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## **RAMSI Fears PPF Officer Lost in Tonga Ferry Tragedy**

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The Regional Assistance Mission to Solomon Islands (RAMSI) today confirmed that a member of RAMSI's Participating Police Force (PPF) was among those believed to have drowned in this week's Tongan Ferry tragedy.

RAMSI acting Special Coordinator, Justin Fepulea'i said it was with great sadness that he confirmed that Niue Contingent police officer, Ms Sisilia 'Sis' Puleheloto was among those who are believed to have drowned when the MV Princess Ashika sank around midnight on Wednesday 6 August, about 90 kilometres north-east of Nuku'alofa, Tonga.

The Commander of the Participating Police Force (PPF), Wayne Buchhorn said 'Sis', as the 23 year old liked to be called, was the first female officer to represent Niue in an overseas mission.

"She was a hardworking and popular member of the PPF's Community Relations team and was often at the forefront of RAMSI's Community Outreach Program since joining the mission in October last year.

"Sis' outgoing personality and enthusiastic approach to every aspect of her work meant that she made an exceptional contribution to the mission and to Solomon Islands," Mr Buchhorn said.

He has asked Niue Police Commissioner, Ross Arden, to pass on the mission's prayers and condolences to Sis' family, friends and fellow officers in Niue.

The acting Special Coordinator, Mr Fepulea'i said that all members of RAMSI wished to convey their deepest sympathies to Sis' family during this difficult time.

"Sis' was widely known throughout the mission and by many Solomon Islanders for her warm, friendly Pacific smile and her easy going manner," Mr Fepulea'i said.

"We look upon her as a thoughtful member of the RAMSI family, a promising young police officer and a great friend."

The acting Special Coordinator said that RAMSI also expressed its deepest sympathy for all those in Tonga who have lost loved ones in this terrible tragedy.

“Our thoughts are particularly with our RAMSI colleagues from Tonga, civilians serving in RAMSI, officers from the Tongan Police and members of the Tongan Defence Services at this difficult time.”

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