

# FSM Swimmers again set new national records at Melbourne swim meet

*FSM Swimming Federation*

FSM Swimming finished 2022 on a high note as Team FSM came away from Melbourne with an astounding nine new FSM National Records in swimming. Four swimmers from the FSM made the journey to Melbourne, Australia in early December for the FINA World Swimming Championships - Tasi Limtiaco, Taeyanna Adams, Kestra Kihleng, and Kyler Kihleng, accompanied by FSM Swimming Coach Derick Daniel. This swimming event was a short course competition, meaning the events took place in a 25-meter swimming pool rather than the Olympic size pool of 50 meters. While the team has been training in earnest in preparation for this competition, coming away with so many new national records was an unexpected, though well-earned achievement.

Team FSM competed in two relays at this competition, setting two new national records in the process. The first was the 4x50 Meter Medley Relay, in which the team dropped a remarkable 15 seconds off the previous national record set in Palau in 2019 at the Micronesian Swimming Championships, coming in ahead of some of the top teams in the Micronesian region. The second relay was the 4x50 Meter Freestyle Relay, finishing a full 6 seconds faster than the previous record, also set in Palau.

For Olympian Tasi Limtiaco, this championship was a career highlight as each one of his swims was a new national record. He not only defended his own national records in his two individual swims, the 50 Meter Breaststroke and the 100 Meter Breaststroke, but also went on to swim the first leg of the two relays



that Team FSM entered, meaning he was eligible for an additional two national records. In a team relay event in swimming, only the first swimmer of the relay can count as a record due to the method of starts. For the Medley relay, Tasi dropped 2 seconds off the long-standing record in the 50 Meter Backstroke set in 2008 by



*Click here for continuation*

# Runoff election currently scheduled between Elnei and Ioanis for Lt. Governor position

*By Bill Jaynes  
 The Kaselehlie Press*

January 3, 2023

**Pohnpei, FSM**—On December 20, 2022, a special election was held to fill the seats left vacant by the passing of Lt. Governor Feliciano Perman and Nett Legislative representative, Senator Adelino Edmund. Four candidates ran for each office. In the Lt. Governor race, Christina Elnei was the top vote-getter

with 3,241 votes. Francisco L. Ioanis came in, in a very close second place with 3,019 votes. Peteriko L. Hairens had 1,791 votes and Kalio Ladore Edwin had 533 votes.

With 809 votes, Welfred H. Edmund was the winner of the Nett legislative position election. He was followed by Ricky Paulino Rodriguez with 377 votes, Alexander Augustine with 311, and Wayne Mendiola with 231.

The Office of the Pohnpei Election Commission is currently preparing for a runoff election on January 17, 2023 for the office of Lt. Governor, between Christina Elnei and Francisco L. Ioanis, neither of whom had the majority of votes in the election.

At press time, Ioanis, who had previously said during an open session of the Pohnpei State Legislature that he would

not participate in a run-off election if he came in second place, had not filed his intention to withdraw at the Office of the Pohnpei Election Commission. Election Commissioner Heinrich Stevenson said that he had contacted Ioanis and told him if it was his intention to have his name withdrawn from the ballot, he must do so in writing to the Commission. He said that at this time, since ballots have to

*Click here for continuation*



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# Court rules Moses name should remain on the FSM ballot for Congress election

By Bill Jaynes  
The Kaselehlie Press

December 21, 2022

**FSM**—On December 21, 2022, the FSM Supreme Court ruled that Erick Paul had failed to prove his claim that Senator Esmond B. Moses had lost his FSM citizenship over 27 years ago by failing to properly register his intent to remain an FSM citizen and renounce his United States citizenship before he turned 21. The ultimate result of the Court's decision is that it denied Paul's request to declare Moses ineligible to run as the incumbent in the upcoming Congress election.

Paul's attorney had argued (in C.A. 2022-030) that Moses' registration of intent was not properly done, as it was not done in writing and it was made to the Attorney General. Paul disputed the authority of the then Attorney General as the proper source for Moses to have made his registration of intent. Paul also argued that Moses additionally failed to properly renounce his citizenship in the United States through the formal processes required in that country.

Moses was born in Guam on April 22, 1974, to Resio Samuel Moses, a Pohnpeian, and Susan Rice Moses, an American residing in Pohnpei. As a student, at the age of 20, Moses travelled to Pohnpei for the purpose of registering his intent to remain an FSM citizen and renouncing his U.S. citizenship. He visited the FSM Attorney General's Office in Palikir to do so. Camillo Noket was the

FSM Attorney General at the time. Noket took his renunciation orally. Moses testified that he did not make a renunciation to the United States Department of State saying that he did not know it was required under U.S. law.

On January 6, 1995, the FSM issued a Certificate of Citizenship to Moses that was signed by A.G. Noket. As soon as he received the certificate Moses went to the FSM immigration office, cancelled his existing valid passport, and applied for a new passport which was issued on the same day. Moses had previously travelled on a US passport but the last time he had done so was in elementary school.

Since his 21st birthday, Moses renewed his FSM passport seven times.

"On the issue of confirming Mr. Moses's citizenship," the ruling said in reciting the facts of the case, "the Election Director's office relied on Mr. Moses's Certificate of Citizenship, the fact that he has been a Congress member and a registered voter, and has held an FSM passport."

In its ruling, the Court pointed out that in 1994-95, neither the FSM Constitution, FSM law nor regulations required that registrations of intent to remain an FSM citizen and renunciation of other citizenships be in written form. It pointed out that there was also no specification in the law, Constitution, or regulations to whom a renunciation must be made.

Under FSM law, a person registering his intent is required to do so to the President or his designee. The Court found that since Camillo Noket was serving as the President's Attorney General at the time Moses sought to retain his FSM citizenship, the doctrine of "regularity" of duties served to make Noket's action to issue a certificate of citizenship legally correct and sufficient as the President's designee.

The Court found that the oral renunciation of US citizenship and announcement of intent to retain FSM citizenship was also legally sufficient.

Paul had argued that Moses had been required to formally appear before a diplomatic or consular officer of the United States in order to effectuate official renunciation of citizenship in the US and that without it, he is still a citizen of the United States and therefore can only be an FSM National and not a citizen. "I find that renouncing a claim to foreign citizenship made to an official, properly designated, of either the FSM or the other country of citizenship, fulfills the renunciation requirement set forth in Article III, section 3 and restated in 7 F.S.M.C. 203," the Court said in its response.

On the question of whether or not the oath to which he swore fulfilled the requirements of action renunciation of US

citizenship, the Court wrote, "In his sworn testimony, Mr. Moses did not recite the words of the oath he took in 1994-95 but recalled that in the oath he both registered his intent to remain a citizen and that he renounced citizenship of any other country. I find that his testimony was credible and that it was further supported by the fact that Attorney General Noket thereafter issued the Certificate of Citizenship."



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Bill Jaynes  
Managing Editor

**THE NEXT ISSUE OF  
THE KASELEHLIE PRESS  
WILL BE RELEASED ON:**

**January 17, 2023**

**Deadline for submission of articles or  
advertisements for this issue is the end  
of working hours on:**

**Monday, January 16, 2023**

# Summary of 22nd FSM Congress sixth special actions



## FSM Congress Information Services

December 08, 2022

**FSM--Palikir, POHNPEI (Pohnpei Delegation Office)** – The 22nd Congress of the Federated States of Micronesia concluded its 6th Special Session on Wednesday, December 07, 2022 with the adoption of eighteen resolutions which included grants, nominations and an invitation for the President, His Excellency David W. Panuelo to deliver a State of the Nation Address at its January 2023 Regular Session among others. The invitation was adopted through Congressional Resolution (CR) 22-178.

In regards to nominations, the Congress adopted CR 22-184 and CR 22-172, confirming the nominations of Mr. Arthy G. Nena to serve as a member of the MiCare Board of Directors, representing the state of Kosrae and Ms. Geraldine Mitagyow to serve as a member of the Board of Regents for the College of Micronesia - FSM, representing the state of Yap.

Through the adoption of C.R. 22-183, the Congress sets the ceiling of \$107, 090, 963 as the estimated funds available for appropriation from the General Fund of the Federated States of Micronesia for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2023, inclusive of Amended Compact grants and Supplemental Education grant.

The Congress also adopted C.R. 22- 182, a grant in the amount of \$4,000,000 from the Asian Development Bank, to fund the Renewable Energy Development Project- Additional Funding. The grant is to promote renewable energy to support a national disaster fund, in addition to support mitigation, adaptation and disaster relief efforts.

