

Independent Prosecutor opens criminal investigation into FSM President, Finance Secretary

FSM Office of the Independent Prosecutor

January 8, 2026

FSM - The Office of the Independent Prosecutor (OIP) has opened a formal criminal investigation into the actions of President Wesley W. Simina and Secretary of the Department of Finance and Administration Rose N. Nakanaga, citing their refusal to transfer funds appropriated by Congress to enable the OIP to operate.

In a press release issued January 8, the OIP said the investigation concerns alleged acts

and omissions by the President and the Finance Secretary related to their failure to release Congressionally approved funds “in accordance with the FSM Constitution,” preventing the office from carrying out its constitutional mandate.

Constitutional Mandate at Issue

The Office of the Independent Prosecutor was created through a constitutional amendment approved by FSM voters, requiring the establishment of an independent body empowered to investigate and prosecute criminal

wrongdoing at the highest levels of government. The amendment specifically provides that the Independent Prosecutor must have independent authority and control over resources necessary to perform those duties.

Although Congress appropriated funds for the OIP, the Independent Prosecutor has asserted that those funds have not been transferred from the Department of Finance and Administration to the control of the office, rendering it unable to fully function.



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Further briefings filed as court reconsiders authority of Chuuk Election Commission

By *Bill Jaynes*
The Kaselehlie Press

January 13, 2026



Chuuk - The Chuuk State Supreme Court is set to hear further arguments on January 16 in Civil Action No. 034-2025, a case that continues to

raise fundamental questions about constitutional governance, separation of powers, and the administration of elections in Chuuk State.

that time—including the conduct and certification of the general election—were legally valid.

The Court's November Ruling

The case arises from a legal challenge brought by the Chuuk State Legislature following the March 4, 2025 general election, which was conducted under the authority of individuals nominated by the Governor to serve on the Chuuk State Election Commission but who were never confirmed by the Chuuk State Senate. At issue is whether those nominees possessed any lawful authority to act during the period between their nomination and their eventual rejection by the Senate, and whether actions taken during

In an interlocutory order issued on November 21, 2025, the Supreme Court resolved one central question but left others open. The Court ruled that the Governor's nominees to the Election Commission were not “deemed confirmed” under Article VI, Section 3 of the Chuuk Constitution after the Senate adjourned sine die on February 11, 2025, following a special session that lasted only eight

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Pohnpei State receives \$86,000 in medical supplies and equipment from the People's Republic of China

Pohnpei Public Information

January 9, 2026

Nett, Pohnpei – In a significant boost to the local healthcare system, the People's Republic of China (PRC) officially handed over a substantial donation of medications and specialized medical equipment to the Pohnpei State Hospital today. The donation, valued at USD \$86,000, underscores the strengthening bilateral ties and humanitarian cooperation between the FSM, including Pohnpei State, and the People's Republic of China.

Enhancing Healthcare Capabilities

The handover ceremony was attended by high-level officials and representatives from the health sector. The donated supplies include:

- Critical medications for hospital pharmacy stocks.
- Advanced surgical and dental equipment to modernize specialized care.
- Essential medical tools for daily patient diagnostics and treatment.

A Legacy of Cooperation

His Excellency Wu Wei, Ambassador of the People's Republic of China, presented the donation and detailed the history of this partnership. He noted that the presence of the Chinese Medical Team (CMT) is the direct result of a milestone agreement reached in 2024 between President Wesley Simina and President Xi Jinping.

This current team is the second rotation of medical professionals to serve Pohnpei, providing not only modern clinical assistance but also specialized Traditional Chinese Medicine, which has become a valued resource for local patients.

Words of Gratitude

Representing Governor Stevenson A. Joseph, Chief of Staff Mr. Patterson Shed formally accepted the donation. In his keynote remarks, Mr. Shed emphasized the human element of the partnership:



"True friendship is measured by the support we give one another in times of need. Today's handover of medical supplies is a powerful testament to that bond. However, the most valuable gift we receive is not just the equipment, but the expertise and spirit of service brought by the Chinese Medical Team."

The ceremony also featured remarks from Senator Shelten Neth, Chairman of the Pohnpei State Legislature's Standing Committee on Health, and the Honorable Marcus Samo, FSM Secretary of the Department of Health and Social Affairs. Both officials extended their deep gratitude to the PRC for their continued generosity and commitment to the health and well-being of the Pohnpeian people.

The Pohnpei State Government remains committed to working with its international partners to ensure that all citizens have access to high-quality healthcare services. This donation of \$86,000 in equipment and the ongoing service of the Chinese Medical Team represent a vital pillar in the state's healthcare strategy.



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Bill Jaynes
Managing Editor

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January 28, 2026

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

Monday, January 26, 2026

Governor Stevenson A. Joseph reviews holiday public safety operations; no fatalities recorded

Pohnpei Public Informations

January 6, 2026

Peilapalap, Pohnpei — This morning, Governor Stevenson A. Joseph and Chief of Staff Patterson Shed met with the leadership of the Department of Public Safety (DPS) to receive an official update on police operations conducted during the 2025-2026 holiday season.

Director of the Department of Public Safety Eltes Pelep and Chief of the Division of Fire and Rescue Joseph Ainstain provided a detailed briefing on the enforcement strategies and statistics that defined the department’s year-end activities.

Operational Oversight and Municipal Cooperation

Director Pelep explained that operations were strategically centered in Kolonia, with additional personnel stationed at substations in Kitti and Madolenihmw. A key highlight of the report was the vital cooperation of Municipal Police Officers, whose partnership with State

Police ensured a comprehensive security presence throughout Pohnpei’s communities.

Enforcement Statistics

The Department reported arrests throughout the holiday season. The enforcement data for the peak holiday periods was broken down as follows:

- Month of December up to the 30th: 49 arrests.
- December 31, 2025 – January 2, 2026: 24 arrests.

The majority of these incidents involved alcohol-related offenses and underage drinking. Most significantly, the Director confirmed that there were no fatalities recorded during this holiday season.

Executive Recognition

Governor Joseph expressed his sincere appreciation to Director Pelep, Chief Ainstain, and the entire Department for their dedication to public service. He specifically commended the Director for the implementation of random traffic spot checks, noting their effectiveness in maintaining order and public safety on the roads.

The Governor encouraged the leadership to utilize the data and lessons learned from these operations to further enhance and build upon future engagements to ensure the continued safety of the public.



Animal welfare group opens new dispensary with support from Canada Fund

By **Bill Jaynes**
The Kaselehlie Press

January 13, 2026

Pohnpei - Pohnpei’s animal welfare organization Kidi Oangoahng (KOO) has opened a new animal dispensary near Sokehs Bridge, expanding its efforts to promote responsible pet ownership and improve access to basic veterinary care.

The initiative is supported by funding from the Canada Fund for Local Initiatives (CFLI), which provides small grants to community-based projects that contribute to local well-being and development. KOO was selected as a recipient in the most recent funding round.

Established as a non-profit organization, KOO focuses on animal health education, preventive care, and population control through spay and neuter services. As part of its long-running efforts, the organization plans

to continue hosting visiting veterinary teams at least twice a year.

