect the rights and welfare of workers in various industries. The coordinated effort demonstrates the government’s commitment to upholding employment standards and supporting safe, lawful workplaces across Vanuatu.

During the inspections, officers engaged with employers and employees to provide guidance on labour regulations, identify areas needing improvement, and offer support for implementing best practices. Such proactive measures help build stronger, more accountable workplaces that benefit both workers and the wider community.



CRIM Launches Induction & Training Program for Provincial Registrars

The Department of Civil Registration and Identity Management (CRIM) has officially opened a one-week induction and training program for all Provincial Registrars, held from 15 to 19 September 2025 at Ramada Resort.





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Aligned with CRIM’s 2025 Annual Business Plan and the Ministry’s Corporate Plan 2026–2030, the program focuses on strengthening vital events registration, expanding National ID issuance, maintaining an accurate central Civil & Population Registry, supporting Electoral Authorities with voter registration data, and reviewing policies and strategies for CRIM services.

Executive Officer Mr. Simon Tor Bebe, in his opening remarks, highlighted the crucial role of Provincial Registrars as “frontline service providers ensuring every Ni-Vanuatu has access to legal identity.” He urged participants to uphold professionalism, teamwork, and accountability while delivering critical government services across the provinces.



The training emphasizes not only strengthening systems and procedures but also fostering a culture of integrity, efficiency, and citizen trust, marking a renewed commitment to improved government service delivery through CRIM





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Vanuatu Delegation Joins PNG's 50th Independence Flag Raising Ceremony

Vanuatu delegation joined Papua New Guinea's Prime Minister at the official flag raising ceremony marking 50 years of PNG's independence—an important celebration of shared Melanesian identity and regional unity. Deputy Prime Minister Hon. Johnny Koanapo, accompanied by the Minister of Lands and the Minister of Internal Affairs, represented Vanuatu with honor, highlighting the deep historic and cultural ties between the two nations.



The event also reaffirmed Vanuatu's commitment to strengthening cooperation with PNG in key areas such as security, labour mobility, trade, and Melanesian regionalism. The milestone celebration served as a reminder of the enduring friendship and partnership between the two countries as they continue to advance shared development goals.





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Government Conducts Consultation in Malekula on Lakatoro's Proposed Municipality Status

Last week, the Director of the Department of Urban Affairs and Planning (DUAP), the Director-General of the Ministry of Internal Affairs, and senior officials conducted a consultation visit to Malekula to engage with communities on the proposal for Lakatoro to become a municipality.

The visit marks an important step in advancing urban development and demonstrates the Government's commitment to bringing services closer to the people, strengthening local governance, and creating new opportunities for growth across Malekula.





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Chinese Police Conduct Training and Courtesy Visit with Lakatoro Police

Lakatoro Police welcomed a team of Chinese Police officers this week as part of ongoing cooperation to strengthen policing capacity in the province. On 18 September 2025, the visiting officers paid a courtesy visit to the Malampa Provincial Headquarters, where they met with the Provincial Secretary General. Police in Lakatoro also held a short welcoming ceremony to receive the delegation.

The Chinese Police team will deliver a two-day basic self-defense training for Lakatoro Police officers. Malampa Commander, Chief Inspector Davis Saravanu, expressed his appreciation for the continued support, noting that the training will greatly assist officers in their daily duties and contribute to improved policing services across the province.





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Aniwa Police Conduct First-Ever Remote Remand Using New Technology

On Thursday, 18 September 2025, the Aniwa Police Post successfully conducted its first remote remand hearing using new teleconference technology—a major milestone for policing and justice services in the outer islands. The system enabled Aniwa Police to connect with the Public Prosecutions Office and the Magistrates Court in Port Vila, as the Tanna Magistrate was on annual leave. The suspect, charged with Domestic Violence, Threats to Kill, Threatening Language, and Intentional Assault, was granted remand and later escorted by Aniwa Police to the Correctional Centre on Tanna.



This advancement demonstrates how modern technology is improving access to justice across Vanuatu by allowing court hearings to take place from any island. A second remand teleconference was also conducted on Friday at the Tanna Magistrates Court with support from the Public Prosecutions Office in Vila, marking the first remote remand for three female suspects facing charges of Criminal Trespass, Intentional Assault, and Complicity.