Three grants from the United States Department of Education were approved by the Congress. The first one is CR 22-181, a grant in the amount of \$250,000 for the budget period August 1, 2022 to July 31, 2023 under part B of the Individual with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). The second one is CR 22-180, a grant in

the amount of \$200,000 for the budget period October 1, 2022 to September 30, 2023 under Part B of the Individual with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), and the third one is CR 22-179, a grant in the amount of \$2,727, 888 for the federal funding period July 1, 2022 to September 30, 2023 under Part B of the Individual with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), including all the terms and conditions of the assistances.

Another congressional resolution that was adopted is C.R. 22-177, which expressed the sincere condolences and sadness of the Twenty-Second Congress of the Federated States of Micronesia, to the family of the former Chief Justice of the Palau Supreme Court, the late Chief Justice Arthur Ngirakelsong, who passed on November 16, 2022.

By adopting C.R. 22-176, the Congress approved a grant in the amount of \$300,000 from the United States Department of Health and Human Services, Health Resources and Services Administration, to provide funding for the America Rescue Act – Pediatric Mental Health Care Access New Area Expansion.

The Congress also adopted C.R. 22-175, a grant in the amount of \$445,000 from the United States Department of Health and Human Services, Health Resources and Services Administration, to provide funding for the America Rescue Act – Pediatric Mental Health Care Access New Area Expansion, including all the terms and conditions of the assistance.

In regards to the ongoing litigation between the Open Access Entity and the FSM Telecommunications Corporation, the Congress adopted C.R 11-174, concerning the Fiber Optic Project and the Eastern Micronesia Cable (EMC), urging the parties and stakeholders to cooperate and expedite the implementation of this project. According to the resolution, the Congress wishes to express policy discretion and its intention for the FSM to join the EMC Project that guarantees broadband connectivity for the FSM via Kosrae, and further urge all parties to the court litigation involving the Open Access entity and the FSM Telecommunications Corporation to respect the trial court decision issued and forego any appeal.

Another grant in the amount of \$250,000 from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Substance Abuse and

Mental Health Services Administration, to provide funding for the FSM Department of Health and Social Affairs State Opioid Response (SOR) Project, also received the approval of the Congress with adoption of C.R 22-171.

A grant of \$119,000 from the U.S. Department of Agriculture, through the Forest Service Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL) was also adopted by the Congress through CR 22-170, to fund the FSM Forest Action Plan activities.

Through C.R 22-169, the Congress approved a grant in the amount of \$131,774 from the U.S Department of Health and Human Services, Health Resources and Services Administration, to fund the FSM Maternal Child Health Program for the budget period from October 01, 2021, to the September 30, 2023.

Congress adopted C.R. 22-168, a donation in the amount of \$200,000 from the Government of the People’s Republic of China to implement appropriate measures against the COVID-19 pandemic and to purchase necessary medical supplies and equipment.

By adopting C.R. 22-167, the Congress approved a grant in the amount of \$155,509 from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, to fund the project entitled: “Epidemiology and Laboratory Capacity in the Federated States of Micronesia” and its related services.

Finally, the Congress adopted C.R. 22-142, which expressed the sincere appreciation of the Twenty-Second Congress of the Federated States of Micronesia to Floyd K. Takeuchi for his long career in photography and journalism that has focused on the Pacific and contributed to a greater positive understanding of the Federated States of Micronesia in the world.

During Mr. Takeuchi’s long career, he has worked on stories as far ranging as the second evacuation of Bikini Atoll, the political status negotiations that led to the independence for the Federated States of Micronesia, the Republic of the Marshall Islands and Palau.

The next Regular Session of the Congress is scheduled for next month, unless a special session is called by the Speaker.

## Christmas Candy Drop around Pohnpei

### Pohnpei Enginkehlap News

December 29, 2022

**Pohnpei--**Staff from the Governor’s Office led by Public Affairs Officer Peteriko Hairens trekked across Pohnpei via the main circumferential road to spread Christmas cheer and candy to children in Sokehs, Kitti, Madolenihmw, U, Nett and Kolonia.

Kalahngan to the children of all ages that came out to collect candy. Kalahngan to the Department of Public Safety for escorting this movement. Kalahngan to V6AH for your continuous updates that informed the public of the Christmas candy drop location. Special Kalahngan to Senator Jayson Walter for coming along to support this effort.



**Job Title: Financial Management Consultant**  
**Sector: Financial Management**  
**Location: Pohnpei, Federated States of Micronesia**  
**Appointment: Local Hire**

**Background/General description:**

Established in 1944, the WBG is one of the world's largest sources of funding and knowledge for development solutions. In fiscal year 2014, the WBG committed \$65.6 billion in loans, grants, equity investments and guarantees to its members and private businesses, of which \$22.2 billion was concessional finance to its poorest members. It is governed by 188 member countries and delivers services out of 120 offices with nearly 15,000 staff located globally.

**World Bank Group Governance Global Practice:**

An effective and accountable governance framework, in the form of functioning institutions, is a necessary precondition for sustainable poverty reduction. Fragile, ineffective or inexistent institutions have long been put forward as explaining the relative underperformance of economies. Furthermore, poor governance and structural deficiencies in public and private institutions are often prevalent in fragile and conflict affected states. On the other hand, cross-country empirics have confirmed that higher institutional quality is correlated with higher levels of per capita income and greater economic growth. Thus, governance mechanisms and institutions are critical to sustained growth and poverty alleviation.

The Governance Global Practice (GGP) comprises a variety of different professional disciplines working on public institutions, including public sector management, governance and anti-corruption, procurement, financial management, social accountability and justice reform.

The GGP interventions range from diagnostics, technical assistance and advisory services, knowledge management and sharing, creating peer learning platforms, lending and reform project implementation, and monitoring and reporting. An

important part of its responsibilities is to deliver operational support to other Practices, including through inputs for project preparations, policy-based operations, hands-on implementation advice and direct fiduciary due diligence of investment financing.

The World Bank has substantially scaled-up its program and field presence in the North Pacific over the past few years and opened a new office in Pohnpei in 2022. The World Bank's current active portfolio in the North Pacific consists of 19 projects in the Federated States of Micronesia (FSM), Republic of Marshall Islands (RMI) and Palau with a value of approximately US \$460 million in the sectors of digital development, transport, health, governance, energy, social protection, education, urban resilience, and environment.

**Duties and Responsibilities:**

The FM consultant will be based in the World Bank's Pohnpei, FSM office and will work on financial management (FM) aspects of the World Bank's operations in the Pacific, focusing on the FSM. The FM consultant will work under supervision of World Bank FM Analysts, World Bank FM Specialists and Senior FM Specialists. This will include, but not be limited to: (i) supporting the Pacific FM team in completing routine supervision work on selected projects, (ii) completing IFR and audit reviews for projects under supervision of the assigned FMS, (iii) providing hands-on support to clients' FM and operations teams in order to achieve systematic recording and reporting of bookkeeping and accounts ensuring compliance with the Bank's audit and other fiduciary requirements; and (iv) carrying out other financial management related tasks as required by the World Bank's Pacific FM team. Specific activities will include:

- As advised by the assigned World Bank FM Specialist, review a sample of individual transactions, including those forming the basis of entries in (IFRs) and statements of expenditures (SOEs) supporting

Withdrawal Applications, to determine the appropriateness of these documents and the adequacy of the internal control systems;

- Follow-up any issues noted during supervision of project implementation, as well as on observations derived from reviews of audit reports, management letters and IFRs, and assess the status of their resolution (e.g. Ineligible expenditures, internal controls weaknesses, non-compliance with financing agreement covenants, late IFRs, late audit opinions etc.);
- Identify existing or emerging project FM issues in consultation with Project Finance Officers and work with the World Bank FM Team to propose relevant solutions/support;
- Facilitate verbal and written communications between the World Bank FM team, country operations team, and the client/project teams;
- Facilitate the coordination of meetings, trainings, workshops, project missions and other activities.

The FM consultant will work within the country team, which includes the Resident Representative, Operations Officer, Task Team Leaders, Financial Management Team, Procurement and other technical specialists, and Administrative and Client Service (ACS) staff.

The FM consultant will be managed by the Financial Management Coordinator based in the Suva office and for day-to-day operational matters he/she will work closely with and provide support to the Financial Management Specialists covering the portfolio of the North Pacific Country Management Unit with a focus on the Federated States of Micronesia and Palau.

This is a Short-Term Contract appointment through June 30, 2023 and may be renewed based on performance and continued business needs.

**Selection Criteria:**

- The candidate should hold at least a Diploma in accounting, finance, bookkeeping or auditing. A Degree will be an advantage,

but not critical.