In 2026, KOO will mark 21 years of collaboration with Dr. Joseph and a veterinary team from Wise Owl Animal Hospital in Guam, which has regularly traveled to Pohnpei to provide spay and neuter surgeries and other veterinary services. The Pacific Partnership program has also been a supporting partner in these efforts over the years.

Between visiting veterinary missions, KOO has begun offering limited but regular services through its new dispensary. The dispensary initially operated on Saturday mornings at New Tokyo Medical College beginning in mid-2025, but relocated following staffing changes at the institution.

The dispensary is currently operating from a temporary location near Sokehs Bridge, under the residence of KOO’s president, while preparations are underway to establish a container-

based clinic. Services presently include routine vaccinations for dogs and cats, guidance on parasite prevention, and telehealth consultations with Dr. Joseph.

KOO also distributes educational brochures on responsible pet ownership and plans to expand these materials. CFLI funding is being used to purchase essential equipment for the dispensary, including pet weighing scales already in use, with additional items—such as post-operative cages, an operating table, surgical lights, and a steam sterilizer—expected to arrive by February 2026.

In addition to clinical services, KOO plans to offer “Prevent a Bite” awareness activities for elementary schools and youth groups.

KOO expressed appreciation to the Canada Fund for Local Initiatives for its support, noting that improved animal care also contributes to public health and community safety.

The organization also acknowledged New Tokyo Medical College for allowing KOO to use its facilities rent-free for several years, which helped sustain operations during the project’s early stages.



...Chuuk Election

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working days.

Article VI, Section 3 provides that a nominee may be deemed confirmed if the Senate has at least ten working days to act on a nomination and fails to reject it. The Court found that the ten-day threshold had not been met, and therefore confirmation by operation of law did not occur.

That ruling rejected the Attorney General's prior legal opinions asserting that the nominees were deemed confirmed and could lawfully serve. The Court also noted that the nominees were formally rejected by the Senate during a subsequent session that adjourned on March 14, 2025.

While the Court's order clarified the confirmation issue, it expressly directed the parties to submit additional briefing on unresolved questions, including whether the nominees nonetheless had authority to act before their rejection, and whether the doctrine of holdover applies to the constitutionally independent Election Commission.

Legislature Challenges Authority from the Outset

In response, the Chuuk State Legislature submitted multiple briefs arguing that the unconfirmed nominees never acquired lawful authority at any point after their nomination. According to the Legislature, both the Constitution and current statutory law prohibit any person requiring Senate confirmation from exercising the powers of office unless confirmation occurs.

The Legislature's filings emphasize the Chuuk State Executive Reorganization Act, CSL 7-03-05, which was enacted in 2016. Section 16 of that law states that any person appointed or nominated to a position requiring Senate advice and consent "shall not exercise the power and authority of such position" until confirmed. The Legislature argues that this provision superseded older statutes relied upon by the respondents and leaves no room for temporary or acting service by unconfirmed Election Commissioners.

The Legislature also relies on Article VI, Section 3 of the Constitution, which bars unconfirmed individuals from holding or exercising the powers of an office requiring Senate confirmation unless temporary service is expressly authorized by statute. According to the Legislature, no statute authorizes temporary or acting Election Commissioners.

From that premise, the Legislature concludes that actions taken by the unconfirmed nominees—including administering the March 4 election—were undertaken without lawful authority and are therefore void as a matter of law. The Legislature's briefs repeatedly characterize those actions as *ultra vires*, meaning beyond the legal powers of the individuals involved.

Holdover Doctrine at the Center of the Dispute

A second major issue before the Court is whether the holdover doctrine applies to the Chuuk State Election Commission. Under the holdover principle, an incumbent officer whose term has expired may continue to serve until a successor is duly appointed and confirmed, in order to prevent a vacancy from disrupting government operations.

The Legislature argues that the holdover doctrine was recognized by the Chuuk State Supreme Court in *Board of Education v. Sony* and applies to constitutionally independent bodies such as the Election Commission. According to this view, previously confirmed commissioners remained lawful holdover incumbents after their terms expired and continued to possess authority to administer elections until successors were properly confirmed.

The Legislature contends that the unconfirmed nominees could not displace holdover commissioners because nomination alone does not create a vacancy or confer authority. In its filings, the Legislature stresses that expiration of a term does not itself remove an incumbent from office and that allowing unconfirmed nominees to exercise authority would undermine the Senate's constitutional role in the confirmation process.

Respondents Defend Temporary Authority

The respondents, represented by the Attorney General's Office, take a sharply different position. Their brief argues that the nominees were authorized to act temporarily from January 27, 2025—the date their nominations were submitted—until March 14, 2025, when the Senate formally rejected them.

The respondents rely heavily on former provisions of CSL 190-07, asserting that those provisions allowed nominees requiring Senate confirmation to exercise the powers of office unless and until rejected. They argue that this statutory authority is consistent with Article VI, Section 3 of the Constitution, which permits unconfirmed nominees to act temporarily where authorized by law.

In addition, the respondents argue that even if the nominees lacked full legal authority, they acted as *de facto* officers, a doctrine that recognizes the validity of actions taken by individuals who exercise the duties of an office under color of authority, even if their appointment is later found to be defective. According to the respondents, invalidating the actions of the Election Commission would disrupt governance and undermine public confidence in the electoral process.

The respondents also argue against applying the holdover doctrine to the Election Commission. They contend that election administration presents heightened risks of political influence and that allowing expired commissioners to remain in office could be exploited by either branch of government. Their brief asserts that existing election statutes already address continuity and that holdover principles are neither necessary nor appropriate in this context.

Legislature Rejects De Facto Argument

In reply, the Legislature disputes the applicability of the *de facto* officer doctrine. It argues that the doctrine is intended to protect the public where an officer's authority is merely defective, not where an individual acts in open violation of constitutional and statutory requirements.

According to the Legislature,

the unconfirmed nominees never possessed "color of authority" because both the Constitution and current statutes expressly barred them from exercising power without confirmation. As such, the Legislature maintains that the nominees were not *de facto* officers but usurpers, and that their actions are subject to direct legal challenge.

The Legislature further argues that applying the *de facto* doctrine in this case would effectively nullify the Senate's confirmation power and encourage future executives to bypass constitutional safeguards.

Status of Amicus Briefing

The Court's November 21 order also allowed for the submission of *amicus curiae* briefs to assist in resolving the remaining constitutional and statutory issues. Attorney Salomon Saimon was expected to participate as *amicus curiae* in the case. However, as of press time, this newspaper had not been able to obtain a copy of any *amicus* filing, and it was not confirmed whether such a brief had been formally filed with the Court.

January 16 Hearing

The January 16 hearing is expected to focus on the remaining questions left open by the Court's November order. These include whether the unconfirmed nominees had any lawful authority before their rejection, whether the holdover doctrine applies to the Election Commission, and what legal consequences flow from actions taken during the disputed period.