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VPF Supports UNCAT Report Validation Consultation in Malampa Province

The Vanuatu Police Force (VPF), through its ongoing partnership with key stakeholders, supported Human Rights Vanuatu (HRV) in drafting Vanuatu's Report under the UN Convention Against Torture (UNCAT) earlier in June. From 15 to 19 September, VPF joined HRV in Malampa Province to conduct a validation consultation with communities and local authorities.

The initiative highlights strong collaboration between the Ministry of Justice and the Ministry of Internal Affairs, reinforcing the Government's commitment to strengthening human rights protections and ensuring accountability across the justice and policing sectors.

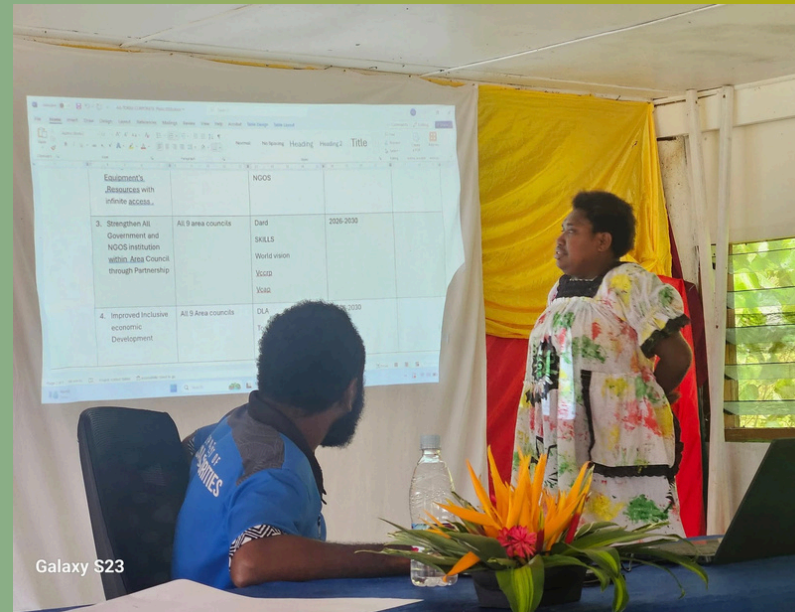




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Torba PGC and PTAC Acknowledge Support for Provincial Corporate Plan Development

Torba Provincial Government Council (PGC) and the Provincial Technical Advisory Committee (PTAC) have acknowledged the valuable support of the Governance for Growth (GfG) program through the Australian High Commission, alongside key Government partners including the Public Service Commission (PSC) and the Department of Local Authorities (DLA).



Galaxy S23

The teams were in Torba last week to continue workshop sessions for drafting the Torba Provincial Corporate Plan 2026–2030, a key roadmap aimed at strengthening provincial governance, improving service delivery, and guiding development priorities for the next five years.





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Reintegration Open Day Highlights Support Services for Returning Seasonal Workers

The Reintegration Open Day successfully brought together government agencies, partners, and community members to showcase the range of services available to support Ni-Vanuatu workers returning from Australia and New Zealand. The event provided a valuable platform for workers to access information, guidance, and assistance aimed at helping them settle back into their communities.





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The reintegration program plays a vital role in ensuring returning workers transition smoothly, manage their earnings responsibly, and access opportunities in employment, small business development, financial literacy, and training. Strengthening reintegration support helps maximise the long-term benefits of labour mobility schemes for individuals, families, and the national economy.



Magistrates Court Returns to Ambrym: Justice Delivered Locally

The Magistrates' Court returned to Ambrym this year after a three-year hiatus, holding sessions from 9th to 16th September. Chief Magistrates presided over 31 criminal cases, including plea cases, Preliminary Inquiries, and trials. The Malekula Police Prosecutor led the proceedings, assisted by another officer due to the high number of trial matters, with some cases involving multiple defendants charged together.





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Court sessions were held at Nebul in the north and Wuro in the west of Ambrym Island. Defendants from the southeast were transported by police to Wuro for their hearings. All plea and trial cases were successfully completed, with most defendants receiving suspended sentences and a few receiving custodial sentences. Lenient sentences were often due to delays, as some offences dated back to 2021 and 2022.