- A minimum of 3 years of relevant experience in accounting, auditing, taxation, project management or the public sector is desirable.
- The candidate should demonstrate strong coordination skills. Oral and written fluency in English is required.
- Current membership of a professional accountancy body is an advantage.

**Technical and other skills**

- Strong verbal and written communications in English.
- Strong coordination skills and ability to serve as a focal point for FM queries by project teams and project finance officers within the country.
- Strong interpersonal skills and ability to work independently.
- Analytical skills to verify accuracy and completeness in project financial reports.
- Practical understanding of accounting, business, finance, and/or auditing, particularly relating to the public sector.
- Ability to work with implementing agencies in a hands-on manner to follow up any issues noted during supervision of project implementation.
- Takes initiative and is adaptable.

**Behavioral Competences**

- Deliver Results for Clients - Proactively address clients' stated and unstated needs.
- Collaborates within Teams and across boundaries - Provides own perspective on practical solutions to any problems identified.
- Create, Apply and Share Knowledge - Applies knowledge particularly of the Pacific regional environment to strengthen solutions for internal and/or external clients.

Interested applicants are requested to email a CV and a cover letter to Nickson Piakal [npiakal@worldbank.org](mailto:npiakal@worldbank.org) and Eseta Vuvu Cokanasiga [ecokanasiga@worldbank.org](mailto:ecokanasiga@worldbank.org) by 9 January 2023.

# Governor Oliver hosts U.S Embassy Chargé d'affaires Alissa Bibb, Defense Attaché' Commander Thomas Price, and U.S. Navy Seabee team

*Pohnpei Enginkehlap News*

*December 28, 2022*

**Pohnpei**--Governor Oliver hosted the U.S. Embassy and Seabees team for a Christmas Dinner at the Governor's residence, Fort Richie, in Nanpohnmal, Nett. In his welcoming remarks, Governor Oliver acknowledged the strong bonds of cooperation and friendship between the U.S. Embassy and the Pohnpei State Government through the FSM National Government. He expressed his gratitude to the Seabees and the U.S. Embassy staff, who are all away from their homes during the holiday season, for their sacrifice, hard work and support of the Pohnpei State Government and people.



Governor Oliver hosted the U.S. Embassy and Seabees team for a Christmas Dinner at the Governor's residence, Fort Richie, in Nan Pohn Mal, Nett. In his welcoming remarks, Governor Oliver acknowledged the strong bonds of cooperation and friendship between the U.S. Embassy and the Pohnpei State Government through the FSM National Government. He expressed his gratitude to the Seabees and the U.S. Embassy staff, who are all away from their homes during the holiday season, for their sacrifice, hard work and support of the Pohnpei State Government and people.



Chargé d'affaires Alicia Bibb also delivered short remarks to thank Governor Oliver for his hospitality on behalf of the U.S. Embassy and U.S. Navy Seabee team. Capt. Draeger presented a command challenge coin to Governor Oliver on behalf of the Seabees team and thanked the Governor for inviting him and his team to a memorable Christmas Dinner.

# Governor Oliver visits Special Education Center

*Pohnpei Enginkehlap News*

*December 28, 2022*

**Pohnpei**--Governor Oliver stopped by the Pohnpei State Special Education Center to visit students and wish them a Merry Christmas. During his visit, Governor Oliver addressed the students, teachers and family members present. He expressed his sincere appreciation for the programs that seek to support and encourage students with disabilities, praising their efforts and wishing them all a Merry Christmas. Gift bags were distributed to the students along with snacks for the students.

Also present during the visit were Mr. Nathaniel Lohn and Ms. Lola Helgenberger from the FSM Department of Health's Social Affairs division. Mr. Lohn and Ms. Helgenberger presented gift certificates worth \$100 redeemable at Ace Office Supplies, on behalf of the Secretary of the FSM Department of Health, Mr. Marcus Samo.

Mr. Jesse Solomon, Special Education Coordinator, ended the short program thanking the Governor, his staff, Mr. Lohn and Ms. Helgenberger for their support of Pohnpei Special Education Services.



## 2023 Baby!

**Baby Shop, Eco-Friendly Options and A-Export & Trading Team Up to Celebrate Newborns**



*The first baby born in Pohnpei in 2023, January 2, was delivered weighing seven pounds and nine ounces. Her parents are Jovalynn Rochon and Bert Ludwig.*

On New Year's Day, the three local businesses collaborated to celebrate the joy of welcoming Pohnpei's 2023 newborn babies into the world by offering a special bundle of products to help the new parents and their little bundles of joy get off to a great start.

The bundle includes a variety of items from both The Baby Shop, EFO and A-Export & Trading. From The Baby Shop, parents receive blankets, pillows, an outfit set, and other items. From EFO, parents get sanitary pads

and Eco-Boom Diapers. EFO is the regional supplier of this premium eco-friendly and biodegradable brand. From A-Export & Trading, parents receive maternity pads and snacks for the mother in celebration of the new arrival. They want to help ensure that the mother is taken care of as well during this special time.

To thank the nurses who help bring new life into the world, a special gift basket of bread and coffee was also created and given to the nurses.



## ...Swimming

*Continued from front page*

Kerson Hadley. For the Freestyle relay, he dropped nearly a second off the record set by Kaleo Kihleng in 2018.

Olympian Taeyanna Adams arrived in Melbourne after finishing her semester exams at the University of North Carolina, where she has been training since the Tokyo Olympics. With only a day to rest after the long flight to Australia, Taeyanna broke the FSM national record in the 50 Meter Freestyle race with a time of 28.84. After also competing with the team in the two relays, she finished out the competition with a fantastic swim in the 50 Meter Breaststroke with a time of 36.64, just shy of her own national record.

Kestra Kihleng also experienced a career highlight with each one of her swims being a new national record. Her first swim was the 50-meter Butterfly, finishing with a personal best and national record time of 31.25. In addition to the two team relays, Kestra swam the 100 Meter Individual Medley race, finishing more than 3 seconds faster than the previous national record.

Kyler Kihleng concluded a busy season of competing in Junior swimming events with the championship in Melbourne, finishing both of his individual races with personal best times. He competed in both the 50 Meter Freestyle and the 100 Meter Freestyle races in addition to swimming the "anchor" or final leg of the two team relays.

Photos and videos of each swim are available on the FSM Swimming

## ...Election

*Continued from front page*

be printed and transported to the outer islands, the Commission has to move forward assuming that Ioanis intends to run.

To be clear, at press time, Ioanis name will still be on the January 17, 2023 ballots for the special election.

At least one candidate publicly expressed disappointment in the conduct of the December 20, 2022 election, saying that the enforcement of the law that prohibits campaigning on election day was heavy-handed, unnecessary, and that it had affected voter turnout.

Stevenson is the first Election Commissioner to have enforced the election day law that has been a part of the Pohnpei Code since at least January of 2012. Under that law, prohibited election-day campaigning activities include:

- "Any distribution, circulation, carrying, holding, posting or staking of campaign cards pamphlets, posters and other literature;
- The use of public address systems and other public communication media;
- The use of motor caravans or parades; and
- The use of entertainment troupes or the free distribution of food, beverages, goods and services."

Facebook page at <https://www.facebook.com/FSMSwimming>.

This particular FINA World Championships was a landmark competition for many reasons, but one stands out in that it was the last competition under the name of FINA. The international governing body for swimming and other aquatic sports has been deliberating for some time over a possible name change, and in December 2022, that became a reality with the new name and logo of World Aquatics. The reason for this change was that "FINA" is a French acronym for swimming and does not encompass the other five aquatic sports the organization governs.

Another landmark of the Melbourne event was that it marked the conclusion of the first-ever FINA Mentorship program in which FINA selected ten nations to work with for a 6-month

"The 'day of election' as used in this paragraph shall commence at midnight of the day before the polls are opened and shall end with the closing of the polls..."

Whereas, in every previous election, candidates and their supporters posted placards and signs on vehicles encouraging voters to vote for their candidate. They then drove around the island and used car horns to attract attention. Candidates and their supporters also offered the service of transportation to polling places. Those activities were not allowed for the December 20, 2022 special election. Additionally, all posters and campaign materials previously posted in Pohnpei had to be removed before midnight, on the morning of the special election.

"It was important that the law be enforced," Stevenson said.

Stevenson also said that special elections tend to have lower turnout than government-wide elections have and that the turnout for the December 20 special election was "about average". However, he added that as the Commission has been working on voter rolls, he has been astounded to discover a higher level of outmigration from Pohnpei than he had previously thought existed. He said that voter rolls at some polling places are down by as much as 75 percent of previous levels due directly to voter outmigration.

time period to improve their overall governance and federation. FSM was one of the ten nations selected and the only Oceania nation selected. FSM Swimming was able to accomplish much for the federation in the 6 months of working closely with FINA and is excited about what is to come for aquatics sports throughout the FSM. Anyone interested in being a part of this next exciting chapter for FSM Swimming is urged to reach out to FSM Swimming via Facebook or email at fsmswimassoc@gmail.com.