The Court's eventual ruling could have far-reaching implications. Beyond determining the legal status of the March 4, 2025 election, the decision may shape how future appointments to independent boards and commissions are handled and clarify the boundaries between executive appointment power and legislative confirmation authority.

As the case proceeds, it continues to draw close attention from both branches of government and the public, underscoring the central role of constitutional processes in maintaining the legitimacy of Chuuk State's electoral system.

...OIP

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According to the OIP, repeated efforts beginning in mid-November 2025 to resolve the matter administratively were unsuccessful, even after two Congressional oversight hearings held in mid-December by the Committees on Judiciary and Governmental Operations and on Ways and Means.

Background of Delays

The funding dispute comes against the backdrop of earlier delays in implementing the constitutional amendment. After the amendment's adoption, the nomination and confirmation of the Independent Prosecutor took an extended period, with Congress eventually accepting the President's nominee late last year. The Independent Prosecutor formally took office on December 1, 2025 though he is currently still in the U.S. pending release of funds.

The current investigation marks the first formal criminal inquiry initiated by the OIP since its establishment.

Scope of the Investigation

In announcing the investigation, the OIP said it was necessary to make the matter public "to reassure the FSM public" that the office will exercise its constitutional and statutory powers, and to affirm that "no one is above the law".

With a formal investigation now open, the Independent Prosecutor has authority to issue subpoenas compelling testimony under oath, as well as subpoenas duces tecum requiring the production of documents and records relevant to the investigation. The OIP also warned that obstructing the investigation or destroying or concealing public records, including emails and text messages, could itself constitute a criminal offense.

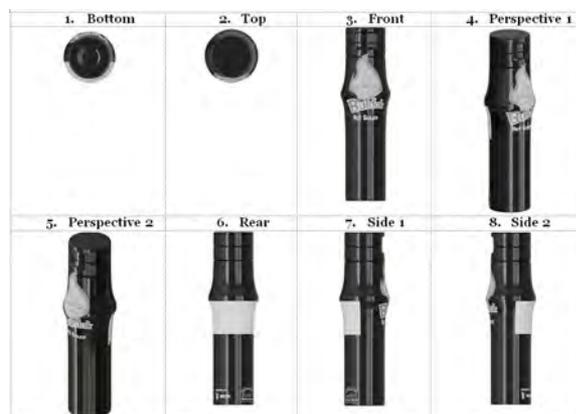
Presumption of Innocence

The OIP emphasized that the investigation does not constitute a finding of guilt. President Simina, Secretary Nakanaga, and any other individuals who may be identified during the investigation are presumed innocent unless and until proven guilty in a court of law.

Following completion of the investigation, the Independent Prosecutor will determine whether criminal charges are warranted.

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MUNRO LEYS

President Simina advances marine spatial planning and national priorities

FSM Information Services

January 8, 2026

Honolulu, Hawai'i-His Excellency Wesley W. Simina, President of the Federated States of Micronesia (FSM), concluded a series of high-level engagements in Honolulu on December 8-12, 2026, reinforcing national priorities and advancing FSM's leadership on sustainable development and ocean governance.

At the margins of the visit, President Simina administered the Oath of Office to the newly appointed Consul General at the FSM Consulate Office in Hawai'i, underscoring FSM's commitment to effective diplomatic representation and services for its citizens abroad.

President Simina also convened a meeting of the Chief Executive Council with FSM State Governors to align national and state priorities and coordinate engagement with regional and international partners on infrastructure development and investment initiatives.

A central focus of the visit was Marine Spatial Planning (MSP), where President

Simina chaired high-level discussions with members of the FSM Congress, state governors, and partners from the Waitt Institute, Micronesian Conservation Trust, and Blue Prosperity Micronesia. The discussions advanced a coordinated national approach to managing FSM's Ocean resources.

"By committing at both the national and state levels, FSM is building a framework that is unified, enforceable, and responsive to the needs of our people," President Simina said. "Prosperity for our ocean and our people is possible, and the sooner we act, the sooner we can realize these benefits."

The MSP workshop emphasized collaboration and transparency in managing nearly 3 million square kilometers of FSM's Exclusive Economic Zone, balancing conservation, economic opportunity, and traditional practices. All four FSM states committed to developing coastal Marine Spatial Planning plans under the Blue Prosperity Micronesia program, with an emphasis on community participation.

Speaking on behalf of the governors,

Pohnpei Governor Stevenson A. Joseph highlighted the national significance of the initiative.

"This work represents one of the most important steps our nation is taking to safeguard the health of our ocean, protect national security, and secure sustainable prosperity," Governor Joseph said. "Our ocean is our national treasure, our identity, our sustenance, our foundation for future economic opportunities."

Congressman Johnson A. Asher, Chairman of Resources and Development, expressed his support for the role of Marine Spatial Planning in strengthening ocean governance, while emphasizing the importance of inclusive engagement. He noted that "state consultations are critical to increasing awareness and understanding of Marine Spatial Planning," underscoring that broad public engagement will be essential to the success of any future legislation.

President Simina welcomed the unified commitment of national and state leaders and thanked Congress and development partners for their continued engagement.

On behalf of the Simina-Palik Administration, the President reaffirmed the National Government's commitment to working closely with FSM states, Congress, traditional leaders, and development partners as work continues toward Marine Spatial Planning legislation. Inclusive consultations, transparency, and shared responsibility will remain central to ensuring ocean governance supports sustainable development and reflects the priorities of the Micronesian people.





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Office of the President congratulates Congressman-at-Large Andrew R. Yatilman

FSM Information Services

January 13, 2026

Palikir, Pohnpei — The Office of the President congratulates the Honorable Andrew R. Yatilman on his seating as Congressman-at-Large for the State of Yap of the 24th Congress of the Federated States of Micronesia (FSM).

The Office of the President recognizes Senator Yatilman as one of the nation's longest-serving Cabinet members, whose years of public service have contributed significantly to national governance. The Office looks forward to working collaboratively with him in advancing national priorities and serving the people of the FSM.

The Office of the President wishes Senator Yatilman success as he begins his term in Congress.



Pohnpei State Government discusses domestic shipping service enhancement with JICA delegation

Pohnpei Public Information

January 8, 2026

Peilapalap, Pohnpei – Governor Stevenson A. Joseph and Lieutenant Governor Herolyn S. Movick today hosted a courtesy visit for a delegation from the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) to conduct a preliminary data collection survey on improving domestic shipping services in the Federated States of Micronesia (FSM).

The delegation was led by Resident Representative Takeshi Watanabe and included consultant team members Masaru Ogawa and Yuko Tanaka from JICA Headquarters, along with Ms. Trisha Billen from the local JICA office. Governor Joseph and Lieutenant Governor Movick warmly received Mr. Watanabe and the entire team, expressing their deep appreciation for the importance of the work being undertaken.

Following the initial welcome, Mr. Watanabe noted that this project is still in its preliminary stages and will

be coordinated through the National Government. Ms. Tanaka then provided a brief overview of the scope and objectives of the survey.

