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## PACIFIC ISLANDS

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**Republics of Kiribati and Nauru, Cook Islands, Niue, Samoa, Republic of the Marshall Islands, Federal States of Micronesia, Republic of Palau, Tuvalu and Vanuatu** (see individual entries for Solomon Islands, Fiji, Papua New Guinea and Tonga)

*Many of the Pacific Islands have no armed forces. In the case of eight of them the provision of defence lies, to varying degrees, with Australia, New Zealand or the USA. Tuvalu and Vanuatu have no such defence arrangements with other states.*

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### REPUBLICS OF KIRIBATI AND NAURU

**Population:** 98,000<sup>1</sup> (aggregate)

**Government armed forces:** no armed forces

**Compulsory recruitment age:** not applicable

**Voluntary recruitment age:** not applicable

**Voting age:** Kiribati: 18; Nauru: 20

**Optional Protocol:**

Kiribati: not signed

Nauru: signed 8 September 2000

**Other treaties ratified** (see glossary):

Kiribati: CRC

Nauru: CRC, ICC

*No armed forces are maintained by the governments of Kiribati or Nauru.*

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### Government

#### National recruitment legislation and practice

Defence assistance in Kiribati is provided by Australia and New Zealand, and the police force carries out law enforcement duties in all the islands.<sup>2</sup> Kiribati nationals have in the past volunteered to join the United Kingdom (UK) armed forces<sup>3</sup> where the minimum age for voluntary recruitment is 16 (see UK entry). Australia is responsible, under an informal agreement, for the defence of Nauru.<sup>4</sup>

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## COOK ISLANDS, NIUE, SAMOA

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**Population:** Cook Islands and Samoa: 178,000 (aggregate); Niue: 1,812<sup>5</sup>

**Government armed forces:** no armed forces

**Compulsory recruitment age:** not applicable

**Voluntary recruitment age:** not applicable

**Voting age:** 18; 21 Samoa

**Optional Protocol:** not signed

**Other treaties ratified** (see glossary):

Cook Islands: CRC, GC AP I and II

Niue: CRC

Samoa: CRC, GC AP I and II, ICC

*No armed forces are maintained by the governments of Cook Islands, Niue and Samoa. Defence is provided by New Zealand.*

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### Government

#### National recruitment legislation and practice

Under the 1965 constitution of the Cook Islands, defence is the responsibility of New Zealand. This responsibility would be acted upon only at the request of the government of the Cook Islands. The New Zealand armed forces administer a Mutual Assistance Programme, which aims to support the Pacific Patrol Boat operations and the police, and provides training, including in using and securing small arms.<sup>6</sup>

The 1974 constitution of Niue, which provides for self-government in free association with New Zealand, states that New Zealand is responsible for external affairs and defence.<sup>7</sup> Under New Zealand's Niue Constitution Act, No. 42 of 1974, "Nothing in this Act or in the Constitution shall affect the responsibilities of Her Majesty The Queen in right of New Zealand for the external affairs and defence of Niue".<sup>8</sup>

Under the 1962 Treaty of Friendship between Samoa and New Zealand, New Zealand agrees to "consider sympathetically" requests from Samoa for "technical, administrative and other assistance", and both governments agree to consult as appropriate on "matters of mutual interest and concern". Under a Mutual Assistance Programme, the New Zealand armed forces have provided training for Samoan police officers in preparation for their deployment with the UN in Timor-Leste.<sup>9</sup>

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## REPUBLIC OF THE MARSHALL ISLANDS, FEDERAL STATES OF MICRONESIA, REPUBLIC OF PALAU

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**Population:** 804,000<sup>10</sup> (aggregate)  
**Government armed forces:** no armed forces  
**Compulsory recruitment age:** not applicable; no conscription in Marshall Islands during peacetime  
**Voluntary recruitment age:** not applicable  
**Voting age:** 18; 20 in Palau  
**Optional Protocol:** Marshall Islands, Palau: not signed  
Micronesia: signed 8 May 2002  
**Other treaties ratified** (see glossary):  
Marshall Islands: CRC, ICC  
Micronesia; Palau: CRC, GC AP I and II

***No armed forces are maintained by the governments of The Marshall Islands, Micronesia and Palau. Defence is provided by the USA.***

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### Government

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#### National recruitment legislation and practice

The USA maintains three separate Compact of Free Association agreements with each state. These agreements determine that the US government has full authority and responsibility for security and defence in relation to the islands.