Team FSM now looks to the upcoming events of 2023, a busy year with not only the World Aquatics Championships in Fukuoka, Japan in July but also the Micronesian Games in the Marshall Islands and the Pacific Games in the Solomon Islands. The competitions in Japan and the Solomon Islands will both be Olympic qualifier events.



# College of Micronesia Land Grant Program Executive Director Search

# 76th Commencement Exercises

The College of Micronesia Land Grant Program, is an independent public corporation of the Republic of the Marshall Islands, the Federated States of Micronesia, and the Republic of Palau with the purpose of providing support through Research and Extension Services conducted at and by Partner Colleges.

### POSITION SUMMARY

- The COM Land Grant Program Board of Regents is seeking an Executive Director who will also serve as Director of Research, Extension and Resident Instruction Programs to lead the College of Micronesia Land Grant Program.

- The successful candidate will be an individual with a deeply rooted understanding and compassion towards Micronesian people, communities and culture, demonstrated through the candidate's prior work experience.

- The Executive Director reports to the Board of Regents, and will be responsible for the organization's consistent achievement of its mission and financial objectives.

### Application Procedure:

To ensure full consideration in the COM Land Grant executive

director search, candidates must submit the following documents:

1. A letter of interest addressing how the candidate's professional qualification and experience match the challenges and position profile (not to exceed three pages).
2. A current resume which includes personal email address and cellular phone number.
3. Official Transcripts (copies will be accepted for initial review) for all relevant degrees.
4. A minimum of 3 professional reference letters.

- The Executive Director position will be based in the Central Office located in Pohnpei, FSM.

- Qualified citizens of the Republic of Marshall Islands, Federated States of Micronesia and the Republic of Palau are encouraged to apply.

- Salary range will be: 50,000USD - 75,000USD with benefits (based on qualification).

- Applications must be received by midnight of January 16, 2023, Pohnpei standard time.

- Applications will be received at HR offices of partner college (PCC, COM-FSM, CMI) or emailed to: [landgrant@comfsm.edu.fm](mailto:landgrant@comfsm.edu.fm)



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Phone: (691)320-2480  
Fax: (691)320-2479  
E-Mail: [national@comfsm.fm](mailto:national@comfsm.fm)

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# 2023

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# Coast Guard leverages aviation workhorse to overcome challenges

*United States Coast Guard News*

*December 25, 2022*

**SANTA RITA, Guam** — Guam is home to three 154-foot fast response cutters commissioned in 2021. These ships are built in Lockport, Louisiana. After initial workups, they sailed from Key West through the Panama Canal, more than 10,000 miles to Guam. In the time since the crews have stayed busy conducting the U.S. Coast Guard's core missions in Micronesia and supporting our Blue Pacific partners.

## The Operations Area

For many of the Nation's fast response cutters, the transit to homeport from Key West is one of the most extended trips they make. Those stateside remain close to most essential services needed to maintain the vessels, designed to operate within 200 nautical miles of homeport. In the case of the Guam-based fleet, they routinely go more than 200 nautical miles to get to the operations area. U.S. Coast Guard Forces Micronesia/Sector Guam has one of the largest areas of responsibility of any sector at 1.9 million square miles. Like its other overseas counterparts, the region can be austere and presents unique challenges.

U.S. Coast Guard Forces Micronesia/Sector Guam (CGFM/SG) differs. The Coast Guard Cutter Oliver Henry (WPC 1140) undertook a more than 6,000-mile expeditionary patrol south through Oceania with inaugural FRC port calls in Papua New Guinea and Australia. Their sister ship, the Coast Guard Cutter Frederick Hatch (WPC 1143), just concluded a similar patrol in support of Operations Rematau and Blue Pacific, the southeast of Guam. The patrol countered illegal, unreported, and unregulated fishing off the Federated States of Micronesia, the Republic of the Marshall Islands, and the Republic of Nauru by enforcing regulatory schemes and individual countries' sovereignty while strengthening partnerships

through shiprider operations, subject matter exchanges, and community engagements.

"What often goes unsaid is the logistics piece enabling the operations," said Chief Warrant Officer Manny Pangelinan, engineering officer for CGFM/SG. The Oliver Henry required a last-minute shipment of fuel injectors while underway, a package coordinated by the CGFM/SG logistics department with some support from the Surface Force Logistics Center in Baltimore. The package was shipped via a commercial carrier and met them in Australia.

But more oversized items and hazardous materials can present a more complex challenge. Guam is a strategic location, and as a U.S. territory, it is the first line of defense against regional competitors. Logistically, it is remote and depends on maritime cargo for most items. Nearly 90 percent of imports come through the Port of Guam, and travel by sea varies in cost and takes time. Commercial air freight requires less time but can be very expensive.

## The Logistics Challenge

Each FRC has four bottles of compressed gas onboard as part of the fire suppression system. The current design of the FRCs uses FN200 powder and nitrogen gas. Over time these bottles lose nitrogen and need to be recharged, the same as any fire extinguisher. If an extinguisher or system loses its prime, it may malfunction and not adequately suppress a fire. Stateside servicing this equipment is a simple endeavor, but service providers in Guam still need to be created. To further complicate matters, if a local provider converted existing equipment to service this system, it could only be used on FN200 to prevent cross-contamination. The U.S. Coast Guard is currently the only FN200 client on the island.

As the Frederick Hatch prepared for

their patrol, the crew noted one of the four bottles was borderline between yellow and red on its pressure. No one wants to be over a thousand miles from shore, with a fire, and risk a system malfunction. But how do you get a 277-pound replacement bottle, considered a hazardous material, shipped from the mainland United States to the territory of Guam? And how do you do it in time to meet the ship's schedule and enable the crew to fulfill their mission requirements in Micronesia? You keep it in-house and leverage the naval aviation community.

## Coast Guard Aviation in Oceania

U.S. Coast Guard Air Station Barbers Point in Hawaii conducts search and rescue, maritime domain awareness and surveillance, law enforcement, and cargo and transportation operations throughout Oceania. They are currently the only U.S. Coast Guard air station in the U.S. Coast Guard 14th District, with the next closest aviation unit in California. Still, from 1947 until 1972, they operated an air detachment in Guam known as Naval Air Station Agana to provide LORAN support for Western Pacific stations.

Today, the Barbers Point team operates four MH-65 Dolphin helicopters and four HC-130 Hercules airplanes. The Hercules airframes were recently upgraded from the H model to the J model. For Guam, this is significant. The J is more capable as a long-range surveillance aircraft providing heavy air transport and long-range maritime patrol capability. Each plane can serve as an on-scene command and control platform or as a surveillance platform with the means to detect, classify, and identify objects and share that information with operational forces. It also has "long legs." Where the H crews needed to stop for fuel en route to Guam from Hawaii, the J could make the trip in one leg if necessary. This advantage matters when time is of the essence, particularly in search and rescue cases.

Capt. John Rivers, CGAS Barbers Point commanding officer, recently visited Guam. He met with the CGFM/SG team to discuss options for more aviation support to Western and Central Pacific operations. Those ideas include more hours of Hercules activity in this region and possible use of the Dolphin helicopters outside Hawaii.

## The Workhorse

Regarding transporting equipment, the aircrew, particularly the loadmaster, has the final say on what goes aboard the plane. The Barbers Point team and the loadmaster were crucial to keeping the Frederick Hatch on schedule.

The team flew the HC-130 Hercules CG 2009 to Sacramento to pick up the shipment of fire bottles, then returned to Hawaii to rest and refuel. Subsequently, they flew to Majuro and landed in Guam on Nov. 9 at the A.B. Won Pat Guam International Airport. The CGFM/SG engineering team and environmental contractors met them to further transport the bottles to the pier.

All told, the movement cost flight hours and personnel time – but that is the nature of logistics. Per Commandant Instruction 7310.1V Reimbursable Standard Rates, the inside government rate for an HC-130J is \$19,782 per hour. This includes Direct Costs like labor, employee benefits, fuel, maintenance, etc.; Support Costs: Costs allocated to a particular asset class for the support received from Coast Guard support activities, including but not limited to Area Commands, Districts, Sectors, Sector Field Offices, Bases, etc.; and General and Administrative: Costs allocated to a particular asset class to represent benefit received from Coast Guard general and administrative activities such as legal services, payroll processing, etc.