Governor Joseph then shared the State's perspective, highlighting that improved domestic shipping is a critical priority for Pohnpei, a point recently shared at a donors' roundtable meeting, and essential to meeting the State's mandate to service its Outer Islands.

The Governor expressed sincere appreciation for the satisfactory and beneficial shipping service currently provided by the National Government. However, he conveyed the State's strong desire to continue building upon that service by reinstating the dedicated, exclusive Outer Islands Field Trip Vessel that Pohnpei State previously maintained with the MV Micro Glory. This dedicated service is needed to better match the priorities and schedules of the State's remote island communities.

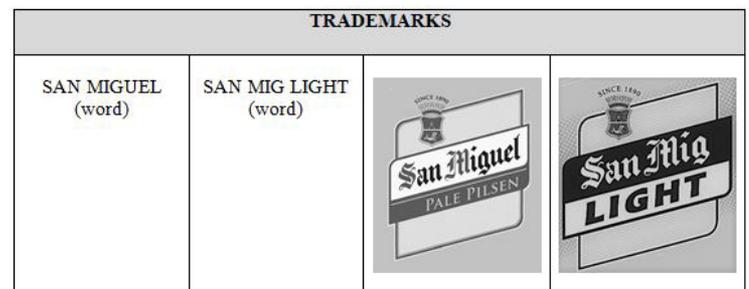
In closing, Governor Joseph thanked

the JICA team for their commitment and further noted that any assistance with infrastructure for docking in the Outer Islands would also be immensely beneficial to the State's goals.

The Pohnpei State Government looks forward to the results of JICA's survey and continued close coordination with the National Government on this vital effort to enhance connectivity for all Pohnpei citizens.

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wireless networks; providing a wide variety of payment and financial services, namely, credit card payment processing services, issuing credit cards and providing personal and business lines of credit, electronic payment services involving electronic processing and subsequent transmission of bill payment data, bill payment services with guaranteed payment delivery, all conducted via a global communications network; credit card and debit card transaction processing services; reimbursement of payment processing for fraudulent transactions, transaction errors, and disputed transactions, namely, transactions concerning lost, damaged, misrepresented, or incorrect products or services, all in the field of electronic payment purchases; providing purchase protection services for goods and services purchased by others via a global computer network and wireless networks, namely, fraud reimbursement services in the field of credit card purchases and electronic payment purchases, secure commercial transactions for credit card purchases and electronic payment purchases, and dispute resolution services and reimbursement services for disputed transactions in the field of electronic payment purchases; credit card transaction processing services; credit services, namely, providing revolving credit account services; bill payments services; providing electronic mobile payment services for others in the nature of providing secure commercial transactions and payment options using a mobile device at a point of sale; credit card transaction processing services and payment processing services in the field of credit card payments and electronic payments; electronic foreign exchange payment processing; payment processing services, namely, providing virtual currency transaction processing services for others; financial services, namely, providing stablecoin currency, virtual currency, digital currency, digital tokens, and cryptocurrency for use by others; financial services, namely, virtual currency, digital currency, stablecoin, and cryptocurrency transfer, trading, exchange, and payment processing services; electronic transfer of cryptocurrency, digital currency, stablecoins, digital and blockchain assets, digitized assets, digital tokens, crypto tokens and utility tokens; electronic wallet services for trading, storing, sending, receiving, validating, verifying, accepting, tracking, transferring, and transmitting virtual currency, and managing virtual currency payment and exchange transactions.

Class 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, fulfilment 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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Fentanyl seizure in Yap still under investigation

Yap Government

January 13, 2026

Yap FM - Authorities continue to investigate the seizure of fentanyl discovered in an incoming shipment to Yap State last year, raising concerns over the presence of the highly lethal illegal drug in the state.

According to the FSM National Police, Yap Branch, the fentanyl was intercepted on April 22, 2025. An arrest and possible prosecution followed the seizure, but officials say the investigation remains ongoing as authorities work to determine how the drug entered Yap State and who may be responsible.

A source familiar with the case, who requested anonymity for personal reasons, said the individual or individuals

involved may face additional criminal charges. The source also indicated that deportation is a possible outcome, depending on the findings of the investigation.

Fentanyl is a powerful synthetic opioid that has contributed to a growing number of overdose deaths worldwide. Law enforcement agencies report that the drug is primarily manufactured in clandestine laboratories in Mexico operated by transnational criminal organizations. These organizations commonly use precursor chemicals sourced from China to produce the drug.

Authorities have not released further details, citing the ongoing nature of the investigation.

Fentanyl Seizure in Yap Under Ongoing Investigation

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utility tokens between parties; downloadable computer software and downloadable mobile application software for facilitating electronic commerce transactions; downloadable computer software, namely, internet browser extensions, plug-ins, and applications for use with electronic commerce transactions and product price monitoring; downloadable computer software and downloadable mobile application 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; downloadable software development kits (SDK); downloadable and recorded computer software for creating and managing a business and an online store, namely, inventory management, order processing, order tracking, fulfilment of orders, sales tracking, collection of sales data, and sales analytics; downloadable and recorded computer software used for point of sale transactions; downloadable and recorded computer software used to train and manage employees, record employee hours worked, and generate payroll processing; electronic devices, namely, point of sale terminals, chip card readers, credit card readers, payment card readers, mobile card readers; charging stands adapted for use with handheld digital electronic devices namely, cell phones, MP3 players, personal digital assistants, point of sale terminals, chip card readers, credit card readers, payment card readers, and mobile card readers.

Class 35:

Promoting the goods of others, namely, providing information regarding discounts, coupons, rebates, vouchers and special offers for the goods of others; promoting the goods and services of others by providing hypertext links to the web sites of others; promoting the goods and services of others by providing a web site featuring links to the online retail web sites of others; business consulting services in the field of online payments; managing and tracking credit card, debit card, ACH, prepaid cards, payment cards, and other forms of payment transactions via electronic communications networks for business purposes; business information management, namely, electronic reporting of business analytics relating to payment processing, authentication, tracking, and invoicing; business management, namely, optimization of payments for businesses; promoting the sale of goods and services of others by providing a website 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; promoting the sale of goods and services of others by providing interactive online applications 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 incentive award programs through issuance and processing of loyalty points for purchase of the goods and services of others; customer loyalty services for commercial, promotional and/or advertising purposes, namely, administration of a program that allows participants to obtain and redeem points or awards for goods and/or services.

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Class 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, fulfilment 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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Historic post-midnight Times Square event opens America's semi quincentennial year

By Bill Jaynes
The Kaselehlie Press

Washington, D.C. — As the world welcomed the New Year in Times Square, the United States began a year-long national celebration marking its 250th anniversary according to a press release from America250.

America250, the nonpartisan organization designated by Congress to lead the nation's semi quincentennial commemoration, partnered with One Times Square and the Times Square Alliance to stage a historic, first-ever second ceremonial moment immediately following the traditional New Year's Eve countdown.

The post-midnight celebration officially ushered in 2026 as the semi quincentennial year, marking 250 years since the signing of the Declaration of Independence.