Two Preliminary Inquiry cases have been committed to the Supreme Court and will be heard in Santo next month, involving Unlawful Possession of Cannabis and Sexual Intercourse Without Consent. Six defendants—two remanded and four sentenced—were escorted by police to the correctional facility in Santo.





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IMMIGRATION ENROLMENT SYSTEM OFFICE OPENS AT VANUATU CONSULATE IN HONG KONG

The Minister of Internal Affairs, Andrew Solomon Napuat, and the Minister of Lands, Rick Tchmako Mahe, officially opened the new Immigration Enrolment System Office at Vanuatu's Consulate in Hong Kong yesterday. The office will be staffed by Passport Manager Mr. Fred Kalwat.

This development demonstrates the Government's commitment to strengthening services at the newly relocated consulate, which was officially opened by the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Mark Ati, in mid-2025.



Speaking at the ceremony, Minister Napuat highlighted that Vanuatu identified Hong Kong more than a decade ago as a strategic hub for investment, business, trade, and broader opportunities—an insight that led to the establishment of a permanent presence in the city. He acknowledged the presence of Minister Mahe, Ambassador to Beijing Dennis Nai, Director of Immigration Jeffrey Markson, Passport Manager Fred Kalwat, and invited guests.



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NATIONAL VALIDATION WORKSHOP HELD ON REVIEW OF THE MARRIAGE ACT

The Department of Civil Registration and Identity Management (CRIM) hosted a National Validation Workshop today at Iririki Island Resort to advance the ongoing review of the Marriage Act. The workshop brought together key stakeholders from across the civil registration and identity management sector.



Participants reviewed feedback gathered from recent provincial consultations and strengthened collaboration among government agencies, churches, law enforcement, civil society, and community representatives. Stakeholders included the Human Rights Office, Ministry of Justice and Community Services, Vanuatu Police Force, Family Protection Unit, Vanuatu Women's Centre, Port Vila City Council, various church denominations, Malvatumauri, the Vanuatu Law Reform Commission, the Department of Women's Affairs, and the Council of Chiefs.





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Opening the workshop, the Director General of the Ministry of Internal Affairs highlighted the importance of the review, noting that the Marriage Act forms a vital foundation for protecting families, individual rights, and community wellbeing. He stressed the need for laws that remain relevant and inclusive as society evolves. The Ministry thanked all stakeholders for their contributions to ensuring a thorough and inclusive review process.

POST-ELECTION REVIEW WORKSHOP HELD TO STRENGTHEN FUTURE ELECTIONS

A one-day Post-Election Review Workshop was held on 29 September 2025, bringing together the Electoral Commission, Vanuatu Electoral Office (VEO), Vanuatu Electoral Environment Program (VEEP), and Provincial VEO Officers to discuss the recent four Provincial Elections. The workshop assessed what worked well, what challenges were faced, and areas needing improvement as part of the continuous strengthening of electoral processes.





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This review is an important step in ensuring transparent, efficient, and well-managed elections across the country. Insights shared during the workshop will contribute to improving planning and operations for upcoming electoral events.

The next Provincial Election will be for Torba Province in February 2026, followed by the Port Vila Municipal elections. Citizens are urged to register early and check their ID cards—no wait long last minute.





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GROUND-BREAKING CEREMONY HELD FOR MOIA FAREA (NAKAMAL)

The Ministry of Internal Affairs celebrated a significant milestone yesterday with the official ground-breaking of the MOIA Farea (Nakamal) at Independence Park. The Director General opened the ceremony, noting that the project represents not just the start of construction but the foundation of a space that reflects unity, service, and community.

Australian High Commissioner H.E. Max Willis reaffirmed Australia's support, describing the Farea as a place for meeting, dialogue, and strengthening community resilience. He highlighted the project as an important step in deepening the partnership between Australia and Vanuatu.





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In his keynote address, the Minister of Internal Affairs emphasized that the Farea will serve as an inclusive and safe gathering space for staff, partners, and communities. He acknowledged the Government of Australia, the Pacific Australia Skills Program, and the Vanuatu Institute of Technology for their contributions. The Ministry looks forward to the project's completion as a symbol of unity, partnership, and service to the nation.



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