However, our aircrews make the most out of every flight, coupling logistics with other missions and training whenever possible. Flight crews must also fly a certain number of monthly

*Continued on next page*



# SEAWATCH FERRY SERVICES

**WENO, UDOT, FEFAN & TONOAS**  
**OFFICIAL LAUNCH DATE: NOVEMBER 21, 2022**



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  - UDOT-FEFAN \$17
  - WENO-TONOAS \$9
  - TONOAS-WENO \$9
  - WENO-FEFAN \$9
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**MONDAY - THURSDAY**  
 WENO-TONOAS-WENO

**DEPARTURE TIMES:**  
**A** WENO: 7:30AM  
**M** TONOAS: 8:00AM  
**P** WENO: 4:00PM  
**M** TONOAS: 4:30PM

**FRIDAY**  
 AM: WENO-TONOAS-WENO  
 PM: WENO-UDOT-FEFAN-TONOAS-WENO

**DEPARTURE TIMES:**  
**A** WENO: 7:30AM  
**M** TONOAS: 9:30AM  
**P** WENO: 3:00PM  
**M** UDOT: 4:00PM  
 FEFAN: 4:30PM  
 TONOAS: 5:00PM

**SATURDAY**  
 AM ONLY: WENO-UDOT-FEFAN-TONOAS-WENO

**DEPARTURE TIMES:**  
 WENO: 8:00AM  
 UDOT: 9:00AM  
 FEFAN: 10:00AM  
 TONOAS: 10:30AM

**SUNDAY**  
 PM ONLY: WENO-UDOT-FEFAN-TONOAS-WENO

**DEPARTURE TIMES:**  
 WENO: 3:00PM  
 UDOT: 4:00PM  
 FEFAN: 4:30PM  
 TONOAS: 5:00PM

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## ...Coast Guard

Forecast

*Continued from previous page*

hours to maintain currency and proficiency.

The personnel hours, in this case, include the coordination and research by the CGFM/SG Engineering Team to enable the technician from the fire services company to come out, install and certify the new bottle. The team kept the cost down by more than \$16,000 by flying out one technician instead of two and doing all the manual labor of removing and replacing the existing bottle with the ship's force. Transporting a 277-pound bottle across the pier, onto the cutter, and into the space with a tripod and chain fall in 90-degree heat with 90 percent humidity is quite an undertaking. According to Reimbursable Standard Rates, the inside government cost of a CWO2 is \$79 per hour, a Chief Petty Officer is \$71, and a Petty Officer 2nd Class is \$55. Still, these personnel, like the aircrew, are salaried. The figures come into play if the Service seeks reimbursement from another branch or outside entity for services. The outside government rate is higher.

One might ask how to avoid this challenge in the future, as this won't be the last time these bottles need to be recharged. One possible alternative was building a facility to support the maintenance of these systems in Guam to the tune of more than a million dollars. Ultimately, this option was deemed unrealistic. Instead of a new facility, the engineering team procured a larger bottle of FN200 and equipment to be kept onsite to recharge the FRCs' systems. The team will do the heavy lifting and fly out a technician for the final assembly and certification. Two complete sets of bottles were procured at the same time. The first set came aboard the Hercules, and the second will come by cargo ship at a fee of just under \$4,000. However, as of Christmas, the second set of bottles are still in transit and will take around 75 days total to arrive, emphasizing the importance of the Engineering Team's efforts and choices.

"This team continues to deliver on the Commandant's mandate to be creative and innovative to craft solutions to the challenges we face as a service," said Capt. Nick Simmons, commander of CGFM/SG. "I am impressed by their commitment and resolve to consistently deliver superior engineering support, keeping us operational in a remote environment."

In the Fiscal Year 2022, the three Guam-based FRCs spent 324 days away from homeport, with 243 of those days physically underway conducting missions at sea. The other days away from homeport account for port calls, community engagements, and maintenance away from the home station. They worked 25 patrols throughout the region, enforcing the rule of law and strengthening partnerships. Guam's sister sector in Honolulu also has three FRCs doing local and long-range missions. By comparison, they spent 202 days at sea for roughly the same number of patrols. This underscores the distances and demands Team Guam is covering.

"We have better platforms to help our crews get after the ever-growing mission demand here. But we must not lose sight of the demand on the crews and what is necessary to maintain our availability and effectiveness as a preferred partner in the region," said Simmons. "That means putting steel on target, remaining flexible, and ensuring our crews have the support they need to succeed in a dynamic operational environment. I thank the CGAS Barbers Point team for ensuring our success and enabling the Frederick Hatch crew to work with our partners in Oceania and protect the Nation."

This fire bottle transport is an excellent example of integrated logistics across the U.S. Coast Guard enterprise and innovation to find a timely cost-reasonable solution to keep the ship operational and on schedule. It is also a model for expanded Coast Guard aviation support to Guam.

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42 Providing temporary use of online non-downloadable software for processing electronic payments; providing temporary use of online non-downloadable software for creating, preparing, managing, sending, processing, tracking, and reconciling invoices; providing temporary use of online non-downloadable software for issuing receipts regarding mobile payment transactions; providing temporary use of online non-downloadable authentication software for controlling access to and communications with computers and computer networks; providing temporary use of online non-downloadable software for electronic funds transfer; providing temporary use of online non-downloadable software for sending, receiving, accepting, buying, selling, storing, transmitting, validating, verifying, tracking, transferring, trading and exchanging digital currency, virtual currency, cryptocurrency, stablecoins, digital and blockchain assets, digitized assets, digital tokens, crypto tokens and utility tokens; providing temporary use of online non-downloadable software for digital currency payment and exchange transactions; providing temporary use of online non-downloadable software for use in issuing digital currency, virtual currency, cryptocurrency, stablecoins, digital and blockchain assets, digitized assets, digital tokens, crypto tokens and utility tokens; providing temporary use of online non-downloadable software for managing digital currency, virtual currency, cryptocurrency, stablecoin, digital and blockchain asset, digitized asset, digital token, crypto token and utility token payments, money transfers, and commodity transfers; providing temporary use of online non-downloadable software for use with digital currency wallet and storage services; providing temporary use of online non-downloadable software for use as an electronic wallet; providing temporary use of online non-downloadable software for facilitating electronic commerce transactions; providing temporary use of online non-downloadable software featuring offers, deals, coupons, rebates, rewards, vouchers, price tracking, price notifications, price-comparison information, links to the retail websites of others, promotional materials, and discount information; providing temporary use of online non-downloadable software for fraud detection, fraud prevention, and fraud analytics; providing temporary use of online non-downloadable computer software for tracking and analyzing payment activity; providing temporary use of online non-downloadable software to prevent fraud, facilitate integration with loyalty and reward platforms to allow tracking of purchases and accrual of rewards, and enable merchants to embed checkouts in third party sites and applications to sell and take payments on third party platforms; Application Service Provider (ASP) featuring Application Programming Interface (API) software for payment collection, payment transactions, forwarding data and information processing; data mining services; providing temporary use of online non-downloadable software for creating and managing a business and an online store, namely, inventory management, order processing, order tracking, fulfillment of orders, sales tracking, collection of sales data, and sales analytics; providing temporary use of online non-downloadable software used for point of sale transactions; providing temporary use of online non-downloadable software used to train and manage employees, record employee hours worked, and generate payroll processing

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# Bank of Guam® receives 3 awards in video competition

*Bank of Guam*

**December 29, 2022**

**Hagåtña, GU.**-Bank of Guam announced today that their 50th Anniversary Brand campaign, Proud to Be has been awarded three (3) Viddy Awards.

The Viddy Awards, formerly the Videographer Awards, is one of the most coveted awards in the video industry. Since 1995, thousands of production and communication professionals from various industries have entered their best and most creative work. The goal of the Viddy Awards is to identify and recognize the video artisans who excel in the scope of their own environment. The Platinum Award is awarded to those projects that the judges deem are written, produced, shot and/or edited in an exceptional manner. The Gold Award is awarded for projects that exceed industry standards.

Proud to Be 50, one of a series of videos under the Bank’s 50th Anniversary campaign, was recognized with two (2) Platinum Viddy Awards under Branding Campaign and Culture/Lifestyle Short Form Video categories. Proud to Be the People’s Bank television commercial received a Gold Viddy in the same category.

The Proud to Be 50 and Proud to Be the People’s Bank videos, along with other media deliverables, came together to create Bank of Guam’s 50th anniversary campaign. Both short form videos featured vignettes of the people of the People’s Bank—their customers and employees. Through these vignettes, viewers had an opportunity to see the People, celebrating who they are, their heritage, their future and their dreams.