For the first time in the event's history, a surprise second celebration followed the midnight countdown. At approximately 12:04 a.m. EST, the iconic Times Square Ball was relit in a red, white, and blue America250 design and rose above illuminated "2026" numerals. The moment featured the debut of a new video titled "America Turns 250," a post-midnight release of 2,000 pounds of red, white, and blue confetti, and a pyrotechnic finale set to



America the Beautiful.

"This moment in Times Square — the most watched celebration on the planet — signaled that the largest and most inspiring commemoration in our nation's history was officially underway," said Rosie Rios, chair of America250. She said the goal was to inspire all 350 million Americans to take part in celebrating the country.

The New Year's Eve event marked the beginning of a year-long collaboration that will culminate later this year with another unprecedented milestone: a second Times Square Ball Drop scheduled for July 3, 2026, on the eve of Independence Day. It will be the first time the Ball drops outside of New Year's Eve and is expected to anchor America250's nationwide Fourth of July celebrations.

Organizers said the July 3 event will reinforce New York City's central role in the nation's history while anchoring celebrations across the country.

"One Times Square has long been a

place where the world comes together to mark pivotal moments in history," said Michael Phillips, president of Jamestown, owner and operator of One Times Square. "We were proud to serve as the starting point for this historic year on a global stage."

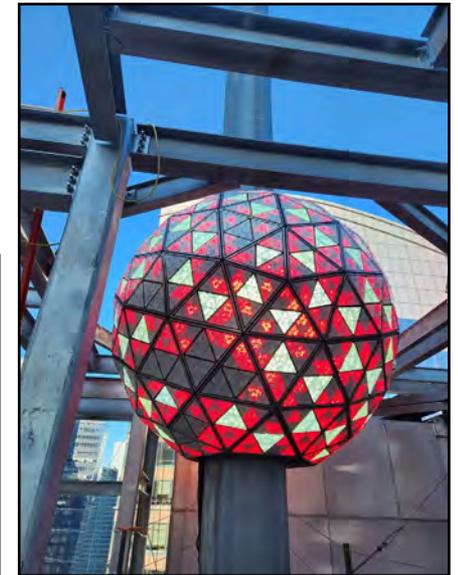
Tom Harris, president of the Times Square Alliance, said the partnership reflected the unifying spirit of both the milestone and the location. "Each year, Times Square unites people in the streets with millions more watching around the world. It was fitting that the first moment of America's 250th year began here," he said.

Anticipation for the post-midnight ceremony built throughout New Year's Eve. Earlier in the evening, at 6:04 p.m. EST, the America250 Ball design was revealed atop One Times Square during a performance of "The Star-Spangled Banner." Later, at approximately 11:15 p.m., Rios invited Americans to participate in America Gives, a new America250 initiative aimed at making 2026 the largest year of service in U.S. history.



America250 entered the Semiquincentennial year with momentum built throughout 2025. Its recent milestones included thousands of student submissions to America's Field Trip, more than 15 stops on the Our American Story tour, participation from all 56 states and territories through official commissions, the formation of the Congressional America250 Caucus — now the largest caucus in U.S. history — and the announcement of major corporate sponsorships and nonprofit partnerships.

America250 will continue its national programming through July 4, 2026, inviting communities across the country to take part in commemorations, service projects, and public celebrations marking 250 years of American history.



FSM convenes first Executive Meeting of 2026 to align national priorities

FSM Information Services

January 10, 2026

Palikir, Pohnpei — As the Government of the Federated States of Micronesia enters the new year, the Office of the President convened its first Executive Meeting of 2026, bringing together Cabinet members and key staff to align national priorities and set a coordinated agenda to guide governance and development for the year ahead.

Key discussions focused on legislative readiness, infrastructure progress, budget planning, expanded postal services to the outer islands, and strengthening international

partnerships. The meeting also addressed the Chuuk oil spill response, workforce issues, and preparations for upcoming regional and global engagements.

The Simina-Palik Administration remains committed to ensuring that policies, programs, and resources across the Executive Branch are aligned with national priorities, advancing sustainable development, improving public services, and building a stronger future for the people of the Federated States of Micronesia.



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Class 2: Paints, varnishes, lacquers; preservatives against rust and against deterioration of wood; colorants, dyes; inks for printing, marking and engraving; raw natural resins; metals in foil and powder form for use in painting, decorating, printing and art; ink cartridges, filled, for printers and photocopiers; inks for printers and copiers

Class 3: Non-medicated cosmetics and toiletry preparations; non-medicated dentifrices; perfumery, essential oils; bleaching preparations and other substances for laundry use; cleaning, polishing and abrasive preparations, laundry preparations; hand soap; air fragrancng preparations

Class 6: Common metals and their alloys, ores; metal materials for building and construction; transportable buildings of metal; non-electric cables and wires of common metal; small items of metal hardware; metal containers for storage or transport; safes; locks of

metal, other than electric; badges of metal for vehicles

Class 7: Machines, machine tools, power-operated tools; motors and engines, except for land vehicles; machine coupling and transmission components, except for land vehicles; agricultural implements, other than hand-operated hand tools; incubators for eggs; automatic vending machines; kitchen machines, electric; washing machines [laundry]; machines and apparatus for cleaning, electric

Class 8: Hand tools and implements, hand-operated; cutlery; side arms, except firearms; razors; razors, electric or non-electric; air pumps, hand-operated

Class 9: Scientific, research, navigation, surveying, photographic, cinematographic, audiovisual, optical, weighing, measuring, signalling, detecting, testing, inspecting, life-saving and teaching apparatus and instruments; apparatus and instruments for conducting, switching, transforming, accumulating, regulating or controlling the distribution or use of electricity; apparatus and instruments for recording, transmitting, reproducing or processing sound, images or data; recorded and downloadable media, computer software, blank digital or analogue recording and storage media; mechanisms for coin-operated apparatus; cash registers, calculating devices; computers and computer peripheral devices; diving suits, divers' masks, ear plugs for divers, nose clips for divers and swimmers, gloves for divers, breathing apparatus for underwater swimming; fire-extinguishing apparatus; smartphones; smart speakers; digital projector; spectacles

Class 10: Surgical, medical, dental and veterinary apparatus and instruments; artificial limbs, eyes and teeth; orthopaedic articles; suture materials; therapeutic and assistive devices adapted for persons with disabilities; massage apparatus; apparatus, devices and articles for nursing infants; sexual activity apparatus, devices and articles.

Class 11: Apparatus and installations for lighting, heating, cooling, steam generating, cooking, drying, ventilating, water supply and sanitary

purposes; cooking apparatus and installations; cooking utensils, electric; cooking stoves; refrigerators; air-conditioning installations; air purifying apparatus and machines; hair dryers; heating installations; shower equipment; water purifying apparatus and machines; disinfectant apparatus

Class 12: Vehicles; apparatus for locomotion by land, air or water; electric vehicles; head-rests for vehicle seats; air pumps [vehicle accessories]

Class 14: Precious metals and their alloys; jewellery, precious and semi-precious stones; horological and chronometric instruments.

