

# Solomon Islands Universal Periodic Review 2026

## Factsheet - 4<sup>th</sup> Cycle

### The human rights of people with diverse SOGIESC

This is a summary of a full report ([download the report](#)) setting out the human rights situation for Solomon Islanders with diverse sexual orientation, gender identities and expressions and sex characteristics (SOGIESC). The report was co-authored by Equality Australia, the Gender Equality and Social Inclusion Network, ILGA Oceania and Kaleidoscope Human Rights Foundation to inform the 2026 4th cycle Universal Periodic Review (UN) of Solomon Islands. In its previous UPR, Solomon Islands did not accept any recommendations related to SOGIESC. The report identifies potential breaches of human rights treaties to which Solomon Islands is signatory (e.g. ICESCR and CEDAW) and some to which it has not acceded (e.g. ICCPR and CAT).

#### Laws and policies

- Sections 160 to 162 of the colonial era Penal Code **prohibit consensual same-sex sexual conduct with a max penalty of 14 years imprisonment**. While there was no evidence that police were enforcing these laws, interviewees explained this legislation creates a profound sense of unsafety, fear and insecurity.
- There are no **protections from discrimination** on the basis of SOGIESC attributes, or protection against hate crimes, incitement to hatred or violence.
- Customary legal frameworks are also interpreted in discriminatory ways.
- Leaders in Solomon Islands have repeatedly expressed **opposition to the rights of people with diverse SOGIESC**. For example, in 2023, former Prime Minister Manasseh Sogavare publicly stated his view that upholding rights of people with diverse SOGIESC was not in line with national values.
- The Sogavare government's policy of **censoring all diverse SOGIESC content from the national broadcaster** does not appear to have shifted since it was introduced in 2023.
- Solomon Islands law **does not provide for legal gender recognition for trans people**, with no option of updating gender markers, including to non-binary identities. Even though there are no legal restrictions to prevent it, **no evidence was found that gender-affirming care is available**.
- No information could be located on the availability of protections for intersex people from medically unnecessary surgical interventions occurring without informed consent.

#### Interview findings

To inform the report, 17 interviews were conducted mid-2025 with Solomon Islanders with diverse SOGIESC and an analysis of relevant laws and policies.

**Abuse, violence and discrimination in the public sphere were the most prevalent human rights violations reported**, ranging from verbal taunts and online abuse to physical assaults and public humiliation. Owing to this widespread public hostility, many community members said that they needed to remain closeted. Some had experienced blackmail and extortion. A small number were accepted by their families, but the majority had either not disclosed their identity to their family or had experienced negative family reactions.

**Discrimination and violence also occur in family, workplace and educational settings.**

Interviewees were denied employment, forced out of jobs due to hostile work environments, and subjected to bullying and harassment in schools and universities. They had experienced physical violence from family members and, in one case, from the police. In this case, following a minor incident, the interviewee was detained for four days, slapped, mocked, forced to strip naked and sexually assaulted by another detainee.

**Cultural and religious beliefs play a central role in driving discrimination,**

With traditional *kastom* (customs) and Christian teachings reinforcing binary gender norms and condemning same-sex relationships and gender diversity.

## **Recommendations**

### ***Legal reform***

1. decriminalize same-sex sexual conduct between consenting adults.
2. amend the Constitution to enshrine SOGIESC as protected attributes within the non-discrimination clause;
3. enact comprehensive anti-discrimination legislation that prohibits discrimination on the basis of SOGIESC in all spheres, including employment, education, health, housing and
4. access to public services; introduce legal protections against hate crimes and hate speech on the basis of SOGIESC, including appropriate penalties and mechanisms for redress.

### ***Implementation and service delivery***

5. develop and implement inclusion policies in education and healthcare sectors, including anti-bullying frameworks, gender-sensitive teacher training, and non-discriminatory health service guidelines to ensure equal access for people with diverse SOGIESC;
6. establish safe and confidential mechanisms for reporting discrimination and violence, including within customary legal frameworks and law enforcement.
7. ensure meaningful participation of SOGIESC communities and organization in the design, implementation and monitoring of policies and programs affecting them.

### ***Community engagement and civil society***

8. roll out nationwide, government-led public education and awareness campaigns that promote understanding, respect, and acceptance of people with diverse SOGIESC, including targeted programs for schools, faith leaders, traditional authorities, and the media; and
9. provide financial, technical and institutional support for the establishment of local civil society organizations which focus on advocating for the rights of people with diverse SOGIESC and providing essential support services, such as counselling and capacity building initiatives.

## **Contact details**

### **Equality Australia**

Savanh Tanhchareun

savanh.tanhchareun@equalityaustralia.org.au

### **Gender Equality and**

**Social Inclusion**

**Network (GESIN),**

**Solomon Islands**

Lawrence Kafa – lawkhapher@gmail.com

### **ILGA Oceania**

Kris Prasad

kris@ilga-oceania.org

### **Kaleidoscope**

**Human Rights**

**Foundation**

Professor Paula Gerber

[paula.gerber@monash.edu](mailto:paula.gerber@monash.edu)