*“We’d like to think of ourselves as being in the business of storytelling. Everyone has a story and we believe the spots were a great reminder that Bank of Guam’s story is inherently the same as all of our stories--a story with a vision rooted in the same fundamental values that our diverse and ever-growing community shares. It was a privilege to work with Bank of Guam on their 50th anniversary project as well as the amazing cast that*

*brought it to life and we look forward to what the future holds for Mighty Island and Bank of Guam.”*

**-Nia Serneo, Producer, Mighty Island**

*“The stories of our People are at the very heart of our business and our Bank.*

*For the past 50 years, their shared stories and experiences have shaped our communities, our business, our families and individual lives. And to be able to capture the voices and images of our People through video in a way that receives recognition on an international scale is an honor that we celebrate proudly as the People’s Bank.”*

**-Joaquin P. LG. Cook, President & Chief Executive Officer, Bank of Guam**

The Viddy Awards is administered and judged by the Association of Marketing and Communication Professionals (AMCP). The international organization consists of several thousand marketing, communication, advertising, public relations, media production, and freelance professionals who have entered AMCP programs.

To learn more about the Viddy Awards and for a complete list of 2022 winners, please visit [viddyawards.com](http://viddyawards.com).



# Pacific Gambit: Inside the Chinese Communist Party and Triad push into Palau

By *Bernadette Carreon (OCCRP), Aubrey Belford (OCCRP), and Martin Young (OCCRP)*

The tiny Pacific nation of Palau is a place where newcomers tend to stick out. So locals noticed when scores of young, mostly Chinese citizens started arriving in 2018 and 2019 and sequestered themselves in rundown buildings in and around the country's main city, Koror.

Unlike the planeloads of tourists that visit the country for its famed limestone islands and unspoiled reefs, the new arrivals didn't see the sights. Instead, they stayed inside all day, their needs met by regular deliveries of food and sex workers.

Police investigators soon worked out what was going on: They were low-paid workers who had been brought in to staff illegal online gambling operations, targeting customers back in China.

Law enforcement came to believe the operations were connected to Chinese gangsters who in the previous years had become an increasingly menacing presence on the country's streets. Brusque men with visible tattoos would "just cut right to the [front of] the line and drive down the streets like they own it," said the country's police chief, Ismael Aguon. "These guys were up and in your face."

On New Year's Eve 2019, they decided to act.

In coordinated raids on three buildings, officers arrested 165 people found in rooms fitted out with laptops, mobile phones, bunk beds, and stashes of instant noodles and soft drinks.

The number of people arrested was more than double the usual population of the country's single jail, Aguon said. The police chief said he had no choice but to give the detainees a citation for working illegally and deport them back home. The force was so overwhelmed that a proper investigation and extensive questioning would be impossible.

"Where was I going to put these people?" he asked.

But Palauan law enforcement had come across something far bigger than a few isolated criminal outfits. The online gambling operations were in fact the

latest step in an attempted push into the Pacific nation of just 18,000 people by a loosely-connected network of Chinese businesspeople, some with ties to triad crime groups and China's ruling party, OCCRP has found.

At stake is influence over a small but strategic Western ally in the Pacific, a region where China has been trying to greatly expand its geopolitical reach in recent years. Palau is a former U.S.-administered territory, and has maintained a formal association with the United States since gaining independence in 1994. The U.S. provides some state services and unrestricted entry to the citizens of Palau, while the country uses U.S. dollars and regularly hosts American military forces.

Palau is also one of just 14 nations worldwide that diplomatically recognize Taiwan; it does not have full diplomatic relations with mainland China, which is ruled by the Chinese Communist Party (CCP). In recent years, Beijing has used aid and diplomacy to convince Kiribati and the Solomon Islands to switch their allegiance to China, leaving Taiwan with relations with just four Pacific Island nations.

While Palau's government has remained steadfastly pro-West and pro-Taiwan, a group of business figures has in recent years begun pushing Beijing's interests in Palau. Some have openly proclaimed they are promoting the CCP's foreign policy goals, while others have furthered Chinese influence by setting up new business ventures and cultivating close relationships with Palau's elite.

Semdiu Decherong, the former head of the country's financial regulator, said that these businesspeople and organized crime figures — including a senior triad member known as "Broken Tooth" — appear to be operating with the knowledge of the Chinese state.

"From my understanding... they're all very interconnected," he said. "There is no way that Broken Tooth was going to come to Palau without the communist government knowing about it. And either they are turning a blind eye or actually behind the scenes supporting."

OCCRP reporters conducted interviews and examined hundreds of pages of company records and files from law

enforcement investigations to better understand the Chinese push into Palau. Along with the illegal online gambling operations, they discovered that this interlinked group of business people has proposed a series of sometimes improbable projects across the country since at least 2016. The prospective businesses have ranged from a blockchain-based insurance scheme to a real-world casino and a special economic zone.

These plans have so far mostly failed to bear fruit, thanks to the skepticism of local law enforcement and regulators, and pressure from Western countries. But they continue nonetheless, aided at times by members of the local elite who have built close relationships with these business figures. Some have even partnered in the ventures.

Among these prominent Palauans have been two former presidents — Johnson Toribiong and Tommy Remengesau Jr. — as well as state governors, a minister, and the country's former postmaster general.

What is happening in Palau is part of a growing trend seen across the Pacific Islands and Southeast Asia over the past decade, according to Jason Tower, an expert on China's overseas criminal networks at the United States Institute for Peace.

Chinese organized crime groups are moving into countries with weak governance in order to build illicit business empires and launder money, often through businesses similar to those popping up in Palau, like casinos and cryptocurrency schemes, he said. By offshoring their criminal activities, they avoid Beijing's ire and show their usefulness to the CCP through corrupting local elites.

"They're also recognizing that in order to protect themselves from law enforcement and from political campaigns in China, they also need to maintain close relationships with political actors in China, and ultimately, to do their bidding," Tower told OCCRP.

## Palauan Politicians and 'Undesirable Aliens'

Palauan law enforcement detained over 200 mostly Chinese workers during the

three raids on suspected online gambling operations on New Year's Eve 2019, and another in mid-2020. Through brief interviews with some detainees and informants, officers managed to gain insight into how the criminal gangs operated. But a thorough investigation never took place since most detainees were quickly deported.

Typically, workers used phones, laptops, and pre-programmed flash drives to administer gambling sites targeting users in China, police chief Aguon said. The rank-and-file workers appeared to have little idea who they were working for, and were kept in line by beatings and fear of the outside world. Sex workers were also brought on site as an inducement for the men to stay.

"They were told a lot of stories just trying to keep them fearful so they cannot mingle with the locals and stay where they're supposed to be, getting paid very minimal cash," Aguon said.

Palauan police recorded testimony that at least some workers had been held in debt bondage. Police records also show that some entered the country via Cambodia, a country that has become a hotspot for human trafficking by Chinese crime groups running online scam operations.

Palauan law enforcement say they have not been able to fully unravel who is behind the online gambling operations, although Aguon said they appear to be linked to large international criminal networks.

A key player appears to have been Tian Hang, also known as Hunter Tian, a 53-year-old Chinese hotelier who lives in Palau and enjoys links to some of its most powerful citizens. Property registry documents show that one of the buildings housing the online gambling operations was leased by a company Tian ran and of which he was part owner.

Tian has also been involved in apparent CCP influence efforts in the country. According to Chinese media reports, he headed the Palau Overseas Chinese Federation, a body aimed at organizing Chinese expatriates in the Pacific nation under the CCP umbrella. Tian even attended a September 2019 event for

*Continued on next page*

## ...Palau

*Continued from previous page*

Chinese diaspora leaders in Beijing's Great Hall of the People to celebrate 70 years of Communist Party rule.

Aguon said that Tian is not facing any charges in connection to the illegal online gambling operations, because authorities were forced to limit their efforts to arresting and deporting people who were working in the country illegally.

However, Palau's government earlier this year added Tian to its list of 230 "undesirable aliens," most of whom are Chinese citizens. He remains in the country and is currently fighting his designation, which would bar him from re-entering Palau if he leaves.

Tian did not respond to questions sent by OCCRP.

Property records show that the building Tian's company leased was owned by Ngirai Tmetuchl, Palau's minister for human resources, culture, tourism, and development.

"I'm confident that [Tian] was not involved with those [online gambling] people," Tmetuchl told OCCRP.

Another associate of Tian is Tmetuchl's cousin, Johnson Toribiong, a lawyer who served as Palau's president from 2009 to 2013. In an interview with OCCRP, he called Tian a "good friend." Toribiong recounted a 2017 trip that Tian had organized for him and other notable Palauans to China that involved meetings with senior CCP officials.

"We went to the Great Wall of China, the palace, and the Forbidden City," Toribiong recalled. "I gave a speech everywhere I went."