Class 16: Paper and cardboard; printed matter; bookbinding material; photographs; stationery and office requisites, except furniture; adhesives for stationery or household purposes; drawing materials and materials for artists; paintbrushes; instructional and teaching materials; plastic sheets, films and bags for wrapping and packaging; printers' type, printing blocks.

Class 18: Leather and imitations of leather; animal skins and hides; luggage and carrying bags; umbrellas and parasols; walking sticks; whips, harness and saddlery; collars, leashes and clothing for animals.

Class 20: Furniture, mirrors, picture frames; containers, not of metal, for storage or transport; unworked or semi-worked bone, horn, whalebone or mother-of-pearl; shells; meerschaum; yellow amber; bolsters; curtain rails; locks, not of metal, for vehicles

Class 21: Household or kitchen utensils and containers; cookware and tableware, except forks, knives and spoons; combs and sponges; brushes, except paintbrushes; brush-making materials; articles for cleaning purposes; unworked or semi-worked glass, except building glass; glassware, porcelain and earthenware;drying racks for laundry; perfume burners, electric and non-electric; toothbrushes, electric; lint removers, electric or non-electric; heat-insulated containers

Class 25: Clothing, footwear,

headwear.

Class 27: Carpets, rugs, mats and matting, linoleum and other materials for covering existing floors; wall hangings, not of textile; floor mats for vehicles

Class 28: Games, toys and playthings; video game apparatus; gymnastic and sporting articles; decorations for Christmas trees; scale model vehicles

Class 35: Advertising; business management, organization and administration; office functions; presentation of goods on communication media, for retail purposes; provision of an online marketplace for buyers and sellers of goods and services; commercial or industrial management assistance

Class 37: Construction services; installation and repair services; mining extraction, oil and gas drilling; installation, maintenance and repair of computer hardware; electric appliance installation and repair; vehicle breakdown repair services

Class 38: Telecommunications services; message sending; providing online forums

Class 42: Scientific and technological services and research and design relating thereto; industrial analysis, industrial research and industrial design services; quality control and authentication services; design and development of computer hardware and software; software as a service [SaaS];platform as a service [PaaS];electronic data storage

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Contractor assists local community in bus recovery near Ganir Bridge Site

Shandong Hengyue Municipal Engineering Co

January 11, 2026

Yap - On December 31, Shandong Hengyue Municipal Engineering Co., Ltd., the contractor for the Ganir Bridge project, assisted the local community in recovering a school bus that had overturned near the project area following a traffic incident.

According to Shandong Hengyue Municipal Engineering Co., Ltd., its site personnel were informed by nearby residents that a school bus had lost stability and was unable to return to the roadway. The incident occurred close to the Ganir Bridge project site, which is currently in the preparatory phase prior to major construction works.

After assessing the situation and ensuring safety, the company's site staff utilized available manpower and construction equipment already

mobilized at the site to stabilize and reposition the bus. The vehicle was subsequently cleared from the roadside, allowing traffic to resume. No serious injuries were reported in connection with the incident.

The company said that the assistance was provided as a community support measure and was not related to scheduled construction activities. During the recovery process, site personnel coordinated closely with local residents to ensure the operation was carried out safely and with minimal disruption to traffic.

The Ganir Bridge project recently held its groundbreaking ceremony and is currently undergoing early-stage site preparation. Shandong Hengyue Municipal Engineering Co., Ltd. noted that it aims to maintain positive engagement with surrounding communities throughout the implementation of the project.



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Opportunity at the Forum Secretariat

The Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat

The Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat (PIFS) is an Employer of Choice in the region, aiming to recruit and employ staff based on merit and organisational needs. The Secretariat ensures that its employment selection upholds its values and commitment to the Forum membership, gender balance, and building a diverse and inclusive organisation. PIFS is committed to achieving gender balance and being fully representative of our member countries*. Our workforce is currently over 50% female, with representatives from 15 of the 18 Forum member countries.

The Opportunity: Team Leader - Governance

Applications are invited to fill this vacant international position at the Secretariat in Suva. The Team Leader - Governance will lead the Political and Regional Governance Team in providing advice and guidance on political processes, stakeholder engagement, and regional policy development. The Team Leader will also lead the Secretariat's work on good governance and leadership, as mandated by Forum Leaders. The key responsibilities are summarised as:

- Policy Analysis and Advice
- Good Governance and Leadership
- Coordinating Meetings and Stakeholder Engagement
- Team Performance & Leadership
- Corporate Accountabilities

Applicants should have an advanced degree (preferably postgraduate master's level or equivalent) from a recognised university in political science, development, international relations, diplomacy, or related fields, with at least eight years work experience in government relations, stakeholder engagement, and/or public policy, preferably within the Pacific region and/or international and development policy context

Excellent facilitation and engagement skills, particularly developing and implementing stakeholder engagement and influencing strategies. Candidates with a sound knowledge of the concerns and interests of Forum members, and of the region's positions on these concerns and interests

The Package

The position carries a competitive and attractive remuneration and benefits package including allowances for housing and education; and medical, accident, and life insurance coverage. This position is based on Band 12 of the PIFS salary scale. The starting salary for the position is SDR 45,113 per annum, which is equivalent to FJD 139,238 based on 1 November 2025 foreign exchange rate.

How to apply

Interested applicants are encouraged to apply through the PIFS website: www.forumsec.org where an information package containing the position description and full remuneration details are available. Candidates must include in either their application or Curriculum Vitae the full contact details of three referees.

To be eligible for the position, applicants must be nationals of Forum member countries. The Forum Secretariat is an Equal Opportunity Employer. The deadline for applications is **Friday, 30 January 2026, 5pm (Fiji Time)**.

**Member States of the Pacific Islands Forum: Australia, Cook Islands, Federated States of Micronesia, Fiji, French Polynesia, Kiribati, Nauru, New Caledonia, New Zealand, Niue, Palau, Papua New Guinea, Republic of the Marshall Islands, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tonga, Tuvalu, and Vanuatu.*

Building brighter futures: Australian Volunteer supports youth development in Yap

Embassy of Australia to the FSM

January 7, 2026

Yap - Australian volunteer Freya Kindin has been working with the Department of Youth and Civic Affairs in Yap through the Australian Volunteers Program, helping to strengthen youth services and community engagement.

As a Youth Development Mentor, Freya worked with the team at the Division of Youth Services, supporting youth events, sharing youth program implementation strategies, and delivering workshops to strengthen the team's capacity.

“I was drawn to the role as I am passionate about youth affairs and wanted to understand what issues were

impacting youth in a completely new context,” says Freya.

John Fillmed - Chief of the Division of Youth Services - says “Freya's contribution will be long-lasting: Her efforts have helped the division in expanding the scope and success of our youth initiatives and community engagements.”

Her commitment in helping the youths and engaging with the communities has significantly supported the division in achieving its goals.

We thank Freya for her contribution to Yap's youth and wish her all the best in her next chapter.