The constitution of the Marshall Islands states “No person shall be conscripted to serve in the armed forces of the Marshall Islands except in time of war or imminent danger of war as certified by the Cabinet, and no person shall be conscripted if ... he has established that he is a conscientious objector to participation in war” (Article II, Section 11).<sup>11</sup>

According to the Compact of Free Association between the USA and the Marshall Islands, no Marshallese citizen is subject to “involuntary induction into military service of the United States so long as such person does not establish habitual residence in the United States, its territories or possessions” (Section 341).<sup>12</sup> Similar provision is made in the USA’s agreement with Micronesia.<sup>13</sup>

In early 2004, there were around 100 Marshall Islanders serving in the US armed forces, 25 of whom had been deployed in Iraq since 2003. Citizens of Micronesia have also served in Iraq.<sup>14</sup>

Palau and the USA signed a Compact of Free Association, which entered into force on 1 October 1994 and will be due for review in 2009.<sup>15</sup>

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## TUVALU AND VANUATU

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**Population:** 206,000<sup>16</sup> (aggregate)  
**Government armed forces:** no armed forces  
**Compulsory recruitment age:** not applicable  
**Voluntary recruitment age:** not applicable  
**Voting age (government elections):** 18  
**Optional Protocol:** not signed  
**Other treaties ratified** (see glossary):  
Tuvalu: CRC  
Vanuatu: CRC, GC AP I and II

***No armed forces are maintained by the governments of Tuvalu or Vanuatu. There were no reports of under-18s in the security or paramilitary forces in Vanuatu.***

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### Government

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#### National recruitment legislation and practice

There are no regular military forces in Vanuatu, and no conscription to the other security forces.<sup>17</sup> The Vanuatu Mobile Forces, which supplements the Vanuatu Police Force, is a paramilitary unit of about 250 men.<sup>18</sup> The Mobile Forces were reported to have developed from a riot squad into virtually a small army, and were involved in an armed confrontation with the police in late August 2002 in a dispute over the appointment of the Police Commissioner.<sup>19</sup>

Police officers have taken part in the Peace Monitoring Group deployed to Bougainville since 1998 and in the International Peace Monitoring Team in the Solomon Islands since it was established by the Townsville Peace Agreement of October 2000.<sup>20</sup>

There are no regular military forces in Tuvalu.<sup>21</sup>

- 1 *The Statesman’s Yearbook 2004*, ed. Barry Turner, Palgrave Macmillan, 2003.
- 2 Central Intelligence Agency (CIA), *World Factbook 2003*, 18 December 2003, <http://www.cia.gov/publications/factbook>.
- 3 House of Commons (UK Parliament), Hansard Written Answers, 16 May 2002, <http://www.publications.parliament.uk>.
- 4 *CIA World Factbook*, op. cit.
- 5 *The Statesman’s Yearbook 2004*, op. cit.
- 6 New Zealand Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade, *Cook Islands Country Paper, August 2003*, <http://www.mfat.govt.nz> (Foreign and trade policy, Pacific, Pacific Island relationships).
- 7 New Zealand Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade, *Niue Country Paper, August 2003*.
- 8 Niue Constitution Act, posted at New Zealand Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade.

- 9 New Zealand Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade, *Samoa Country Paper, May 2003*.
- 10 *The Statesman's Yearbook 2004*, op. cit.
- 11 Constitution, revised code of 1988, [http://www.rmiembassyus.org/government/constitution\\_all.html](http://www.rmiembassyus.org/government/constitution_all.html).
- 12 Compact of Free Association, <http://www.rmiembassyus.org/government/compact.html>.
- 13 Compact of Free Association, as amended May 2003, <http://www.fm/jcn/press/signrelease.html>.
- 14 *Yokwe Online*, "Marshall Islands soldiers serve in Iraq with honor", 13 April 2004, [www.yokwe.net](http://www.yokwe.net); Joint Communiqué, 13 May 2003, <http://www.fm/jcn/docs/signjointcom.html>.
- 15 *Pacific Islands Report*, "Palau, FSM and Marshalls object to Compact changes", 15 August 2003, <http://166.122.164.43/archive/2003/august/o8-15-01.htm>.
- 16 *The Statesman's Yearbook 2004*, op. cit.
- 17 CIA *World Factbook*, op. cit.; Civil and political rights, including the question of conscientious objection to military service, Report of the UN Secretary-General to UN Commission on Human Rights, UN Doc. E/CN.4/2000/55, 17 December 1999, <http://www.ohchr.org>.
- 18 Philip Alpers and Conor Twyford, *Small Arms in the Pacific*, Occasional Paper No. 8, Small Arms Survey, March 2003, <http://www.smallarmssurvey.org> (Publications).
- 19 Robert Keith-Reid, "Solving differences via the traditional means: How a few pigs helped avert a coup", *Pacific Magazine*, October 2002, <http://www.pacificmagazine.net>; *Sydney Morning Herald*, "PM hides as island police turn on their chiefs", 28 August 2002, <http://www.smh.com.au>.
- 20 Philip Alpers and Conor Twyford, op. cit.; Global IDP Database, *Profile of Internal Displacement: Solomon Islands*, 18 March 2004, <http://www.idproject.org>.
- 21 CIA *World Factbook*, op. cit.