"The whole thing was paid by somebody. I was invited to join as ex-president," he added.

Since 2017, Toribiong's law firm and a company owned by Tian have also been partners in a Palau "Chinese Economic Trade Promotion Association," which is registered as a company in Hong Kong. Toribiong said he could not recall signing documents to form the association, but added: "I want to bring investment to Palau."

The association was also founded in

partnership with Overseas Chinese Big Data Group, a conglomerate that develops data technology with the Zhengzhou Xinda Advanced Research Institute, which is affiliated with a provincial government and a military university.

One of Overseas Chinese Big Data's subsidiaries describes the research institute as following "the principle of leading the people through the army, and promoting civilian-military integration." The conglomerate did not respond to written questions.

### Broken Tooth Takes a Bite

Because Palauan police never carried out a deep investigation of the illegal casino operations they busted in 2019 and 2020, the criminal networks behind them remain a mystery. But police chief Aguon said he believes the online gambling operations are connected to the entry into Palau of the triad figure Broken Tooth and his associates.

The country is simply just "too small to have different factions" linked to Chinese organized crime, he said.

Rising to prominence in the 1990s as the head of the 14K triad in Macau, Broken Tooth — whose real name is Wan Kuok Koi — was imprisoned there for more than a decade on charges including loan sharking, weapons possession, and membership in an organized crime group. Since his release in 2012, he has rebranded himself as a CCP loyalist — without forswearing his triad affiliations.

According to the U.S. Treasury, which sanctioned Wan in 2020, he remains both an organized crime boss and a member of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference (CPPCC), a top-level political advisory body that forms part of the CCP's "United Front" foreign influence efforts.

China's government has strongly denied that Wan is a CPPCC member. Wan has also denied it, describing the U.S. accusations as a "smear campaign."

Wan has taken a leading role in setting up overseas branches of his Cambodia-based World Hongmen History and Culture Association, which the U.S. sanctioned along with him in 2020. The association takes its name from Hongmen, also known as the Heaven and Earth Society, a centuries-old secret society that the U.S. Treasury and experts say is now a barely disguised front for triads. (Wan has said his World Hongmen Association has always abided by the law.)

According to Tower, the Chinese organized crime expert, the goal of Wan's Hongmen Association is to build "vast networks both with Chinese business actors and elites across the region, co-opting them into its various schemes."

"Meanwhile it parrots the narratives of the PRC [People's Republic of China] government on a range of politically sensitive issues, helping it to build influence in favor of key PRC interests," he said.

By 2018, Wan had set his sights on Palau. Immigration records obtained by OCCRP show that Wan made two trips from Macau to the Pacific island nation late that year and early the next. He also set up a branch of his Hongmen Association in Palau, nearly nine months after establishing the association's headquarters in Cambodia.

Soon after his second visit, Wan told a Hong Kong media outlet that the Hongmen Association would be used to build and run a Hongmen-themed resort in Palau that would include a casino and Hongmen-branded alcohol and cigarettes. Payments would be handled using a cryptocurrency called "Hong Coin." A white paper about the currency written by one of Wan's companies specifically mentioned its usefulness in online gambling.

"I envision this to be a special economic zone like Macau, and I will have the final say in overseeing the development of customs, ports, and an airport," he boasted of the planned Palau casino.

Wan did not respond to questions sent to a public contact for his Hongmen Association.

The zone's proposed location was on the lightly populated southern island of Angaur, the site of a World War II-era airstrip. The island has since assumed greater strategic value, after the U.S. military made plans to use it to base part of a sophisticated high-powered radar system — costing between \$100 million and \$250 million — that is aimed at countering China.

Wan's attempted push into Palau was facilitated by senior officials. Immigration records show that during his second visit, starting in late 2018, he was listed as a "guest of [the] government." Two state officials were involved in setting up his local Hongmen Association.

Company records show Palau's then-postmaster general, Timothy Sinsak, and

the then-governor of the state of Airai, Tmewang Rengulbai, both signed on as directors of Wan's association when it was first registered in early 2019.

Sinsak and Rengulbai did not respond to requests for comment.

Wan even met with Palau's then-President Tommy Remengesau Jr. and his immediate predecessor, Toribiong.

Remengesau told OCCRP he was introduced to the triad figure by Wang Guodan, another longtime Chinese expatriate in Palau. Also known as Rose Wang, she worked with Tian as the vice chairman of his Palau Overseas Chinese Federation, according to Chinese media reports. She also attended the CCP's 70-year celebration with him in Beijing in 2019, and was added alongside him to the Palauan government's "undesirable aliens" list earlier this year.

In a brief phone interview, Wang denied any connection to Wan, Tian's association, or any CCP-related activities. She did not respond to written follow-up questions.

Remengesau's predecessor as president, Toribiong, said he believed "Broken Tooth" and his associates were guests of Remengesau in Palau.

"When Broken Tooth came they were like VIPs, they had a lot of meetings," Toribiong said, adding that he too had met the triad figure.

Remengesau, who stepped down last year, denied he had invited Wan to the country, and told OCCRP he was unaware how the triad figure had been listed as a "guest of the government" when he visited in 2018. The former president said Wang had only briefly introduced him to the triad figure and that he had posed for a photo. But he insisted, "That is the only time I sat down with him."

On Angaur island, the prospective casino site, Wan was assisted in his attempt to lease some land by the island's then-governor, Kennosuke Suzuki.

"He was dealing with me directly," Suzuki told OCCRP, adding that he did not know that Wan was a senior organized crime figure until later, when "I Googled his name."

"We didn't know who he was," agreed Jackson Henry, a local property broker who helped Wan look for real estate on the main island of Babeldaob. Palauans

*Click here for continuation*

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only became aware of Wan's organized crime ties when he started publicizing his casino plans, Henry said.

"These guys are not here to do anything bad. They're not convicted, except for Broken Tooth," Henry added. "But it's really bad about society, where you go to jail, you pay your dues to society. When you get out... you can't do anything."

Remengesau, for his part, said he turned firmly against Wan once he became aware of his background. By April 2019, he announced that he was opposed to the project, after being informed by Taiwan's government of Wan's criminal background. The Palau Hongmen Association applied to be voluntarily dissolved shortly thereafter.

### 'They Know It's a Scam'

While Wan is not known to have arrived in Palau until 2018, another figure connected to him had already pitched big plans for the small country.

Zhang Bauluo, a Singapore-based businessman, showed up in 2016 and made the rounds in prominent political circles. Through his GT Group, Zhang said he wanted to launch businesses including a \$1 billion "smart city," a blockchain-based insurance scheme, and a bank.

Zhang and Wan are part of the same business circles in Southeast Asia and the Pacific, but the exact nature of their relationship is unclear, organized crime expert Tower said.

The two men have appeared in public together at property development and blockchain events in the region, including a 2018 conference organized by Zhang's GT Group in the Philippines at which Wan was a guest. Wan took to the stage with Zhang and others at the event and raised wine glasses for the cameras.

Zhang's plans for Palau were initially facilitated by former presidents Toribiong and Remengesau. Company documents show that Toribiong acted as local legal counsel for Zhang's GT Group, and helped set up four Palauan companies on his behalf.

Meanwhile, Remengesau rolled out the welcome mat. During one 2016 visit to Palau, the president appointed Zhang an honorary overseas representative of Palau on "economy, trade and tourism." Remengesau also later made Zhang's son, at the time a 10-year-old child singer, a tourism ambassador for the country.

Zhang repaid the hospitality. During Remengesau's successful 2016 re-election bid, Zhang's company supplied 125 mobile phones that were handed out as gifts at campaign events, the former president acknowledged in an interview. Zhang and his family later attended Remengesau's inauguration, where they had their own marquee tent.

Remengesau said there was nothing improper about his relationship with Zhang.

"The good thing about me is, when I meet these people, I don't do any business deals... or benefit from it," he said.

But as with Broken Tooth, Zhang's plans were eventually either blocked by local authorities or failed to reach fruition. He also appears to have evaporated from the regional business scene.

The GT Group's websites and social media accounts have largely gone dark since the first half of 2021, after a GT Group executive was charged in Malaysia over an alleged cryptocurrency fraud.

Zhang did not respond to questions sent via email and Facebook.

While Palau has remained steadily pro-Western, it remains a strategic prize in an increasingly contested region. And, in the absence of formal diplomatic connections between the country and mainland China, unofficial proxies remain a powerful tool of attempted influence.

Decherong, Palau's former financial regulator, said there remains a steady flow of questionable Chinese business people interested in Palau.

"They think if they come in with a fancy name, they put up some stupid nicely done graphics on the Internet, all of us stupid islanders are gonna believe it," Decherong said.