Australia Awards pre-departure briefing & farewell

Embassy of Australia to the FSM

January 12, 2026

FSM - Having recently hosted the Pre-Departure Information Session for our newest cohort of Australia Awards Scholarship recipients, we are excited to be supporting their academic journeys in Australia.

The session provided our scholars with essential guidance as they prepared to embark on their studies in Australia covering everything from settling

in, cultural insights, and academic expectations.

We are proud to announce the following successful recipients of the Australia Awards Scholarship who are about to commence their studies in Australia this year:

- Barnson Daniel: Bachelor of Aviation Management at Griffith University in Brisbane
- Stan Kostka: Master of International Relations at Griffith University in Brisbane

- Ian Perman: Master of International Relation at The University of Melbourne in Melbourne

- Danally Daniel: Master of Public and International Law at the University of Melbourne in Melbourne

- Reileen Joel: Master of Digital Communications at Queensland University of Technology in Brisbane

- Galliard James: Master of Public Health (Extended)/Master of Physiotherapy at the University of Canberra in Canberra

take the next big step towards achieving their career goals. These talented individuals are now on their way to represent the FSM, building skills and connections between Australia and the FSM that they can bring back and contribute to their communities.

Congratulations and best wishes to all our departing scholars! Your hard work and dedication inspire us, and we look forward to seeing the incredible impact you'll make.

We bid them a heartfelt farewell as they



Mr. Kembo Mida appointed Honorary Consul-General of Japan to Chuuk

Embassy of Japan to the FSM

January 13, 2026

Chuuk - On December 1, 2025, the Government of Japan appointed Mr. Kembo MIDA as Honorary Consul-

General of Japan to Chuuk, the Federated States of Micronesia (FSM). Mr. MIDA is the first Honorary Consul of Japan to be appointed in the Federated States of Micronesia, as well as the first foreign Honorary Consul to be appointed in

Chuuk State.

The location of the Office of the Honorary Consul-General of Japan, Chuuk is as follows.

Ramp & Mida Law Office
L5 Hotel, 2nd Floor
P.O. Box 790
Chuuk, FM 96942
Tel.: +691 330-2022

Ambassador Wu Wei attends and addresses the opening ceremony of the China Film Festival

Embassy of the People's Republic of China to the FSM

December 29, 2025

Palikir - On December 29, H.E. Ambassador Wu Wei attended and addressed the China Film Festival in the Federated States of Micronesia held by the Micronesia-China Friendship Association (MCFA), the Chinese Embassy in the FSM, the China Film Administration and the China Film Archive. The event was attended

by over 100 people including T.H. Reed Oliver, Former Governor of the Pohnpei State, T.H. Aurelio P. Joab, Senator of Pohnpei State Legislature, T.H. Patterson K. Shed, Chief of Staff of Pohnpei State Government, Mr. Duhlen Soumwei, Secretary-General of Micronesia-China Friendship Association, members of the diplomatic corps, representatives and friends from various sectors.

Ambassador Wu said that film serves

as a vehicle for civilizational exchange and mutual learning between nations. This year marks the 120th anniversary of Chinese cinema, and this audiovisual feast will further deepen friendship and mutual understanding between our two peoples. China stands ready to work with the FSM to continue implementing the important consensus reached by our two heads of state, strengthening cooperation under the Global Civilization Initiative, and enhancing people-to-people exchanges,

so as to deepen the development of China- FSM Comprehensive Strategic Partnership and jointly advance the building of a community with a shared future for humanity.

The event was held at the National Convention Center (KAMORALE Convention Center) in the FSM, and screened Chinese films including *The Wandering Earth 2*, *Chinese Zodiac 12*, *Home Coming* and *My Country, My Parents*.



Ambassador Wu Wei meets with Acting Secretary of Foreign Affairs of the FSM Ricky F. Cantero

Embassy of the People's Republic of China to the FSM

January 5, 2026

Pohnpei - On January 5, 2026, H.E. Ambassador Wu Wei, Chinese Ambassador to the FSM, met with T.H. Acting Secretary of Foreign Affairs of the FSM Ricky F. Cantero to have an in-depth exchange of views on the development of bilateral relations.

Ambassador Wu stated that under the guidance of the important consensus reached by the two heads of state,

based on the one-China principle, China is willing to work with the FSM to advance the China-Micronesia comprehensive strategic partnership, thereby better benefiting the peoples of both nations.

Acting Secretary Cantero affirmed that the FSM side firmly adheres to the one-China principle, and recognizes that there is but one China in the world, that Taiwan is an inalienable part of China's territory, and that the government of the People's Republic of China is the sole legal government representing the whole of China. And the FSM is willing to strengthen people-to-people exchanges, enhance friendship between the two peoples, and deepen practical cooperation across various fields between the two nations.



President Simina receives credentials of first ambassador of Viet Nam to the FSM

FSM Information Services

January 12, 2026

Palikir, Pohnpei - His Excellency Wesley W. Simina, President of the Federated States of Micronesia (FSM), formally received the Letters of Credence from His Excellency Pham Thanh Binh, accrediting him as the first Ambassador of the Socialist Republic of Viet Nam to the FSM.

The Presentation of Credentials ceremony, held at the Office of the President, marked a historic milestone in FSM-Viet Nam relations. President Simina congratulated Ambassador Pham on his appointment and extended warm greetings to Madame Hoang Thi Huong Giang and the accompanying delegation, noting that their presence underscores Viet Nam's commitment to strengthening diplomatic ties with the FSM.

Following the ceremony, President Simina hosted a courtesy call with

Ambassador Pham, joined by the Vice President and members of the FSM Cabinet. The meeting provided an opportunity for both sides to engage in productive discussions on advancing bilateral cooperation and shared priorities.

President Simina expressed appreciation for the courtesy engagement and reaffirmed FSM's strong desire to expand and deepen relations with Viet Nam in a manner that is mutually responsive to the needs and aspirations of both governments and their peoples. He reiterated FSM's intention to seek Agrément for Ambassador K.S. Vincent Sivas, currently serving as FSM Ambassador to the People's Republic of China, to be concurrently accredited to Viet Nam, with residence in Beijing, and sought Viet Nam's support in strengthening diplomatic coordination.

Climate change was underscored as a critical and cross-cutting issue for

FSM, alongside a shared commitment to peace, stability, and sustainable prosperity. President Simina highlighted opportunities for cooperation in climate resilience, agriculture and aquaculture, tourism capacity-building, and infrastructure development. He also emphasized the importance of promoting people-to-people relations, particularly through student exchanges, cultural engagement, and educational opportunities, and expressed optimism about the future of FSM-Viet Nam relations.

Ambassador Pham conveyed his appreciation for the warm welcome and noted the honor of being appointed as Viet Nam's first Ambassador to the FSM. He expressed full concurrence with the areas of cooperation identified by President Simina and emphasized the significant potential to further strengthen bilateral engagement.

Ambassador Pham highlighted Viet Nam's experience and strengths in agriculture, including rice production, aquaculture, tropical fruits, and vegetables, and noted opportunities for cooperation in fisheries exchanges and food security initiatives. He also shared Viet Nam's focus on infrastructure development, including roads, highways, and airports, and emphasized the importance of people-to-people linkages, reflecting Viet Nam's cultural diversity.

