

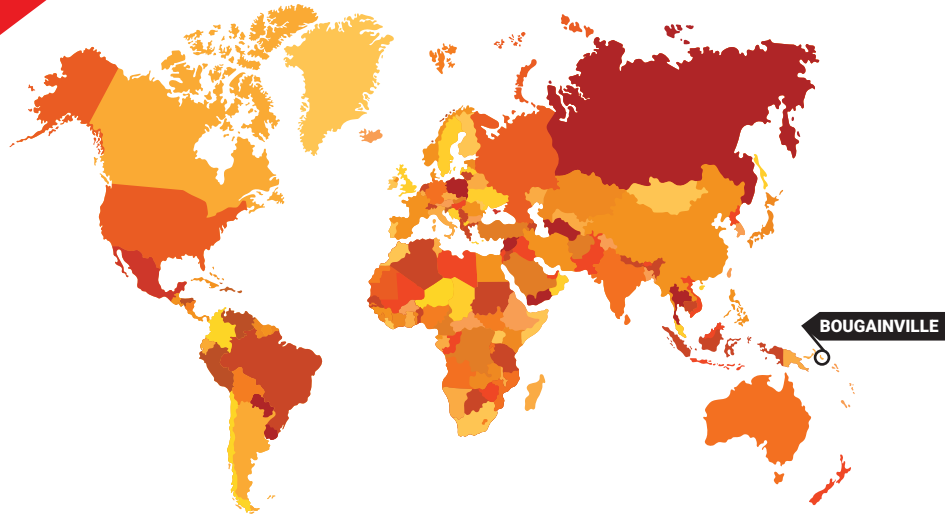
NEW ZEALAND DEFENCE FORCE: PEACEKEEPING OPERATIONS

BOUGAINVILLE

WHERE:

The main island of Bougainville and smaller island of Buka are located in the north-west of the Solomon Islands group and east of the island of New Britain.

Bougainville was previously part of the German colonial territories in New Guinea, which became a League of Nations Mandate territory governed by Australia following the First World War. These territories combined with British Papua to form Papua New Guinea which gained independence in 1975. Bougainville is currently an autonomous territory of the nation of Papua New Guinea.



WHEN:

The roots of the conflict in Bougainville are complex and can be traced back to the 1960s and the growth of the movement for Bougainville independence. In 1972, the Panguna copper mine began operating in the central highlands. Many Bougainvillean people were displaced from their land. Major environmental degradation and health effects resulted from the mine's operation and waste products. Armed resistance to the Panguna mine and the Papua New Guinean government escalated in 1989.

WHO:

- The Bougainville Revolutionary Army (BRA), led by Francis Ona, who led the initial resistance to the mine and the government of Papua New Guinea.
- The Papua New Guinea Defence Force (PNGDF), along with local anti-BRA 'Resistance' in Bougainville.
- The Panguna Mine and its parent company, Rio Tinto.
- Sandline International, an international mercenary force who were briefly employed by the Papua New Guinea Government from 1997.
- As civil order in Bougainville broke down various factions emerged, including local defensive groups and criminal gangs.

WHAT:

The conflict on Bougainville lasted until 1998. Panguna Mine was forced to close and the workers evacuated. Papua New Guinea maintained a blockade of the island, attempting to prevent the flow of food, medicine, weapons, and other supplies to Bougainville. The conflict was marked by extreme factionalism (smaller groups with different interests or opinions) on the island which split communities and families. Fighters and civilians faced extreme violence and a breakdown of civil society.

WHY:

- Bougainville Independence, driven by cultural distinction from Papua New Guinea.
- Major environmental and health impacts from Panguna Mine, with little economic benefit to Bougainville.

NZDF PEACEKEEPING IN BOUGAINVILLE

TRUCE MONITORING GROUP AND PEACE MONITORING GROUP

WHERE:

The islands of Bougainville and Buka. These islands make up the autonomous (self-governing) region of Bougainville in the nation of Papua New Guinea.

WHO:

Truce Monitoring Group (TMG) – a New Zealand-led deployment which included personnel from Fiji, Vanuatu, and Australia.

Peace Monitoring Group (PMG) – an Australian-led deployment that continued the work of the TMG. This included personnel from New Zealand, Vanuatu and Fiji.

WHEN:

1997 – 1998: TMG deployment.

1998 – 2003: PMG deployment.

WHAT:

The TMG was the first New Zealand-led international deployment.

Both the TMG and PMG were unarmed deployments. The primary goal of these deployments was to spread awareness of the peace and reconciliation process to the communities of Bougainville. The peace process was led by the people of Bougainville, with the international peacekeepers enabling and assisting where possible. This assistance took many forms including transport, community engagement, and helping in the reconstruction of infrastructure and civil society.

WHY:

New Zealand's initial leadership role in the TMG was essential as New Zealand was seen as a neutral party to the conflict. Australian leadership was unacceptable on Bougainville as Australia was closely associated with the Panguna Mine. New Zealanders were perceived as being more sympathetic to the people of Bougainville than Australians. Māori culture played a vital role in establishing connections with the Melanesian Bougainvilleans, and showed an example of cultures blending and working together.

The TMG and PMG being unarmed was a show of 'good faith' in the peace process. It also protected the TMG and PMG from being exploited for propaganda purposes by hostile factions, who may have otherwise claimed that the groups were an occupying force.

Brigadier Roger Mortlock, in command of the TMG, believed that peace was not possible unless both sides wanted it. The TMG's primary mission was to provide the opportunity for the peace process to continue, not to take a role in the process itself. The peace process was led entirely by the people of Bougainville.