"The Palauans that get involved in it are not stupid. They know it's a scam, but they just play along to see how much cash they can get from these people."

# Food and health agents from Micronesia learn national regulations at UOG-hosted food safety training

*University of Guam*

Training on the latest national food safety requirements made its way to the islands of Micronesia this week via a USDA National Institute of Food and Agriculture-funded program hosted by the University of Guam and the University of Idaho.

The four-day training brought 14 public health agents, food safety educators, and land-grant extension agents to Guam from Palau, the Marshall Islands, and the islands of Yap, Pohnpei, Kosrae, and Chuuk in the Federated States of Micronesia to learn about food safety practices to prevent foodborne illnesses.

Foodborne diseases are a significant public health issue across the Western Pacific, according to the World Health Organization, yet few food safety professionals in the region have had access to appropriate resources, including training on the national Food Safety Modernization Act.

Extension food-safety specialist Jang Ho Kim of the University of Idaho, who previously worked with Cooperative Research, Extension, and Education Services at Northern Marianas College in Saipan, is the director of the grant program, titled "Customized Food Safety Education Strategy for Hard-to-Reach Audiences in the Western Pacific Islands."

"This is a training for agriculture and extension agents, and then they will go out and teach and provide food safety information for their people, like farmers and processors," he said.

The participants said there is a general lack of awareness about the importance of food safety on their islands. One shared how high electricity costs prompt residents of Kosrae to turn off their refrigerators overnight, increasing the risk of food contamination.

"I'm excited to bring back the training materials and try to tailor fit it to what we practice back home, especially in the hospital because that's where we serve the most vulnerable people," said Steward Molens, a nutritionist at Pohnpei State Hospital.

Joining Kim in delivering the training were UOG food scientist Jian Yang; director of the Food Technology Center at the University of Idaho Joshua Bevan; and Douglas Marshall, chief scientific officer for Eurofins Microbiology Laboratories Inc. out of Colorado.

"You're the future of the food system in Guam and Micronesia," Peter Barcinas, interim associate director of UOG's extension service, said to the participants. "I hope that as you look at your food system and the credentialing of the people that support your institutional markets, you'll think of us and future training that's ahead and take advantage of any capacity building like this and look to your partners for support."



## Statement by the Forum SG, Henry Puna on the Parliamentary election of the new Fiji Prime Minister

*Pacific Island Forum*

*24 December 2022*

**SUVA, FIJI**—I offer my congratulations to the Hon Sitiveni Rabuka on his appointment as Prime Minister of the Republic of Fiji. I also congratulate the successful appointment of his Cabinet, in line with the agreement reached by the coalition of political parties who now form Government.

As the home of the Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat, the affairs of the people and government of Fiji are close to the hearts of many of our Secretariat staff and families.

We congratulate the people of Fiji for the peaceful observance of its democratic and constitutional processes which has resulted in the appointment of its Prime Minister at today's Parliamentary sitting, and we stand as the Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat committed to the ongoing service towards the 2050

Strategy for the Blue Pacific, and to the service to the people and leaders of our Forum family.

I acknowledge the distinguished tenure of the Hon. Josaia Voreqe Bainimarama including his leadership as the Chair of the Pacific Islands Forum. I look forward to working with Prime Minister Rabuka and his Government as they continue Fiji's role as Forum Chair.

Finally, and most importantly, I extend seasons blessings to the people of Fiji and their newly elected Parliamentarians, and to the Prime Minister as he confirms his government.

Fiji has come through a general election and its subsequent Parliamentary milestone and can now fully enjoy the full measure of this festive season. Thank you for upholding the values of peace and goodwill as we, together, look forward to working towards a productive and successful 2023

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The Pacific Community (SPC) invites applications for the position of Administrative Assistant – FSM EDA Programme in its Micronesia Regional Office (MRO). This position will be located at its regional office in Pohnpei, Micronesia.

### Description

The Pacific Community (SPC) is the principal scientific and technical organisation in the Pacific region, supporting development since 1947. We are an international development organisation owned and governed by our 27 country and territory members. In pursuit of sustainable development to benefit Pacific people, our unique organisation works across more than 25 sectors. We are known for our knowledge and innovation in such areas as fisheries science, public health surveillance, geoscience, and conservation of plant genetic resources for food and agriculture.

The Micronesia Regional Office (MRO) situated in Kolonia, Pohnpei, Federated States of Micronesia (FSM), is the main hub for SPC's projects and partnerships with the Micronesian members of the Federated States of Micronesia, the Republic of the Marshall Islands (RMI), the Republic of Palau, and the United States territories of the Northern Mariana Islands (CNMI), and Guam. The MRO opened in January 2006.

The role – the Administrative Assistant – FSM EDA within the EDA Programme Coordination Unit, will provide administrative and other support to the EDA Programme Coordinator and the Finance and Procurement Officer. He/she will ensure the efficient and effective delivery of activities in compliance with SPC corporate guidelines as well as donor requirements.

The key responsibilities of the role include the following:

1. Provide support to the EDA Programme Coordinator and the Finance and Procurement Officer on financial management and procurement tasks
2. Provide general administrative support for the delivery of activities
3. Provide logistical support for the delivery of meetings, conferences, technical support, training, and travel
4. Assist with other programme activities where required

For a more detailed account of the key responsibilities, please refer to the online job description.

### Qualifications

- Tertiary qualification in finance, accounting, business or public administration.
- Essential experience and skills
- At least 3 years' relevant work experience in a similar role with project administration and systems management.
- Demonstrated experience in conference management and event organisation, logistics and travel.
- Knowledge of accounting and procurement standards, practices, and procedures.
- Experience with organizing large, complex regional events including virtual/hybrid modalities.
- Experience in managing procurement, purchase orders, invoicing, payments, and other finance processes.
- Experience using Navision or similar finance software.
- Experience in airline ticketing, communicating with airline agents and searching for data / flights / travel information.
- Driver's license.

Remuneration – the Administrative Assistant – FSM EDA is a Band 3 position in SPC's 2022 salary scale, with a starting taxable salary range of USD 1,508–1,886 per month, plus local staff benefits.

Benefits – SPC provides medical and life insurance for eligible employees and their eligible dependents. Employees are entitled to 25 days of annual leave. Provident Fund and/or Social Security will be according to FSM's local legislation.

Closing date: 22 January 2023 – 11:00 pm Pohnpei time

Job Reference: SH000241

Applicants can apply online at: <http://careers.spc.int/>.

For your application to be considered, you must provide us with:

- an updated resume with contact details for three professional referees
- a cover letter detailing your skills, experience and interest in this position
- responses to all screening questions

Please answer all of the screening questions, if you do not answer these questions your application will be considered incomplete and will not be reviewed at shortlisting stage.

Screening questions:

1. What approaches would you take in your daily work to ensure you are well organised to address priorities on time?
2. Could you please identify a stressful situation that you had to manage during your work and how you addressed it?
3. Briefly describe your experience in travel and logistics management/administration for fieldwork or workshops, and identify three lessons learned.

## JICA donates research boat to PICRC as part of joint coastal ecosystem management

Palau International Coral Reef Center



The Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) donated a research boat to the Palau

International Coral Reef Center (PICRC) at the end of November 2022. This donation is part of a three-year joint coastal ecosystem management project.

The project, which aims to increase the resilience of Palau's coastal ecosystems to climate change and environmental threats, started in February 2022. Titled 'Project for Enhancement of Integrated Management of Coastal Ecosystems in Palau for Strengthening their Resilience to Climate Change', it consists of four key components: integrated coastal ecosystem management system, mangrove ecosystem monitoring and management, soil run-off and sedimentation monitoring and management, and communication, education, and public awareness programs. This work will contribute to the long-term sustainability of Palau's communities, environment, and livelihoods in the face of future challenges.

JICA has continuously supported PICRC since it began its activities in January 2001 through grant-aid from the Government of Japan. The new 33 feet long boat with twin outboard engines will be used for the project's activities, such as mangrove and sedimentation monitoring, as well as PICRC's other research programs.

In responding to the donation, PICRC CEO, Dr. Yimnang Golbuu stated, "We are grateful for the donation of this new boat by JICA. This new 32-footer boat will increase the research capacity of the Center since it can carry more researchers and equipment than the current boats at the Center. Having more researchers and equipment on each trip will mean that more work can be done. We thank JICA not only for this donation but for its partnership and support in helping Palau build its resilience to climate change."

"It's important that we bring this information to schools like Kayangel, which are far from Koror and don't have easy access to the Center's resources," said Research Director Geraldine Rengiil. "We were able to do these outreach activities through coordination with the school principal and teachers."