Ambassador Pham acknowledged shared vulnerabilities to climate change and expressed gratitude for FSM's solidarity and support following a recent tropical storm in Viet Nam. He also sought FSM's support regarding Viet Nam's pending official membership in the Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission (WCPFC) and reaffirmed his commitment to working closely with the FSM Embassy in Beijing to facilitate closer diplomatic coordination.

The Vice President commended Viet Nam's development progress and emphasized the value of people-to-people cooperation, particularly in the areas of training, environmental protection, and climate change, which he described as an existential threat to FSM. He noted that while this was the first formal dialogue at this level, it marked a timely and important step toward deeper engagement.

President Simina concluded by reaffirming FSM's commitment to strengthening diplomatic ties with Viet Nam and advancing cooperation across mutually beneficial sectors. He wished Ambassador Pham a successful tenure and requested that his warm greetings be conveyed to the leadership and people of the Socialist Republic of Viet Nam.



U.S. Coast Guard saves 58-year-old mariner west of Guam

U.S. Coast Guard Forces Micronesia

January 12, 2026

Santa Rita, Guam — A 58-year-old mariner survived a vessel capsizing west of Guam Monday morning thanks to his use of multiple communication devices, staying with the vessel, and informing others of his plans, which enabled a rapid U.S. Coast Guard response.

The mariner departed Merizo around 5 a.m. local time aboard the 22-foot white pleasure boat Solo 2 to fish near the Agat buoy and then head to the 9-mile mark. Adverse sea conditions, including a high surf advisory and a rip current statement, are currently in effect for Guam and likely contributed to the vessel capsizing.

"The mariner's quick thinking to activate his personal locator beacon or PLB, send a message via his GPS device, inform a contact about his plans, and remain with

the capsized vessel until help arrived made all the difference," said Cmdr. Grant Johnson, the search and rescue mission coordinator. "These actions, combined with multiple redundant communication methods, allowed us to locate and recover him swiftly and safely."

At approximately 10:22 a.m., watchstanders at the Joint Rescue Coordination Center in Guam received an alert from the COSPAS-SARSAT system detecting the mariner's personal locator beacon. The U.S. Coast Guard also received a distress message via his GPS device reporting the vessel was sinking at the same location.

"The mariner's properly registered PLB, which included a secondary emergency contact, allowed our watchstanders to swiftly verify the

vessel's description and his plans after he could not be reached by phone," said Johnson.

U.S. Coast Guard Station Apra Harbor personnel launched the 45-foot response boat-medium, which arrived on scene by 11:09 a.m. and rescued the mariner, who was sitting atop the capsized vessel. He reported no other people aboard and showed no medical concerns.

The RB-M crew transported the mariner to Agat Marina, where members of his family and the Guam Fire Department met him. The U.S. Coast Guard issued a broadcast notice to mariners to advise of the capsized vessel as a potential hazard to navigation.

A high surf advisory remains in effect for north-facing reefs through 4 p.m. Tuesday, Jan. 13, with large breaking waves of 7 to 10 feet expected, creating dangerous swimming and surfing conditions along with localized beach erosion. A rip current statement warns of a high risk along north- and east-facing shores during



the same period. The National Weather Service advises inexperienced swimmers to stay out of the water, and all beachgoers to heed warnings about life-threatening rip currents. More at <https://www.weather.gov/gum/>.

Boaters are reminded to file float plans, carry appropriate safety equipment, including PLBs or EPIRBs, and monitor marine conditions closely during periods of hazardous surf.

Japanese Tennis Club Donates Equipment to Support Junior Tennis in Pohnpei

Pohnpei State Tennis Association

Kolonia, Pohnpei – *January 2026* – The Pohnpei State Tennis Association (PSTA) has received a generous donation of 300 high-quality used tennis balls and several tennis racquets from Let's Indoor Tennis School in Tokyo, Japan. The equipment will be used to support junior players in Pohnpei who are eager to learn and develop their skills in the sport of lawn tennis.

This donation is part of the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) initiative known as the "Smile for All in the World Program." The program recruits donors across Japan to provide items related to sports, culture, education and welfare for communities worldwide. JICA manages and coordinates the delivery of these goods through its overseas offices. Coach Keisuke Takano, formerly an employee of Let's Indoor Tennis school, relocated to Pohnpei to teach tennis to junior players in the Federated States of Micronesia (FSM). He continues to work closely with the PSTA Board of Directors and the JICA Micronesia Office to ensure donated items are distributed effectively and benefit young athletes.

The donated equipment will be used to expand opportunities for junior tennis players in Pohnpei and across the FSM, encouraging youth participation in sports and strengthening international friendship through tennis.



Mr. Toda, Manager of Let's indoor tennis school, Mr. Fujita, President of PSTA and Coach Keisuke Takano

Statement by Dr. David Obura, Chair of the Intergovernmental Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES) on U.S. withdrawal

IPBES Secretariat

January 8, 2026

Bonn, Germany - The Intergovernmental Science Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES) regrets the deeply disappointing news of the United States' intention to withdraw its participation in IPBES, along with more than 60 other international organizations and bodies.

The United States is a founding member of IPBES and scientists, policymakers and stakeholders – including Indigenous Peoples and local communities – from the United States have been among the most engaged contributors to the work of IPBES since its establishment in 2012, making valuable contributions to objective science-based assessments of the state of the planet, for people and nature. The contribution of US experts ranges from leading landmark Assessment Reports, to presiding over negotiations, serving as authors and reviewers, as well as helping to steer the organization both scientifically and administratively.

Decision-makers in the United States – at all levels and in all spheres of society – have also been among the most prolific users of the work produced by IPBES to help better inform policy, regulations, investments and future research.

On behalf of the global IPBES community, I want to express our sincere thanks for all these invaluable contributions, and our determination to continue exploring avenues and opportunities for future engagement.

IPBES has not yet received any formal notification

directly from Government of the United States but anticipates that the intention expressed to withdraw will mean that the United States will soon cease to be a member of IPBES.

While it is clearly the prerogative of Governments to withdraw from global processes, like those of IPBES, it is important to remember that this does not change the science or the relevance of that science to the lives and livelihoods of people in every community, in every part of the world.

Unfortunately, we cannot withdraw from the fact that more than 1 million species of plants and animals face extinction (IPBES Global Assessment, 2019). Nor can we change the fact that the global economy is losing as much as \$25 trillion per year in environmental impacts (IPBES Nexus Assessment, 2024) or restore the missed opportunities of not acting now to generate more than \$10 trillion in business opportunity value and 395 million jobs by 2030 (IPBES Transformative Change Assessment, 2024).

The mandate of IPBES is as clear as it is important: to objectively and without prescription, provide the most credible science and evidence about biodiversity to all decision makers and actors – for better informed decisions, policy and action. Our commitment to this goal – as the whole IPBES community – remains unwavering. Science and policy for people and nature.